



FRANK MRUNAL

Actor Mrunal Thakur appreciates the freedom to openly discuss relationships and breakups

LEISURE P2



PROTESTS DECELERATE

Rioting across France was less intense overnight, as tens of thousands of police were deployed in cities across the country

INTERNATIONAL P10



HISTORY BECKONS NOVAK

Defending champion Novak Djokovic will eye a 24th Grand Slam title when he arrives at the Wimbledon courts Monday

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

5 smugglers held with 4 jumbo tusks

BARIPADA: A team of forest officials Sunday arrested five wildlife smugglers and seized four elephant tusks from them during a raid at Jamakeswar village under Jashipur police limits in Mayurbhanj district. The police also seized two motorcycles and three mobile phones from the accused Dasha Singh (35), Nanda Singh (30), Narasingh Singh (33) of Uski village, Manmohan Hembram (30) of Chhamundia village, and Mantri Singh (55) of Godamsahi village. The smugglers have confessed that they have purchased the tusks from two poachers. "Soon the poachers will be arrested after an investigation," said Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF) Prakash Chand Gogineni. The weight of the seized tusks is 6.086 Kg, the RCCF said, adding that the age of the elephants can be ascertained after an examination of the tusks at OUAT.

2 dead in 337th mass shooting in US this yr

BALTIMORE: Gunfire erupted at a block party in Baltimore Sunday — killing two people, wounding 28 and leaving an extensive crime scene that marred the US holiday weekend, police said. The mass shooting was at least the 337th to occur this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a 'mass shooting' as a gun-related incident in which four or more people are wounded or killed. The shooting took place just after 12:30 am at a block party in the Brooklyn Homes area in the city, Baltimore Police Department Acting Commissioner Richard Worley said.



BLOOM OF THE WILD: The abundant growth of wild flowers, also known as Foxglove, has turned out to be a major attraction for the visitors flocking to the picturesque Baderwah valley in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district

No let-up: Three more killed in Manipur violence

AGENCIES

Imphal, July 2: At least three 'village volunteers' were killed and five others injured in an exchange of fire with unidentified gunmen in Manipur's Bishnupur district, police said Sunday. The incident took place in Khoijumantabi village late Saturday night when the 'village volunteers' were guarding the area in a makeshift bunker, a police officer said. While two bodies were found initially, the third one was recovered later. Five people were injured in the shootout that lasted for several hours. A couple of them, the condition of whom was stated to be serious, were brought to a hospital in Imphal. Chief Minister N Biren Singh went to the spot to take stock of the situation and interacted with the locals. More than 100 people have lost their lives in the ethnic strife between Meitei and Kuki communities in the northeastern state so far. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute another 40 per cent.

Ajit's Pawar Games

2019 redux: NCP leader revolts against uncle Sharad Pawar, back as Maha Deputy CM

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 2: In a day of dramatic developments in Maharashtra politics, NCP leader Ajit Pawar Sunday led a vertical split in the party to become the Deputy Chief Minister for third time in four years, shocking his uncle Sharad Pawar, who founded the outfit 24 years ago. Eight NCP leaders were also sworn in as ministers at the ceremony held at Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai. The NCP patriarch tried to put up a brave front after his 63-year-old nephew's stunning rebellion, as sources claimed that 36 of the 53 MLAs of the party were solidly backing the new deputy CM. The rapidly unfolding developments came as a shocker for Sharad Pawar, even as sources said Ajit's rebellion was prompted by the NCP chief and his daughter Supriya Sule's presence at the recent conclave of Opposition leaders in Patna. Addressing reporters after



taking oath, Ajit Pawar said NCP decided to become part of the Shiv Sena-BJP government for the development of the country and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Maintaining that there was no split in NCP, Ajit Pawar said they would contest all future elections on the NCP's name and symbol. "All the elected representatives (of the party) have sup-

Union Cabinet meet today amid rejig buzz

Senior NCP MP Praful Patel and Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis are being seen as probable contenders among likely new ministers in Union govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a meeting of the Union Council of Ministers Monday amid a heightened buzz about the likelihood of a Cabinet reshuffle following a series of meetings of BJP's top brass. The political upheaval in Maharashtra as NCP leader Ajit Pawar joined the BJP-Shiv Sena government along with several of his party legislators and a number of closed-door meetings involving the BJP's brain trust, including Home Minister Amit Shah and party president JP Nadda, have strengthened the view that a Cabinet reshuffle is on the cards. Senior NCP MP and former Union minister Praful Patel, who ditched his longtime mentor Sharad Pawar to join hands with his nephew, is being seen as a probable contender among the likely new ministers in the central government. With Ajit Pawar taking oath as Deputy CM in Maharashtra, there is also speculation about Devendra Fadnavis, also a Deputy CM and the key BJP

leader in the state, being brought into the central government. BJP sources have been indicating that allies will be given representation in the Cabinet whenever Modi decides to go in for rejig in his Council of Ministers. The fact that the period before Parliament's Monsoon Session, which begins from July 20, could be the last window for such an exercise have added to the reshuffle buzz. Modi held a meeting with Shah and Nadda June 28. This came after closed-door meetings involving Shah and Nadda, among others, to take stock of organisational and political affairs. Any Cabinet rejig will factor in the upcoming assembly polls as well. The BJP has been making hectic preparations for several state polls scheduled this year, with the Congress showing some bounce following its big win in Karnataka. Elections are due in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Mizoram later this year, and the Congress will be the BJP's main challenger in the first three states.

Couple dies by suicide over 'loan burden'



Banambar and Banita Behera

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kanas, July 2: A 57-year-old man and his wife allegedly ended their lives by hanging at Anlajodi village under Kanas police limits in Puri, an official said, Sunday. According to neighbours, Banambar Behera and his wife Banita Behera, 52, were under stress for the past few months owing to a huge debt burden. "The couple had availed loans from three private financial institutions on high interest rates. Agents of the financial institutions frequently visited their home as they couldn't pay the instalments. Saturday, an executive of one of the firms had visited their place for money," said a neighbour, pointing out that it could have prompted the couple to resort to the extreme step. The incident came to light when the Beheras did not come out of their home till noon. A neighbour, who was the first to discover the two hanging from the ceiling fan in a room, alerted others and the police. Soon, they were rushed to Khurda district headquarters hospital (DHH) where doctors pronounced them 'brought dead'. No police complaint has been lodged in this regard when the last report came in.

The couple had availed loans from three private financial institutions on high interest rates. Agents of the financial institutions frequently visited their home as they couldn't pay the instalments

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No restrictions please, Mr Musk. Think about our educated youth. They've nothing else to do

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	36.3°C	36.6°C
TEMP MIN	27.6°C	27.6°C
Humidity	83%	83%
Rainfall	Trace	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

Mexican mayor marries croc to bring luck to his people

Marriage between a man and a female caiman has happened here for 230 years to commemorate the day when two indigenous groups came to peace -- with a marriage



Marriage between a man and a female caiman has happened here for 230 years to commemorate the day when two indigenous groups came to peace -- with a marriage. Tradition has it that frictions were overcome when a Chontal king, embodied these days by the mayor, wedded a princess

girl of the Huave Indigenous group, represented by the female alligator. The Huave live along coastal Oaxaca state, not far from this inland town. The wedding allows the sides to "link with what is the emblem of Mother Earth, asking the all-powerful for rain, the germination of the seed, all those things that are peace and harmony for the Chontal man," explains Jaime Zarate, chronicler of San Pedro Huamelula. Before the wedding ceremony, the reptile is taken house to house so that inhabitants can take her in their arms and dance. The alligator wears a green skirt, a colorful hand-embroidered tunic and a headdress of ribbons and sequins.

The creature's snout is bound shut to avoid any pre-marital mishaps. Later, she is put in a white bride's costume and taken to town hall for the blessed event. As part of the ritual, Joel Vasquez, a local fisherman, tosses his net and intones the town's hopes that the marriage may bring "good fishing, so that there is prosperity, equilibrium and ways to live in peace." After the wedding, the mayor dances with his bride to the sounds of traditional music. "We are happy because we celebrate the union of two cultures. People are content," Sosa told AFP. As the dance winds down, the king plants a kiss on the snout of the "princess girl."

San Pedro Huamelula, July 2: As onlookers clapped and danced, a mayor of a small southern Mexico town entered into holy matrimony with a female reptile in a traditional rite to bring good fortune to his people. Victor Hugo Sosa, mayor of San Pedro Huamelula, a town of Indigenous Chontal people in the Tehuantepec isthmus of Mexico, took as his betrothed a reptile named Alicia Adriana, re-

enacting an ancestral ritual. The reptile is a caiman, an alligator-like marsh dweller endemic to Mexico and Central America. Sosa swore to be true to what local lore calls "the princess girl." "I accept responsibility because we love each other. That is what is important. You can't have a marriage without love... I yield to marriage with the princess girl," Sosa said during the ritual.

leisure



CRUISE PERFORMS ANOTHER DEATH-DEFYING STUNT FOR MI7

Actor Tom Cruise has pulled off another death-defying stunt for *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One*. Cruise, shared a video of him doing one of the most dangerous sports in the world - Speed Flying, off the side of a rocky mountain in the United Kingdom's Lake District, reports *The Hollywood Reporter*.

EWAN MCGREGOR HONOURED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Actor Ewan McGregor known for his role in *Star Wars* received much love and adulation as he was feted with the President's Award for lifetime achievement at the 57th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech spa town.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Decisions about career and finance will keep you preoccupied today. After a hectic day, all you may want to do is relax. In that case, Ganesh may send a short but pleasurable trip your way, which is sure to rejuvenate you. Group activity suggests you will make more friends, says Ganesh.

TAURUS

You must learn to get to the root of a routine to keep things fresh today, feels Ganesh. Just learn the basic psychology of people and analyse the facts. All action and decision has a motive, you will need to understand the chain to get the most out of things, advises Ganesh.

GEMINI

It's time you took stock of your personal life. Is there someone you want to propose but are afraid to do so? Ganesh advises you not to let the fear of rejection stop you from making an effort. There are strong indications that you will be accepted if you speak your heart today.

CANCER

Ganesh believes that you are likely to have a heightened interest in the study of philosophy and the working of the metaphysical world. This may be mere curiosity or a part of your effort to improve your professional skills.

LEO

It's fun, fun and more fun on the horizon! Ganesh foresees you taking time out for some leisure and frolic today. Broaden your horizon with a bit of travel since you are very likely to be going on a small trip to recharge your batteries. When it comes to work – which you seem to have put on hold – it is a matter of pride for you to play the role that you essay within your company.

VIRGO

Today you need to carry on with your success without resting on your past laurels. You will also need to stay focused and organised to continue with the same success level that you enjoyed in the past. Pay attention to your relationship matters as they are the quintessential of your success and peace of mind.

LIBRA

It is very likely that you will arouse immense jealousy in others with your success and growth in business. Your business rivals may attempt to dent your credit worthiness in one way or the other. You may prefer to deal with them subtly rather than confront them openly, feels Ganesh.

SCORPIO

You may find yourself at crossroads, wondering which path to take. Crucial decisions regarding your personal life may numb your thoughts. Let this not interfere with your routine or it may lead to complications at work and with loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS

You seem to be on a self-appreciation mode today. Grooming, makeover and attracting attention in on your cards today, you make extra efforts to get that glamorous look for your self. And as Ganesh says, it will surely not go unnoticed as you bag a lot of compliments for it. One of the fortunate days in store for you!

CAPRICORN

You regret spending hefty amount of money on branded items and luxuries, but you'll see a ray of hope today, feels Ganesh. Your bank account is strengthened by some heavy cash flow, and needless to say, it will give you a great relief. Now, you'll understand the value of money and curb on your urge to spend lavishly. Your work place will make you feel more comfortable.

AQUARIUS

Today is your day! Your performance will speak for itself and everyone at work, including bosses, will appreciate your efforts, says Ganesh. Work will not seem burdensome any more, in fact you will enjoy your job like never before.

PISCES

You are likely to feel a lot of tension and stress today. You will feel down owing to some disagreement with someone or due to some unfathomable reason. Even that special someone will be unable to chase away your blues.

Mrunal's take on actors hiding their relationships

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur known for her roles in films like *Sita Ramam*, *Love Sonia*, and *Jersey* opened up about the topic of actors hiding their relationships.

The *Lust Stories 2* actress said, "Thank God I am born in this era where I can talk about my relationships. I have spoken in the past as well, and I have spoken about my breakups which most people don't want to address as it's very personal. But I feel that you learn through these experiences and I am glad that today I am also surrounded by people who are very vocal about what they feel, about their partner, about their lover." She added, "Obviously being a public fig-

ure... but if my partner is not from this industry, and he does not want it to be public (I will not discuss). I don't think that if I get married, I won't get work. So I am in a much better space and thanks to people like Neena ma'am, Angad Bedi, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Neha Dupia, who have spoken up openly about their relationships that they are just normalising things. It is so normal now, and it is absolutely okay if you have a child in your twenties or in your thirties."



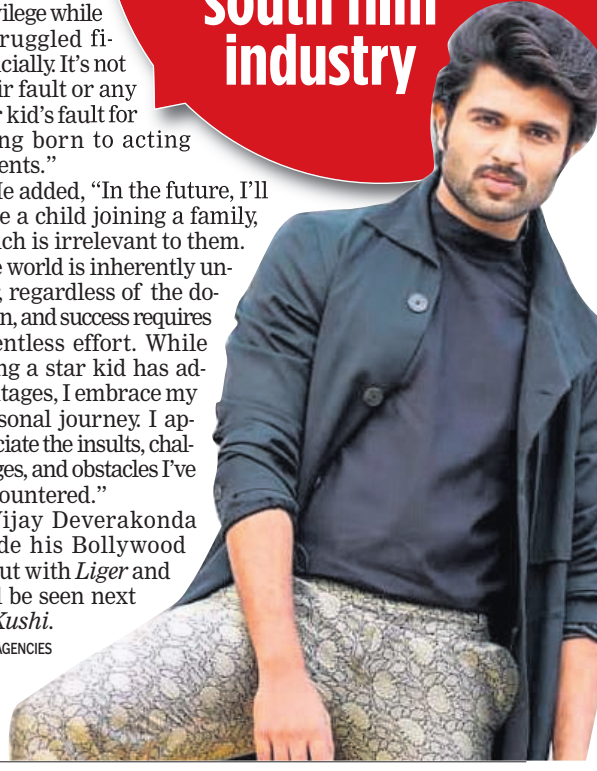
Mumbai: Actor Vijay Deverakonda recalled his struggling days and mentioned that nepotism exists down South as well and getting a break is not easy at all.

Vijay in an interview said, "It's incredibly challenging to make a breakthrough in the industry as an outsider without any connections. This isolation makes it even more difficult. I'm not sure if I agree with that. In essence, my belief is that life is unfair. We don't all start with the same financial background, physical attributes, or opportunities."

I've never held resentment towards someone born into privilege while I struggled financially. It's not their fault or any star kid's fault for being born to acting parents."

He added, "In the future, I'll have a child joining a family, which is irrelevant to them. The world is inherently unfair, regardless of the domain, and success requires relentless effort. While being a star kid has advantages, I embrace my personal journey. I appreciate the insults, challenges, and obstacles I've encountered." Vijay Deverakonda made his Bollywood debut with *Liger* and will be seen next in *Kushi*.

Vijay reflects on nepotism in south film industry



Kangana claps back at fashion critic

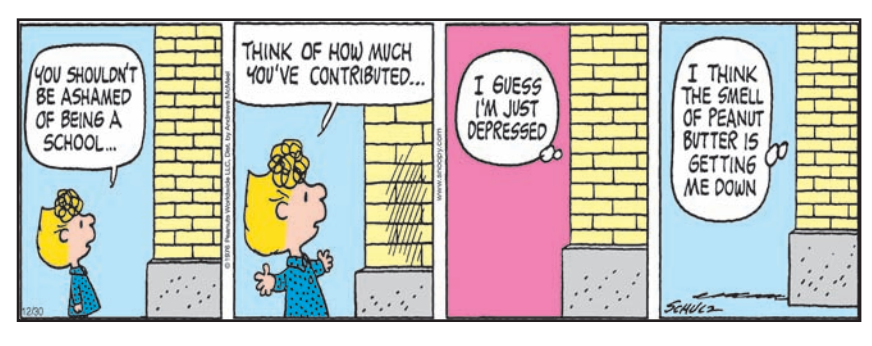
Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut faced brutal trolls over her latest fashion outing. The actress celebrated the success of her production, *Tiku Weds Sheru* and opted for a stunning tangerine red dress for the same. Netizens slammed her for shaming Westernization and American looks a few days back and tagged her as hypocrite.

Fashion critic Diet Sabya took to their Instagram story and shared Kangana's fashionable look and wrote, "Remember when she said she hates fashion? Anywho it's a slay. 10/10 on the lewk! This is a great direction for Gauri and Nainika. It could be huge!"

