



PRAGMATIC APPROACH

Actor Kajol, speaking on the concept of female pleasure, says it should be normalised like eating and drinking

LEISURE P2



STARTLING REVELATIONS

A researcher in Wuhan claims China deliberately engineered coronavirus as a 'bioweapon' with an aim to infecting people

INTERNATIONAL P10



TOP BILLING FOR ALCARAZ

Carlos Alcaraz gets No.1 seeding at Wimbledon over Novak Djokovic due to current ATP rankings

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Bhim army chief Aazad shot, injured

SAHARANPUR: Dalit leader and Bhim army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad was injured when unidentified assailants opened fire Wednesday on his car in UP's Deoband, police said. Aazad (36) had gone to attend a 'terhavin' ritual at a supporter's home in Saharanpur district's Deoband when he was fired on as he was leaving, informed police officials. "The assailants were in a car and opened fire on Aazad's SUV from the right side. A bullet grazed his abdomen. He has been admitted to a hospital and his condition is stable," SP Deoband, Abimanyu Manglik said. Efforts are on to nab the miscreants, he added. **P9**

2 new members in SC Collegium

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud-led five-judge Collegium has undergone a change with the inclusion of Justices BR Gavai and Surya Kant, after two senior judges demitted office during the summer break. Justices KM Joseph and Ajay Rastogi, who were part of the Collegium, retired June 16 and 17, respectively. Besides the CJI, the revamped Collegium now includes Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai and Surya Kant.

Chandrayan-3 launch scheduled for mid-July

NEW DELHI: India is looking at July 13 as a possible launch date for Chandrayan-3 that entails landing a rover on the lunar surface. A senior official said Wednesday that the Chandrayan-3 mission would be launched July 13 at 2.30 pm from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota. However, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman S Somanath said while the date has not been finalised yet, the agency was looking at the earliest possible date between July 12 and 19. He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an Indian Air Force event.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Say anything absurd, nasty or irritating... I assure you nobody will throw a single tomato



HOME COMING FOR DEITIES: All the three chariots-Nandighosha, Taladhawa and Darpadalana - reached the Singhadwar of Srimandir in Puri as part of the return car festival, Wednesday

1.7L 'Safety' posts vacant

Railway unions have repeatedly flagged the Ministry to fill the vacant positions stating that the present workforce is under a lot of pressure

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 28: Since the Bahanaga Bazaar train disaster which took place June 2, leaving 292 dead and more than 1,000 persons injured, probes have been initiated to ascertain the cause behind the accident. The Indian Railways has always said that safety of passengers is its prime concern. However, in response to a recent RTI query, the Railways have stated that more than 2.74 lakh posts are lying vacant as of this month in the organisation, with over 1.7 lakh of them in the 'Safety' category alone.

In its reply to the questions filed by Chandra Shekhar Gaur, a Madhya Pradesh-based Right to Information (RTI) Act activist, the national transporter said at present 2,74,580 posts are vacant in Group C category, including Level 1 or entry-level staff. This includes 1,77,924 vacancies in the 'Safety' category, it added. "The total number of non-gazetted posts vacant i.e. Group-C (including Level-1) in Indian Railways, as available in this office, as on 01.06.2023 (provisional) is: 2,74,580," the Ministry said in its reply. "On the 'Safety' category, there are more than 9.82 lakh posts of which over 8.04 lakh are filled which means there is a



1.38 lakh appointment letters issued so far by the Railways this year

RAIL UNIONS UNHAPPY OVER THE LACK OF WORKFORCE

vacancy of 1,77,924 posts," it added. It should be stated here that the 'Safety' category are personnel directly involved with train operations. They include key profiles like loco pilots, trackspersons, pointsmen, electrical works, signal and telecom assistants, engineers, technicians, clerks, guards/train managers, station masters and ticket collectors. The shortage of staff in key 'Safety' posts has been flagged by railway unions regularly. In fact, rail unions have urged the Ministry for more posts in segments like track maintenance and fitness, senior and junior section engineers, gangmen and technicians. Explaining how this has affected the on-ground work, officials said that it puts tremendous pressure on the workforce, and the on-ground staff has to cover eight to 10kms daily to inspect tracks. "This is a sensitive job that requires more attention and it's difficult for them to cover so much distance," an official said. Others pointed out that shortage of staff can lead to compromising the well-being of passengers travelling in trains. Officials said the Railways, which has set a target of filling up 1.52 lakh vacancies by October 2023, has already provided letters of appointment to 1.38 lakh candidates. Out of these, 90,000 have joined. They said 90 per cent of these posts are of 'Safety' category. The Railways have faced criticism over its safety measures since the Balasore tragedy.

AAP at it again

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 28: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) extended Wednesday its 'in-principle support' to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) but said it should be brought in with a consensus after extensive consultations with stakeholders.

"The AAP supports UCC in principle. Article 44 (of the Constitution) also supports it. But the government should bring in UCC only when there is a consensus among the stakeholders," AAP national general secretary Sandeep Pathak said here Wednesday. The decision of the AAP came as a surprise to many opposition parties including the Congress, who had met last week in Patna to present a united front against the BJP in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The statement by AAP will certainly develop new fissures in the opposition camp, sources said.

Earlier in the day, Congress leader P Chidambaram had said that the UCC cannot be forced on people by an 'agenda-driven majoritarian government' as it will 'widen divisions' among people. The former Union minister claimed PM Narendra Modi was batting for UCC to divert people's attention from issues of unemployment, price rise and hate crimes. Earlier Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said that her government will never implement UCC in the state.

Three electrocuted during Bahuda Jatra

In both incidents reported from Keonjhar and Koraput districts, live wires led to the tragedy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jhumpura/Koraput, June 28: Three persons were killed Wednesday in separate incidents of electrocution during Bahuda Jatra festival in Keonjhar and Koraput districts. In the first incident Wednesday noon, two persons were electrocuted and four others sustained serious injuries after the flag of the chariot came in contact with a live 11-KV wire ahead of the 'Pahandi Bije' rituals of the deities before pulling of the chariots at Kendua village under Jhumpura block in Keonjhar district. The deceased were identified as Jugal Kishore Barik, 40, of Bhubanpasi village and Barun Giri, 42, of Kendua village. Tragedy struck when three persons pulling the chariot tried to turn it sideways. An iron pole hoisting the flag came in contact with a live wire leaving the three seriously injured. They were rushed to the Jhumpura hospital where doctors declared two dead on arrival. The third injured, Shankarshan Pradhan, 42 was shifted to the district headquarters hospital in Keonjhar after his condition deteriorated. In the second incident, a youth was electrocuted and another

6 DIE AS RATH CATCHES FIRE

Agartala: Six people died and 15 others were injured as a chariot caught fire after coming in contact with a high-tension wire in Tripura's Unakoti district Wednesday, police informed. The incident happened around 4.30pm in Kumarghat locality during the 'Uta Rath Yatra' festival of Lord Jagannath, they said. Thousands of people were pulling the 'Rath', made of iron, when it came in contact with a 133kv overhead cable and caught fire, police said. A police official said that the condition of six of the injured are stated to be critical. **P9**

sustained critical injuries after the 'Taladhawa' chariot of the deity constructed of iron came in contact with a live wire at Kolab Nagar in Koraput district. The deceased was identified as Babula Nahak, 28 while Krishna Rao, 54 is undergoing treatment. Champa Power department SDO Narayan Behera ruled out any wrongdoing on the part of the local office. He said that the 11-KV line was 30 feet behind the spot where the chariot had been parked. He blamed locals for pushing the chariot backward due to which the accident occurred.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	63915.42	↑ 499.39
NIFTY	18972.10	↑ 154.70
DOLLAR	82.00	↑ ₹0.05
EURO	89.50	↓ ₹0.37
GOLD	₹57,999	↓ ₹108
SILVER	₹68,981	↓ ₹360

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	33.5°C	33.1°C
TEMP MIN	27.6°C	27.5°C
Humidity	81%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Heavy Rainfall

7 dead, 17 injured in 2 road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, June 28: Two persons, including a woman were killed Wednesday and eight others suffered serious injuries in a road accident in Dhulu Ghati under Jayapatna block in this district. Police said that the accident occurred when the driver of a pick-up van lost control of the vehicle and it skidded off a bridge and fell into a gorge 40 feet deep. The deceased have been identified as the driver of the vehicle, Singh Goud (28) and Mukta Majhi (50). On being informed, police arrived at the accident spot and rescued the injured. They said 12 people from Timanpur village

were travelling in the jackfruit-laden vehicle when the accident occurred. The injured are currently undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital. Earlier in the wee hours of Wednesday, a truck ploughed into a marriage procession killing five and injuring nine others in Keonjhar district. The incident took place at Sathighar Sahi near National Highway-20. Preliminary reports said that the deceased included the groom's nephew and three relatives from the bride's side. Expressing grief over the accident Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased.

Lockdown slowed Himalayan meltdown

REDUCED ANTHROPOGENIC POLLUTANT LED TO THE DECREASE IN MELTING OF ICE AND SNOW ON THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 28: A total of 27 metric tonne (1MT equal to 1,000kg) of ice and snow melting in the Himalayas had been prevented by the Indian national lockdown, in place from March 25, 2020, to May 31, 2020, according to a new study. Diminished anthropogenic pollutant emissions during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown reduced snow melting in the Himalayas, the report published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus* said. It added that if emission of various gases is reduced, global warming can be reduced to a great extent. Liqiang Zhang from Beijing Normal University, China, and colleagues explored how the sud-



den, dramatic reduction in particulate pollution in the region affected snow and ice melt, using multiple satellite data as well as a coupled atmosphere-chemistry snow model. The authors estimate that the reduced anthropogenic pollutant emissions during the Indian lockdown was responsible for 71.6 per cent of the reduction in radiative forcing on snow in

April 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. "This reduction in radiative forcing may have prevented 27MT in ice and snow melting. The results emphasised the power of reducing anthropogenic pollutant emissions when combating snow and ice melt," the authors said in the report. Snow and ice on the Tibetan plateau act as a water source for over 20 per cent of the global population. However, ice and snow in the Himalayas have been melting at an accelerating rate in recent decades which many scientists have termed alarming and have said may 'lead to global catastrophe in the not too distant future'. While much of the melting of snow and ice in the Himalayas is attributable to climate change, air pollution also plays a role. This is because dark particles of dust and soot that fall on frozen surfaces absorb solar energy and melt the nearby snow and ice, the authors pointed out. They added that such restrictions on emission of polluted material should be implemented in all countries to prevent global warming.

leisure

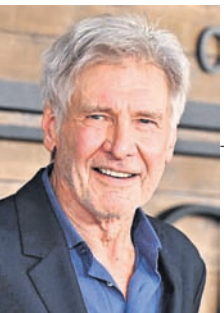


ELBA REFUSES TO PLAY BOND DUE TO RACISM

Actor Idris Elba was one of the biggest contenders for portraying James Bond after Daniel Craig left the franchise. However, Elba shared that he refused to play the famous MI6 spy-assassin due to high racist backlash, reports *Deadline*.

HARRISON FORD DOESN'T SEE HIMSELF AS A LEGEND

Actor Harrison Ford, the 80-year-old known for iconic roles like *Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars*, doesn't view himself as a legend. He considers himself a regular working actor and feels that being labeled a legend implies old age, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You will share wonderful moments with your beloved today. Go ahead and learn some musical instrument, suggests Ganesh. It's a beautiful way to convey emotions. And it provides a perfect means to woo someone anew. Join a class before the mood wanes.

TAURUS
It is highly unlikely that you will be emotional and sentimental today, predicts Ganesh. Adopt a laid-back attitude towards life to feel at ease. Public servants will have encouraging and affirmative results in their efforts. Your competency will be put to test at the work place.

GEMINI
If you have children, they will be a pampered lot today, says Ganesh. Your affection, however, may not have its desired impact. Children are known to be unpredictable, but keep an eye on their activities, especially today.

CANCER
Today, you will need to rise above your emotional leanings and will have to choose between doing the right thing and keeping your loved ones happy. So far, you have managed to strike a balance. It is about time that you learn to deal with your fears, suggests Ganesh.

LEO
Friendships are supposed to last forever. But it all depends on whether or not the friend is around when most needed. Today, your pals may turn to you for help, and sure enough, you will be there to extend all the support you can, says Ganesh. Get ready to make new acquaintances today, some of whom may go on to become life-long friends.

VIRGO
You are the banner carrier for those around you today, giving hope and inspiring. Clad yourself in robes of the perfect family man. This should spread warmth and love, and will work wonders in improving relationships.

LIBRA
Call it two sides of the same coin, but today, you shall have the uncanny desire to be your own master and servant. But this day is all set to be animated and eventful and full of life. Expect a few run-ins with the opposite sex, as you are bound to attract quite a few of them, mainly because of your killer good looks. Hitting the gym pays its dividends, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
You may find yourself sulking in your shell today, feels Ganesh. One event or another may lead you to shut out work. Hindsight and bitterness will not lead you anywhere, so Ganesh advises that you must steer clear of negativity. Soul searching and inner cleansing may best be complimented with meditation and yoga.

SAGITTARIUS
A nice, easy and pleasant day is on the cards. Your professional approach will bring you much appreciation, especially in the way you handle complicated problems. The way you balance people's opinions will help you make many friends.

CAPRICORN
Recognition and rewards are awaiting you at work, and unlike in most cases, colleagues won't be envious of your success. They will, in fact, provide the much-needed motivation for taking up new and challenging projects, says Ganesh. For those of you looking to switch jobs, wait awhile, this may not be the right time. You will be showered with better job opportunities, but it will be wise of you to wait till you strike the right deal.

AQUARIUS
Today, your social butterflies will set hearts fluttering! Also, whatever you have been working on will reach completion now. You do have a great vision, but you're lost when it comes to executing your plans. Ganesh assures success if only you are a little more practical!

PISCES
The focus today is on touching base with your near and dear ones, says Ganesh. It is likely that you will renew some old associations in a social function, or in matters related to business.

Female pleasure should be normalised: Kajol

Mumbai: Actress Kajol, who completed 30 years in the film industry and will be next seen in *Lust Stories 2*, Wednesday opened up on the concept of female pleasure. In an interview with a film magazine, the *Baazigar* actress said, it should be normalised in the same way that the society has normalised eating and drinking. "At one point in time as a society, we were very open about it. It was part of our ancient texts and our education. We later closed ourselves off from it. But at the end of the day, it is a very normal part of life that we cannot do without. I think it needs to be normalised the same way that we've normalised eating and drinking. It's really a question of making it a part of the conversation rather than closing it off," she added.

In the same interview, Kajol also spoke about the evolution of lust in cinema over the years. "Lust used to be two flowers coming together at one point. But we've evolved just a step forward and decided to make something like *Lust Stories 2*. Right now, the movies are speaking in the language that love is defined today. People believe in multiple soulmates these days. And therefore, all the love stories we've made so far have been very differently made. They're based more on friendships, modern relationships and society," signed off the actor.



Daman makers' next titled Mission O2

Bhubaneswar: The makers of the critically acclaimed and hit Odia movie *Daman* are bringing yet another movie about a real-life incident. The director duo of Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad Lenka Wednesday shared the poster of their new movie titled *Mission O2*. "We have always celebrated our super heroes, now it's time to honor our super state," reads the poster. The movie is being produced & directed by Vishal Mourya & Debi Prasad Lenka. The development has stoked intense interest about the cast of the movie, it was learnt. According to sources in the know, the film will tell the story of Odisha government's initiative to supply medical oxygen and how it embarked on a mission to despatch more than 28,000 tonnes of medical oxygen to 17 deficit states in two months.



Priye Tu Mo Sie to hit theatres today



Bhubaneswar: Odia movie *Priye Tu Mo Sie*, the fourth production of Jhilik Motion Pictures (JMP), will release in theatres Thursday. In the film, popular actress Elna Samantray will be seen pairing up with Amlan Das for the first time in her career. Directed by Sudhanshu Mohan Sahoo, the plot of the movie revolves around the lives of a poor boy and a rich girl and how they fall in love. Bobby Mishra is also playing an important role in the movie. The film's music has been scored by Baidyanath Dash while the drama part was shot entirely in Baripada. The songs have been picturised in Manali and Chandigarh, informed the makers. Headed by actress Jhilik Bhattacharjee, JMP earlier had produced *Rudrani* with her as lead, *Kiss Miss* with Shivani and Svaraj and *Tora Mora Katti* starring Sidhant Mohapatra, Sheetal Patra and Shailendra.

Celina threatened for backing LGBT movement

Mumbai: Actress Celina Jaitley recently talked about receiving threats from people for supporting the LGBT movement. Talking to media about Pride Month, the No Entry actress said, "Probie Da, my makeup artist, played a maternal role during my difficult teenage years as a guardian angel to me. His demise deeply affected me. In our last conversation a week before his passing, he expressed his anxieties about growing old as a gay man, not having a family or a life partner, and his wish to witness my marriage to a wonderful man. His entire life was dedicated to pursuing happiness, a goal he could never fully attain due to the societal prejudice against being gay. In one tragic event, all his fears vanished, leaving a lasting impact on me." "I faced threats from individuals across the nation. Even colleagues within the film industry who identify as LGBTQIA distanced themselves, fearing that any connection with me would expose their own identities. Despite the dangers, I persisted in supporting LGBTQIA organisations, events, and film festivals. To ensure my safety, I had to hire expensive personal security. I endured questioning about my own sexuality and was being excluded from social circles and film projects," revealed the actress.

