

**PRIYANKA FACES FLAK**

Actor Priyanka Chopra draws flak as her throwback video shows her making mockery of Indian movies

**LEISURE** P2

**ISRAEL WITHDRAWS TROOPS**

Israel withdraws troops from a West Bank militant stronghold, but warns of repeating intense operations unless violence stops

**INTERNATIONAL** P10

**JEAKSON GRABS EYEBALLS**

Jeackson Singh creates a flutter by wrapping himself in a 'Meitei' flag after India's SAFF Championship triumph

**SPORTS** P12

**20 injured as buses collide in Balasore**

**Balasore:** Twenty persons suffered injuries, some of them seriously, when two buses collided on Tamulwa bridge under Balasore Sadar police station limits Wednesday. Police said that while one of the vehicles was going from Balasore to Baripada, the other was travelling to this town from Bhubaneswar. On being informed police reached the spot and sent the injured to the district headquarters hospital here. The drivers of both the buses have been detained and further investigations are on, police said.

**Servitors seek dress code for devotees**

**Puri:** Servitors' body, the 'Daitapati Nijog' in Puri Srimandir has demanded a dress code for the devotees visiting the temple. As per their allegation, many devotees who come for darshan of Lord Jagannath do not wear proper clothes. They said it hurts the Jagannath culture and the religious sentiments of other devotees. The Nijog demanded that the devotees who arrive here in western attire should be provided a room to change and enter the temple with appropriate clothing. "A lot of devotees even enter the temple wearing shorts. This should stop," said secretary of the Nijog, Ramakrushna Dasmohapatra.

**Cabinet approves data protection bill**

**New Delhi:** The Union Cabinet gave its nod Wednesday to the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill which will be tabled during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, a source said. The bill aims to make entities like internet companies, mobile apps, and business houses more accountable and answerable about collection, storage and processing of the data of citizens as part of 'Right to Privacy'. The bill proposes to levy a penalty of up to ₹250 crore on entities for every instance of violation of norms. The Cabinet has approved of a draft of the DPDP bill. It will be tabled during the Monsoon Session," the source said. **P9**

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



**TRKING DIFFICULT TERRAINS:** Pilgrims walk carefully along a narrow stretch of the hills en route to the Amarnath cave Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

**Forest staff free to fire**

Personnel have been on agitation since the murder of 2 Forest officials by poachers May 22 and June 16

POST NEWS NETWORK

- No action against foresters for using firearms without magisterial enquiry**
- Foresters to get immunity as per the provisions contained under sub-section-(2) of section-197 of CrPC**

if it is held in the inquiry that the use of firearm has been unwarranted, excessive and unnecessary, the criminal proceedings against the said forest officials will be initiated on acceptance of such reports by the state government, the official added.

For protection of land and resources in forest areas as well as wildlife in protected and reserved forest areas of the state, the government has already provided firearms to the personnel. However, in most cases, they were apprehensive of using firearms fearing criminal charges. Now however, they can do so without any fear and without the apprehension of facing criminal charges. Now the government has granted them immunity as per the provisions contained under sub-section (2)

of Section-197 of CrPC.

The rule will be applicable to all Forest department guards, foresters, deputy range officers, range officers, assistant conservators, sub-divisional officers, deputy conservators, deputy directors, divisional officers, regional chief conservators, field directors and any other officers in the state who are charged with maintenance of public order relating to forest and wildlife protection, conservation and management, the notice stated.

Speaking about the new development, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), SK Popli said, "Section-197 of the CrPC is now applicable to Forest department officials. It bodes well for the future."

Since the death of Jena and Majhi, field level officials of the Forest department are not going out for any work, restricting themselves in office only from June 19. They have threatened to go on leave en masse July 10 onwards if their seven-point charter of demands is not met. The demands include providing bullet-proof jackets to all field officials and ₹30 lakh as compensation to each of the families of the two deceased.