In response, the *Manikarnika* actress wrote, "I never said I hate fashion darl...I'm fashionable even when I go to bed. I just want to encourage Made In India products. We must spend there where our own earn. This is a proudly made-in-India dress and a testimony to the fact that we are as good as the best in the world."

Meanwhile, Kangana also received massive backlash over celebrating the success of *Tiku Weds Sheru*, while many disapproved the film which premiered on Amazon Prime Video. On the professional front, Kangana Ranaut will be seen next in *Emergency*. She also has *Tejas* and *Chandramukhi 2* in the pipeline.

PEANUTS



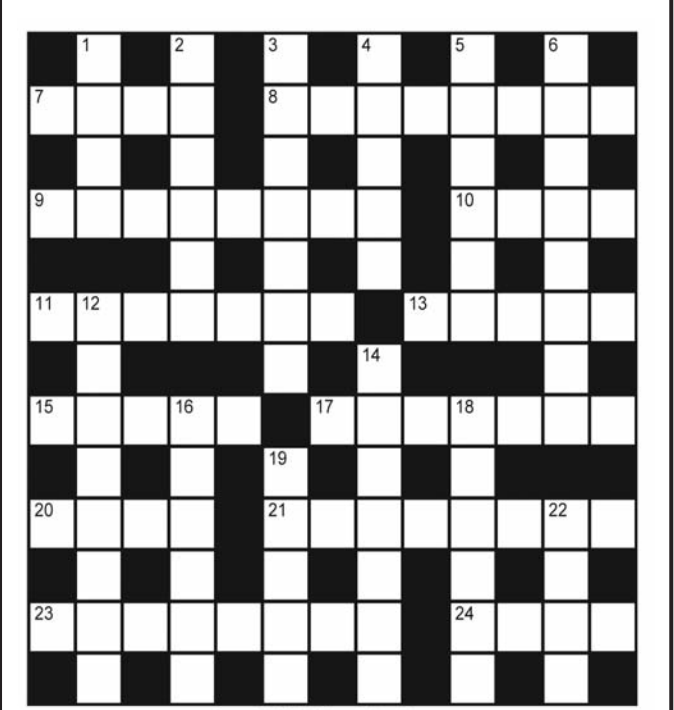
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



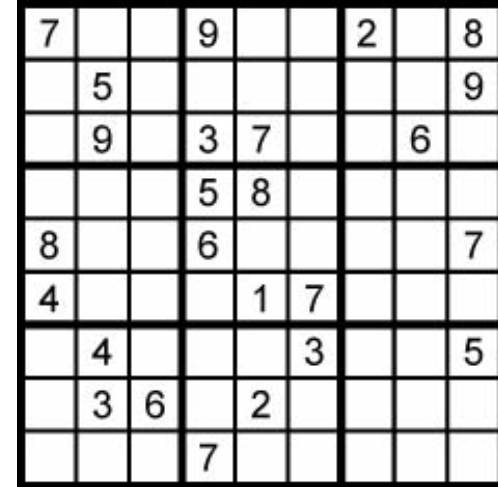
FUN post CROSSWORD



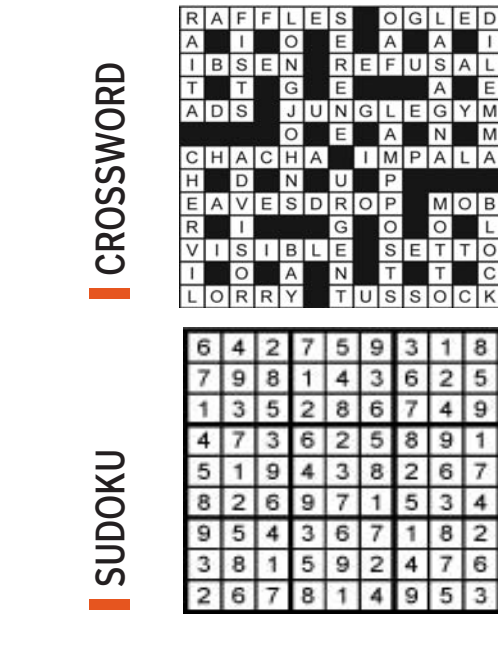
- Across**
- 7 French bread
 - 8 Young ladies' get-together (3,5)
 - 9 Net income
 - 10 Coffin
 - 11 Kind of gland
 - 13 Stomach woe
 - 15 Small terrestrial lizard
 - 17 Booby trap
 - 20 Relative of a gull
 - 21 In seventh heaven
 - 23 Closest neighbour (4,4)
 - 24 Connive
 - 3 Poem parts
 - 4 Inclement
 - 5 Cavort
 - 6 Gossamer
 - 12 Jingle
 - 14 Crack
 - 16 Real small
 - 18 Frozen dessert
 - 19 Station
 - 22 Clothes presser
- Down**
- 1 Band member
 - 2 Comely

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

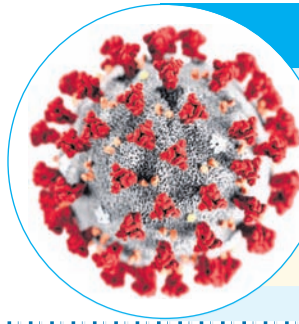


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



MARKING AN END

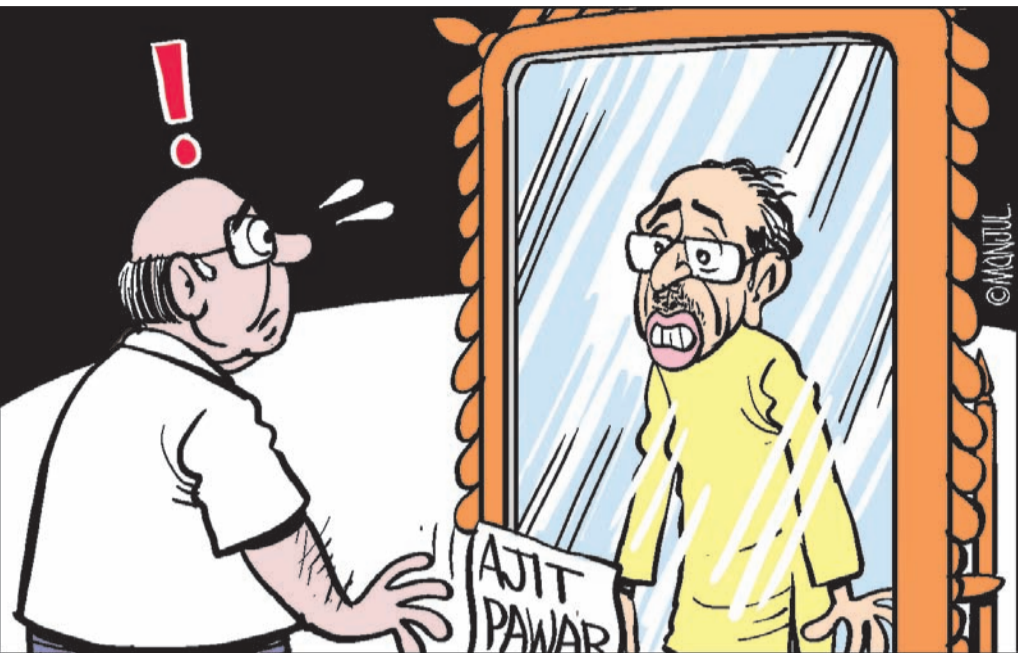
A charioteer being taken off a chariot after completion of Bahuda Jatra in Puri, Sunday



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

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Ensure steps to curb boat mishaps, CS told

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Chief Secretary (CS) to ensure measures are in place at the earliest to prevent boat mishaps.

The commission's move came in response to a plea filed by rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy who sought the commission's intervention and direction to prevent incidents of boat capsizing in state.

In 2019, Tripathy had approached the NHRC alleging that boats are operating without valid licence and fitness.

He also informed the commission about a series of boat mishaps in the last few years across the state, leading to loss



The commission's move came in response to a plea filed by rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy who sought its intervention and direction to prevent boat mishaps in Odisha

Following the fresh complaint filed by the petitioner, the apex rights body sought an action taken report (ATR) from the state government in July last year

of many precious lives.

"In the first week of January 2019, 10 people died in a boat accident in Kendrapara district. The boat capsized near the confluence of the Mahanadi and the Bay of Bengal. Similarly, six persons drowned after a boat carrying 18 tourists capsized in the Chilika Lake June 17, 2018," the rights activist said.

At least 13 people died after a country boat from Sambalpur capsized due to overloading in the Hirakud Dam Reservoir February 9, 2014, Tripathy pointed out.

The NHRC had closed the case after receiving the state government's action taken report in February 2021.

However, Tripathy challenged the state government's submis-

sion that it was taking necessary measures to prevent boat mishaps in Odisha.

The petitioner had requested the NHRC to reopen the case and seek status of implementation of various expert committee recommendations from the state government.

Following the fresh complaint by Tripathy, the apex rights body sought an action taken report (ATR) from the state government July 14 last year.

The NHRC said, "It is necessary to conduct a study on the causes of the tragedy focusing on boat capsizing accidents and precautions to be carried out by boat owners and drivers."

According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, 79 people died due to boat capsizing in Odisha in 2021, the highest in the country.

HC quiz competition for judicial officers

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: As part of celebration of its 75th year of establishment, the Orissa High Court organised the first ever 'State Level Quiz Competition' for judicial officers of the state in collaboration with QShala.

The quiz was organised in three phases - two preliminary rounds, six zonal rounds and the grand finale. The winning team of each zonal round participated in the grand finale held at the Odisha Judicial Academy, Cuttack, Sunday in presence of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and other judges of the Orissa High Court. The questions in the quiz were from diverse topics



The quiz was held in 3 phases - 2 preliminary rounds, 6 zonal rounds and the grand finale

such as law, politics and social studies, and from other domains like history, culture, music, movies, art and technology.

There were two online preliminary rounds common to all the 30 districts June 11, where 432 judicial officers of various cadres participated individually.

The top three winners of each district formed the team to represent the respective district in

the zonal rounds.

For the 'zonal rounds,' six zones matching with their claimants have been following all the death rituals since the accident," he said. Similarly, Sibakanta Roy from Cooch Behar district of West Bengal is in trauma as the body of his son Bipul Roy was taken away by another family from Bihar. "I was in Arunachal Pradesh when I came to know about the accident. I immediately went home and requested our BDO to arrange a vehicle for me. He arranged it and I arrived at Balasore," Roy said.

The five district teams of each zone competed among themselves in the respective 'zonal rounds' at the headquarters.

The Koraput team won the quiz competition while Gajapati and Sundargarh teams became the first and second runners-up respectively. While Raghav Chakrabarty, co-founder and chief executive officer of QShala, was the quizmaster in the preliminary and the zonal rounds, Sachin Ravi, the co-founder of QShala, was the quizmaster in the grand finale.

Chief Justice S Muralidhar, along with Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo and Justice Chittaranjan Dash, distributed prizes in a function held after the grand finale.

BMC rolls up sleeves to fight dengue menace in Capital

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: A mass cleanliness drive was organized by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) in City, with an awareness campaign, Sunday with participation of Mayor Sulochana Das and the team to hand and reverse progress of the vector-borne diseases dengue.

The City authorities had organised a city-wide 'Dry Day' Saturday, in every ward, mobilising the community to actively participate in preventing the spread of the disease. The initiative was successfully conducted with support of BMC commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange and marks a significant step towards enhancing the health and well-being of City residents.

In a recent corporation meeting, Kulange had directed all officials to take action towards the betterment of citizens' health. Emphasizing the need to raise awareness at the grassroots level, officials were instructed to educate residents about preventive measures and the activities they should avoid.

As a result of these directives, the 'Dry Day' campaign could be completed simultaneously in each ward across the three zones. Under the supervision of the zonal deputy commissioner in each zone, along with the assistant commissioner, ward officers, sanitary inspectors, Swachh Sathi volunteers, sanitation supervisors, and anti-larvae workers, extensive monitoring was conducted throughout the wards. The dedicated team engaged with each household, delivering awareness messages and seeking permission to identify and address potential breeding sites.

BAHANAGA TRAGEDY

Even after a month, man awaits brother's body



OVER 210 PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO IDENTIFY BODIES OF THEIR NEAR AND DEAR ONES AND PERFORMED THEIR LAST RITES, BUT NOT ALL HAVE BEEN SO LUCKY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, July 2: One month ago, the tragic triple train accident involving Coromandel Express and Yeshwantpur Howrah Express occurred near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district.

The mishap shook the entire country and devastated many families as at least 293 people were killed and over 1000 injured in India's worst train accident in the last three decades.

After the news flashed, the family members of passengers started searching for their loved ones. Over 210 people were able to identify bodies of their near and dear ones and performed their last rites. Those who found their loved ones in hospitals with injuries were lucky.

However, even though one month has passed since the incident, many families are still waiting for their family members' body. West Bengal's Ashok Rabidas is one of them. He is waiting for the authorities to allow him to take the mortal remains of his younger brother Krishna Rabidas (22).

After roaming from one hospital to another, Ashok Rabidas reached AIIMS-Bhubaneswar where bodies of unidentified persons were preserved.

To identify the body of his brother Krishna, AIIMS authorities have sent DNA samples of Ashok and the body

to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, DNA reports of 29 bodies matching with their claimants have been received by the AIIMS-Bhubaneswar.

However, Krishna's DNA report has not arrived, said Ashok.

Ashok, a native of Harischandampur Tripletala village of Malda in West Bengal, was staying here at a guest house provided by the Railways. As the waiting is not over and he has to return to his work, Ashok left for his village four days back and now his brother Sibcharan Rabidas is waiting in Bhubaneswar for Krishna's body.

Sharing his story with IANS, Ashok said that Krishna worked as a daily wage labourer in Bangalore since July 2022, where he laid underground pipes. On June 2, he was returning home in the Yeshwantpur Howrah Express for his younger sister's wedding.

"My sister's wedding was scheduled for June 12. Now, it has been cancelled. Discussion was also initiated with the family members of a girl for Krishna marriage as well. We had planned to conduct Krishna's wedding after our sister's. However, the accident spoiled everything," said Ashok.

"My father and mother are completely broken after the incident.

More worrisome is that we are yet to receive the body of our brother, due to which, nothing is normal in our house. Even my family members have been following all the death rituals since the accident," he said.

Similarly, Sibakanta Roy from Cooch Behar district of West Bengal is in trauma as the body of his son Bipul Roy was taken away by another family from Bihar.

"I was in Arunachal Pradesh when I came to know about the accident. I immediately went home and requested our BDO to arrange a vehicle for me. He arranged it and I arrived at Balasore," Roy said.

After searching here and there, Sibakanta came across the picture of Bipul on a wall among the photographs of all deceased persons. Stunned, Sibakanta, when sought his son's body, came to know that someone from Bihar had already taken it.

"After reaching AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, I came to know that my son's body was taken away by someone else. Now, what can I do?" asked Roy.

Out of 293 persons who died in the tragic train accident June 2 evening, 81 unidentified bodies were stored at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, of which 29 have been identified through DNA testing. Another 52 bodies are yet to be identified.

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For feedback, write to rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in

Heavy rain to lash for 4 days: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: After a subdued southwest monsoon, the state is likely to experience isolated heavy rainfall from July 3 to 6 with the possibility of a low pressure forming over Bay of Bengal around July 4, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) informed Sunday.

Heavy rainfall is likely to occur at one or two places in Gajapati, Ganjam, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Kandhamal and Nabarangpur July 3. Yellow warning for thunderstorm with lightning has also been issued for one or two places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul and Boudh.

Light to moderate rain or thundershower may also occur at many places in coastal districts and at a few places in the remaining districts of the state during this period, according to the IMD bulletin.



July 4, heavy rainfall is likely at one or two places in Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput and Rayagada. Thunderstorm with lightning may occur at one or two places in Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sonepur, Boudh and Bolangir districts. There is also a forecast for light to moderate rain or thundershower at most places in south and north coastal Odisha.

erate rain or thundershower at most places in south and north coastal Odisha.

Yellow warning for heavy rainfall has been issued for one or two places in Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Boudh, Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput and Cuttack during the subsequent 24 hours July 5. Light to moderate rain or thundershower may also occur at most places across the state.

July 6, heavy rainfall is likely at one or two places in Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Nuapada and Bolangir districts with light to moderate rain or thundershower at most places in South Odisha and at many places in North Odisha.

The MeT office further said that the southwest monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab. Thus, it has covered the entire country by Sunday.



AGAINST SKYROCKETING PRICES: Members of CPI and BKMU staging a demonstration at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar against spiraling prices of vegetables and commodities in state, Sunday

Creative minority can change society: Pillai

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Goa Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai joined the 17th Foundation Day celebrations of KiiT International School as the chief guest here Sunday.

In his address, the Governor emphasised the transformative power a small group of individuals can hold if they have the right mindset and the creative spirit, highlighting that "the creative minority in a society can change it as a whole, the human beings as a whole." Drawing parallels to the freedom struggle, he noted that the leaders who spearheaded the movement constituted only five per cent of the population.

