



UNUSUAL MOVE

Actor Kangana Ranaut has decided to sue a film magazine for nominating her for her work in biopic *Thalaivi*

LEISURE P2



CAR BOMB ATTACK

Darya Dugina, the daughter of an ultra-nationalist Russian ideologue, was killed in a car bomb attack

INTERNATIONAL P9



AIMING SERIES SWEEP

A fancied Indian team is a shoo-in to complete a 3-0 ODI series sweep against a struggling Zimbabwe side

SPORTS P12

3 held in fake certificate case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 21: Police Sunday arrested three persons, two on charge of producing fake resident certificate in Army recruitment rally last year near Berhampur University, while another for making the forged documents for them in Ganjam district.

B Lokesh (20) and B Umapatti Reddy (20) of Suvani village under Golanthara police station had allegedly produced fake resident certificates to get job in the Indian Army, while Banamali Behera (24), owner of a common service centre (CSC) of the same village allegedly made the forged documents for them, said police.

Police seized two fake resident certificates and two original certificates of other candidates and a computer in the case.

During the Army recruitment rally held from March 25 to April 6, last year, Lokesh and Reddy had allegedly produced the fake resident certificates, after they were selected in the physical tests.

The recruitment officers, however, were suspicious about their documents and lodged complaints with the police for verification.

During the inquiry, the tehsil office at Chikiti replied that these documents were fake, said Additional SP (Berhampur) Ramesh Chandra Sethi.

The duo revealed that they had produced the fake resident certificates in the CSC of Behera, he said.

Contd...4



LORD OF ALL BEGINNINGS: Ganesh idols are on display for sale at Unit 1 market in Bhubaneswar ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, Sunday.

OP PHOTO

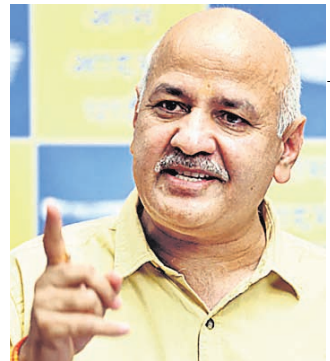
CBI should probe ₹10,000cr liquor scam in Guj: Sisodia

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday said he was not afraid of a CBI probe but the agency should also investigate the alleged Rs 10,000-crore illicit liquor scam in Gujarat and the Bundelkhand Expressway construction scam as the road developed cracks just five days after the Prime Minister inaugurated it.

In an interview with PTI, Sisodia, who is among 15 people and entities named in an FIR registered by the CBI in connection with alleged irregularities in the implementation of the excise policy, said his party was not scared of any investigation and asserted that the scams being alleged by BJP leaders were nothing but "shagufe (lies)."

"The CBI should investigate the scam of Rs 10,000 crore happening every year in Gujarat, where prohibition is in place but still people are dying by con-



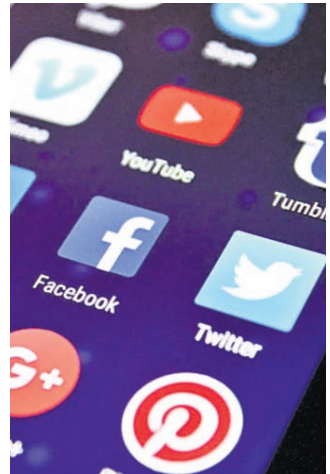
suming illicit liquor. The Bundelkhand Expressway caved in five days after being inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi. It has brought disgrace to the nation. There was corruption involved. You should investigate us and everyone else also. We are not against investigation or probe," the deputy chief minister said.

Big Tech cos' Indian execs to depose before Parl panel

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: Top executives of the Indian arms of Apple, Google, Amazon, Netflix and Microsoft will Tuesday depose before a Parliamentary panel looking into anti-competitive practices in the digital space, the committee's chairman Jayant Sinha said.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance has been looking into various aspects of competition in the marketplace, especially concerning technology majors.



According to a notice issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the agenda of the meeting is "Oral evidence of the representatives of Big Tech companies on the subject 'Anti-Competitive' practices by Big Tech companies." "Representatives of Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Netflix, from their Indian arms and a few others will appear before the panel on the issue of competitive behaviour in the digital market," Sinha told PTI Sunday.

Contd...4

Massive evacuation in N Odisha

All the rivers flowing through the region are in spate due to heavy rains caused by a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal, and subsequent floodwater release from Jharkhand

PNN/AGENCIES



Car swept away, 2 bodies fished out

Sambalpur: Two persons were killed after the car they were driving was swept away in floodwaters here Saturday night. The mishap occurred when the duo -- Tapas Nayak and Pratap Patel -- was crossing the Naktipali nullah under Kuchinda police limits. They were natives of Gunduruchuan. After several hours of search, the car and the bodies were retrieved by rescue personnel Sunday morning. Police have registered a case and sent the bodies for autopsy. The two, who were brothers-in-law, had gone to distribute cards for the post death rituals of their uncle who had passed away a few days ago.

"Involve functionaries of the Panchayati Raj System, women self-help groups and others concerned in evacuating people," Jena

said in a message to the District Collectors of Balasore and Mayurbhanj. All the rivers flowing through north Odisha are in spate

due to heavy rains caused by a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal, and subsequent floodwater release from Jharkhand. According to Jena, nearly 6 lakh cusecs of water were discharged by Jharkhand from Galudih barrage on the Subarnarekha river system, following a heavy downpour.

Most rivers flowing through the northern region of Odisha into the Bay of Bengal originate in neighbouring Jharkhand. Four blocks in coastal Balasore district -- Baliapal, Bhograi, Basta and Jaleswar -- were identified as most vulnerable to the latest flooding.

Sunday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik delegated powers of a Special Relief Commissioner to the Collector of Balasore district so that the local administration could be more effective. A helicopter was also placed at his disposal to deal with any emergency.

Odisha is already reeling under the impact of moderate floods in the Mahanadi river system following incessant rainfall, which has affected above 7 lakh people. Nearly 5 lakh are still marooned in 763 villages, according to government estimates.

Contd...P4, More P3, 5

25% extra seats for int'l students: UGC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: Universities and higher education institutions across the country will now be allowed to create up to 25 per cent supernumerary seats for foreign students in their undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) programmes, UGC chairman Jagadish Kumar has told PTI.

There will be no entrance tests for these admissions, Kumar said, adding that the decision was taken at a meeting of the UGC held last week to discuss "internationalisation of UG and PG programmes in India."

The supernumerary seats will be created over and above the total sanctioned strength and the decision regarding these seats will be taken by concerned higher educational institutions (HEIs) according to specific guidelines and regulations issued by the regulatory bodies considering the infrastructure, faculty and other requirements.

"Indian HEIs may admit international students based on the equivalence of entry qualifica-

tion held by them. The equivalence is to be determined by UGC or any other body recognised by UGC for such purpose or the concerned regulatory bodies of the country. HEIs may adopt a transparent admission process for admitting the international students," Kumar told PTI.

"HEIs may create up to 25 per cent supernumerary seats for international students, over and above of their total sanctioned enrolment for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The decision regarding 25 per cent supernumerary seats has to be carried out by the concerned higher educational institutions as per specific guidelines/regulations issued by the regulatory bodies considering the infrastructure, faculty and other requirements," he added.

The supernumerary seats for international students will not include the international students under exchange programmes and through Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between institutions or between Indian government and other countries.

Contd...4

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, he has a special taste for HISTORY. He himself is a HISTORY-SHEETER!

Mobile internet shut to prevent exam malpractices

OVER 14.30 LAKH CANDIDATES ARE ASPIRING FOR NEARLY 30,000 GRADE III AND IV POSTS IN ASSAM

AGENCIES

Guwahati/Silchar, August 21: Mobile internet services across 25 districts of Assam were suspended for four hours Sunday to prevent possible malpractices as the state government conducted written examinations for Grade IV posts in its various departments.

Besides, prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC were promulgated in the districts where the examinations were on, a top government official said.

The principal of Cachar College in Silchar was detained by the police for alleged gross negligence of duty in conducting the examination.

Police said the deputy commissioner of Cachar district had filed an FIR at the Silchar Police Station this morning against the princi-

pal, Siddhartha Sankar Nath, after visiting the institution. The DC claimed that the principal had failed to conduct the examination as per the guidelines issued for the purpose. Nath was detained on basis of the complaint, police said.

More than 14.30 lakh candidates are expected to appear for nearly 30,000 Grade III and IV posts, with the examinations scheduled for August 21 and 28, and September 11.

While the Grade IV examinations took place Sunday in two shifts, tests for Grade III posts will be held on the other two dates. All examinations are being conducted by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA).

Senior officials of private telecom operators Airtel and Jio told PTI that internet services were suspended in 25 districts for four hours as per



A police personnel checks aspirants as they enter an examination hall to appear in the Assam Recruitment Exam, in Guwahati, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

directions of the Assam government. "Dear customers, as per government directive, mobile internet services are being temporarily stopped in your area between 10 am to 12 pm and between 2 pm to 4 pm," read an Airtel SMS to its sub-

scribers. Similar messages were sent by other operators to their customers across the state.

August 17, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said internet services would be suspended during the examination hours to

avoid possible malpractices during the recruitment process.

Meanwhile, Assam Police said in a tweet that Section 144 of CrPC has been promulgated in and around the examination venues for all three days to conduct the tests in a "free, fair and transparent manner."

As per an official order, the gathering of people within a radius of 100 metre of each examination centre other than candidates, scribes, and officials engaged in conduct and monitoring has been prohibited. Carrying mobile phones to the examination centres has also been barred.

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC have also been imposed within a radius of 100 metre of the SEBA office at Guwahati till receiving, depositing, and scrutinising the answer scripts are over.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	34.8°C	35.0°C	
MIN	26.8°C	26.0°C	
Humidity	80%	85%	
Rainfall	TRACE	2.2mm	cloudy sky

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181*

ARIES
Interactive sessions with people who think like you are on the cards. At last you may have an intimate talk with your beloved and you will get a chance to confide your commitment to the relationship, says Ganesh. You may even express your long-term dreams.

TAURUS
Today, you are likely to be more reckless than ever in splurging your hard earned money. Ganesh strongly advises you to leave your credit card at home today. Using it for making purchases will only make matters worse. Money wise, be very careful in your business dealings, about the commitments you make.

GEMINI
You will feel physical and mental excitement and emotions today. You may take part in some competition and will seek to improve your self-esteem by performing physically in it. Your intellectual capacity will be on display in the work that you do, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today is a day for taking things slowly, especially on the business front. This applies the most to the stockbrokers and also others who invest in stocks or shares on the side. Stars are not so bright today and haste will only worsen the matters. People involved in speculation, chance games and shifty markets may feel frustrated.

LEO
You want to make your personal relationships conflict free and hence will attempt to resolve the conflicts which are within you. You will need to adopt a compromising attitude in life. It is best to stay away from risky financial investments today. An event which will make you happy will occur at the end of the day, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Take time off all by yourself and introspect today, says Ganesh. Office cubicle looks set to be a war front and pay due attention there, lest things turn to be more difficult, advises Ganesh. New love may just blossom today, and you may even enjoy a nice quiet evening with friends.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will showcase your ability and skills today in your work field and impress people. You will develop and express your inner love for art and artistic things and you will purchase a new work of art today. Ganesh showers you with all his blessings.

SCORPIO
Your account balance may suffer suddenly as you decide to loosen your purse strings. You are all set to splurge on your loved ones today, according to Ganesh. However, it is important to remember that the value of money is precious, and once spent it never returns; spend wisely.

SAGITTARIUS
A la a phoenix from the ashes, find yourself reborn as the perfect family person. You are bound to shower love and care on your betrothed. Children, too, will receive your share of love, and they will love it. Enjoy spending quality time with your loved one, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Like you weren't already overworked, new responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day, says Ganesh. The excitement with which you work every day will weaken, and eventually die down by the end of the day. This is mainly because you will burn your energy and resources in helping others. But there is a good side to this too. Your social standing will improve dramatically because of your kind nature.

AQUARIUS
You have your head on your shoulders and feet on the ground. Congratulations! You've covered the first step to success. Step two, says Ganesh, involves an inquisitive mind and a questioning attitude. Later, you may resort to shortcuts and compromise a tad in quality.

PISCES
Your fount of creativity spouts everyday like there is no tomorrow. However, you need to be organised and in position to implement all those revolutionary ideas that occur to you in a jiffy, that lesser mortals take aeons to dream up. Your oratory will win you many admirers today, so let go of your inhibitions, says Ganesh.



LISA RECALLS SURREAL DINNER DATE WITH MICHAEL JACKSON

Steps star Lisa Scott-Lee was amazed when Michael Jackson offered to take her out to dinner at one of Bahrain's swankiest palaces. The 46-year-old singer has revealed she encountered the King of Pop during a trip to Bahrain after she was invited to attend the F1 Grand Prix there.

MODERN POP MUSIC IS CONFUSING: MADONNA

Music icon Madonna has confessed to feeling 'confused' by modern pop artists. The 64-year-old singer - who is one of the best-selling artistes of all time - feels the music industry has changed markedly since her pop heyday.



Kareena dons producer's hat

Mumbai: Unfazed by the box-office failure of Aamir Khan's *Laal Singh Chaddha*, where she played his character's love interest, Kareena Kapoor has started work on her maiden production. She, however, has not revealed its name or other details.

The actress took to the story section of her Instagram and posted an image of a film's script with Shahid helmer Hansal Mehta's name in the director's credit.

The actress smartly concealed the title of the project by keeping a pen over it, though one can see the words 'The' and 'Murder'.

A year ago, in August 2021, Kareena had announced on Instagram that she was getting into production in collaboration with Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms.

Kareena had posted a picture of herself with Ekta Kapoor and Hansal Mehta, announcing that she would be donning the producer's hat 'soon'. IANS

Mrunal eager to play this legend on screen

Mumbai: After the first look of her last release was unveiled, it drew comparisons with legendary actress Madhubala. As she made her south debut with *Sita Ramam* starring Dulquer Salmaan, Mrunal Thakur was on cloud nine when she won that attention for her look.

Reacting to the overwhelming reaction she received, the *Toofaan* actress said, "I am excited that people drew comparisons with Madhubala over my look in the film. When I was shooting for this Telugu film, on the sets too, a lot of people came to me and complimented me on the resemblance. I am a big fan of Madhubala ji. I remember watching so many of her songs and it is an honour when someone compares me with someone of that stature."

Mrunal hopes that this buzz leads to something even more concrete. "I wish that if filmmakers too see me in that light, then I would want someone to approach me for a Madhubala biopic. I know it won't be easy to pull off a Madhubala on screen, but I will definitely have to work hard and put in my best," she added. AGENCIES



I can't fight with star kids: MEERA

Mumbai: Actress Meera Chopra, cousin of Priyanka and Parineeti Chopra, has been in the film industry for nearly two decades but is yet to get her dues.

In a recent interview with a news portal, the *Gang of Ghosts* actress, who insisted on playing a Maharashtra slum girl in a Rs. 10-crore film *Section 375* against a big budget movie *Pagalpanti*, spoke on a host of topics. On her lack of visibility in media, she says, "I can't aggressively put myself out there. I can't make plans to get clicked by the paparazzi at the airport or at any other place for that matter."

"With so many new actors coming in from star families, I see that they are doing 90 percent of the good work that is available. I can't fight with star kids. I have often auditioned for roles where I was better suited but those were given to people who were known to them (makers). I can't make myself a part of any camp. The struggle never ends for an outsider like me, I guess."

She is now more interested in doing web series as it is more difficult for her to get roles in big projects, signs off Meera. AGENCIES

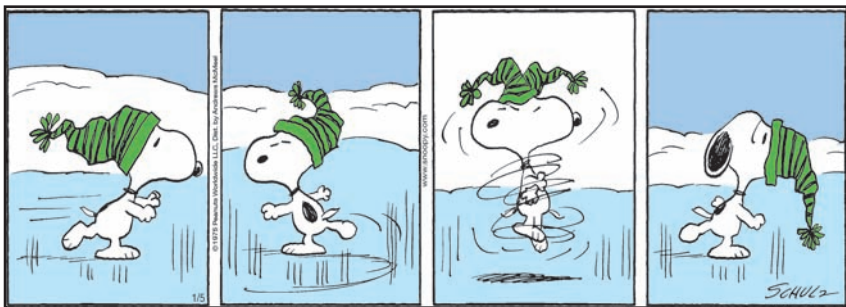
Kangana to sue top film magazine

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut has decided to sue Filmfare for nominating her for her work in biopic *Thalaiivi*, in the upcoming edition of the Filmfare Awards.

The *Queen* actress took to the story section of her Instagram and wrote a lengthy note stating the reason behind the decision. She wrote, "I have banned unethical, corrupt and totally unfair practices like @filmfare since 2014, but since I have been getting many calls from them for attending their award function this year as they want to give me award for *Thalaiivi* (sic)."