**Protests grow against 5T Secy**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boudh, July 5:** Irate opposition party workers hurled eggs at the motorcade of 5T Secretary VK Pandian when he was on his way to review the construction work of the Alati ghat at Chandrachud temple here Wednesday. The 5T Secretary visited Boudh and Kantamal Assembly segments in this district and attended various programmes and meetings. This is the second day in succession when eggs have been hurled at the 5T Secretary. A similar incident had occurred when Pandian visited Sonepur district Tuesday.

The first incident occurred when the 5T Secretary was going to attend a meeting at Ambagaon Janata High School in Kantamal block. Holding placards, BJP workers shouted slogans like 'Pandian Go Back'. They also showed black flags to him.

The Congress workers also showed Pandian black flags at Ambagaon. The 5T Secretary after attending programme at Kantamal block was on his way to a place in this town when Congress workers rushed near the district museum close to the meeting venue and shouted slogans like 'Pandian go back' and 'Ganatantra Hatyakari Mukhyamantri'. Police detained them after a scuffle. **P3**

**I-T raids DN Group, ₹30 crore seized**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** The Income Tax (I-T) Department carried out simultaneous raids at 20 places across the state, including in the Capital city here, related to real estate major DN Group on charges of tax evasion, Wednesday.

Sources in know of the development said the I-T sleuths raided DN Group's office and residences of its founder and managing director Jagdish Prasad Naik and employees here over alleged tax evasion.

"The sleuths have recovered ₹30 crore in cash from the rented accommodation of Chandrasekhar Panda, an employee of the real estate company, at Postal-BSNL Colony in Unit IV area of the City. Panda's father, a retired BSNL employee, has been residing nearby," sources informed.

Around 15 I-T sleuths, in presence of local police, raided Panda's residence in the morning. During the raid, the sleuths claimed to have recovered four suitcases containing ₹30 crore and bank passbooks related to the real estate company.

Sources informed that several documents have also been seized for examination by the I-

**1st round to Ajit in 'Pawar' games**

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 5:** The rebel faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) informed the Election Commissioner through a letter Wednesday that Sharad Pawar is no longer the party supremo and that Ajit Pawar was elected chief through a resolution dated June 30, 2023, signed by an 'overwhelming majority' of members, both from the legislative and organisational wing. Sources in the rebel faction said they have also staked claim to the party name and election symbol.

Sharad on the other hand said he would prefer to disregard numbers and even poll symbols, while assuring supporters that they would not be deprived of the election symbol. "I don't pay attention to all this," Sharad said.

Both the factions held separate rallies here in a show of strength. While, 32 MLAs attended the meeting conducted by the Ajit group, 18 were present at the conclave organised by Sharad.

Ajit during his meeting urged uncle Sharad to retire. "You are 83, aren't you going to stop? Everybody has his innings. Give us your blessings and we will pray that you live a long life," Ajit said. **P9**



T officials. However, there has been no official statement from the I-T Department so far on the raids being conducted at various places.

Sources said that the I-T raids would continue for another two or three days. Many heavy-weights have invested in the real estate firm, sources said.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal targeted the state government on the issue. "Who is behind the success of DN Group? How corrupt and those with black money are so close to the CMO?" Biswal asked.

DN Group was unavailable for comments. The group is a leading business conglomerate in Odisha and owns a number of housing projects and malls at several locations.

**Nagaland's headhunters remember 'glorious' past**

**VETERAN MEMBERS OF KONYAK TRIBE FEEL NOTHING IS BEING DONE TO PROTECT THEIR TRADITIONS AND HELP THEM GET A BETTER FUTURE**

AGENCIES

**Dimapur, July 5:** They were known as the fiercest fighters in India and each male member of the Konyak tribe, living close to the Myanmar border in Nagaland, took pride in the number of heads of enemies they collected. Now however, they fret about the future and lament that they have been forgotten.