The Governor lauded the KiiT and KISS founder Achyuta



Samanta as an exemplary figure, stating that India requires more visionaries like him to establish the country as a global educational hub. He stressed that true education goes beyond imparting knowledge and should foster humility while creating a knowledge-driven society.

Expressing his admiration for the remarkable growth and development of KiiT, Pillai mentioned that it has surpassed his

expectations. He further urged the university to embrace the values espoused by Swami Vivekananda, who envisioned education as the realisation of perfection within individuals.

Samanta, in his address, said KiiT International School is only 17 years old but its achievements are manifold. "It is the only school in the country that is known as a special school dedicated to imparting education to

special children. KiiT-IS is also the only school in Eastern India to be affiliated with three boards," he said.

Describing the Goa Governor as a "writer-Governor", he praised him as a man of profound wisdom and for possessing several noble qualities suited for a life in public.

The foundation day celebration included the investiture ceremony. The function was attended by KiiT and KISS president Saswati Bal, KiiT International School chairperson Mona Lisa Bal, principal of the school Sanjay Kumar Suar, and head of international curriculum Rory Menamara, among others.

The students of the school participated in the celebration with an overwhelming display of enthusiasm.

WORLD SPORTS JOURNALISTS DAY

'Sports journalists spread love for game & generate viewership'

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Sports journalism has become an essential element of any news media organisation. The journalists handling sports desk write and report about sports events in a diverse environment.

They perform various duties such as drafting game statistics, interviewing coaches and players, and offering game commentary. Also, they work in multiple media such as radio, television, internet, and print. Featuring sports events in the media increases their visibility and help to generate interest and viewership.

Sports journalism does not only include sport and physical education but also the public events. These events can have an economic, political, cultural character and thus have a certain sporting value, to generate interest among the audience of sports media.

World Sports Journalists Day, which was established by International Sports Press Association (AIPS) in 1994, is celebrated globally July 2 to encourage and recognise the accomplishments of various sports journalists. Orissa POST took time out to speak with a few sportspersons to understand their perception about the media

persons engaged in covering various sporting events.

Subhransu Senapati, a cricketer based in Kendujhar who made his first-class debut for Odisha in the 2016-17 Ranji Trophy and now plays for Chennai Super Kings said, "Sports journalism has become more of a hype-creating profession now. However, I laud all the reporters who do their work in an impartial manner. I thank all the sports journalists who work hard to reach to the core of the news and present it with neutrality."



Chess player **Padmini Rout** who holds the title of International Master, Woman Grandmaster and many more hailed the sports journalists for their relentless service. She said, "Thank you to all the sports journalists who bring us the news about our favourite sports persons and teams, which connects the sports persons with the fans with interviews and other medium."

"Thanks to all of you, my chess journey and achievements have been shared and highlighted since the beginning of my career which is spreading love for the game and due to which many kids have been inspired to take up chess."



Dipsan Tirkey, a hockey player who plays as a defender appreciated the sports journalists' role working on different platforms. "It is because of the print and digital media that our victories reach every corner of the country. It is equally the contribution of the journalists to take the craze of the game ahead. Kudos to all the sports journalists on this day!"



Stolen items returned to owners

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 2: The office of the Cuttack City Urban Police DCP Sunday held a fair to return stolen or lost items recovered by the police to the rightful owners.

During the fair, mobile phones, two-wheelers, TV sets, and other items stolen in various police station areas in Cuttack were handed over to their rightful owners. According to police, 110 mobile phones, 11 two-wheelers, one LED TV, one bicycle, and one laptop were handed over to their rightful owners

during the day-long handover fair.

Cuttack DCP Pinak Mishra said that after receiving complaints regarding stolen vehicles, mobiles, and other things at different police stations in Cuttack, the accused were arrested and many stolen goods were recovered. Sunday, they were handed over to their owners.

On the other hand, after getting back their stolen mobiles and vehicles, the owners of these items expressed their happiness and hailed the police.



DCP Pinak Mishra handing over a stolen mobile phone to a woman in a 'Return Mela' organised at his office in Cuttack, Sunday

Hundreds take part in City Pride Parade



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Hundreds of people belonging to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Allies (LGBTQA+) community, along with their supporters, assembled here Sunday to take part in the 'Rainbow Pride Walk.'

The pride walk started from the Housing Board Square and moved towards Shubham Market Complex.

The event was co-organised by several LGBTQ+ and voluntary organisations of the state including the Odisha Rainbow Collective, Saathii, Sakha, and others. Waving rainbow flags, sporting faces painted with rainbow-hued pride flags, and holding placards demanding equal rights in society, scores of members of the Odisha Rainbow Collective and their allies walked and danced during the Rainbow Pride March.

In 2023, prior to the state-level Rainbow Pride Walk, district-level Pride Walks were also organised in Angul, Balangir, Bhadrak, Puri, Sundargarh and Rayagada districts.

The Rainbow Pride March highlighted the need to respect each other irrespective of gender, colour, and sexual orientation, said the organisers. Apart from Meera Parida, Meghna Sahoo, Sadhna Mishra, Ayesha Behera, Amit Bisoi, and Somesh Kumar, many LGBTIQ+ individuals joined the walk.

Can you 'address' annoying eye floaters with a supplement?

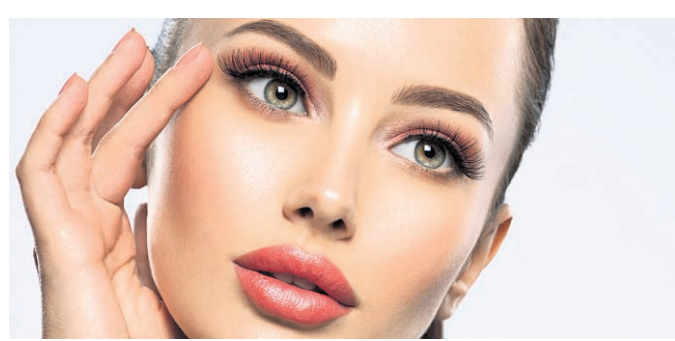
THE THEIA BIO WEBSITE SAYS- CLEARER CONTAINS A BLEND OF ANTIOXIDANTS AND ANTIGLYCATION MICRONUTRIENTS THAT HAS BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO REDUCE EYE FLOATER SIZE AND VISUAL DISCOMFORT IN AROUND 70% OF TEST SUBJECTS

If you look up at the sky on a clear day, you might notice little cobweb-like structures drifting across your field of vision. They are known as floaters or, more formally, muscae volitantes - Latin for flying flies.

Like regular flies, muscae volitantes are rather pesky, so it's not surprising that people want to banish them. A recent article in the Mirror Eye floaters: What causes them and how to get rid of them naturally, claims to have a solution.

Sarah Brewer, a GP, is quoted in the article as saying that a supplement called Clearer, made by Theia Bio, is "a natural but effective solution to address annoying floaters". Despite the promise in the headline, Dr Brewer does not talk about getting rid of floaters.

The Theia Bio website uses more precise language. It says, "Clearer contains a blend of antioxidants and antiglycation micronutrients that has been sci-



entifically proven to reduce eye floater size and visual discomfort in around 70 per cent of test subjects over six months."

Before we look at the feasibility of a supplement to "address" annoying floaters or reduce their size, let's look at what floaters are and why they occur.

The main reason floaters occur is age. With age, the vitreous - a clear, gel-like substance inside the eye - starts to thicken and shrink. Vitreous consists mostly of water, collagens and an acid called hyaluronan. Over time,

the vitreous degenerates slightly and little clumps of collagen begin to form. Floaters are the shadows these clumps cast on the retina.

With age, it's normal for the vitreous to pull away from the back of the eye, a process called posterior vitreous detachment, and this causes more floaters.

Is it possible that vitamin supplements could affect the clumps and strands of collagen, to improve the vitreous? In 2022, researchers in Taiwan reported that taking high-dose mixed fruit

enzyme supplements could reduce floaters, but it's not clear how they measured the number of floaters, so it is difficult to judge this study properly without more information.

Theia Bio, the company that Dr Brewer was speaking in partnership with, shares a link to a study on its website as scientific proof that the Clearer supplement can "reduce eye floater size and visual discomfort". But floaters are tricky to measure because the vitreous is mobile. Every time you move your eyes, the vitreous opacities (the floating objects in the vitreous) move, and the floaters - the shadows the vitreous opacities cast - move too.

The vitreous clumps are 3D, not 2D, so catching them from different angles affects the measure you take and floaters appear bigger when they're closer to the front of your eye. The reduction in opacity size in the study is based on just 26 people who took

the formulation, and opacity sizes were reported in a 2D measure (cm²).

What about other solutions? There are a couple of medical ways to get rid of floaters. The most accepted is a procedure called vitrectomy, which surgically removes the vitreous. But this surgery poses risks to a person's vision far more significant than the floaters themselves.

Zapping floaters with a laser (known as a YAG laser) is another option, but not all experts agree that this is safe. Worryingly, several private companies offer this treatment as a good solution, even though there are reports of damage to various eye structures and glaucoma as a result. Other "solutions" suggested online include intermittent fasting, temple massage and acupressure, as well as eye exercises. But there is no credible evidence for these.

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Land sharks push Gobari to extinction

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 2: The Gobari river flowing by Pattamundai area in Kendrapara district for a 20-km stretch is getting buried fast and its existence has been threatened, a report said Sunday.

Taking advantage of the situation, land sharks are manipulating the land classification and selling plots on the river bed. With the river getting buried to the extent that it may cease to exist, locals and various outfits have been demanding for renovation of the river for long.

Heading to the demands, the state government launched the river revival programme and spent ₹10.55 crore towards excavation of the river in 2010 and 2022. However, the project was soon aborted following which the river is again getting buried.

This has proved opportune for land sharks as they encroach on the dry patches of the river bed and sell them as plots by changing its status. As a result, several buildings have come up on the river land, while construction of many others is underway. This has sparked concern among the environmentalists, nature lovers and residents as the river inches towards a slow death.

Residents have alleged that the district and the local administrations are no less responsible for the present fate of the river, which was once a thriving water body irrigating the



Despite the state government's river revival programme in 2010 and 2022, people have lately realised that the river is never going to be revived as government buildings have come up on it

Sensing opportunity from the government move, land sharks and many influential people have also started encroaching on the river

farmlands and controlling floods.

The then British government had constructed a barrage at the river's origin from Brahmani river for flood control and a channel to discharge the floodwater through Gobari river into the sea. However, the state Water Resources department hindered the free flow of water in the river by wrongfully constructing a dam on the river six decades back.

Later, the state government allegedly committed another blunder by constructing the Pattamundai bus stand building on plot no-1329 on the Gobari river. Later, a veterinary hos-

pital on plot no-2047 and plot no-2048, electricity office on Sabik (past) plot no-1076, telephone office on Hal (current) plot no-3602, a residential area called block colony at Dakhinadia mouza, Rural Development office on plot no-2049 and 2050, as well as many constructions on plot no-2043 and 2046 by the panchayat samiti and on plot no-3603 by Terajodi and other buildings have come up on the Gobari river.

However, the government agencies never spared a thought on what would be the effect of their mindless constructions on Gobari river. Later, the authorities also

changed the status of the river islet and launched construction of an indoor stadium.

People have lately realised that the river is never going to be renovated as government buildings have come up on it. Sensing opportunity from the government move, land sharks and many influential people have also started encroaching on the river.

They have constructed houses on the river bed and given them on rent at Beltala, Dakhinadia and Pokhariapada mouza adjoining Pattamundai bazaar. They are also carving out small plots on the river bed and selling those to interested buyers.

Many have grabbed government lands under current khata no-221 and 1065 in the settlement survey conducted in 1930. Later, in the consolidation exercise

held in 1984, many have managed to get RoR (patta) registered in their names. Locals alleged that the district administration has turned a blind eye to these irregularities. Currently, there is no water flow in the river and the riverbed is getting buried.

All those who have purchased land from the land brokers are yet to get pattas in their name. They alleged that despite taking several rounds of the tehsil office, they are yet to get their pattas.

Members of the Pattamundai legal services authority identified as Prafulla Dash, Debashis Panda, Khirod Mallick and Ashok Bal have filed a public interest litigation (PIL) at National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). The NALSA heard the matter and directed the engineer-in-chief of Water Resources department to take steps in this regard but the orders are yet to be implemented.

When contacted, tehsildar Dillip Sethi said that he is yet to receive any complaint about non-issuance of patta which is not in the government guideline.

Residents alleged that the Gobari river was alive and thriving for a long time but it is dying a slow death now due to lack of proper upkeep and periodic renovation. The riverbed is now being encroached due to lack of water flow in the river sparking concern among environmentalists.



NATURE'S FURY: A whirlwind formed during thunderstorm at Panki village under Rajkanika tehsil in Kendrapara district, Sunday. It left a trail of destruction by blowing away thatched houses

2 crushed to death in Angul

Angul: In a tragic incident, two people, including a woman, died when the motorbike they were riding got crushed in between two trucks on NH-55 near Karadagadia Square in Angul district, Sunday. According to reports, the duo on a motorcycle were travelling from Badakera towards Angul. At Karadagadia on NH-55, the motorbike was hit by a speeding truck, which was also going in the same direction. After the collision, the bike rider along with the pillion rider fell on the road, the truck ran over them killing the duo on the spot. The identity of deceased persons is yet to be ascertained. Reacting to the incident, locals were outraged on the highway following which Angul police reached the site to pacify the angry locals.

Police arrest man accused of raping minor girl in Aul

Kendrapara: Aul police have arrested a 32-year-old man on the charge of raping an eight-year-old girl, police sources said Sunday. Aul Police Station IIC Dillip Sahoo said the accused Dillip Sethi was arrested Saturday under Section 376 AB of the IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act, 2012. The IIC said the medical examination of the victim and the accused confirmed rape. Sethy was produced before the local court, and the court remanded him into jail custody after rejecting his bail plea. Police said, as per the FIR lodged by the uncle of the victim, Sethy lured the girl to an isolated place while she was playing and raped her. He threatened her not to disclose the incident to anyone.

BRO Civil Engineer who died in Ladakh cremated at village

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapada, July 2: Debi Prasanna Sutar of Jagadapur village under Garadpur block in Kendrapara district, who was working as a Civil Engineer with the Border Road Organisation (BRO) in Ladakh, was cremated at his village cremation ground Sunday morning after a Guard of Honour.

Thousands of people, in-

cluding the villagers, intellectual masses, political leaders, and officials, visited the cremation ground to pay their last homage to the departed soul.

Sutar (35) got martyrdom June 30 last year after heavy snow fell on him freezing him to death while he and a JCB driver were cleaning the road with the help of a JCB machine.

After the mortal remains of

the martyr were brought to Biju Patnaik International Airport, they were taken to his native village in a well-decorated vehicle Saturday night. People lined up on both sides of the road to pay their tribute while the body was taken in a procession from his house to the cremation ground.

Minister of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, visited the

cremation ground and paid his last tribute to the martyr.

The minister said Debi Prasanna Sutar has made the district proud by becoming a martyr while serving the motherland. He prayed to God to give enough courage to the bereaved family members to overcome the loss. Sutar is survived by his widow Jyotsnamayee, and a three-year-old son.



GREEN INITIATIVE: Forest department personnel planting a sapling in Bishalkhinda village forest in Sambalpur, Sunday

Rourkela Junction rly station getting facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 2: The Railways, which has been at the receiving end for many reasons, is going to implement many new facilities at Rourkela Junction. Among them, the most notable is the opening of a restaurant inside rail coaches for the passengers.

Speaking on this, station master Prabhbas Das said, "In all probability, by the end of this month this unique project is going to be operational. Work on this is going on in a very fast pace."

The unique facility is being set up on the second entrance to the railway platform from Durgapur hill range side. The work was awarded to a private party in the month of April.

"Passengers will enjoy the unique ambience of a railway compartment and restaurant at one place," said a person from the company preparing the joint.

Besides, the station will have many other shops for the benefit of the passengers. "Soon an ultra-modern interlocking sys-



tem is going to be set up at Rourkela station. Also, platforms 6 and 7 will be ready soon," said a person in the railway project department at Bondamunda.

In addition to the above, two modern stairs and a ramp are at the final stage of construction. A wide foot-over bridge is also getting ready for passengers and another lavatory is being made at platform no-5.

There is good news also for those coming to attend to the passengers. In front of both entrances, there will be free parking provisions for all. All illegal parkings are being evicted and a special vigil will be started soon to check anyone charging parking fees to the visitors.

Steel City lad shines in Oscar-winning team

MANDEEP, WHO IS NOW BASED IN WELLINGTON IN NEW ZEALAND, FONDLY REMEMBERS HIS DAYS IN ROURKELA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 2: This is the story of the journey of one Mandeep Singh, just another name in the crowd, who grew up in one of the non-descript lanes of Rourkela, the Gandhi Road. But, here lies the clue, he is in the team of one of the top grosser movies of the year from Hollywood, Avatar 2 as an animation artist.

