



KATRINA TURNS 39

Katrina Kaif celebrates her 39th birthday with the makers of 'Phone Bhoot' dropping a BTS video of the cast wishing her on her special day

LEISURE P2



WAR CRISIS DEEPENS

Ukrainian authorities across the country report new Russian missile strikes

INTERNATIONAL P10



SINDHU STORMS INTO FINALS

PV Sindhu storms into Singapore Open title clash with a commanding win over Japanese Saena Kawakami in the semi

SPORTS P12

PITTER PATT RAINS



A man holding umbrella walks as another sits inside a pipe amid monsoon rains, in New Delhi, Saturday

Kashipur deaths set House on boil

Cong takes potshots at the govt over food security claims and says that people in Kashipur still eat mango kernel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The state Assembly Saturday witnessed pandemonium over death of seven persons in tribal dominated Kashipur block of Rayagada district due to suspected diarrhoea.

Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha had to adjourn the House twice after the Congress members trooped into the well and shouted slogans demanding a ruling from the Speaker to direct the Chief Minister to come to the House and make a statement on the issue.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Congress legislative party leader Narasingha Mishra said the state government is No-1 in implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA) in the country, yet people are consuming mango kernel and dying of diarrhoea and hunger there.

"The state government is claiming that 1.36 lakh people out of 1.54 lakh in Kashipur block are being provided Re 1-a-kg rice. However,

many people of Kashipur block are still deprived of food security," he said.

Mishra said it indicated that rice provided by the government is not sufficient. There are many areas like Kashipur in the state, but the government, instead of addressing these issues, is busy collecting awards by furnishing false information.

He urged the Speaker to take it seriously and issue a ruling directing the Chief Minister to come to the House and make a statement on what steps he has taken after these deaths.

Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said the death of people in Kashipur after 23 years of BJD rule and 75 years of independence is very unfortunate and shameful. Bahinipati too urged Speaker to give a ruling asking the Chief Minister to make a statement. Rayagada MLA Makaranda Muduli said, "Six people have died of diarrhoea and a medical team has been sent to the spot," (sic).

Speaker asks Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari to make a statement in the Assembly Monday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He is a brilliant script writer. Started his career in police as a chargesheet-writer

Dhankhar NDA's VP candidate

NEW DELHI: West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was Saturday announced as the BJP-led NDA's Vice Presidential candidate.

Making the announcement here, BJP president JP Nadda lauded Dhankhar as a "kisan putra" who established himself as a "people's governor". Since assuming charge as the WB Governor in July 2019, Dhankhar has taken on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led government regularly over various issues.



IIC Suna suspended over mishap deaths

BHUBANESWAR: Director General of Police (DGP) SK Bansal Saturday suspended lady police inspector Snigdharani Suna, whose car had recently rammed into an auto-rickshaw and a bike killing three persons on the spot. In an order, the DGP said, "Pending drawal of departmental proceedings, Snigdharani Suna, inspector of police Sundargarh district is placed under suspension with immediate effect for her gross misconduct."

During the period of suspension, she will remain under the disciplinary control of SP, Sundargarh. Three people were killed and a few others injured when Snigdharani's car hit a bike and an auto-rickshaw on NH 57 Bolangir-Sonepur Road near Badabahal chhik July 12 last. The accident occurred when Snigdharani was returning from Puri in the car after performing Rath Yatra duty.

Charges against Patel Modi's strategy to go scot-free: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad/New Delhi, July 16: The Congress Saturday alleged that the charges levelled by the Gujarat police against late party leader Ahmed Patel were part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "systematic strategy to absolve himself of any responsibility for the communal carnage" of 2002.

The Congress' rebuttal came a day after the Gujarat police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) submitted an affidavit in a court in Ahmedabad stating that arrested activist Teesta Setalvad was part of a "larger conspiracy" carried out at the behest of Ahmed Patel with the political objective of "dismissal or destabilisation of the elected government in Gujarat by hook or by crook".

In a statement, Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the party "categorically refutes the mischievous charges manufactured" against the late Ahmed Patel.

"This is part of the Prime Minister's systematic strategy to absolve himself of any responsibility for the communal carnage unleashed when he was chief minister of Gujarat in 2002," he said. Patel's daughter Mumtaz reacted sharply to the allegations, saying her father's name still holds weight to be used for "political conspiracies" to malign the Opposition.

"So their campaign for Gujarat election has begun by dragging Ahmed Patel's name in conspiracy theories. They did it before election when he was alive & are still doing it when he is no more," she tweeted.

GUJARAT RIOTS

Patel's daughter Mumtaz says her father's name still holds weight to be used for 'political conspiracies'

Contd...P4



SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY

<p>nirf INDIA RANKINGS 2022</p>	<p>16th Best University 18th Best Medical Institution 27th Best Engineering Institution 10th Best Dental Institution 9th Best Law Institution</p>	<p>The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accredited the university with the highest Grade A++ with a CGPA of 3.88 out of 4.</p>
--	--	--

Category -1 Graded Autonomy Status
UGC 12(B) Status | DSIR - SIRO Recognized

<p>Rank 1201+ World University Rankings, 2022</p> <p>Rank 601-800 in Engineering & Technology and Computer Science, 2022</p> <p>Rank 601+ In Health Sciences, 2022 (Clinical, Pre-clinical and Health Science category)</p> <p>Rank 401-500 Times Asia University Rankings, 2022</p> <p>Rank 401+ Times Young University Rankings, 2022</p> <p>Rank 501+ Emerging Economies University Rankings, 2022</p>	<p>Rank 801-1000 QS World University Rankings, 2022</p> <p>Rank 401-450 QS Asia University Rankings, 2022</p> <p>Diamond University Rating by QS I-GAUGE for outstanding performance</p> <p>Institution of Happiness Recognized by QS I-GAUGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of Association of Universities (AIU) Member of Institute of Electricals & Electronics Engineering (IEEE) Member of American Society of Mechanical Engineering (ASME) Member of the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Member of Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering (IIIE) Member of the Computer Society of India (CSI) Member of American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Member of Indian Medical Association (IMA)
---	---	--

13 SOA Researchers featured in the top 2% scientists of the world list prepared by Stanford University, USA

13th Cottonfab-2022
The Original & Authentic Handloom Fabrics

Traditional, Gorgeous & Fabulous Handlooms,
Saree : Dressmaterial : Kurties : Salwar-Kameez : Home Furnishing

BROUGHT TO YOU

UTTAR PRADESH FABRICS Chikan work, Banarasi Silk, Aplic Work, Block Print, **RAJASTHAN FABRICS** Block Print, Dhabu, Sangneri, Bandhej, Kota Doria. **GUJRAT FABRICS** Traditional Bandhani, Kutch Embroidery **MADHYA PRADESH FABRICS** Light weight Chanderi, Traditional Maheshwari, Batik Print. **BIHAR FABRICS** Kosa, Kora, Tussar. **JAMMU & KASHMIR FABRICS** Embroidered Silk, Pashmina Shawls. **WEST BENGAL FABRICS** Kantha, Baluchari, Dhakai Jamdani, Tangail. **ANDHRA PRADESH** Kalamkari Vegetable Dye, Zari Border. Mangalgiri, Pochampalli, Gadwal, Venkatgiri, Udappa. **TAMILNADU FABRICS** Madurai & Kanjeewaram, Coimbatore, Erode Cotton. **HARYANA FABRICS** Handlooms & Embroidery.

Gate No. 2
(Near Ekamra Haat)
Exhibition Ground, Unit - III,
Kharvel Nagar, Bhubaneswar
Date :
2nd July to 3rd Aug. 2022,
Time:
10.30 AM - 9.00 PM

Every Sunday
LUCKY DRAW
@7PM

Use Mask & Maintain Social Distancing to Prevent COVID-19

www.cottonfabexpo.com | cottonfabexpo@gmail.com | https://goo.gl/maps/zXTwRnCxv6CGmh2Y8

Regd. by: O/o D. C. Handicrafts, Ministry of Textile Govt. of India | Org. by: Awadh Hathkargha Hastship Evam Gramodyog Samiti

leisure



WHEN SINGER DEMI LOVATO BANGED HER HEAD ON A CRYSTAL

'Sorry Not Sorry' hitmaker Demi Lovato recently smashed her head against a crystal and had to get stitches before her appearance in a television show. The singer shared the details of the accident in a TikTok post.

FANS CHEER AS BRITNEY SINGS ALL-TIME HIT NUMBER 'BABY ONE MORE TIME'

Freed from her conservatorship after 13 years this past November, Spears took to Instagram to post a brand new rendition of 'Baby One More Time', the single that catapulted her to superstardom as a teen when she released it in 1998.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

Today, you may be stumped by some mysterious and wonderful event. That, or you may encounter an unexpected yet advantageous incident. It may not exactly be path-breaking, but it is sure to make you take stock of things. Also, you may find it difficult to meet deadlines today.

TAURUS

Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesh. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesh.

GEMINI

You are likely to make a list of your daily chores that take most of your time. Then you will find a way to outsource these activities or eliminate them from your routine altogether. You will also devote a lot of your time to meditation. Health of a family member may give you some anxious moments, feels Ganesh.

CANCER

You think you are smart. You will be most certainly savouring the positive aspects of your life. Sometimes, it is quite possible that you find yourself at the end of your wits. You had better sit together with your spouse and thrash out personality clashes and private quarrels, suggests Ganesh.

LEO

A moment once lost is not going to come back. So, it's about time you realised the value of time, says Ganesh, because time is money. On this day, set everything to a schedule and figure out your tasks right down to the brass tacks. Personal organisers are a good bet, but if you are old school, then maybe you would rather prefer a diary and a calendar.

VIRGO

Communication is your best handgun and creativity your best bullet. Ganesh feels you are full of energy, enthusiasm and exuberance. Creativity, though, will be at its best in an atmosphere free of pressure and strain, cautions Ganesh.

LIBRA

When you aim big, it is the small things that somehow manage to irritate you the most. Ganesh foresees you being troubled immensely by minute things today. But do not let this dampen your spirit, because today is also a day when you shall be receptive to new ideas.

SCORPIO

You may face the music from bosses today, forecasts Ganesh. Your colleagues too may not warm up to you and offer half-hearted support. Novices knocking on the doors of career may look forward to belated success in interviews and final selection.

SAGITTARIUS

Wisdom in words and hero in deeds - this may well be your avatar today. Expect good news at work, especially related to a thicker pay package or an increase in office floor area. Accountants and franchisees - expect to crunch good numbers today!

CAPRICORN

Lack of confidence may leave you glum in the first half of the day, and to add to it, you will be loaded with work that you may have taken up from company other than the one employing you full time, says Ganesh. The sullen mood will turn jovial by evening, and you can expect to have a good time socialising with friends and relatives.

AQUARIUS

You may feel constrained by future plans. Ganesh says that plans are okay, but you must live in the present to avail the cosmic energy that ultimately manifests your dreams. At work, your generous spirit adds to the goodwill you have already accrued.

PISCES

You would do well to make a to-do list today, if only to gain a realistic perspective of how much you want done and how much you can achieve in the time you have available. Making unreasonable demands from yourself will only lead to further delays, says Ganesh.

Rashmika delights paps with 'Saami Saami' hookstep

Bengaluru: She may be India's crush but 'Pushpa' star Rashmika Mandanna has shown that she is a grounded person with her heart in the right place. Srivalli aka Rashmika Mandanna has been the talk of tinsel town for her adorable gesture at a recent public appearance.

At the red carpet, the actress obliged the paps for some pictures and also went ahead to pose with all of them. She also flaunted the 'Saami Saami' hookstep and the famous 'thaggade le' hand gesture to the audiences.

Rashmika looked drop-dead gorgeous as she posed in a figure-hugging thigh-high length dress. Boasting a deep V-neck, and an accentuated fabric from her waist.

Letting the outfit do all the talking, Rashmika went minimal with her accessories. She opted for simple yet effective pair of hoop earrings to go with her ensemble. The makeup was flawless and kept in neutral tones.



Katrina raps with Ishaan, Siddhant

Mumbai: With Katrina Kaif celebrating her 39th birthday today, the makers of her upcoming movie 'Phone Bhoot' have dropped a quirky BTS video of the cast wishing her on her special day.

In the video, Katrina Kaif, Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi can be seen rapping. Katrina looks stunning in her latest fringe haircut. Her fans can

not only see her new look in the film, but also watch her rapping for the first time in her career.

The video comes with the caption: "There's hype cos you're a vibe. Happy Birthday#KatrinaKaif"

'Phone Bhoot' is a supernatural comedy directed by Gurmmeet Singh of Mirzapur fame and produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's banner Excel Entertainment. The movie, to be released November 4, also stars Jackie Shroff, Sheeba Chaddha, Nidhi Bisht and Surrender Thakur. IANS



Kartik Aaryan's 'Shehzada' to release in February

Mumbai: Actor Kartik Aaryan Saturday announced that his upcoming film Shehzada, directed by Rohit Dhawan, will hit the theatres February 10, 2023. The Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 star took to Twitter to announce

the new release date of the film, which was earlier supposed to come out in November this year.

"#Shehzada Returns Home Feb 10th 2023," the actor wrote alongside a still from the movie.

Shehzada is the Hindi remake of the 2020 Telugu blockbuster Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo, starring Allu Arjun and Pooja Hegde.

The film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Allu Arvind and Aman Gill. IANS



Mouni Roy's corner of the sky

Mumbai: Mouni Roy, one of the hottest television actresses, never fails to burn the internet with her photos. The actress recently shared her bare back photos from the Maldives and raised the temperature.

In the pictures, the actress can be seen posing backless with a blanket wrapped around her. Sharing the photos, she wrote, "My corner of the sky."

Mouni, who made her debut with Akshay Kumar in 'Gold' will be next seen in Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's fantasy adventure epic Brahmastra.

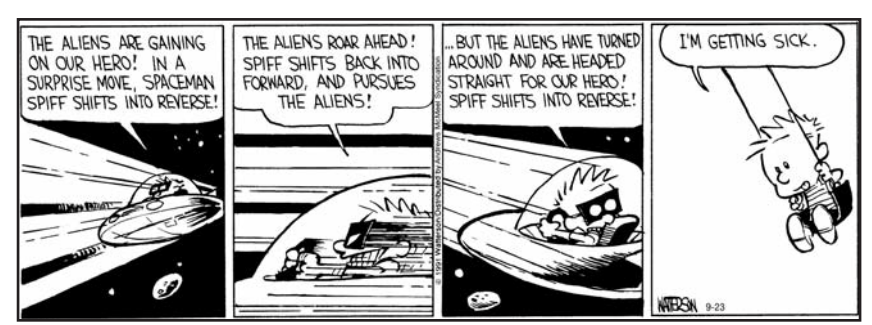
She plays the antagonist Junoon, the mysterious queen of darkness.