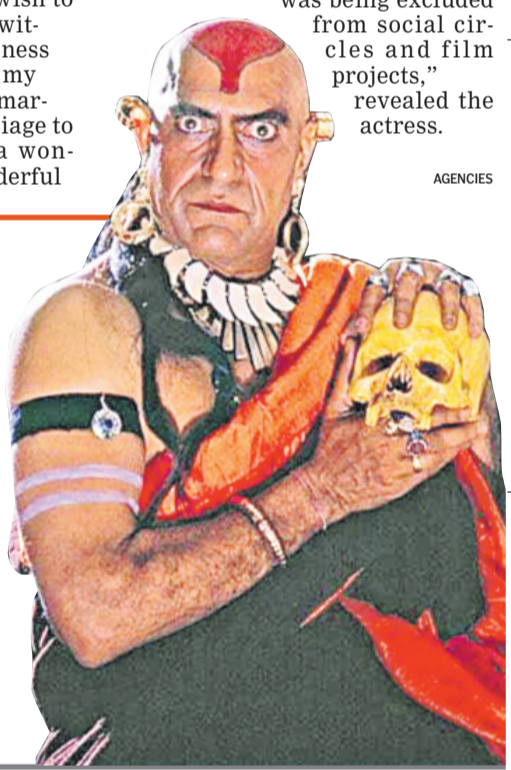


AGENCIES

When Amrish Puri was called 'anti-national'

'Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom (1984)' was banned in India as the movie showed several Indians as barbaric and uncivilised. The government didn't even permit the shoot in India

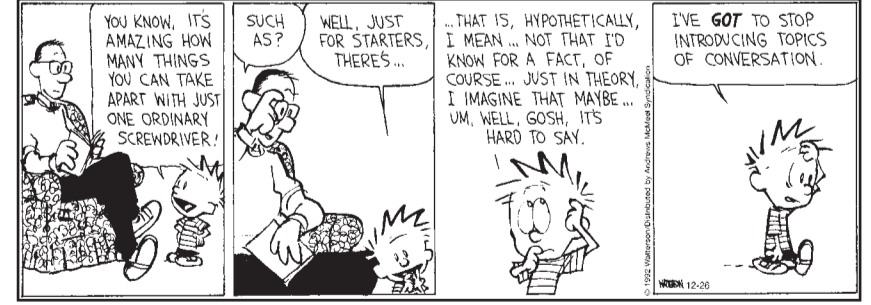
Mumbai: The much-awaited film, *Indiana Jones And The Dial Of Destiny*, is all set to release in Indian cinemas Thursday. It is the fifth and final part of the franchise and will feature 80-year-old Harrison Ford essaying the iconic character one last time. The first part, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, was released in 1981 and emerged as a cult classic and redefined the action-adventure genre. In fact, *RRR* director S Rajamouli's next with Mahesh Babu is also on the lines of the franchise, it was learnt. Interestingly, the second film of the series, *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom (1984)*, was set in India but was banned by Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). Moreover, the government didn't even permit the shoot in India as they had reservations about the plot. The movie showed several Indians as barbaric and uncivilised. In a dinner scene set in a palace, the men of royal blood are seen feasting on snakes, spiders and monkey brains! Mola Ram, the main antagonist played by late Indian actor Amrish Puri, is seen pulling hearts from victims before sacrificing them in the most heinous way. Though the movie was never released in India, word spread about its content and the depiction of Gods and it was perceived as demeaning. Amrish Puri, as expected, faced brickbats. He was even termed 'anti-national' and he reacted to this episode in his autobiography. He wrote, "It was a chance of a lifetime working with Steven Spielberg, and I don't regret it even for a moment. I don't think I did anything anti-national; it's really foolish to take it so seriously and get worked up over it." Amrish further wrote, "It's based on an ancient cult that existed in India and was recreated like a fantasy. I know we are sensitive about our cultural identity, but we do this to ourselves in our own films. It's only when some foreign directors do it that we start cribbing."



PEANUTS



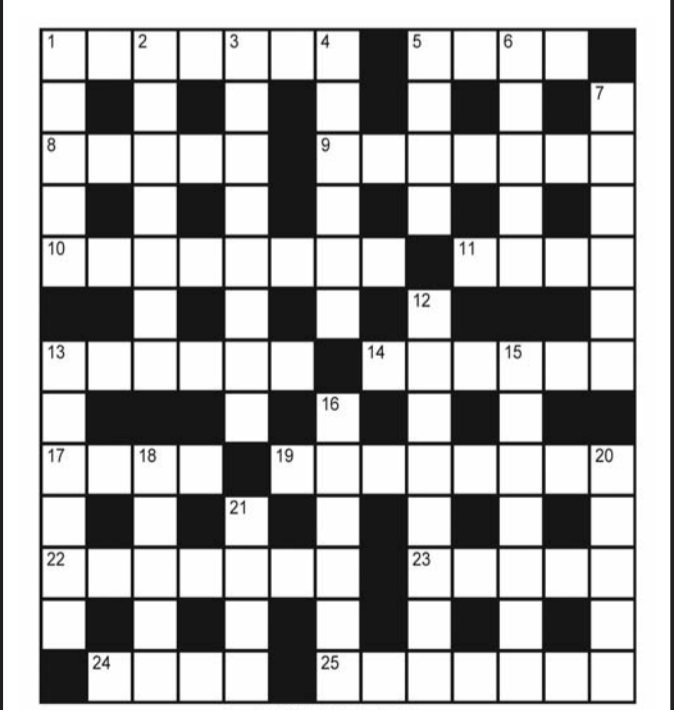
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



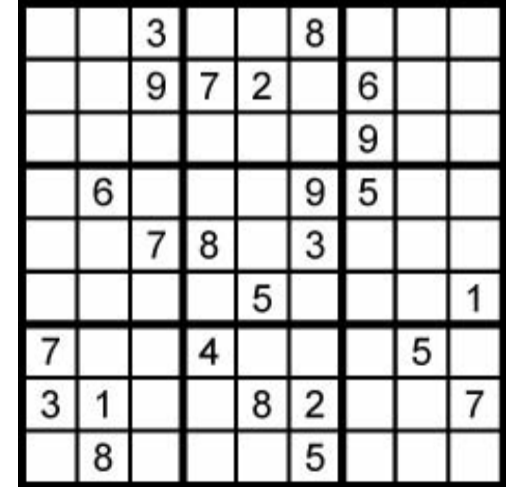
FUN post CROSSWORD



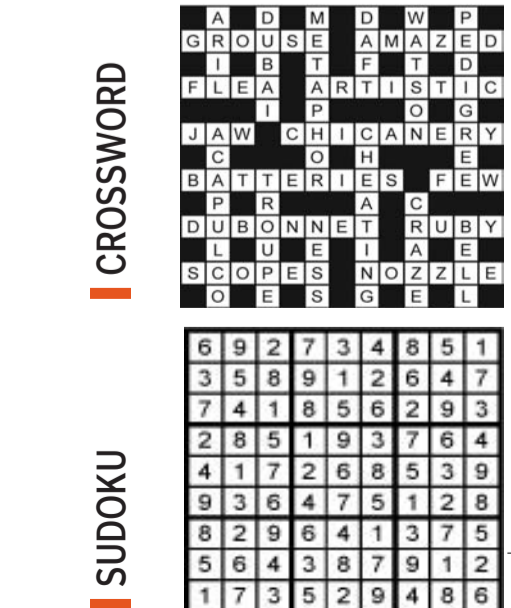
- Across**
- 1 Bridge bid (2-5)
 - 5 Sandwich filler
 - 8 Cut corners
 - 9 Stingy
 - 10 Actor's line
 - 11 Dread
 - 13 Barricaded
 - 14 Potpourri
 - 17 Aspect
 - 19 Flying fox (5,3)
 - 22 Consistent
 - 23 Graceful bird
 - 24 Connive
 - 25 Shangri-la
 - 4 Marsupial
 - 5 Cash drawer
 - 6 Innocent
 - 7 Fortified wine
 - 12 Solve a code
 - 13 Cream soup
 - 15 African nation
 - 16 German city
 - 18 Auger
 - 20 South Seas kingdom
 - 21 Like some points
- Down**
- 1 Beat (out)
 - 2 Where some things disappear (4,3)
 - 3 Like some theories

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

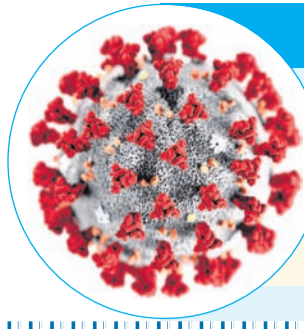


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



TALENT FETED

Artist Shashikant Rout being felicitated during an event organised at Srirama Chandra Bhawan in Cuttack, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	69,00,68,151	66,24,96,191	68,89,432
India	4,49,92,293	4,44,57,720	5,31,886
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Fine weather; chariots reach Singhadwar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 28: An estimated eight lakh devotees thronged the Pilgrim City to witness Bahuda Jatra, which marks the return of Lord Jagannath and His siblings - Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra - from their aunt's place - Gundicha Temple - to Srimandir, Wednesday.

Special rituals were performed at Gundicha Temple beginning early Wednesday morning. "The rituals began with 'Kusumi Lagi' at 4:35am. After Mangal Alati, Mailam, Tadap Lagi, Rosha Homa, Abakasha and Dora Lagi, Pahandi (ceremonial procession) of the Sibling deities began at 7:55am and concluded at 11:05am," an official said.

Though Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) had earlier fixed the timing of Pahandi between 12 noon to 2.30pm, the Lord's procession was completed much ahead of the schedule.

As per the tradition, 'Chhera Panhara' (sweeping of the chariots) ritual was performed by Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb in all three chariots.

Amid chants of 'Jai Jagannath' and beating of cymbals, Taladhwaaja of Lord Balabhadra was the first to be pulled at 12:50pm, followed by Darpadana of Devi Subhadra and Nandighosha of Lord Jagannath. Devotees jostled to catch a glimpse of the sibling deities on chariot.

Lord Balabhadra was the first to reach near the Lion's Gate of Srimandir at 4:40pm, followed by Devi Subhadra at 4:45pm. On the way, Lord Jagannath had to wait near the king's palace for Laxmi-

Deities to dazzle in golden attire today

Lord Jagannath and His Siblings - Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra - will adorn the golden attire (Suna Besha) on chariots, Thursday.

According to Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), around 10 lakh devotees are expected to witness the Suna Besha.

"After completion of the Mailam and Ekadashi Sarbanga rituals, the deities will be decked in gold jewellery embellished with diamond and gems taken out from the temple treasury Thursday," said an SJTA official.

The official added, "Suna Besha Mailam will be performed between 10pm and 11pm. Pahuda rituals will be performed at 1am after completion of Bada Singhara Besha of the sibling deities."

The administration has put in place adequate arrangements to ensure smooth conduct of the rituals, the official pointed out.

The Adhar Pana (a delicious drink) ritual will be performed on the chariots June 30, while the deities will be taken back to the 12th century shrine July 1 in a ritual called Niladri Bijje.

Narayana Bheta at 5:55pm. Lord Jagannath was the last to reach Lion's Gate at 6:45pm. Surprisingly, there was no rain Wednesday, and the weather was clear.



CM LAYS STONE FOR ₹280CR EKAMRA PROJECT

With an allocated 80-acre land around the Lingaraj Temple, including various monuments, holy tanks, and water bodies, the project aims to recreate the magnificence of the ancient heritage precinct

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for the Rs 280 crore Ekamra project on the last day of the three-day ground breaking ceremony, Wednesday.

While laying the foundation, Patnaik thanked the people who have offered their land for the project. The Chief Minister also felicitated 14 people who contributed land for the project cementing the government's dedication to the preservation and revival of Bhubaneswar's ancient heritage.

Representatives of Brahmana Nijog, Badu Nijog and Samartha Nijog presented a photo of Damodar Besha of Lord Lingaraj to the CM. Among others, Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik, Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda and 5T Secretary VK Pandian were present on the stage.

The Ekamra project, also known as Ekamra Kshetra Amenities and Monuments Revival Action plan, was launched by the state government in 2019.

Ekamra Kshetra is a series of ancient sandstone temples, heritage ponds and water tanks in the Temple City of Bhubaneswar. The wealth of monuments in the area is testament to an ancient continuous architectural and historical heritage



covering over 2,000 years from the 3rd century BC to the 15th century AD.

With an allocated 80-acre land around the revered Lingaraj Temple, including various monuments, holy tanks, and water bodies, the project aims to recreate the magnificence of the ancient heritage precinct.

The Phase-I development will encompass key highlights such as restoration of Ekamra Kshetra's architectural and archaeological heritage. A 12-18 metre wide mixed traffic lane will be implemented, alongside 4-10 metre wide shaded walkways to ensure smooth pedestrian flow. Parking facilities will be relocated to the outer periphery of Ekamra Kshetra to alleviate congestion.

Interconnected landscaped open spaces will be created, providing safe gathering areas for devotees, while a 300 square metre temple facility will be constructed for the convenience of pilgrims.

Additionally, a 1,600 square metre Information and Control Centre will be developed to cater to emergency services. A dedicated pedestrian path around Bindusagar will be constructed to facilitate easy access to ritual spaces and Ekamra Van. It seeks to provide a harmonious blend of modern amenities and preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring a transformative experience for visitors and devotees alike.

The Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation

(OBCC) has been entrusted with the task of executing the project and the tender has been finalised.

The Bhumi Pujan for the project commenced on the evening of June 26 with Yagna rituals that continued till June 28.

On the occasion, Lingaraj Temple, Ananta Basudeva Temple, Mukteswar Temple, Bindusagar and other smaller temples were beautifully decorated with lights. Captivating sky projections, light and sound show, dance performances at BMC Market Complex enthralled the visitors during the event.

An exhibition featuring a project model and information displays was organised to enlighten visitors about the endeavours taking place within the Ekamra Kshetra.

DEVPT PLAN

- A 12-18 metre wide mixed traffic lane will be implemented, alongside 4-10 metre wide shaded walkways to ensure smooth pedestrian flow

- Parking facilities will be relocated to the outer periphery of Ekamra Kshetra to alleviate congestion

- A 1,600 square metre Information and Control Centre will be developed to cater to emergency services

Cong picks holes in ₹25K-cr drone deal

■ The party says India signed the deal with the US at exorbitant prices & without the approval of Cabinet Committee on Security

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, June 28: The Congress party Wednesday raised questions over a deal signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for procurement of MQ-9B Predator UAV drones during his visit to the United States allegedly without the approval from Cabinet Committee on Security.

The Prime Minister during his visit to the US had signed the deal for procurement of 31 MQ-9B Predator UAV drones at the cost of US\$ 3.072 billion (Rs 25,200 crore). Alleging a major scam in the entire deal, the Congress said that Spain had signed the deal for Reaper MQ-9 at \$46.75 million per drone and the US bought the superior quality MQ-9 at \$56 million per drone while the Indian government has signed the deal at \$110 million per drone. It added that the deal was signed without the approval of Cabinet Committee on Security.

"Why is India paying more than the price for a drone, as compared to other countries? Why are we paying the highest price for a drone, which does not have AI integration?" Congress asked. The party asked the Centre to clarify whether the deal is with the US govern-

ment or with General Atomics, the manufacturing company. Asserting that no tender was issued for procurement of drones, the Congress demanded a complete transparency on the cost of drones if it is a government-to-government deal between the US and India. The Congress also questioned the procurement of 31 drones when the armed forces have demanded only 19.

Addressing the media, Congress spokesperson Pawan Kherra questioned the Union government on its Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make-in-India initiative. He said that the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been developing several advanced drone technologies with the prominent ones being the RUS-TOM-II series, specifically RUS-TOM-II, also known as TAPAS-BH-201, developed on the lines of the Predator drones of the US. DRDO can develop similar quality drones in just 10-20 per cent of total cost of predator drones from USA. He alleged that the predator drones are of outdated technology and being bought for four times higher than its actual price.

The Congress party further questioned the links of the CEO of General Atomics with the influential figures of the ruling establishment. Kherra, however, did not name the person who allegedly influenced the deal.

CPET to be held despite holiday

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Higher Education department Wednesday said this year's Common PG Entrance Test (CPET) which is scheduled for June 29, 2023 (Thursday) will be held as notified earlier, despite Id-ul-Zuha declared a holiday.

"Odisha government has announced June 29, 2023 (Thursday) as a holiday on account of Id-ul-Zuha. Accordingly all educational institutions in the state will remain closed Thursday. However, Common PG Entrance Test (CPET 2023) will be conducted on Thursday as per the scheduled time. Three sittings of the CPET 2023 as decided earlier by State Selection Board of the Department will be held tomorrow," a tweet of the I&PR department issued on behalf HE department mentioned.

All higher educational institutions will remain open June 30 (Friday). The HE department had announced April 26 the schedule for CPET-2023 and e-Admission to universities and colleges in Odisha under Student Academic Management System (SAMS) for the Session 2023-24. The entrance tests were to be held from June 23 to July 4 except June 28 and June 30.