Mandeep, who is now based in Wellington in New Zealand, fondly remembers his days in Rourkela and how he was absolutely hooked to cricket. "However, after completing my twelfth, I felt there was no fun in choosing commerce as a career. At that time, we had a computer on which my sisters used to work and I was quite adept at using the machine. I got hooked on to computer and gaming," mentions Mandeep in a prepared text mail.

"One day I saw an ad for a course in animation and immediately contacted the institute in Mumbai. And my family stood by me as I left to start my tryst with animation, and my



destiny as well," said Mandeep. For someone from a small town like Rourkela, it was really tough and challenging to adjust to the fast life of Mumbai and especially with the local trains. "So, I would sit in the station to avoid the peak hours and draw my homework. Then I would go to attend my classes and come back home very late in the night as I

was staying in the suburbs and my institute was at Andheri," continued Mandeep.

The first break was when he worked in the institute's film making team and then Transformer had just been released. His project was adjudged best and also won some awards on different platforms for best animation. It was inspired by

Transformer: "I was just 21 then. And finally, in 2010 I got my first job in Prana Animation and I worked on the movie 'Tinker Bell', but that was just for a month. And soon I was out of the job, but it was a nice experience," said Manjeet.

Meanwhile, he was being hired for projects on a daily basis and they were worth it as he started working on series like Moto Patlu and Vir.

"I was going nuts because I had no permanent work and wanted to study further abroad but there was no support for me financially. But, fortunately, I got a break in Malaysia and went there and stayed for two years. And I came back when my grandmother passed away and worked from home. But, staying in Rourkela was not in my mind. Once while browsing through LinkedIn I learned about a studio in New Zealand and by that time I had a decent portfolio to show and got the job," wrote Manjit.

He got to work in Hu Hu Studio there in a cartoon movie Moseley. Incidentally, he met his partner Hannah there. "In 2021 Weta FX

was hiring animators for AVATAR, I was then surely ready for a change and I and my partner moved to Wellington. Working with weta has been very inspiring - the amount of detailed work that goes in here is absolutely crazy - Weta FX is one of the top tier VFX companies in the world and there we got to work in different projects apart from working on Avatar, I got to also work on LOTR series for a very short while - A very little time on the recent Flash that just released - Godzilla x Kong which is set to release, and then Transformers," mentions Mandeep's mail.

And when he was visiting India in March, he learned that his team had won the OSCARS. "After I returned one random day, our head of animation for Avatar brought the OSCARS and BAFTA and left it on my table and sent me a picture. It was very emotional to hold the Oscars in my hands, especially with Mum not around anymore who passed away last year when we were working on Avatar 2," informed Mandeep.

In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture.

SRI AUROBINDO



Corrupt Alliances

The Ajit Pawar saga is laughable and also seems to be unending. After the Maharashtra state Assembly election in 2019, the BJP-Shiv Sena combine fell apart on the issue of who shall become the Chief Minister. At that time, Ajit Pawar took a dramatic step and claiming support of majority NCP MLAs supported formation of a Devendra Fadnavis led BJP government in which Ajit became Deputy CM. This move of the nephew against his uncle Sharad Pawar surprised most political observers. However, this pleased the top leadership of the BJP who instantly took steps to withdraw all corruption cases that were being processed in different courts against Ajit. Soon after, the cases were withdrawn from the courts officially. Immediately after this, the NCP faction led by Ajit returned to the original NCP fold and helped form the Maha Vikash Agadi (MVA) government headed by Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray. In that government too, Ajit became Deputy CM. Then came the June 2022 split in the Shiv Sena. Uddhav's close associate Eknath Shinde broke the legislative party and walked away with a large number of MLAs and joined the BJP to form a coalition government that had Eknath as Chief Minister and Devendra as Deputy CM. Ajit became the Leader of the Opposition. Till recent past, Ajit seemed to be cooling his heels till he publicly expressed his desire to head the Maharashtra state unit of NCP. His desire was made public only after Sharad Pawar announced that he will no longer continue as the NCP chief. The presence of Sharad's daughter Supriya Sule seems to have disturbed Ajit. Possibly Sharad wished to handover the baton to his daughter rather than his nephew Ajit. A similar situation had arisen when Balasaheb Thackeray had preferred his son Uddhav to head Shiv Sena rather than his nephew Raj Thackeray. At that time, Raj seemed more eligible but could not hold on to the original Shiv Sena. With the present NCP, the story seems to be different because Ajit has managed to take the bulk of the legislative party while defecting and joining the Shinde-Fadnavis government.

The constant treacherous nature displayed by Ajit Pawar exposes the core values of almost all politicians across India today. Without any empathy for the well being of the citizens and lacking any economic policies that would help the state and the nation to develop, politicians today are open to make any compromise for securing power. Not only power, present situation displays extreme fear of central investigating agencies which is making politicians do the unimaginable. Ajit Pawar's past shows the murkiest of political histories. His past deeds would have made him an extremely soft target for the kind of vengeful politics being displayed by the BJP. Whether willingly or unwillingly, Ajit's frequent change of loyalties has condemned the NCP to ignominy. His summersaults will also ensure his own political future will be dwarfed.

The Ajit Pawar drama might be a precursor to many other political rearrangements in other states. Take for example the arrest of a minister in the Stalin led DMK government of Tamil Nadu or the corruption charges brought and arrests made of senior AAP ministers in the Delhi government. Citizens remember about the multiple pending allegations against the daughter of Telangana Chief Minister KCR, the sword of corruption hanging over the CM of Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy while not forgetting the charges against DK Shivakumar, the newly appointed Deputy CM of Karnataka. These corrupt pressure points could create opportunities for the BJP to form new political alliances before the 2024 general elections.



Twila Moon

AFTER A QUARTER-CENTURY OF LOSING MASS, THE GREENLAND ICE SHEET HAS BEEN UNDERGOING A RAPID AND RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

The days in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, are growing longer. Even after setting, the sun lingers below the horizon, casting a glow over the rocky coastal landscape. On sun-drenched days, when the skies are as blue as the ocean, one can admire Greenland's striking mountains. Their jagged summits contrast with the smoothness of their lower slopes, fjords shaped by the relentless force of ancient ice sheets. Here and there, splashes of fragrant brownish-green tundra punctuate the scene. Everywhere, the snow is melting, making for slushy treks through a wet and heavy snowpack.

Before landing in Greenland at the start of the melt season, I expected to see more snow. But only patches of winter snow remained. One does not need to be a scientist to observe the trends that we researchers can detect via satellites and other long-term measurements. The snowfall has been arriving later in the year, sometimes after Christmas, and has not been as persistent as it once was. After a quarter-century of losing mass, the Greenland Ice Sheet has been undergoing a rapid and radical transformation.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Arctic Report Card for Greenland, which I co-authored, paints a grim picture. In 2022, Greenland marked its 25th consecutive year of ice loss, accompanied by "unprecedented late-season melt events." On September 3, more than a third of the ice sheet's surface - including Summit Station, a research camp near the ice sheet's apex - experienced melting conditions. A year before, in August 2021, Summit Station documented its first-ever recorded rainfall, although it was impossible to say exactly how much it received, owing to the absence of rain gauges at such high altitudes.

FOCUS CLIMATE CHANGE

ICE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE



Greenland's accelerating rate of ice loss is projected to exceed that of any period during the Holocene, the geological epoch that began roughly 12,000 years ago

Greenland's accelerating rate of ice loss is projected to exceed that of any period during the Holocene, the geological epoch that began roughly 12,000 years ago. There is compelling evidence that the western portion of the Greenland Ice Sheet is growing increasingly unstable, edging toward a tipping point beyond which its dynamics and structure fundamentally and irreversibly shift.

In fact, scientists may have underestimated how sensitive glaciers are to global warming, which means that the tipping point may be reached sooner than we think. My own research shows that ice loss has been reshaping the ice sheet's margins and the Greenland coast, altering glacier speeds and rerouting the flows of ice, water, and sediment. These changes, in turn, influence the ice sheet's response to future temperature increases.

On my recent visit to Nuuk, I continued work on the QGreenland project, building a geospatial data tool for researchers and educators interested in exploring Greenland and learning about the scientific research taking place there. Although one cannot smell the

tundra or hear the Arctic birds through interactive maps, such tools promise to familiarise people with the world's largest island and help them understand how changes in the Arctic could affect their own communities, even if they are thousands of miles away.

To avoid catastrophe, we must act immediately. Much like the light from distant stars enables us to peer into the past, the changes we now see in Greenland - the result of our previous inaction on greenhouse-gas emissions - offer a frightening glimpse into the future. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recent Synthesis Report notes, "sea-level rise is unavoidable for centuries to millennia," largely owing to ice-sheet melt.

Rising sea levels may not seem like a pressing issue if one's own backyard is not flooding. But roughly 40% of the world's population lives within 100 kilometers (62 miles) of coasts. Beyond coastal erosion and saltwater inundating freshwater resources and ecosystems, sea-level rise will also affect groundwater levels, causing potential flooding and water contamination further inland.

And those of us living thousands of miles from the coastline depend on coastal infrastructure for goods and shipping. We must all plan for a future with continued sea-level rise and work together to respond to it.

The extent and pace of sea-level rise, however, still depends on the choices we make now. The latest IPCC report, which shows global temperatures heading toward a 3.5°C Celsius increase by 2100, underscores the urgent need to close the gap between current measures to combat climate change and what must be done to meet our agreed global goal of less than 2°C. If temperatures rise by 2-3°C, the Greenland and West Antarctic Ice Sheets could be lost "almost completely and irreversibly over multiple millennia," causing several meters of sea-level rise. Estimates suggest that the Greenland Ice Sheet alone holds the equivalent of 7.4 meters (24 feet) of potential sea-level increase.

Fortunately, humanity's future is not fully predetermined. By taking strong climate-focused action now, we could save much of the Greenland Ice Sheet, curb the spread of wildfires, minimise the rise in drought frequency and severity, enhance food security, and ensure a habitable world.

But achieving this requires a concerted and sustained effort to limit global temperature rise; every degree matters. To prevail against climate change, we must adhere to established deadlines and honor existing commitments to shifting away from fossil fuels as our primary energy source. The message from Greenland is clear: ice will not negotiate.

The writer is Deputy Lead Scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Centre at the University of Colorado Boulder.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- All men's miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone. **BLAISE PASCAL**
- When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation. **RAMANA MAHARSHI**
- The optimist thinks this is the best of all possible worlds. The pessimist fears it is true. **J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER**

WORDSWORTH

Lexiphanic

The US statesman William Pinkney wrote in the early 1800s: "The tinsel of Lexiphanic language in many places involves his argument in almost inextricable mystery, and pains whom it was intended to please, by making them toil for instruction, when an easy, natural communication was practicable." Modern writers might take this as a motto or an awful warning to be posted above their desks. Lexiphanic means somebody who uses bombastic or pretentious language. It comes from the title of a dialogue that was composed by the Greek writer Lucian of Samosata in the first century AD. It is also the name of the character who was the subject of the satire in the dialogue, coined from lexis, word, and phaino, to show. So Lexiphane was a phrase-monger, of whom another character, Lycinus (supposed to be Lucian himself) says in the dialogue, "There is not a doubt I shall go raving mad under the intoxication of your exuberant verbosity". This may remind you of Benjamin Disraeli's quip about William Gladstone: "A sophisticated rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity". Few people read Lucian today and even fewer would recognise the name of one of his characters. Two centuries ago, men and women of education were more familiar with the classics. In Dr Johnson and Fanny Burney, the latter wrote in surprise about the former: "How little did I expect from this Lexiphane, this great and dreaded lord of English literature, a turn for burlesque humour!"

Lieutenant

Like other military words (army, captain, corporal, sergeant and soldier), lieutenant came into English from Old French after the Norman Conquest. It's from lieu, meaning "place" (ultimately from Latin locus), plus tenent, holding. A lieutenant is a place-holder, a person who at need fulfils the role of a more senior one or who functions as his deputy. He acts - one might say - in lieu of another, where in lieu now means "instead" but could equally be construed as "in the place of". As an example, the Lieutenant Governor of New York, David Paterson, automatically replaced Governor Eliot Spitzer when the latter had to resign in March 2008. Lieutenant is closely related in origin and meaning to locum tenens for a person who stands in temporarily for someone else of the same profession, such as a cleric or doctor. On etymological grounds, therefore, the pronunciation ought to be like lieu, which suggests that Americans are nearer saying it "correctly". But historical evidence shows that we English early on adopted the way of saying the word which is still our standard one, that this was taken by colonists to the US and that it was only in the nineteenth century in that country that it slowly changed to its modern pronunciation. Some writers have suggested early readers misread u as v. This is plausible, since in fourteenth-century English, when lieutenant first appeared in the written language, a distinction between the two letters didn't yet exist and they were interchangeable. However, the Oxford English Dictionary says that the theory doesn't fit the facts. A medieval form lueffenant is known (for example in a letter of 29 May 1447 in the records of the Fribourg canton, Switzerland, which was signed by Ly Leuffenant douz Chastellen Davenche; Fribourg is one area which the French-related language survives that's called variously Franco-Provençal, Romand, Burgundian or Arpitan. This matches a Scots spelling of the fifteenth century and it may be that English speakers picked up this variant way of saying the word. Or they may have heard the gilded sound at the end of lieu when it appeared in compounds as a v or an f. Early spellings like leaf-, lyff- and leif- show that writers were trying to record a pronunciation rather like the now-standard British one.

SPECTRUM COMMERCE

Turnaround in India's toy story



Shivaji Sarkar

A NEW GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE PROMISES TO HELP INDIAN TOYMAKERS SCALE UP PRODUCTION CAPACITY TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY, FURTHER SHRINKING CHINA'S SHARE IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET

India is poised to replace Chinese toys with indigenous manufacturing touching \$1.5 billion. It is likely to double to \$3.3 billion by 2028, according to International Market Analysis Research and Consulting Group (IMARC Group). India's toy imports, according to official figures, have declined by more than 70% in the past 3.5 year, while exports have jumped by 61.3%. The market is expected to grow at 12% CAGR. The world's leading toymaker Mattel recalled over 21 million Chinese-made toys worldwide in 2007 due to excessive levels of lead paint and other unsafe components.

India first banned toy imports from China mainly for its toxicity in January 2009 but again eased it in March 2009. The government put restrictions again in September, 2017. Despite all this as per WTO norms a complete ban on toy imports is unlikely.

A new government initiative promises to help Indian toymakers scale up production capacity to compete internationally, further shrinking China's share in the domestic market. The government is considering a special scheme for the toy industry, according to Ajay Aggarwal, President of the Toy Association of India. It is likely to be a pro-

duction-linked incentive, which will spur the activities of the toy industry.

India is home to 25% of world's children aged between 0 and 12 years. Domestic demand is huge. It also has a rich history and culture when it comes to toy making. India's share in the global toy market, estimated at \$90 billion, is 0.5% (\$500 million). The toy manufacturers are mostly located in NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and clusters in some other states. Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh, Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, Tanjore dolls, Ghurni clay dolls, Rajasthani puppets and Chennapatna on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway have age old tradition of toy making but are unable to keep up with modern scale and trends.

The traditional craft is protected as a geographical indication (GI) under the WTO. These are in demand in the West as exquisite pieces of art. India's domestic toy industry comprises 4,000 MSMEs and is primarily in the unorganised sector.

Advanced technology and machinery encourage manufacturers to produce innovative toys and boosting market outlook. The rising sales of smartphones, laptops, and computers,

along with the increasing influence of social media, are propelling market growth.

Amazon sold \$6292 million worth toys, Walmart \$4645 million and Target \$1621 million through e-commerce. A large variety of toys available within the Indian market can be broadly classified into two very distinct categories on the basis of their application and purpose - educational and recreational. Under educational toys various toys and games made out of plastic and cardboard materials are prominent, while recreational toys, including electronic toys are not popular among modern parents.

The markets still sell Chinese products as these are considered to behold the buyer. The Indian toys, despite being less expensive, are supposedly of better quality but have yet to carve out a niche in the market. There is a perception that the imported are technologically better. Manufacturers say that at initial stages the reactions are normal but as indigenous products proliferate the perception would change.

Manufacturers find that while they have started mainly plastic toys as it is easier, they face different kinds of problems. It is just

not the kind of metals and plastics, but many toys need different kinds of textiles and other accessories. The ancillaries are yet to come up. Some require particular kind of durable, light and special fabric. That too is not locally available.

However, they are expecting more government support for banning imports to sustain production. A KPMG-FICCI report is hopeful that the country's market size would be doubling to \$2 billion shortly. Electronic toys comprise about 10% of the toy segment; it is hoped that even without it the rest of the segment would grow and gradually critical areas would also be covered.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is trying to understand the dynamics and shortcomings. It is also looking at the experience of other countries and is working with the Toy Association of India.

Overall, a good import substitution move has been made and the government expects the sector to take a leap by 2028. The Ministry of Commerce is of the opinion that in the next few years the Indian toy industry would compete with China and have a niche in the world market.