Roy, who made her television debut in the hugely popular soap opera Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, was recently seen as the judge on the kids' dance reality show Dance India Dance Li'l Masters season 5. Her co-judges in the show were choreographer-director Remo D'Souza and actress Sonali Bendre. AGENCIES

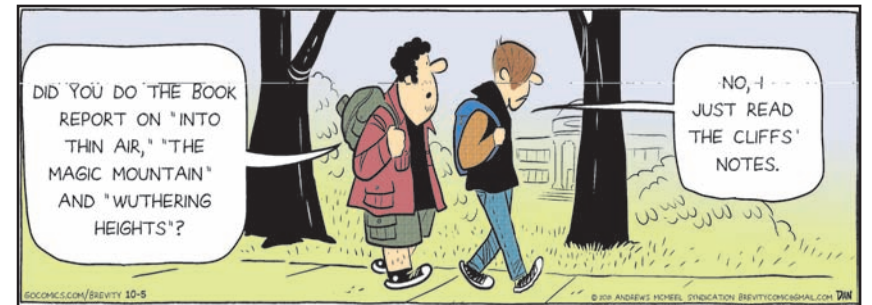
PEANUTS



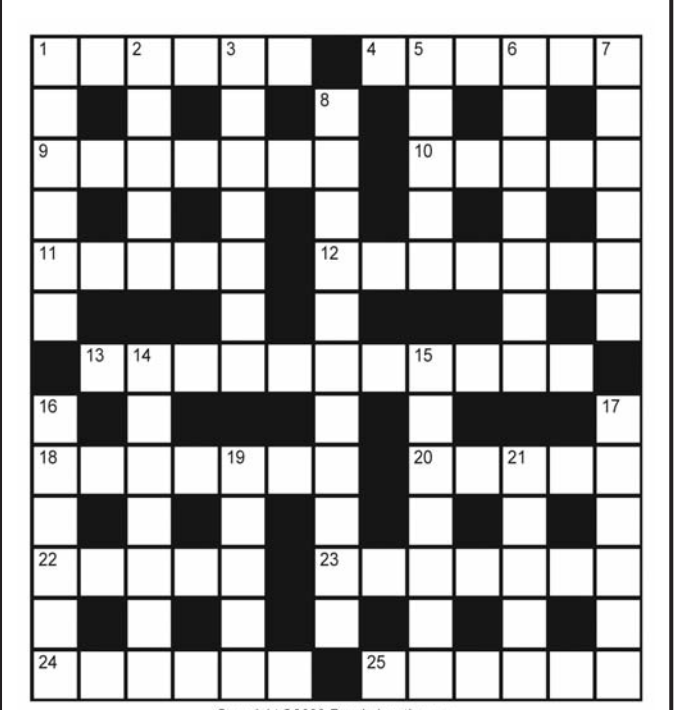
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



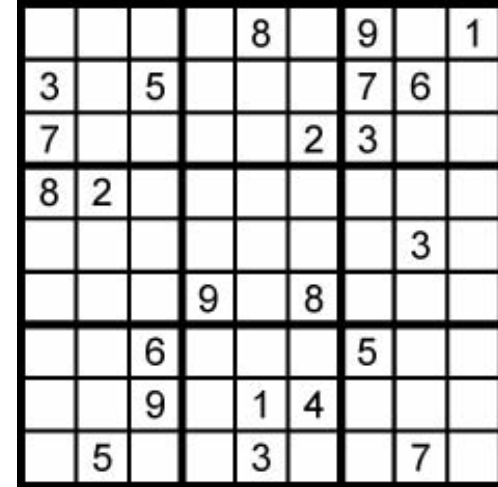
FUN post CROSSWORD



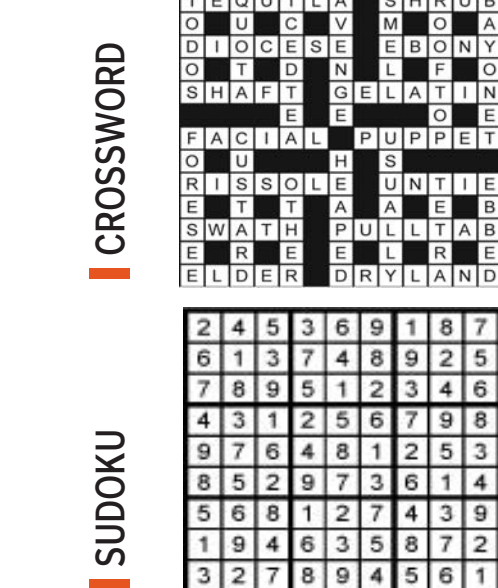
- Across**
- 1 Chef's secret, maybe
 - 4 "Exactly right" words (4,2)
 - 9 Decorative framework
 - 10 Coastal feature
 - 11 Fragrance
 - 12 Muffin, of sorts
 - 13 Capable of being classified
 - 18 Entreat
 - 20 Courtroom event
 - 22 Certain berth
 - 23 Round-the-clock
 - 24 Church officers
 - 25 Meagre
 - Down**
 - 1 Unmask
 - 2 Large stringed instrument
 - 3 Tapered flag
 - 5 Gussy up
 - 6 Israel's ___-Yafa (3,4)
 - 7 Inherent character
 - 8 Assistant's job (7,4)
 - 14 Bland
 - 15 Doomed ship
 - 16 Purlind
 - 17 Go by, as time
 - 19 Blunder
 - 21 Bury

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



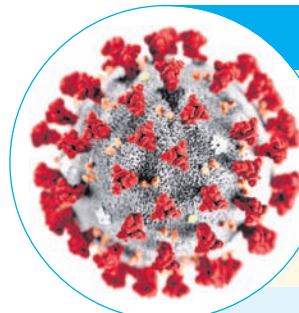
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SQUATTERS REMOVED

Civic authorities in Cuttack removed illegal structures in Nuabazar area of the city, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	56,66,51,907	53,78,56,292	63,86,267
India	4,37,30,071	4,30,63,651	5,25,660
Odisha	12,98,240	12,84,235	9,128

MONSOON SESSION

Raise pending issues of Odisha in Parl: Naveen to BJD MPs



BJD president Naveen Patnaik held a meeting with party MPs through videoconference

We are neglected in matters of railways, banking, tele density, payment of coal royalty and clean energy cess, and the construction of coastal highway. All the above important issues concerning the interests of Odisha need to be raised in the Parliament

NAVEEN PATNAIK | BJD PRESIDENT

BJD president Naveen Patnaik held a meeting with party MPs through videoconference. In the Parliament, Patnaik said in the meeting. The Chief Minister said he had raised several issues concerning Odisha during his meeting with the Prime Minister at New Delhi May 30 and sought the support and cooperation of the Centre in this regard. "I would impress upon all of you to take up all the pending issues with the concerned ministries so that these are sorted out in a time bound manner," Patnaik told the BJD MPs. Recently, Patnaik has written to the Prime Minister regarding evacuation of 5 lakh MT of surplus fortified parboiled rice from the state for the kharif marketing season 21-22, withdrawal of export duty on the below 58 per cent grade ore and pellets, and sanction of 1.84 lakh PMAY (G) (special houses) to the cyclone Fani affected fami-

lies in state. Patnaik had also sought the intervention of the Union Finance Minister regarding the exemption of DMF trust from the purview of income tax from 2022-23 fiscal. "All the above issues need to be pursued with the Centre," Patnaik said to the MPs. He also asked the MPs to persuade the Centre for speeding up of pending railway projects in the state, implementation of the Swaminathan Committee recommendations on minimum support price (MSP) for paddy, legal provisions for 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures and formation of Odisha Legislative Council. "Our demand for special category status and inclusion of 'Ho' language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution needs to be followed up and pursued vigorously," Patnaik added. The BJD parliamentarians have also been asked by the Chief Minister to provide full support to Droupadi Murmu in the Presidential election to be held July 18.



Strong waves triggered by a low pressure area crashed on Puri beach, Saturday

ROUGH SEA

Normal life hit as rain lashes coastal belt

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Normal life was thrown out of gear in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, and many other places across the coastal region Saturday as rain lashed these areas since early morning under the influence of a low-pressure area. Intense spells of rain continued over several parts of the twin city area of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. "It may cause temporary waterlogging in low-lying and underpass areas," Regional

Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar tweeted. The heavy rain spelled a tough time for office goers. School students were, however, spared as schools were closed it being a Saturday. The attendance in government offices, including the Lok Sabha Bhavan and the Kharvel Bhavan, was thin due to the rains. Most of the shops and business establishments remained closed in the state capital and the public transport service was affected, an official said. According to the Met centre,

Balapatna received 95.5 mm rainfall, Baliana in Khurda district received 86 mm, Chilika 85mm and Bhubaneswar airport 49.1mm by 8:30 am Saturday. Reports of heavy rainfall were received from other districts too, revenue department officials said. The IMD has forecast moderate to heavy rainfall in several parts of the state over the next couple of hours. There is also a possibility of water logging due to the intense rain (2-3 cm) in the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Earlier, the IMD had issued

an orange (be prepared) alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall in several parts of the state till 8:30 am Saturday. It has also issued a yellow warning for Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Jagatsinghpur, Khordha, Puri, Nayagarh, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Kandhamal, Boudh, Sonepur and Jharsuguda districts. The special relief commissioner has instructed the district Collectors of Khurda and Cuttack to take measures to dewater low-lying areas.

Four get life term in builder murder case

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The Court of Additional District & Sessions Judge-III, Khurda here Saturday sentenced four persons to rigorous imprisonment for life holding them guilty for murdering a city-based builder nine years ago in 2013. The convicts have been identified as Salila Patnaik alias Tarini, Suraj Sharma alias Nepa, Santosh Padhiary alias Nana and Rajesh Kumar Barik alias Pintu. The convicts have also been ordered to pay a fine of Rs 10,000 each. As per the order, the convicts have to further undergo rigorous imprisonment for one more year if they failed to pay the fine. The victim, Krushna Chandra Nayak of Ganjam district was staying at IRC Village under Nayapalli police limits. Nayak was the proprietor of Kalinga Putra Real estate and a security agency. On August 12, 2013, convict Tarini along with his three associates, Suraj, Rajesh and Santosh came on a motor cycle and intercepted Nayak



who along with his supervisor was returning home. The convicts opened fire at Nayak from their pistols near the IRC village Post Office in broad day light. Nayak succumbed to the injuries on the spot. The deceased had previous enmity with the prime accused Tarini over some land related disputes. Subsequently, Tarini along with other convicts hatched the murder plot. Based on the complaint lodged by the deceased's son, Nayapalli police lodged a case (226/13) and arrested the accused a few days after committing the crime. The court after examining the statements of 24 witnesses and 20 documentary evidences held the accused persons guilty of killing Nayak and pronounced the judgment.

SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY QUESTION PAPER LEAK

BJP seeks action against the guilty

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Saturday sought stern action against people involved in the leak of question papers of examinations conducted by the Sambalpur University. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, BJP deputy leader in Assembly Bishnu Sethi urged Speaker BK Arukha to direct Higher Education Minister Rohit Pujari to take stern action against the people involved in the question paper leak. He alleged that a lecturer of Kuchinda College and a faculty member of Sambalpur University were involved in the question paper leak. Stating that the question paper leak would adversely affect the meritorious students, the BJP MLA asked the state government to ensure stern action against the guilty. Notably, the question papers of Plus III Final Year Education (Honours) and Physics (Honours)



The question papers of Plus III Final Year Education (Honours) and Physics (Honours) of Sambalpur University were leaked in social media, forcing the authorities to cancel the examinations

of Sambalpur University were leaked in social media, forcing the authorities to cancel the examinations. "Earlier, question papers of school and colleges were leaked but now it happened in the university. It seems that the entire education system in the state right from the primary to university level is directionless and there has

been mismanagement everywhere, Sethi added. Sambalpur University Vice Chancellor Sanjib Mittal had earlier said that the Physics question paper was leaked from Kalahandi. "The question paper was leaked from an aided college in Kalahandi district. The principal of the concerned college was called to the university. A lecturer of the college

was involved in question preparation," Mittal said. He also stated that complaints were filed at Burla police station and Cyber police station in this regard. The question paper of Physics was reportedly leaked before the examination Friday, admitted the Controller of Examination. This comes just a day after Education question paper was leaked. The university authorities, meanwhile, have rescheduled the Plus III Final Year examination for Education (Honours) and Physics (Honours) following the question paper leaks. While the sixth semester examination in Education has been rescheduled for July 19, the Physics examination will be held July 20, announced the Controller of Examinations of the varsity. As many as 205 colleges have been notified about the new schedules. This time, the question papers will be sent by email before 30 minutes of exam to avoid any untoward incident, the university authorities said.

MAHANADI WATER DISPUTE

Tribunal takes on record affidavits of witnesses

New Delhi, July 16: The Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal Saturday took on record the affidavits of witnesses filed by both Odisha and Chhattisgarh with respect to Mahanadi river water dispute. Odisha filed an affidavit of expert on ground water while Chhattisgarh filed an affidavit of expert on agriculture. A bench of tribunal headed by Supreme Court judge, Justice AM Khanwilkar listed the matter for hearing August 27. The tribunal also asked both the states to file interim applications in order to seek documents related to Mahanadi water dispute from Central agencies. During the hearing, Chhattisgarh submitted in the tribunal that Madhya Pradesh isn't providing them vital data of Mahanadi basin. The tribunal granted four weeks time to Madhya Pradesh to share the Mahanadi data with Chhattisgarh. Earlier, the tribunal had in March asked Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit affidavits of witnesses in order to deposit their studies in connection with the Mahanadi river. Significantly, Odisha proposed nine witnesses to examine in the tribunal during the hearing of the matter. Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh has proposed around eight witnesses to examine. It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the Mahanadi water dispute tribunal in respect to sharing of Mahanadi river water. Odisha in its petition claimed that the state of Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha. The state has sought stay on the construction and operation of barrages being built on the Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months, November to May.

RICH TRIBUTE



Artistes of Tridhara performed Odissi at an event to mark the 36th death anniversary of Guru Debaprasad Das at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Prez Poll: Parties ask MLAs not to leave Capital till Monday

Bhubaneswar, July 16: As the countdown for the ensuing Presidential election begins, all the three major political parties in Odisha Saturday held parleys and asked the MLAs not to leave the state capital before casting their votes. Congress was the first party which held a meeting of its MLAs at the Assembly premises. OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak, who returned from New Delhi Saturday, was present at the meeting presided over by Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra. Pattanayak informed the party's decision at the meeting. He announced that former MLA Ganeswar Behera and sitting MLA Santosh Singh Saluja are appointed as the state party's agents for the presidential poll. "All our MLAs will vote for Sinha in the ensuing Presidential elections, voting for which will be held at the state assembly Monday," Pattanayak said.

The ruling BJD also held its legislature party meeting attended by 110 MLAs. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik presided over the meeting held at the assembly premises. Including the Speaker, the BJD has 112 MLAs while two of other MLAs have been expelled from the regional outfit. One of the expelled MLA Pradeep Panigrahi has announced his support for NDA candidate Droupadi Murmu, the NDA's candidate for the Presidential poll. Another expelled MLA Prasant Jagdev is in jail and he is likely to come for taking part in election Monday, sources said. The state's lone Independent MLA Makaranda Muduli from Rayagada has also announced his support for Murmu. Presiding over the meeting, Patnaik said the BJD has been a proposer for Murmu as she is the "daughter of Odisha" in the fray for the country's topmost position. He asked all the party MLAs to vote for Murmu and ensure that not a single vote become invalid. This apart,

sources said, the BJD has also asked its MLAs not to leave the state capital till voting is completed Monday. The MLAs were told to write one in numerical near name of Murmu as the first preference. The senior leaders demonstrated before the new members on how to cast votes in the presidential elections. The BJD MLAs also held a separate meeting at the party office here which was attended by 21 members of the party's 22 lawmakers. Leader of Opposition P K Naik was absent in the meeting as he is hospitalized due to post COVID-19 complication. The saffron party cautioned all its MLAs to cast their votes in favour of Murmu without any fault. The party also warned the MLAs to ensure that not a single vote become invalid in the process. "All our MLAs will remain present in Bhubaneswar while all MPs have left for Delhi to cast votes in Parliament," a senior BJP leader said adding that Murmu will have better prospect to win the polls.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	27.3°C	28.0°C
	MIN	24.8°C	24.5°C
	Humidity	98%	100%
	Rainfall	9.6mm	26.0mm
	Forecast	Cloudy sky	

Charges against Patel Modi's strategy to go scot-free: Cong

Continued from P1
"Why during UPA years @TeestaSetalvad was not rewarded & made Rajya Sabha member and why the Centre upto 2020 did not prosecute my father for hatching such a big conspiracy?" she said in another tweet which was retweeted by her brother Faisal Patel from his verified Twitter handle.

Ramesh alleged that it was Modi's unwillingness and incapacity to control the 2002 Gujarat "carnage" that had led the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to remind the chief minister of his 'raj dharma'.

The Prime Minister's "political vendetta machine" clearly does not even spare the departed who were his political adversaries, the Congress general secretary said.

"This SIT is dancing to the tune of its political master and will sit wherever it is told to. We know how an earlier SIT chief was rewarded with a diplomatic assignment after he had given a 'clean chit' to the chief minister," Ramesh said.

He alleged giving judgment through the press, in an ongoing judicial process, through "puppet investigative agencies who trumpet wild allegations as supposed findings", has been the hallmark of the Modi-Shah duo's tactics for years.

"This is nothing but another example of the same with the added object of vilifying a deceased person since he is unable and unavailable to refute such brazen lies," Ramesh alleged. Hitting back at the BJP, Congress' media department head Pawan Khara said whenever elections approach, the BJP, PM Modi and "his ecosystem" put forward "new theories" and even drag names of Muslim leaders.

"In the last assembly polls, Prime Minister Modi's ecosystem suddenly came up with talk of conspiracy against Modi at a dinner in Jangpura in which ex-army chief Gen Deepak Kapoor, former prime minister Manmohan Singh as well as many noted personalities were present.

"They said Pakistan was also involved," Khara said at a press conference at AICC headquarters in Delhi. "Now again, the Gujarat elections are coming, so they have again started. Whenever Gujarat polls come, sometimes they start talking about Ansari, or Ahmed Patel," he said. Setalvad, along with former Director General of Police (DGP) RB Sreekumar and former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt, was arrested by the city Crime Branch for allegedly fabricating evidence to implicate innocent persons in the 2002 riots cases, under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 468 (forgery) and 194, among other offences.

Kashipur deaths set House on boil

Continued from P1
He demanded the government to send a state-level medical team to the affected areas to assess the situation and take action. Muduli said water from the area has been sent for examination and the result of the test report is awaited.

The issue took an ugly turn when the Speaker said he had reserved his ruling and appealed to the agitating members to go to their seat and cooperate in conduct of House business. The agitated Congress members, however, rushed to the well and shouted slogans in support of their demand.

As the Speaker denied to give ruling immediately on the issue, Congress members created uproar in the House, which led to adjournment of the proceedings twice for 10 minutes and then 15 minutes.

Later, the Speaker asked Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari to make a statement in the Assembly on the issue Monday. At least six people have died and 71 others are hospitalised due to diarrhoea after drinking contaminated water from open sources in several villages in Rayagada district, officials said Saturday.

Notably, over 40 people of Kashipur block lost their lives to diarrhoea in 2007.