"I am shocked to know that they are still nominating me. it is beneath my dignity, work ethics and value system to encourage such corrupt practices in anyway that is why I have decided to sue @filmfare ... thanks (sic)," Kangana added. Kangana, who has four National Film Awards to her credit, is known for her straightforward attitude and speaking her mind. IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

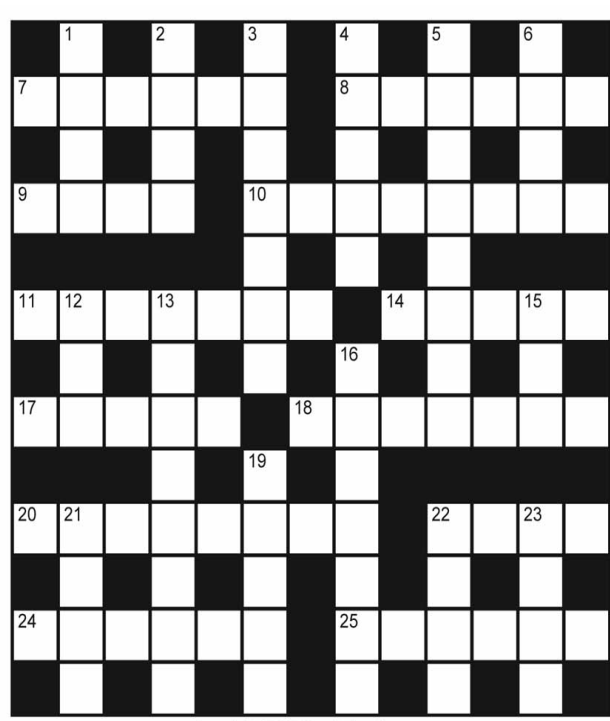


BREVITY



FUN post

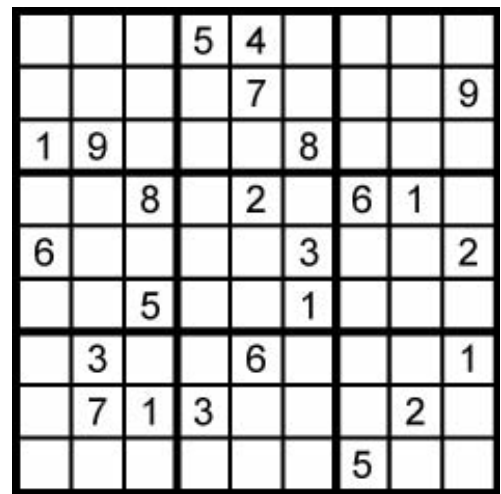
CROSSWORD



- Across
7 Gully
8 Skeleton's place?
9 Lowly worker
10 Reserved for a rainy day (3-5)
11 Common pet
14 Lollygag
17 Incentive program
18 Equilibrium
20 Small intestine part
22 Minor setback
24 Serbian province
25 Instructed
Down
1 Highlands hillside
2 Flub
3 Gang member
4 Critical
5 Aubergine and ground lamb dish
6 Pinochle move
12 Big deal
13 Naval unit
15 Mythical bird
16 Gigantic
19 Emissary
21 ET rides
22 Insult
23 Distress signal

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

JUST SHOCKING
E U R P O O N A
T A F A P U G
I N C O R R I G I B L E
S I R L T C
O B L I G E C A S S I A
N E E S T R
N A R R O W M I N D E D
I F A A O R I
S P L I T M E N D I N G
I A T O I S F A
S A T I R I S E S T U N

SUDOKU

4 3 5 7 9 6 8 1 2
7 9 1 2 5 8 3 6 4
6 8 2 4 3 1 9 7 5
2 7 8 1 6 5 4 3 9
1 6 4 9 2 3 7 5 8
3 5 9 8 7 4 6 2 1
8 4 3 6 1 2 5 9 7
5 1 7 3 4 9 2 8 6
9 2 6 5 8 7 1 4 3

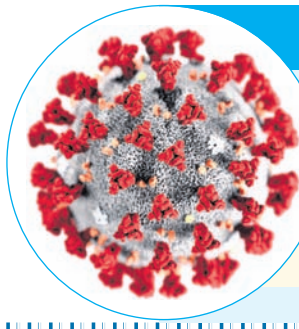
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



ART COMPETITION

Students during the inter-school art competition organised by Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar at Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	60,07,42,742	57,48,89,894	64,71,601
India	4,43,39,429	4,37,12,218	5,27,332
Odisha	13,25,061	13,13,679	9,163

Kerala HC Registrar General seeks action against Berhampur jail supdt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The Registrar General of Kerala High Court has asked the Director General of Police (DGP) of Odisha to take action against the superintendent of Berhampur Circle Jail for dereliction of duty, an official said Sunday.

According to sources, Thufan Malik, a resident of Jahada village under Gangapur police limits in Ganjam, was working as a daily wager at Mathlakam in Kerala.

In 2019, Malik and three others had a scuffle with a 24-year-old man over a trivial issue and in a fit of rage they killed the man.

The Mathlakam police registered a case (583/19) under Sections 323,324,326,302, 201 and 34 of the IPC and arrested the accused including Malik.

Malik walked out of jail on bail March 18, 2021. While granting bail, the court had asked Malik not to leave Kerala and to appear before it on regular basis. Malik, however, fled to Odisha, flouting the court's directions.

Back home, Malik was arrested by Ganjam police under Section 8



of the POCSO Act for sexually assaulting a minor girl. He was sent to judicial custody June 5, 2021.

On the other hand, the Irinjalakuda court in Kerala learnt about Malik's presence in Berhampur Circle Jail and subsequently issued a production warrant against him.

The Berhampur Circle Jail Superintendent received the warrant through registered post February 23, 2022, the official said.

Meanwhile, a local court in Berhampur granted bail to Malik in the sexual assault case and he was released from the Berhampur Circle Jail April 5, 2022.

Despite having received the production warrant February 23, 2022, the Berhampur Circle Jail Superintendent allowed the accused (Malik) to walk out on bail April 5, 2022. This amounts to dereliction of duty, the Irinjalakuda court said to the Odisha DGP.

On August 4, 2022, the Registrar General of the Kerala High Court has sent the missive to Odisha DGP after receiving the details from the Irinjalakuda court July 14, 2022.

Upon receiving the letter, the Crime Branch of Odisha Police August 19 this year requested the Prisons DG to take appropriate action in this regard, it was learnt.

Ahimsa Raths reach Nayagarh, Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The Ahimsa Raths, which were flagged off by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the Independence Day to spread the message of Mahatma Gandhi and create awareness about the philosophy of Ahimsa (non-violence), reached Angul and Nayagarh Sunday, an official said.

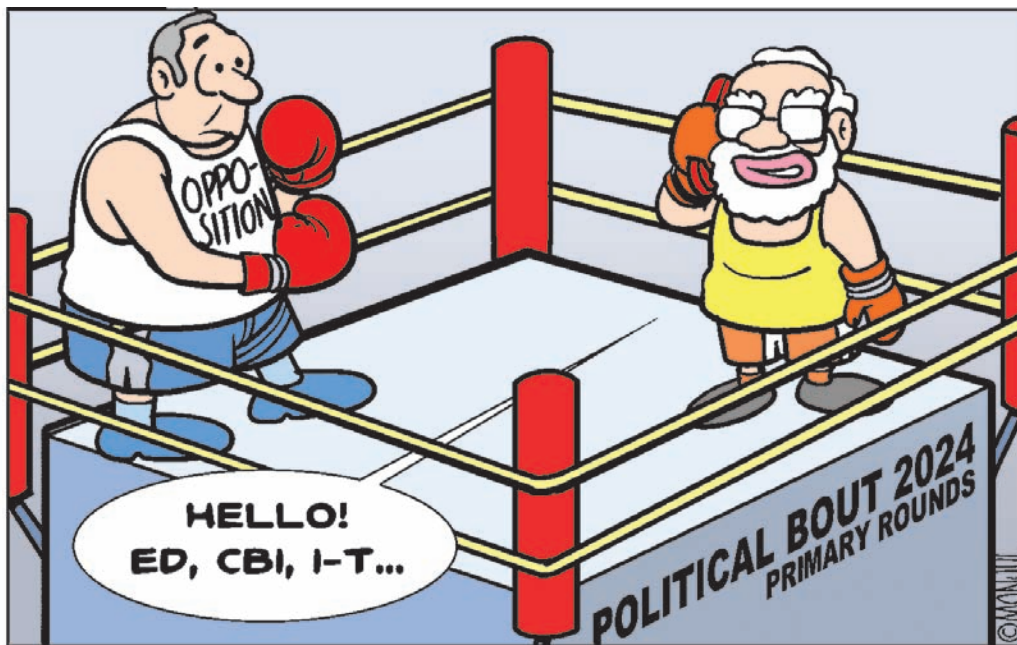
The chariots were welcomed by the district administrations. In Nayagarh, the chariots toured places like Jemadepur, Lathipada, Itabhati, Balugaon, Nuagaon, Khandapada and Kantilo Champapadi where school students and women members of Self-Help Groups welcomed the chariot.

In Angul, the chariots visited Handapa, Chendipada and Pathapada spreading the message of non-violence. In the morning, it toured the village panchayats of Champapadi, Gopalpur and Madalakhanda in the Ranpur block.

During the state-level celebration of 76th Independence Day at Idco Exhibition Ground in Unit-III area of Bhubaneswar, Naveen had flagged off four Ahimsa Raths.

The Ahimsa Raths, which are managed by the Information and Public Relations department, will tour the state till October 2, the birth anniversary of the father of the nation.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



Bhubaneswar, Rourkela gear up for FIH Men's Hockey WC '23

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, August 21: With less than five months left for the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 to commence, hockey lovers across the world are excitedly looking towards Odisha, which will host the mega sporting event.

As Odisha is not only the hosting state, but also sponsoring the national men's and women's hockey teams, it is leaving no stone unturned to make the event more memorable than the previous World Cup, which was also hosted here.

The Hockey World Cup will be held in Rourkela and Bhubaneswar from January 13 to 29, 2023. Several players, coaches and FIH officials have lauded the marvellous hockey stadium inside the iconic Kalinga Sports Complex in Bhubaneswar, where the last edition of the World Cup was organised.

Apart from the Kalinga Stadium, the 2023 World Cup matches will also be played at the Birsma Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela of Sundargarh district. Sundargarh district is said to be the heart of hockey in India as the region has produced several international hockey players such as former captains Dilip Tirkey, Ignace Tirkey and Prabodh Tirkey in the men's team and Subhadra Pradhan and Jyoti Sunita Kulu in the women's team.

It has also produced more than 60 international hockey players, including Olympians Lazarus Barla, William Xalco, Birendra Lakra and Sunita Lakra. Three players from Sundargarh -- Deep Grace Ekka (women's team), Amit Rohidas and Birendra Lakra -- made it to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Recognising the talents of the soil, Naveen Patnaik took the decision to build the country's largest hockey stadium soon after Odisha was selected by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to host its flagship event for the second time in a row.

Besides the main stadium, which will have a 20,000 seating capacity, a practice pitch is also being developed nearby.

On the other hand, Kalinga Stadium is also being upgraded. Recently, a brand new turf has been laid for the upcoming World Cup.

Apart from the stadiums, the



File photo of the CM unveiling the logo of FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023

We are eagerly looking forward to hosting the Hockey Men's World Cup 2023. While Kalinga Stadium is match ready with two new pitches laid (main and practice), Birsma Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela will be ready in the coming months



R VINEEL KRISHNA | SPORTS AND YOUTH SERVICES SECRETARY

The Hockey World Cup will be held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and Birsma Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela from January 13 to 29, 2023

The state government has also lined up a host of infrastructure and beautification projects in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela in a bid to give a pleasant experience to the hockey players, sports lovers and other guests during the World Cup

Besides the main stadium in Rourkela, which will have a 20,000 seating capacity, a practice pitch is being developed nearby. Kalinga Stadium is also being upgraded. Recently, a brand new turf has been laid for the upcoming World Cup

state has also lined up a lot of infrastructure and beautification projects in the cities of Bhubaneswar and Rourkela to give a pleasant experience to the hockey players, sports lovers and other guests during the World Cup. The state government is eyeing to make the Rourkela airstrip operational

before the event while connecting roads are being strengthened in the Steel City.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has already unveiled the official logo for the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023.

A meeting between the FIH and the Hockey India Committee of Administrators (CoA) was held recently in New Delhi where both the organisations appreciated the infrastructure being developed for the tournament. They said the official draw for the World Cup 2023 would be announced in Bhubaneswar September 8, 2022.

Odisha Sports and Youth Services Secretary R Vineel Krishna said, "We are eagerly looking forward to hosting the Hockey Men's World Cup 2023. While Kalinga Stadium is match ready with two new pitches laid (main and practice), Birsma Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela will be ready in the coming months."

Rourkela, too, is going through massive development to welcome the participating teams, the Sports Secretary said.

Oppn dubs Mahanadi flood as man-made

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Opposition BJP and Congress Sunday dubbed the flood in Mahanadi river system as man-made and result of gross mismanagement by the state government.

However, BJD leader and School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash rejected the opposition parties' allegation and claimed that the state government successfully managed the flood situation in Mahanadi delta region and is now focusing on the Subarnarekha system.

The opposition parties made the allegation after their respective teams visited several flood-affected areas in the 13 districts, where more than seven lakh people have been affected in the deluge.

BJD leader Samir Ranjan Dash rejected the allegation and claimed that the state government successfully managed the flood situation in Mahanadi delta region and is now focusing on the Subarnarekha system

Around 5.5 lakh people are still marooned in the Mahanadi floods, officials said.

Coming down heavily on the state government, BJP state general secretary Prithiviraj Harichandan said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's call of 'zero casualty' was 'hollow' as the calamity has so far claimed at least six lives.

"I call the Mahanadi flood as man-made as the government utterly failed to manage the Hirakud reservoir. The government has no knowledge how much water was being flown to Odisha from the upper catchment areas in Chhattisgarh," Harichandan told reporters here.

Though the state government

claimed that it was prepared to tackle the calamity, its failure was visible when people were denied basic amenities like food, drinking water and medicine in the marooned villages. Harichandan alleged claiming that the flood situation worsened due to lack of coordination with Chhattisgarh.

The BJP leader claimed that it was the violation of the 'rule curve' in Hirakud dam water management by the state government for which the life and property of the people were pushed to danger.

He said the rule curve for water management of Hirakud was made in 1962 and later amended in 1988. It has been a longtime that the rule curve provisions are not changed

according to changing situation.

The saffron party also alleged that the situation was more or less same in north Odisha which has now been hit by a major flood following rains.

The BJP demanded a long-term plan to fight the flood situation in the state.

Congress leader Nishikanta Mishra alleged that people in many places were denied food and polythene which exposes the state government's 'failure' in managing the flood and relief operation.

"The flood is man-made as the deluge was caused due to the government's mismanagement," he said.

Senior Congress MLA Suresh Routray Sunday rushed to Baliaanta area with relief materials and distributed food and other essentials.



Dignitaries, including Utkal University Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya, unveil a booklet to mark the second annual function of alumni association of the premier university in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

Odisha logs 287 new Cov cases, 1 fatality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The state's COVID-19 tally rose to 13,25,061 Sunday as 287 more people, including 62 children, tested positive for the virus, a health department bulletin said.

The death toll mounted to 9,163, with one more patient succumbing to the infection, it said.

The state had logged 320 fresh infections and one fatality Saturday.

Odisha now has 2,485 active cases, while 13,13,360 patients have recovered from the disease.

It tested 16,121 samples in the last 24 hours at a positivity rate of 1.78 per cent, the bulletin added.

Cov raises brain disorder, epilepsy risks in kids months later: Lancet

Not just adults, children who suffered from Covid-19 are also at an increased risk of cognitive deficit, insomnia, ischaemic stroke, nerve/psychotic disorders and epilepsy or seizures even months after they were infected, a large-scale observational study of over 1.25 million patient health records has revealed.

According to The Lancet Psychiatry journal, the study that looked at data of 1,85,748 children found that post-Covid risk trajectories differed in children compared with adults.

In the six months after SARS-CoV-2 infection, children were not at an increased risk of mood or anxiety disorders.

However, they had an increased

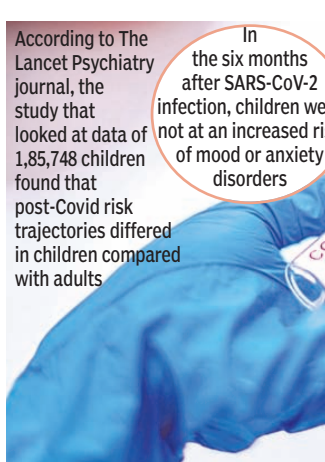
risk of cognitive deficit, insomnia, intracranial haemorrhage, ischaemic stroke, nerve, nerve root, and plexus disorders, psychotic disorders, and epilepsy or seizures.

Unlike adults, cognitive deficit in children had a finite risk horizon (75 days) and a finite time to equal incidence (491 days).

"Children have a more benign overall profile of psychiatric risk than do adults and older adults, but their sustained higher risk of some diagnoses is of concern," said the study.

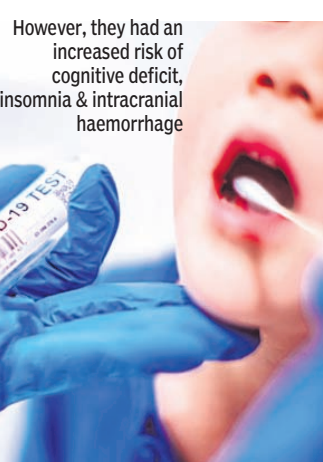
A sizeable proportion of older adults who received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis, in either cohort, subsequently died, especially those diagnosed with dementia or epilepsy or seizures.

According to The Lancet Psychiatry journal, the study that looked at data of 1,85,748 children found that post-Covid risk trajectories differed in children compared with adults



Just after the emergence of the delta variant, increased risks of ischaemic stroke, epilepsy or

seizures, cognitive deficit, insomnia, and anxiety disorders were observed, compounded by an in-



creased death rate.

"With Omicron, there was a lower death rate than just before emergence of the variant, but the risks of neurological and psychiatric outcomes remained similar," revealed the study, led by researchers at the University of Oxford in the UK.

The observational study extracted data from the "TriNetX" electronic health records network, an international network of de-identified data from health care records of approximately 89 million patients collected from hospital, primary care, and specialist providers (mostly from the US, but also from Australia, the UK, Spain, Bulgaria, India, Malaysia, and Taiwan).