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Gubernatorial overreach

Sir, Gubernatorial overreach hit a new low when Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi dismissed minister V Senthil Balaji from the state Cabinet - without consulting Chief Minister MK Stalin. It was only after the Union Home Ministry's intervention that the Raj Bhavan placed the order in abeyance and later withdrew it. However, despite the belated decision to keep the unconstitutional and illegal decision to sack the jailed minister, Senthil Balaji, on hold, significant damage has already been done. According to Article 164, it is mandatory for the Governor to appoint or dismiss a minister based on the advice of the Chief Minister. However, this provision was blatantly disregarded by the TN Governor, setting a detrimental precedent. The genesis of Tamil Nadu Governor's decision to dismiss Balaji can be traced back to January 2023. When the Governor omitted certain paragraphs from the text prepared by Stalin's government and walked out of the Assembly. This incident was reminiscent of a similar and bizarre episode when the then Governor of West Bengal, Padamja Naidu, walked out of the Assembly in February 1965. The Centre's failure to take strict action in such cases keeps the door open for Governors to interfere with elected governments that are not aligned with the ruling party at the Centre. This situation poses a threat to the democratic fabric of India. The trend of unconstitutional actions extends beyond Tamil Nadu, as Governors are also blocking recommendations made by non-BJP ruled Chief Ministers. These actions include preventing the convening of Assembly sessions, appointing vice chancellors without consulting CMs, and engaging in executive activities, all of which are not permitted by the Constitution.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Creating a colossus

Sir, The merger of HDFC Bank with mortgage lender HDFC has created a financial services colossus. The merged entity, with a market cap of \$172 billion, is India's second-most-valued company after Reliance Industries and the world's fourth-most-valuable lender after JPMorgan Chase, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Bank of America. HDFC Bank will issue 42 shares for every 25 held by HDFC investors, as per the plan approved by the boards. The merger was announced April 4, 2022.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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UP govt to catch the bulls by their horns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 2: The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has finally decided to deal with the bull by its horns.

With just a few months left for the Lok Sabha polls, the state government has decided to deal with the issue so that it does not become a factor in elections. The government recently sent nodal officers to districts to identify the reasons for the continuance of the problem.

UP chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra has directed officials to ensure that stray cattle are not seen roaming in public places. "District magistrates will monitor on a daily basis to see that abandoned cattle do not roam in public places," he said. He also asked them to send proposals for the construction of large cow protection centres as per the requirement to keep deserted cattle there. Director, animal husbandry, Indramani said the feedback received from nodal



officers was being compiled and examined to take further action to deal with the stray cattle issue. "District magistrates of at least 15 districts have told the nodal officers that in their districts there were no stray cattle out as all of them had been caught and protected in the cow protection centres," he said. Indramani said the government was building around 300 large cow protection centres with the

capacity of housing 300 cattle each and this, he claimed, would help find a durable solution to the problem. "Around 12 lakh abandoned cattle are already staying in over 6000 make-shift cow protection centres where all proper arrangements of fodder and water are made available by the government," he pointed out. An animal husbandry department official said more stray cattle had been

caught and put in the cow protection centres than the total number identified in the last livestock census.

"The 2019 Livestock Census put the number of stray cattle in UP at 11.84 lakh and against which more than 12 lakh cattle had already been put in cow protection centres but the problem still remains, though not as much as it was earlier," he said.

"Their number has naturally increased since the last census and we do not know exactly as to how many stray cattle are still out," he added. After coming to power in 2017, the BJP government under Yogi Adityanath strictly enforced the ban on cow slaughter and this started resulting in the increasing presence of stray cattle in the state leading to public outcry as the herds of animals were seen destroying standing crops and disrupting movement of traffic on roads.

In December 2018, Yogi Adityanath issued diktats to of-

ficials asking them to ensure that all stray cattle were caught and protected comfortably in makeshift cow protection centres. The state-wide drive began immediately and has been continuing ever since.

During the assembly elections in the state last year, the stray cattle emerged as a big issue to the extent that by the middle of the phased voting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, through his public rallies started assuring voters of a permanent solution to the stray cow menace in Uttar Pradesh.

The problem, however, is believed to be intact in most districts, albeit in varying degrees with farmers still complaining about herds of stray cattle destroying their crops. "Since the Lok Sabha elections are only six-seven months away, the BJP government in the state does not want the stray cattle to be a poll issue again and hence pressuring officials to find a way out," a senior official disclosed.

TN to monitor health of pregnant women, newborns

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 2: Tamil Nadu health department will monitor the health of pregnant women and lactating mothers as well as newborns under the scheme 'First 1,000 - Best Healthy Days'.

Health Minister Ma Subramanian announced the launch of the programme at the Ranipet Hospital Saturday. It will be implemented at all the primary health centres as well as community health centres in 14 districts of the state based on poor maternal and child health indicators.

The programme is aimed at the survival and growth of all children in their first 1,000 days, from pregnancy up to the first two years. The scheme, according to the minister, will target 37,200 children born in a year in Tamil Nadu and 74,400 children born in two years.

The beneficiaries will be ensured adequate antenatal care,



The programme is aimed at the survival and growth of all children in their first 1,000 days, from pregnancy up to the first two years

The scheme, according to the minister, will target 37,200 children born in a year in Tamil Nadu and 74,400 children born in two years

good nutrition and lactation, best early childhood development and proper weight gain up to two years. Subramanian in his speech said that the programme will also focus on prevention and control of anemia during pregnancy, weight gain of pregnant women and infants.

16 gangsters killed in UP since Jan 2020

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 2: As many as 16 gangsters and their gang members have been gunned down in separate police encounters in Uttar Pradesh while 55 others, including 19 mafiosi, have been convicted and awarded death penalty and life term or sentenced with different periods of imprisonment in 42 different cases.

The state police had initiated stern action against 69 mafiosi and 1,153 of their gang members in nearly three-and-a-half years since January 2020.

UP Police Special Director General (SDG), Law and Order, Prashant Kumar informed that the state police had been acting tough on criminals and mafia and properties worth Rs 3,516



crore procured and occupied by them, were seized and demolished or freed from illegal possession since January 2020.

Besides, the involvement of criminals and mafiosi in different government contracts and other occupations was curbed that led to the loss of over Rs 1,424 crore to them, he said.

Prashant Kumar said as many as 650 criminal cases were lodged against these elements while

acting against them and at least 549 of them were arrested.

He said 239 were booked under the Goonda Act, 704 under Gangsters Act and 18 under the National Security Act. Preventive measures were taken against 336 people under provisions of 110G Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The Special DG said similarly, 92 new criminal gangs were registered in the police records and vigilance was intensified on gang leaders and members.

He said history sheets of 404 criminals were opened and action of 'Zila Badar' (expulsion of regular offenders from a certain district for a certain period) was taken against 83 of them while bail of 25 criminals was cancelled and they were sent back to jail.

Mini Vande Bharat train between Lucknow-Gorakhpur soon

Vande Bharat Express is likely to cover a distance of 302 km (via Ayodhya junction) in less than four hours. The train will operate at maximum 110 kmph on the track, although the train cruise limit is 160 kmph

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 2: Uttar Pradesh will receive its second Vande Bharat Express -- the train's first mini version -- that will connect Lucknow to Gorakhpur via Ayodhya.

To ensure financial feasibility on shorter routes, the Indian Railways recently introduced a mini version of Vande Bharat

Express which comprises eight coaches instead of 16. A mini-Vande Bharat Express currently operates between Chennai Central and Coimbatore Junction.

Divisional railway manager, NER-Lucknow, Aditya Kumar said, "The train will operate via Ayodhya connecting Gorakhpur to Lucknow." According to sources, the train is likely to



be flagged off on July 7. "We expect that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will

inaugurate the train operation; however, we are yet to receive assent from the PMO office," said the source. The route, schedule and fare have yet not been finalised, but it is expected that the railway board will give approval a couple of days before the flagging-off ceremony.

Currently, Arunachal superfast express (22411), which operates on Sunday and Wednesday between Gorakhpur and Lucknow, covers the 270 km journey (via Gonda junction) in the shortest possible time of 4 hours 35 minutes, followed by Sapt Kranti superfast express (12557) and Gorakhdham

superfast express (12555), both of which take 4 hours and 50 minutes to cover the distance.

Vande Bharat Express is likely to cover a distance of 302 km (via Ayodhya junction) in less than four hours. The train will operate at maximum 110 kmph on the track, although the train cruise limit is 160 kmph.

Maintaining speed and punctuality of Vande Bharat Express will be a challenge, as NER has double track upto Mankapur junction from Gorakhpur junction; however, after Mankapur junction, it's a single track up to Barabanki junction via Ayodhya.

UP village carving out a niche in making artificial braids

HOWEVER, ARTIFICIAL BRAIDS ARE NOT ABOUT STYLE ALONE. VILLAGERS SAY MANY HANG IT OUTSIDE HOUSES AND SHOPS, ON VEHICLES AND ALSO TIE IT AROUND THE NECK OF THEIR LIVESTOCK TO WARD OFF THE EVIL EYE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shahjahanpur (UP), July 2: The artificial braids woven here give the perfect hair look and style, say artisans in Feel Nagar who are earning a place for themselves in Uttar Pradesh and in several parts of the country with their work.

However, artificial braids are not about style alone. Villagers say many hang it outside houses and shops, on vehicles and also tie it around the neck of their livestock to ward off the evil eye. Ajay Kashyap, a resident of Feel Nagar who lost his job during the COVID-19 pandemic, says he returned home to join the business.

The village, located 35 kilometers from the district headquarters, comes under the Tilhar block. Almost every household in the village is involved in the work of braid making. "The business has helped me make ends meet in the tough times of the pandemic. I am planning to ex-

pand the business," Kashyap said. The villagers bring raw cotton thread from Bhilwara, Rajasthan, and some parts of Gujarat. The raw threads are cleaned and cut to the required sizes of braids before being distributed to different households for braiding. People at home, especially women, braid the threads and secure them by tying knots at the end.

Kashyap explains that other artisans decorate the braid by making flowers on braids. In this way, after the efforts of many people, a braid is prepared. Every artisan works on contract and is paid for his work. Every artisan earns Rs 300-500 daily, Kashyap said. The braids are collected by contractors and distributed across the country.

Afroz Ali, a contractor of braid-making work, said the braids are made throughout the year in the village, but there is more demand from August to October. Ali says a good braid sells for Rs 300 and gives a profit



margin sufficient to sustain the business. According to locals, the braids are used as totems and tied outside homes and businesses. People also tie it to their cattle or holy trees or private vehicles. Braids are particularly

popular among truck drivers who decorate their vehicles with more than 40 braids.

Talib Khan, a truck driver, said he utilizes braids to "protect his vehicle from the evil eye and bad omens". "The braids also

make the truck look beautiful." "Once these braids were also popular among women who used them in makeup as hair extension. But it has now been replaced by other braids that use natural hair," said Kashyap.

MEKEDATU ROW

Palaniswami lashes out at Cong, DMK



Palaniswami especially came down hard on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, charging him with not fiercely opposing Karnataka Deputy CM D K Shivakumar's assertion that the balancing reservoir would be built on river Cauvery at Mekedatu in the neighbouring state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 2: AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami Sunday lashed out at the ruling Congress in Karnataka and the DMK in Tamil Nadu over the neighbouring state pushing for the construction of the contentious Mekedatu reservoir and the Stalin-led government not putting up a resistance to protect the interests of the state.

Palaniswami especially came down hard on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, charging him with not fiercely opposing Karnataka Deputy CM D K Shivakumar's assertion that the balancing reservoir would be built on river Cauvery at Mekedatu in the neighbouring state.

Tamil Nadu is opposed to the construction of the dam, saying its prospects will be hurt, and also insists that its consent is required to implement the project. Palaniswami, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly, said that due to his previous government's efforts in 2018, the Mekedatu issue was never discussed in the meetings of the Cauvery Management Authority (CMA).

According to him, the CMA had said that it would intervene in the matter as the reservoir is proposed to come up on the Cauvery river bed and that Tamil Nadu's consent is required for the project.

"Following this, the Mekedatu issue remained calm till May this year. But, after the Congress

government came in Karnataka (in May), Deputy CM Shivakumar is blowing up the matter saying the dam will certainly be constructed," the AIADMK chief said in a statement.

He said that soon after the Congress formed the government in that state, Shivakumar had asked his officials to expedite the matter. The deputy CM had recently written to the Union Jal Shakti Minister also on the issue, Palaniswami said. "I had then itself expressed my strong criticism of the Karnataka government. Had the puppet chief minister Stalin of the DMK government given a befitting reply to Shivakumar then (in May when Shivakumar first flagged the matter), he would not have done so today," Palaniswami said in an apparent reference to the Karnataka leader raising the issue of the dam with the Centre.

Palaniswami alleged that the DMK "cedes Tamil Nadu's rights" whenever in power, and cited the Cauvery and Katchatheevu issues to buttress his claim. He slammed Stalin for remaining "silent" over the Cauvery issue and demanded a strong response from him personally, besides urging him to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with the 38 Lok Sabha MPs belonging to the DMK-led coalition to prevent Karnataka from going ahead with the Mekedatu dam.

The AIADMK will go through the necessary struggles to prevent Tamil Nadu from "turning into a desert," the former chief minister added.

Mekedatu is a multi-purpose drinking water and power project proposed by Karnataka, which involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district. Tamil Nadu has been opposing the project, raising apprehensions that the state would be affected if the project takes shape. The project, once completed, is aimed at ensuring drinking water supply to Bengaluru and neighbouring areas (4.75 TMC).

It also can generate 400 MW power. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 9,000 crore.

Dog bites 14 people in 16 hours in UP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jalaun (Uttar Pradesh), July 2: A street dog went on a biting spree in a residential colony in Orai in Jalaun, and bit 14 people within 16 hours.

The locals finally killed the dog as the forest department and Nagar Palika failed to send a team to catch the animal. The dog bit eight people on Friday night in a residential colony of block development.

Among the victims were the block secretary, his driver, and his assistant. The driver's son was also attacked on the face and the dog chewed his nose, said block employee Durga Prasad. On Saturday, the dog bit six more people when they were leaving for work. Dr Virendra Kumar of the local community health centre said 14 people from the colony were treated for the dog bite. They were given anti-rabies injections.



A pedestrian walks past a graffiti made on a wall in front of NSCB Airport in Kolkata



People collect drinking water from a Municipal Corporation tanker on the outskirts of Bhopal



Israelis protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to overhaul the judicial system in Tel Aviv, Israel



A peacock inside a garden in New Delhi



Britain's Prince William speaks to PM Rishi Sunak and Prince George eats pizza in their box as they attend day-4 of the 2nd Ashes cricket test match between England and Australia at Lord's in London



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes a selfie using the cellphone of a person from the crowd during the Canada Day noon show, in Ottawa



Activists of the United Muslim Forum Pakistan group chant slogans during a demonstration against desecration of Islam's holy book 'Quran' in Sweden, in Karachi, Pakistan



A fisherman casts net on river Hooghly during sunset, in Nadia



A police officer moves a scooter in the area of a mass shooting incident in the Southern District of Baltimore



We are strongly committed to the development and progress of Telangana based on social justice and equity
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

MONSOON COVERS ENTIRE COUNTRY

The southwest monsoon Sunday covered the entire country six days before the normal date, as it advanced in the remaining parts of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, the India Meteorological Department said



of the day quote

CM, Assam has promised that peace will return to Manipur in a week. It will help if CM, Assam did not poke his nose into Manipur's conflict and stayed away
P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

During the previous UPA government at the Centre, Pakistan-based terrorists would often cross over to Indian territory and launch attacks. The people of the country now feel safe under Prime Minister Narendra Modi
AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

5,000 youths who register for the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme will be able to join the state government departments directly by July 15
PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

Drugs seized

Guwahati: Drugs worth nearly ₹12 crore were seized Sunday and three traffickers nabbed by police in Kamrup district, an officer said. Assam Police's Special Task Force (STF) Deputy Inspector General Partha Sarathi Mahanta said acting on a tip-off, the Kamrup district police led by Additional SP Kalyan Pathak launched an operation against trafficking of the consignment. "Three couriers were carrying the narcotics from Guwahati to Dhubri in an SUV during early hours. They intercepted the vehicle at Palasbari and seized 50 soap boxes containing as many packets of heroin, weighing 700 gm," Mahanta said.

Three killed

Mumbai: Three persons were killed when their car dashed the divider on the Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district Sunday, police said. The incident has occurred just a day after 25 people were charred to death when their bus caught fire on the expressway in Buldhana. The accident on Sunday took place on the expressway near Bhojode village in Kopergaon around 11.30 am, an official from Kopergaon police said. The driver lost control of the wheel and the car dashed the divider, killing all three passengers on the spot, the official said.

2 brothers drown

Farrukhabad (UP): Two minor brothers drowned after falling in a waterlogged pit in Nawabganj area here Sunday, police said. According to police sources, Arun (11) and his brother Anshul (9), residents of Salempur Tyori village, had gone to a brick kiln located some distance from the village Sunday afternoon. The duo fell into the water filled in a deep waterlogged pit and drowned.