CIVIC WOES



Continuous rains expose the deplorable condition of roads in Cuttack, one of them being the Sikharpur - Kalia Boda road

OP PHOTO

BMC brings back 'No mask, No goods'

THE FUEL STATION OWNERS HAVE ALSO BEEN DIRECTED TO PUT PROPER SIGNAGE IN THE APPROPRIATE PLACES FOR INFORMATION OF ALL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Observing the rapid surge of Covid in state Capital in the last 10 days, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday brought back the 'No mask, No fuel' mandate for vehicle owners under its jurisdiction.

In a notification issued by the civic authority, the BMC ordered the fuel refilling stations to not sell fuel to those who turn up without wearing a face mask or face cover appropriately. The fuel station owners are also directed to put proper signage in the appropriate places for information of all.

"There has been a sudden increase in the number of newly detected Covid-19 positive cases within BMC jurisdiction in the last fortnight, which requires caution among the citizens. Proper wearing of face masks or face covers is a key method to check the spread of the virus," the BMC notification read.

Apart from gas stations, the BMC also issued advisory for other traders and office goers in City. It instructed all citizens residing within BMC jurisdiction as well as



those coming from outside to wear face masks or covers properly while at public places.

"Appropriate use of face mask or face covers means that it should cover the mouth and nose prop-

erly. The owners of business establishments like shopping malls or shops or stores shall not allow staff or customers without face masks or face covers inside their premises. They shall also put appropriate signage 'No Mask, No Entry' or 'No Mask, No Goods' at the entry points of their premises for information of all concerned," the notification added.

The civic authority also suggested the CEOs, managers, heads of government as well as private offices to ensure that their employees are wearing face masks while except while eating or drinking.

122 kids among 1,065 new Cov cases in state

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Saturday recorded over 1,065 new Covid-19 cases, the highest single day spike in five months, pushing the case-load to 12,98,240, the state Health department said in a bulletin. As many as 122 children were among the new patients, it added.

It was the second consecutive day that the state recorded over 1,000 coronavirus cases, the Health bulletin said.

The highest number of cases in the past five months was 1,148, which was recorded February 13, it said. On Friday, Odisha had logged 1,043 cases.

The state's coronavirus toll remained 9,128 with no reports of any fresh fatality. A total 53 patients with the infection have died due to comorbidities so far.

Khurda, where the Capital

Bhubaneswar is situated, reported the highest number of 361 coronavirus cases, followed by 135 in Cuttack and 111 in Sundargarh.

The state now has 5,376 active cases, while 12,83,683 people recovered in the last 24 hours, including 514 in the past 24 hours.

The coastal state's TPR stood at

5.45 per cent with new cases detected from 19,542 samples.

The coastal state contributes 3.02 per cent of India's total confirmed cases till date. Similarly, it currently shares 30.39 per cent of total active cases, 3.02 per cent of total recoveries and 1.75 per cent of total Covid deaths of India.



Fame follows young Odia author



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Odia youth Piyush Pratik Mohanty has garnered fame by writing a book in English. Though writing interested him since his childhood, the lockdown following the Covid outbreak gave him the needed opportunity. During the lockdown in 2020, he started working on the book, which received wide adoration.

Piyush has received national honors like Elite Book Award,

Writing Ink Award, Spectrum Award, etc. He has penned several books namely 'Time's Insertion', 'Odyssey of Misapprehension', 'Cosmos of Utopia', 'Three Allegories', and 'Do You Really Understand?'. Friday at the Dharitri head quarters here, Piyush met CEO Adyasha Satpathy and Editor Tathagata Satpathy, who advised him to keep on writing. Piyush is the eldest son of Manas Ranjan Mohanty and Simi Mohanty from Joda, Keonjhar.

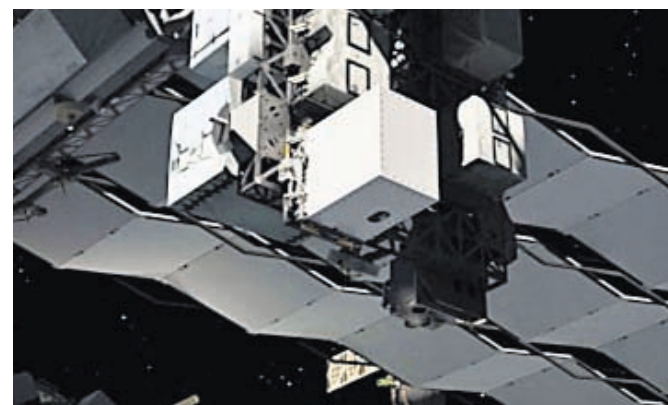
New NASA mission launched to study airborne mineral dust

NASA has launched a probe to analyse airborne mineral dust and see how it might affect climate and environment.

Called the Earth Surface Mineral Dust Source Investigation (EMIT), the mission was on its way to the International Space Station (ISS), the US space agency said in a statement.

EMIT's state-of-the-art imaging spectrometer, developed by the agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California, will collect more than a billion dust-source composition measurements around the globe over the course of a year. The mission will identify the composition of mineral dust from Earth's arid regions.

Desert regions produce most of the mineral dust that makes its way into the atmosphere. They're



also largely remote, making it difficult for scientists to collect soil and dust samples over these vast areas by hand, said NASA.

"EMIT is studying mineral dust because it's currently an unknown element," said Robert Green, EMIT's principal investigator and Jet Propulsion Laboratory senior re-

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN

A melting pot of quality academics and research



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: From a humble beginning over 25 years ago, the Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), also known by its acronym SOA, has emerged as a shining academic edifice today which has illuminated the educational skyline of eastern India.

Coming into existence July 17, 2007, when the Government conferred on it the status of Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956; SOA is considered as a centre of superlative professional education today. The university is home to nearly 15,000 students including from 15 foreign countries. The university has a faculty-student ratio of 1:10.75 with the number of faculty with PhD or equivalent degrees accounting for more than 75 per cent of teachers.

For seven consecutive years, SOA has been continuously listed among the top 25 universities in the country by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). It has been ranked 16th in by NIRF in the just released rankings for 2022, making it the third best

Resolve issues of Ukraine-returned medicos: State to Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Following the recent protest by Ukraine-returned medical students, the state government once again requested the Centre to resolve their problems. State Health Minister Naba Kishore Das has written a letter to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in this regard.

Das expressed gratitude to the Union government for the safe evacuation of Indians including medical students from the Ukraine. Presently, he said, chances of Ukraine returned medical students to return to Ukraine again to complete their MBBS course appears slender as hostilities between two countries has intensified. Such students are now very much helpless, he added.

"It is relevant to mention here that, around 470 medical students from Odisha pursuing their studies in different Universities have approached our Chief Minister to intervene for enabling them to complete their medical studies in India," the Minister stated in his letter.

In the above backdrop, the Minister requested Mandaviya to consider the concerns of the students and take steps to resolve the problems.

university in eastern region.

SOA reached a huge milestone recently when National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accredited the university with the highest Grade A++ with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.88 out of 4.

The recent decision of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to grade SOA as a Category-1 Deemed to be University has come as the newest feather in the university's already glowing cap.

SOA was globally ranked in the 801-1000 bracket by prestigious QS World University Ranking for 2022 after being in the 401-450 bracket in the QS Asia University Ranking in 2021. It was awarded Diamond University rating by QSI-GAUGE for its performance in 2020. It was also the only institute in eastern India to get QSI-GAUGE E-LEAD for conducting online teaching-learning during lockdown.

Significantly, 13 of the researchers in SOA found place in Stanford University's prestigious world ranking of two per cent scientists which was drawn up on the basis of a subject-wise analysis in 2021.

their understanding of dust's impact on climate and the Earth system today and in the future.

Right now, scientists don't know whether mineral dust has a cumulative heating or cooling effect on the planet. "That's because dust particles in the atmosphere have different properties. For instance, some particles may be dark red, while others may be white," said NASA. EMIT will provide a detailed picture of how much dust comes from dark versus light minerals.

In the absence of more specific data, scientists currently characterise mineral dust in climate models as yellow, a general average of dark and light.

Because of this, the effects that mineral dust may have on climate, and that climate may have on mineral dust, are not well represented in computer models, the US space agency said.

IAN5

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

RETURN TO REALISM



After taking a tough, supposedly principled stand against the Kingdom at the beginning of his administration, Biden is now set to adopt a more conciliatory approach

US President Joe Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia is proving to be more than a little controversial. After taking a tough, supposedly principled stand against the Kingdom at the beginning of his administration, Biden is now set to adopt a more conciliatory approach. This about-face has riled critics, but there are good reasons to welcome the shift.

During the 2020 presidential campaign, Biden called Saudi Arabia a "pariah." Once in the White House, Biden diplomatically ostracised the Kingdom's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (widely known as MBS). And last year, his administration released an intelligence report blaming MBS for the brutal 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

But soaring energy prices and skyrocketing inflation – and the popular frustration they have stoked – have changed Biden's calculations. Now, his administration is desperate for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to increase their oil output. And that means bringing MBS in from the cold.

Yet, contrary to critics' claims, this does not amount to a destabilising display of American weakness. On the contrary, Biden is, at long last, embracing a time-tested US policy. When it comes to the Middle East, American acceptance of the status quo has virtually always proved to be the more stable – and desirable – option. While muscular or activist US policies have sometimes produced flashes of awe, they quickly degenerate into disdain, instability, and humiliation.

Consider President Dwight D. Eisenhower's experience in the 1950s. The United States' star had been rising in the region since World War II's end. To solidify the country's position in the region, Eisenhower demanded that Britain, France, and Israel withdraw from Egyptian territory after the 1956 Suez Crisis. Just two years later, however, whatever goodwill Eisenhower had generated was

quickly destroyed, after the US military intervened in Lebanon to stabilise its fragile government.

Ronald Reagan fell victim to the same destructive pattern. He initially sought to project power in the Middle East, dispatching troops to Lebanon in 1983 to tame a civil war. But after two lethal bombings left 258 Americans dead, Reagan abruptly withdrew US forces. Regional actors were not impressed. How could this supposedly mighty superpower be unable to resolve a conflict in a country smaller than Connecticut with fewer inhabitants than Kansas?

In the 1990s and 2000s, Iraq became the leading catalyst of Middle Eastern turmoil. When Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990, George H.W. Bush launched a 38-day air assault – broadcast live on CNN – followed by a 100-hour ground war. The Iraqi military was crushed. Kuwait was free. And the US had regained the fear and admiration of regional actors. For example, Syria, which had clashed with US forces in Lebanon in 1983, renounced resistance and joined a US-sponsored peace process.

But this reverence was short-lived. When Hussein did not cede

power, as the US had desired, the US adopted a policy of containing and isolating Iraq. America's regional allies, such as the UAE, opposed this policy, clamouring instead for Hussein's reintegration into the Arab order. A rift formed.

The same cycle played out in the 2000s. A swift American invasion – ordered by another Bush, George W. – toppled Hussein, leaving adversaries awestruck. This time, Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi relinquished his weapons of mass destruction, embraced the campaign against Islamic extremism, and accepted US regional hegemony.

Yet again, however, America's fall from grace was swift. An Iraqi insurgency bogged down the US military. American diplomats could neither reconcile inveterate enmities nor resolve internecine conflicts. An Iranian satellite sprouted where the US had attempted to plant the seeds of democracy.

American power was again in decline. Even stalwart allies defied the US, with Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak, for example, refusing to visit the US for six years. Syria – again an adversary – sought

to destabilise US-backed governments in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories.

Amid such gyrations, the US has sought stability above all. This has meant maintaining good relations with authoritarian governments – from Egypt to the Gulf – that deprive their people of basic rights.

Today, the Saudis and Emiratis are none too happy with America's Iran policy – in particular, its timid response to attacks on their territories by Iran's Yemeni proxy. But, just as Biden has little choice but to mollify them, they have little choice but to accept American regional hegemony. China and Russia, which buck international sanctions against Iran and shield it in the United Nations, will not protect these fragile petrostates against the mullahs.

Egypt, meanwhile, has drifted toward the Russian orbit. But if it is to have any hope of keeping up in the arms race with Israel, there is no substitute for American weapons. In any case, the Egyptian military's officer corps has bitter memories of their predecessors' treatment by the Soviet advisers deployed after the 1967 war: "They are brusque, harsh, frequently arrogant," one Egyptian general wrote.

Likewise, China cannot resolve Egypt's water dispute with Ethiopia, despite being Ethiopia's largest investor and creditor. Only America – with its long history of conflict resolution, record of meeting its obligations, and seemingly bottomless coffers – can accomplish that.

In 2018, following Khashoggi's murder, I argued that despite the desire to hold the Saudis to the standards expected of other close US allies, common interests and mutual dependence would almost certainly prevail. Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia shows that he has now reached the same conclusion.

The writer is a former research fellow at New America.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

The right to blaspheme

Recent happenings in India have come across as a blow to the fundamental right of free expression. It is undeniably true that historically we've never had an excellent record on free speech in any case. However, it is devastating when the last refuge of the oppressed i.e. the judiciary, condemns a former BJP spokesperson's mockery of a particular religion as being responsible for destabilising the country. Since last week, we've been witnessing a deluge of FIRs being lodged by members of the ruling party against filmmaker Leena Manimekalai for offending the religious sentiments of Hindus.

Like most terrible systemic issues of our country, the sections under which offending religion is a crime has a colonial origin. For Thomas Babington Macaulay, it was essential to have a stable colonial government which would receive the least resistance from the natives. While denouncing judicial activism, Macaulay noted how sensitive Indians were to religion. Macaulay believed that a person who "offers a gross insult to the Mohamedan religion" or deprives a Rajput from his caste is more likely to invite violent public anger than severe bodily harm. Unless the government adopted the principle that "no man should be suffered to insult the religion of another", it risked the "dissolution of society". It is important to note that the reasoning here is strikingly similar to the oral observations of Justice Surya Kant and Justice JB Pardiwala in the recent Nupur Sharma hearing at Supreme Court.

It is in this spirit that Section 295A was introduced. In 1924, the Hindu publisher of a satirical pamphlet disparaging Prophet Muhammad was acquitted of the charge of "promoting enmity or hatred among different classes" (Sec 153A). The massive outrage, protests and social tensions in the aftermath led the government to introduce Section 295A which criminalised insult to the religious sentiments of classes of people with "malicious and deliberate intention of outraging religious feelings".

Since Independence, governments have freely utilized these oppressive laws to curb dissent. In 2012, for instance, a 21-year-old woman was arrested for critiquing shutdown on Bal Thackeray's funeral on Facebook while her friend was arrested for merely liking the post. Similarly, the UPA government arrested the cartoonist Aseem Trivedi under sedition for critiquing rampant corruption through his cartoons utilising national symbols. Jawaharlal Nehru's government had the Urdu poet

Majrooh Sultanpuri arrested for writing poems critiquing the government and the Prime Minister. When it comes to free speech, our government's record in our country has been exemplary.

However, it'd be wrong to merely blame the executive and the legislature for the sorry state of free speech. In 1957, Ramji Lal Modi questioned the constitutional validity of Sec 295A. He was arrested for writing an article that hurt the religious feelings of Muslims. Arguing that the provision was too broad, the petitioner noted that free speech can only be restricted when there's proximate disruption of public order. If a person offends an influential group of people who later on take part in a violent rampage or public protest, she'll be arrested under 295A. However, if the people being offended are powerless and vulnerable, the likelihood of it causing disruption to public order will be minimal and so will be the likelihood of the individual's conviction. This is because the court, while upholding 295A, noted that the law was applicable when there's a "calculated tendency" to "disrupt public order". Anticipating this critique raised by the petitioner, the court noted that the Section 295A is so wide that it covers even those insults and offences which actually do not lead to "breach of public

order". Thus, though the spirit of the law's origin may have been the need to maintain public order, judgements such as Ramji Lal Modi vs. the State of UP have made the boundary so wide as to criminalise even the slightest offence to religion, provided it's deliberate. In fact, the Supreme Court has repeatedly held that uttering historical truth is not a defence in cases of Sec 153A and 295A (State of Maharashtra v. Sangharaj Damodar Rupawate).

A crucial problem with Section 295A, apart from its obvious restrictions of free speech, is the privileging of certain forms of offenses (i.e. religious) over others. I, as an atheist, cannot file a case against religious believers for being offended when they preach that non-believers like me will burn in hell for eternity. On the other hand, the rationalist Sanal Edamaruku has multiple FIRs against him because he exposed superstition and criticised Christianity. It is time that we treat religion like every other idea. Just like mockery of politicians isn't a crime, mockery of religion shouldn't also be a crime.

The writer is an author, blogger and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Ensure food security

Sir, Even in this technological world of 21st century, humans cannot eat money and gadgets to quench their thirst and hunger. The East or the West, countries like the US, Australia and continents like Asia cannot brush aside agriculture anymore. This is also true of Russia that has been ruthlessly involved in the war against Ukraine, destroying the latter's ecosystem thereby disturbing the global economy unnecessarily. Here comes a big sad story of the economic crisis Sri Lanka has been facing. The people in Sri Lanka have been reeling from severe economic shocks caused by various factors including a failed regime. Unable to bear the brunt of the current crisis, people in Sri Lanka have been shunning their meals at least once or twice a day – even avoiding tea and coffee to save money. On the other hand, this current situation may lead to numerous humanitarian crises from violence to hunger deaths to suicidal attempts to child crisis to threats to women's safety – if allowed to continue. The international community neighbouring Asian countries and the UN should send their assistance to Sri Lanka in the form of food items immediately. As a matter of fact, backed by water sources and rigorous agricultural activities, my native areas like Korkai, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, Nagercoil, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu have been home to banana, paddy, betel and other crops. Only such rigorous agricultural activities and people's hard work will pave the way for strong food security and economic growth. In this context, the UN, some other Asian representatives and global farm experts should visit Sri Lanka now to take stock of the situation and share their ideas and strategies with the island nation regarding how to strengthen the local agriculture in the next few months.

P Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

IIT-M at top

Sir, The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) has yet again come out with flying colours bagging the top rank among educational institutions in India. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and the IIT Bombay grabbed the second and third spots. The IISc also topped the list of universities, with the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Jamia Millia Islamia coming second and third. But unfortunately, access to quality education is beyond the reach of the average student, with many preferring to study in countries such as Ukraine, Russia and China, where education is affordable.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Yoga is a generic name for any discipline by which one attempts to pass out of the limits of one's ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness.
SRI AUROBINDO



Why We Lie

Having been kept busy by the government in various matters, I have not had the chance to catch up with the news much in the last couple of weeks. This is why I was taken aback – shocked is actually the right word – to learn that India had "reiterated its commitment to protecting and promoting all human rights."

These words are part of a joint Press Release from the "10th India-EU Human Rights Dialogue" (I did not know there had been nine previously) held on 15 July.

The document makes for interesting reading, given the circumstances in which Indians find themselves on the issue of human rights. It lists nine points. The first is that India and the European Union refer to themselves as "open and democratic societies" which "emphasised the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights."

These are grand words and set the stage up for the text to come. The next substantive point is that India and the EU exchanged "views and concerns on civil and political rights, the rights of persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and opinion online and offline" among other things.

After this, more remarkably, the government of India says that it and the EU "concurred on the importance of safeguarding the freedom, independence and diversity of civil society actors, including human rights defenders and journalists, and respecting freedom of association and peaceful assembly."

And then India "expressed the need to foster greater engagement on human rights issues, based on internationally recognised human rights laws and standards. Both sides recognised the importance of strengthening national and international human rights mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights and the important role of national human rights institutions, civil society actors and journalists."

On and on the document goes, reiterating things that India has abandoned in practice but is preaching in theory. The question is why. Given that India's government has not only disregard but pure hatred and contempt for human rights defenders like the Bhima Koregaon 16 and journalists like Mohammed Zubair and activists like Teesta Setalvad, why is it then pretending to actually like them and their work?

The reasons are quite clear. The first is that India's government does not want to be recognised abroad for what it is: a majoritarian, authoritarian State that thrives on using its power against citizens. When India's diplomats abroad engage with other democracies they still pretend that India is Nehruvian and secular. They do not use words like Hindutva does here and the language that the BJP and its leaders use against other Indians especially minorities are not to be found in our external engagement.

This is not because the BJP is ashamed or embarrassed of what it says and does; it is merely because it is a hypocrite and has no problem being two-faced. The Western world has moved over the last century to a consensus on the issue of human rights and free speech and the rights of minorities. India's government opposes all of these but cannot do so abroad because we have neither the confidence or the strength to do so. This is why we lie.

The second reason we do this is because external pressure is effective. If it were not, we would tell the European Union to get lost. Consider that one year ago EU officials said that "Human Rights Defender and Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy has died in custody, nine months after his arrest on false charges of terrorism. Jailing human rights defenders is inexcusable."

The special representative for human rights from the European Union, Eamon Gilmore said that the "EU had been raising his case repeatedly with authorities." These are the same people with whom we are now agreeing, when we say that we respect human rights defenders and their right to do their work. Why are we doing this? Because we have no option. An honest and powerful and truly sovereign government would not need to lie about its behaviour. China does not hold human rights dialogues with the EU.

This must be understood by those who think that the outside world has no influence on India. In an interconnected globe, there is no nation that can claim to be beyond the influence of others.

Naturally, the amount of influence exerted and felt will depend on the issue and the strength of feeling on either side. Human rights are something that many states in the EU take seriously because their citizens do so. India's leaders likely understand this and are trying to figure out how to manage this reality with the desire to continue doing mischief at home. One indicator of the discomfort at being made to do this was that while the EU was represented in this human rights dialogue by its ambassador, the Indian side was represented by a low level diplomat (Joint Secretary for Europe West). Another indicator is that there was almost no news about this meeting. The foreign ministry did not tweet about it as it usually does with all engagements at this level. This then is the behaviour of our government, which shows a benign mask to the world behind which its fangs are bared against its own citizens.

WISDOM CORNER

- If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles. SUN TZU
- I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear. NELSON MANDELA
- I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. KAHLIL GIBRAN

WORDSWORTH

Ullage This is most commonly encountered as a technical word of the beverage technologist, the wine merchant or publican, meaning the unfilled space in a barrel or wine bottle. The word comes ultimately from the Latin oculus, an eye, used in a figurative sense by the Romans for the bung hole of a barrel. In the medieval period this was taken into French as oeil, from which a verb ouiller was created, to fill a barrel up to the bung hole. (When wine ferments in the barrel, there's a slow loss of liquid due to evaporation through the wood. It's important to keep the barrels full, as otherwise undesirable bacteria and yeasts can get in and cause unwanted side fermentations.) In turn, a noun ouillage was created, which was the immediate source of our word, first recorded in Norman English about 1300, at first in the sense of the amount of liquid needed to fill a barrel up to the bung hole. By an obvious extension, ullage came to refer to any amount by which a barrel is unfilled, perhaps because some of the contents have been used. And it is also applied to the unfilled air space at the top of a bottle of wine, which in this case is essential to allow for expansion of the contents as the temperature changes. The word has been transferred into the vocabulary of rocket scientists to mean much the same: the unfilled space at the top of liquid fuel tanks, left to permit the fuel to expand with changes in temperature. The space between the top of the propellant load and the top of the tank is known as ullage space.



Barak Barfi

SOARING ENERGY PRICES AND SKYROCKETING INFLATION – AND THE POPULAR FRUSTRATION THEY HAVE STOKED – HAVE CHANGED BIDEN'S CALCULATIONS



Aakar Patel

An honest and powerful and truly sovereign government would not need to lie about its behaviour



Anwesh Satpathy

WHEN IT COMES TO FREE SPEECH, NO GOVERNMENT'S RECORD IN OUR COUNTRY HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY

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

national

of the day quote

Whatever the SSP has said is right. There is nothing wrong in it. He has said the same thing which we have been saying for several years. The OS is creating unrest in society

TEJASHWI YADAV | RID LEADER

After I was declared the Presidential candidate by the opposition, I tried to call up Nitish Kumar a number of times. He never answered, perhaps thinking I do not enjoy the status to be worthy of his time

YASHWANT SINHA | OPPOSITION'S PRESIDENTIAL POLL CANDIDATE

India is trying to help friend Sri Lanka as appropriately as possible despite having also been affected by COVID-19 and Ukraine crisis

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Former Punjab Speaker dies

Chandigarh: Former Punjab Speaker and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Nirmal Singh Kahlon passed away in his sleep early Saturday. He was 79. He was the Rural Development and Panchayat Minister from 1997 to 2002 and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 2007 to 2012. Kahlon was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Amritsar, where he breathed his last. SAD leaders -- Parkash Singh Badal and Sukhbir Singh Badal -- Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann expressed grief over death of Kahlon.

Boy detained

Mumbai: A boy has been detained here for allegedly assembling a low-intensity explosive device and packing it in a courier parcel for claiming insurance money, police said Saturday. The parcel caught fire at a courier firm's office earlier this week, causing panic, but no one was injured in the incident, a police official said. After the courier company alerted police, the boy who had allegedly shipped it was tracked down and detained on Friday, he said. As per the police, the boy came across an online advertisement of insurance policy for the goods damaged during transportation, and hatched a plan to get easy money.

Two arrested

Mumbai: Mumbai police has busted a gang which purchased and sold stolen mobile phones with the arrest of two men, an official said here Saturday. Unit 6 of the Mumbai crime branch conducted a raid at Maharashtra Nagar in suburban Mankhurd on Friday and seized at least 480 mobile phones including iPhones, he said. The gang bought stolen high-end mobile phones at discount and sold them in various states, the official said. Besides mobile phones, police also seized a laptop, 9.5 kg of ganja, 174 bottles of foreign liquor and two swords during the raid.

Four drown

Jaipur: Four children, including two minor girls, drowned in a pit filled with rainwater in Rajasthan's Nagaur district Saturday, police said. Ramlal, Lichma and Aarti, all aged three years, and Shimbu (4) were playing near the pit. They started taking bath in it and drowned. They belonged to a nomadic community and their families were staying nearby, Station House Officer, Kotwali, Brijendra Singh said. The incident occurred near Mundwa road in Nagaur city, he said.



Misled. Betrayed. Cheated. Prime Minister, can India's unemployed youth use these 'unparliamentary' words for your lies?

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHOOTING BANNED

The Kerala government has enforced a ban on film shooting in the area around the State Secretariat. An order to this effect was passed last month as the area is a high security zone and on account of the shooting, a lot of people are seen in the place



Space for Oppn diminishing: CJ



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, July 16: Chief Justice of India NV Ramana Saturday said that a strong, vibrant and active Opposition helps to improve the governance and corrects the functioning of the government, but "unfortunately the space for Opposition in the country is diminishing".

In his address at an event on "75 Years of Parliament Democracy" at the Rajasthan Assembly, he said: "Particularly, the leaders in the Opposition used to play a stellar role. There used to be a lot of mutual respect between the government and the Opposition. Unfortunately, the space for Opposition is diminishing. We are witnessing laws being passed without detailed deliberation and scrutiny."

Chief Justice Ramana said strong, vibrant and active opposition helps to improve the governance and corrects the functioning of the government. "In an ideal world, it is the cooperative functioning of the government and the opposition which will lead to a progressive democracy. After all, Project Democracy is a joint effort of all the stakeholders," he added.

He added that in the absence of a thorough debate involving all the sides of the house, as a judge, he, at times, wonders as to how one traces the legislative intent behind the enactments. "Instead of engaging in meaningful debates for furthering democracy, politics has become acrimonious. The diversity of opinion enriches polity and society. Political opposition should not translate into hostility, which we are sadly witnessing these days. These are not signs of a healthy democracy," he said. The Chief Justice said building a peaceful and inclusive society is not just a matter of public administration, but also a duty of a statesman. "You are a reflection of the people's aspiration. Let morality of the constitution guide you in

Particularly, the leaders in the Opposition used to play a stellar role. There used to be a lot of mutual respect between the government and the Opposition. Unfortunately, the space for Opposition is diminishing. We are witnessing laws being passed without detailed deliberation and scrutiny

NV RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

the right direction. After all, you are all role models. Strengthening parliamentary democracy demands strengthening the opposition as well," he said.

"We have a form of government where the executive, both political and permanent, is accountable to the legislature. Accountability forms the core principle of democracy. I have, on several occasions, highlighted the significance of parliamentary debates and parliamentary committees. In fact, I used to look forward to the legislative debates."

The Chief Justice said a year ago, on Independence Day, he had expressed views on a decline in the quality of debate and, at times, even the lack of debate in the legislative bodies. "On this occasion, I have a suggestion to make. Law making is a complicated process. One cannot expect every lawmaker to have a legal background. It is essential that Members of the Legislature have quality assistance from legal professionals, so that they are able to contribute to the debates meaningfully. The Hon'ble Speaker may consider providing the assistance of qualified law clerks to each of the MLAs. "We, as judges, are also assisted by law clerks in our day-to-day Court work. Let me assure you, it will really be helpful to you all," he said.

Monsoon session: Oppn seeks Agnipath debate

At an all-party meeting ahead of the session beginning Monday, Birla informed the leaders about preparations for the session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Ahead of the Monsoon session of Parliament, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Saturday sought cooperation of all parties for smooth conduct of proceedings with "decency, dignity and discipline", even as the Opposition demanded discussion on the Agnipath scheme, unemployment and farmers' issues.

At an all-party meeting ahead of the session beginning Monday, Birla informed the leaders about preparations for the session. He later said that leaders of all parties assured that they will cooperate in conducting the proceedings of the House with dignity.

Several opposition political parties - TMC, TRS, Shiv Sena, NCP, BSP, SP, TDP, SAD and Left parties - skipped the meeting. However, Congress and its allies DMK and IUML attended the meeting. While Congress was represented by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, TR Bala from



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla with Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and Anupriya Patel, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and DMK leader TR Bala after his meeting with leaders of all parties in the House, ahead of the Monsoon session in New Delhi

DMK participated.

Leaders from YSR Congress and NDA's constituents - LJP, Apna Dal were also present in the meeting. The government was represented by Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi and Minister of State in the same ministry Arjun Ram Meghwal.

In a tweet after the meeting, the Speaker said he urged all parties to "cooperate in the smooth conduct of the proceedings with decency, dignity and discipline in accordance with the high traditions and values of the House".

He further said that efforts will be made to have extensive discussion and dialogue on topics

related to public interest. He also said that by "celebrating #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav (celebrations surrounding 75 years of India's independence), we can achieve the expected results fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the public".

During the meeting, discussions were also held on the issues to be taken up during the session and allocation of time for discussion on different bills. Issues, such as the recently issued list of unparliamentary words, are also believed to have come up for discussion in the meeting.

The Speaker holds this cus-

tomary all-party meeting before the start of every parliament session. The Monsoon session of the Parliament will begin on July 18 and is scheduled to continue till August 12.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the Opposition demanded a discussion on the Agnipath military recruitment scheme, unemployment and farmers' issues in the upcoming Monsoon session of Parliament. The meeting was held at Parliament premises in the evening and was attended by floor leaders of several political parties.

"We have demanded that discussion should be held on Agnipath, unemployment and issues related to farmers and sufficient time be given to the Opposition to raise these issues in the House," Chowdhury told reporters after the meeting. Bala also demanded discussion on these issues.

Joshi listed the government's business for the session which includes 14 pending bills and 24 new bills. Birla also informed the members there will be 18 sittings during the session and a total time of 108 hours will be available out of which about 62 hours will be for government business.

ROUGH SEA



High tides crash at the Marine Drive sea next to the site of a coastal road construction in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

BOMB BLAST IN BIHAR SCHOOL, 2 KIDS INJURED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, July 16: Two schoolchildren were injured and four more fell unconscious after a bomb exploded in Bihar's Gaya district Saturday.

Harpreet Kaur, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Gaya confirmed the incident.

She said that the victims received injuries and were admitted in a hospital in Wazirganj, and were out of danger.

The explosion took place at the government primary school, Murgiyachak under Wazirganj police station on Saturday morning. The victims were identified as Satyendra Kumar Manjhi (10) and Niraj Kumar Manjhi (9).

"The students were playing inside the school campus when the explosion took place. Four students also came under the impact of the explosion and fell unconscious. We have sent a bomb and dog squad at the school for investigation," Kaur said. The villagers claimed that three bombs also exploded in the village on Friday night.

Wazirganj is a Maoist dominated area of Gaya district. The police said that there was a possibility of bomb being kept in the school premises which exploded.

ITBP jawan shoots 3 colleagues in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 16: An Indo-Tibetan Border Police jawan Saturday fired at his three colleagues at a camp in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, before he himself received fatal bullet wounds, with a senior official saying the "exact sequence of the event is being investigated".

Earlier officials had said Constable Bhupendra Singh had

shot himself dead after firing at his colleagues around 3:30 pm at the Devika Ghat community centre in the district. But, later an official said there was not much clarity on how Singh died.

He said Singh could have been killed either in an exchange of fire, or he might have shot himself, or possibly he was hit by a ricocheting bullet fired from his own weapon. "The exact sequence of the event is being

investigated," the senior ITBP officer said. The injured personnel have been admitted to a hospital, and are out of danger, the previous official had said. He had also said that Singh had shot himself from his INSAS service rifle and he died on the spot. The jawan was presently deputed to the 'F' company of the 2nd ad-hoc battalion of the ITBP deployed in Jammu and Kashmir for security duties.

Jaishankar to move bill on WMD in Monday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Family Courts (Amendment) and Indian Antarctic bill are listed to be taken up in Lok Sabha Monday, while the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill is listed for consideration and passing on the same day in Rajya Sabha.

Both houses will also pay tributes to former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab

The bill seeks to ban funding of weapons of mass destruction and empower the Centre to freeze, seize or attach financial assets and economic resources of people engaged in such activities

Emirates and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Mwai Kibaki the third President of Kenya - three world

leaders who died since the last parliament session -- as part of their obituary references. Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will move the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Bill in Rajya Sabha, as per the house's list of business.

The bill seeks to ban funding of weapons of mass destruction and also empower the Centre to freeze, seize or attach financial assets and economic resources of people engaged in such activities. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's name is listed to introduce the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill in Lok Sabha, as per the house's

list of business for Monday.

The draft legislation has been brought to validate the family courts functioning in several states. The absence of a mandatory central government notification has put a question mark on the jurisdiction of the family courts set up to secure a speedy settlement of marriage-related disputes in two states - Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh. To overcome the legal difficulty, the government has brought this bill to help validate the appointment of judicial officers and court staff in the family courts of the two states with retrospective effect.