"This analysis of 2-year ret-

pective cohort studies of individuals diagnosed with Covid-19 showed that the increased incidence of mood and anxiety disorders was transient, with no overall excess of these diagnoses compared with other respiratory infections," the researchers noted.

In contrast, the increased risk of psychotic disorder, cognitive deficit, dementia, and epilepsy or seizures persisted throughout.

"The fact that neurological and psychiatric outcomes were similar during the Delta and Omicron waves, indicate that the burden on the health-care system might continue even with variants that are less severe in other respects," the researchers warned.

WORLD SENIOR CITIZENS DAY

ARTISTES IN ACTION

Senior citizens play a vital role in enriching our society: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, on the occasion of World Senior Citizens Day, Sunday asked the people to take a pledge to give senior citizens the love, care and respect they deserve. Through his Twitter account, the CM said senior citizens play a vital role in enriching our society with their wisdom, knowledge and experience. We should acknowledge the hardships faced by them and pledge to give them the love, care and respect they deserve, he added.



he proportion of older people in the population has risen significantly in the state. The number has increased from 22.81 lakhs in 1991 to 30.39 lakhs in 2001, to 39.8 lakhs in 2011. The present proportion of 9.5 percent is estimated to reach 13.8 percent, numbering 62.69 lakhs, in 2026

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The traditional norms and values of the Indian society laid stress on showing respect and providing care for the aged. However, in recent times, society is witnessing a gradual withering of the joint family system, as a result of which a large number of parents are being neglected by their families, living without emotional, physical and financial support.

This reveals that ageing has become a major social challenge and there is a need to provide for the economic and health needs of the elderly and to create a social milieu which is conducive and sensitive to their emotional needs.

The Odisha State Policy for Senior Citizens 2016 recognizes that senior citizens need sustainable support systems to reduce their poverty and vulnerability, improve their health, and stay active citizens contributing to their communities. It therefore aims to provide critical support and health services, increase the capacity of service providers especially in rural area to make the services more accessible; provide suitable environment to ensure their inclusion and full participation in society; include gender perspective in its programmes to specifically cater to the needs of the increasing number of elderly women; and inculcate family values and respect for the elderly to enhance psychological support and informal care.

The approach will be multi-sectoral involving government departments, non-governmental organizations and corporate entities. The necessary institutional capacity is to be developed for its effective execution. The Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Department, Government of Odisha aims to create conditions that provide the elderly opportunities, while also protecting their rights and ensuring their full participation in society. As part of an integrated initiative the Department had launched a new umbrella scheme 'ABADANA' for the welfare of the elderly.

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A play Raga organised by Kalakar Theatre and Regional College of Management at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Odia boy representing India in Asian handball championship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: A boy from Odisha, Aryan Bramhin, has been selected to the Indian team for the forthcoming 9th Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship 2022 to be held from August 20 to 31 in Manama, Bahrain.

Born into a middle-class family in Talcher town in Angul district, this achievement was far from easy for Bramhin. His father Gouri Shankar Mishra is a handball coach, whose guidance was crucial in making his son's dream come true.



Brahmin, who has been playing in the national team for the last five years, is the only Odia player to have been selected for the national team. Attributing his selection credit to his father, Aryan said, "I am highly inspired by my father. Wherever I am, till date, it's only due to my father. I am looking forward to giving my level best in the tournament and bring the trophy home. We all seek your blessing."

Overwhelmed by his son's selection, Gouri Shankar Mishra said, "I don't have any words to express my happiness. I am proud of my son. His hard work and sheer dedication took him to the international level. I wish him the best of luck for his Championship game which is going to be held in Bahrain, and also urge to the state government to endorse handball game so that thousands of Aryan Bramhins will be coming out in the future, making Odisha proud in the national and international arena."

Prasant Kumar Nayak, secretary, Handball Association, Bhubaneswar and Ritik Adhikari, chairman, ad-hoc committee, Odisha, congratulated and wished success to Aryan. Notably, Arayan Bramhin represented India in the 2nd Asian Men's Youth Beach Handball which was held in Tehran in March of this year.

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Continued from P1

25% extra seats, no entrance test...

The HEIs will also be permitted to admit international students using a transparent admission process as is done by the foreign universities and that these students do not have to go through the entrance process used for admissions in India.

"The seats shall be exclusively meant for the international students both in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A seat remained unfilled in the supernumerary category, shall not be allocated to anyone other than an international student. International students in this context shall be defined as the one who shall possess a foreign passport," Kumar explained.

3 held in fake certificate case

Though they belong to the same village, they could not obtain the resident certificate from the tehsil office, police added. Police said they were also investigating some other fake certificate cases, which had been produced in the Army recruitment rally last year.

Massive evacuation in N Odisha

Rains and flood-related incidents have so far claimed six lives.

There were signs of relief, however, as rains have subsided in the upper catchment area of the Mahanadi river, said BK Mishra, chief engineer in the department of water resources. There is an improvement in the flood situation in the Mahanadi delta, he said, adding it was expected to get better in the next couple of days.

In its latest bulletin, the India Meteorology Department said the deep depression has now weakened into a depression over northwest Chhattisgarh and adjoining northeast Madhya Pradesh and southeast Uttar Pradesh.

Big Tech cos' Indian execs to depose before Parl panel

The BJP leader and former Union minister further said the committee has already held deliberations with the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and Indian tech firms on the issue.

Representatives of food delivery platforms Swiggy and Zomato, e-commerce player Flipkart, cab aggregator Ola, hotel aggregator Oyo, and the All India Gaming Association are among those who have already been called by the Sinha-led panel. In recent times, there have been complaints about alleged anti-competitive ways of various technology platforms and firms. The CCI is already probing various cases, especially in the digital space, following complaints of unfair business practices. April 28, the CCI made a presentation about competition aspects in the marketplace to the parliamentary panel.



Governor Ganeshi Lal lighting the lamp on the occasion of Platinum Jubilee ceremony of Odisha Diploma Engineers' Service Association at Odesa Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

NALCO felicitates best matriculate students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, August 21: National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) felicitated 29 students with Best Matriculate Award in a function organised at Nalconagar Angul, Sunday.

Nalco CND, Sridhar Patra gave away the best matriculate students case prizes of Rs 5,000 each, along with appreciation certificates. The students belonged to the periphery schools of Smelter & Power (S&P) complex. Amongst others, the event was graced by Sasmita Patra, president, Nalco Mahila Samiti, and AP Panda, ED (S&P).

Addressing the gathering, Patra urged the youngsters to continue with the momentum of success and not to settle until they achieve their goals in life. He also added that 'You Study, You Struggle & You Succeed' should be the mantra of life for every student. Sasmita Patra inspired the children with her motivational talk and urged them to not only be bright students, but also to develop strong moral and ethical values and become able citizens of the future. The Best Matriculate award has been instituted to support, encourage and inspire the meritorious students of 22 schools in the periphery of S&P Complex and 5 schools of Coal Mines Area in Chhendipada.



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Preserving ancient memories through digitisation

The elders of the Wancho community in a remote district of Arunachal Pradesh have taken up the task of recording their age-old folktales in digitised form with the help of a UK-based researcher.

The researcher, Tara Douglas, who spent over three years even during the COVID-19 pandemic with the community elders and workers in Longding district to document the folktales, is helping them to digitally archive the folklores.

The Wanchos have a rich tradition of oral stories, memories, and songs and Douglas was invited to assist them to make the recordings. "The knowledge of the ancestors that has accumulated over generations is a record of life as it has been lived for centuries in this little-known area of the Patkai hills.

"It is the history of the cultural practices and rituals, the precise knowledge of livelihood practices, of plants, animals, the climate and geography. It is the collective memories of the community," Douglas said.

The researcher was introduced to the community when she first visited Kamhwa Noknu in 2019 and has since been working with local project partners to record, translate and catalogue the material.

The venture that began in 2019 has led to further visits to some of the villages of the Pongchau and Wakka circles of the district to record local stories.

The Wancho tribe, with a population of nearly 57,000 members, inhabits mostly the Longding district that borders Myanmar. "The pattern of life is changing rapidly as the district becomes more integrated and accessible to the outside world. Younger people are acquiring new priorities for education and employment, and they have much less time than before to listen to the memories of their parents and grandparents," Douglas told PTI.

Before the demise of the tradition bearers of the village and the disappearance of the knowledge that they hold, the elders are recording their memories, she said. Jatwang Wangsa and Banwang Losu, two teachers who also run a local organisation, the Wancho

Literary Mission, have been the interlocutors for Douglas, facilitating introductions to the storytellers and sitting patiently hour after hour with her to translate the recordings into English so that the videos can be subtitled.



Little is known about the rich oral traditions of the indigenous, tribal and Adivasi communities of India. These traditions, increasingly overwhelmed by modern life, may even be forgotten entirely by the younger people

The storytellers whose memories have been archived include, Late Ngamchai Wangsa and Nyemnoi Wangsa, Tangkaam Pheam, Wanjay Losu, Phawang Wangham, Gamlong Gampa, Wanghom Losu and Wanchan Losu from Kamhwa

Noknu; Chaidang Dangam from Nyinu and Ngompha Wangsa from Longkai village.

"The archive will be expanded to include more stories from Kamhwa Noknu and the neighbouring villages," Douglas, the secretary of Adivasi Arts Trust, a UK-based charity said.

Arunachal Pradesh with recorded 26 major tribes, 110 sub-tribes, and many unrecorded sub-tribes is a research hub for anthropologists.

With the recommendation of Stephen Morey, a linguist who specialised in the study and documentation of various languages of the region, Douglas also stored the Wancho folk tales in the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC), a digital record of some of the small cultures and languages of the world.

PARADISEC is a consortium of three universities- the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, and the Australian National University. Some of the folktales of the community archived include Folktale of the Story of the Gourd, Cultural memory of death and the soul, Folktale of Tiger Man Cicada, Folk tale of the Story of the Gourd, second version; Folktale of the story of the Stone and Memories of traditional rituals.

Little is known about the rich oral traditions of the indigenous, tribal and Adivasi communities of India, the researcher said. These traditions, increasingly overwhelmed by modern life, may even be forgotten entirely by the younger people, Douglas said.

"I work relentlessly to record the stories from the elders of the village communities and then to translate these narratives into English. I also encourage local artists and I work with them to introduce digital tools to retell their stories in interesting contemporary formats," Douglas said. This work is extremely difficult to secure support for in India and abroad, as indigenous art and culture, and also work by independent practitioners is increasingly difficult to sustain, she added.

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Deputy Collector's wife in soup for having ration card



She allegedly produced a ration card to grab the benefit of paying less revenue as intended for BPL beneficiaries to get land pattas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, August 21: A day after media reports alleged that the Malkangiri Deputy Collector's wife used a ration card in her name to acquire a land patta for her plot at DNK urban slum area in this town; the district civil supply department scrapped the ration card, Sunday.

Binotarani Mandal, wife of Malkangiri Deputy Collector Lalit Mandal allegedly produced her ration card to grab the benefit of paying less revenue intended for BPL beneficiaries and avoid paying more revenue as intended for people of upper financial class. This was stated here by Malkangiri block civil supply officer Hrushikesh Nayak to mediapersons, Sunday.

"The state government will be apprised of the development with

recommendation for a probe as to how she managed to get this card and who all are involved in delivering her this card," he added.

Moreover, recommendation will also be made for a probe into the government benefits if she has received any and action against the government officials thereof. Mandal is posted as a deputy collector in the office of the Malkangiri district Magistrate and Collector.

Ram Patnaik, advocate cum-member of Nagaraik Surakshya Manch demanded a high level probe into the irregularities and action against all those involved.

Notably, people who have been living on government land since long years are entitled to land pattas under Municipality Land Rights as per government rules. While a ration card holder is required to deposit ₹10,800 as land re-

venue, a person of upper financial class is required to deposit ₹65,000 as revenue.

When contacted, executive officer Ashok Chakraborty of Malkangiri Municipality said, "A notice has been issued to Binotarani to pay the revenue meant for persons of upper financial group after it was found that she is the wife of the deputy collector." Deputy Collector Lalit Mandal said that before his marriage the ration card was in the name of his father-in-law and later during survey of slum dwellers a land patta has been provided in the name of his wife as per government rule.

He, however, said he has no knowledge about the notice issued to his wife. Locals demanded a probe into the irregularity and for tracing of persons in top government posts holding ration cards.

TALENT HUNT



Girls participate in a talent hunt contest titled 'Sambalpuri Nani' at Panthanivas in Sambalpur ahead of Western Odisha's mass harvest festival Nuakhai, Sunday

In a first, Berhampur ITI, varsity sign MoU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 21: The Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Berhampur has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Berhampur University for scientific and educational cooperation which will help the ITI students achieve excellence in education.

The MoU signed through virtual mode is claimed to be the first in the country between an ITI and a university. This will also help the university students to learn about the creation of waste to wealth.

The MoU was signed by ITI, Berhampur Principal Rajat Kumar Panigrahy and Berhampur University Vice-Chancellor Geetanjali Das. It will help the two institutes exchange practical skills, academic knowledge & information, conduct joint research activities and organise seminars and workshops.

Reghu G, Director, Technical education and Training, Additional Secretary Tapan Kumar Satapathy, skill development department were present during the signing of the MoU.

CONTRACTORS, NOT SHGs IN MUKTA YOJANA Ganjam Collector told to keep tab

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, August 21: Contractors have been engaged for projects under Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan Yojana (MUKTA Yojana) allegedly in urban areas of Ganjam district. As per guidelines, women Self Help Groups (SHGs) were mandated to work under it.

After such blatant violation of guidelines, the Housing and Urban Development department has taken the issue seriously and directed the Collector to keep a close watch on it.

Besides, officials were warned of action if they are caught helping the contractors in the project works.

It was alleged that contractors are working in the name of SHGs while BeMC Commissioner, executive officers of municipalities and NACs, engineers and accountants are helping them.

Complaints in this regard were received by the department. Commissioner cum Additional Chief Secretary of the Housing



It was alleged that contractors are working in the name of SHGs while BeMC Commissioner, executive officers of municipalities and NACs, engineers and accountants are helping them

and Urban Development department G Mathi Vathanan said this at a review meeting here.

He has directed the Collector to monitor the MUKTA projects in urban areas.

"If officials are found to have helped the contractors, they will be either removed from jobs or sacked," he added.

“ If officials are found to have helped the contractors, they will be either removed from jobs or sacked

G MATHI VATHANAN | COMMISSIONER CUM ADDL CHIEF SECY, H&UD DEPT

been released.

It was alleged that BeMC Commissioner, executive officers of the municipalities and NACs are unable to put forth project proposals. The Collector was asked to lay focus on it.

In BeMC, 370 projects under MUKTA have been approved while work of only 68 projects has been completed.

Besides, 355 projects were sanctioned for Hinjili municipality and 16 other NACs while only 27 projects were completed.

The aim of involving the SHGs in the MUKTA projects is to financially empower women.

Under MUKTA, projects like open air gyms, parks, water conservation, walking tracks and vending zones are being set up.

Youth assaulted, paraded on road



Senapati said.

The incident occurred when locals caught up a youth running away after allegedly stealing mobile phone. They ganged up and brutally assaulted him till blood oozed out from his mouth. Not to rest with that, they tied his hand with rope and paraded him for over two kilometre on road with on-lookers shooting video of the act on mobile phones instead of rescuing him. Meanwhile, the youth has rejected the charges of theft while residents have demanded a probe into the case.

On being informed, police rescued the youth from the spot and brought him over to the police station. "A probe is underway and no case has been registered yet in the police station," IIC Birendra

200 villages marooned in Bhadrak; crops in 16k ha damaged

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak/Balasore, August 21: Amid torrential rains induced by low pressure, over 200 villages in six blocks of Bhadrak district were marooned while river Baitarani was swelling due to heavy rains in the upstream areas.

According to the preliminary report of the district administration, floods have damaged crops in 16,554 hectares of farmland.

Since Saturday, the water levels in all rivers in the districts of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak and Balasore have started swelling.

Baitarani is flowing above the danger mark at Akhuapada. Low-lying areas under Dhamnagar block were inundated even as water level of Salandi, Genguti and Kochila kept on rising.

Besides, scores of villages in

Basudevpur and Tihidi blocks were again flooded due to entry of floodwater from Kansabansa, Kanchudi, Dhala, Mantei, Gamiel, Reba Kapali and Salandi rivers.

People in Palasahi panchayat were panicked after two cracks appeared on Baitarani river embankment. As water level is increasing, there is every possibility of the embankment giving in to force of floodwater.

Some roads in Bankasahi panchayat were inundated.

Junior engineer Kishore Chandra Nayak of the water resources department said that the department had made arrangements of sand packets at the cracks.

In another development, a 200-foot stretch of Genguti embankment in Dhamnagar area has caved in making it vulnerable for total collapse in case of more rain. As many



as 70 families were worried and in panic over the situation. Locals alleged that due to sub-standard work, the embankment was prone to collapse.

In Balasore, water levels in many

CROCS IN KENDRAPARA RIVERS STRIKE FEARS

KENDRAPARA: Floodwaters in the Mahanadi river system have receded in parts of Kendrapara district. However, as many as 56 villages in the district are still marooned.

People are more panicked over entry of reptiles in various rivers. Crocodiles and snakes swarming in seven rivers like Gobari, Birupa, Paika, Brahmani, Kanthia nallah and Chitrotala have become a cause of fear for residents. Reports of snakes entering



houses came in from Aul, Rajnagar, Rajkanika, Pattamundi, Mahakalapara, Marshaghai and Garadpur.