Buffalo heads found in vehicle

New Delhi: Buffalo heads were found in an abandoned tempo near the Vinod Nagar depot in east Delhi's Ghazipur area, police said Sunday. The police Saturday afternoon received a PCR call about a tempo laden with animal flesh being abandoned near the depot. When a police team reached the spot, they found the buffalo heads and flesh in the tempo, a senior officer said. After inspection, the veterinary doctor declared the flesh to be of buffaloes, the officer said. A case has been registered under sections 293 (sale, etc, of obscene objects to young person) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of the Indian Penal Code, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Amrutha Guguloth said.

Yediyurappa leaves for Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 2: Senior BJP leader B S Yediyurappa Sunday left for New Delhi after being summoned by the party's top leadership amidst a delay in electing the Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly.

Though the BJP stalwart, who is the BJP parliamentary board member, expressed ignorance over the reason for the call, party sources said he has been summoned to decide on the candidates for the posts of leader of the opposition as well as the party's state chief.

"BJP National president J P Nadda has summoned me to New Delhi. I don't know what the subject is," Yediyurappa told reporters here. He said, "I will go there, talk to him and if possible, I will return by tonight because a massive protest by thousands has been planned for day-after-tomorrow. So I will try to return by tonight or tomorrow morning." Asked whether he has been called to New Delhi to discuss the appointment of LoP, Yediyurappa said he was not aware. "... After talking to him, I will get to know what is running in his mind. I don't have any clue why he has summoned me," the former CM said.

To a query about the lobbying in the party for the two top posts, Yediyurappa said only the national leaders would take a call on such matters. "Many people demand many things... Our national leaders will decide. Since he (Nadda) has called me, I will go there and talk to him," he added.

Regarding the BJP's agitation on Tuesday, Yediyurappa said a massive protest will be organised against the ruling Congress for its "failure" to fulfill its election promises. "It has been decided to protest the failure of the state government. Thousands of people will participate. I will also take part in it," he added.

With just one day left for the budget session of the assembly to start, the BJP is yet to finalise its leader of opposition. There is a stiff contest in the saffron party in the state for these two prime posts. There are many frontrunners for the role of opposition leader, sources in the BJP said.

Maha political upheaval: Oppn attacks BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: Opposition parties Sunday lashed out at the BJP after NCP leader Ajit Pawar and eight others were inducted into the Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government, saying the ruling party's "washing machine" has resumed its operations and it can no longer talk about fighting corruption as it has joined hands with tainted leaders.

Ajit Pawar, who split the NCP and took oath as the deputy chief minister of Maharashtra, said his party decided to join the BJP-Shiv Sena government for the development of the country and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Reacting to the development, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "Clearly the BJP's washing machine has resumed its operations. A number of new entrants into the BJP-led alliance in Maharashtra today had been facing serious corruption charges with ED, CBI and Income Tax authorities after them. Now they have all got a clean chit."

The Congress will intensify its efforts to free Maharashtra



A Nationalist Congress Party supporter defaces a banner showing Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar during a protest against him and other party leaders who joined the state cabinet, outside NCP office at Ballard Estate, in Mumbai

from the clutches of the BJP, Ramesh asserted. The Congress is part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance that also comprises Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar-led NCP.

"The oath-taking ceremony in Maharashtra was part of Operation Lotus and it has no official support of NCP. Those who took oath, it is their personal decision and not that of the NCP," Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said.

After inducting "corrupt men" as ministers, the BJP and Prime

and were jailed are now being sworn in as ministers!"

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav claimed that Maharashtra has emerged as a "bigger laboratory" for the BJP after Madhya Pradesh and the saffron party will do other "experiments" in the run-up to 2024 general elections to stay in power. "BJP does this from time to time, first they did this in Madhya Pradesh, and then in Maharashtra, but people are watching this," Yadav said in Lucknow.

AAP leader Atishi said that BJP has declared openly now that all the corrupt should come to its fold and get "cleaned off their sins in its washing machine". "After the opposition parties' meeting in Patna, they (BJP) are afraid, and that's why they want to break opposition parties," said DMK leader TKS Elangovan. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut claimed it was the beginning of the process of Eknath Shinde losing his chief minister's post. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said no words are enough to condemn the manner in which the BJP has repeatedly undermined the popular mandate in Maharashtra.

Minister Narendra Modi cannot talk about fighting corruption, senior TMC leader Babul Supriyo, who was earlier a minister in the Modi government and had switched from the BJP, said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha leader Priyanka Chaturvedi tweeted, "Principles be damned, BJP should be the last party in the country talking about ideological alliances. They are just political opportunists wanting power at any cost. With the latest development in Maharashtra, those MLAs who were corrupt



People who were killed in the bus fire tragedy, being cremated at Vaikunth Smashanbhumi, in Buldhana

Fresh violence in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 2: A Trinamool Congress (TMC) worker was killed and several other members of the ruling party and opposition outfits were injured in clashes in panchayat poll-bound West Bengal, police said.

A TMC worker, identified as 52-year-old Jiyarul Molla, was shot dead in Phulmalancha area in Basanti in South 24 Parganas district late on Saturday night while he was returning home, a police officer said. The man was taken to a local hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

A local Indian Secular Front (ISF) leader claimed that Molla, who was a close associate of TMC leader Amarul Laskar, was a victim of infighting within the ruling party. Molla's daughter



Manwara, who is a TMC candidate in Kathalberia gram panchayat, also alleged that her father had complained to the police about frequent threats from a rival faction which asked him to quit politics but the law enforcers did not take any action.

"I am a first-time candidate. My candidature is not liked by another local faction in the party. I demand a high-level probe into

the incident," she said. Local TMC MLA Saokat Molla said the police should probe the matter and take prompt action against whoever is responsible.

With the fresh death, 10 people have been killed so far in West Bengal in poll-related violence since the filing of nominations for the rural elections began on June 9, according to police reports

the incident," she said. Local TMC MLA Saokat Molla said the police should probe the matter and take prompt action against whoever is responsible.

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KCR's remote control with Modi: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khammam (Telangana), July 2: Launching a scathing attack on Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday said his remote control was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and described the state's ruling party as "BJP's B-Team" and its new nomenclature, BRS, as "BJP Rishtedar Samithi".

Rahul Gandhi alleged that the corruption charges against Rao and his party's leaders have made them subservient to the BJP, and asserted that he told all other opposition leaders that the Congress would not join any bloc where the BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) was involved.

Rahul Gandhi said the Congress has always stood against the BJP in Parliament, but Rao's party has been "BJP's B-team". "Prime Minister



BRS is like BJP Rishtedar Samithi. KCR thinks he is a king and Telangana is his kingdom
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Narendra Modi carries the remote control of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao," the former Congress chief said.

He said the Congress recently fought the assembly

election in Karnataka against "a corrupt and anti-poor government and we defeated them with the support of the poor, OBCs, minorities and oppressed in the state".

"Something similar is going to happen in Telangana. On one side there would be rich and powerful of the state and on the other side, there would be poor, tribals, minorities, farmers and small shopkeepers with us. What has happened in Karnataka, would be repeated in Telangana," Rahul Gandhi said.

The Congress leader said earlier it was said that there was a three-way fight between the TRS (Telangana Rashtra Samithi which is now BRS), the Congress and the BJP in Telangana. "But the BJP does not exist at all in Telangana. Their all four tyres have got punctured. Now it is a fight between Congress and B-Team of BJP," he said.



Govt not keen to test UCC waters before polls

The Modi government may have asked the Law Commission to look into the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) issue and the Commission has also moved with lightning speed to solicit views of all stakeholders in a month's time. But there is no prospect of a UCC bill being passed in the Monsoon

session of Parliament. The reason for going at a slower pace is that PM Modi has a tight agenda on his plate. The government is not inclined to test the UCC waters before the Assembly elections in five states due in November-December. The UCC affects not only Muslims but also 11 crore strong tribal population as well.

Is Kamraj plan in works in PMO?

Is Kamraj plan in works before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls? The BJP leadership is worried over its dwindling performance in Himachal and Karnataka polls and the going is tough in three of the five states. Except for Mizoram and Rajasthan, the BJP is facing its Waterloo in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and

Telangana. Even in Rajasthan, if Vasundhara Raje Scindia is not given her due, the BJP will have a very tough time. The Kamraj plan, held in the Nehru era resulted in all senior ministers being sent to the party and new faces were brought into the Cabinet. It was a daring move. It transpired that PM Modi told BJP president J P Nadda to present an action plan to win all five states and obtain more than 300 Lok Sabha seats in 2024. Accordingly, it is believed that many senior leaders will be sent back to the party to strengthen it and new faces may be brought in. The BJP leadership believes that Opposition unity may finally take off and the party has to gear up accordingly. A few of the allies waiting in wings like Chirag Paswan, Shiv Sena (Shinde) and others may be inducted. West Bengal may also be given representation.

EC in a dilemma

The Election Commission of India continues to be in a dilemma over holding a by-poll for five Lok Sabha seats in four states due to many reasons. These seats are Ghazipur (UP), Pune and Chandrapur (Maharashtra), Wayanad (Kerala) and Ambala (Haryana). With the Parliamentary polls just 11 months away, there is a view that no useful purpose will be served by holding a by-poll for now. Secondly, Section 151-A of the Representation of People Act, a by-poll for filling a vacancy to the Lok Sabha shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy, if the remainder of the term of the MP is not less than a year. The EC, however, can sidestep the statutory requirement if the commission, in consultation with the Central government, certifies that it is difficult to hold the by-poll within the stipulated period.

Ministers learning Hindi fast

For the past few months, the BJP leadership has been focusing on maximum use of Hindi. The Prime Minister, Home Minister Amit Shah and other ministers use Hindi as their language for communication with the people. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been trying her hand in reading Hindi text and trying her best to speak in Hindi whenever addressing the audience inside or outside the Parliament. In fact, she had started doing this ever since she joined the BJP in 2008 and was promoted as official spokesperson of the party. To the surprise of political watchers, the latest to join the group of ministers is External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar who is speaking in Hindi during public discourse. To the surprise of the diplomatic fraternity, Jaishankar has learnt the Hindi lessons rather fast.

international



China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and increasingly the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do so
WILLIAM BURNS | DIRECTOR, CIA

INDIANS FLOCKING TO NEPAL

Nearly 1,68,000 Indian tourists visited Nepal by air during the first six months of 2023, registering a significant increase in their number compared to 97,313 visitors during the same period last year. According to the Nepal Tourism Board, the Himalayan nation received a total of 4,76,481 foreign tourists by air in the first six months of 2023



of the day quote

Now is not the time to forget Haiti or weaken our solidarity with its people



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

The Unification Ministry has been acting like the ministry of North Korea aid and it is wrong. It's time for the unification ministry to change



YOON SUK YEOL | PRESIDENT, SOUTH KOREA

Due to the tense situation on the border with Belarus I have decided to bolster our forces with 500 Polish police officers from preventive and counter-terrorism units



MARIUSZ KAMINSKI | MINISTER OF INTERIOR, POLAND

SHORT TAKES

Trump starts rallies

Pickens: Former President Donald Trump Saturday marked a return to the large-scale rallies of his previous presidential campaigns, speaking to thousands gathered in the streets of a small South Carolina city on a blazing day ahead of the July 4 holiday. "There's nowhere else I'd rather be to kick off the Fourth of July weekend than right here on Main St, with thousands of hardworking South Carolina patriots who believe in God, family and country," Trump said to a roaring crowd standing on asphalt as temperatures climbed into the 90s. It wasn't immediately clear how many people had gathered in the streets of downtown Pickens, a small city in South Carolina's conservative Upstate of around 3,400 residents. Law enforcement officials told some media outlets that around 15,000 people had gathered by 11 am, two hours before Trump's remarks.

More jets for Israel

Jerusalem: Israel has approved the purchase of a third squadron of F-35 stealth fighter jets in a deal worth \$3 billion, the Ministry of Defense said Sunday. The additional 25 aircraft manufactured by Lockheed Martin will bring the number of F-35s in Israel's air force to 75, the ministry said, adding that the deal will be financed through the defense aid package Israel receives from the United States. Israel was the first country outside the United States to acquire the F-35. In May 2018 its air force chief said that Israel was the first to use the plane in combat. The F-35 is also known as the Joint Strike Fighter and in Israel by its Hebrew name "Adir" (Mighty). Lockheed Martin and engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney have agreed to involve Israeli defense companies in the production of aircraft components, the Israeli ministry added.

TTP chief arrested

Lahore: Pakistan police Sunday arrested a senior commander of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and thwarted a terror attack on law enforcement agencies in Multan of Punjab province. Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab Police said that they received a tip-off that a top TTP commander was present in Multan following which a joint operation of the CTD, police and an intelligence agency was launched. "During the operation, the raiding team surrounded the whereabouts of the terrorist in Multan and arrested him. He has been identified as Kamal and shifted to an unidentified location for interrogation," the CTD said. It said Kamal was an "important commander" of TTP in south Punjab who was in charge of the outfit's operations in the region.

337th mass shooting in US this year

In yet another tragic incident in US, 2 people were shot dead while 28 were left wounded

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, July 2: At least two people were killed and 28 wounded in a mass shooting early Sunday in the US city of Baltimore, police said.

Police received multiple calls about a shooting just after 12:30 am Sunday at a street party in the city's Brooklyn neighborhood in Maryland state, Acting Police Commissioner Rich Worley said during a press conference. "Upon officers' arrival we located multiple victims suffer-

ing from gunshot wounds," Worley said.

One 18-year-old woman was found dead at the scene, with a 20-year-old male victim also confirmed to have been killed, a police statement said.

The wounded victims were being treated at area hospitals, he added, with three of them in critical condition.

Worley said authorities were working to identify a suspect and determine a motive for the shooting. "This is an extensive crime scene, our detectives are going to



With more firearms than inhabitants, the US has the highest rate of gun deaths of any developed country -- at least 44,357 in 2022, including 24,090 suicides

be here quite a while," he said.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott, speaking to reporters at the crime scene, condemned the shooting. "This is an absolute tragedy that did not have to happen," he said.

Sunday's mass shooting was at least the 337th to occur this year,

according to the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a "mass shooting" as a gun-related incident in which four or more people are wounded or killed.

The violence comes as federal prosecutors in Baltimore this week touted their efforts to reduce violent crime in the city.

Russia launches first drone strike on Kyiv in 12 days

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, July 2: After a relative lull, Russia launched a drone attack early Sunday on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, officials said. It was the first such attack of the war in 12 days.

All of the Iranian-made Shahed exploding drones were detected and shot down, according to Serhii Popko, the head of the Kyiv city administration.

In addition to the city itself, the surrounding Kyiv region was targeted. Kyiv regional Gov Ruslan Kravchenko reported that one person was wounded by falling debris from a destroyed drone.

Officials in the Ukrainian capital didn't provide an exact number of drones that attacked the city. But Ukraine's air force said that across the country, eight Shaheds and three Kalibr cruise missiles were launched by the Russians.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's military reported that the most intense fighting continued in Ukraine's industrial east, with attacks focused around Bakhmut, Marinka and Lyman in the country's Donetsk province, where 46 combat clashes took place.

In its regular update Sunday morning, the General Staff said that over the previous 24 hours, Russia had carried out 27 airstrikes, one missile strike and around 80 attacks from multiple rocket launchers, targeting regions in the country.

FRANCE PROTESTS Riots dim on 5th night

The crisis is a new challenge to President Emmanuel Macron's leadership and exposed deep-seated discontent in low-income neighborhoods over discrimination and lack of opportunity

REUTERS

Paris, July 2: Rioting across France was less intense overnight, as tens of thousands of police were deployed in cities across the country after the funeral of a teenager, whose shooting by police has sparked nationwide unrest, the interior ministry said Sunday.

The government poured 45,000 police onto the streets to head off a fifth night of violence after the funeral of Nahel, a 17-year-old of Algerian and Moroccan parents, who was shot by a police officer during a traffic stop Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre.

Since then rioters have torched cars and public transport and looted stores, but also targeted town halls, police stations and schools - buildings that represent the French state.

The interior ministry said 719 people were arrested on Saturday night, fewer than the 1,311 the previous night and 875 on Thursday night.

"Forty-five thousand police officers and thousands of firefighters have been mobilised to enforce order. Their action ...



Arrests lower by half Saturday night versus Friday
Mourners held funeral for teenager shot by police
Macron postpones visit to Germany due to unrest

made for a quieter night," the ministry said on its Twitter account.

The biggest flashpoint overnight was Marseille, where police fired teargas and fought street battles with youths around the city centre late into the night.

China, along with some Western nations, has warned its citizens to be vigilant due to the unrest, which could pose a significant challenge for France in the peak summer tourist season if it were to escalate around city centre landmarks.