BALASORE MISHAP

Extension for cop supervising probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: Senior IPS officer Viplav Kumar Choudhry, who is supervising the CBI probe in the June 2 Balasore train accident, was given a one-and-a-half-year extension as a joint director in the agency, Wednesday.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the extension in his deputation tenure for a further period of one year and six months from March 28, 2023 to September 27, 2024 (seven years in total).

An official said he is also supervising the CBI probe in the Balasore train tragedy.

Only caffeine won't do, you need coffee to get going!

If you want to feel not just alert but ready to go, caffeine alone won't do - you need to experience that cup of coffee, say scientists after studying the effects of coffee vs caffeine in coffee-drinkers.

The scientists wanted to understand if the wakefulness effect came from caffeine or from the experience of drinking coffee. "There is a common expectation that coffee increases alertness and psychomotor functioning," said Nuno Sousa

of the University of Minho, Portugal, and corresponding author of the study published in the journal Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience.

"When you get to understand better the mechanisms underlying a biological phenomenon, you open pathways for exploring the factors that may modulate it and even the potential benefits of that mechanism," said Sousa.

The scientists recruited people who drank a minimum of one cup of coffee per day and

asked them to refrain from eating or drinking caffeinated beverages for at least three hours before the study.

The participants' socio-demographic data was collected through interviews and their brains were scanned using functional MRI (fMRI), once before and once 30 minutes after taking caffeine or drinking a stan-

dardised cup of coffee. While being scanned, the participants were asked to relax and let their minds wander.

Being aware of the neurochemical effects of drinking coffee, the scientists expected the brain scans to show an increased integration of the prefrontal cortical networks associated with executive memory



and of the default mode network involved in introspective and self-reflective processes.

However, in both coffee-drinkers and caffeine-takers, they found that the introspection network's connectivity had decreased, suggesting that both coffee and caffeine consumption made people more active and more prepared for working on tasks. Also, only in coffee-drinkers, the scientists established an enhanced connectivity in brain regions accessed for working memory, cognitive con-

trol and goal-directed behaviour - the higher visual network and the right executive control network. That this didn't take place in caffeine-takers suggested, scientists said, that if you want to feel not just alert but ready to go, caffeine alone won't do - you need to experience that cup of coffee.

"In simple words, the subjects were more ready for action and alert to external stimuli after having coffee," said Maria Pico-Perez of Jaume I University, Spain, and the study's first author. PTI

MINISTER BLAMES RAIN FOR TOMATO PRICE RISE

Tomatoes, which were available at ₹40-50 per kg two days ago, are now being sold at a price of ₹80-100 per kg in different markets of Odisha



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Tomatoes, which were available at ₹40-50 per kg two days ago, are now being sold at a price of ₹80-100 per kg in different markets of Odisha. According to traders, the retail price of tomato was ₹80 per kg in Unit-I vegetable market of Bhubaneswar while it was ₹90 per kg at Cuttack's Chhatra Bazaar and Balasore urban market.

The price of the vegetable has reached ₹100 per kg in Berhampur and Bhadrak. Even in some places, the price has gone beyond ₹100 per kg, the traders said. All these prices are in different markets in the urban areas or district headquarters and price would be much more

“We have already instructed department officials to put a check on the market and take appropriate action against those who are indulging in hoarding”

ATANU SABYASACHI NAYAK | FOOD SUPPLIES & CONSUMER WELFARE MINISTER

in the rural markets, they said. Blaming rain, Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak said, “Incessant rain has affected farmers as well as the market. Tomatoes are usually procured from Bangalore. Due to the adverse impact of rainfall, the production has been affected there and price was also increased. In accordance with the import price, we are selling it here,” Sahu said.

The sudden price hike has impacted the consumers. While some chose to buy much less quantity as compared to other days, others stopped buying it. “Two days ago, I bought a one kg tomato at a price of ₹50. But, today, the price increased to ₹90. So, I chose to buy half kg as it is essential for my kitchen,” said Nibedita Behera, a housewife of Cuttack CDA area. Similarly, Manasiwni Panda of Bhubaneswar said she returned home from the vegetable market without buying tomatoes after knowing about the price hike.

who are indulging in hoarding and other illegal activities,” Nayak added.

The price hike in the source markets in Karnataka is the reason behind the sudden increase in the price of tomatoes in Odisha, said Debendra Sahu, secretary of the Chhatra Bazar Traders' Association. “At present, the vegetable is not growing in Odisha. So, we import it from Bangalore. Due to the adverse impact of rainfall, the production has been affected there and price was also increased. In accordance with the import price, we are selling it here,” Sahu said.

Similarly, Rajkalli Devi from Bihar's Mizaffarpur has been waiting for her husband's body who was on way to Chennai. As many as 35 persons are camping at the guest house while 15 others have left for home due to delay in arrival of DNA reports. Calls and messages from PTI to AIIMS director Ashutosh Biswas went unanswered. A railway official told PTI that they were appealing to claimants to provide their DNA samples. “We are just a bridge between AIIMS and the state government,” the railway official said. Meanwhile, the identities of 81 bodies preserved in three containers at Bhubaneswar AIIMS are yet to be ascertained. A total of 84 families have given DNA samples so far.

PRIs have become pioneers of country in devpt: CM

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday announced that the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) which won the first place at the national level will be awarded six times the amount of money given by the Central government. Similarly, the PRIs that got the second place will be awarded 3 times more and the institu-

tions that were placed third will be awarded 2 times more.

The Chief Minister said that there must be healthy competition among Panchayati Raj institutions for development.

According to the announcement, Ganjam district council, which stood first at the national level, was awarded a prize of ₹30 crore while Hinjilicut panchayat which secured the first position was awarded ₹12 crore. Similarly,



Kanchuru Panchayat of Hinjilicut block, Kulada Panchayat of Bhanjanagar block, Sasan Ambgaon of Hinjilikutu block and Ankuli Panchayat of Patrapur block that bagged the second position were awarded ₹2.25 crore each. Boneigarh

Panchayat of Sundargarh's Bonei Block, which secured the third position, was awarded a prize of ₹1 crore. A total of ₹52 crore was awarded to 7 Panchayati Raj institutions. The Chief Minister welcomed the PRIs calling them as “Gaon Ra Sarkar”. Panchayati Raj Institutions have become the pioneers of the country in various parameters of development today, he said.

MP delegation all praise for P-PAS

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 28: A delegation from Madhya Pradesh led by Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Joint Director HS Parmar along with Madhya Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation General Manager KK Srivastava and IT Consultant Parag Pathak visited Odisha Wednesday to study the innovative methods adopted by the state government to automate the paddy procurement process and targeted public distribution system (TPDS) transformation.

The team visited rice receiving centre-cum-departmental storage centre (DSC), Mancheswar to study its functioning and lauded the transparent supply chain operations



followed by the state.

They also visited Santholia rice mill, Baliana block in Khurda to see the paddy milling process and were surprised to learn that the state is procuring paddy directly from farmers by opening paddy purchase centres in all 30 districts which facilitates farmers to sell their produce almost at their doorstep.

The team proceeded to Maitree fair price shop (FPS) under BMC to understand the functioning of the food grain ATM installed in the FPS centre and how it has reduced manual dispensing and automated the distribution of food grains under PDS.

The delegates interacted with the officials of food supplies and Odisha state civil supplies corporation limited to understand the modalities and workflow of paddy procurement automation system (P-PAS), supply chain management system, ration card management system, fair price shop automation and grievance redressal system.

Parmar commended the steps taken by the government in the implementation of NFSA leading to becoming the number one performing state in the country.

TRIPLE TRAIN MISHAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 28: There is no end to the misery and anguish of the kin of the June 2 Odisha train mishap victims as they continue to wait for the bodies of their near and dear ones, almost four weeks after the deadly accident that claimed nearly 300 lives.

Basanti Devi from Bari-Ballia village in Bihar's Begusarai district has been camping in a guest house located at an isolated area near AIIMS since the last 10 days to claim her husband's body.

“I'm here for my husband Yogendra Paswan, a contract labourer. He was killed in the accident at Bahanaga Bazar while returning home in the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express,” she said as tear rolled down her cheeks.

She claimed that officials haven't given her any deadline when she will get the body. “While some officials say it will take 5 more days, others say it might take more time. There is just no clarity by the administration,” she added.

“I have five kids. I have left

Victims' kin still wait for bodies



behind three kids and brought two sons with me. My husband was the sole breadwinner. I don't know how I will be able to survive,” she added.

Similar is the situation of Narayan Rishidev from Purnia, who has been waiting to claim the body of his grandson Suraj Kumar since June 4. Suraj was travelling to Chennai in the ill-fated Coromandel Express.

After completing his matriculation, Suraj was heading to

Chennai in search of a job. “The authorities have already taken my DNA sample, but the report is yet to come,” he added.

Shivkant Roy from West Bengal's Cooch Behar district said his son Vipul was returning home from Tirupati for his marriage in June-end.

“My son's body was kept at KIMS Hospital but I kept looking for him in a Balasore hospital. I was later informed that KIMS Hospital handed over the body

to someone from Bihar, who took it with him and cremated it,” Shivkant Roy told PTI.

Similarly, Rajkalli Devi from Bihar's Mizaffarpur has been waiting for her husband's body who was on way to Chennai.

As many as 35 persons are camping at the guest house while 15 others have left for home due to delay in arrival of DNA reports.

Calls and messages from PTI to AIIMS director Ashutosh Biswas went unanswered.

A railway official told PTI that they were appealing to claimants to provide their DNA samples. “We are just a bridge between AIIMS and the state government,” the railway official said.

Meanwhile, the identities of 81 bodies preserved in three containers at Bhubaneswar AIIMS are yet to be ascertained. A total of 84 families have given DNA samples so far.

The Chennai-bound Coromandel Express, Howrah-bound SMVP-Howrah Superfast Express and a goods train were involved in a deadly accident near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district June 2 killing more than 290 people.

10 trains cancelled due to restoration work

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, June 28: At least 10 trains have been cancelled due to restoration work at Bahanaga Bazar station of Kharagpur-Bhadrak section of South Eastern Railway. Eight trains, which were to commence journey June 28, and two trains, which were scheduled to depart June 29 and 30, have been cancelled. Following trains with June 28 as the date of journey have been cancelled.

Train number 22831 Howrah - Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam, 22849 Shalimar - Secunderabad, 12773 Shalimar - Secunderabad, 22842 Tambaram - Santragachi, 18046 Hyderabad - Shalimar, 22864 SMVT Bengaluru - Howrah, 22826 Chennai Central - Shalimar and 22888 SMVT Bengaluru - Howrah. Train number 22888 SMVT Bengaluru - Howrah with June 29 as date of journey and 2850 Secunderabad - Shalimar, scheduled to depart June 30 have also been cancelled.



Meanwhile, South Central railway announced that in order to clear the extra rush of passengers, it has extended the run of special trains between various destinations. Train number 04121 Subedarganj-Secunderabad, which runs every Thursday, has been extended from July 6 to August 31. 04122 Secunderabad Subedarganj, which runs every Friday, extended from July 7 to September 1. 07445 Kakinada Town-Lingampalli (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) from July 3 to August 30. 07466 Lingampalli-Kakinada Town (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) from July 4 to August 31.

Chemical imbalance in forebrain behind OCD, research finds

An imbalance in the neurotransmitters or chemicals in the brain, in the brain's frontal regions responsible for maintaining the excitation-inhibition equilibrium in these regions has been found in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder, or OCD.

Glutamate is an “excitatory” neurochemical allowing electrical impulses to send information across brain networks, whereas GABA is the “inhibitory” one, dampening neural excitation and thereby, creating and maintaining a balance.

In OCD sufferers, the glutamate-GABA balance was “disrupted” in two regions of the brain's cerebral cortex, both fundamentally involved in deciding the balance between our conscious goals and more automatic habits, the University of Cambridge (UK) research showed.

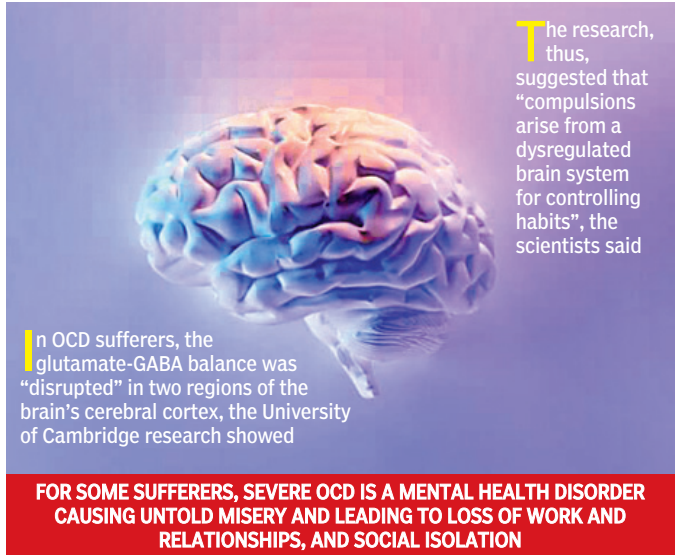
Using magnetic resonance spectroscopy, the researchers

found heightened glutamate and lowered GABA levels in one of these cerebral cortical regions, the anterior cingulate cortex, of people with OCD than in those without.

Further, enhanced glutamate levels in the other cerebral cortical region, the supplementary motor region, were linked to severity of OCD symptoms, along with a tendency towards habitual and compulsive behaviour. The researchers found this to be the case in both OCD patients as well as healthy participants with milder compulsive tendencies.

The research, thus, suggested that “compulsions arise from a dysregulated brain system for controlling habits”, the scientists said.

Publishing their study in the journal Nature Communications, the neuroscientists said it will open up new avenues for treating a potentially disabling OCD, a psychiatric disorder charac-



In OCD sufferers, the glutamate-GABA balance was “disrupted” in two regions of the brain's cerebral cortex, the University of Cambridge research showed

FOR SOME SUFFERERS, SEVERE OCD IS A MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER CAUSING UNTOLD MISERY AND LEADING TO LOSS OF WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS, AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

terised by recurrent and persistent thoughts and feelings and repetitive, ritualised behaviours.

“Understanding obsessive-compulsive disorder is a cen-

terised by recurrent and persistent thoughts and feelings and repetitive, ritualised behaviours.”

The research, thus, suggested that “compulsions arise from a dysregulated brain system for controlling habits”, the scientists said

tered by recurrent and persistent thoughts and feelings and repetitive, ritualised behaviours.”

Department of Psychology. “Excess glutamate and reduced GABA is disrupting the neural circuitry in key regions of the OCD brain.”

For some sufferers, severe OCD is a mental health disorder causing untold misery and leading to loss of work and relationships, and social isolation.

“Symptoms of intrusive thoughts and repetitive rituals can confine patients to their homes for months on end,” said Robbins. In extreme cases, the lack of control and sense of hopelessness caused by OCD can even result in thoughts of suicide.

In terms of treatment, while people with milder symptoms can benefit from some anti-depressants, fewer and extreme options exist for those with severe OCD, such as deep-brain stimulation and even a neurosurgical removal of the anterior cingulate cortex entirely. The researchers say that raised

glutamate levels may prove to be an OCD “biomarker” guiding new therapies, including medication.

“The results suggest new strategies for medication in OCD based on available drugs that regulate glutamate. In particular, drugs that inhibit presynaptic glutamate receptors,” said Robbins. A presynaptic receptor is the part of a nerve cell that controls release of neurotransmitter chemicals.

Along with scans, the researchers conducted tests and questionnaires with all participants to gauge obsessive-compulsive and habitual tendencies, which checked for their behavioural adaptability to better pursue goals, rather than repeating responses out of habit.

“Compulsions and habits are not the same, but impaired regulation of compulsions and shift people away from their goal-directed behaviour,” said Robbins.

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



SOAKED IN FAITH: Devotees pulling the three chariots during the Bahuda Jatra of Trinity at Patali Srikhetra in Ulunda block of Subarnapur district, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

4 teachers sent behind bars over fake certificates

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, June 28: A Vigilance court here Tuesday sentenced four teachers to four years of imprisonment after convicting them for submission of fake educational certificates in connection with their appointment.

The convicted teachers were identified as Daitari Nayak, an assistant teacher of Mahishapata UGME School under Nilagiri police limits; Narahari Nayak, a teacher of Jharanaghata Primary School; Debendra Kumar Mohapatra, former teacher of Tentulia UGME School and currently posted at Kalyani Primary School at Mitrapur; and Dharendra Nayak, a retired teacher of Pithahat Nodal School.

Three of the convicted teachers have been sacked from service while the court has directed to stop payment of pension to the convicted retired teacher.

The court sentenced them to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of 2 years and fine of ₹10,000 each and in default of payment of fine, to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of 4 years and fine of ₹20,000 each and in default of payment of fine, to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of 4 months each for the offence U/s



471 IPC. The court further sentenced Daitari Nayak and Debendra Kumar Mohapatra to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of 4 years and fine of ₹20,000 each and in default of payment of fine, to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of 3 months each for the offence U/s 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) PC Act. All the sentences are to run concurrently.

All the convicts were forwarded to jail custody Tuesday. Vigilance will now move the competent authority for the stoppage of the pension of Dharendra Nayak, and the dismissal of Daitari Nayak, Narahari Nayak, and Debendra Kumar Mohapatra, from service following their conviction.