Even crocodiles were found on farmlands. Cases of snakebite were also reported in some areas.

have been inundated in low-lying areas. Sonar river is also in spate. Areas like Nijampur, Mandarpur, Durgadevi, Badapal, Dahapada, Sindhia and Kaincha panchayats under Remuna block are facing

imminent danger of floods.

Chandipur, Srikona and Gudupahi under Sadar block were inundated by floodwater. Mathani, Dudnihansa and Baharda localities under Basta block were flooded.

Minor girl killed in wall collapse

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, August 21: A 10-year-old girl died after a wall of her house, soaked in rainwater, collapsed on her at Raghunathpur under ward no-22 of this town, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Muni, daughter of Sanjay Behera of the area. Police registered a case of unnatural death and sent the body for post-mortem. The girl was playing on the verandah of her house when a portion of a wall collapsed on her. Family members rescued and rushed her to the Pandit Raghunath Murmu (PRM) Medical College and Hospital where the doctors pronounced her dead. Locals have demanded financial assistance for the poor bereaved family.



Protesting the deplorable condition, residents of Mahima village under Koksara block in Kalahandi district planted paddy saplings on the muddy road to their village, Sunday

NOVEL PROTEST

6-year-old boy electrocuted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 21: A six-year-old boy was electrocuted after accidentally coming in contact with an earthing wire which was conducting live electric current at Sector-A under Bandhamunda police limits in Steel City, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Abhishek Parmanik, son of Raju Parmanik, a railways employee and resident of quarters no A/189 at Sector-A block of Bandhamunda.

The mishap occurred when he had gone to collect flowers from his backyard. Locals and family members rushed him to Bandhamunda Railways Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem.

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai- 400 070. CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639. Website: www.piramalfinance.com

Branch Address: Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) - 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No. 00001956 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Prasanna Kumar Swain (Borrower) Pradeep Kumar Swain (Co Borrower 1)	29-07-2022 / ₹ 689184 / - (₹ Six lakh Eighty Nine Thousand One Hundred Eighty Four Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No 428, Khata No 46, Mouza Hakapada, Ps- Delanga, Jenapur Near Hanuman Temple, Delanga Pipili Puri Orissa - 752016
(LC No. 00001691 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Satrugna Rout (Borrower) Saumya Ranjan Rout (Co Borrower 1)	29-07-2022 / ₹ 1106366 / - (₹ Eleven lakh Six Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (09-06-2022)	Khata No-450/42 & 196 Plot No 223/224 Mouza Jayapur, Near Jayapur School, Puri Puri Orissa - 752016
(LC No. 00001336 of Bhubaneswar Branch) Kabindra Guru (Borrower) Sobha Dei (Co Borrower 1) Upendra Guru (Co Borrower 2)	28-07-2022 / ₹ 2184865 / - (₹ Twenty one lakh Eighty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Five Only) NPA (09-06-2022)	Plot No-159 (P) , Khata No- 357 Mouza- Bolakana Po- Guali Pada Delanga Puri Orissa - 752016

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: 22-08-2022
Place: Orissa

Sd/-
(Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited



Change yourself if you wish to change the world.

THE MOTHER



Taliban Year

Afghanistan no longer hogs the limelight the way it did for months after the Taliban took over the country August 15 last year. This could probably be due to the instability that has gripped the world in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But, heart-rending scenes are being witnessed on the streets of Kabul where women and children are begging for a single loaf of bread in front of bakeries. The rest of the country is facing a similar plight as famine stares in the face. This is the only country in the world where 14 million women have been thrown out of schools, colleges and working places and virtually locked up in their homes. Only a handful of women are being allowed to work so that health care, police and aviation security systems do not flounder. The situation demands that humanitarian aid be stepped up to prevent the country from falling into the abyss of poverty, complete lack of education for women and rule by gun-toting bigots known for their savagery.

When the Taliban returned to power last year after a gap of 20 years, none believed that they had really changed, though there was a faint glimmer of hope that they must have learnt a lesson from the brutality and mediaeval outlook for which they earned notoriety during their previous rule. The facade they maintained that they would not be as oppressive and bigoted as they had been was only because of the refusal of the international community to accord recognition to their government and the regime's keenness to get billions of dollars frozen in banks abroad, especially in the USA.

But, barely a year later, the Taliban have proved the sceptics right. All forms of freedom of expression – a free Press and judiciary – have been muzzled. Women are banned from education and allowed to be out on the streets only when it is absolutely necessary with the condition that they can only travel with a male family escort, veiled from head to toe. For any violation of the fiat the male members of the 'offending' woman's family would have to pay a heavy price. Many former employees of the overthrown regime are harassed, forced into hiding or exile.

What has shocked and shaken the international community is the treatment the Taliban regime is meting out to the womenfolk. As the UN Under-Secretary-General and Women Executive Director Sima Bahous said, it is a reflection of the character of the regime that there are "no women in the Taliban's cabinet and no Ministry of Women's Affairs." This shows how women's right to political participation has been curbed. This is having disastrous effects on the aspirations of Afghan women who have, since the fall of the first Taliban regime in 2001, become accustomed to receiving education and shaping their own destiny.

No one is in doubt that the empty promises of the new masters of Kabul were intended only to extract international recognition of their government and ensure flow of billions of dollars of the previous government's reserves that were frozen abroad and foreign aid for building infrastructure. No country in the world, not even Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has, so far, obliged them.

The only good news from Afghanistan is, as its former President Hamid Karzai said, that the Taliban have brought an end to widespread fighting and conflict. The warlords in different regions, who during the previous regime behaved as if they were law unto themselves, are now tamed. Otherwise, for most Afghans, the first year under the Taliban's rule has been marked by increased levels of poverty and unemployment with over one million people losing their jobs. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has warned that 97 per cent of the Afghan population could sink into poverty before the end of 2022. Incomes have dropped so much that the World Bank in April said about 37 per cent of Afghan households did not have enough money to buy food, while 33 per cent could afford food but nothing more. The global supply chain disruption and runaway food prices due to the war in Ukraine make famine in the country look like almost inevitable.

Afghanistan is fast turning out to be a failed state. This may encourage the ISIS to begin its nefarious designs there. The international community can ill afford the prospect of such an outfit taking over Afghanistan.



Shivaji Sarkar

FOR BETTER SOCIAL RETURNS THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS THE IDEAL

Public sector banks (PSB) are critically needed today as these were in 1969, is virtually the message that the Reserve Bank of India has given. Its observation that privatisation can do more harm is almost a warning.

Independent reports suggest severe weakness in seven private banks. From 1969 onwards, a 2018 report says, 36 private banks, including 10 during last 20 years, have been put under moratorium, due to mismanagement. The RBI report is almost an echo of the views expressed by the late Pranab Mukherjee as then Finance Minister in 2008 after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. He triumphantly said the country was able to weather the global financial crisis on the back of its strong banks. History proved that later the same government encouraged undue incentives of the corporate post 2009. It led to an avoidable critical non-performing assets (NPA) situation. The RBI is right that the banks are not at fault but extra-banking decisions have led to many crisis-like situations and unwanted write offs.

The national psyche has yet to accept the move to privatise banks. The bank employees went on strike a number of times during the past one year. The recent dilution of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) equities has only resulted in its share prices losing shine. The RBI paper is almost a counter to the policy paper of National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) Director General Poonam Gupta and former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya which recommended privatisation of all banks except the State Bank of India.

Schemes of the Narendra Modi government such as MUDRA, Skill India, Jan Dhan Yojana, transferring of PM Kisan and other direct benefits were deftly handled because the banks are in social control. Demonetisation would not have been possible had not the public sector banks efficiently managed it.

The Indian financial sector un-

FOCUS BANK PRIVATISATION

PSBs BADLY NEEDED



The second volume of the official history of the RBI describes bank nationalisation as the single-most important economic policy decision taken by any government after 1947

derwent a tectonic shift, when the Indira Gandhi government nationalised the 14 biggest commercial lenders July 19, 1969. The common man, the poorest, the students and the needy entrepreneurs got access to finance, which the private house controlled banks had denied. It paid Congress political dividend in 1971 elections. People in general welcomed it but gradually aberrations set in as politicians could control the banking decisions. The second volume of the official history of the RBI describes bank nationalisation as the single-most important economic policy decision taken by any government after 1947. Central bank historians say that in terms of the impact, even the economic reforms of 1991 pale in comparison.

The RBI bulletin critically observes that PSBs have given yeoman service to the stabilisation and growth of different sectors. They have higher degree of market confidence, better financial inclusion objectives, labour cost efficiency and handled COVID-19 shock well.

The first major loan-waiver by the Janata Party government led by the then Prime Minister VP Singh cost the exchequer ₹10,000

crore yielding to the demands of agitating farmers in 1990. The second one of ₹60,000 crore was by the UPA government in 2008. Thirteen states followed it in the subsequent years to give relief to farmers. This was criticised but there was wide support too as the write-off of big loans of the industry too became the norm for decades. During 2004 to 2014, the UPA government wrote off loans worth ₹2.20 lakh crore. In subsequent years another ₹19.2 lakh crore of large loans were written off. Banks say these are totally unrecoverable and excluded from balance sheets.

Yes, these have been problems. The PSBs suffered a grievous injury when they ended up with a huge amount of gross NPAs or bad loans, which peaked at ₹8.96 trillion in March 2018, 14.6 per cent of total loans. This situation led a section in the government to mull over privatising the banks, starting with four major banks - Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Indian Overseas Bank - despite the latest recapitalisation of ₹15,000 crore.

The premise that private sector banks are doing better is being

disputed by the RBI paper. It highlights that the private banks have failed to cater to the customers of the rural and semi-urban areas to date and customers from such locations are relying heavily on PSBs for banking. It turns out that even after bank nationalisation and with more stringent regulation of the banking system by the RBI, private banks continue to fail.

Some of the major reasons, as identified by the RBI paper, why PSBs can serve the country better than private banks are - these have better financial inclusion, superior credit system, and better efficiency. The paper hints at a possible convoluted financial engagement if the entire sector is privatised, as the NITI Aayog suggests. It says that private banks are oriented to profits while the public banks work on thin spread and serve a larger section of the society. This implies that if the sector is privatised many government programmes as well as social welfare targets might get hit resulting in social imbalance. The RBI paper notes that despite weak balance sheet, resource utilisation of the PSBs had been more efficient and that gave them the edge in weathering the COVID-19 pandemic shock remarkably well.

Once privatised, the large social wealth would be beyond the reach of the people and the government. This was the problem that the government faced most during the 1960s. If these banks are sold out again to similar people, many of whom are large defaulters, the countercyclical role of the banks would suffer the most. This apart, it might cause severe fluctuations in lending rates affecting most government programmes. It may not be good for the PSBs themselves as abstract factors can affect their share prices, market sentiments, valuation and may have three risks - interest rate, regulatory, price-to-earnings ratio and price-to-book value. For better social returns the public sector is the ideal and privatisation is not the panacea.

INFA

WISDOM CORNER

You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help other people get what they want. **ZIG ZIGLAR**

It's in responsibility that most people find the meaning that sustains them through life. It's not in happiness. It's not in impulsive pleasure. **JORDAN PETERSON**

Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence. **HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

WORDSWORTH

■ Balderdash

The standard dictionary definition – senseless talk or writing; nonsense – may seem anodyne, lacking the fire and passion that so often comes attached to the word. It's often reserved for circumstances in which common-or-garden invective would be thought inadequate. This has been so for two centuries. Here is the grandly-named Victorian historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, writing in a footnote in his History of England from James I: "I am almost ashamed to quote such nauseous balderdash". One of the great wielders of balderdash – it seems somehow to be akin to a bludgeon – was the American journalist HL Mencken; he was in fine form castigating "the general run of business and professional men" in his book In Defense of Women: "Their very capacity to master and retain such balderdash as constitutes their stock in trade is proof of their inferior mentality". It's a pity that such a fine word should come of unknown stock, but we really don't have a clear idea where it comes from. Some argue its origin lies in the Welsh baldorddus, idle noisy talk or chatter (though that is pronounced very differently), while others point to related words in Dutch, Icelandic and Norwegian, such as the Dutch balderen, to roar or thunder. It appears around the time of Shakespeare with the meaning of froth or frothy liquid, or a jumbled mixture of liquids, such as milk and beer, or beer and wine. Only in the latter part of the seventeenth century did it move towards its modern meaning, through the idea of speech or writing that is a senseless jumble, hence nonsense or trash. It has also been used as a verb, meaning to make a jumbled mixture of ingredients or, in plain English, to adulterate. Tobias Smollett used it in his Travels through France and Italy in 1766 to refer to French wine: "That which is made by the peasants, both red and white, is generally genuine: but the wine-merchants of Nice brew and balderdash, and even mix it with pigeons' dung and quick-lime".

LOL

Excess billing hours

A lawyer died and arrived at the pearly gates. To his dismay, there were thousands of people ahead of him in line to see St. Peter. But, to his surprise, St. Peter left his desk at the gate and came down the long line to where the lawyer was standing. St. Peter greeted him warmly. Then St. Peter and one of his assistants took



the lawyer by the hands and guided him up to the front of the line into a comfortable chair by his desk. The lawyer said, "I don't mind all this attention, but what makes me so special?" St. Peter replied, "Well, I have added up all the hours for which you billed your clients, and by my calculation you must be about 193 years old!"

SPECTRUM NET-ZERO EMISSIONS

A bold & realistic energy transition



Sultan Al Jaber

OUR ULTIMATE GOAL SHOULD BE TO HOLD BACK EMISSIONS, NOT PROGRESS

Record growth in renewables, representing over 80% of all new power-generating capacity last year, is the clearest sign yet that the energy transition is gathering pace. But recent events have shown that unplugging the current energy system before we have built a sufficiently robust alternative puts both economic and climate progress at risk – and calls into question whether we can ensure a just transition that is equitable to all.

A successful energy transition must be built on progress for the economy and the climate together. It must be based on scientific, economic, and engineering facts, appreciate the multiple dilemmas and challenging trade-offs, and accelerate the deployment of practical solutions. And for that, we need an inclusive approach that leverages the experience of all sectors of society and, critically, does not exclude the energy sector.

The world was already facing a profound energy-supply crunch as economies began to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Russia-Ukraine conflict then made a tight market even tighter and forced countries to reassess their urgent near-term strategic energy needs. So the message for governments should be clear: Policies aimed at divesting from hydro-

carbons too soon, without adequate viable alternatives, are self-defeating. They will undermine energy security, erode economic stability and leave less income available to invest in the energy transition.

What's needed is a realistic new strategy that is practical, pro-growth, and pro-climate. The strategy needs to appreciate the complexity of energy and industrial systems, and that the scale of the transition required is colossal, requiring greater alignment and collaboration on everything from capital allocation to product design, public policy, and behavioural change. This means examining the demand side of the energy system first. Wind and solar power are making great advances, but most energy is used in heavy industry, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and agriculture. These harder-to-abate sectors have the biggest effect on climate and thus require more investment, starting now.

While renewable-energy investment globally exceeded \$365 billion last year, combined investment in energy storage, carbon capture, and the hydrogen value chain was only \$12 billion. That is not nearly enough. The energy transition is estimated to need more than \$250 trillion of investment over the next 30 years.

Obviously, no single country, much less a single company, can foot this bill.

But financing isn't the only issue. Energy transitions take time. While wind and solar accounted for the vast majority of all new power-generating capacity in 2021, they still comprise only 4% of today's energy mix. As the world's energy needs grow ever larger, maintaining global energy security will require oil and gas to remain a significant part of the mix for decades to come.

That is why we must do more now to reduce the impact of oil and gas on the climate. Producers, governments, and the private sector must work together to make sure that each new unit of output is less carbon-intensive than the last. That will require supportive fiscal policies through tax incentives, operational efficiency via technology, greater commitments to reduce methane and flaring, and significantly greater investment in carbon-capture technologies.

These realities are guiding the United Arab Emirates' approach to the energy transition, which involves continuing to meet global needs today while investing in the new energy systems of tomorrow. The UAE has three of the world's largest single-site solar plants, has

invested in renewable projects in over 40 developed and developing countries, and plans to increase its renewables portfolio to 100 gigawatts by 2030. We have also invested in nuclear power and are laying the foundations of the hydrogen value chain, which is key to achieving net-zero emissions.

While the UAE remains a reliable supplier of some of the world's least carbon-intensive oil and gas, we will reduce its intensity by a further 25% before the end of this decade. And, as the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to announce a 2050 net-zero strategic initiative, we are decarbonising our economy sector by sector. We have established the region's first industrial-scale carbon-capture programme, and all the electricity consumed by our national oil company now comes from zero-carbon nuclear and solar power.

If we are going to make good on the pledges of the Paris agreement, we need to deliver results now for the climate and the economy. Our ultimate goal should be to hold back emissions, not progress.