China's Consulate General lodged a formal complaint to France after a bus carrying a Chinese tour group had its windows smashed in Thursday, lead-



Participants entertain the crowd during a Canada Day parade in Montreal, July 1

PTI/PHOTO

Euclid lifts off to unravel universe's dark mysteries

Scientists hope Euclid space telescope's data will help them learn more about the evolution of galaxies, black holes and more

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, July 2: Europe's Euclid space telescope blasted off Saturday, kicking off a first-ever mission to shed light on two of the universe's greatest mysteries: dark energy and dark matter.

"I can tell you, I'm so thrilled, I'm so excited to see this mission up in space," European Space Agency (ESA) Director General Josef Aschbacher said after the launch.

The telescope successfully took off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. Shortly after, once separated from the rocket, it emit-

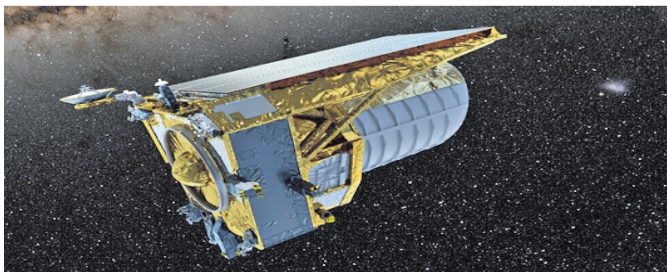
ted its first signal, as scheduled.

The ESA was forced to turn to billionaire Elon Musk's firm to launch the mission after Russia pulled its Soyuz rockets in response to sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

After a month-long trip through space, Euclid will join the James Webb telescope at a stable hovering spot around 1.5 million kilometers (more than 930,000 miles) from Earth called the second Lagrange Point.

From there, Euclid will chart the largest-ever map of the universe, encompassing up to two billion galaxies across more than a third of the sky.

By capturing light that has



taken 10 billion years to reach Earth's vicinity, the map will also offer a new view of the 13.8-billion-year-old universe's history.

'Cosmic embarrassment'

Scientists hope to use information gathered by Euclid to address what project manager Giuseppe Racca calls a "cosmic embarrassment": that 95 percent of the universe remains unknown to humanity.

Around 70 percent is thought to be made of dark energy, the

name given to the unknown force that is causing the universe to expand at an accelerated rate. And 25 percent is dark matter, thought to bind the universe together and make up around 80 percent of its mass.

"Ever since we could see stars we've wondered, is the universe infinite? What is it made out of? How does it work?" NASA Euclid project scientist Michael Seiffert told AFP. "It's just absolutely amazing that we can

RELIGIOUS HATRED

Measures needed to prevent Koran desecration: OIC

A man tore up and burned a Koran outside Stockholm's central mosque Wednesday, the first day of the Muslim Eid al-Adha holidays

REUTERS

Cairo, July 2: An Islamic grouping of 57 states said Sunday collective measures are needed to prevent acts of desecration to the Koran and international law should be used to stop religious hatred after the holy book was burned in a protest in Sweden.

The statement by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, most of whose members have a Muslim-majority population, was issued after an extraordinary meeting in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah called to discuss Wednesday's incident.

"We must send constant reminders to the international community regarding the urgent application of international law, which clearly prohibits any advocacy of religious hatred," OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha said.

A man tore up and burned a Koran outside Stockholm's central mosque Wednesday, the first day of the Muslim Eid al-Adha holidays. The act angered OIC member Turkey whose backing Sweden needs to gain entry to the NATO military alliance.

Swedish police had granted permission for a protest to take place. But after the burning, police charged the man who carried it out with agitation against an ethnic or national group. In a newspaper interview, he de-

We must send constant reminders to the international community regarding the urgent application of international law, which clearly prohibits any advocacy of religious hatred

HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHA | SECRETARY-GENERAL, OIC

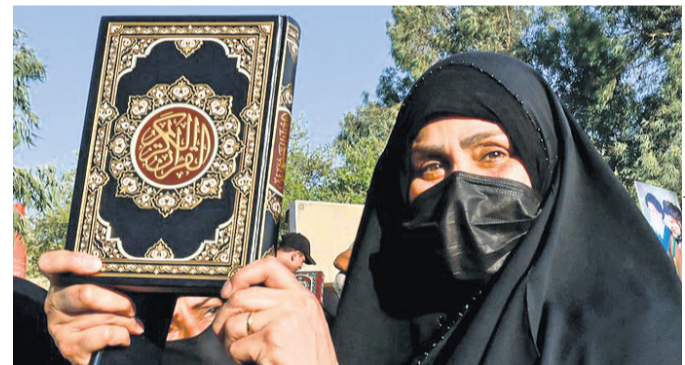
scribed himself as an Iraqi refugee seeking to ban it.

The incident has triggered large protests in Baghdad in front of the Swedish Embassy. It has also been condemned by the United States.

Turkey in late January suspended talks with Sweden on its NATO application after a Danish far-right politician burned a copy of the Koran near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm.

While Swedish police have rejected several recent applications for anti-Koran demonstrations, courts have overruled those decisions, saying they infringed freedom of speech.

In its permit for Wednesday's demonstration, Swedish police said that while it "may have foreign policy consequences", the security risks and consequences linked to a Koran burning were not of such a nature that the application should be rejected.



CRACKDOWN ON STIRS UK cops get new expanded powers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 2: New and expanded powers for British police took effect Sunday, including measures targeting activists who stop traffic and major building works with protests.

Authorities have repeatedly condemned environmental protest groups, including Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion, which have sought to raise awareness about the urgency of climate change by staging multiple high-profile protests at the busiest highways and roads. Their protests in recent years often caused serious disruption for motorists.

From Sunday, police will have



powers to move static protests. Critics have argued the toughened laws are a threat to the right to protest, but UK officials say the measures were to stop "disruption from a selfish minority."

"The public have had enough of their lives being disrupted by selfish protesters. The mayhem we've seen on our streets has

been a scandal," Home Secretary Suella Braverman said.

Authorities say that under the new Public Order Act, protesters found guilty of "tunnelling" — or digging underground tunnels to obstruct the building of new infrastructure works — could face three years in prison.

Anyone found guilty of obstructing a major transportation project could be jailed for up to six months.

Hundreds of protesters were arrested last year in the UK for blocking major roads and bridges. Many activists protested by sitting in the middle of the roads or gluing themselves to the roadway to make them harder to move.

take data and actually start to make even a little bit of progress on some of these questions."

'Dark detective'

Euclid consortium member Guadalupe Canas told a press conference ahead of the launch that the space telescope was a "dark detective" which can reveal more about both elements.

Euclid, which is 4.7 meters (15 feet) tall and 3.5 meters wide, will use two scientific instruments to map the sky. Its visible light camera will let it measure the shape of galaxies, while its near-infrared spectrometer and

Beyond dark energy and matter, Euclid's map of the universe is expected to be a gold mine for the whole field of astronomy

YANNICK MELLIER | HEAD OF THE EUCLID CONSORTIUM

photometer will allow it to measure how far away they are.

So how will Euclid try to spot things that cannot be seen? By searching for their absence.

The light coming from billions of light years away is slightly distorted by the mass of visible and dark matter along the way, a phenomenon known as weak gravitational lensing.

"By subtracting the visible matter, we can calculate the presence of the dark matter which is inbetween," scientists said.

While this may not reveal the true nature of dark matter, scientists hope it will throw up new clues that will help track it down in the future.

The first images are expected once operations start in October, with major data releases planned for 2025, 2027 and 2030.

of the day quote

We are trying to see how we can tighten the system further. We have been using OTP-based authentication earlier. Now, we are going to go in for biometric authentication also

We are evaluating the voluntary carbon credits market. There are only two markets at this time. There are about 26 million voluntary carbon credits available in India as of today, which can be monetized

Our focus is on enhancing diversity, especially on the shop floor and 25 per cent of all our new recruits are women

SHORT TAKES

GQG ups stake in two Adani firms

New Delhi: US-based boutique investment firm GQG Partners has ramped up its shareholding in two Adani group companies to more than 5 per cent in signs of its confidence in the group despite the damning report of a US short seller. On June 28, GQG bought \$1 billion (Rs 8,265 crore) worth of additional stakes in the group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd and renewable energy firm Adani Green Energy Ltd. The stake sale in Adani Enterprise was through one block deal, where GQG bought 1.79 crore, or 1.58 per cent, more shares to take its holding to 6.15 crore shares or 5.4 per cent of the total, according to stock exchange filings. A separate filing showed that billionaire Gautam Adani and his brother Rajesh S Adani had sold the shares of the promoter family. This has reduced the Adani family's stake in Adani Enterprises to 67.65 per cent from 69.23 per cent previously.

BoB to divest up to 49% in its arm

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) plans to sell up to 49 per cent stake in credit card business arm BOB Financial Solutions Ltd. Currently, it is 100 per cent owned by BoB. The bank has floated a Request for Proposal for roping in a strategic investor, and the process is expected to complete in one year, a senior bank official said. BOB intends to offload up to 49 per cent in a combination of primary and secondary capital from one or multiple investors to create more value in BOB Financial Solutions and take it to the next level of growth, the official said. BOB Financial doubled the acquisition of new credit cards in FY23 by issuing close to 1.2 million credit cards compared to 0.5 million a year ago.

Indian Bank starts digital services

Chennai: Public sector lender Indian Bank has unveiled new services under its digital transformation initiative -- Project WAVE -- the bank said Sunday. Accordingly, the city-headquartered bank in collaboration with National E-Governance Services Ltd, has introduced an electronic bank guarantee service to ease traditional paper-based processes. This move will also reduce the turn-around time of the bank guarantee issuance and delivery to the beneficiary from an industry average of 3-4 working days to a few minutes, it said. Besides, it would replace the need for physical stamp paper and physical signatures of customers by replacing them with digital stamping and e-signing making the entire process digital.

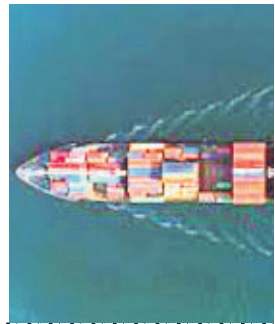


There is huge scope for collaboration between New Delhi and Taipei in areas of emerging and critical technologies including manufacturing of semiconductors and electronics equipment

KAO SHIEN-QUEY | DEPUTY MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TAIWAN

FALLING SHIPMENTS: EXPORTERS MEET TODAY

The commerce ministry has called a meeting of exporters Monday to take stock of the situation, as the country's outbound shipments have been contracting for the last four months, an official said. Exports declined for the fourth-consecutive month by 10.3 per cent year-on-year to \$34.98 billion in May, while the trade deficit widened to a five-month high of \$22.12 billion



Banks' NIM jumps to 3.3%

ON A CUMULATIVE BASIS SINCE MAY 2022, RBI HAS INCREASED THE REPO RATE BY 250 BPS TO 6.5% IN FY23, WHICH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AN INCREASE IN INTEREST RATES IN THE DEBT MARKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 2: Banks' net interest margin (NIM), a key profitability gauge, grew 46 basis points to 3.3 per cent in the January-March quarter, driven by slower deposit rate resetting, an analysis showed.

This has helped lenders register a 29.5 per cent increase in their net interest income during the period, according to an analysis of the banks' balance sheets by Care Ratings.

Net interest income or NII, which is the money that banks earn from lending and paying to depositors, rose to ₹1.83 lakh crore in Q4FY23 due to healthy loan growth and a higher yield on advances against the year-ago period, it said.

The NIM saw an year-on-year improvement of 46 basis points (bps) to 3.3 per cent in the fourth quarter due to the faster repricing of loans, while deposit rates have not yet reflected the increased interest rates.

The anticipated rise in deposit rates, which is expected to be a lag effect, is likely to be counterbalanced by the withdrawal of the ₹2,000 banknotes in May this year, it added.

The NIM of private sector lenders stood at 4.03 per cent, which was more than 43 bps,



- Net interest income rose to ₹1.83 lakh crore in Q4FY23
- Private banks' deposits surge to ₹62.2 lakh crore
- Public sector banks saw growth to ₹117.1 lakh crore

and that of public sector lenders at 2.85 per cent, up 46 bps.

Despite rising interest rates on loans, the overall economic growth led to higher credit demand leading to banks reporting a robust 17.3 per cent rise in advances mainly driven by personal loans, NBFs, and MSMEs, taking the full year credit off-take to 15 per cent in FY23.

Significantly, private sector banks as well as public sector ones logged in equal pace of loan

growth during the reporting period. But public sector banks reported a higher NII growth of 31.6 per cent against 28.2 per cent rise recorded by their private sector peers.

On the other hand, interest income rose 32.1 per cent overall led by private sector lenders which reported a 32.6 per cent growth. Their state-owned peers registered a 31.7 per cent growth in the interest income during the quarter. This was based on an increase in advances by 17.3 per cent and 130 bps higher yields from 7.5 per cent in Q4FY22 to 8.8 per cent in Q4FY23.

Interest expenses rose by 34.3 per cent with private banks witnessing a 37.5 per cent growth and the state-owned lenders registering a much lower 32.6 per

Share of housing loans in total advances rises to 14.2% in 11 years: RBI

In addition to rising sales, new launches also maintained healthy growth, reflecting strength in demand by end-users

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 2: The share of residential housing loans in total advances has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, as per the Reserve Bank's latest Financial Stability Report (FSR).

It also said the housing sector is witnessing a healthy growth with sales growing by 21.6 per cent in the fourth quarter (January-March) of 2022-23.

The share of residential housing loans in total loans has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, the report said.

During this period, the share of commercial real estate (CRE) in total loans has hovered between 2.0-2.9 per cent.

"Total exposure of the banking system to real estate stood at 16.5 per cent of total loans in March 2023. Given the secured nature of these loans and loan to value (LTV) ratio regulations,



loan defaults remain less than 2 per cent," it said.

According to an RBI data, housing (including priority sector housing) loan outstanding in March 2023 was ₹19,36,428 crore, up 15 per cent year-on-year. The FSR further said the all-India house price index (HPI) recorded its highest increase over the last seventeen quarters (4.6 per cent y-o-y) in the fourth quarter of 2022-23.

On a sequential (q-o-q) basis, HPI has been rising over the last one year and inched up further by 0.6 per cent during January-March.

It also said that during the fourth quarter of 2022-23, house sales grew by 21.6 per cent and new launches also maintained healthy growth, reflecting strength in demand by end-users as well as investors.

The rise in unsold inventory resulted in an uptick in the inventory overhang in January-March of 2022-23, it said.

MONSOON SETS IN

Diesel sales fall in June

Petrol and diesel sales have been on the rise since the second half of March on the back of a pick-up in industrial and agriculture activity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: Diesel sales dropped in June as the arrival of monsoon cut demand in the agri sector and reduced vehicular movement, preliminary industry data showed.

Demand for diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country -- accounting for about two-fifths of the total demand, fell 3.7 per cent to 7.1 million tonne in June compared to the year-ago period.

Diesel sales had soared 6.7 per cent and 9.3 per cent in April and May, respectively, as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat summer heat.

Month-on-month sales were almost flat compared to 7.09 million tonne of diesel consumed in May.

Petrol sales, however, rose 3.4 per cent to 2.9 million tonne in June 2023 compared to the year-ago period. Sales were unchanged month-on-month, the data showed.

Petrol and diesel sales have



been on the rise since the second half of March on the back of a pick-up in industrial and agriculture activity. But the arrival of monsoon has cooled temperatures and reduced demand for running diesel gensets to irrigate fields and cut down consumption in tractors and trucks in the first half of June.

Petrol consumption during June was 33.5 per cent more than Covid-marred June 2021 and 20.6 per cent more than pre-pandemic June 2019. Diesel consumption was up 30 per cent over June 2021 and 6.5 per cent higher than in June 2019.

With the aviation sector booming with summer travellers, jet fuel (ATF) demand soared 6 per cent to 587,300 tonne in June compared to the same period last year. It was 140 per cent higher than in June 2021 but 4.6 per cent lower than pre-Covid

June 2019.

Month-on-month sales fell 2.4 per cent against 6,02,000 tonne in May 2023.

The Indian economy has gained pace with a pick-up in government and private capital spending. Manufacturing too has picked up, while the services sector has been robust.

The country's oil demand during the last few months was supported by strong industrial activity, industry officials said.

Cooking gas LPG sales were down 0.8 per cent year-on-year to 2.27 million tonnes in June. LPG consumption was almost flat compared to June 2021 and 28.5 per cent more than pre-Covid June 2019.

Month-on-month, the demand fell 3.4 per cent compared to 2.36 million tonnes of LPG consumption during May, the data showed.

DATA SCRAPING

Musk limits reading posts on Twitter

REUTERS

Washington, July 2: Twitter is limiting how many tweets per day various accounts can read, to discourage "extreme levels" of data scraping and system manipulation, Executive Chair Elon Musk said in a post on the social media platform Saturday.

Verified accounts are temporarily limited to reading 6,000 posts a day, Elon Musk said, adding that the unverified accounts will be limited to 600 posts a day with new unverified accounts limited to 300.