The Konyaks were the last to give up the age-old practice of severing enemies' heads. Today, the last survivors of a past age mourn the changing times – and a new generation they call 'soft'. At 90, Nokkko Konyak residing in Chi village of Nagaland can barely see beyond a few feet. His body needs support even when he stands. However, his eyes glint and his hands become

animated when he talks about 'those simpler times'. "We witnessed our brave elders cutting off enemies' heads and we participated in many battles," Nokkko was quoted as saying by a national news website. "I am lucky to still be alive, to be around my extended family, and I feel that today's generation is too privileged," he added.

Nokkko is one of the few Konyak members who are still alive. "Human heads were trophies that earned you respect," Nokkko said. "We fought battles, beat the enemy and then cut off their heads. We did not do it for fun," Nokkko pointed out.

As a young boy, Nokkko practiced lopping off heads on large puppets, though he never severed a human one in battle himself. The last two headhunters in



the village, his two elderly friends, died about 20 years ago.

"My youth was a time of great transition," Nokkko said, referring to the arrival of missionaries, who denounced head-hunting. He remembers World

and weak'.

Like Nokkko, 90-year-old Bo Wang, king of nearby Hongphoi village, took up hunting wild boars and other animals after 'headhunting became taboo'. He however, lamented that the respect for the elderly and century-old traditions of the tribe are fast disappearing.

However, Wang's second wife, Kanya, 80, said she was glad her granddaughters were growing up today and not in the conditions she experienced when they had to live in constant fear of losing near and dear ones.

Kaipa Konyak, 34, from a local tribal organisation working to support the Konyak culture, said that the history would not be lost. "Young people are proud of their warrior traditions and culture," he said.

**COPS BUST BANK ROBBER GANG**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, July 5:** Police claimed Wednesday to have busted the gang involved in the daring dacoity of the Chandaneswar Union Bank at Talasari in this district. Police said that six persons involved in the crime have been nabbed. They added that five more accomplices of the gang have been identified and they will soon be apprehended.

Addressing mediapersons, Balasore SP Sagarika Nath said the accused had criminal antecedents and were involved in various cases of robbery earlier. Out of the six arrested three are from Nachinda, Routmandaruni and Baharda within Kamarda police limits in this district while the others are natives of Dantan and Junput in West Bengal. They had robbed the Union Bank branch April 26.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VIARIATION
SENSEX	65446.04	↓ 33.01
NIFTY	19398.50	↑ 9.50
DOLLAR	81.94	↓ ₹0.16
EURO	89.47	↑ ₹0.29
GOLD	₹58,518	↑ ₹109
SILVER	₹71,388	↑ ₹846

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
MAX	31.0°C	33.0°C	
MIN	27.1°C	27.0°C	
Humidity	85%	80%	Forecast
Rainfall	15.3mm	12mm	Light to moderate rain

# leisure

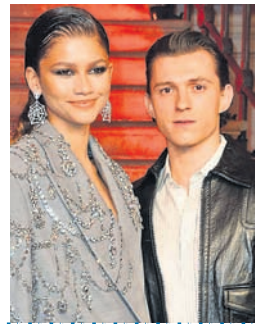


## JAMIE'S FAMILY TIGHT-LIPPED ON HIS HEALTH CONDITION

Hollywood actor Jamie Foxx has reportedly not returned to his normal self, two months after he was rushed to the hospital in Atlanta due to a medical complication. Since his hospitalisation in April, very little is known about the Oscar winning actor's health as his family has been keeping very quiet.

## TOM HOLLAND SAYS HE'S LUCKY TO HAVE ZENDAYA IN HIS LIFE

Actor Tom Holland says he's lucky to have his *Spider-Man* co-star Zendaya in his life, and added that they can relate to each other because of their similar experiences with fame. In Monday's episode of the *Smartless* podcast, the 27-year-old explained why he and Zendaya, 26, work so well together.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You will find work to be very stressful today. However, it will not prevent you from taking shots at your opponents. You are thoughtful, but can be cunning too. People would have gauged it by now. Ganesh advises you to go ahead nevertheless.