The writer is the United Arab Emirates' Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology.
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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Uphold scientific temper

Sir, Upholding scientific temper is a Constitutional provision in our country. Science and rationality are opposed to myth and magic. Nowadays, tele-serials are full of supernatural elements. Black magic is the principal theme in these tele-serials. It may create nervous excitement and thrill for some time, but, ultimately, it ruins the mind and intellectual faculties of young generation. Supernatural tales are meant for creating horror and awe among the viewers. They hardly build one's personality and character. Such imaginary things are hardly happening in real life. Instead of instilling courage and strength, they rather lead to stress and anxiety among viewers. Writers and producers of tele-serials have a moral duty towards the society.
Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

A new low

Sir, The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav release of the 11 convicts involved in the infamous Bilkis Bano case marks a new low in Gujarat politics. The criminals raped three women, including a pregnant Bilkis Bano and murdered her three-year-old child and six men March 3, 2002. The remission granted by the Gujarat government, based on recommendations made by a committee set up on a reference by the Supreme Court on a plea by a convict, couldn't have been possible without the Centre's sanction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech about fighting misogyny and respecting and empowering women makes one wonder about its significance.
NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Managing e-waste

Sir, The management of e-waste is becoming a major issue for the nation. In order to control the e-waste, a few regulations were made. Recent regulations from the Central Pollution Control Board and the Indian government drafted that electronics manufacturing businesses have to register on their websites and specify their yearly goals for e-waste generation and collection. By 2023, these businesses must ensure that at least 60 per cent of their e-waste is collected and recycled, with the goal of increasing that number to 70 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively, by 2024 and 2025. But companies that don't meet annual targets outlined in regulations don't appear to face harsh penalties. Companies that violate these rules ought to be subject to sanctions stringently. Therefore, a steering committee led by the CPCB chairperson is needed to monitor and control the overall execution of these regulations.
Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR



Prime Minister Narendra Modi should take states into confidence and work with them to strengthen the economy
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

VAGHELA LAUNCHES PARTY

Veteran politician and former Gujarat Chief Minister Shankersinh Vaghela Sunday floated a new party, Praja Shakti Democratic Party. His party will contest the upcoming Assembly elections in Gujarat



of the day quote

Administrative officers have an important role to play in strengthening the country's delivery mechanism and taking the benefits of welfare schemes to the poor and to every needy person

BANDARU DATTATREYA | HARYANA GOVERNOR

1.3 crore citizens of the Union territory wholeheartedly participated in the recently concluded Amarnath Yatra and set a new benchmark for its rich cultural tradition

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The Centre should extend liberal financial assistance to Andhra Pradesh as the state suffered due to its bifurcation

JUSTICE NV RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

US drones to help India fortify China border

The hunter-killer drones are being procured for the three services as they can carry out a variety of roles, including maritime surveillance, anti-submarine warfare and over-the-horizon targeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: India is in an "advanced stage" of negotiations with the US to procure 30 MQ-9B Predator armed drones for over USD 3 billion to crank up its surveillance apparatus along the frontier with China as well as in the Indian Ocean region, people familiar with the developments said on Sunday.

The MQ-9B drone is a variant of the MQ-9 "Reaper" which was used to launch a modified version of the Hellfire missile that eliminated al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in the heart of Kabul last month. Authoritative sources in the defence establishment said talks between New Delhi and Washington are underway for the government-to-government procurement of the General Atomics-built drones, and rejected reports that the deal is off the table.

Dr Vivek Lall, the Chief Executive for the General Atomics Global Corporation, said that the acquisition programme is at an advanced stage of discussions between the two governments. "We understand that the MQ-9B acquisition programme is at an advanced stage of discussion between the US and Indian governments," he said.

"Any questions on those discussions should be addressed specifically to the respective governments. From a company perspective, General Atomics is ready to support India and values our longtime relationship," Lall added.

The hunter-killer drones are being procured for the three services as they can carry out a variety of roles, including maritime



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

surveillance, anti-submarine warfare and over-the-horizon targeting. The high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) drones are capable of remaining airborne for over 35 hours and can carry four Hellfire missiles and around 450 kgs of bombs.

The MQ-9B has two variants SkyGuardian and its sibling SeaGuardian. The sources said the talks are focused on sorting out certain issues relating to cost, weapons package and technology sharing.

It is learnt that the procurement proposal figured in the fourth two-plus-two foreign and defence ministerial dialogue between India and the US in Washington in April. In 2020, the Indian Navy had taken on lease two MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones from General Atomics for one year for surveillance in the Indian Ocean. The lease period has been extended subsequently.

The Indian Navy has been bolstering its surveillance mechanism to monitor growing Chinese activities including frequent forays

by PLA warships in the Indian Ocean Region. When asked about the two drones, Lall said they have performed "very well" and flew close to 3,000 hours in support of the Indian Navy's maritime and land border patrol objectives.

"General Atomics has supported India over the past three years by providing two MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft as part of a Company Owned/Company Operated (COCO) lease agreement," he said.

"Over the past six months, close to 3,000 hours have been flown in support of the Indian Navy's maritime and land border patrol objectives, covering over 14 million square miles of operating area," he said. "Our Indian customer has been impressed by the MQ-9's over-the-horizon ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) support for surface units and Indian warships, as well as the exceptional endurance and operational availability of the platform," the top executive added.

Anand quits Himachal Congress post

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 21: Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma, who quit as the chief of the party panel for the upcoming Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, on Sunday said that he had no choice but to resign "due to continuous insults and exclusion" while asserting he will remain a committed party member.

"I have resigned with a heavy heart from the Chairmanship of the Steering Committee of the Congress for the Himachal Elections. Reiterating that I am a lifelong congressman and remain firm on my convictions

"Committed to Congress ideology that runs in my blood, let there be no doubts about this! However, given the continuing exclusion and insults, as a self-respecting person-I was left with no choice" he said in a series of tweets. Sources close to Sharma said he has sent his letter to Congress President Sonia Gandhi after being sidelined from the working of the party unit in the state.

Rajeev Shukla, the party's state in-charge, has not commented on the issue, and Congress sources said they did not know about the development. Sharma's resignation comes in wake of Ghulam Nabi Azad quitting as the party's J&K campaign committee head.

Along with Azad, Sharma is also among the prominent leaders of the G-23 group, which has demanded sweeping reforms in the party.



CBI denies issuing LOC against Sisodia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

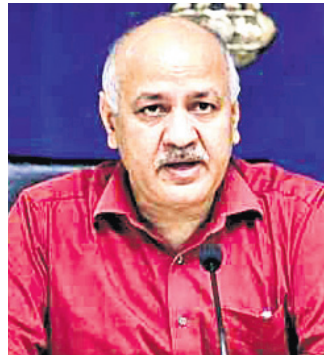
New Delhi, August 21: Facing the heat in the excise policy "corruption" case, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday claimed the CBI issued a Look Out Circular against him, but agency officials denied it and said the LOCs were only against eight "private" persons named in the FIR.

The Aam Aadmi Party mocked the Centre, accusing it of playing the "CBI-ED game" every morning instead of focusing on problems of inflation and unemployment, while the BJP claimed that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is getting nervous as the roots of the scam are leading to his doorstep. The Congress demanded the resignation of Sisodia, saying the issue at hand was the liquor policy and AAP should stop "hiding behind" the education policy debate.

Claiming the CBI found "nothing" during the raid at his residence on Friday, Sisodia said the agency was doing a drama by issuing a Look Out Circular (LOC) against him when he is "roaming freely" in Delhi and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi if he is unable to find him.

Sisodia is among 15 people and entities named in an FIR registered by the CBI in connection with alleged irregularities in the implementation of the Delhi excise policy. CBI officials, however, said no LOCs have been issued against four public servants named in the FIR, including Sisodia and three former excise department officials.

The CBI issued Look Out Circulars against eight private persons named in the FIR, they said, adding the agency had not felt the need for LOCs against



public servants so far because they cannot leave the country without intimidating the government. In an interview, Sisodia said the Centre is trying to stop chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has emerged as a national alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, by sending the CBI after his cabinet colleagues.

The AAP leader said that they are not scared of any investigation and asserted that the scams being alleged by BJP leaders are nothing but "shagufe" (lies). The BJP and AAP have been attacking each other with a flurry of press conferences and tweets

after the Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday raided 31 locations including Sisodia's residence in connection with alleged irregularities in the Delhi government's Excise Policy 2021-22.

Addressing a press conference, the Aam Aadmi Party's chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj hit out at the Modi government over the alleged LOC. "The Narendra Modi government started the day by issuing a Look Out circular against Manish Sisodia and sharing the news with all the newspapers and television channels. It is a very serious matter," he said.

SHORT TAKES

Mehbooba placed under house arrest

Srinagar: Former Chief Minister and president of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti was placed under house arrest Sunday in her official residence in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar city. Suhail Bukhari, spokesman of the PDP said that she was scheduled to go to Chotigam village of Shopian district on Sunday where terrorists killed a local Kashmiri Pandit Sunil Kumar on August 16.

23 AIIMS to be renamed

New Delhi: The government has firmed up a proposal to give specific names to all the AIIMS, including that in Delhi, based on regional heroes, freedom fighters, historical events or monuments of the area or their distinct geographical identity. Majority of the 23 All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) have submitted a list of names, after the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare sought suggestions from them in this matter, official sources said.

Pak intruder held

Jammu: A Pakistani intruder was arrested after being shot at and injured by Army troops near the LoC in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, a police officer said. Senior Superintendent of Police, Rajouri, Mohammad Aslam said Army troops guarding the LoC in Sehar Makri area of Nowshera sector noticed suspicious movement of an infiltrator who was challenged but he started to run. "On this, the intruder was fired upon and was then intercepted in an injured condition," the officer said.

Bihar CM's convoy attacked in Patna

Patna: Stones were hurled at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's cavalcade in Patna Sunday, following which 11 people were arrested, officials said. Kumar was not present in the cavalcade, which was on the way to Gaya for his scheduled visit on Monday, they said. The incident happened around 5 pm at Sohdi Mode in Gauri Chuk police station area when a road blockade was underway over the death of a local man, they added. "When the protestors saw the advance cavalcade of the chief minister, they hurled stones, causing minor damage to three-four vehicles," Patna district magistrate Chandrasekhar Singh said. Soon, a police force was sent to the area and the mob was dispersed, he said. "A case has been registered against 15 people and police have already arrested 11 people," he added.

Lumpy skin disease kills over 7,300 cattle



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ease emerged in Bangladesh in July 2019.

According to the official, India too saw the first case of LSD in the same year, 2019, in eastern states especially West Bengal and Odisha. But this year, the disease has been reported in western and northern states as well as in Andaman Nicobar.

"First, LSD was reported in Gujarat and it has spread to eight states/union territories now. Over 1.85 cattle have been affected so far and more than 7,300 cattle have died since the outbreak of the disease in July," the official said.

About 74,325 cattle have been affected in Punjab so far, while 58,546 in Gujarat, 43,962 in Rajasthan, 6,385 in Jammu and Kashmir, 1,300 in Uttarakhnad, 532 in Himachal Pradesh, 260 in Andaman & Nicobar, he said and added the data from Madhya Pradesh is awaited.

According to the ministry's data, 7,300 cattle have died so far, out of which 3,359 animals died in Punjab, 2,111 in Rajasthan, 1,679 in Gujarat, 62 in Jammu and Kashmir, 38 Himachal Pradesh, 36 in Uttarakhnad and 29 in Andaman Nicobar.



No takers for now

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar may be a new torch bearer to unite like-minded Opposition parties against the BJP. But it is a long shot as many Opposition parties are signing their own tunes. Neither West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee nor Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan have issued a formal statement welcoming developments in Bihar. They have not even

congratulated Nitish Kumar. Andhra Chief Minister Y Jaganmohan Reddy also opted to keep quiet. The BSP has not reacted to these developments. Mayawati has been lending support to the NDA on crucial moments inside and outside Parliament. A senior Janata Dal (U) leader said on the condition of anonymity, "Many Prime Ministerial candidates in the Opposition are rattled though Nitish ji has repeatedly said that such ambitions are not on his mind." Kumar also allayed such apprehensions saying, "It's (PM's post) not on my mind. No matter what people say, even if people close to me say it."

Gubernatorial changes on the anvil

As Presidential and Vice Presidential elections and Independence Day celebrations over, the stage is now set for gubernatorial changes. There is talk of a Cabinet reshuffle too but it may still take some more time for the party as to fix nuts

and bolts in many states. An exercise is already afoot for gubernatorial changes as tenure of five Governors and two Lieutenant Governors is coming to an end. As a matter of policy, the Prime Minister prefers to appoint senior politicians as Governors and retired civil servants as Lieutenant Governors.

Uddhav's MPs are at a crossroad

With fire-brand leader Sanjay Raut in judicial custody, thanks to the Enforcement Directorate, the Uddhav Sena MPs virtually went into a silent mode in Parliament. Be it Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha, it was the same story in just concluded session. There was no one is around to keep the pot boiling. Even on the debate of price rise in Rajya Sabha, none of the MPs belonging to the Uddhav faction spoke. Gone are the days when these MPs were roaring with each passing day in Parliament and

outside. Even the participation of Sena MPs during the Question Hour lacked biting spirit. Insiders say that the uncertainty will continue until the Supreme Court decides the battle between the two Senas.

Abhishek on top

If one person looks pretty after the Enforcement Directorate's raids on Mamata Banerjee's most powerful minister Partha Chatterjee, he is Abhishek Banerjee. The TMC's Lok Sabha MP and Mamata's nephew had been against Partha from day one and as a protest, did not attend the swearing-in-ceremony when Partha Chatterjee was inducted again into the ministry in 2016 and also in 2021. With the ED seizing massive cash haul and benami properties in raids, Mamata has gone on somewhat on the backfoot. Though Abhishek and his wife are also under the ED scanner, they have got protection from the court. Now Mamata has nobody to fall back upon but Abhishek Banerjee.

CLOSE WATCH



Army soldiers guard near the Line of Control in Poonch district

PTI PHOTO

Now, Tejashwi projects Nitish as PM candidate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could emerge as a "strong candidate" for Prime Minister in 2024 if opposition parties agreed to consider him for the job, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said Sunday.

Nitish Kumar, who recently swapped alliance partners by dumping the Bharatiya Janata Party and returning -- for a second time -- to the Rashtriya Janata Dal-led Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, enjoys "immense goodwill" on the ground, Yadav said in an interview.

The coming to power of the Mahagathbandhan, which now comprises the JD(U), the RJD, the Congress and several small parties in Bihar, "augurs well for opposition unity", said Yadav who has made a comeback as deputy chief minister in Bihar's new government.

"It signals that most of the Opposition parties recognise the larger challenge before the country -- the hegemony of the BJP, where on the back of money, media, and (administrative) machinery power, they are determined to stamp out all diversity from the Indian society as well as from the political spectrum," the RJD leader said. It is also a question of regional representation and social justice and development issues at the level of states, Yadav said.

9 civilians injured in grenade attack

Srinagar: Nine civilians were injured after terrorists hurled a grenade in the Nishat area of the city here Sunday, officials said. The attack took place outside the famous Mughal garden on the banks of the Dal Lake, they said. The officials said nine civilians were injured. Seven of them were taken to the SMHS hospital and two to the SKIMS hospital here, they said. Their condition is stated to be stable, the officials added.

BATTLE FOR MUMBAI CORPORATION

Shinde, BJP attempt to undercut Sena by luring 'Govinda' troupes

Mumbai, August 21: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's announcement that Dahi Handi will be recognised as an adventure sport has drawn criticism, but it is also being seen as an attempt to cut into the base of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena ahead of Mumbai civic polls.

Shinde, who started his political career as an ordinary Shiv Sena worker in neighbouring Thane and rose through the ranks, rebelled against Thackeray in June this year and brought down the Thackeray-led Sena-NCP-Congress government in Maharashtra. Shinde then became Chief Minister with the support of rebel Sena MLAs and the BJP. The coming elections to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, the country's richest civic body, will be a do-or-die affair for the Uddhav-led faction. The Sena has been in power in the BMC for several years. Dahi Handi, during which teams of participants form human pyramids and break earthen pots containing curd or buttermilk hung high above the ground, is an important part of the Krishna Janmashtami festival in Maharashtra. But in big cities, especially in Mumbai and Thane, Dahi Handi events have also attracted politicians as a way of distributing patronage at the local level.

"Govindas are an asset for a political party to establish its influence in a locality. Economically it is not very expensive for any politician or party to fund them. They came in handy at the time of election. For a long time, the Shiv Sena has retained their loyalty and thus maintained its dominance in street politics," said a political analyst. In rural Maharashtra, politicians try to control the networks of cooperative sugar

With Dahi Handi being recognised as a sport, its participants, popularly called 'Govindas', will become eligible for a quota in government jobs. Activists and political commentators ridiculed the move Friday while political parties were muted in their opposition. The decision puts the Thackeray faction of the Sena in a quandary, because the Govinda troupes, made up predominantly of lower-middle class Marathi-speaking youngsters, come from its traditional support base.

mills, credit societies, banks and educational institutes as a way to consolidate their power base. "Similarly a vast network of Govinda troupes and Ganesh mandals has helped Shiv Sena to remain dominant in Mumbai and Thane. Such control also has a nuisance value and the Sena has utilised it," the analyst said. Hence, Chief Minister Shinde's attempt to woo Govinda troupes attached to the Sena pose a threat for the Uddhav faction. "They are getting medical (insurance) protection and the carrot of government jobs through sports quota is also being dangled before them," noted a Sena MLA from Mumbai who is loyal to Uddhav Thackeray, adding that this will make an impact during the BMC elections. Sena leader Sunil Prabhu, who belongs to the Thackeray faction, praised Shinde's decision in the Assembly but also said that it was "our demand for a long time that Govinda troupes be given medical protection and Dahi Handi be recognised as a sports activity." A former spokesperson of the Maharashtra unit of the BJP said the saffron party always had a strong base in the middle and upper middle classes, but not in the lower middle class.



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesha to install at a pandal for the upcoming Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

MP: Pranpur emerges as model rural tourism hub

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, August 21: Many areas of Madhya Pradesh are rich in art and culture but they have not been duly recognised. However, Pranpur in Ashoknagar district is a village which has become an example of rural tourism as its art and culture is reaching different parts of the country and the world, effecting a big change in the lives of the people there.

There is an interesting story of Pranpur taking shape as a rural tourism hub. Anand Upadhyay of Bird Volunteer Organisation says that he was engaged in the campaign to strengthen self help groups for women empowerment in Guna district around 2002. During this, the tourism project came to the fore, the purpose of this project was to contribute to rural livelihoods along with preserving rural handicrafts, ancient culture and historical heritage. A proposal was made and sent to the central government, which was approved.