Gangul Behera, ex-Inspector, Vigilance, Balasure Division had investigated the case and SK Ray, Special Public Prosecutor, Vigilance, Balasure conducted the case on behalf of the prosecution.

Lower Suktel dam gets first rainwater

After reports surfaced, people in nearby villages thronged the dam site to get a glimpse of the water filled dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, June 28: The first rainwater in Suktel river entered the Lower Suktel dam's reservoir for the first time, Tuesday as work on the irrigation project is on its last leg, a report said Wednesday.

According to available information, the water level in the reservoir reached 184 RL by Wednesday night. After reports surfaced, people in nearby villages thronged the dam site to get a glimpse of the water filled dam. This has also sent the chatters abuzz in the area.

Reports said that the plan for construction of an irrigation project called Lower Suktel Irrigation Project was conceived two decades back. The project had to encounter many roadblocks and finally, after much uncertainty, construction of the project has reached its last leg



The project had to encounter many roadblocks and finally, after much uncertainty, construction of the project has reached its last leg

tainty, construction of the project has reached its last leg.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for construction of the dam on November, 24, 2001. The project

work got stalled several times due to repeated agitations by the locals and project oustees. Later, work on the project picked up and now it is just short of completion.

Observers and people are of the opinion that the dam after its completion will lead the district on the path of development.

However, what ails the district administration is that there are still many people to be relocated from many of the project-affected villages. People in these villages are apprehensive as they ponder what their situation will be as monsoon has set in the state.

They are living in an atmosphere of fear and trepidation. Though none of the project affected villages have submerged due to little rain, but what will happen when it will rain heavily, they alleged. They fear that the riparian villages will be completely submerged when it rains heavily. Observers think that relocation of people from the affected villages is the most important work now.

The district administration is leaving no stone unturned to expedite the relocation process but people want it to be done on war footing.

When contacted, chief construction engineer Sunil Rout of Lower Suktel Irrigation project ruled out any possibility of submergence of affected villages. He said that rainwater has entered the dam after two days of rainfall in the area. The water level has been measured at 181 RL but if more water enters the dam then the under sluice gate will be opened to discharge the excess floodwater.

Water level in the dam will be maintained at a safe level and as the construction of the dam is underway, the accumulated rainwater will also be discharged from the dam, he added.

Minor boy dies by suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahanga, June 28: In a tragic incident, a minor boy committed suicide by hanging at Raghunainagar (Patana) under Usuma panchayat and Mahanga police limits in Cuttack district Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Aryan Jena (12), son of Jatindra Jena of the village.

As per reports, Jatindra and his wife had gone to their relative's house leaving their

younger son Aryan alone back home. When they came back, they found Aryan hanging from the ceiling fan by a rope. Aryan was then brought down and rushed to Mahanga community health centre by his family members, where the doctor declared him 'brought dead'.

After being informed, Mahanga police reached the spot and seized the body. Police registered a case of unnatural death (No-15/23) and sent the body to Cuttack for post-mortem.

4 critical among 15 hurt in pick-up van accident



POST NEWS NETWORK

R. Udayagiri, June 28: As many as 15 labourers were injured, four among them critically, when the driver of a pick-up van in which they were returning after work lost control near Champaghati turning and met with an accident, Tuesday night.

The critically injured persons were identified as Siman, Bipin, Niranjan and Ashok. All the injured were first rushed to R. Udayagiri health centre and all

four critically injured were then shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur.

As per information, a contractor Bapi Naidu had brought 15 labourers from Purunapani area for the roof construction work of Thakur Master of Lubusingh village under R. Udayagiri police limits. After completing work, the labourers were returning to their village in the pick-up van which met with an accident after the driver failed to manoeuvre the vehicle at Champaghati turning.

Informed, the local police reached the spot and seized the vehicle and started an investigation after registering a case.

Tehsildar Jyotimaya Das and BJD district president Jagabandhu Das reached the health centre and sent the critically injured persons to Berhampur.



CLOSE WATCH: A police personnel guards the level crossing check gate of Bahanaga Bazaar railway station on Bahanaga-Gopalpur main road in Balasure district as it was sealed again for vehicular traffic for pending works, Wednesday

RMC stops toll free service centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, June 28: The call centre at Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) which used to address civic problems faced by residents has stopped working from June 24 and those working in the department have been informed that their services are no longer required.

The call centre was set up soon after Rourkela became part of the 'Smart City' project. It used to receive 70-80 calls daily and the numbers would go up during the monsoons and festive seasons like Rath Jatra and Durga Puja. So its sudden closure has come as a shock to the residents of this town.

"We are not sure why the RMC decided to stop the call centre all of a sudden. However, we are certain it has stopped functioning and we are no longer working there," said a person on



condition of anonymity. A second person who also worked at the call centre said, "We were all outsourced and working at the call centre. Our supervisor came and informed us June 24 that our service is no longer required."

Many of the former staffers of the call centre feel that its closure will have a detrimental

effect on the residents of city. "The monsoons have arrived and the problems of the residents will increase manifold. Now they will have nowhere to turn to for addressing their grievances. Earlier we have even helped a pregnant lady in getting her to the hospital. Where will these people now go to," asked another former staffer.

In fact this correspondent got to know from aggrieved persons regarding the closure of the call centre. "I tried the number 18003457468 and there was no answer. There is water logging in front of my house and garbage is also being piled up. I don't know how to get this problem solved," said the person who is in his 70s. Others also had similar complaints to make.

RMC deputy commissioner Sudhansu Bhoi also had no idea about the closure of the call centre. "I did talk with them yesterday (Monday) and today also. They have no idea why they were terminated. Incidentally they get their salaries from the district mineral fund (DMF)," added Bhoi.

The official however assured that the call centre will be functional again soon. "We are looking into it, otherwise residents particularly the senior citizens will suffer," Bhoi stated.

Decomposed body of missing driver found

POST NEWS NETWORK

Anandapur, June 28: A chilling murder of a cab driver has surfaced at Ghasipura Wednesday in the guise of customers killed the driver and fled with the cab after throwing his body. The matter came to the fore after Ghasipura police found a decomposed body along the NH-20 near Darakhala under Ghasipura police limits in Keonjhar district, Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Bhagaban Bairi Ranjan of Chhotijodi village under Kanas police limits in Puri district after an investigation was carried out by the police against an unnatural death case (32/23). After getting a call from the police, the relative of the de-

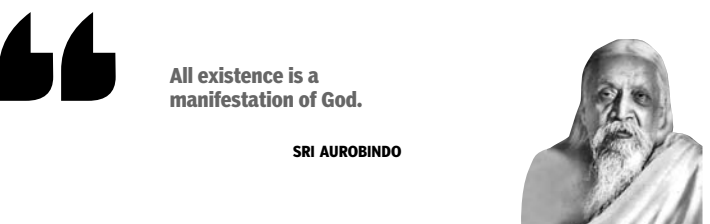
ceased, Chintamani Bairi Ranjan received the body at Anandapur sub-divisional hospital after showing his identity proof.

IIC, Ghasipura PS said that a missing complaint about the driver was in their knowledge. After tracking the contact number of the driver his last location showed at Ghatagaon range. So, after finding the decomposed body, we informed their family, he said.

As per reports, Bhagaban was a cab driver by profession. He took two boys and a girl from Cuttack college chowk to Jajpur on rent, June 24. Then there was no information about his whereabouts. When his family members were unable to contact him, they filed a missing complaint at Malgodam police station June 25 evening.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. ELOP-T-06-2023
NAME OF WORK : SUPPLY OF SCREENED AND DRY RIVER SAND CONFORMING TO RDSO SPECIFICATION NO. "AAR M-916-51" IN 20 KG WATER PROOF NON-MOISTURIZED TRANSPARENT POLYTHENE BAGS AND FILLING IN THE ELECTRICAL/DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE SAND BOXES AT PALASA, KHURDA ROAD, BHADRAK, TALCHER, PARADEEP, ANGUL, PURI, BHUBANESWAR, RAJATHGARH, KENDUJHARGARH & JAKHAPURA ALONG WITH REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF SAND GEAR OF DIESEL AND ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES AT KHURDA ROAD, TALCHER & PARADEEP ROUND THE CLOCK AS PER REQUIREMENT FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.
Advertised Value : ₹ 5,49,40,035.70, EMD : ₹ 4,24,700/-, Cost of Tender Document : ₹ 11,800/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.
Bidding Start Date : 29.06.2023
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1730 Hrs. of 13.07.2023.
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>
Div. Railway Manager (Electrical)/ PR-302/O/23-24 Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No.: eTender CPMGSUBS2023003, Dtd. 19.06.2023
Name of Work: EXECUTION OF PWAY WORKS SUCH AS LINKING OF TRACK, INSERTION OF POINTS & CROSSINGS, TRANSPORTATION OF PWAY MATERIALS, SUPPLYING OF BALLAST AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH DOUBLING OF LINGARA SJ10 CONNECTIVITY OF NTPCLINE OF MCL.
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹1264.83 Lakhs, EMD: ₹7,82,400/-
Completion Period: 12 (Twelve) Months
Tender closing Date and time : At 1200hrs. on 20.07.2023
No manual offers sent by Post/ courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-B duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.
PR-36/CG/23-24 CPM/GSU/HUBANESWAR



All existence is a manifestation of God.

SRI AUROBINDO

Return of Warlords

The turmoil in Russia unleashed by Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group has drawn rapt attention in capitals throughout the world, but probably nowhere more so than in Beijing. The reason is not only that Russia is a trusted partner for China, but also that there are clear historical parallels between Russia this insurrectionary weekend and events a century ago that weakened China and left it vulnerable to invasion.

Today, Russia runs the risk of being split between four or five factions, each with its own army. Aside from the Russian army and the Wagner Group, there are smaller forces under the control of the mayor of Moscow, the local militarist Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya, and a National Guard officially under President Vladimir Putin's command but outside the chain of command of the Russian army. Various other armed forces protect the private business interests of a select group of Russian oligarchs.

A hundred years ago, it was China that was split between "warlords." The collective memory of that period is one reason why China's leaders are determined to keep military force firmly under the ruling Communist Party's control.

In 1911, an unplanned revolutionary alliance ousted China's last emperor, a five-year-old boy, and declared the establishment of Asia's first republic. Yet the new state was extremely unstable. Its constitutional president, Sun Yat-sen, lasted only a few weeks in office before being ousted by Yuan Shikai, a military leader with a massive army loyal to him, not the state.

China's brief republican experiment was quickly overcome by a contest between military groups. Yuan died in 1916, shortly after trying to have himself declared a new emperor. For the next decade and a half, China was divided into regions ruled by local armies. The term "warlord" (junfa) was used pejoratively to describe their commanders. Patriotic activists lamented that the danger confronting China had become twofold: imperialism from outside, warlordism from inside.

The effects of divided authority were obvious and grim. No one ruler could lay claim to all of China, and military leaders were constantly forming alliances that fell apart amid internecine fighting.

These warriors fought each other for one of the few reliable sources of tax income, the Maritime Customs Service, which was run by foreigners but provided revenue to whatever government happened to hold power in Beijing. Constitutional government became a dead letter.

This autumn will mark the centenary of the 1923 Chinese presidential election "won" by a warlord named Cao Kun, who bribed his way to power. To be fair, not all warlords were wholly venal: Yan Xishan of Shanxi province was known for his social reforms, such as prohibiting the practice of binding the feet of young girls.

For some in China, weak government was something of a blessing, because it meant that political dissidents, such as Communists, and writers in trouble with the authorities, could flee to another jurisdiction. Yet overall, the greatest suffering under the warlords was among the people who were unwilling victims or conscripts on the frontline of the constant battles among the various camps: the urban and rural population of China.

The origins of the problem lay half a century before the 1911 revolution. Between 1850 and 1864, a brutal civil war, the Taiping Rebellion, racked eastern China. The ruling Qing dynasty was trying to put down an insurgency led by a man convinced that he was Jesus' younger brother.

For years, the imperial armies could not cope with the Taiping rebels. Eventually, the emperor had to allow provincial leaders to raise their own armies to fight them. This tactic succeeded, but at the price of devolving military power from the centre to the provinces. As the dynasty weakened, the local military leaders gained strength. After the fall of the last emperor, they emerged as militarist "warlords."

In 1928, Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek established a government that nominally unified China. Yet he spent much of the next ten years fighting rival military leaders as well as the Communists (forcing the latter on the famous Long March in 1934).

In 1937, war broke out with Japan, and in some cases, warlords cut their own deals with the invaders, seeking to preserve their regional power. The war also gave new strength to the insurgent Communist Party. Mao Zedong, one of its rising leaders, observed that "power grows out the barrel of a gun." Therefore, he concluded, "the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."

Mao was as good as his word. Once the Communists had won the Civil War in 1949, Mao moved to crush all possible alternative sources of power in China. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) was established as the Party's army, not the national army. That is still its status today.

Even now, nearly 75 years after the People's Republic was established, the thought of political upheaval backed by military force sends shivers through the Chinese leadership. It was widely rumoured that Bo Xilai, the senior Party figure purged in 2012, had been in conversation with rogue army leaders in an attempt to seize power.

Soon after coming to power, President Xi Jinping made sure that the PLA was firmly under the Party's control by purging numerous generals. This week, as they follow coverage of Putin having to admit that a major Russian city was occupied by a rival army, the Chinese Politburo will have no doubts that their ruthlessness in military matters has paid off.

The writer is Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China at the University of Oxford. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- Two things awe me most, the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. **IMMANUEL KANT**
- We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**
- Experience is not what happens to you; it's what you do with what happens to you. **ALDOUS HUXLEY**

WORDSWORTH

Latrociny

Do not seek this word — meaning robbery or brigandage — in your dictionary, unless it be of the size and comprehensiveness of the Oxford English Dictionary: it is quite obsolete and vanished from the treasury of writers' vocabularies more than a century ago. Indeed, the OED doesn't have an example after 1732. In 1865, John Mitchell Bonnell listed latrociny in his Manual of the Art of Prose Composition as one of the many words "rejected by good writers, though properly formed".

FOCUS BANKING

PROTECTING DEPOSITORS



People hope that the RBI, the extended arm of the government, which licenses banks, has full responsibility to ensure full protection to bank deposits



PSM Rao

BANKS IN INDIA HAVE A HUGE AMOUNT OF DEPOSITS SIGNIFYING THE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THEM

Following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, particularly the US government's heavy spending to bailout some troubled TBTF (Too-Big-To-Fail) banks, the idea of bail-in, in place of bailout is gaining ground widely in the financial world. Simply put, a bailout involves propping up the failing banks with money from outside (say the exchequer) to safeguard the banks' (in other words, depositors') interest while bail-in implies protecting the banks with support of stakeholders - that includes depositors' - money. What a paradox! A shift from using public money to protect public deposits to using the very same deposits to protect the failing banks.

Not only do these kinds of thoughts, but the occasional bank failure news frighten depositors. To alleviate their fears, the Indian government, inter alia, has enhanced the DICGC (Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation) coverage limit of bank deposits from ₹1 lakh (in force from 1 May 1993) to ₹5 lakh, effective 4 February 2020. That prima facie means the depositor's money up to ₹5 lakh is safe come what may. But there is more to it than meets the eye.

Good if the depositors know how their money is safe to that extent and how they can secure even more. They need to know which among the innumerable banks and branches around them is safe. For this understanding, an understanding of the genesis, evolution and functioning of the DICGC, though briefly, would be of great help to depositors.

The banking crisis that erupted in Bengal in 1948 made the government think about some protection to depositors to guard against the recurrence of similar failures although no immediate action was taken, not even after the Rural Banking Enquiry Committee's reassertion in 1950.

It was only in 1960, after the failure of two more banks in the country, Laxmi Bank and Palai Central Bank Ltd., the

government introduced a Depositors' Insurance Corporation (DIC) Bill 1961 which came into force in January 1962. This first enactment to provide insurance coverage to bank deposits is known as Deposit Insurance Act, 1961. As its name suggests it covered only the deposits, not credit. The DIC which covered only the commercial bank deposits in beginning, started including, after the 1968 amendment, cooperative banks' deposits also.

The deposit amount covered in beginning was ₹1,500 which was gradually increased to ₹1 lakh in about 60 years before the quantum jump of ₹5 lakh in 2020. The insurance premium is 0.12% raised gradually from 0.05% in the beginning and 0.04% in 1971. The burden of paying the premium is exclusively on that of banks; depositors need not pay it.

Now, the Credit Guarantee part of the DICGC: the RBI promoted a Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd, a public limited company in 1971, to support bank credit to the poor and priority sectors. Then in 1971 Deposit Insurance Corporation and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India were merged to form DICGC and the Deposit Insurance Corporation Act, 1961 was renamed as Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Act, 1961. But, by April 2003 all partic-

ipating banks had gradually withdrawn their participation with regards to credit. So, the DICGC's main function thereafter remains deposits insurance alone. This does not mean banks have the freedom to withdraw from deposits' coverage function, too. No, if they do that, they will forego the RBI's license to function as a bank.