Free power for 51L Punjab households

Chandigarh: In a major relief to residents, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Saturday announced that as per the government's promise to provide 600 units of free power per billing cycle, 51 lakh households will get zero electricity bill from September. All domestic consumers will be eligible to get zero bills if their consumption is up to 600 units in every billing cycle. Mann said this decision has been implemented from July 1, so the households who will consume less than 600 units of power in the billing cycle of July and August will not have to pay for their electricity consumption.

IMA urges Sitharaman to withdraw GST on healthcare

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The Indian Medical Association Saturday requested Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to withdraw the imposition of Goods and Services Tax on healthcare services, saying the step will raise the cost of running hospitals and clinics in the country.

Referring to a recommendation by the 47th GST council which stated that "like CTEPs, common bio-medical waste treatment facilities for treatment or disposal of biomedical waste shall be taxed at 12 per cent so as to allow them ITC", the Indian Medical

Association (IMA) said these facilities were earlier in the GST exempted category and will be taxed post-July 18.

The doctors' body also cited another recommendation which stated that "room rent, excluding ICU, exceeding ₹5,000 per day per patient charged by the hospital will also be taxed at 5 per cent, without input tax credit (ITC)". The IMA said, in its letter, that this facility was also GST (Goods and Services Tax) exempted and will now come under the purview of the GST norms post July 18.

"We, as collective voice of all establishments and doctors of the country, express our serious con-



cerns and objections to these new taxes in the healthcare sector. This

step will add big additional cost to the healthcare of people," the

IMA's letter stated.

"We request you to immediately withdraw any GST on healthcare services," it said. The Association further rued that already the healthcare system of the country is not on track owing to meagre government spending on health, adding that people are largely dependent upon private sector with high out-of-pocket expenditures.

The decision of adding GST will simply raise the basic bed rates, it said. "Taxing room rent in a hospital is profiteering from the suffering of a sick person. It is no less than the 'Salt Tax' imposed by the British on Indians for which even the Father of our Nation Mahatma

Gandhi had to protest," the IMA said in the letter.

Similarly, it said, a steep rise of 12 per cent on biomedical waste is unjustified and it will raise the cost of running hospitals and clinics. It will further translate into raised charges for patients, the letter added.

"Application of GST will push healthcare towards a business model away from a service-centric one, and it will not be fair to our citizens already facing many hardships. So, it is our sincere and immediate request to withdraw the GST on room rent and biomedical waste in the larger interest of public healthcare," the IMA added.

Mamata turns BJP model on its head in Bengal

ACCORDING TO POLITICAL ANALYSTS, THE CONDITION OF THE BJP AS AN OPPOSITION PARTY SEEMS TO BE QUITE HOPELESS EVEN WHEN THE ISSUES AGAINST THE RULING PARTY ARE MANY



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, July 16: The numbers did not favour the BJP in the 2021 West Bengal assembly polls when the saffron camp could not even cross the 100-mark in the 294-seat assembly. The existing number too has started depleting fast after the polls with the present headcount of the BJP having come down to 70 as several party legislators have joined the Trinamool Congress. Even two heavyweight party Lok Sabha members, Babul Supriyo and Arjun Singh have joined the ruling party. According to political analysts, the BJP's model of disruption for toppling opposition ruled state governments by attracting opposition MLAs in states like Maharashtra and

Madhya Pradesh, but in West Bengal that same model is not working in favour of the saffron camp. Rather, the ruling Trinamool Congress is using the same model of disruption to weaken the BJP in the state.

In fact, according to political analysts, the condition of the BJP as an opposition party seems to be quite hopeless even when the issues against the ruling party are many. "The foremost issue are the mass irregularities and corruption in teachers' recruitment in the state, an issue which involves mass interest as genuine candidates were deprived to make room for ineligible candidates. But we hardly see the BJP hitting the streets to organize mass protests. Even with zero rep-

resentation in the state assembly, the visible street movements by the CPI(M) and the Congress are more than that of the BJP. In such a situation, the BJP's focus is on the progress made by central agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate in their probes in such recruitment scams," said political analyst Arundhati Mukherjee.

In fact, both Union home minister Amit Shah and the BJP's national president, JP Nadda, during their visits to West Bengal earlier this year advised the party's state leadership to concentrate on organizing mass movements on burning issues in the state rather than depending on central agencies on

this count. However, it is doubtful how far the state leadership of the BJP is serious in implementing the advice of Shah and Nadda at the ground level. The dependence of the state BJP leaders on the CBI and the ED has continued and every time a ruling party leader is summoned by any central agency in connection with various cases like the teachers' recruitment scam, coal & cattle smuggling or post-poll violence, the saffron camp leaders give enthusiastic media bites and express hopes that the ruling party leaders will soon be behind bars.

According to political analyst Rajagopal Dhar Chakraborty, currently the prime concern of the state BJP leadership is to keep the party intact by arresting the exodus of senior leaders from the party. "The strategy that the BJP is adopting in other states to weaken the opposition parties, it is facing the heat of that same strategy from the Trinamool Congress. So, the state unit of the BJP is dependent on the progress of the central agencies against the ruling party for future election successes. In my opinion, unless the BJP chalks out its own mass movement strategy on the issues in the state, there is little possibility for it to weaken the Trinamool Congress before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Sheer dependence on central agencies without any mass movement will

not take the BJP ahead," he said.

The Trinamool Congress leadership too has realized this weakness of the BJP in West Bengal. That is why TMC leaders including its national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee have been claiming in public that the central agencies have become the last weapon of the BJP considering that their own organisation and mass base in the state have totally vanished.

According to TMC state general secretary and party spokesman Kunal Ghosh, letting loose the central agencies is proof of the BJP's political bankruptcy. "After the 2021 West Bengal assembly polls they have realized that the beginning of their end has started and the saffron camp does not stand any chance in West Bengal in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. So, in desperation they are letting loose the central agencies," he said.

However, the BJP's state spokesman in West Bengal Shamik Bhattacharya rebuts this theory of the Trinamool Congress. "Can the Trinamool Congress leadership deny that there had been so many incidents of corruption? What has the BJP to do with the central agencies' probes when such investigations are being carried out following the orders of the Calcutta High Court? Does the BJP decide when and how the CBI or the ED will act?" he questioned.

Dhankhar, Mamata's bête noire, is NDA's Vice Presidential nominee

Dhankhar been in the limelight since becoming governor of West Bengal in July, 2019 over frequent run-ins with the Mamata Banerjee government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 16: Jagdeep Dhankhar, whose candidature as NDA's vice presidential candidate was announced Saturday, has been in the limelight since becoming governor of West Bengal in July 2019 over frequent run-ins with the Mamata Banerjee government.

A lawyer by profession, Jagdeep Dhankhar forayed into politics in 1989 and was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan that same year and became a Union Minister in 1990.

Dhankhar, who practised in Rajasthan High Court and the Supreme Court, was designated a senior advocate in 1990, the same year he became a Union minister. He was also a member of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha from 1993 to 1998 representing Kishangarh constituency. The lawyer-turned politician was appointed governor of West Bengal in July 2019 and has since had a tumultuous relationship with the ruling Trinamool Congress in the state. The TMC leadership



has often accused him of acting as an 'agent of the BJP', while the saffron party in the state looked upon him as an 'upholder of constitutional norms'.

On his part, Dhankhar has claimed he has gone by the rule book and the Constitution in pointing out issues to the Mamata Banerjee government and the state legislature. Acrimony between Dhankhar and the ruling party and its leader often led to messy situations with both levelling accusations at each other over issues ranging from post-poll violence in the state to delays in assent to bills passed in the House besides interference in the functioning of the civilian bureaucracy and state run universities.

Several districts in Bengal report cases of black fever

It was found that the disease was mostly prevalent in people who have spent a considerable amount of time in Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Some individuals from Bangladesh, too, have been showing symptoms of the fever



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 16: Eleven districts of Bengal have reported at least 65 cases of black fever or 'kala-azar' in the last couple of weeks, a senior official of the health department said, citing results of a state-administered surveillance.

The districts where maximum number of cases was registered include Darjeeling, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Kalimpong, he told PTI.

"Kala-azar was practically eradicated from West Bengal. A recent surveillance, however, led to the detection of 65 cases in 11 districts. Now that these cases have come to the fore, the state will be able to tackle the

spread of the disease," the official said. The districts of Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia, Murshidabad have also reported a few cases of black fever, mainly transmitted by bites of sandflies infected with the parasite 'leishmania donovani'. According to the official, no case has yet been detected in Kolkata.

"It was found that the disease was mostly prevalent in people who have spent a considerable amount of time in Bihar, Jharkhand and in Uttar Pradesh. Some individuals from Bangladesh, too, have been showing symptoms of kala-azar," the official said, adding, the sur-

veillance process will continue.

A top bureaucrat at the state secretariat said the government has taken the decision to treat all diagnosed with the disease "free of cost."

"Even if the infection is detected in a private laboratory or hospital, the doctor should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the district health officer. All expenses of treatment along with meals will be borne by the state health department. The district chief health officer will monitor the whole process," the bureaucrat told PTI.

MP likely to see 'Operation Lotus' redux during Prez poll

IT IS SUSPECTED THAT AT LEAST FIVE TO SIX CONGRESS MLAS, IF NOT MORE, MAY VOTE FOR THE NDA'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DROUPADI MURMU

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, July 16: After the BJP's 'Operation Lotus' toppled the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh in March 2020, the Opposition is now suspecting that the saffron party's operation may be visible here again during the Presidential elections.

If sources are to be believed, it is suspected that at least five to six Congress MLAs, if not more, may vote for the NDA's Presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu.

Sources in the Congress told IANS that two-three tribal leaders, who believe that they will not be getting tickets from the party in the 2023 assembly elections, may cross-vote for the NDA candidate Monday. However, some other sources claimed that there are five to six Congress MLAs who may cross-vote, including one from the Gwalior-Chambal division and a



non-tribal.

Sources said that though several Congress MLAs are in touch with the BJP, the saffron party is specifically targeting the stronghold areas of the Congress so far and therefore tribal leaders are its target.

The Congress, which claims to have revived in the municipal and district panchayat elections (though the results are yet to be announced) is worried that if the BJP's 'Operation Lotus' is again successful in Madhya Pradesh, it would

have a psychological effect on the party for the next assembly elections, which is scheduled in 2023.

Thursday, during the visit of joint opposition Presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha to Bhopal, 77 out of the 96 Congress MLAs attended the legislature party meeting. Clarifying on the absence of 19 MLAs from the meeting, state Congress spokesperson Abbas Hafeez said, "Those who couldn't attend the meeting had already told the party leadership about

their inability to attend the meet in view of the counting of votes in the local body polls in their districts."

However, a senior Congress MLA from the Malwa-Nimar region said that the party was aware that there were some black sheep, who may cross-vote for the NDA candidate July 18. "There were around 3-4 MLAs, particularly tribal MLAs from Dhar-Jhabua region who may vote in the name of respecting larger tribal sentiments," the MLA told IANS requesting not to be named.

"It is very clear that nearly half-a-dozen Congress MLAs are queuing up before senior BJP leaders, but the BJP is not in a hurry now, until the next assembly elections come near. Many of those who joined the BJP with Jyotiraditya Scindia, most probably will be given another chance. To fill that vacuum, the saffron party will target Congress leaders for the next assembly elections," said a senior journalist.

In March 2020, Madhya Pradesh had witnessed the BJP's 'Operation Lotus' like in Maharashtra recently. The then mass resignation of 22 MLAs had resulted in the toppling of Congress Chief Minister Kamal Nath, 15 months after he had come to power. Several Congress legislators resigned soon after senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia joined the BJP.

HIGH ACCIDENT RATE, NO EMERGENCY CARE

MP's healthcare reels from insufficient facilities

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ratlam, July 16: "June 10 was a dreadful day for us. My nephew, niece and daughter-in-law were injured in a bus accident at Dudh Talai, near Nipania village. We frantically dialled 108 for an ambulance, but none were available. Hours later, we finally managed to rent a private vehicle for Rs 5,000 and took them to Ratlam. But my niece Maya Bai (26) died due to excessive bleeding," says Badrilal, a resident of Palasia village, breaking down as he recounts his family's horrendous ordeal.

Abysmal health centres with inadequate testing facilities, shortage of medicines and non-existent ambulance services are the bane of many villages in the district of Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh.

The Lebad-Nayagaon four-lane national highway became an accident-prone zone due to heavy traffic density, since train connectivity in Indore, Ujjain, Ratlam, Jaora and other parts of northern Madhya Pradesh were affected due to the pandemic. There are three to four accidents on the highway weekly; yet, there's no arrangement to rush the injured to nearby Primary Health Centres (PHC). In most situations, they are referred to the district hospital.



Piling onto the misery of the accident victims is the near 15km to 50km distance between ambulance services and the healthcare centres. For instance, ambulances are 30km from the Kalukheda PHC, 25km from the Birmawal and Berda PHCs, and 35km from the Bajna Community Health Centre (CHC). Recently, Chief Medical and Health Officer of Ratlam Dr Prabhakar Nanaware wrote to the mission director of the National Health Mission in Bhopal to take some positive action.

The CHC in Kharwa Kalan village, built on an exorbitant budget, lacks even the most basic facilities. This centre is the only government hospital in the vicinity, and the people of 25 villages and dha-

nis depend on it for all their health needs. However, there's neither a doctor to take up the sanctioned post nor a competent testing facility here. Ironically, even though an ambulance was procured through the MLA fund, a driver and diesel fuel were denied due to lack of funds. There's no X-ray or ultrasound machine here either.

Kharwa Kalan, a shorter route to Indore and other cities, sees more than average traffic, resulting in more road accidents. The CHC, however, is only equipped to provide first-aid as there are no ICU wards for critically-ill patients. The hospital also has a solar panel worth around Rs40 lakh for electricity purposes, but it remains unused.

"A total of 26 ambulances are approved in Ratlam district. Of these, 11 vehicles are under 108 and 15 vehicles are under Janani Express. Now, 21 more ambulances have been demanded. For the ambulance bought from the MLA fund, a driver and diesel were not arranged due to lack of budget. We've instructed the transfer of seven such ambulances from 108 call centres to Kharwakalan," says Dr Nanaware.

There are two vacant posts for doctors, two for operators and sweepers, and one each for a pharmacist, pathologist and ward boy Birmawal. The medical officer here, Dr Rohan Kanthel, says that a letter had been written to the district headquarters regarding the shortage of medical staff and a budget for a driver and diesel for the ambulance. Six doctors were sanctioned, of whom three posts for a surgeon, gynaecologist and paediatrician are still vacant. There are three junior doctors, of whom two are on contract.

Many PHCs do not have sonography and diagnostic facilities, leaving women with no choice but to travel 10km to 50km to the district headquarters. Even for prenatal check-ups, patients are forced to travel back and forth to different health centres.

NOW, COMPLAINT AGAINST MAHUA FOR 'GOGOI' TWEET



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sivasagar, July 16: A complaint has been lodged with the police in Assam's Sivasagar district against Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra for her tweet which allegedly links the expression 'sexual harassment' with an Assamese surname.

A local organisation, Jatiya Sangrami Sena had filed the written complaint alleging that Moitra had insulted the entire Assamese community with her tweet and demanded an unconditional apology from her. Moitra had allegedly posted the tweet in reference to a list of unparliamentary words.

"My first of new twitter series on replacements for unparliamentary

words. Banned word- Sexual Harassment Replacement- Mr Gogoi," she allegedly wrote Thursday. This led to criticism, especially by netizens from Assam, who pointed that 'Gogoi' is a surname of a large section of Assamese people and the tweet was deemed by them as an insult to the entire community.

The TMC leader had Friday clarified that she was not implicating the Gogoi community. "Just for those Sanghis twisting tweet to say I targeted all Gogois, let me spell it out: Mister Ranjan Gogoi. Honourable MP, Rajya Sabha," she had posted on the micro blogging site.

A former staff of Supreme Court had in 2019 accused Gogoi, who was then the chief justice of the

country, of sexual harassment and the apex court took suo motu cognisance of the matter.

An in-house committee of three judges had later given a clean chit to Gogoi. The Jatiya Sangrami Sena has also threatened not to allow TMC to hold any meeting or rally in upper Assam if she failed to apologise for her comment.

A police official confirmed that a written complaint against Moitra, who had created an uproar with her Goddess Kali comment, had been received Friday but no FIR has been registered as yet. "A complaint has been filed at Sivasagar sadar police Station. We are examining it. No case has been registered yet," he said. The ruling BJP in Assam Saturday demanded an apology from Moitra for her Twitter post.

"The unparliamentary word used by Mahua Moitra is an insult to all the people of Assam. She must tender an apology for it," BJP state spokesperson Mominul Awal said in a statement in Guwahati. A complaint had been lodged July 6 by Bajrang Dal with the police at Hailakandi in Assam for Moitra's Kali comment in which she said she imagined the goddess as meat eating and alcohol accepting and that everyone has the right to worship a god and goddess in his or her own way.