**TAURUS**  
This is a day when you will be dying to share your thoughts and feelings with someone near and dear. You will be extremely effective in communicating your ideas and emotions and will thus develop greater closeness and intimacy with your loved one. The time spent with your sweetheart will be full of love and warmth.

**GEMINI**  
Your mind will be seized with tension on some account. You will be nervous and uneasy as a result. A grave illness may strike some member of your family. However, things should ease out during the later part of the day, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You may make a switch to a new job or get a job offer that you don't want to deny, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to go on a shopping spree and spend lavishly. In the evening, you will be spending your time and money on your loved ones.

**LEO**  
You will complete your tasks courageously today. You will have the patience to wait for the fruits of your labour to fall into your lap, so as to say. You will redo those tasks that you are unable to complete to your expectations. Owing to this attitude of yours, you do not need to worry about a thing, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
You will feel very agitated about some prickly issues today. Ganesh says there is a likelihood of your joining some sort of a course to improve your personality. There is also a possibility of an intimate conversation leading up to some carnal enjoyment.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will be in a nostalgic frame of mind and will love to remember the good memories of the past today. You will be able to sit with like-minded people and will discuss and share your ideas and thoughts. You will share your thoughts on varied topics like philosophy religion etc. Ganesh says it is time you focus on the present and remain joyous instead of trying to think about the past or future.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh has lot of surprises in store for you today. It's your time to slowly unravel the mystery, He says. The ball is in your court when it comes to business meetings and professional discussions. Your sense of humour is likely to cast a magic spell on everyone around you, today.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
A day full of highs and lows, predicts Ganesh. Heaps of work is likely to keep you on toes today. You experience a stressful day at work. In the evening, you may spend quality time with your beloved and treasure small joys of life.

**CAPRICORN**  
If you are holding an authoritative position at work, today is your day, feels Ganesh. Sincere efforts and honesty will not make the current projects cross finishing line, but also fetch you appreciation and rewards from one and all. Those in the fields other than government, will win the confidence of superiors and may discuss confidential subjects with them.

**AQUARIUS**  
The day will kick start with you deciding to opt for higher education or a personality development course. If you are a businessman or associated with finance, it will be a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesh. Through out the day, you will be occupied with one or the other thing but you will not be complaining.

**PISCES**  
You need to control the vortex of emotions swirling through you. Your savage mood swings could have a bearing on vital decisions you need to take today. You need to guard against being emotional, be more calculative in your dealings, and think lesser about chasing after money, says Ganesh.

## Tamannaah's tips for new generation

**Mumbai:** Of late, Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma are getting asked a lot of questions about their relationship. Though both being private people, Tamannaah and Vijay haven't shied away from talking about it.

In a new interview, Tamannaah opened up about whether it is tough to see their relationship being put under the microscope.

The *Babli Bouncer* actress said she has come to a point where she felt like there's no need to hide.

When she was asked about her equation with Vijay in their relationship, Tamannaah replied, "He is a wonderful human being and an equal partner. I think he has a lot of strong women in his life and I feel like that's what it

takes...when you respect those strong women, you respect your woman as well. And that's what I feel the younger generation needs to learn. We teach sons how to treat women instead of asking women how they should behave with men around them."

"I cannot enter any equation where women are expected to compromise on their most basic feelings," asserts the actress.

AGENCIES



## Samantha to take year-long break

**Mumbai:** After wrapping up the Indian chapter of action-thriller *Citadel*, actor Samantha is taking a step back from acting for at least one year. While she is looking forward to this break, she would primarily focus on her health, and undergo treatment for autoimmune condition, Myositis, in the US and South Korea.