The temporary reading limitation will be increasing soon to 8,000 posts per day for verified users, 800 posts per day for unverified and 400 posts per day for new unverified users, Elon Musk said in a separate post on Twitter without providing further details on when it would be implemented.

Elon Musk had earlier expressed displeasure with artificial intelligence firms like OpenAI, the owner of ChatGPT, for using Twitter's data to train their large language models.

The social media platform had previously taken a number of steps to win back advertisers who left Twitter under Musk's ownership and to boost subscription revenue by making verification check marks a part of the Twitter Blue program.

What is cashless claims settlement in motor insurance?

Motor insurance is probably one of the best ways to protect yourself from a financial loss that may arise if anything happens to your prized possession. If you have a motor insurance policy, then you know that an accident or any sort of damage to your vehicle will not likely mark a dent in your pocket since your policy will be there to shield you. This comfort stems from the fact that in case of an accident, your policy will trigger and you can file a claim, and this makes the moment of claim a very crucial aspect for you. In motor insurance, there are predominantly two kinds of claims, reimbursement and cashless; while both serve the purpose of insurance by offering financial protection, cashless claim settlement is much smoother.

So, what is cashless claims

settlement? As you would have guessed by the name, in cashless claims, you don't have to bear the repair cost from your pocket upfront, rather the insurance company will directly settle the bill with the garage. So far the motor insurance policy covers the loss and the claim is well within the policy purview, you won't have to bear anything.

Process for cashless claims settlement: It is always ideal to inform the insurance company about the damage or the accident, who can guide you to their nearest network garage where you can enjoy hassle-free claims experience. You can intimate the insurer through their app or toll-free number. You can then drive or tow your car to the nearest network garage depending on the condition of the vehicle. Many insurance com-

panies help you tow your vehicle too, subject to certain charges or coverages as per the policy terms. An appointed surveyor will visit the garage, as per a fixed time, will inspect the vehicle and will make a preliminary assessment of the cost of repair. Post which the repair work will commence. Once the repair work is complete, the surveyor will visit the workshop for re-inspection, he will look at the final repair bill and will share the measure of liability with you. You can simply pay your part of the bill and drive out of the garage. You must keep in mind the deductibles in the policy, and also look if there are any voluntary deductibles; since you will have to bear the deductible cost as per the policy terms. Have a look at the coverage to understand what is covered and what you

may have to bear. Do check if you have zero depreciation cover, as it will impact your liability payable to the garage.

You will be amazed to know that apart from the cashless settlement, today the industry offers on-the-spot claims settlement too. For small damages up to a certain amount, you can do a self-inspection, upload the photographs of the damaged parts on the app of the insurer and get the claim settled in a few minutes. Then you are free to get your vehicle repaired from a garage of your choice.

Why it is better to go to network garages? Firstly please note, the facility of cashless claims settlement is available only in network garages.

Secondly, the quality of parts and quality of repair work is quite good. The quality check in terms of the overall work and services of the garage is already taken care by the insurer before they tie up with them.

Overall, cashless claims settlement makes the entire process quite seamless and saves you the trouble of arranging a large sum in case of an unfortunate event. So the next time when you find yourself in a situation where you need to raise a motor insurance claim, simply go to a network garage and enjoy a hassle-free claims experience.



TA RAMALINGAM, CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE

HIL set for grand return

HOCKEY INDIA PLANNING TO HAVE WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT TO PROMOTE THE GAME



The Kalinga Lancers were the last winners of the Hockey India League title when the tournament was last played in 2017

New Delhi, July 2: The much-anticipated Hockey India League (HIL) is set to return in a new avatar next year or in early 2025 with Hockey India (HI) setting its sight on reviving the franchise-based league after a hiatus of seven years.

The HIL, which was suspended in 2017 due to financial issues and non-cooperation from team owners, is expected to be held after the Paris Olympics and will feature an event for the women for the first time. The new HI body under Olympian Dilip Tirkey plans to rejuvenate the hockey scenario in the country by providing exposure to budding players through the HIL. HI has requested the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for a window

HI SUPPORT FOR ALL STATE UNITS

New Delhi: Hockey India announced Sunday financial assistance to its district and state units with an aim to improve the standard of tournaments held at the grass-root level. As part of its commitment towards promoting the sport, the national federation has disbursed a grant of Rs 2 lakh each to all of its state member units. "This initial grant will aid the district units in meeting their deliverables and complying with the necessary guidelines," HI said in a statement. In addition to the initial grant, HI will further sanction Rs 1 lakh each to respective state member units upon successful completion of the compliance by their respective district units.

to conduct the tournament next year and is awaiting a response from the world body.

"We haven't got any window as yet but we have asked FIH for a window. The time may be in December next year or January in 2025," Tirkey said Sunday. "We are still waiting for official communication from FIH. We are planning to conduct the HIL for both men and women this time. Earlier it used

to be just for men but we want our women players to get the exposure too," the former Olympian added.

As per HI's plans, the revamped HIL will have eight men and four women's teams. "In men there would be eight teams, while in women there would be four teams," Tirkey informed. "We are working on a war footing to revive the HIL," he added. Tirkey said that the HIL is im-

portant as it will help youngsters to gain experience "HIL will provide exposure to young players of the country. It's a big platform for them because all the top players of the world would participate in it. They will gain valuable experience by rubbing shoulders with the best of world hockey," informed Tirkey. It has been learnt that HI is scheduled to hold a meeting with all the stakeholders of the game, including its commercial partners July 5 here to decide the future course of action about the league. The HIL, founded in 2013, was played between six teams, with the regular season lasting two months from January to February, with each team playing 10 games. The last champion of the HIL was Kalinga Lancers, who won the tournament in 2017.

SERBIAN KEEN TO CONTINUE HIS DOMINANCE ON WIMBLEDON COURTS Djokovic eyes Federer's record

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, July 2: Wimbledon 2023, the third Grand Slam of the season, is drawing near; the grass courts are freshly-cut, the all-white kits are ready to be donned, and more importantly, some new tennis records are waiting to be hit. Novak Djokovic, at the age of 36, has made his intentions clear – playing for the record books.

The Serbian legend has Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon titles as well as a 24th major in his sights as he closes in on a first calendar Grand Slam in 54 years. Djokovic won his 23rd Grand Slam earlier last month at Roland Garros. A 24th would

quarter of the draw but the No 30 seed must first get past a tricky opener against Belgian wildcard David Goffin.

However, the biggest obstacle in Djokovic's path will be Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz. After capturing a maiden grass-court title in Queens last week, the World No 1 Alcaraz will be looking to carry that confidence on the surface into Wimbledon, where he reached the fourth round 12 months ago. However, many grass court specialists lie in his side of the draw. Among them French veteran Jeremy Chardy, Alex de Minaur, Alexander Zverev and Danish No 6 seed Holger Rune. If Alcaraz gets past them, he will have

competition, World No.1 and four-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek will strive for her maiden Wimbledon crown by facing the highest-ranked unseeded player in the draw, China's world No 33 Zhu Lin. A year ago Swiatek arrived as French Open champion, too, but was bundled out in the third round.

The 22-year-old Pole has No 7 seed Coco Gauff and No 11 seed Daria Kasatkina as possible quarterfinal rivals, while No 4 seed Jessica Pegula and No 5 seed Caroline Garcia could face Swiatek in the semis.



I still feel hungry for success, for more grand Slams, for more achievements in tennis. As long as this drive is there, I will be able to compete at the highest level

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

help him tie the record with Margaret Court, reports Xinhua.

The second seed and defending champion will open his campaign against Argentina's Pedro Cachin, with the first dangerous obstacle in his path possibly coming in the fourth round against former semifinalist and No 17 seed Hubert Hurkacz or Italian No 14 seed Lorenzo Musetti.

Australia's mercurial Nick Kyrgios, the man Djokovic beat in last year's title decider at Wimbledon, is also in the Serb's

to take on either No 3 seed Daniil Medvedev or No 5 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the semis. In the women's

SHORT TAKES

Maiden ATP title for India's Bhambri



Mallorca (Spain): Indian tennis player Yuki Bhambri clinched his first ATP Tour title after winning the Mallorca Open 2023 men's doubles final with his South African partner Lloyd Harris, here Saturday. The Indian-South African duo defeated the Dutch-Austrian pair of Robin Haase and Philipp Oswald 6-3, 6-4 in the ATP 250 final. Bhambri and Harris did not lose a single set in the tournament. "Definitely a lot of fun. We went in with no expectations I think this week. We just enjoyed playing, took it match by match and had a great tournament. It's a great city, a great place and I really enjoyed playing here," the 30-year-old Bhambri said.

Chennaiyin recruit two new defenders

Chennai: ISL team Chennaiyin FC (CFC) has roped in defenders Ankit Mukherjee and Bijay Chhetri on multi-year deals to bolster their defence ahead of the upcoming season. Mukherjee, who plays right-back, has one goal from 38 ISL appearances, joins CFC from East Bengal FC. The 26-year-old's experience and ability to read the game well will play a crucial role in bringing stability to the defence. Hailing from Manipur, 21-year-old Chhetri has been handed his major ISL contract by Chennaiyin FC. The promising centre-back previously played for local club Chennai City FC, showcasing exceptional defensive abilities and composure.

Dipa to compete

New Delhi: Gymnast Dipa Karmakar will return to action following a 21-month ban for failing dope test when she competes at the Asian Games selection trials in Bhubaneswar, July 11 and 12. The 29-year-old from Tripura has been named in the list of core probables by the Gymnastic Federation of India. "It is confirmed I will be participating in the trials," Dipa stated Sunday.

STOKE CENTURY IN VAIN

Australia beat England by 43 runs to go 2-0 up in Ashes series

AGENCIES

London, July 2: Despite a brilliant century by England skipper Ben Stokes (155, 214b, 9x4, 9x6), Australia managed to defeat their arch rivals by 43 runs at the Lord's here Sunday and go 2-0 up in the five-match series. It will now need a Herculean effort by England, if they are to make a comeback in the series. The Australians held their nerves, despite the assault by Stokes and in the end it paid off.

When Jonny Bairstow (10) was 'controversially' run out by Australian keeper Alex Carey, it looked like Australia would romp home quite easily. However, with the score at 193 for six and the tail only to come, Stokes launched a murderous assault on the opposition bowlers. Till then, he had played a subdued knock, but with the dismissal of Bairstow he decided to take the game to the Aussies. One Cameron Green over went



Ben Stokes acknowledges the applause after reaching his century during the game against Australia at Lord's, Sunday

for 23 runs as Stokes launched the attack. The England skipper put on 108 runs for the seventh wicket with Stuart Broad and the latter's contribution was only 11. Stokes literally toyed with the Australian attack till the time Josh Hazlewood (3/80) dismissed him with Carey taking an important catch behind the stumps. A chase that was moving at a serene pace erupted when

Bairstow got himself stumped attack. The England skipper put on 108 runs for the seventh wicket with Stuart Broad and the latter's contribution was only 11. Stokes literally toyed with the Australian attack till the time Josh Hazlewood (3/80) dismissed him with Carey taking an important catch behind the stumps. A chase that was moving at a serene pace erupted when

umpire, who didn't hesitate to say he was stumped. England's tail was exposed, still needing 178 more runs.

Despite Bairstow's brain fade, Stokes expressed his anger to the on-field umpires, and large parts of Lord's blamed the Australians in chants. One was, 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, cheat, cheat, cheat'. As prim and proper Lord's turned into the Colosseum, Stokes, the last recognised batter, switched into beast mode. But ultimately, he even failed to achieve the impossible.

"Yes definitely Stokes gave us a bit of scare," Aussie skipper Pat Cummins said after the game. "However, we never lost our cool and backed our strengths. The absence of Nathan (Lyon) was definitely a big blow to us, but the others contributed," he added. **BRIEF SCORES:** Australia 416 and 279 beat England 325 and 327 (Ben Stokes 155, Ben Duckett 83, Pat Cummins 3/69, Mitchell Starc 3/79) by 43 runs.

Shiva, Lovlina, Nikhat to spearhead Indian challenge

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 2: Record six-time Asian Championships medallist Shiva Thapa, Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain and two-time World Champion Nikhat Zareen will spearhead the Indian boxing squad for the 19th Asian Games to be held in Hangzhou, China from September 23 to October 8, 2023, officials said Sunday.

With a World Championships bronze medal and six Asian Championships medals under his belt, Shiva will be looking to add a first Asian Games medal to his kitty as he represents the country in the 63.5 kg category. Lovlina will battle it out in the 75kg category, determined to add a coveted Asian Games medal to her decorated CV that has three World Championships and Asian medals each.

Meanwhile, Nikhat, who recently made history by becoming only the second female pugilist from India to win two World Championships gold

THE SQUAD

- MEN:** Deepak (51kg), Sachin (57kg), Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Nishant Dev (71kg), Lakshya Chahar (80kg), Sanjeet (92kg) and Narender (+92kg)
- WOMEN:** Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti (54kg), Parveen (57kg), Jaismine (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (66kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg)

medals, will seek to continue her dominance on the international stage. The Telangana-born pugilist also clinched gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and will box in the 50kg category.

"This formidable Indian squad have worked tirelessly to prepare for this prestigious event and I have no doubt that they will make our country proud. India have been making waves in the boxing landscape and has established its place amongst the elite. We are confident that we will be seeing some sterling performances in Hangzhou," said Ajay Singh, president of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI),

Rising Star win FAO Super Cup



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 2: Rising Star Club won the FAO Super Cup defeating Bidanasi Club 2-0 in the final played here Sunday at the Barabati Stadium. After the game ended goalless in the scheduled time, players of Rising Star Club held their nerves to win the tie-breaker 2-0 and take home the coveted trophy.

However, the final between the top two sides in the state turned out to be a drab affair. Players of both sides lacked the spark to really make the game exciting. There were too many faulty passes in

the midfield and as a result the game was quite boring. There were hardly any goal-bound chances with players of both sides indulging in safety first tactics. There were very few good combination moves as the players indulged in aimless kicking rather than playing constructive football. The game just exemplified the poor standard of football in the state.

Among the dignitaries present at the prize distribution ceremony were Pankaj Lochan Mohanty, vice-president, Odisha Cricket Association and Asirbad Behera, Secretary, FAO.

Predict and dive: Sandhu's motto

GOALKEEPER SHARES THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS IN SAVING PENALTY SHOTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 2: India's premier shot-stopper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu went for the tried and tested formula of defending penalty kicks – predict a side and dive, leaving the outcome to chance – as his first save shaped the home side's win over Lebanon in the SAFF Cup Championships semifinal played here Saturday.

India prevailed over Lebanon 4-2 in the penalty shootout after 120 minutes of goalless play to seal a summit clash against Kuwait, to be played Tuesday.

After captain Sunil Chhetri scored from the spot, Sandhu saved the first kick from Lebanon as he dived to his left and blocked the low shot from Hassan Maatouk with his hand. "As a goalkeeper, all I want to do is make the penalty-taker's job tough. I try to stay big until the last moment, choose a side and get a hand to the ball," Sandhu said Sunday. "You can't save



Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu saves a penalty against Lebanon during India's game in the SAFF Cup at Bangalore, Saturday

every penalty. But you try to know what the taker is thinking. Someone will try to trick you, someone will come with a pre-decided shot. The experience and physicality help. If I was five-foot-four, I wouldn't have saved that penalty, for sure," the goalkeeper added.

Assistant coach Mahesh Gawli, who manned the India dug-out as Igor Stimac is serving a two-match ban after receiving a red card in the group match against Kuwait, said Sandhu's save gave confidence to his teammates. "His save gave a lot of confidence to our players, who came

to take the next penalties," he said. The 19,640-strong crowd at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here cheering the Indian team was not a new experience for Sandhu as the venue is his home ground at the Indian Super League as a Bengaluru FC player. "Playing at the Kanteerava, my Bengaluru FC home ground, in national team colours is always special. I'm really proud of the grit, determination and fight the boys have shown," Sandhu said. "We're lucky to have such good penalty-takers in our team, which helps during training," added Sandhu.

Sandhu was the first to admit that India were off colour in the first 15 minutes of the game. "We were sloppy in the first 15 minutes, but after that, we dominated the entire match. Our intensity was the same until the 120th minute. The credit goes to the boys as they played very well. We could've scored three or four goals with the chances we had," Sandhu said.

YOUNG PAK CUEIST DIES BY SUICIDE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, July 2: Pakistan's renowned national snooker player Majid Ali, who was reportedly suffering from acute depression, has committed suicide in Punjab province, police said Sunday.

The 28-year-old player, who won a silver medal in the 2013 Asian Under-21 Snooker Championship and bronze in the 2018 World 6-Red Snooker championship, was reportedly a patient of depression for the last few years and committed suicide Saturday, police said. They added that Ali, a resident of Faisalabad, some 130kms from Lahore, committed suicide by an electric saw machine.

"Snooker Player Majid Ali died Saturday by suicide. Ali went to a furniture shop of his father and switched on an electric saw machine installed there and put his neck on an iron blade and died instantly," police said. Majid's brother Rashid said Ali was fighting depression for quite some time.