Uttar Pradesh is in the grip of drought but the government is not paying attention
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

BAN WITHDRAWN

The ruling BJP in Karnataka Saturday withdrew ban on videography and photography inside government offices, after the order came under sharp criticism from various quarters



of the day quote

According to our internal survey, TRS will win over 90 seats (in the 119 member-House). It indicates the faith people reposed on TRS even after eight years of rule

K T RAMA RAO | TRS WORKING PRESIDENT

There is no concept of super CM in the present government. We have only one chief minister and that is Eknath Shinde. We are working under his leadership. But some people can't digest this. They should get used to be in the Opposition now

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

Parties engaged in politics of appeasement for votes have been trying to disturb the country's atmosphere in a bid to stymie the Modi government's development measures and undermine India's growing stature in the world

GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER

Monkeypox scare: TN steps up surveillance at Kerala borders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 16: After a Kerala native was diagnosed with monkeypox, the Tamil Nadu government has intensified surveillance at the borders adjoining the neighbouring state. Tamil Nadu health minister Ma Subramanian while speaking underlined: "We have intensified patrolling across the borders sharing with Kerala and in airports also as the first monkeypox case in the country is reported from Kerala.

The minister also said that the state public health department is conducting an awareness programme on monkeypox disease and how it spreads among people.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu health department said that the state government has already commenced monitoring the borders that are being shared with Kerala.

Police contingent along with health officials including doctors, nurses, and technicians are posted at the check posts on the Tamil Nadu side to monitor the presence of any patient with suspected monkeypox disease who is reaching Tamil Nadu.

The international passengers who are reaching airports in Tamil Nadu are also kept under surveillance as the Kerala man who contracted the disease had reached the state from a West Asian country. With monkeypox disease being present in several countries, the state health department is stepping up vigil in all the airports in the state.



Sources in the Tamil Nadu health department said that the state government has already commenced monitoring the borders that are being shared with Kerala. Police contingent along with health officials including doctors, nurses, and technicians are posted at the check posts on the Tamil Nadu side to monitor the presence of any patient with suspected monkeypox disease who is reaching Tamil Nadu

The international passengers who are reaching airports in Tamil Nadu are also kept under surveillance as the Kerala man who contracted the disease had reached the state from a West Asian country

The state health minister also said that the next mega Covid-19 vaccination camp would be conducted in the state on July 24. The state health department has commenced a mega booster vaccination drive from July 15th and will extend up to September 30 as part of the Azad Ki Amrit Mahotsav programme.

So far, the state has conducted 31 mega vaccine camps since September 12, 2021, and has administered 4.61 crores of Covid vaccine doses. However 4.71 crore people in the state are yet to take the first and second doses of the vaccine, a statement from the state health minister's office said.

With monkey pox being detected

in Kerala and a sizeable group of people yet to take Covid-19 vaccine, the health department is planning to increase the awareness of vaccine and tighten the Covid protocol situation in the state.

Sources in the state health department said that the health minister will be sending missives to all the district collectors to be strict on Covid protocol violations and to ensure that maximum people are participating in the next Covid-19 vaccine drives. The state health secretary has already sent directives to the district health officers to strictly monitor any symptoms of monkey pox disease in their respective districts and to live up to all the PHCs in the area.

MODI'S 'REVADI' JIBE DRAWS FLAK



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swipe at parties offering freebies for votes drew a sharp reaction Saturday from AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal who alleged that those dishing out loan waivers and work tenders to friends were the ones promoting the "revadi culture" and not those who were providing free healthcare, education and electricity.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also waded into the issue, saying the rulers doling out "revadis as a thank you" should instead provide jobs to the youths. At an event in Jalaun, Uttar Pradesh, the prime minister used 'revadi', a popular north Indian sweet often distributed during festivals, as a metaphor for freebies being promised by various parties to grab power and said the people, especially the youth should guard against this as it is dangerous for the development of the country. Hitting back, Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal, whose party has often promised a slew of freebies to woo voters, said his government's schemes for free edu-

cation, healthcare and electricity were not "freebies" but efforts to lay the foundation for making India the number one country in the world.

He said education and health services will be free for all in the country if, by God's will, he is in a position to do so. Without naming anyone, Kejriwal said, "I will tell you who is distributing 'revadis' and giving freebies. This waiving of friends' loans worth thousands of crores and getting contracts worth thousands of crores from foreign tours for friends are giving freebies."

The Congress and other opposition parties have been accusing the Modi government of favouring a few corporate, a charge rejected by the ruling dispensation. If incentives for the poor are 'revadi', then what will you call the loan waivers of lakhs and crores of rupees for the corporates, Bhartiya Tribal Party leader and Gujarat MLA Chhotubhai Vasava said on Twitter.

"Those in power, who run a thank you campaign by distributing 'revadis', if they provide jobs to the youths, then they can save from the blame-game. Is the word 'revadi' unparliamentary," Akhilesh Yadav said in a tweet in Hindi.

Modi, in his speech, said those indulging in "revadi culture" will never make new expressways, airports and defence corridors. "In our country today, attempts are being made to bring a culture of garnering votes by distributing 'revadis'. This 'revadi culture' is very dangerous for the development of the country. People of the country, especially the youth, need to guard against this culture," Modi said.

SHORT TAKES

Gandhi's statue vandalised

Bathinda: A statue of Mahatma Gandhi was vandalised by some unidentified people at a public park in Ramanandi here, police said Saturday. The incident took place on the intervening night between Thursday and Friday, they said. Locals strongly condemned the incident when they came to know about the vandalism. Station House Officer (Sadar) Harjot Singh Mann said they are investigating the matter.

Man kills youth

Bhopal: In a bizarre incident, a man allegedly hacked a youth to death at a temple in Madhya Pradesh as an offer to Goddess after his wife gave birth to a male child. The incident was reported in a village in Rewa district and the victim has been identified as a 19-year-old Divyansh Kol. As per police, chromatically, locals found a boy's body on the temple's floor with a deep cut on the neck on July 6 and informed the police.

Cop ends life

Chennai: After a policeman attached to the Coimbatore armed city force committed suicide, his friends and relatives blamed the online rummy game to which he was addicted to being the reason. Kalimuthu, 29, had borrowed more than ₹20 lakh from his known persons, including relatives and friends, and had been playing online rummy games in which he incurred in heavy losses and debts.

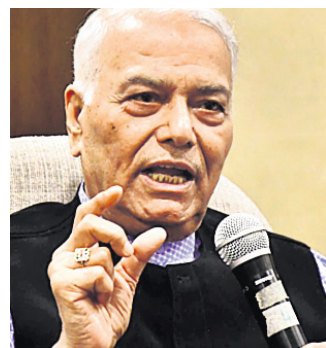
8 hurt in accident

Srinagar: Eight CRPF troopers were injured Saturday in a road accident in J&K's Pulwama district. Police sources said a CRPF vehicle collided with a truck on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway at Goripora (Awantipora) crossing in Pulwama district.

Fake notes seized

Motihari: Police Saturday claimed to have seized fake currency notes with a face value of ₹8 lakh and arrested four persons in this connection in East Champaran district of Bihar. The district police chief Kumar Ashish said that the fake currency racket was operated from a cyber cafe in Chhatauni police station area and the accused persons revealed during interrogation that they picked up the technique of printing the counterfeit notes from an online video sharing and social media platform.

Prez poll: AAP backs Yashwant



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The AAP will support joint opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha in the Presidential poll despite its respect for Droupadi Murmu, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said after a political advisory committee (PAC) meeting of the party Saturday.

Sinha is in the fray for the top constitutional post of the country with Droupadi Murmu, the candidate chosen by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.

"We respect Droupadi Murmu but the AAP will support opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha," Singh said. The decision was taken in the PAC meeting chaired by AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, ministers Gopal Rai

The AAP is the only non-BJP, non-Congress outfit that has governments in two states -- Delhi and Punjab. It has 10 Rajya Sabha MPs from the two states, including three from Delhi

and Imran Hussain, MP Singh, Punjab MP Raghav Chadha, MLA Atishi, and other members of the PAC were present in the meeting. Voting for the Presidential poll will take place Monday.

"The PAC unanimously decided that the AAP will support Yashwant Sinha. All AAP MLAs and MPs will vote for Sinha on July 18," Singh said. The AAP acknowledges and respects NDA nominee Droupadi Murmu's candidature in the Presidential elections but the PAC has deemed it fit to support the Opposition candidate, he said.

In 10.86 lakh-strong Electoral College, the AAP has votes with a total value of 21,308. The party has 10 MPs with a vote value of 7,000, 92 MLAs in Punjab with a vote value of 10,672, 62 MLAs in Delhi with a vote value of 3,596 and two MLAs in Goa with a vote value of 40.

MOCK DRILL



Security personnel during a simulated anti-terror response exercise carried out at Lahori Gate, ahead of the Independence Day 2022 in New Delhi. PTI PHOTO

UDAIPUR MURDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, July 16: A designated National Investigation Agency (NIA) court Saturday sent three Udaipur tailor murder case accused to judicial custody till August 1, according to a government lawyer.

3 accused sent to judicial custody

Riaz Akhtari, also known as Riyaz Attari, Ghouse Mohammad and Farhad Mohammad Sheikh were under NIA custody, and were produced in the court by a team of the anti-terror probe agency amid tight security.

"The court ordered to send them

to judicial custody till August 1," special public prosecutor T P Sharma said, adding the accused were being shifted to a high-security jail in Ajmer. The NIA has arrested a total of seven people so far over the gruesome murder four of whom - Mohsin, Asif, Mohammad Mohsin

and Wasim Ali - are already under judicial custody till August 1.

Kanhaiya Lal, a tailor, was killed by clever-wielding men -- Riaz Akhtari and Ghouse Mohammad - at his shop June 28 in Udaipur's Dhan Mandi police station area over a controversial post on social media.

'Efforts needed to get routine immunisation back to pre-Covid times'

Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand maintained high vaccination rates over 95 per cent DTP3 coverage throughout the pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The World Health Organization has called for greater efforts in the South-East Asia Region to revive routine immunization rates to pre-Covid times, stressing that despite concerted efforts by countries, challenges and gaps persist.

"Commendably the region has administered 3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to date, since January 2021 when the first dose of vaccine was administered in the South-East Asia Region. "As we focus on further scaling up COVID-19 vaccination coverage, we must also do all we can to ensure no child is deprived of life-saving vaccines offered under routine immuniza-

tion services," said Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director WHO South-East Asia.

Many countries have demonstrated that routine immunization can be maintained or scaled up along with COVID-19 vaccination, she said on a statement. "This speaks for a very committed health work force which has to manage both considerable challenges."

Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand maintained high vaccination rates over 95 per cent DTP3 coverage throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Bhutan witnessed a slight decline in 2020 but surpassed its pre-pandemic coverage of 97 per cent to record 98 per cent DTP3 coverage in 2021, it said.

Globally, DTP3 (third dose of



vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) in one-year old children, is a proxy indicator for immunization coverage, it said.

Nepal substantially revived routine immunization coverage for

DTP3 from 84 per cent in 2020 to 91 per cent in 2021. These six countries have also achieved high COVID-19 vaccination coverage, the WHO statement said.

Routine immunization cover-

age declines witnessed in 2020 in India and Timor-Leste seem to have stabilized in 2021 indicating programme recoveries as well, it said.

In 2021, India provided close to 2 billion doses of COVID-19 and other childhood vaccines taken together, over five times more vaccines administered in the country during the year than in 2020, the statement said.

All countries in the South-East Asia Region focused on routine immunization while prioritizing essential services during the pandemic and concerted efforts continue to be made to scale-up vaccination coverage, with a focus on identifying and vaccinating 'missed children', the

world health body said.

Efforts for measles and rubella elimination, a flagship priority in the Region, continued during the pandemic. Nepal substantially increased the coverage for second dose of measles and rubella vaccine from 76 per cent in 2019 to 87 per cent in 2021.

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka maintained their respective coverage rates throughout the pandemic, the statement said.

To revitalize routine immunization coverage following the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO convened a South-East Asia Regional Working Group on Immunization in March this year focusing on programme intensification, it said.

international



My views on Khashoggi have been absolutely, positively clear. And I have never been quiet about talking about human rights

JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

RUSSIA STOCKPILES WEAPONS IN N-PLANT

Russia has deployed multiple missile systems on the territory of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, as per Ukrainian officials, media reports said



of the day quote

There are no such words in normal human language that can describe the condition to which the Russian state has degraded. It is a double crime - to destroy pedagogical universities so that there won't be educational institutions and new educators cannot be trained. But let the terrorists not hope that it will give them anything

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | UKRAINE PRESIDENT

We assess an official Russian delegation recently received a showcase of Iranian attack-capable UAVs. We are releasing these images captured in June showing Iranian UAVs that the Russian government delegation saw that day

JAKE SULLIVAN | WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

If customers do need to travel, they should check before they travel as we are expecting there to be some impact to Tube and rail services as a result of temporary speed restrictions we will need to introduce to keep everyone safe

ANDY LORD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SHORT TAKES

14 marines killed in helicopter crash

Mexico City: At least 14 Mexican marines were killed when their helicopter crashed during the arrest and transport of a drug lord in northern Mexico, the Mexican Navy said. The Black Hawk helicopter, owned by the Navy, was escorting another aircraft carrying Rafael Caro Quintero, founder of the Guadalajara Cartel, who was arrested earlier in the day in the northern state of Sinaloa. One person survived the crash that occurred Friday, the cause of which has yet to be determined. Xinhua news agency said quoting the Navy.

Rockets fired into Israel

Jerusalem: Palestinian militants fired four rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory early Saturday. There were no casualties or damage as a result of the attacks. Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) responded with an airstrike against targets in Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported. According to a statement released by the Israeli military, it's retaliatory airstrikes targeted "Hamas weapons manufacturing sites."

31 killed in tribal clashes

Cairo: At least 31 people were killed in tribal clashes that fired up again on Saturday in a Sudanese southern province, authorities said, the latest bloodshed in a country in turmoil since an October military coup. The fighting between the Hausa and Birta ethnic groups in the Blue Nile province grew out of the killing of a farmer earlier this week, according to a statement from the local government late Friday.

Saudi, Iraq to boost ties

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia and Iraq have signed an electric power grids deal to boost economic cooperation. The deal was signed between Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud and Iraqi Oil Minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar Friday, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Abdulaziz said that apart from enhancing bilateral economic ties, the signing of the deal will help establish Saudi Arabia as a regional hub for electric power grids and attract investment in the country's electricity generation projects.

Russia steps up attacks across Ukraine

AGENCIES

Kramatorsk (Ukraine), July 16: Ukrainian authorities across the country reported new Russian missile strikes and shelling Saturday that killed at least 16 more civilians, deaths that came after Russia's top military announced it was stepping up its onslaught against its neighbour.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Saturday that Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu gave "instructions to units in all operational areas, in order to exclude the possibility of the Kyiv regime launching massive rocket and artillery strikes on civilian infrastructure and residents of settlements in Donbas and other regions". The new Russian attacks hit areas in the north, the east and the south of Ukraine.

Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, has seen especially severe bombardments in recent days, with Ukrainian officials and local commanders voicing fears that a second full-scale Russian assault on the



Smoke rises after a missile strike, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Kyiv, Ukraine

- Russia says stepping up operations to protect captured territory
- Southern city latest target of long-range bombardment
- Around 40 killed in bombardments since Thursday, says Ukraine
- War overshadows G20 meet, no communique agreed

northern city may be looming.

At least three civilians were killed and three more were injured Saturday in a pre-dawn Russian rocket strike on the northern Ukrainian city of Chuhui, which is close to Kharkiv and only 120 kilometers from the Russian border, a regional police chief said.

Serhiy Bolvinov, the deputy head of Kharkiv's regional police force, said the rockets partly destroyed a two-story apartment building. "Four Russian rockets, presumably fired from around (the Russian

city of) Belgorod at night, at about 3.30 am, hit a residential building, a school and administrative buildings," Bolvinov wrote on Facebook.

"The bodies of three people were found under the rubble. Three more were injured. The victims are civilians," Bolvinov added.

In the neighbouring Sumy region, one civilian was killed and at least seven more were injured after Russians opened mortar and artillery fire on three towns and villages not far from the Russian border, regional governor Dmytro

Zhyvitsky said Saturday on Telegram.

In the embattled eastern Donetsk region, seven civilians were killed and 14 wounded in the last 24 hours in attacks on cities, its governor said Saturday morning.

Nearby, however, Ukrainian troops repelled a Russian overnight assault on a strategic eastern highway, said Serhiy Haidai, the governor of the Luhansk region. Haidai said Russia had been attempting to capture the main road link between the cities of Lysychansk and Bakhmut "for more than two months".

In Ukraine's south, two people were wounded by Russian shelling in the town of Bashtanka, north-east of the Black Sea city of Mykolaiv, according to the regional governor, Vitaliy Kim.

Kim said Mykolaiv itself also came under renewed Russian fire before dawn. On Friday, he had posted videos of what he said was a Russian missile attack on the city's two largest universities and denounced Russia as "a terrorist state".

Jan. 6 Capitol riot panel subpoenas Secret Service for erased texts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, July 16: The House committee investigating the Capitol riot has subpoenaed the Secret Service for text messages agents reportedly deleted around Jan. 6, 2021, as the panel probes Donald Trump's actions at the time of the deadly siege.