Pranpur is a village where stone carving is the expertise of the people here. Apart from this, pottery and toys, metal crafts and wooden art are the means of livelihood for the people. There is also a large number of weavers here, besides music experts. Pranpur was an



SITUATED ALONG THE ROAD CONNECTING LALITPUR AND CHANDERI, PRANPUR IS SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL VALLEYS

APART FROM THE PEOPLE WHO ARE WELL VERSED IN THE ART OF HANDLOOM AND CLAY, THE LOCALS WHO MAKE STONE CARVINGS ALSO FASCINATE THE OUTSIDERS HERE

DESPITE ALL THIS, THIS VILLAGE CAME TO THE FORE ONLY IN 2005, AFTER IT WAS MADE A PART OF THE TOURISM PROJECT AND THE AMRAEE RURAL HERITAGE RESORT WAS BUILT NEAR HERE

apt village for this project of the Central Government's Tourism Department. The plan of a resort was implemented so that the people come here and after their stay, they get acquainted with the art. Five acres of land was found near

the village and mango trees were planted there. Rai dance is the folk dance here. After combining the two of them, the name 'Amraee' was coined for the Amraee Rural Heritage Resort.

In this resort, local artisans have made stone rooms in which tourists from far and wide stay. When this was built, attention was paid to providing employment to the local artisans. There was also an emphasis on not cutting a single tree, so it was built at a place which was lying vacant. Now this resort is run by the tourism development committee of the village. A local resident Hemant Jain explains that tourists from different parts of the country and the world, as well as children and groups who need to study, come here because it is difficult to find such a serene and picturesque view anywhere else.

Mentally-challenged girls excel in making Ganesh idols

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aurangabad, August 21: Twelve mentally challenged girls and women living at a care home in Maharashtra's Osmanabad district have learnt the art of making beautiful Lord Ganesh idols which they intend to sell in the market for the upcoming Ganpati festival.

This will definitely help improve their quality of life, an official from the zilla parishad said lauding the initiative taken by the 'Swadhar' care home, located in Alni village.

Currently, the care centre has 110 girls and women, majority of whom were brought in an ailing state and most of them were bed-ridden, the care home's head Shahaji Chavan told PTI. "They are orphans brought here from big cities like Pune and Mumbai. They are autistic and mentally challenged. They can't express their condition and 30 of them cannot even assess their urge to go to toilet," he said. But with time, they have started studying and 60 of them are now literate, he said. "While trying to find out their area of interest and talent, we decided to engage them in different activities. We found 12 of them were good at moulding clay



and mud and they started making the idols of Lord Ganesh," Chavan said. Working with mud, making body parts of an idol and attaching them properly are not easy tasks. But, these inmates are learning and they have now also started painting the idols on their own, he said. Two persons from the care centre work with the inmates and make them learn the art of making idols, he said.

"We try to make around 400 idols every year, but only half of them reach the market," Chavan said. Bharat Kamble, who heads differently-abled wing of the Osmanabad zilla parishad's social justice department, said the care home inmates have no relatives. "Their idols are as beautiful as made by professional artists," he said. The care home is not only making these inmates learn art, but also helping them with different therapies to make them stand on their feet, he said.

FARMERS' WOES

LOW GARLIC PRICES LEAVE BITTER TASTE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sehore (MP), August 21: A video of farmers throwing sacks full of garlic into a river in Madhya Pradesh, apparently due to low prices, surfaced on social media, prompting calls to allow export of the commodity.

A video showing farmers throwing bags of garlic into the Parvati river from a bridge dividing Sehore and Rajgarh districts went viral on social media during the day.

In the video posted on Twitter by the Kisan Swaraj Sangathan (KSS), a farmer can be heard saying they were throwing the bumper garlic crop as prices offered to them were abysmally low. The

clip is from Ashta town in Sehore district and had been sent by one of its workers there, a functionary of the KSS said. "Traders are purchasing garlic in the Rs 14 per kilogram range. However, cost of production per kilogram was Rs 30-40. We are facing huge losses and so are dumping the produce," farmer Jamshed Khan of Phulmogra village claimed.

The KSS said the cost of production of one quintal (100 kg) of garlic was between Rs 2,500-3,000, while it was fetching just Rs 300 to Rs 600 per quintal. Cultivators led by Suryapal Singh Thakur submitted a memorandum to the Jawar tehsildar after holding a protest.

TIES IN THE WILD

'Mausi' tigress protects, trains cubs of her dead sister

The 'mausi' (maternal aunt) tigress - named T28 - has become a centre of attraction at the Sanjay Dubri National Park and Tiger Reserve in Sidhi district for the way she has been taking care of her sister's cubs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, August 21: In a rare show of maternal sentiments among wild animals, a tigress in a Madhya Pradesh national park has not only been taking care of three cubs of her dead sister along with four of her own, but also giving them precedence in hunting training.

It was not an easy journey for the four cubs born to tigress T18. One of them fell prey to an adult tiger right after the death of their mother in a train accident. However, the maternal aunt of

the three surviving cubs - T28 - took it upon herself to see that not only the little ones survived, but had proper training to get on in the fiercely competitive jungle world. "We received information that a big cat was lying near railway tracks in the reserve's core area of Dubri range on March 16 this year. A forest department team reached the

spot and found it was tigress T18," Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve's Field Director YP Singh told PTI.

After being rescued, the seriously injured T18 was released from a cage the next day following treatment, but it was hard for the big cat to move and finally she died a few hours later, he said. Singh said, "After this, our major

concern was the safety of T18's four cubs, who were nine-month-old at that time. Elephant-mounted patrolling teams were pressed for their monitoring and prey was given to them but unfortunately an adult tiger killed one of these four cubs."

This incident further increased concern about the safety of the re-

maining cubs, the officer said. "The area where these cubs of T18 were staying then became the domain of an adult tiger named T26," the reserve's field director said.

Singh said T18 was born in the first litter to tigress T11, popularly known as Kamli because of the lotus sign on her head along with T16 (a male big cat) and T17 (a tigress). Kamli, in another litter, gave birth to two tigresses T28 and T29. The reserve's field director said T18 was first spotted with her four cubs in June last year, while her sister T17 gave birth to a litter of three cubs around October 2021. Similarly, their other siblings, T28 and T29, also gave birth to three cubs each in October last year and January this year, respectively, he said.

The national park was declared a tiger reserve in 2006 and it comprises the Sanjay National Park and the Sanjay Dubri Sanctuary. The park is spread over an area of 812 square km as core and 861 square km as buffer, totalling 1674.551 square km, he said.

International

of the day quote

The UN stands in solidarity with all Somali victims and survivors of terrorism as they heal from their trauma, along with their families and communities

More than 400 years ago, twenty enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the shores of what would become the United States

A drama begins on the appointment of Army chief which does not happen in any part of the world

SHORT TAKES

20 die as flood hits Afghan's province

Islamabad: At least 20 people died after a devastating flash flood hit Khoshi district in Afghanistan's Logar province, officials said Sunday. According to initial reports, half of the deceased were children, the provincial police said in a statement. Another 30 people were wounded and at least four were missing. As a result, more than 3,000 residential houses have been partially or completely damaged, dpa news agency reported quoting officials. Social media footage showed bodies of children as well as villages inundated by the flooding. "The situation is very worrying. People urgently need basic aid," police spokesman Ahmadullah Anas told dpa.

FIR against Imran Khan

Islamabad: Former Pakistan Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has been booked for openly hurling threats to senior most police officials, a female judge, the state institutions and bureaucracy during his public speech in Islamabad's F-9 park. Imran Khan has been booked under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) for challenging judicial and law enforcement authorities under offence, which falls under Sector 7 of the terrorism act.

SL reports nearly 50K dengue cases

Colombo: Sri Lanka reported nearly 50,000 cases of dengue in the first eight months of 2022, local media reported. According to the National Dengue Control Unit (NDCU), 49,941 people have been admitted to hospitals for dengue treatment in the past eight months. Half the cases were reported from the Western province, comprising Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara districts, Xinhua news agency reported quoting NDCU.

Turkey: 35 killed in separate crashes

Istanbul: Turkish authorities Sunday investigated a pair of secondary crashes at emergency sites that killed at least 35 people the previous day. In both cases, first responders tending to earlier collisions were among the dead. Saturday's tragedies happened just 250 kilometers (155 miles) apart in southern Turkey. The first happened on the highway between Gaziantep and Nizip when a passenger bus collided with emergency teams that had responded to a crash in Mardin Province, west of Derik. Three firefighters, two paramedics and two journalists were among the 15 people killed, according to Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu. Eight of the victims were from the bus, he said.



I'll keep fighting for every vote until the final day
RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH PRIME MINISTER HOPEFUL

'BULBUL-E-PAK' NO MORE

Celebrated Pakistani singer Nayyara Noor, adored by millions from both sides of the border for her soulful melodies, passed away after a brief illness, her family said Sunday, bringing the curtains down on the life of one of the last musical icons to represent the shared culture of India and Pakistan



Daughter of 'Putin's brain' killed in car explosion

REUTERS

Moscow August 21: The daughter of an ultra-nationalist Russian ideologue who advocates Russia absorbing Ukraine was killed in a suspected car bomb attack outside Moscow, Russian state investigators said Sunday.

Russia's TASS state news agency quoted Andrei Krasnov, someone who knew Dugina, as saying the vehicle belonged to her father and that he was probably the intended target.

Father and daughter had been attending a festival outside Moscow and Dugina had decided to switch cars at the last minute,

Russian government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

TV footage accompanying a statement by Moscow region investigators showed officers collecting debris and fragments from the spot where the explosion happened.

The statement, which described Darya Dugina as a journalist and political expert, said investigators had opened a murder case and would be carrying out forensic examinations.

Investigators were considering "all versions" when it came to working out who was responsible, it said.

The head of Russia's



Investigators work at the site of the suspected car bomb attack

Investigative Committee ordered the institution's central branch to take over the investigation.

"An explosive device was placed on the underside of the car on the driver's side," the committee

Darya Dugina, daughter of prominent ideologue Alexander Dugin, was killed Saturday evening after a suspected explosive device blew up the Toyota Land Cruiser she was driving

The Russian Foreign Ministry speculated that Ukraine might have been behind the attack. Ukraine denied any involvement

said in a statement. "Darya Dugina, who was behind the wheel, died at the scene." "The investigation believes that the crime was planned in advance and was of a contractual nature," it added.

Maria Zakharova, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, said that if the investigation's trail led to Ukraine, then it would point to a policy of "state terrorism" being pursued by Kyiv

Alexander Dugin, Darya's father, has long advocated the unification of Russian-speaking and other territories in a vast new Russian empire.

The influence of Dugin, who is on a US sanctions list, over Russian President Vladimir Putin has been a subject for speculation, with some Russia watchers asserting that his sway is significant and others calling it minimal.

Russia-Ukraine war nears half-year mark

REUTERS

Kyiv, August 21: Artillery shells rained down on a city close to Europe's biggest nuclear plant overnight and Russian missiles hit targets near Odesa, a Ukrainian Black Sea port and a grain export hub, as the war headed for its six-month milestone Wednesday.

August 24 will also mark 31 years of Ukraine's independence from Soviet rule and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a nightly video address called for vigilance, saying Moscow could try "something particularly ugly".

As Ukraine prepared to mark its Independence Day embroiled in a war that has flattened towns and cities, killed thousands

and forced millions to flee, military and regional officials reported more Russian strikes on targets in the east and south of the country.

Of particular concern was the shelling of Nikopol, a city which lies across the Dnipro river from Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine's and Europe's biggest nuclear plant. It has been held by Russian forces since March. Nikopol was shelled on five different occasions overnight, regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko wrote on Telegram. He said 25 artillery shells hit the city, causing a fire at an industrial premises and cutting power to 3,000 residents. The fighting in the proximity of Zaporizhzhia and Saturday's missile strike on the southern Ukrainian town of Voznesensk, which is not far from Ukraine's second-largest atomic plant, has spurred fears of a nuclear accident.

CRUISE MISSILE STRIKES

Local authorities also reported overnight missile attacks in the Odesa region, home to Black Sea ports critical to a UN-brokered plan to help Ukrainian agricultural exports, key for global food supplies, reach world markets again.

Five Russian Kalibr cruise missiles were fired from the Black Sea at the region overnight, the regional administration spokesperson said, citing information from the southern military command. Two were shot down by Ukrainian air defences while three hit agricultural targets, but there were no casualties. Russia said on Sunday the missiles had destroyed an ammunition depot containing missiles for US-made HIMARS rockets, while Kyiv said a granary had been hit.

There were no fresh reports of incidents in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, after a series of explosions made headlines in recent weeks.

In his speech, Zelenskyy referred obliquely to the blasts, for which Ukraine has not claimed responsibility, but analysts have said at least some have been made possible by new equipment used by its forces.

In the latest incident, a drone attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea fleet was thwarted Saturday morning.

In the south, Russian forces conducted a successful assault on the village of Blahodatne on the border between Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, it said.

The city of Mykolaiv was hit with multiple S-300 missiles early Sunday, regional governor Vitaliy Kim said on Telegram.



FILE PHOTO

China plans cloud seeding to protect grain from drought

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing/New Delhi, August 21: A hacking group allegedly backed by the Chinese government has been attacking governments, NGOs, news publications and think tanks globally - including India's National Informatics Centre (NIC) - sending them emails which, once opened, were used to steal their login credentials.

The group known as 'RedAlpha' has consistently spoofed login pages for NIC, which manages wider IT infrastructure and services for the Indian government. The hacking group weaponised some least 350 domains last year alone.

The China-sponsored hacking group spoofed organisations such as the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Amnesty

International, the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), and other global government, think tank, and humanitarian organisations that "fall within the strategic interests of the Chinese government".

According to a report by cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, the group has also engaged in direct targeting of ethnic and religious minorities, including individuals and organisations within Tibetan and Uyghur communities.

"In recent years RedAlpha has also displayed a particular interest in spoofing political, government, and think tank organisations in Taiwan, likely in an effort to gather political intelligence," said the report. The China-based hacking group targeted in-

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chongqing (China), August 21: China says it will try to protect its grain harvest from record-setting drought by using chemicals to generate rain, while factories in the southwest waited Sunday to see whether they would be shut down for another week due to shortages of water to generate hydropower.

The coming 10 days are a "key period of damage resistance" for southern China's rice crop, said Agriculture Minister Tang Renjian, according to the newspaper Global Times. Authorities will take emergency steps to "ensure the autumn grain harvest," which is 75% of China's annual total, Tang said Friday, according to the report. Authorities will "try to increase rain" by seeding clouds with

chemicals and spraying crops with a "water retaining agent" to limit evaporation, Tang's ministry said on its website. It gave no details of where that would be done.

The disruption adds to challenges for the ruling Communist Party, which is trying to shore up sagging economic growth before a meeting in October or November when President Xi Jinping is expected to try to award himself a third five-year term as leader.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

China has announced plans to try to protect its grain harvest from record-breaking drought by using chemicals to generate rain

The hottest, driest summer since the government began recording rainfall and temperature 61 years ago has wilted crops and left reservoirs at half their normal water level

A smaller Chinese grain harvest would have a potential global impact. It would boost demand for imports, adding to upward pressure on inflation in the United States and Europe that is running at multi-decade highs. Also Sunday, thousands of factories in Sichuan province that make solar panels, processor chips and other industrial goods waited for word on whether last week's six-day shutdown would be extended.



The group known as 'RedAlpha' has consistently spoofed login pages for NIC (National Informatics Centre), which manages wider IT infrastructure and services for the Indian government

The hacking group weaponised at least 350 domains last year alone

domains spoofing Taiwanese or Taiwan-based government, think tank, and political organisations.

"Notably this included the registration of multiple domains imitating the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the de facto embassy of the United States of America in Taiwan, during a time of increasing US-China tension regarding Taiwan over the past year," they said.

RedAlpha's activity has expanded over the past several years to include credential-phishing campaigns spoofing ministries of foreign affairs in multiple countries.

A Chinese government spokesperson told the MIT Technology Review that the country opposes all cyberattacks and would "never encourage, support, or connive" to carry out such activity.

divid als via emails containing abasic PDF files with links to the phishing sites, typically stating that a user needs to click the link to preview or download files.

Over the past three years, RedAlpha continued to conduct credential-phishing activity using large clusters of operational infrastructure to support campaigns.

DEADLY ATTACK



Police and military officials comb the scene of an Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab group militant attack, in Mogadishu, Somalia. Somali authorities Sunday ended a deadly attack in which at least 21 people were killed and many others wounded when gunmen from the Islamic extremist group Al-Shabaab, stormed the Hayat Hotel in the capital Friday evening

China plans cloud seeding to protect grain from drought

36 killed, 145 hurt in rain spells across Pak

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, August 21: At least 36 people were killed and 145 others injured in heavy monsoon rain-triggered flash floods and other rain-related incidents during the last 24 hours in Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said.

According to a report released by the NDMA, at least seven children and five women were among those who lost their lives in different rain-related incidents across the country. Xinhua news agency reported. The country's southern Sindh province was the worst-hit region with 18 killed and 128 others injured, followed by northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with 11 deaths, and eastern Punjab province with seven deaths.

Singapore will decriminalise sex between men: PM

REUTERS

Singapore, August 21: Singapore will decriminalise sex between men but has no plans to change the legal definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Sunday.

LGBTQ groups welcomed Lee's decision to repeal Section 377A of the penal code, a colonial-era law that criminalises sex between men, but also expressed concern that ruling out same-sex marriage would help to perpetuate discrimination. In his annual national day rally speech, Lee said Singaporean society, especially young people in the city-state, were becoming more accepting of gay people. Singapore becomes the latest Asian country to move toward ending discrimination against members of the LGBTQ community. In 2018, India's highest court scrapped a colonial-era ban on gay sex, while Thailand has recently edged closer to legalising same-sex unions.