So, deposits are safe to the extent guaranteed in all banks covered by DICGC. It is clear from DICGC's website that all the 2025 banks are spread in ten categories: Public Sector Banks (12); Private Sector Banks (21); Foreign Banks (44); Small Finance Banks (12); Payment Banks (6); Regional Rural Banks (43); Local Area Banks (2); State Cooperative Banks (33); District Central Cooperative Banks (352) and Urban Cooperative Banks (1,500).

The government claims that the depositors and their deposits are largely protected with the hike in insurance coverage to ₹5 lakh when a bank fails/ goes into liquidation and also when RBI issues the All-Inclusive Direction to banks when it senses something wrong. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that 98.3% of deposit accounts and 50.3% of the deposit value is covered. This we may understand as assessable deposits excluding ineligible for coverage sums like those of governments - state, central and foreign - deposits.

Banks in India have a huge amount of deposits signifying the people's confidence in them. As of March 2023, the scheduled commercial banks have ₹190.35 lakh crore deposits which account for 70.80% of the estimated nominal GDP of ₹273.07 lakh crore.

Let us now turn to the nitty-gritty of protecting ₹5 lakh (principal and interest together) and more in any bank covered under the DICGC (the name of each bank is available for public verification on DICG's site). The rule: "Same Right and the Same Capacity." If a person, for example, has several accounts - saving bank, recurring deposit, term deposit, etc. - in one bank or several branches of same bank, the balance in all these accounts is summed, which works out to say some ₹25 lakh whereas protection is given for just ₹5 lakh of it.

Instead, if the same person in the same bank holds interest differently, for example, one account in his name, another a joint account with spouse, another with son as guardian, another as a first partner of partnership, and another as second partner and so on, all these accounts are treated as different accounts and if one has 10 accounts like this, will get protection up to ₹50 lakh. Instead of all this if a person holds accounts in several banks, he or she gets protection separately ₹5 lakh in each bank.

Undoubtedly, the DICGC protection is beneficial to the extent it provides it, but not fully. People hope that the RBI, the extended arm of the government, which licenses banks, has full responsibility to ensure full protection to bank deposits. The government therefore needs to regulate fully and protect all deposits in all banks because the deposits belong to the depositing public no matter whether the bank is privately owned, government-owned, or a cooperative.

The writer is a development economist and commentator on economic and social affairs.

SPECTRUM INDIGENISATION

Tech transfer to cut import bill



Dhurjati Mukherjee

THIS THRUST ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND MANUFACTURING THROUGH COLLABORATIONS IS INDEED A WELCOME TREND

In recent months, the Centre has given a greater thrust to indigenisation of products to boost manufacturing. Though rather late in the day, this thrust was perhaps needed and should help not just in import substitution but open up new avenues of manufacturing. Pre and post US visit of Prime Minister Modi, there has been a significant change in the scenario with new tie-ups and other possibilities opening, especially in defence, IT and electronics sectors as also collaboration in various fields of research.

It needs to be noted that a huge country like India has a very big import bill and experts are of the opinion that most of the items imported can be manufactured in the country as well. This realisation could greatly help the Indian economy.

Recently the Defence Ministry approved another list that progressively bans import of 929 sub-systems, components, spares and line replacement units (LRUs) of military equipment and platforms by defence PSUs to promote self-reliance. The new 'positive indigenisation list'

for the defence PSUs is in continuation of the first three such lists, which contained a total of 1238 items, announced in December 2021, March 2022 and August 2022. The 928 items in the fourth list with import substitution value of ₹715 crore will only be procured from the Indian industry after the timelines indicated in the cost that ranges from December 2024 to December 2028. Of the 1238 items, 310 items have been indigenised so far, according to military sources.

Though the value of India's domestic production crossed the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time in 2022-23, which is 12% higher than the preceding financial year, there is need to substantially increase the value to around ₹2 lakh crore within the next two years or so.

Meanwhile, as the IT hardware business passes through recession in Europe and the US, India is likely to emerge as the engine that will power growth of products such as laptops, computers and servers with the market expected to grow over 2.5 times in the next three years and cross \$25 billion in size,

stated Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for IT and electronics. India's technology industry is witnessing the setting up of GCCs (global capability centres), which are shared services arms of MNCs. More than 150 MNCs have set up these in the past two years though most are in Bangalore and some in NCR and Mumbai.

Coming on the heels of Modi's US visit, the most significant development as reported, is American computer chip maker, Micron announcing the setting up of India's first semiconductor plant in Gujarat, which comprises \$825 million from the company and the rest from the government in two phases. Meanwhile, the MoU between General Electric (GE) and Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) will translate into the actual contract within a few months.

Another important development is the announcement of Applied Materials for a \$400 million investment to build a collaborative engineering centre in Bangalore, focused on developing and commercialisation of technologies for semiconductor

manufacturing equipment. Both these announcements are crucial to the development of the semiconductor industry in India as it is one of the world's top electronics and automobile producers and an equally big consumer.

However, while these are no doubt crucial, the decision of the US to set up GE-FA14 factory in India is indeed a game-changer. It is significant that the US sharing this very important technology signals it's betting big on India. India must take advantage of this to diversify its defence structures away from Russia. Added to this, Amazon committed to invest \$15 billion, which includes plans to put \$12.7 billion into cloud infrastructure while Google also announced investing \$10 billion to open 'global fintech operations centre' in GIFT City, Gujarat.

This thrust on technology transfer and manufacturing through collaborations is indeed a welcome trend as it would help create a lot of job opportunities and the steady reduction of the import bill should go a long way in boosting the economy.

Seekers of power

Sir, School and university education in India increasingly looks like a dented football kicked around randomly by amateur players. A party comes into power, and the first thing it does is to ban certain subjects and historical figures from the curricula, and replace them with its own preferred leaders. The latest to play this game is the newly-elected Congress government in Karnataka. The government has decided that lessons on KB Hedgewar and VD Savarkar will not be taught in schools, and that the name of Nehru will be captured onto academic curricula once again, along with other leaders who had been banned by the previous BJP government. This is obviously a prime case of political retaliation, but it is, nevertheless, a naïve decision. The RSS, which Hedgewar founded, is not going to go away from our lives simply because schools will not teach the ideas of the founder. And Nehru will not disappear from our collective consciousness just because the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has been renamed, rather unimaginatively, as the Prime Minister's Museum and Library. Witness the irony. Across the world, reputed research centers and libraries are named after seekers of knowledge such as the philosopher Goethe. In India, NMMML, a once renowned centre of research and academic discussions, is now renamed after seekers of power!

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Guardians of forests

Sir, A forest guard was killed inside the Simlipal Tiger Reserve on May 22 and a deputy forest ranger was shot dead by poachers on June 16 in the same reserve. The most pronounced reason for Indian forest personnel to fear for their lives is that they are neither armed with weapons nor are they fully granted the immunity while using them for self-defence. Very few states have armed their personnel who guard their forests with ammunition to fight poachers. Most have done with the "expert" advice that guns may cause a further divide in the already existing acrimony between forest personnel and locals. While there is no doubt that forest personnel be provided with arms, one cannot overlook the fact that they are chronically overworked. Bossy superiors, uncooperative atmosphere, paucity of staff and vehicles have added to their woes. The number of forest rangers, and guards and foresters who work under rangers, has to be substantially increased.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Muslim law board's late night meet after PM's push for UCC

AIMPLB MEMBERS HUDDLE UP TO FINALISE DRAFT OPPOSING UCC TO BE SUBMITTED TO LAW PANEL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 28: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for a Uniform Civil Code, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) is locked in hectic parleys to finalise the documents it would be submitting to the Law Commission to stress its point against such a code.

The Board held a meeting Tuesday night through video conferencing in which the draft document to be submitted to the Commission was discussed, according to AIMPLB member Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahli.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) is a non-governmental organisation that represents the interests of Muslims in matters of personal law. It was formed in 1973 with the objective of protecting and promoting the application of Islamic personal law among Muslims in India.

Addressing a gathering of BJP workers in Bhopal Tuesday, Modi called for implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and said the Constitution also mentions about giving equal rights to all citizens.

He also said that the BJP has decided it would not adopt the path of appeasement and vote bank politics, and alleged that the Opposition was using the issue of UCC to mislead and provoke the Muslim community.

Talking to PTI Wednesday, Mahli, however, said the AIMPLB meeting was a routine one and that it should not be linked to the prime minister's statement on UCC.

He further said July 14 is the last day for filing of objections and we have got down to discussing the matter.

"Our stand is that UCC is against the spirit of the Constitution and we will oppose it strongly," the AIMPLB member underlined.

India is a country where many religions and cultures are followed. So, the UCC is not only going to affect the Muslims, but also the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Jews, Parsis and other minuscule minorities, he added.

The Law Commission has initiated a fresh consultation process on the Uniform Civil Code by seeking views from stakeholders, including public and recognised religious organisations.



A LITTLE TOO SOUR: A man bargains with a vegetable vendor in Lucknow, Wednesday, as tomato prices have soared across India with retail price crossing ₹100/kg in many parts of the country. PTI PHOTO

UP govt bans sale of meat in open on Kanwar Yatra routes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 28: The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to prohibit the sale of meat in the open along the routes fixed for the Kanwar Yatra, which will commence from July 4.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued the directions in this regard while chairing a review meeting with senior officials, including police commissioners, divisional commissioners, district magistrates and superintendents of police, ahead of the upcoming festival season, an official statement said Tuesday.

Adityanath said that this year due to Adhimas (additional month), Shravan is of two months duration. The festivals of Shravan Shivratri, Nagpanchami and Rakshabandhan will be celebrated during this period,

he said.

The traditional Kanwar Yatra will take place in the holy month of Shravan starting from July 4. Before this, Bakri Eid will be celebrated June 29. "This time is sensitive from the point of view of law and order. So, we have to be constantly alert and careful," he said.

Respecting the belief of devotees, meat should not be allowed to be sold in the open on the Kanwar route. The route should remain clean and sanitised. There should be provision for streetlights. Since the weather is hot, arrangements for drinking water should also be made, the CM said.

According to the statement, Adityanath asked the officials to install CCTV cameras on the yatra route and also deploy divers. The places for setting up of Kanwar camps should be



marked in advance so that traffic is not obstructed, he ordered.

The chief minister also directed officials to ensure that the sound level of DJ, music, etc to be used during the Kanwar procession is as per the prescribed standards.

Give permission to the organisers of the event. But ensure that everyone follows the rules and regulations, he said.

Adityanath also directed that

strongly dealt with, he said.

At the meeting, the chief minister also noted that during Ramadan, traffic was not affected due to religious activities.

This effort has been appreciated across the country. This time, on the occasion of Bakri Eid and Muharram, we will have to implement the same system. A dialogue should be made with the respective religious leaders-intellectuals in this regard by the local administration, he said.

He added that the place for the sacrifice on Bakri Eid should be marked in advance.

Sacrifice should not be done anywhere other than the previously marked place. In any case, make sure that no prohibited animal is sacrificed anywhere. There should be an action plan for the systematic disposal of waste after sacrifice in every district, he said.



Panaji Smart City flooded after just an hour of rain

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, June 28: After an hour of rainfall, the Panaji Smart City in Goa was flooded, leading to the inundation of several roads and shops.

Opposition parties had asked the ruling BJP government in the state to complete the ongoing work in the Smart City before the arrival of the monsoon season.

But as the work remained incomplete, the city was flooded Tuesday night.

Reacting to the incident, Congress leader Amarnath Panjikar said "Panaji Smart City is flooded after just an hour of rain. Just imagine Union Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri what will happen if it rains continuously for more than one hour?"

"We had requested you (Puri) to hold a padyatra and walk through Panaji to inspect, but you



preferred to sit in the AC Room to enjoy," he added.

The flood water reached knee level on the '18 June Road', which is in the heart of the city.

Earlier in May, when Union Minister Puri had visited the coastal state to review the 'Smart City', Congress had advised him to hold a 'Padyatra' in Panaji to witness the substandard work and corruption involved in the project.

Not only the opposition, but Panaji BJP MLA and Revenue

Minister Atanasio Monserrate also alleged that the ongoing work is sub-standard.

"I hope I am wrong. But the work of Smart City is substandard. I am just waiting and watching. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has taken charge... My concern is that people should not suffer. I have not interfered because one consultant has been paid Rs 8 crore. I believe he should have been under supervision of PWD. Everyone is trying to wash their hands," Monserrate said.

"I don't say whether the consultancy failed or not. (This factor) we will come to know during monsoon season. I feel that substandard work of Smart City is going on. I had done inspection at some places and that work was not up to the standard. When consultancy is there and crores of rupees are spent on them, it is their job to deliver," he said.

Goa beaches shut for monsoon, but tourists still flock

Panaji: The onset of monsoon in Goa has prompted authorities to close the beaches for any kind of activities, but tourists still flock to the seafronts, though in lesser numbers. Beach shacks were dismantled in the last week of May, while water sports activities were also closed by the State Tourism Department. Tourists, however, have continued visiting the beaches, though in a lesser number. "Hardly 20 per cent of tourists arrive here during the monsoon. There is no activity happening here. Warnings are also issued against swimming in the sea due to high waves," said Abdul Shaikh, a tourist taxi operator from Colva Beach in South Goa. He said that the tourist season has almost closed down with no business for taxi operators. At Colva Beach, tourists were seen enjoying the rain on Wednesday, while the private lifeguard agency engaged by the state government deployed its manpower to the fullest to ensure that there were no untoward incidents.

BEYOND 'SUN-SAND-SEA'

Goa to go big on homestays to boost sustainable tourism

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, June 28: Goa Tourism is in the process of formulating a 'homestay' policy, which the government feels would set an example for sustainable tourism that can be replicated worldwide.

As per the official records, in 2019 about 71,27,000 domestic tourists arrived in Goa, while 9,31,000 were foreign tourists.

Goa's Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte has said that the state plans to expand its tourism offerings by promoting lesser explored areas like spirituality, health and wellness, eco-tourism and traditional aspects.

Sources informed that tourist arrivals in Goa are picking up post COVID and the government is making efforts to attract more tourists to the state, as tourism plays a major role in the coastal state's economy.

According to Khaunte, Goa has witnessed significant growth in its tourism infrastructure, with over 6,000 hotels accounting for more than 55,000 rooms.

"Through initiatives like the policy on homestays, which focuses on creating cluster economies and engaging the local community, Goa is setting an example for sustainable tourism that can be replicated worldwide," Khaunte said.

He said that tourism holds immense potential in shaping our global future. "The tourism industry, as a catalyst for economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development, has the ability to transcend borders, forge friendships, and create opportunities like no other," Khaunte added.

"Goa's vibrant blend of rich heritage, diverse culture, and breathtaking landscapes offers an experience that is both mesmerising and enchanting. From



its picturesque beaches and lush tropical forests to its vibrant festivals and warm hospitality, Goa embodies the very essence of a traveller who is seeking an immersive and experiential paradise destination," he said.

Goa's distinct attractions, such as its beautiful beaches, tropical climate, diverse wildlife, historical landmarks, lively festivals, water sports, Ayurvedic practices, and authentic cuisine, set it apart as a unique destination.

"By implementing targeted

marketing campaigns and promoting experiential tourism, Goa aims to establish itself as a top choice for travellers worldwide, emphasizing its exceptional offerings and encouraging visitors to explore its rich cultural and natural treasures." Khaunte said.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that it is the responsibility of the people of Goa to take the tourism area beyond the 'Sun-Sand-Sea' concept, for which the government can help by creating the infrastructure.

IPS officer helps 'light up' elderly woman's life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bulandshahr (UP), June 28: It was literally a 'tamso ma jyotirgamaya' (moving from darkness to light) moment in the life of 70-year-old Noorjahan and a 'Swades' moment for IPS officer Anukriti Sharma as an LED bulb started glowing in the elderly woman's house Monday.

According to police sources, a few days ago, women and girls in Khedi village, located within the Agauta police station limits, were made aware of various government schemes by Assistant Superintendent of Police Sharma under Mission Shakti Abhiyan.

It was there that Noorjahan told the 2020-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer that there is no electricity connection in her house.



Sharma went to the village again Monday along with Station House Officer (SHO) Jitendra Kumar Saxena. She contacted the electricity department and got a power connection installed in the elderly woman's house. A pedestal fan was also given to her.

In a tweet, Sharma said, "Swades moment of my life. Getting electricity connection to Noorjahan aunty's house literally felt like bringing light

into her life. The smile on her face was immensely satisfying. Thank you SHO Jitendra ji and the entire team for all the support."

Sharma also shared a video on her Twitter handle where she was seen present in Noorjahan's house along with other police personnel.

In the video, a bulb is seen hanging. Sharma asks Noorjahan to look at it and soon after, the bulb glows.

Noorjahan's face lights up as soon as the bulb is lit. The elderly woman is seen patting the back of the IPS officer affectionately.

The police personnel and Noorjahan also exchanged sweets on the occasion. Sharma even switched on the fan and showed the elderly woman how to operate it. The video has gone viral on social media.

Sharma said Noorjahan told her about her problem at a public meeting. She also told the IPS officer about her financial crisis. The widow, who has a married daughter, lives alone.