The committee chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said the committee understands the messages had been "erased." Thompson outlined an aggressive timeline for production of the documents by Tuesday.

The Secret Service said the committee "has had our full and unwavering cooperation" since beginning its work and "that does not change," according to a statement from agency spokesman Anthony Guglielmi. He added: "We plan to continue that cooperation by responding swiftly to the Committee's subpoena."

The subpoenas come hours after the nine-member panel received a closed briefing from the watchdog for Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Secret Service. Lawmakers were briefed about his finding that the Secret Service deleted texts from around Jan. 6, according to two people familiar with the matter. That finding raised the startling prospect of lost evidence that could shed further light on then-President Donald Trump's actions during the insurrection, particularly after earlier testimony about his confrontation with security as he tried to join supporters at the Capitol.

The private briefing with the inspector general, Joseph Cuffari, came two days after his office sent a letter to leaders of the House and Senate Homeland Security committees stating that Secret Service agents erased messages between Jan. 5 and Jan. 6, 2021 "as part of a device-replacement program."



A helicopter launches water as a wildfire advances near a residential area in Alhaurin de la Torre, Malaga, Spain. Wildfires continue to spread across Spain as firefighters work to bring them under control

FIGHTING FIRE

PTI PHOTO

US 'will not walk away' from Middle East: Biden



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), July 16: President Joe Biden, speaking at a summit of Arab leaders, said Saturday that the United States "will not walk away" from the Middle East as he tries to ensure stability in a volatile corner of the globe and boost the worldwide flow of oil to reverse rising gas prices. His remarks, delivered at the Gulf Cooperation Council on the final leg of a four-day Middle East tour, came amid concerns about

Iran's nuclear ambitions and support for militants in the region.

"We will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia or Iran," Biden said. "We will seek to build on this moment with active, principled, American leadership." Although US forces continue to target terrorists in the region and remain deployed at bases throughout the Middle East, Biden suggested he was turning a page after the country's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Today, I'm proud to be able to say that the era of land wars in the region, wars that involved huge numbers of American forces, is not under way," he said. He announced \$1 billion in US aid to alleviate hunger in the region, and he pressed his counterparts, many of which lead repressive governments, to ensure human rights, including women's rights, and allow their citizens to speak openly.

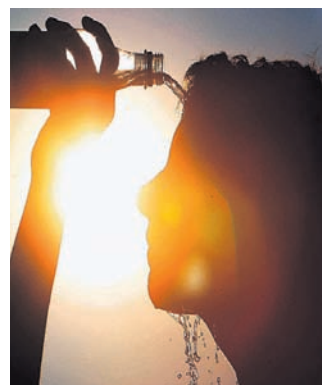
England braces for 40°C

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 16: The British government was holding an emergency response meeting Saturday to plan for record high temperatures next week after weather authorities issued their first-ever "red" warning for extreme heat.

The alert covers large parts of England Monday and Tuesday, when temperatures may reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) for the first time, posing a risk of serious illness and even death among healthy people, the UK met Office, the country's weather service, said Friday. The British heat record is 38.7C (101.7F), set in 2019.

Rail passengers and users of the London Underground subway system were being advised not to travel Monday and Tuesday unless it's absolutely necessary. With children and older people considered particularly vulnerable to high



temperatures, schools and nursing homes have been urged to take steps to protect students and older residents. Most schools in England are still in session until the end of next week. "If customers do need to travel, they should check before they travel, as we are expecting there to be some impact to Tube and rail services as a result of temporary speed restrictions we will need

to introduce to keep everyone safe," said Andy Lord, the chief operating officer of Transport for London, which runs the capital's transportation system. The alert comes as scientists say climate change is increasing the likelihood of exceptional heat waves in Britain, a country unaccustomed to such temperatures. Few homes, apartments, schools or small businesses in the country have air conditioning.

Britain usually has moderate summer temperatures. Across the UK, average July temperatures range from a daily high of 21 C (70 F) to a low of 12 C (53 F). London Mayor Sadiq Khan met with representatives of the National Health Service, police, fire and other emergency services Friday to ensure that plans were in place to deal with the heat emergency.

One doctor warned that the upcoming heat wave and a surge in Covid-19 infections were causing a nightmare for health workers.

G20 finance meetings overshadowed by war in Ukraine

As G-20 host this year, Indonesia has sought to bridge divisions between G-20 members over Russia's invasion, but enmity over the conflict was evident even as the finance ministers and central bank chiefs concurred on other global challenges that have been worsened by the war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, July 16: Financial leaders of the Group of 20 richest and biggest economies agreed at meetings on the Indonesian resort island of Bali this week on the

need to jointly tackle global ills such as inflation and food crises, but failed to bridge differences over the war in Ukraine.

All involved agreed the meeting took place "under a very challenging and difficult situation because of the geopolitical tensions," Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Muliyani Indrawati said Saturday. She said delegates had "expressed sympathy that Indonesia has to manage this situation." Indrawati and Indonesian central bank Gov. Perry Warjiyo said Indonesia would later release a G-20 chair's statement that would include two paragraphs describing areas where the participants failed to agree.

There were still issues that could not be reconciled, "because they want to express their views related to the war," Indrawati said. In the statement "related to the war there are still views that are different



US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, right, talks with South African Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana during their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, Saturday

AP PHOTO

within the G-20," she said.

Indrawati outlined a range of areas where the members did agree, including the need to improve food security, to support the creation of a funding mechanism for pandemic preparedness, prevention and responses, on working toward

a global tax agreement and on facilitating financing of transitions toward cleaner energy to cope with climate change. "The progress is more than expected," Warjiyo said.

With inflation running at four-decade highs — US consumer prices were up 9.1% in June — Warjiyo said

participants were "strongly committed to achieving price stability" "There is a commitment among the G-20 to well calibrated macro economic policy to address inflation and slowing growth," he said.

The meetings in Bali follow a gathering of G-20 foreign ministers earlier this month that also failed to find common ground over Russia's war in Ukraine and its global impacts.

During the talks that began Friday, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen condemned Moscow for "innocent lives lost and the ongoing human and economic toll that the war is causing around the world."

"Russia is solely responsible for negative spillovers to the global economy, particularly higher commodity prices," she said. Canadian Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland likened the attendance of Russian

officials at the meetings to having "an arsonist joining firefighters." War is waged by economic technocrats, as well as generals, she said in a post on Twitter.

Russian officials reportedly blamed Western sanctions over the war for worsening inflation and food crises. Indrawati said the closed-door G-20 talks did not include discussion of proposals for a price cap on Russian oil — one of Yellen's key objectives as the U.S. And allies seek to curb Moscow's ability to finance its war.

Such discussions would have occurred on the sidelines of the meeting, she said. The Bali talks saw more progress than an earlier G-20 finance meeting in Washington in April, when officials from the US, Britain, France, Canada and Ukraine walked out to protest the attendance of Russian envoys.

of the day quote

The market power on digital advertising that is currently being exercised by the Big Tech majors, which places Indian media companies at a position of disadvantage, is an issue that is seriously being examined in the context of new legalisations and rules

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MINISTER OF STATE FOR IT AND ELECTRONICS

Every percentage decline in rupee value impacts mobile phone supply chain by 0.6 per cent because of imports of components. The 5 per cent decline has an impact of 3 per cent on overall profitability, therefore, prices have to go up

PANKAJ MOHINDROO | CHAIRMAN, ICEA

We started selling Portl from March and recorded 60 per cent month-on-month growth. Our aim is to sell around 5,000 units this fiscal

INDRANEEL GUPTA | CO-FOUNDER, PORTL

SHORT TAKES

VIL okays ₹436cr equity to Voda

New Delhi: Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea's shareholders have approved equity allocation worth ₹436.21 crore to its promoter entity, the Vodafone Group. As per voting results submitted to the stock exchanges on Friday evening, 99.94 per cent of Vodafone Idea (VIL) shareholders approved allocation of the equity to Vodafone Group firm Euro Pacific Securities. Vodafone Group at present holds 58.46 per cent stake in the company and Aditya Birla Group 16.53 per cent. The company had raised ₹3,375 crore from Vodafone Group and ₹1,125 crore from Aditya Birla Group in March.

ICICI Pru posts ₹156cr profit

Mumbai: ICICI Prudential Life Saturday reported ₹156 crore net profit in the April-June quarter of this financial year amid a moderating trend in the pandemic-related claims and provisions. The company had reported a net loss of ₹186 crore in the year-ago quarter. Assets under management grew 3.1 per cent to ₹2,30,072 crore. The persistency ratios, which is a measure of customer trust and the quality of its business, have improved across all cohorts and the key 13th month ratio stood at 85.5 per cent, a company statement said.

Bol plans to raise ₹2,500cr capital

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India Saturday said its shareholders have approved a proposal to raise up to ₹2,500 crore fresh equity capital by various modes. The decision was taken at the bank's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on July 15, Bank of India said in a release. The bank said the shareholders approved the agenda to raise fresh equity capital up to an amount of ₹2,500 crore including share premium, by way of public issue or right issue or preferential issue or QIP or private placement. The meeting also took the agendas to approve and adopt the audited accounts for the period ended 31st March 2022 and to declare dividend for the Financial Year 2021-22 at ₹2 (20 per cent) per share. All the three agenda items were passed with requisite majority, the bank said.



I complete my 5-year term as MD and CEO of NSE today. I have done my best to lead the organization in a very difficult period and to stabilize, strengthen and transform NSE

VIKRAM LIMAYE | OUTGOING MD & CEO, NSE

ELON MUSK VS TWITTER

Elon Musk filed a motion opposing Twitter Inc's request to fast-track a trial over his plan to terminate his \$44 billion deal for the social media firm. Musk's lawyers, in papers filed with the Delaware Chancery Court, said Twitter's "unjustifiable request" to rush the merger case to trial in two months should be rejected

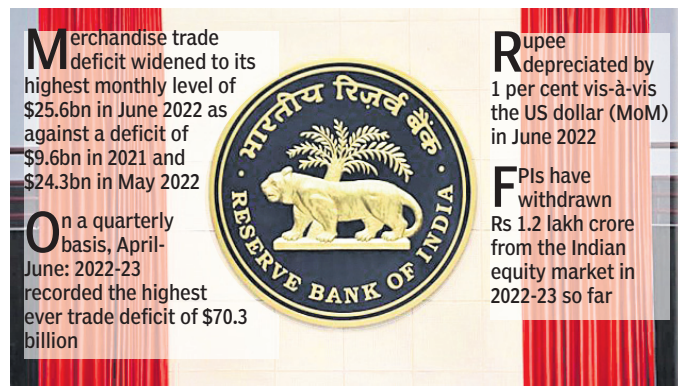


'Monitoring trade deficit, FPI outflows warranted'

INDIAN ECONOMY REMAINS RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL HEADWINDS, THE RBI ARTICLE SAID, BUT ADDED "KNOCK-ON EFFECTS OF GLOBAL SPILLOVERS ARE VISIBLE IN SEVERAL SECTORS, TAPERING PACE OF RECOVERY"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 16: Amid hostile international environment, close and continuous monitoring of the widening trade deficit and portfolio outflows is warranted, strong reserve buffers notwithstanding, an RBI article has stated. The article, authored by a team



led by Deputy Governor MD Patra, however, took comfort from the fact that recent moderation in commodity prices and easing of supply chain pressures would help the nation in escaping the global inflation trap.

The international environment "is hostile and hence, close and continuous monitoring of the widening trade deficit and portfolio outflows is warranted, notwith-

standing strong reserve buffers, moderating external debt and a fairly valued exchange rate that has wilted less in the face of the monotonic strengthening of the US dollar than many peers", the article on state of the economy published in the RBI Bulletin for July said. "In spite of this overwhelming shock, there are sparks in the wind that ignite the innate strength of the economy and set it on course

RBI, Bank Indonesia to expand ties in payment systems

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India and Bank Indonesia Saturday entered into an agreement to expand cooperation in payment systems, digital financial innovation, and anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML-CFT). The two central banks signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Bali on the sidelines of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting to improve mutual cooperation. "With this MoU, RBI and BI committed to deepen relations between both central banks and strengthen the exchange of information and cooperation in the area of central banking, including payment systems, digital innovation in payments services, and regulatory and supervisory framework for AML-CFT," the RBI said in a statement. The MoU will be implemented through policy dialogue, technical cooperation, exchange of information and joint work. It was signed by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra and BI Deputy Governor Dody Budi Waluyo in the presence of RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and BI Governor Perry Warjiyo. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das noted that "this MoU is a step forward in putting our joint efforts within a formal mechanism." The RBI further said the MoU will also provide a good basis for promoting mutual understanding, developing efficient payment systems and achieving cross-border payment connectivity.

HDFC posts 21% jump in Q1 net profit at ₹9,579cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 16: Largest private sector lender HDFC Bank Saturday reported a 20.91 per cent jump in its June quarter net profit at ₹9,579.11 crore on the back of overall growth.

On a standalone basis, its net profit increased to ₹9,195.99 crore from ₹7,729.64 crore in the year-ago period, but was down from ₹10,055.18 crore in the preceding March quarter.

The core net interest income grew 14.5 per cent to ₹19,481.4 crore from the year-ago quarter's ₹17,009 crore on the back of a 22.5 per cent growth in advances. The core net interest margin (NIM) stood at 4 per cent.

Other income, excluding trading and mark to market losses, jumped 35 per cent to ₹7,699.99 crore on the back of an increase in fees and commissions, foreign exchange derivatives revenue and miscellaneous income which included recoveries and dividend, the bank said.

Amid the hardening of yields which is widely expected to lead to reverses for banks' treasury operations, the lender reported a loss of ₹1,311.7 crore on sale or revaluation of investments as against a profit of ₹601 crore reported in the quarter ended June 2021.

Deposit growth came in at 19.2 per cent, the bank said, adding that it added 2.6 million liability relationships during the quarter.

INT'L CRUDE RATES SLIDE JET FUEL PRICE CUT BY 2.2%

ATF PRICES WERE HIKEED BY THE STEEPEST EVER 16 PER CENT TO CATAPULT RATES TO AN ALL-TIME LAST MONTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Jet fuel (ATF) prices Saturday were reduced by 2.2 per cent, reflecting a fall in international oil prices.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were cut by ₹3,084.94 per kilolitre, or 2.2 per cent, to ₹138,147.93 per kl, a price notification of state-run fuel retailers showed.

This is only the second reduction in rates this year: Prices had peaked to ₹141,232.87 per kl (Rs 141.23 per litre) last month. ATF prices are revised on the 1st and 16th of every month based on rates of benchmark international oil rates in the previous fortnight. There was no change in rates July 1.

International oil prices have softened since on fears of recession in major economies. Oil prices are at pre-Ukraine war levels.

On June 16, the price of ATF - the fuel that helps aeroplanes fly - was increased by ₹19,757.13 per kl. That followed a marginal 1.3 per cent (₹1,563.97 per kl) cut in rate June



THIS IS ONLY THE SECOND REDUCTION IN RATES IN 2022

RATES HAVE BEEN RAISED 11 TIMES SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR

PRICES ALMOST DOUBLED IN SIX MONTHS

SURGE HAD RESULTED IN A RISE IN THE COST OF FLYING

1. But for the one-off decrease June 1, ATF prices have been on the rise throughout 2022. In all, rates have been increased 11 times since the start of the year. This has led to rates almost doubling in six months. Prior to the cut Saturday, prices had gone up by 91 per cent (Rs 67,210.46 per kl) since January 1. With jet fuel making up almost

40 per cent of the operating cost of an airline, the increase in prices had resulted in a rise in the cost of flying. Now there has been a marginal relief. Meanwhile, petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged at ₹96.72 per litre and ₹89.62 a litre, respectively.

An excise duty cut by the government had helped reduce the price of petrol by ₹8.69 a litre and diesel by ₹7.05 per litre May 22. But for that, the base price has remained unchanged since April 6.

Before that, prices had risen by a record ₹10 per litre each. The retail prices of petrol, diesel and domestic cooking gas are way below the cost. Petrol and diesel rates are revised daily, based on equivalent rates in the international market.

TTK Prestige partners with Ultrafresh Modular Solutions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 16: TTK Prestige, India's leading kitchen appliances company, announced the progress on a strategic investment and business collaboration deal with Ultrafresh, an end-to-end modular kitchen solutions provider. TTK Prestige has acquired a strategic stake of over 40 per cent in the equity of Ultrafresh to forge a business collaboration between the two companies. The initiative ties-in with TTK Prestige's overall goal of becoming a total kitchen solutions brand.

At a press conference held in Bangalore, the company revealed that the business is well on its way to achieving double-digit growth, having made inroads through innovative products in multiple categories such as cookers, cookware, gas stoves and appliances.

As a leader in the kitchen appliances space, making an entry into the ₹9500 crore modular

kitchen industry is a natural extension for TTK Prestige as a brand. This is a significant move, as it makes TTK Prestige a unique player equipped to offer kitchen appliances and modular kitchens all under one roof. It is estimated that the Indian modular kitchen market will grow at a CAGR of 20 per cent during 2021-2026 and will hit ₹23000 crores in the next 5 years.