The Taliban marked the first anniversary of their return to power in Afghanistan with a national holiday August 15, following a turbulent year that saw women's rights crushed and a humanitarian crisis worsen. Exactly a year ago, the hardline Islamists captured Kabul after their nationwide lightning offensive against government forces ended 20 years of US-led military intervention. A chaotic withdrawal of foreign forces continued until August 31, with tens of thousands of people rushing to Kabul's airport hoping to be evacuated on any flight out of Afghanistan. Images of crowds storming the airport aired on news bulletins around the world

THE GRIM REALITY

SOME ARE TRYING TO FIND WAYS TO KEEP EDUCATION FROM STALLING FOR A GENERATION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND UNDERGROUND SCHOOLS IN HOMES HAVE SPRUNG UP

The Taliban on August 15 marked a year since they seized the Afghan capital of Kabul, a rapid takeover that triggered a hasty escape of the nation's Western-backed leaders, sent the economy into a tailspin and fundamentally transformed the country. Battered Taliban fighters, some hoisting rifles or the white banners of their movement, staged small victory parades on foot, bicycles and motorcycles in the streets of the capital. One small group

marched past the former US Embassy, chanting "Long live Islam" and "Death to America." A year after the dramatic day much has changed in Afghanistan. The former insurgents struggle to govern and remain internationally isolated. The economic downturn has driven millions more Afghans into poverty and even hunger, as the flow of foreign aid slowed to a trickle.

Meanwhile, hard-liners appear to hold sway in the Taliban-led government, which imposed severe restrictions on access to education and jobs for girls and women, despite initial promises to the contrary. A year on, teenage girls are still barred from school and women are required to cover themselves head-to-toe in public, with only the eyes showing.

Some are trying to find ways to keep education from stalling for a generation of young women and underground schools in homes have sprung up.

Natalia Kanem, executive director of the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, said in a statement that Afghan females must not be forgotten.

"As the world faces multiple, overlapping crises, we must not forget the women and girls of Afghanistan. When women's and girls' basic rights are denied, we are all diminished," she said.

A year ago, thousands of Afghans had rushed to Kabul International Airport to flee the Taliban amid the US military's chaotic withdrawal from Kabul after 20 years of war - America's longest conflict.

Some flights resumed relatively quickly after those chaotic days.

A regime that tramples on human rights cannot under any circumstances be recognised. But we must not forget the people in Afghanistan, even a year after the Taliban takeover

As the world faces multiple, overlapping crises, we must not forget the women and girls of Afghanistan. When women's and girls' basic rights are denied, we are all diminished

UNCERTAIN FUTURE



For most teenage girls in Afghanistan, it's been a year since they set foot in a classroom. With no sign the ruling Taliban will allow them back to school, some are trying to find ways to keep education from stalling for a generation of young women.

At a house in Kabul, dozens gathered on a recent day for classes in an informal school set up by Sodaba Nazhand. She and her sister teach English, science and math to girls who should be in secondary school.

"When the Taliban wanted to take away the rights of education and the rights of work from women, I wanted to stand against their decision by teaching these girls," Nazhand said.

Hers is one of a number of underground schools in operation since the

Taliban took over the country a year ago and banned girls from continuing their education past the sixth grade. While the Taliban have permitted women to continue attending universities, this exception will become irrelevant when there are no

The survey, conducted in May and June, found that more than 45% of girls are not going to school, compared with 20% of boys. 26% of girls are showing signs of depression, compared with 16% of boys

more girls graduating from high schools. "There is no way to fill this gap, and this situation is very sad and concerning," Nazhand said.

The relief agency Save the Children interviewed nearly 1,700 boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 17 in seven provinces to assess the impact of the

education restrictions. The survey, conducted in May and June, found that more than 45% of girls are not going to school, compared with 20% of boys. It also found that 26% of girls are showing signs of depression, compared with 16% of boys. Nearly the entire population of Afghanistan was thrown into poverty and millions were left unable to feed their families when the world cut off financing in response to the Taliban takeover.

Teachers, parents and experts all warn that the country's multiple crises, including the devastating collapse of the economy, are proving especially damaging to girls. The Taliban have restricted women's work, encouraged them to stay at home and issued dress codes requiring them to cover their faces, except for their eyes.

The evacuation ferried more than 1,24,000 Americans and Afghans to safety over 15 days. Tens of thousands of Afghans, many of whom worked for US forces, now have resettled in the United States in the largest US refugee operation since the Vietnam war

A year after Biden's Afghanistan exit, accountability in short supply

As weary US military planners wrapped up the evacuation and pull-out from Afghanistan one year ago, officials across the government steered themselves for intense public scrutiny into how America's longest war ended in shambles with the Taliban retaking power.

But as the United States marked the first anniversary of the withdrawal this month, some US officials and experts say President Joe Biden's administration has moved on without properly assessing lessons from the 20-year war and the Taliban victory.

Nor has there been public accountability for the chaotic evacuation operation that saw 13 US service members killed at Kabul's airport and hundreds of US citizens and tens of thousands of Afghans left behind, they said.

"We need to open up that ugly history book called the 20 years in Afghanistan and see why we fail," said John Sopko, the US special inspector general tapped with tracking some \$146 billion in reconstruction aid. These lessons are especially crucial now as the administration pumps bil-

ions of dollars of assistance into Ukraine's fight against Russia, Sopko said.

US policymakers, however, are now preoccupied with Russia's onslaught against Ukraine and soaring tensions with China, even as the Taliban erase women's rights, harbor al Qaeda militants and execute and torture former government officials.

The Biden administration portrays the pullout and extraction operation - one of the largest airlifts ever - as an "extraordinary success" that wound up an "endless" conflict that killed more than 3,500 US and allied foreign troops, and hundreds of thousands of Afghans.

The evacuation ferried more than 124,000 Americans and Afghans to safety over 15 days. Tens of thousands of Afghans, many of whom worked for US forces, now have resettled in the United States in the largest US refugee operation since the Vietnam war.

To be sure, Biden was left a mess by his predecessor Donald Trump, who committed to completing the troop pullout by May 2021 without processing a massive backlog of visa applications from Afghans who

worked for the US government.

"We inherited a deadline in Afghanistan, but not a plan for withdrawal," a National Security Council spokesman said. But some US officials, experts and private evacuation organizers say the administration has avoided taking responsibility for misreading the speed of the Taliban advance.

The US military and the State Department have been preparing so-called "after-action reviews" on their roles in the withdrawal. But it is unclear if those

reports will be made public. "It's accountability for the



Americans that were left behind, the allies that were left behind that are still being hunted down, for the 13 Gold Star families (of slain U.S. troops)," said US Representative Michael Waltz, a Republican lawmaker who commanded special forces in eastern Afghanistan.

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin sent back the military's initial draft review because he was dissatisfied with the limited insight it provided, two US officials said. The report is now complete and Austin is reviewing it, one official said. A State Department spokesman could not say when, or in what form, it would

release its report.

'REARVIEW MIRROR'

The Pentagon chief, after an Air Force inspector general investigation, concluded in December that no US military personnel would be held accountable for a drone strike in Kabul that killed 10 civilians, including seven children, in the final days of the evacuation. The Pentagon said it would compensate the family and relocate them.

But nearly a year has passed without either happening, though US officials said there has been progress. A congressional commission approved by Biden to study the history of the US intervention and the pullout has yet to begin work because Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has not named the Republican co-chair.

Afghanistan momentarily returned to the headlines this month after a CIA drone strike killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, Washington's first known strike in Afghanistan since US troops left, with Biden giving a televised address to mark the success.



Fight for lost freedom

Mona Mubarez is not going to give up the rights she and other Afghan women won during 20 years of Western-backed rule. Before the hardline Islamist Taliban movement swept back to power a year ago, the 31-year-old served as a director of policy monitoring at the finance ministry. She was one of many women, mostly in big cities, who won freedoms that a former generation could not have dreamed of under the Taliban's previous rule in the late 1990s. Now Mubarez has no job, after the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law severely limited women's ability to work, required them to dress and act conservatively and closed secondary schools to girls across the country. Under the new government, there are no women in the cabinet and the Ministry of Women's Affairs was shut down. "One war ended, but the battle to find a rightful place for Afghan women has started... we will raise our voice against every injustice until the last breath," said Mubarez, who is among the most prominent campaigners in the capital Kabul. Despite the risk of beatings and detention by Taliban members patrolling the streets in the weeks after the Western-backed government was toppled, she took part in several protests that broke out, determined to protect her hard-fought rights. Those demonstrations have died down - the last one Mubarez took part in was on May 10. But she and others meet in homes in private acts of defiance, discussing women's rights and encouraging people to join the cause. Such gatherings would have been virtually unthinkable the last time the Taliban governed Afghanistan. During one such meeting at her home in July, Mubarez and a group of women sat in a circle on the floor, spoke about their experiences and chanted words including 'food', 'work' and 'freedom' as if they were at an outdoor rally.

"We fight for our own freedom, we fight for our rights and status, we work for no country, organisation or spy agency. This is our country, this is our homeland, and we have every right to live here," she said.

The country representative for UN Women in Afghanistan, Alison Davidian, said stories like Mubarez's are being repeated across the country. "For many women across the world, walking outside the front door of your home is an ordinary part of life," she said. "For many Afghan women, it is extraordinary. It is an act of defiance." While rules on women's behaviour in public are not always clear cut, in relatively liberal urban centres like Kabul they often travel without a male chaperone. That is less common in more conservative regions, largely in the south and east. All women are required to have a male chaperone when they travel more than 78 km (48 miles).

I think it's a sad anniversary for the majority of people of my country, particularly for the women who don't have enough food, who do not know what is the tomorrow for them

SIMA SAMAR I PROMINENT AFGHAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST



A US Marine provides a meal ready-to-eat to a child during an evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport on August 21, 2021



A baby is handed over to the American army over the perimeter wall of the airport for it to be evacuated, in Kabul on August 19, 2021



The government is looking at whether the Chinese companies and their subsidiaries have complied with all the regulations to come and do business in India
DEBASHIS MITRA | PRESIDENT, ICAI

LIC MUTUAL FUND EYES BIG BOYS' CLUB

LIC Mutual Fund, having missed the growth bus in the past three decades of operations, is on a catch-up bid and has set a target of crossing the ₹1-lakh-crore-AUM-mark in the next five years. The past few years have seen the 43-player mutual fund industry growing at an exponential pace both in terms of Assets under management (AUM) and number of folios



of the day quote

Theoretically speaking, it (repo rate hike) should have a negative impact because interest rates going up discretionary spending, which also includes spending on cars. But at the moment that we are not feeling that



SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA | SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER (MARKETING & SALES), MARUTI SUZUKI

We need to be close to where people are. So that's when we also looked at smaller formats that are still relatively big for Indian retail



SUSANNE PULVERER | CEO, IKEA INDIA

We believe the housing market is in a strong situation and if it is supported well by various policy makers, housing industry can contribute significantly to India's economic growth in this year and the years to come



ABHISHEK LODHA | MD & CEO, MACROTECH DEVELOPERS

SHORT TAKES

LIC Covid death claims drop 20%

New Delhi: Insurance behemoth LIC witnessed a decline of nearly 20 per cent in death claims in the first quarter of this fiscal with the Covid impact seen to be ebbing, though the amount is still higher than pre-2020 levels, officials said. In the June quarter of the previous fiscal, settlement of death claims was to the tune of ₹7,111 crore, which for Q1 of this year was ₹5,743 crore. LIC Chairman M R Kumar said in a post-earnings call with analysts. "So there is quite a decrease, and it's quite obvious that whatever decrease was there based on Covid... Going away now, Q1 to Q1 of the previous year," Kumar said.

No charges for UPI services: FinMin

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Sunday said United Payments Interface (UPI) is a digital public good and there is no consideration in the government to levy any charges on this. This statement allays fear emanating from the RBI's discussion paper on charges in the payment system suggesting that UPI payments might be subject to a tiered charge based on various amount brackets. Currently, there are no charges levied on transactions done through UPI. The government has mandated a zero-charge framework for UPI transactions with effect from January 1, 2020.

Vijay re-appointed as Paytm's chief

New Delhi: Shareholders of One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, have approved the re-appointment of Vijay Shekhar Sharma as managing director and chief executive officer of the company, according to the scrutinizer report filed by the firm Sunday. Investors advisory firm IAS had recommended against the reappointment of Sharma and several other resolutions that were part of the agenda of the 22nd Annual General Meeting held Friday.

L&T plans \$2.5bn for green energy

Hazira: Engineering major Larsen & Toubro is committed to work across the green energy value chain and plans to invest up to \$2.5 billion over the next 3-4 years, a company official said. The statement comes in the wake of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) planning to achieve water and carbon neutrality by 2035 and 2040, respectively.

SUFFICIENT STOCKS

No plans to import wheat: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: The government has no plans to import wheat as it has sufficient stocks to meet the country's requirements, official sources said.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has enough stock for public distribution, they added.

"There is no such plan to import wheat into India. Country has sufficient stocks to meet our domestic requirements and @FCI India has enough stock for public distribution," the Department of Food and Public Distribution said in a tweet.

The comments come against the backdrop of some reports which said India may import the foodgrain.

India's wheat production is projected to have declined nearly 3 per cent to 106.84 million tonne (MT) while the overall foodgrain production is estimated to have touched record 315.72 million tonne in the 2021-22 crop year.

Wheat production is estimated to have declined due to a heatwave that resulted in shrivelled grains in the northern states of Punjab and Haryana.

According to the fourth advance



Wheat production projected to dip nearly 3% to 106.84MT	Total foodgrain production estimated to have touched record 315.72MT in the 2021-22 crop year
India had exported a record 7MT of wheat during 2021-22 fiscal	Record output is estimated for rice, maize, gram, pulses, rapeseed and mustard, oilseeds and sugarcane
Price of wheat has increased by ₹300-350 per quintal in the last 15 days	

estimate for the 2021-22 crop year released by the agriculture ministry recently, record output is estimated for rice, maize, gram, pulses, rapeseed and mustard, oilseeds and sugarcane.

A wheat flour millers' body earlier this month demanded that the government scrap the 40 per cent import duty on wheat to boost domestic supplies and control prices.

Members of the Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India met Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey Wednesday to discuss the issue of price rise and shortage of wheat in the market, it said in a statement.

The federation's President Anjani Agarwal has said the price of wheat has increased by ₹300-350 per quintal in the last 15 days. The industry body has raised

concerns regarding unavailability of wheat and the drastic rise in price in the last few days even though the harvest season ended just a month back and the new crop would arrive only after eight months from now.

It has also demanded the release of wheat under the Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS) through a tender process for user industries.

In May, India had banned wheat exports in a bid to check high prices amid concerns of wheat output being hit by a scorching heat wave.

In July, the government had stated that wheat stocks in FCI godowns are expected to be 134 lakh tonne at the start of next fiscal, 80 per cent more than the buffer norm.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal had said the central pool stock of wheat as July 1, 2022 is well above the food-grains stocking norms.

The wholesale price-based inflation eased to a five-month low of 13.93 per cent in July on easing prices of food articles and manufactured products. Inflation in food articles in July eased to 10.77 per cent from 14.39 per cent in June.

Freebies never free: RBI MPC member

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Freebies are never 'free' and when political parties offer such schemes, they must be required to make the financing and trade-offs clear to voters, RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Member Ashima Goyal said Sunday, adding this would reduce the temptation towards "competitive populism".

Goyal further said a cost is imposed somewhere when governments provide freebies, but this is worth incurring for public goods and services that build capacity. "Freebies are never free... Specially harmful are subsidies that distort prices," she told PTI.

Noting that this hurts production and resource allocation and imposes large indirect costs, such as



the water table falling in Punjab due to free electricity, Goyal said such freebies come at the cost of low quality health, education, air and water that hurt poor the most. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in recent days hit out at the competitive populism of extending 'rewards' (freebies) which are not just wastage of taxpayers' money but

When parties offer schemes they must be required to make the financing and such trade-offs clear to voters. This would reduce the temptation towards competitive populism

ASHIMA GOYAL | RBI MPC MEMBER

also an economic disaster that could hamper India's drive to become atmanirbhar (self-reliant). On India's macroeconomic situation, Goyal, currently emeritus professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, said, "Indian growth is sustaining despite continuing global shocks and rate rises."

M-cap of five of top-10 companies dips ₹30,737.51cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Five of the top-10 valued firms together lost ₹30,737.51 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries Limited taking the biggest hit. In the holiday-shortened week, the Sensex advanced 183.37 points or 0.30 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and Bajaj Finance were the laggards from the top-10 pack, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the gainers. The valuation of Reliance declined by ₹12,883.7 crore to ₹17,68,144.77 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of State Bank of India fell by ₹9,147.73 crore to ₹4,64,436.79 crore. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) dropped by ₹5,323.92 crore to ₹12,38,680.37 crore and that of ICICI Bank by ₹2,922.03 crore to ₹6,05,807.09 crore. The mcap of Bajaj Finance dipped by ₹460.13 crore to ₹4,42,035.99 crore.

On the other hand, the market valuation of Hindustan Unilever rose by ₹9,128.17 crore to reach ₹6,18,894.09 crore. HDFC Bank added ₹4,835.37 crore to take its valuation to ₹8,30,042.72 crore.

The market valuation of LIC increased by ₹2,308.62 crore to ₹4,33,768.34 crore and that of HDFC advanced ₹1,916.08 crore to ₹4,47,675.98 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance remained the most valued company, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, HDFC, Bajaj Finance and LIC.