"We decided to provide her electricity and after coordinating with the electricity department, she was provided with a power connection. A fan and a bulb were also provided by the police to her," Sharma said.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL: SUNDARGARH
Tender Call Notice No.2913, Dt.26.06.2023
COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
No.C-687:
Notice Inviting Tender
Bid Reference No. SNGM-04 / 2023-24 / Dt. .06.23
 1. Total No. of Works for which Tenders Invited: 15 Nos.
 2. Place of Execution: Different locations of Sundargarh Municipality.
 3. Estimated Cost of Individual Works excluding GST: Rs.75,426/- to Rs.16,87,195/-
 4. Eligible Class of Contractors: Registered Contractors of Class-'D' to Class-'C' as indicated against each work mentioned in the tender call notice.
 5. Intending bidders have to participate through "On-Line" bidding only. The website for online bidding is <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.
 6. The bid documents will be available in the above website from 11.00 A.M of Dt.28.06.2023 to 5.00 P.M of Dt.07.07.2023 for online bidding.
 7. Bids received will be opened on e-Procurement System at 11.00 A.M onwards on Dt.10.07.2023.
 8. The bidder must possess valid and compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)
 9. The DTN for bid shall be available in the e-procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in> for on-line bidding.
Sd./- Executive Officer
Sundargarh Municipality
 OIPR-13130/11/0010/2324



People drive in a carriage with mini Shetland ponies during the opening ceremony of the CHIO Equestrian Festival in Aachen, Germany. Britain is this year's partner country of the most important international Jumping, Dressage, Four-in Hand Driving and Vaulting horse meeting



View of a rainbow after rain in Dehradun, Uttarakhand



French President Emmanuel Macron meets residents as he visits the Benza district in Marseille, southeastern France. The French president is on a three-day visits to Marseille



Fishermen move a boat with the help of a crane amid monsoon season, at Sassoan Dock in Mumbai, Maharashtra



Members of All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and North East Students' Organisation (NESO) take out a candle march for peace and harmony for Manipur in Guwahati, Assam



Devotees dance at the 52nd ISKCON 'Ulta Rath Yatra' (Chariots' Return Journey) in Kolkata, West Bengal



Devotees at Jama Masjid on the eve of Eid al-Adha in New Delhi

PT/AP PHOTOS



INS Trishul arrives in Seychelles as part of Operational Deployment. The ship is scheduled to participate in the Seychelles National Day celebrations June 29



national

of the day quote

Our first objective is the qualitative improvement of university education in Bengal. Universities in Bengal should be the best in the nation

C V ANANDA BOSE | BENGAL GOVERNOR

I had known Mulayam Singh Yadav for years. It is natural that I have good terms with (his son) Akhilesh...I have come to meet him and will let you know whatever transpires in the meeting

SHANKERSINH VAGHELA | FORMER GUJARAT CM

One-fourth of the assembly budget is always sanctioned for education purposes in Delhi. Four new universities have been opened and there are 12 Delhi government colleges here. Ever since the AAP government came to power, funds to these colleges have increased three-fold

ATISHI | DELHI EDUCATION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

BSF hands over Pak national to Rangers

Chandigarh: The Border Security Force (BSF) has handed over a Pakistan national, who entered the Indian territory inadvertently by crossing the international border in Punjab's Ferozepur district, to the Pakistan Rangers, a statement said Wednesday. During questioning, it came to notice that the apprehended Pakistan national had crossed over to Indian territory inadvertently.

5 killed as truck falls into river

Bhopal: Four minors and a woman were killed and several others injured when a truck in which they were travelling overturned and fell into a river in Madhya Pradesh's Datia district Wednesday, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra said. The accident took place in the wee hours near Buhara village in Datia district when some people from Gwalior were going to Jatar in Tikamgarh district for a marriage ceremony, Mishra told reporters.

RK Arora sent to ED custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday granted the Enforcement Directorate (ED) till July 10 the custody of R K Arora, the chairman and promoter of real estate major Supertech Group, arrested in a money laundering case. Duty Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala remanded Arora in ED custody to facilitate his interrogation by the anti-money laundering agency. Arora was arrested Tuesday under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after three rounds of questioning.

ED arrests IRS officer

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday arrested a 2008-batch IRS officer, working as an Additional Commissioner of Customs and GST, in connection with a money laundering investigation against him linked to alleged possession of disproportionate assets, official sources said.

4 die of suffocation

Gondia: Four persons died after apparently inhaling carbon dioxide accumulated inside a well in Maharashtra's Gondia district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in Sarandi village under Tiroda taluka when one of the persons, identified as Khemraj Sathvane, went inside the well situated in his house to repair a motor pump, a senior police official said.



Tomato: ₹140 per kg, Cauliflower: ₹80 per kg, Toor Dal: ₹148 per kg, branded Arhar Dal: ₹219 per kg and cooking gas cylinder above ₹1,100. The BJP government, which is busy in increasing the wealth of capitalists and collecting taxes from public, has forgotten the poor and middle class families

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

FLOOD FURY

The flood situation in Assam improved Wednesday, although one more person lost his life and nearly 83,000 people were still under the impact of the deluge in six districts



PM-PRANAM scheme gets CCEA nod to boost alternative fertilizers



The CCEA also decided to introduce sulphur-coated urea (Urea Gold) in the country for the first time to address sulphur deficiency in the soil

Briefing media, Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the CCEA has approved a scheme PM-PRANAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The Centre Wednesday approved a new scheme PM-PRANAM (PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Generation, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth) to incentivise states to promote alternative fertilisers and reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and also decided to continue the current urea subsidy scheme for three years ending March 2025, with an outlay of ₹3.68 lakh crore.

That apart, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved an outlay of ₹1,451 crore subsidy to promote organic manure, taking the total package to over ₹3.70 lakh crore. Under the scheme, Mandaviya said that the states, which will adopt alternative fertilisers will be incentivised with the subsidy that is saved by reducing the use of chemical fertilisers.

Citing example, suppose a state is using 10 lakh tonne of conventional fertiliser, and if it reduces its consumption by 3 lakh tonne, then the subsidy saving would be ₹3,000 crore.

Out of that subsidy savings, the Centre will give 50 per cent of it -- ₹1,500 crore to the state for promoting the use of alternative fertiliser and other development works, he added. The scheme was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech in February.

According to an official statement, the CCEA approved a "unique package" of innovative schemes for farmers with a total outlay of ₹3,70,128.7 crore. "The bouquet of schemes is focused on the overall well-being and economic betterment of farmers by promoting sustainable agriculture. The initiatives will boost farmers' income, strengthen natural/organic farming, rejuvenate soil productivity and ensure food security," it added. The CCEA approved the continuation of the urea subsidy Scheme to ensure constant availability of fertiliser to the farmers at the same price of ₹242/45 kg bag, excluding taxes and neem coating charges.

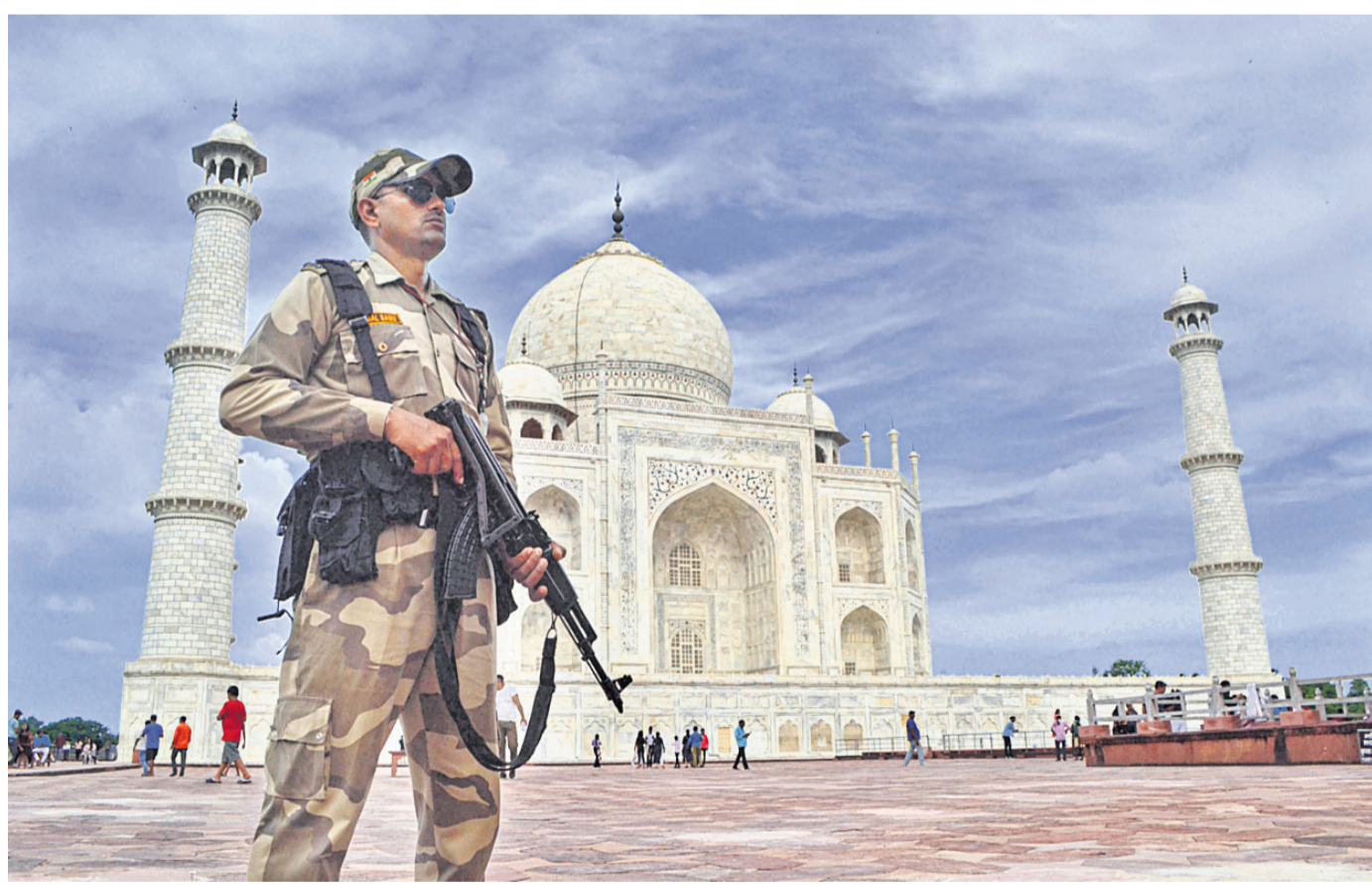
Out of the total package, ₹3,68,676.7 crore has been committed for urea subsidy for three years (2022-23 to 2024-25).

Case against Malviya over tweet on Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore/New Delhi, June 28: The Karnataka police has registered an FIR against BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya for "promoting enmity within groups" and "instigating people" over a video that he posted allegedly mocking Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on social media.

The case was registered following a complaint from Congress Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee member Ramesh Babu in connection with a tweet posted by Malviya recently. The tweet showed an animated video allegedly mocking Rahul Gandhi and showing the Congress party in poor light. According to the FIR, Malviya tweeted a video with the captions, "Rahul Gandhi is dangerous and playing an insidious game" and "More dangerous are people who are pulling strings of #Raga like Sam P, staunchly anti-India, they leave no stone unturned to defame India overseas, just to embarrass Hon'ble PM @Narendramodi ji."



STRICT VIGIL: A security personnel stands guard at the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Bhim Army chief shot at, injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saharanpur (UP), June 28: Dalit leader and Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad was injured when unidentified assailants opened fire on his car in Deoband Wednesday, police said.

Aazad (36) had gone to attend a 'terhavin' ritual at a supporter's home Saharanpur district's Deoband, they said, adding the assailants fired multiple shots at his SUV when he was leaving. "The assailants were in a car and opened fire on Aazad's SUV from the right side. A bullet grazed his abdomen. He has been admitted to a hospital and his condition is stable," Superintendent of Police (City) Abimanyu Manglik said.

According to police, the vehicle used by the assailants carried a Haryana registration



number. The officer added the Saharanpur police has also reached out to its counterpart in adjoining districts to seek their support in the effort to nab the attackers. Aazad heads the Aazad Samaj Party which he founded in March 2020. The Samajwadi

Party hit out at the state government over the incident, questioning the law and order situation under the BJP rule.

"The murderous attack on Chandrashekhar Azad, National President of Azad Samaj Party in Deoband, Saharanpur, by criminals protected by power is highly condemnable and cowardly act. When people's representatives are not safe under the BJP rule, then what will happen to the general public? Jungle Raj in UP!" SP president and former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav tweeted in Hindi. Senior SP

leader Shivpal Singh Yadav tweeted the morale of criminals in the state is so high that they "have started breaking all their limits".

"The opposition in Uttar Pradesh is now the target of both the government and the criminals," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

He said the "deadly attack" on the Bhim Army chief is a commentary on the law and order situation in the state. "Wake up government!" President of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) Jayant Chaudhary tweeted in Hindi, "The murderous attack on Chandrashekhar Azad is a disturbing incident! I have faith that @BhimArmyChief will get well soon and continue on his chosen path!"

6 die by electrocution during Rath Jatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, June 28: Six people died and 15 others were injured as a Rath caught fire after coming in contact with a high-tension wire in Tripura's Unakoti district Wednesday, police said.

The incident happened around 4.30 pm in Kumarghat area during the 'Ulta Rath Jatra' festival of Lord Jagannath, they said. During this festival, the sibling deities - Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhdara and Lord Jagannath -- return to their abode, a week after Rath Yatra.

Thousands of people were pulling the Rath, made of iron, when it came in contact with a 133 kv overhead cable, police said.

Six people died on the spot and 15 others received burn injuries, Assistant Inspector General (Law & Order) Jyotishman Das Chowdhury told PTI. The injured were undergoing treatment at a nearby hos-



Thousands of people were pulling the Rath, made of iron, when it came in contact with a 133 kv overhead cable

pital, he said. Their conditions were stated to be critical, officials said. Chief Minister Manik Saha condoled

the deaths. "In a tragic accident at Kumarghat, several pilgrims lost their lives and several others were injured due to electrocution while pulling the 'Ulta Rath'. I am deeply saddened by this incident. Deepest condolences to the bereaved family. Also, I wish the injured persons a speedy recovery. The state government stands by them in this difficult time," he said.

Mumbai to face 10% water cut from July 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 28: With the level of lakes supplying water to Mumbai going down due to inadequate rainfall in their catchment areas, the city civic body has decided to impose a 10 per cent water cut here starting from Saturday, officials said.

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner and administrator Iqbal Singh Chahal also appealed to citizens to save water and use it judiciously.



The southwest monsoon covered Mumbai on Sunday after a delay of two weeks.

Talking to PTI, Chahal said on Wednesday that the BMC has decided to implement 10 water cut in Mumbai from July 1 as the stock in lakes supplying water to the city is about seven per cent.

Mumbai receives 3,800 MLD (millions of litres per day) of water from seven reservoirs namely Bhatsa, Upper Vaitarna, Middle Vaitarna, Tansa, Modak Sagar, Vihar and Tuls, located in Mumbai, Thane and Nashik districts.

According to a BMC report, the seven lakes had 7.26 per cent stock at 6 am Wednesday. On the same day in 2022 and 2021, the lakes had 9.04 per cent and 16.44 per cent water stock respectively, as per the report. Meanwhile, two persons were killed and a teenager was injured in rain-related incidents in Mumbai, where heavy showers led to waterlogging in many areas, forcing the closure of a busy subway Wednesday, while suburban train services were delayed, civic officials said.

UZBEKISTAN COUGH SYRUP ROW

'Indian firm used toxic industrial chemical in medicines'

REUTERS

New Delhi, June 28: The Indian manufacturer of cough syrups that Uzbekistan said last year had poisoned 19 children used a toxic industrial-grade ingredient rather than the legitimate pharmaceutical version, two sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

The company, Marion Biotech, bought the ingredient — propylene glycol (PG) — from trader Maya Chemtech India, as reported by Reuters. But Maya did not have a licence to sell pharmaceutical-grade materials and "dealt in industrial-grade only," according to a source at the firm with knowledge of the

Marion investigation.

"We did not know Marion was going to use it to make cough syrups," said the person, who declined to be identified while the case is investigated. "We are not told where our material is used."

The two sources said the syrup was made with industrial-grade PG, a toxic material widely used in liquid detergents, antifreeze, paints or coatings, and to enhance the effectiveness of pesticides.

"Marion bought commercial-grade propylene glycol," said a second source, an investigator, who declined to be named while the inquiry is ongoing.

"They were supposed to take Indian Pharmacopoeia-grade,"

the source added, referring to national standards for the composition of pharmaceutical products.

Marion also did not test the ingredient before using it in the syrups it sold to Uzbekistan, the investigator said.

India's drugs and cosmetics rules say manufacturers are responsible to ensure the safety of ingredients they use.

Maya is not facing charges, according to the company source, but the investigation is ongoing. Deepak Sharma, an Assistant Drugs Controller for the national capital territory of Delhi, where Maya is based, declined to comment, saying the case was being investigated by



federal drugs authorities. Marion, which says it deals in pharmaceuticals, herbal and cosmetics products, has

previously denied any wrongdoing. Neither the company, nor India's drug regulator or health ministry responded to

requests for comment.

An analysis last year by Uzbekistan's health ministry showed the Marion-made cough syrups, Ambronol and DOK-1 Max, contained unacceptable amounts of toxins diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol (EG), used in products that are not for human consumption.