As part of the business collaboration, Ultrafresh Modular Solutions has opened their first experience centre in Koramangala, Bangalore. With multiple designs of kitchens on display at the 2700 sq feet store, customers can get a first-hand glimpse and choose from the vast array of modular kitchens to suit their unique requirements. Ultrafresh pioneered steel kitchens in India and screwless cabinets. Currently, the brand has 120 studios and they have manufactured 5000 kitchens across the country.



After Lanka, dozen other nations facing economic fallout

REUTERS

Washington, July 16: Traditional debt crisis signs of crashing currencies, 1,000 basis point bond spreads and burned FX reserves point to a record number of developing nations now in trouble.

Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Russia, Suriname and Zambia are already in default, Belarus is on the brink and at least another dozen are in the danger zone as rising borrowing costs, inflation and debt all stoke fears of economic collapse.

Totting up the cost is eye-watering. Using 1,000 basis point bond spreads as a pain threshold, analysts calculate \$400 billion of debt is in play. Argentina has by far the most at over \$150 billion, while the next in line are Ecuador and Egypt with \$40 billion-\$45 billion.

Crisis veterans hope many can still dodge default, especially if global markets calm and the IMF rows in with support, but these

are the countries at risk.

Argentina

The sovereign default world record holder looks likely to add to its tally. The peso now trades at a near 50% discount in the black market, reserves are critically low and bonds trade at just 20 cents in the dollar - less than half of what they were after the country's 2020 debt restructuring.

Ukraine

Russia's invasion means Ukraine will almost certainly have to restructure its \$20 billion plus of debt, heavyweight investors such as Morgan Stanley and Amundi warn. The crunch comes in September when \$1.2 billion of bond payments are due. Aid money and reserves mean Kyiv could potentially pay. But with state-run Naftogaz this week asking for a two-year debt freeze, investors suspect the government will follow suit.

Pakistan

Pakistan struck a crucial IMF deal this week. The breakthrough



could not be more timely, with high energy import prices pushing the country to the brink of a balance of payments crisis. Foreign currency reserves have fallen to as low as \$9.8 billion, hardly enough for five weeks of imports. The Pakistani rupee has weakened to record lows.

Tunisia

A near 10% budget deficit, one of the highest public sector wage bills in the world and there are concerns that securing, or at least sticking to, an IMF programme

may be tough due to President Kais Saied's push to strengthen his grip on power and the country's powerful, incalculable labour union.

Ghana

Furious borrowing has seen Ghana's debt-to-GDP ratio soar to almost 85%. Its currency, the cedi, has lost nearly a quarter of its value this year and it was already spending over half of tax revenues on debt interest payments. Inflation is also getting close to 30 per cent.

Egypt

Egypt has a near 95 per cent

debt-to-GDP ratio and has seen one of the biggest exoduses of international cash this year - some \$11 billion according to JPMorgan. Fund firm FIM Partners estimates Egypt has \$100 billion of hard currency debt to pay over the next five years, including a meaty \$3.3 billion bond in 2024.

Kenya

Kenya spends roughly 30 per cent of revenues on interest payments. Its bonds have lost almost half their value and it currently has no access to capital markets - a problem with a \$2 billion dollar bond coming due in 2024.

Ethiopia

Addis Ababa plans to be one of the first countries to get debt relief under the G20 Common Framework programme. Progress has been held up by the country's ongoing civil war though in the meantime it continues to service its sole \$1 billion international bond.

El Salvador

Making bitcoin legal tender all

but closed the door to IMF hopes. Trust has fallen to the point where an \$800 million bond maturing in six months trades at a 30% discount and longer-term ones at a 70 per cent discount.

Belarus

Western sanctions wrestled Russia into default last month and Belarus now facing the same tough treatment having stood with Moscow in the Ukraine campaign.

Ecuador

The Latin American country only defaulted two years ago but it has been rocked back into crisis by violent protests and an attempt to oust President Guillermo Lasso.

Nigeria

Bond spreads are just over 1,000 bps but Nigeria's next \$500 million bond payment in a year's time should easily be covered by reserves which have been steadily improving since June. It does though spend almost 30% of government revenues paying interest on its debt.

SINDHU SAILS INTO SINGAPORE FINAL



Sindhu beats Kawakami
21-15 21-7

The 27-year-old from Hyderabad, who has also claimed a bronze at the Asian Championships this year, is now one win away from her maiden Super 500 title of the 2022 season

Singapore, July 16: Indian shuttler PV Sindhu stormed into the Singapore Open title clash with a commanding win over lower-ranked Japanese Saena Kawakami in the women's singles semi-final, here Saturday.

Sindhu, a double Olympic medalist, who had claimed two Super 300 titles at Syed Modi International and Swiss Open this year, prevailed 21-15 21-7 over world number 38 Kawakami in a 32-minute last-four clash.

In the finals, the third seeded Indian will face China's 22-year-old Wang Zhi Yi, the reigning Asian Championships gold medalist, who was also part of the Uber Cup

team, which won the silver at Bangkok this year. Wang beat Japan's Ohori Aya 21-14 21-14.

Sindhu had defeated world number 11 Wang in their only meeting at the All England Championships this year. A two-time World Junior Champion and a Youth Olympics silver medalist, Wang had also reached the finals of Indonesia Open Super 1000 in June.

Sindhu came into the match with a 2-0 head-to-head record, having played her last at the 2018 China Open. Kawakami had received a walk-over from top-seed Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the second round.

A former world number 15, Kawakami, winner of the 2019

Orleans Masters and a finalist at Swiss Open the same year, was a part of the Japanese women's team that won the bronze medal in May this year. The Japanese had played just three events last year and it was her fifth tournament in 2022.

Sindhu, a former world champion, looked in complete command against Kawakami, who just couldn't control the shuttle and was buried in a heap of errors during the lop-sided match. Early on, Sindhu started with her whipping smashes but the drift inside the hall, made decision making difficult and also at times, the precision was lacking. But the power in her stroke-play helped the Indian moved to a healthy three-point lead at the break.

The 24-year-old Japanese, however, started putting the shuttle in from difficult positions to draw parity. The match came alive with both fighting for each point.

Sindhu also won two video referrals, punished a weak high lift and also made good calls at the baseline to move to 18-14. A power-packed smash and then two unforced errors by Kawakami helped Sindhu seal the opening game comfortably. Kawakami's struggles continued in the second game as she failed to control the shuttle and conceded a 0-5 early lead to her fancied rival.

Sindhu just had to keep engaging her rival in the rallies and patiently wait for her mistakes. A

frustrated Kawakami just could wryly smile as Sindhu first grabbed a 11-4 lead at the mid-game interval and then zoomed to 17-5 in a jiffy.

The Japanese had no answer to Sindhu's attacking forehand returns and deft backhand flicks which opened up a decisive 19-6 lead for her.

Sindhu sent one long but next unleashed a whipping smash from the baseline which her opponent could only sent to the net. When Kawakami's return finally went out again, Sindhu pumped her fist to announce her entry into the finals.

The two-time Commonwealth Games medalist, will lead the Indian charge at the quadrennial event in Birmingham starting July 28.

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Long-jumper Murali 1st man to enter finals

Anju Bobby George was the first Indian to make it to the World Championships long jump finals and first to win a medal – bronze in 2003 edition in Paris

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eugene (USA), July 16: Murali Sreeshankar became the first Indian male long jumper to qualify for World Athletics Championships finals while 3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable also expectedly made the grade on the first day of the competitions here.

Sreeshankar, who had entered the championships as a dark horse for a medal at second spot in the season's top list, had a best jump of exactly 8m, which he did in his second attempt, to finish second in qualification round Group B and seventh overall.

Two other Indians in the fray, Jeswin Aldrin, who was cleared for the championships despite failing to impress the national selectors in two rounds of trials, and Muhammed Anees Yahiya could not make it to the finals after finishing ninth and 11th in Group A qualification round with best jumps

TOOR PULLS OUT

Asian record holder shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, however, pulled out of his event due to a groin injury sustained four days ago after reaching USA. He tried a couple of practice throws before the event but decided to skip the event as the pain did not subside. "I had this groin injury four days back after reaching Chula Vista (USA). I had a couple of warm-up throws to see if the pain is still there. I still felt the pain while throwing, so I decided to pull out of the event," Toor, who has 'No Mark (NM)' against his name, told PTI.

of 7.79m and 7.73m respectively. Those who achieved 8.15m or the 12 best performers from across the two groups qualify for the finals to be held on Sunday (6:50am IST).

The 23-year-old Sreeshankar has been a consistent performer with his 8.36m jump at the Federation Cup in April, followed by 8.31m and 8.23m at an event in Greece and National Inter-State Championships respectively.

Only Japan's Yuki Hashioka (8.18m) and Marquis Dendy (8.16m) of USA crossed the 8.15m mark during the qualification round of two groups. The 27-year-old Sable, who had also qualified for the 3000m steeplechase final during 2019 edition in Doha, finished third in heat number 3 clocking 8:18.75 to qualify for the finals to be held Monday.



IOA announces 322-member strong contingent for CWG

New Delhi, July 16: The Indian Olympic Association Saturday announced a 322-strong contingent including 215 athletes and 107 officials and support staff for the upcoming Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

The Games are scheduled to be held in British city from July 28 to August 8, and the India contingent will look to improve upon its Gold Coast 2018 CWG performance, where it finished third behind traditional powerhouses Australia and England.

Sharing his thoughts, IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta said, "We are sending one of our strongest squads ever to the CWG and even with a strength sport for us like shooting not being there, we are confident of bettering our performance from the last edition."

Some prominent names in the squad include Olympic medalists Neeraj Chopra, PV Sindhu, Mirabai Chanu, Lovlina Borgohain, Bajrang Punia and Ravi Kumar Dahiya.

Defending CWG champions Manika Batra, Vinesh Phogat as well as 2018 Asian Games gold medalists Tajinderpal Singh Toor, Hima Das and Amit Panghal are also part of the contingent.

Shooting WC: Tomar bags gold

This was Tomar's second Shooting World Cup gold, having won his first in New Delhi last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Changwon, July 16: India's Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar clinched the gold medal in the 50m rifle 3 positions event at the ISSF Shooting World Cup here Saturday.

The 21-year-old Indian stamped his class and got the better of 2018 Youth Olympics champion Zalan Peklar of Hungary 16-12 to claim the top prize.

Reigning junior world champion Tomar had earlier topped the qualification round with a score of 593.

The Madhya Pradesh shooter's gold was India's fourth in the ongoing competition. India consolidated its position as the leader in the medal tally with a total of nine medals (four gold, four silver and one bronze).

Though Peklar gave a tough challenge in the final, Tomar kept his cool and brought out the big shots from his repertoire to keep himself ahead in the final moments.

The seasoned Istvan, also from Hungary, bagged the bronze in the event.

In the ranking round, Tomar had shot perfect scores in the first



two kneeling and prone positions but had lost all of his seven points in the final standing position.

Another Indian in the fray, Chain Singh finished seventh in the final event.

Earlier in the day, India missed out on a medal as 2019 World Cup champion Manu Bhakar suffered a heart-breaking loss to finish fourth in the women's 25m Pistol final event.

After doing well in ranking matches that saw her perform way better than the eventual gold winner Xiu Hong Teh of Singapore, Manu was eliminated with just nine hits to her name in the final.

2018 Changwon World Cup silver medalist and seasoned Anjum Moudgil has qualified for the finals of the women's 50m rifle 3 positions to be held Sunday after finishing sixth in the ranking round.

PRAGGNANANDHAA WINS PARACIN OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paracin (Serbia), July 16: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa won the Paracin Open 'A' chess tournament 2022 here Saturday, scoring 8 points from nine rounds.

The 16-year-old remained unbeaten and finished half a point ahead of the field. Alexandr Predke took the second spot with 7.5 points ahead of Alisher Suleymenov and India's AL Muthaiah, who both scored 7 points. Suleymenov grabbed the third place on the basis of a better tie-break score.

Young Indian International Master V Pranav ended up with 6.5 points after a defeat at the hands of Predke in the final round. Indian GM Arjun Kalyan (6.5 points) set

led for seventh place.

The young GM Praggnanandhaa was in superb form, winning his first six games before Predke held on for a draw in round seven. He subsequently beat compatriot and fellow GM Arjun Kalyan in the eighth round before signing off with a draw against Alisher Suleymenov (Kazakhstan) in the ninth and final round.

He also recorded wins over fellow Indian WGM Srija Seshadri, Lachezar Yordanov (Bulgaria), Kazybek Nogerbek (Kazakhstan), compatriot Koustav Chatterjee, Arystanbek Urazayev (Kazakhstan).

Starting as the second-seed in the tournament behind Predke, Praggnanandhaa was in red-hot form and left the field behind to end half a point ahead of a strong field.



The teenage prodigy will be part of a strong India 'B' team in the 44th Chess Olympiad to be held from July 28

KOHLI'S RUN DROUGHT

Still a lot of cricket left in Virat: Kapil

Talismanic India batter Virat Kohli is undoubtedly going through one of the most difficult times of his cricketing career at the moment. Since November 2019, Kohli has been in a prolonged lean patch and hasn't registered a century in international cricket

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: Since November 2019, Virat Kohli hasn't scored a century in international cricket and has been in a pro-

longed lean patch across all formats. With every low score coming off his bat, the debate on Kohli's poor form climbs up with the Men's T20 World Cup in Australia just three months away.

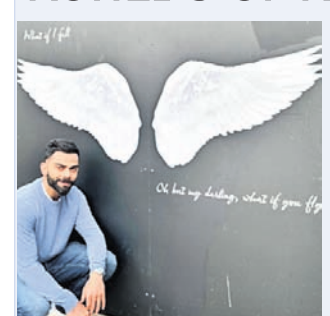
Now, legendary all-rounder and 1983 World Cup-winning captain

Kapil Dev feels that Kohli has still got a lot of cricket left in him and pointed out that the talismanic batter has to himself create a way for getting back amongst the runs.

"It's not like India haven't played without Virat in the last five to six years, but I want such a player to be back in form. Yes, he's been dropped or rested but there's still a lot of cricket left in him. And he has to create the path for that. Maybe play Ranji Trophy or score runs anywhere. His confidence needs to be back. This is the difference between a great and a good player. A great player like him shouldn't take so much time to get back in form. He has to fight with himself and get things in order," said Kapil to ABP News.

After the conclusion of England

KOHLI'S OPTIMISTIC POST



Amidst all the talk around him, Kohli hinted at being optimistic in his mind. In a recent post on Instagram and Twitter captioned 'Perspective', Kohli is seen posing with a wall art with wings that reads, "What if I fall" and "Oh but my darling, what if you fly". Replying to Kohli's post on Instagram, ex-England cricketer Kevin Pietersen wrote, "You go big guy! People can only dream what you've done in cricket. And they're some of the best players that have played the game."

tour, Kohli will not be travelling to West Indies for three ODIs and five T20Is. Asked on whether Kohli has been dropped or rested, Kapil remarked, "I can't say a big player like Virat Kohli should be dropped. He is a very big player. If you have

said that he has been rested to give him respect then there's no harm in that.

"The most important part is how to bring such a player back in form? He's not an ordinary cricketer. He should get more practice and play more matches to get his form back. I don't think there's any player in this world who is bigger than Kohli in T20s but when you are not doing well, the selectors can take their call. My thinking is that if anybody is not doing well then he can be rested or dropped," he added.



I don't have any problems if he is dropped or rested but I want him to get back in form. One innings can change a great player's fortune but when will that come, we don't know. We are waiting for (almost) two years for that

KAPIL DEV | INDIAN CRICKET VETERAN

Fencing World C'Ships: Karan in second round

CAIRO: Young Indian fencer Karan Singh registered an upset win over Mao Kokubo of Japan in the men's 'Sabre' event to enter the second round at the Fencing World Championships here Saturday. The 23-year-old Indian, who is currently ranked 90th in the International Fencing Federation (FIE) list and seeded 61st in the competition, disposed off challenge from 14th seeded Kokubo with a 15-11 scoreline in the round of 128 (first round) match.

Barca eye Lewandowski

BARCELONA: Barcelona is set to sign Poland striker Robert Lewandowski from Bayern Munich in a bold move by the debt-ridden club to acquire a world-class scorer who can finally help fill the void a year after Lionel Messi's exit last summer. The two European clubs have reached an agreement in principle for Lewandowski's move to Camp Nou, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press. Spanish media reports that the transfer would cost Barcelona some 50 million euros (\$50.4 million).

Chelsea sign Napoli

LONDON: Chelsea completed the signing of center back Kalidou Koulibaly from Napoli Saturday. The Premier League club paid a fee reported to be 40 million euros (\$40 million) for the 31-year-old Senegal international, who arrives at Stamford Bridge following the departures of defenders Antonio Rudiger and Andreas Christensen. Koulibaly, who signed a four-year contract, joined his new teammates in Las Vegas for their pre-season tour of the United States.

Early exit for Woods

ST ANDREWS: Tiger Woods made an early and emotional departure from the British Open, possibly for the last time at St Andrews. Cameron Smith can only wonder if the 150th Open will be his arrival as an undisputed elite player. Smith already won The Players Championship this year and has risen to as high as No. 3 in the world. His 8-under 64 gave him his first lead in a major; by two shots over PGA Tour rookie Cameron Young. Rory McIlroy was lurking another shot behind.