HIGH INFLATION ₹70K-cr net outflows of debt MFs in June qtr

On the other hand, equity MFs attracted a net sum of ₹49,918cr in the quarter under review due to volatility in stock market environment and exodus by FPIs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Investors continued to withdraw from mutual funds focused on investing in fixed income securities for third consecutive quarter and pulled out over ₹70,000 crore in April-June due to high inflation and an increasing rate cycle.

"In the next (September) quarter, it is safe to assume that monetary conditions will be tighter in terms of lower amount system liquidity and higher regulatory rates, both of which should see further reduction in mutual fund debt cor-

pus," Sandeep Bagla, CEO Trust Mutual Fund, said.

The latest outflow has pulled down the asset managed by fund managers for debt fixed-income funds by 5 per cent to ₹12.35 lakh crore at June-end from close to ₹13 lakh crore at the end of March, data available with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

After hitting a peak of ₹14.16 lakh crore in the first quarter of fiscal 2022, assets under management for the fixed-income category has been on a steady decline and since then the asset base has fallen by 13



per cent. According to the data, net outflow from open ended fixed-income mutual funds or debt mutual funds was at ₹70,213 crore in the quarter under review. Month-wise, the quarter started

This came following a net outflow of ₹1.18 lakh crore in March quarter and ₹21,277 crore in quarter ended December 2021. Prior to that, the category had seen a capital infusion to the tune of ₹10,858 crore in July-September 2021.

The pull-out in June quarter was largely contributed by short duration, corporate bond, low duration, banking & PSU funds with the outflow figures for these categories standing at ₹19,704 crore, ₹13,785 crore, ₹13,757 crore and ₹8,099 crore respectively.

Generally, debt funds are considered to be less risky, with investors taking comfort in being able to hedge their risks by parking hard-earned money in instruments that provide better returns than bank fixed deposits.

IMF fees on loans to war-torn nations closer to elimination

For years, lawmakers, economists and civil rights organizations have called on the IMF, which has for decades loaned billions to low-income countries, to end its surcharge policy. With an ever-worsening risk of a global debt crisis and rising interest rates, the issue has become more pressing for countries looking to reduce their deficits

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 21: The International Monetary Fund is facing pressure to reevaluate how it imposes fees on loans it dispenses to needy countries like war-torn Ukraine — which is one of the fund's biggest borrowers.

The move comes as more countries will need to turn to the IMF, as food prices and inflation internationally continues to rise. Surcharges are added fees on loans imposed on countries that are heavily indebted to the IMF.

Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo said in Aspen last month that finance ministers of several countries realize they have to pay a price for Russia's war in Ukraine, especially with food prices going up.

"They're going to have to go to the IMF, they're going to need to

find assistance," Adeyemo said.

However, the IMF fee system could change through US legislation. An amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, otherwise known as the defense spending bill, would suspend IMF surcharges while their effectiveness and burden on indebted countries is studied.

As the largest IMF shareholder and member of the Fund's executive board, the US can push for policy decisions and unilaterally veto some board decisions.

Citing worsening financial crises in Sri Lanka and Pakistan as examples, some accuse China of engaging in debt trap diplomacy — or having countries falls so deeply in debt to that they are beholden to it on international issues.

Advocates and civil rights organizations lodge the same com-

WAR-TORN UKRAINE

- Ukraine's projected real GDP is expected to decline by 35 percent, due in large part to Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- The country, engaged in a war with no projected end, has an outstanding balance of 7.5 billion SDRs — an IMF accounting unit valued at around \$9.8 billion



The latest figures estimate that Ukraine will owe the IMF \$360 million in surcharges between 2021 and 2023

plaint against the Fund, who claim the organisation undercuts its core lender-of-last-resort role with countries in vulnerable positions to pay back debt.

However, some economists and representatives of the fund say

the surcharges amount to responsible lending behavior, as they provide an incentive for members with large outstanding balances to repay their loans promptly. This applies especially for countries that may otherwise may not

The IMF's financial position shows the surcharges are not necessary for sound finances. There is no excuse for the IMF to be punishing countries under debt stress with surcharges. There is also no logic to it, the amount of money that the IMF raises from surcharges is trivial relative to its income and capacity

ANDRÉS ARAUZ | SENIOR RESEARCHER, CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH

be able to obtain financing from private lenders.

A spokesperson for the fund says the surcharges are designed to discourage large and prolonged use of IMF resources.

"They only apply to countries with particularly large outstanding loans," Mayada Ghazala said in an emailed statement, adding that poorest countries are exempt from the surcharges.

The fund's executive board met in December 2021 and discussed the role of surcharges — it ultimately decided not to make a

change to the fees, but said they would review them again in the future. The IMF was created in 1944 at the United Nations Bretton Woods Conference — one of its missions is lending to maintain the financial stability of countries. Among its 190 countries, it lends around \$1 trillion, according to the organization's website.

An April review of the fund's financial health for fiscal year 2022 and 2023 states that lending income excluding surcharges "remain strong and are expected to exceed expenses in FY 2023-2024."

INDIA-ZIMBABWE ODI SERIES

Clean sweep on cards

ZIMBABWE HOLDS THE RECORD FOR MOST CONSECUTIVE ODI LOSSES AGAINST INDIA. THE CHEVRONS HAVE LOST IN 13 STRAIGHT ODIs. THE INDIAN TEAM'S LAST DEFEAT AGAINST ZIMBABWE CAME JUNE 3, 2010

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, August 21: A fancied Indian team is a shoo-in to complete a 3-0 ODI series sweep against a Zimbabwe side that has been struggling to put up even a semblance of a fight.

Having done exceedingly well to not just turn up but trump their hapless opponents on all fronts in the preceding two matches, India will enter the third and final ODI knowing well that the script is unlikely to change at the Harare Sports Complex Monday.

This will translate to the visiting team getting yet another opportunity to carry out experimentation keeping the bigger picture in mind, i.e. next year's ICC World Cup.

Stand-in skipper KL Rahul has done quite well to keep the players motivated enough to go out in the middle, grab the chances with both hands, and cement their places in the side that is gearing up for big battles in the coming times.

There is no doubt that they have not faced the kind of examination that would have helped them develop further as cricketers, but those who are looking to get a longer run at the top level would certainly not mind the experience.

If the 161 all out in the second game is any evidence, the home team continues to look for a quick fix to its batting woes, while the bowlers are also not able to trouble the Indian batting line-up that has some of the top ODI players in its



Probable teams

India: KL Rahul (C), Shikhar Dhawan (VC), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Ishan Kishan (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Shardul Thakur, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Avesh Khan, Prasad Krishna, Mohd Siraj, Deepak Chahar, Shahbaz Ahmed

Zimbabwe: Regis Chakabva (C), Ryan Burl, Tanaka Chivanga, Bradley Evans, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Takudzwanashe Kaitano, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, John Masara, Tony Munyonga, Richard Ngarava, Victor Nyauchi, Sikandar Raza, Milton Shumba, Donald Tiripano

rankings. For proof, one can take a look at Shikhar Dhawan's statistics in the 50-over format.

The extremely talented Shubman Gill should not be content with whatever he has achieved so far on the tour, and will certainly look to have another go at the Zimbabwe bowlers.

The move to promote himself up the order did not work in the second match but that will not deter Rahul from trying it out one more time. His

stay at the crease in the second ODI lasted just nine balls as he could score just one run off five balls.

In the absence of the front-line bowlers, this attack has performed extremely well and showed what it is capable of, and the quality of opposition is no reason to undermine the efforts of committed people like Deepak Chahar, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Prasad Krishna and Axar Patel.

Among the batters, Ishan Kishan,

if he gets another chance to bat, will look to overcome the failure of the second game with a good knock.

After the 10-wicket drubbing in the series opener, Zimbabwe cut the margin of defeat in the second ODI, but to ensure a better result they would need to play out of their skins. Even that may not be enough for the beleaguered hosts, but they would do well to promote Sikandar Raza and Sean Williams, best batters for some time now, in the line-up.

Kohli best Test batter, says Watson; 2nd spot for Babar

Former Indian skipper's cricketing innings has hit a rough patch and now he is struggling to make any kind of notable contributions to team India. In the latest ICC rankings, he has dropped to number 13 from number 10 and it is high time he regains his old form back

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: Shane Watson, former Australia National Cricket Team all-rounder, has ranked the unofficial Big 5 Test batters - Virat Kohli, Joe Root, Steve Smith, Kane Williamson and Babar Azam - in terms of their performances in the purest format of the game.

During a conversation with Isa Guha on the ICC Review, Watson said that the former Indian skipper Kohli is the best Test batter and ranked him on the top position amongst his unofficial Big 5.

"Test match cricket, I am always going to say Virat Kohli. His ability to just maintain that range, he continues to maintain that range in all formats. He has got such high intensity every time he goes out there to play for India. So, in Test cricket, yes Virat Kohli," Watson said.

"One thing with Steve Smith is that he has started to come off a little bit. It looks like Steve Smith is not putting as much pressure on the bowlers as he did when he was at his absolute best. So, for me, Steve sort of dropped down on that list a little bit. Babar Azam is now playing just incredibly well. We have to see how he has adapted his game to Test cricket as well. So, Babar Azam would probably be No 2 at the moment. Kane Williamson, he has had a few elbow issues, he knows his game inside out. He can put pressure on bowlers in any conditions. Joe Root - he has had bit of time along the lines of Steve Smith."

Many experts have labelled Pakistan cricket team captain Babar Azam as the finest batsman on current form due to his conti-

nous rise in cricket world. In ICC rankings, Babar is on the top of the list in ODIs and T20Is while he is third in Tests. He is the only player to be among the top-three in all three formats. He is also being constantly compared with Kohli as they are the leading batsmen from the rival countries.

Incidentally, Kohli is currently not even among the top-10 in Tests in the official ICC rankings. Kohli has played 102 Tests scoring 8074 runs at an average of 49.53 so far while Babar has played only 42 Tests scoring 3122 runs at an average of 47.30.



Test match cricket, I am always going to say Virat Kohli. His ability to just maintain that range, he continues to maintain the range in all formats. He has got such high intensity every time he goes out there to play for India. So, in Test cricket, yes Virat Kohli

SHANE WATSON | FORMER ALL-ROUNDER, OZ



WINNING RUN ENDS

Praggnanandhaa loses to Duda in FTX Crypto Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Miami, August 21: Teenaged Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa went down to Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda via the tie-break in the sixth round of the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, here Sunday.

It was the second loss for the 17-year old GM after he went down to Quang Liem Le in the previous round. He, however, remained in second spot with 13 match points behind world No 1 Magnus Carlsen (15 match points). Duda drew first blood when he won the opening game. After two draws, Praggnanandhaa won the fourth game to level the match. The Polish player then showed his class to win both the tie-break games for a 4-2 victory.



Praggnanandhaa takes on Carlsen in the last and final round of the tournament later Sunday night.

Carlsen had to bring out his best to subdue the highly-rated Alireza Firouzja 3.5-2.5 via the tie-breaker. The Norwegian lost the first game but bounced back to win the next to level the match. Games three and four were drawn before the world champion won the blitz tie-break series.

In other matches in the round, Liem Le pulled off a surprise 2.5-1.5 win over Anish Giri of the Netherlands, and Levon Aronian defeated Hans Niemann 2.5-1.5.

The eight-player all-play-all tournament is the American finale of Champions Chess Tour. There is \$7,500 at stake for each match win at the event. Each match will be played over four rapid games, with blitz tie-breaks in case of a 2-2 draw.

Modric helps Madrid get over Casemiro's departure



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 21: Luka Modric is making it easier for Real Madrid fans to start getting over Casemiro's departure.

A day after the Brazil midfielder announced he was ending his successful decade-long stint with Madrid to join Manchester United, his former teammate scored a beautiful goal and set up another to help the defending champion beat

Celta Vigo 4-1 Saturday for its second consecutive win to start the Spanish league.

Modric's performance was worthy of applause even by Celta fans when the veteran was substituted in the second half. "It is always nice," Modric said. "It makes me happy to be recognised by other fans."

Karim Benzema, Vinicius Junior and Federico Valverde also scored as Madrid comfortably followed up its come-from-behind win at promoted Almeria in the opener.

It was Madrid's first game since losing Casemiro, the trusted holding midfielder who had been one of the defensive anchors of the Spanish powerhouse.

"We made history together here," Modric said. "He was a fundamental piece for us and we will miss him a lot, both as a player and as a person. We are sad that he left but it's part of soccer. We have to move on without him and each one of us has to give something extra to make up for his absence."

Inter Milan beats Spezia 3-0



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, August 21: Romelu Lukaku started in his first home game for Inter Milan since returning from Chelsea, helping his team beat Spezia 3-0 for two wins from two

games in Serie A.

The Belgium forward was involved in two goals - scored in each half by Lautaro Martinez and Hakan Calhanoglu - and home fans applauded him enthusiastically when he made

way for Edin Dzeko in the 68th minute Saturday.

Dzeko set up fellow substitute Joaquin Correa for the third goal in the 82nd.

Lukaku crashed a header off the crossbar before the break as he almost added to his goal from Inter's opening win over newly promoted Lecce last weekend.

Inter dominated from the start but home fans had to wait till the 35th minute for Martinez to fire in the opener. Nicolo Barella sent in a cross that Lukaku headed back for the Argentine to unleash his shot inside the left post.

Lukaku was involved again in the 52nd when he skipped past one defender and was faced by five more players when he passed to Milan Skriniar. Skriniar's attempted return pass was blocked but fell kindly for Calhanoglu to score.

Also Saturday, Domenico Berardi's brilliant first-half goal was enough for Sassuolo to defeat Lecce 1-0.

Udinese had Nehuen Perez sent off before the break but goalkeeper Marco Silvestri denied visiting Salernitana in a scoreless draw.

ULTIMATE KHO KHO

Odisha Juggernauts beat Gujarat Giants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, August 21: Riding on Dilip Khandvi and Vishal's brilliant defensive play, Odisha Juggernauts handed Gujarat Giants their first defeat in the inaugural edition of Ultimate Kho Kho here Sunday.

Dilip defended for four minutes and 33 seconds and Vishal for three minutes four seconds in a thrilling match that ended with a 50-47 scoreline. It was the third win for the team.

Wazir Subhasis Santra scored 10 points for Odisha Juggernauts by dismissing four players while Milind Chavarekar supported him with seven points. Earlier, Odisha Juggernauts won the toss and chose to defend. Vishal, coming into the second batch, earned his team four bonus points while defending for more than three minutes before he was out by Wazir Akshay Bhargave.

Odisha Juggernauts, which came into the match following a win against Rajasthan Warriors, fought back well as they added 24 more points to end the first innings with a 28-24 lead.

BWF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Onus on Lakshya, Prannoy in Sindhu's absence

WITH FIVE MEDALS, INCLUDING THE GOLD IN 2019, SINDHU IS A COLOSSAL FIGURE IN THE BWF'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND COMPETITIVE TOURNAMENT, BUT AN ANKLE INJURY EN ROUTE TO A MAIDEN COMMONWEALTH GAMES TITLE TRIUMPH DASHED HER HOPES OF TRAVELLING TO THE JAPANESE CAPITAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, August 21: With the injured PV Sindhu missing out for the first time in a decade, the onus will be on young Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy to spearhead India's challenge in the BWF World Championships, starting here from Monday.

Sindhu's ankle injury has left the task of continuing India's impressive run in the tournament on the young shoulders of Lakshya, and the experienced duo of Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth. The country has not returned empty-handed from the Worlds since the 2011 edition.

It was Srikanth and Lakshya, who had ensured India's presence at the podium in 2021 when they finished with a silver and a bronze, respectively, but the field this time will be much stronger than last year.

It was a depleted field in 2021 with Japan's Kento Momota, and



the Indonesian duo of Jonatan Christie and Anthony Ginting missing out. But there has been no such withdrawal this time.

At the same time, the expectations from the Indian male shuttlers will also be high, given their exploits in recent months.

Brimming with confidence following his CWG gold on debut,



Lakshya has been on a sensational run this season, and will go into the top event as one of the favourites.

The 20-year-old, who was left crestfallen after not being able to go the distance in Spain, will look to complete his unfinished business when he opens against Danish veteran Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus. Lakshya's stocks have

been rising ever since he returned from Huelva in December as he won a maiden Super 500 title at India Open, finished with a silver at All England Championships, before joining hands with Srikanth and Prannoy to earn India its maiden Thomas Cup win in May.

However, the trio will turn for this week after being clubbed in the

same quarter.

Prannoy has been one of the most consistent players in the circuit, with a run of quarterfinals, three semifinals and a runner-up finish this season, and he would be itching to continue his impressive run.

The 30-year-old Indian is known for his giant-killing exploits and comes into the event after twin wins over world No 4 Chou Tien Chen recently, and will fancy his chances against Momota, who has not looked the same player since his car accident two years ago.

Srikanth, 12th seed, was simply sensational in Bangkok and it was his unbeaten run which played a huge role in India's Thomas Cup win, but the former No 1's confidence took a beating after he lost twice to upcoming Malaysian Ng Tze Yong at the Birmingham CWG. If Srikanth clears the initial hurdles, world number 5 Malaysian

Lee Zii Jia will stand in his way to the quarters.

B Sai Praneeth, a 2019 World Championships bronze medalist, too, is in the fray and will open against Taiwanese Chou Tien Chen. The former Singapore Open champion will look to exorcise his ghosts in Tokyo, where he battled without a proper coach or physio, suffering a series of defeats to bow out early from the Olympics last year.

All eyes will also be on Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, who claimed India's first gold medal in men's doubles at the CWG earlier this month.

Away from all the limelight will be a certain Saina Nehwal, who was once the cynosure of all eyes. The decorated shuttler has a silver and bronze from the Worlds but, of late, has looked a pale shadow of herself, following a series of below-par performances due to both injuries and lack of form.