Uzbekistan in January arrested four people in relation to the 19 deaths, including two executives at a company that imported the Marion drugs. Reuters could not establish the status of the case.

Uzbekistan's health ministry did not respond to a question on possible penalties there.

international

of the day quote

There is urgent need to limit irregular departures from Africa and Turkey, to fight against migrant smuggling and work with partner countries to ensure that people don't leave or transit those countries

URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The government abides by its policy of not carrying out a release without the understanding of fishing groups in Fukushima

HIROKAZU MATSUNO | CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY, JAPAN

The focus of my meeting with Xi was to reaffirm our close economic relationship by supporting businesses (to) renew their connections with Chinese counterparts and helping grow new ones to support New Zealand's economic recovery

CHRIS HIPKINS | PM, NEW ZEALAND

SHORT TAKES

Sudan crisis spirals

Cairo: The United Nations has said the surging violence in Sudan is likely to drive more than 1 million refugees out of the African country by October, as the 10-week conflict shows few signs of easing. Sudan descended into chaos after fighting erupted in mid-April between the military, led by Gen Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. Since then, over 3,000 people have been killed, the country's Health Ministry said, while about 2.5 million people have been displaced, according to the UN.

Protests rock Paris

Paris: Protesters armed with fireworks clashed with riot police in a Paris suburb overnight after a 17-year-old man was shot dead by police during a traffic stop and prosecutors opened a homicide investigation. Thirty-one people were arrested in the clashes in which 40 cars were burned, mostly in Nanterre, the Paris suburb where the victim was from, interior minister Gerald Darmanin said Wednesday. Video footage showed at least one building on fire and burnt-out barricades on the road. Fireworks were aimed at police, who fired tear gas at the crowd. French President Emmanuel Macron Wednesday called the shooting dead of a 17-year-old by police during a traffic stop near Paris "inexcusable" in rare criticism of law-enforcement hours after the incident triggered unrest.

'Covid-19 was engineered as bioweapon'

A Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher has claimed that Covid-19 was engineered as a bioweapon by China, revealing experiments and suspicious activities surrounding the pandemic's origins

AGENCIES

Washington, June 28: A researcher in Wuhan has made a shocking claim that China deliberately engineered coronavirus as a "bioweapon" with the purpose of infecting people, according to multiple reports. The explosive claim was made by Chao Shan in an exclusive interview with Jennifer Zeng, a member of the International

Press Association, who provides first-hand information and unique insights about China and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Chao said he and his colleagues were tasked with identifying the most effective strain for spreading among various species, including humans.

Jennifer's blog mentions that the interview was conducted in September 2021. She said that



The claims represent only a fraction of the larger puzzle surrounding the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in nearly 7 million deaths worldwide

Chao was given four strains of coronavirus by his superior in Nanjing City in 2019 to test which one of them was the most virulent and transmissible.

Chao tested the virus on human ACE2 receptor, bats and monkeys. He also called the coronavirus a "bioweapon". He also mentioned in the interview that several of his colleagues went missing during the 2019 Military World Games in Wuhan. Later, one of them revealed that they were sent to hotels where athletes from various countries were staying to "check the health or hygiene conditions". Since checking hygiene doesn't require virologists, Chao Shan suspected that they were sent there to spread the virus.

However, commenting on Chao's claims, Jennifer said that it is just a small piece of the entire puzzle. So far, the true origin of the pandemic that has caused nearly 7 million deaths worldwide, or even more, is still under exploration.

Indian smuggles 800 people into US using Uber, jailed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, June 28: A 49-year-old Indian-origin man was sentenced to over three years in jail for smuggling more than 800 Indian citizens into the US using ride-hailing app Uber.

Rajinder Pal Singh, aka Jaspal Gill, pleaded guilty in February, admitting that he took in more than \$500,000 as a key member of a smuggling ring, bringing in hundreds of Indian nationals across the border from Canada, the Department of Justice said in a press release.

Singh, a resident of California, was sentenced Tuesday in a US District Court to "45 months in prison for Conspiracy to Transport and Harbor Certain Aliens for Profit and Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering," said Acting US Attorney Tessa M Gorman.

"Over a four-year period, Singh arranged for more than 800 people to be smuggled into the US across the northern border and into Washington State," said Gorman.

She asserted that Singh's conduct was not just a security risk for Washington but also subjected those smuggled to security and safety perils during the often weeks-long smuggling route from India to the US.

"Singh's participation in this conspiracy preyed upon the Indian nationals' hopes for a better life in the US while saddling those smuggled with a crushing debt of as much as \$70,000," Gorman said.

From July 2018, Singh and his co-conspirators used Uber to transport people who had illegally crossed the border from Canada to the Seattle area, the press release said, citing records filed in the case.

From mid-2018 to May 2022, Singh arranged more than 600 trips involving the transportation of Indian nationals illegally smuggled into the US.

According to investigation estimates, between July 2018, and April 2022, the 17 Uber accounts tied to the smuggling ring ran up more than \$80,000 in charges.

Don't underestimate Russian forces: NATO

The leaders agreed that, given the short-lived revolt by Wagner fighters in Russia over the weekend, that the allies should continue to bolster their forces along NATO's eastern flank to discourage Russian President Vladimir Putin from attempting to widen his war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Hague, June 28: NATO's chief has said that the power of Russia's military shouldn't be underestimated following the weekend mutiny against it by Wagner Group mercenaries, and said the alliance has increased its readiness to confront Russia in recent days.

Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance may decide to further boost its strength and readiness to face Russia and its ally Belarus when NATO leaders meet in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius July 11-12.

"So, no misunderstanding and no room for misunderstanding in Moscow or Minsk about our ability to defend our allies against any potential threat," Stoltenberg said.

At a meeting in The Hague of eight NATO leaders, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said that neighbouring countries would face a heightened danger if the Wagner Group deploys its "serial killers" in Belarus.

Stoltenberg said it was still early to draw any conclusions about what Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and some of his forces might do or whether they all might end up in Belarus.

NATO responded to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 by deploying multinational battlegroups in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. They complement another four deployed in 2017 in the three Baltic states and Poland, to expand NATO's presence from the Baltics to the Black Sea. On Monday, Germany said that it stands ready to permanently base forces in Lithuania, if needed.

Rutte and Stoltenberg met with the presidents of Romania and Poland and leaders of Belgium, Norway, Albania and Lithuania at the Dutch leader's



official residence in a leafy suburb of The Hague.

Earlier Tuesday, Russian authorities said they had closed a criminal investigation into the aborted armed rebellion led by Prigozhin and are pressing no charges against him or his troops.

The mutiny by Wagner Group forces lasted less than 24 hours, but formed the latest twist in a series of events that have brought the gravest threat to Putin's grip on power in the 16-month-old war in Ukraine.

The war led Sweden and Finland to seek to join NATO. Finland has already become the alliance's latest member, but Sweden's membership is being held up by Turkey.

On Monday, Stoltenberg said he will call an urgent meeting in the coming days to try to overcome Turkish objections to Sweden joining the military organization, in a last-ditch effort to have the Nordic country standing alongside the allies at the July summit in Lithuania.

NATO requires the unani-

mous approval of all members to expand. Turkey accuses Sweden of being too lenient toward groups that Ankara says pose a security threat, including militant Kurdish groups and people associated with a 2016 coup attempt.

If Wagner deploys its serial killers in Belarus, all neighbouring countries face even bigger danger of instability

GITANAS NAUSEDA | PRESIDENT, LITHUANIA

Wagner troops spell trouble Eastern European NATO countries also warned that a move of Wagner's Russian mercenary troops to Belarus would create greater regional instability, but NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance is ready to defend itself against any threat.

"This is really serious and very concerning, and we have to make very strong decisions. It requires a very, very tough answer of NATO," Polish President Andrzej Duda added.

Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin arrived in Belarus Tuesday under a deal negotiated by President Alexander Lukashenko that ended the mercenaries' mutiny in Russia Saturday.

INDIANS TO BENEFIT

Canada's major move for H-1B visa holders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, June 28: Canada has announced a new open work-permit stream to allow 10,000 H-1B visa holders in the US to come and work in the country, a move that could benefit thousands of Indian tech professionals.

Canada is hoping to become a world leader in a variety of emerging technologies and it hopes to attract professionals affected by massive layoffs by US tech giants.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

By July 16, the Canadian government will create an open work-permit stream to allow 10,000 American H-1B visa holders to come and work in Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Sean Fraser



said Tuesday.

In its news release, the ministry said the programme will also provide for study or work permits for their family members.

Approved applicants for the new programme will receive an open work permit of up to three years in duration, which means they will be able to work for almost any employer anywhere in Canada. Their spouses and dependants will also be eligible to apply for a temporary resident visa, with a work or study permit, as needed, the release said.

Tech companies went on a hiring binge during the pandemic but have since started laying people off in large numbers. That's left a lot of H-1B visa holders scrambling to find new jobs before they're forced to leave the US.



PATH OF FAITH: Muslim pilgrims pray on the Mount of Mercy at the plain of Arafat during the annual haj pilgrimage, outside the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia

OLD AGE-COUNTING METHOD SCRAPPED

South Koreans become younger overnight

In the centuries-old "Korean age" system, a person turns one at birth and gains a year January 1. This means a baby born 31 December will be two years old the next day

REUTERS

Seoul, June 28: South Koreans became a year or two younger Wednesday as new laws that require using only the international method of counting age took effect, replacing the country's traditional method.

Under the age system most commonly used in South Koreans' everyday life, people are deemed to be a year old at



birth and a year is added every January 1.

The country has since the early 1960s used the international norm of calculating from zero at birth and adding a year on every birthday for medical and legal documents. But many South Koreans continued to use the traditional method for everything else.

In December, South Korea passed laws to scrap the traditional method and fully adopt the international standard.

"We expect legal disputes, complaints and social confusion that have been caused over how to calculate ages will be greatly reduced," Minister of Government Legislation Lee

Wan-kyu told a briefing Monday. According to a government survey conducted in September 2022, 86% of South Koreans said they would use the international age in their everyday life when the new laws took effect.

"I was about to turn 30 next year (under the traditional Korean age system) but now I have some more time earned and I love it," Choi Hyun-ji, a 27-year-old office worker in Seoul, said. "It's just great to feel like getting younger," Choi added.

Another age system exists in South Korea for prescription, school entrance and calculating the legal age to drink alcohol and smoke: a person's age is calculated from zero at birth and a year is added January 1. Officials said that method would remain for the time being.

French bird flu wave ends after 10 million birds culled

France has been among countries worst affected by the unprecedented spread of avian influenza - commonly called bird flu - that has killed hundreds of millions of birds in the past two years, disrupting supply of poultry meat and eggs



would launch vaccination against the virus in the autumn.

Some 22 million birds were culled in France in the 2021/22 season.

Vaccination against bird flu will start in October and will be mandatory for all ducks across France, making it the first country in the world to launch a nationwide vaccination campaign, farm ministry officials told reporters.

The length of the vaccination

campaign - whether all year round or just in the autumn and winter - is still to be decided, depending on the budget allocated, the officials said.

The French Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products (ANMV) has cleared the use of vaccines from three companies, France's Ceva Animal Health, Germany's Boehringer Ingelheim and US firm Zoetis Animal Health, they said.

A pre-order for 80 million doses was launched in April and a formal decision is expected next month, the officials said.

Tests carried out in France on Ceva and Boehringer Ingelheim's vaccines showed favourable results. The officials could not say where Zoetis had carried out its tests.

business

of the day quote

India's share in US's ready-made garment import from the world has increased to 5.7 per cent in 2022, which will further improve in future



NAREN GOENKA | CHAIRMAN, AEP

The government has planned over ₹17,000 crore in incentives to promote the manufacturing of electrolyzers and green hydrogen in the country



BHUPINDER SINGH BHALLA | MNRE SECRETARY

India's top eight residential markets continue on a growth path. The RBI's decision to pause the hike in the key lending rate helped in sustaining strong positive sentiments for buying residential properties



VIKAS WADHWAN | CFO, REA

SHORT TAKES

GQG, others pour in \$1bn in Adani

New Delhi: US-based boutique investment firm GQG Partners and other investors have bought close to \$1 billion of additional stakes in Adani group companies as billionaire Gautam Adani continues to rebuild market confidence since hit by a damning report of a US short seller. The investors bought 18 million, or 1.6 per cent, from the Adani family in the group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd in a single block trade. GQG Partners has been ramping up its investment in the conglomerate ever since Hindenburg Research in a bombshell report alleged accounting fraud and stock price manipulation at the Group, triggering a stock market rout that had erased about \$150 billion in its market value at its lowest point.

Sugarcane price hiked by ₹10

New Delhi: The government Wednesday increased the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP), the minimum price that mills have to pay to sugarcane growers, by ₹10 to ₹315 per quintal for the 2023-24 season starting October. The decision to increase the FRP of sugarcane was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The FRP of sugarcane has been fixed at ₹315 per quintal for the 2023-24 season.

Kotak allows RuPay credit cards on UPI

New Delhi: Private sector Kotak Mahindra Bank and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) Wednesday announced that bank's customers can now use their RuPay Credit Card on UPI with UPI-enabled apps. Kotak Mahindra Bank customers can select from seven RuPay Credit Cards to use seamlessly on UPI, the bank said in a statement. With the linkage of Kotak RuPay Credit Cards on UPI, customers would not need to use their physical Credit Card, it said.

TVS partners Zomato

New Delhi: TVS Motor Company Wednesday said it has partnered with online food delivery platform Zomato under which its 10,000 electric scooters will be deployed over two years in the latter's delivery fleet. This association is in line with the commitment towards green and sustainable mobility solutions and further strengthens the company's electrification journey across diverse mobility segments, TVS Motor Company said.



Taiwan has an enormous appetite to expand ties with India and firming up the proposed free trade agreement between the two sides will be a big encouragement for Taiwanese companies to set up manufacturing bases in India

JAUSHIEH JOSEPH WU | FOREIGN MINISTER, TAIWAN

OYO TARGETS 1K HOTELS BY DEC

Hospitality technology platform OYO Wednesday said it will add over 1,000 hotels to support over 100 first-generation hoteliers by December 2023 as part of its accelerator programme. The company launched its accelerator programme in March this year with a target of supporting 50 first-generation hoteliers



STOCKS SIZZLE

INDICES AT LIFETIME HIGH

The market's bullish momentum was supported by strong FII inflows and a narrowing current account deficit, both of which positively impacted investor sentiments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 28: Equity benchmark indices hit their lifetime highs Wednesday, with Sensex reaching the record 64,000 mark and Nifty scaling the 19,000 level in intra-day trade, as fresh foreign fund inflows and a rally in the US and European markets bolstered investor sentiments.

Hectic buying in market heavyweights Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Infosys added to the positive momentum, traders said.

Extending the previous day's rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 499.39 points or 0.79 per cent to settle at its lifetime closing high of 63,915.42. During the day, the index jumped 634.41 points or 1 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day peak of 64,050.44.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty climbed 154.70 points or 0.82 per cent to end at a record high of 18,972.10 points. It zoomed 193.85 points or 1 per cent to reach its lifetime intra-day high of 19,011.25 during the session.

Tata Motors was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 2.38 per cent, followed by Sun



Pharma, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, HDFC Bank and Maruti. In contrast, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies and Wipro were the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.73 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.08 per cent.

All the indices ended in the green, with services rallying 2.35 per cent, capital goods jumping 1.14 per cent, power (1.02 per

After almost a seven-month consolidation, the Nifty has surpassed the 19,000 mark, and what's more, all sectors are in the green as well. Investors are massively turning positive on risk assets, taking comfort from the recent fall in inflation, anticipating the end of the rate hike cycle

AMAR AMBANI | GROUP PRESIDENT & HEAD (INSTITUTIONAL EQUITIES), YES SECURITIES

Govt drops TCS on overseas credit card spends

New Delhi, June 28: The government Wednesday dropped plans to levy TCS on overseas payments made through international credit cards and said such expenses will be included in the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of the RBI.

The Finance Ministry has also deferred by three months the implementation of a higher Tax Collected at Source (TCS) rate of 20 per cent on expenditures made under LRS and overseas tour packages till September 30. The new rates will come into effect from October 1.

The ministry clarified that "transactions through international credit cards while being overseas would not be counted as LRS and hence would not be subject to TCS".

The Budget 2023-24 had raised TCS rates on LRS and foreign tour packages from 5 per cent to 20 per cent, effective July 1.

With Wednesday's announcement of deferment of a higher TCS rate, LRS spending above Rs 7 lakh would attract 20 per cent TCS from October 1.

On the purchase of overseas tour packages, a TCS of 5 per cent will be applicable on payments up to Rs 7 lakh. Above the threshold, 20 per cent would be levied from October 1.

Currently, overseas tour packages and LRS spending above Rs 7 lakh attract 5 per cent TCS.

FIRST COVID THEN WAR

LAST YEAR ALONE, THE EURO FELL TO A 20-YEAR LOW VERSUS THE DOLLAR, STERLING HIT ITS LOWEST ON RECORD AND THE YEN ITS WEAKEST IN 32 YEARS, AS THE GREENBACK SOARED BROADLY ON SHARP INCREASES IN US INTEREST RATES TO CURB INFLATION THAT OTHER MAJOR CENTRAL BANKS LAGGED

London, June 28: Big global currencies are rarely on different paths. Yet Japan's yen and China's yuan are slumping against the dollar while in Europe the euro is outperforming and sterling is on a tear. With economic and monetary policy outlooks varying, currency moves are increasingly out of sync with each other. This is making the \$7.5 trillion-a-day global FX market - operating in the aftermath of Covid-19 and the face of war in Ukraine and an energy crisis - more volatile and more unpredictable.

The Bank of Japan has dashed expectations that a change to its ultra-dovish monetary policy would come early in 2023, sending the Japanese yen down 9% so far this year, on top of a 12% decline in 2022. That has raised the chance of intervention to stem weakness. More pain is also anticipated

Investors richer by ₹3.43L-crore

Equity investors became richer by ₹3.43 lakh crore in two days of market rally that saw the BSE benchmark Sensex touching the record 64,000-mark Wednesday. In two days, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms went up by ₹3,43,718.15 crore to ₹2,94,11,131.69 crore. Earlier, June 21, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms had hit an all-time high of ₹2,94,36,594.50 crore.

The rupee slipped 1 paisa to settle at 82.03 against the US currency Wednesday.

Foreign Portfolio Investors emerged as net buyers in the capital market on Wednesday as they bought shares worth Rs 12,350 crore.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.83 per cent to ₹72.86 a barrel.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the green while Seoul and Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading in the positive territory in early deals.

The Sleep Company opens first store in City

Bhubaneswar: In a bid to cater to the surging offline demand from customers in eastern India, The Sleep Company, Asia's first and only provider of the Smart GRID technology for peaceful sleep, has launched its very first store in Bhubaneswar. This latest phygital store marks the company's 31st store in the country and solidifies its vision of opening 100+ stores across India by the end of this year. The store's inauguration was graced by the presence of renowned orthopaedics & sports surgeon Sarthak Patnaik. The new 1200 sq ft store offers customers an immersive Smart GRID experience and is located at Unit No 3, Plot No 501, Narula Market, Kharvela Nagar, Janpath. Consumers can witness first-hand the unique ergonomic design, and comfort of the brand's products ranging from mattresses and pillows to sleep accessories and Smart GRID chairs. This inauguration of the brand's first store in eastern India represents the rapid progress towards their vision of being the leading provider of comfort-tech solutions in the region. With the successful opening of 30+ stores in the past year, The Sleep Company continues to assert its position as a disruptive force in the industry.

India rolls out 2.7cr cars in FY23

THE VEHICLES WERE VALUED AT \$108BN

Mumbai, June 28: The Indian automobile industry produced a whopping 2.7 crore vehicles across segments and types, worth around \$108-billion (Rs 8.7-lakh crore) in FY23, with passenger vehicle segment accounting for 57 per cent at ₹5-lakh crore in the total value, a report.

Also, in the total 2.7 lakh crore vehicles churned out last fiscal, the commercial vehicle segment, which includes small 4-wheel carrier with less than 2-ton capacity to large tractor trailers and specialty vehicles like tippers, share stood at 10-lakh vehicles, generating a value of ₹1.7-lakh crore, management consulting services firm Primus Partners said in its report. The CV segment accounted for 4 per cent in the total volume and 19 per cent in value terms, it said.

According to Primus Partners, the production of two-wheelers is closely matched by China, with 20-million two-wheelers coming out of the manufacturing facilities in the country, accounting for 77 per cent of the volume share.

Within the passenger vehicle segment, according to the report, the mid-size and full-size SUV sub-segments accounted for over half of the value.

OMCs set to expand network

THE VEHICLES WERE VALUED AT \$108BN

Bhubaneswar, June 28: IOCL, HPCL, and BPCL, the leading PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), have announced the release of advertisements for the establishment of new retail outlets across the country. The advertisements aim to meet the growing demand for petrol and diesel in line with the country's fast-growing economy.

Over the years, the demand for retail sales of petrol and diesel has been increasing. With the country's economy experiencing significant development, the need for energy has increased manifold. As a result, OMCs are undertaking the expansion of their retail outlet network to cater to this rising demand, said a press release.



It added the expansion will cater to emerging markets such as urban areas, upcoming highways, agricultural pockets, rural, remote, and far-flung areas. The plan not only addresses the growing energy needs but also creates employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurs are encouraged to seize this chance to associate with Fortune 500 companies and establish successful ventures in the retail outlet dealership sector.

cast the euro moving to \$1.12 over coming months, implying a further 2% gain from \$1.095 now, and expected the yuan to weaken to 7.30 per dollar versus 7.2 now.

The yuan has slid almost 5% so far this year, hurt by a weak economy and a wide interest-rate gap with the United States.

This week Chinese authorities set a stronger-than-expected trading band for the currency, a sign that Beijing is increasingly uncomfortable with its quickening slide.

Lee Hardman, senior FX strategist at MUFJ, said the dollar's rebound against Asian currencies reflected a reversal of the trades put in place late last year with the post-lockdown reopen-

ing of China's economy, as pessimism about the growth outlook there grew.

There is no good news for the yen which is near seven-month lows against the dollar and 15-year lows versus the euro, as the Bank of Japan holds fast to its ultra-loose monetary policy.

In Scandinavia, Norway's crown is under pressure, and property woes and a weakening economy have also battered Sweden's crown, which last week hit a record low versus the euro amid a sense that rates there cannot climb much higher.

Of course given what the world has endured in the past few years, it is maybe not surprising that currency markets have gone a little strange.



Euro/dollar a less useful guide to other moves: Analysts
Yen, yuan, Swedish crown weakness concerns authorities
Pound and euro perform well
Pandemic, war, energy crisis all destabilising factors

for the yuan, trading near seven-month lows, as well as smaller Asian currencies.

Meanwhile the euro is up 2.5% this month against the dollar and expected to rise further

AUSTRALIA IN COMMAND AT LORD'S

REUTERS

London, June 28: Steve Smith scored an unbeaten 85 (149b, 10x4) to guide Australia to 339/5 as England wasted favourable bowling conditions on the first day of the second Ashes Test at Lord's Wednesday.

England captain Ben Stokes won the toss under grey skies and floodlights at the home of cricket, sending Australia into bat with high hopes of taking early wickets in his team's bid to level the series.

But David Warner (66, 88b, 8x4, 1x6) and Usman Khawaja (17) rode their luck to share a gritty opening partnership of 73 and although Josh Tongue (2/88) removed them both, Marnus Labuschagne made 47 (93b, 7x4) and Travis Head a rapid 77 (73b, 14x4) to put Australia in a commanding position.

Joe Root (2/19) removed Head and Cameron Green in the same over to give England late hope but the day firmly belonged to Australia.

Warner and Khawaja negotiated probing spells from James Anderson and Stuart Broad and, after a short rain delay, Warner reached his fifty by hooking Tongue for six before Khawaja was bowled by the same bowler



Steve Smith plays a shot during his unbeaten innings against England, Wednesday

just before lunch.

Warner was dismissed by Tongue as the debutant bowled the left-hander through the gate with a fine swinging delivery to reduce Australia to 96/2. Smith emerged from the pavilion to a chorus of boos but he settled down quickly and silenced the crowd with two sumptuous drives off Broad to the cover boundary.

Labuschagne started slowly before finding his rhythm. Broad thought he had trapped

2ND ASHES TEST Day 2's play Time: 3:30 pm Telecast: Sony Sports Network

Labuschagne lbw, the umpire raising his finger before the batsman was reprimanded, but the Australian departed shortly after tea, feathering a catch to Bairstow off Ollie Robinson.

Head joined Smith and accelerated the scoring rate as the England bowlers tired in the final session. Smith passed fifty

and Head reached his half century off only 48 balls, the pair peppering the boundary rope all around the ground.

Head was stumped off Root by Bairstow and three deliveries later Green aimed an ugly swipe at the spinner to give Anderson a simple catch at mid-off.

It was a positive end to a poor day for England in which Stokes looked short of ideas and used few of the innovative field settings which have been a feature

A brief disruption

LONDON: Two protesters from the Just Stop Oil group ran onto the field at Lords and briefly disrupted play about five minutes after the start of the second Ashes Test Wednesday. The environmental activists tried to spread orange powder on the field but the England and Australia players intervened. England wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow tackled one protester and carried the person about 50 meters (yards) before leaving him in the hands of security over the boundary hoardings. England captain Ben Stokes and Australia batter David Warner corralled the other protester. Some orange powder was released but only on the grass, away from the pitch. "Police have arrested three people and taken them into custody," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement. Bairstow went to the England changing room to clean himself of some powder, Lord's staff quickly cleaned up what little orange fell on the grass, and play resumed about five minutes later. The activists want the British government to stop new fuel licensing and production.

of his captaincy.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 339/5 (Steve Smith 85 batting, Travis Head 77, David Warner 66, Marnus Labuschagne 47; Joe Root 2/19, Josh Tongue 2/88) vs England. Match to continue.

Pogacar, Vingegaard set for thrilling third act amid safety fears



Tadej Pogacar (L) and Jonas Vingegaard

REUTERS

Paris, June 28: The Tour de France looks set to be a battle between defending champion Jonas Vingegaard and two-time winner Tadej Pogacar, but there is a question mark over the Slovenian's form while riders' safety will be scrutinised after the death of Gino Mader.

Pogacar was enjoying a sterling season, winning Paris-Nice and the Tour of Flanders, before breaking his wrist two months ago, leaving the 2020 and 2021 Tour winner fighting to make a full recovery before the Grand Depart in Bilbao Saturday.

Pogacar's UAE Emirates team has been reinforced with the recruitment of Britain's Adam Yates and Felix Grossschartner - two major additions for the mountain stages.

If the 24-year-old is back to his best then the stage is set for a potentially vintage battle with Vingegaard. The Danish rider, who will again be able to rely on the formidable Jumbo Visma team, won the Criterium du Dauphine and will start as the big favourite.

He and his team made Pogacar crack last year in the 'stage of the

century' a year after Vingegaard took second place behind the Slovenian.

Pogacar, however, has earned the nickname 'Baby Cannibal' in reference to Belgian great Eddy Merckx and he will be out for revenge this year on a course that favours mountain battles and attacking riders.

Pogacar returned to competitive racing in his national championships earlier this month, winning both the time trial and road race titles, but the Tour is a different affair altogether. He is expected to throw everything at Vingegaard as he did last year, when he attacked on all terrains, earning the support of the French crowds.

Descents played a substantial part in last year's Tour, with Pogacar risking all to unsettle Vingegaard in the descent from the Col de Spandelles and Britain's Tom Pidcock going down the Col du Galibier at breakneck speed en route to the stage win at L'Alpe d'Huez.

Both riders were at the limit, showcasing rare talent but also the dangers of going down an asphalt road at 100kph wearing lycra on tubeless tyres less than 3cm wide.

Swiss Gino Mader died earlier this month after crashing down a ravine in a descent at the Tour de Suisse, raising more questions about riders' safety and triggering calls for safety nets in the most dangerous downhill sections. The topic will be discussed at the teams' meeting with organisers of the Tour three days before the start in Bilbao.

The race will hit the Pyrenees after only five days with the first summit finish in Cauteret on Stage 6 after going up the punishing Col du Tourmalet, while pure sprinters might have a chance to shine the following day in Bordeaux.

This is where Mark Cavendish could break the all-time record for stage wins on the Tour de France that he currently shares with Merckx after taking 34 victories.

Behind Vingegaard and Pogacar, the battle to finish on the podium will rage on but none of those contenders could realistically expect to win the title.

Alcaraz, Swiatek seeded No.1

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wimbledon, June 28: Carlos Alcaraz - not four-time defending champion Novak Djokovic - and Iga Swiatek were seeded No.1 for Wimbledon Wednesday, as expected, because the All England Club adhered to the ATP and WTA rankings.

Alcaraz overtook Djokovic atop the men's standings on Monday. Djokovic has not played since collecting his men's-record 23rd Grand Slam title at the French Open June 11 and slid to No.2, while Alcaraz rose one spot after winning a grass-court tune-up tournament at Queen's Club Sunday.

Djokovic has won the championship at Wimbledon each of the past four times it was held - and seven times overall - but he did not benefit from a ranking boost in 2022 because the ATP and WTA withheld all points to protest the All England Club's decision to ban players from Russia and Belarus because of the invasion of Ukraine.

Those athletes are allowed to



CARLOS ALCARAZ



IGA SWIATEK

compete this year, and Russian player Daniil Medvedev is seeded No.3 in the men's field, while Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka is No.2 in the women's field.

The draw to set up the singles brackets will be Friday. The tournament begins Monday. Casper Ruud is No.4 of the 32 men's seeds, followed by Stefanos Tsitsipas, Holger Rune, Jannik Sinner, Taylor Fritz and Frances Tiafoe.

Swiatek has been ranked No.1

since April 2022 and owns four Grand Slam titles, most recently at the French Open. She has never been past the fourth round at Wimbledon.

Elena Rybakina, the 2022 women's champion at the All England Club, is No.3 among the women's 32 seeds, followed by Jessica Pegula, Caroline Garcia, Ons Jabeur, Coco Gauff, Maria Sakkari, two-time champion Petra Kvitova and Barbora Krejickova.

Biles returns to compete, 1st time since 2020 Games

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chicago, June 28: Simone Biles is back. The gymnastics superstar plans to return to competition at the US Classic outside Chicago in early August, her first event since the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

USA Gymnastics announced Wednesday that Biles, a seven-time Olympic medalist and the 2016 Olympic champion, is part of the women's field for the single-day event set for August 5.

Biles has taken most of the last two years off following her eventual stay in Japan, where her decision to remove herself from multiple events to focus on her mental health shifted the focus from the games.

Sumit assures bronze in Elorda Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Astana (Kazakhstan), June 28: Indian boxer Sumit confirmed a bronze medal for the country with a win over Kazakhstan's Bekzat Tangatar in the 86kg category quarterfinal in the Elorda Cup here Wednesday. Sumit showcased his power and precision to win 5-0.

Zoram Muana displayed superior technique in the 51kg category pre-quarterfinal to overcome another Kazakhstan boxer Daryan Kulzhabayev by a split 4-1 verdict. He will face Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Saken Bibossinov of Kazakhstan in the quarterfinal Thursday.

In the other last-eight bouts, Shivender Kaur (50kg) lost 1-4 to Gulnar Tarapbay of Kazakhstan, Sonia Lather (57kg) went down 0-



5 against home team boxer Grafeyeva Viktoriya, while Poonam (60kg) fought hard but lost by a 2-3 margin against Issayeva Shakhnaz of Kazakhstan.

Sanjay (80kg) faced a formidable opponent in Khabibullaev Turabek of Uzbekistan and lost his quarterfinal bout 0-5.

Four Indians will compete in their respective quarterfinal bouts, Thursday. Pukharam

ICC MEN'S WORLD CUP 2023 FIXTURES

Table with columns: DATES, MATCHES, VENUES. Lists fixtures from Oct 5 to Nov 19, including teams like ENG, PAK, BAN, SA, IND, AUS, NZ, AFG, Q1, Q2 and venues like Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Dharamsala, Chennai, Lucknow, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata.

Determined to maintain unbeaten run: Chhetri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 28: A draw feels like a defeat, but inspirational Indian skipper Sunil Chhetri is determined to maintain their unbeaten run intact, a splendid home run that stretches to almost four years.

"To a large extent, we could do exactly what we had trained for. They are not an easy side. This team can play, and we could see that. But we matched their energy, and for most of the time, I think we did well," said Chhetri.

"But the feeling that comes to our mind is that of a loss because we conceded at the last moment," he added. "Clean sheet was one of our targets, which went out of the window. All of us in the dressing room are a little bit disheartened about that. Now, it's the unbeaten run that we



want to keep as long as possible." India are unbeaten in all nine matches played in 2023. At home, the run stretches to almost four years, with the last defeat coming

I'm not trying to be arrogant, but I don't take goals too seriously. Once when I'm done in a few years, we can talk about it with a nice burger and a beer. For now, I really appreciate the love that I get across the whole country, especially here as it is my home ground. I try my best to give whatever I have on the pitch

SUNIL CHHETRI

ing in Guwahati against Oman in September 2019 in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. Amidst all the craziness in the drawn game against Kuwait, there was a sil-

DULEEP TROPHY Shorey ton props NOZ, CEZ-EAZ tie hangs in balance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, June 28: Dhruv Shorey steered North Zone's (NOZ) charge against North East Zone (NEZ) with a composed century (135, 211b, 22x4) on the first day of the four-day Duleep Trophy quarterfinal at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here Wednesday.

NOZ were 306/6 in 87 overs at close after NEZ fielded by choice in the morning. Nishant Sindhu also contributed to the total with an unbeaten 76 (113b, 9x4, 2x6).



MURASINGH SHINES

Pacer Manisankar Muringasingh's five-wicket haul (5/42) fuelled East Zone's (EAZ) walk to command against Central Zone (CEZ) on Day 1 of their Duleep Trophy quarterfinal here at the Alur Grounds Wednesday.

CEZ were bundled out for 182. At close of day's play, EAZ were 32/2 and in arrears by 150 runs. Rinku Singh (38) was the top scorer for CEZ, while Odisha opener Shantanu Mishra (6) failed to impress becoming one of the two EAZ wickets fall in the day.