"Few months back, Samantha decided that she will be taking a break from acting, and was just waiting to wrap up her projects — *Kushi* with Vijay Deverakonda and the Indian segment of *Citadel* with Varun Dhawan," says a source close to the actor.

Back in 2022, Samantha revealed that she has been diagnosed with an autoimmune condition called Myositis, and she took a six month break for treatment at that time, too. Now, she is determined to regain her health in a holistic way before resuming work.

"She is taking a break as she wants to focus on her health. She just came back because of her commitments.

She was in mid of shooting of *Kushi* when she fell ill. Now, she has to go for the main treatment and therapy session," shares the source.

AGENCIES



## Priyanka brutally trolled for her 'fake demeanour'

**Mumbai:** Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who made her debut at Emmys in 2016, got brutally trolled on social media recently. A Reddit user dropped a video of the *Aitraaz* actress from the red carpet of Emmys 2016 where she talked about Indian cinema.

In the video Priyanka said, "With Indian movies everything is about hips and chests" and then showed a few moves as well. But, PeeCee's description about Indian movies irked netizens on social media.

One user wrote, "I know there are a lot of issues with Indian movie industry but the way she constantly sh\*t talks about it on an interna-

tional platform is so annoying. Plus the image she presents is so outdated. She does it for brownie points there & that makes me more annoyed lol."

Another one commented, "I'm an American and she's not popular or liked by other Americans here. I never hear anyone talk about except possibly to say she's Nick Jonas' wife. One even wrote, "Nothing trashier than a self loathing racist."

Another one commented, "Her whole demeanour is so fake, from the hair on her head to her toe nail."

The *Quantico* actress also faced a massive backlash on social media recently for saying that she has not watched SS Rajamouli's *RRR*.

AGENCIES

## TEASER OF UPCOMING MOVIE BAWAAL SHOWS PEOPLE GASPING FOR BREATH IN A ROOM AS THE WINDOW OF ENTRANCE IS SHUT ON THEM

## Twitterati outraged over reference to Holocaust

**Mumbai:** The teaser of the upcoming Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor-starrer film *Bawaal*, which was unveiled Wednesday has received polarising reactions from the people on the Internet. While many people appreciated the teaser of the film, a section of users on the Internet feels that the makers shouldn't have made reference to gas chamber in Nazi Germany.

The last shots of teaser are installed in what seems like a gas chamber and shows people gasping for breath as a person shuts the window of the entrance on them. Several users took to Twitter to express their anger over alleged 'romanticisation of holocaust' in the film.

One user wrote: "Nitish Tiwari insane...you don't use a tragedy on the scale of holocaust to portray basic romantic strife..and then to show a gas chamber scene??? all my expectations for this film went out of the window."

Another wrote: "Was that a gas chamber in the final shot of the teaser?"



One person on Twitter enquired: "Wtf happened in the last?! I got goosebumps. Were they inside a gas chamber in a concentration camp?! #Bawaal." Six million European Jews were killed in one of the deadliest documented crimes against humanity by the Nazis. It was also the first time when people were killed on an industrial scale during World War 2.

IAN5

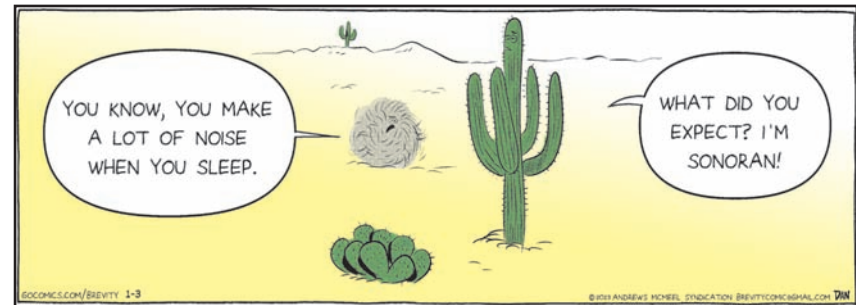
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

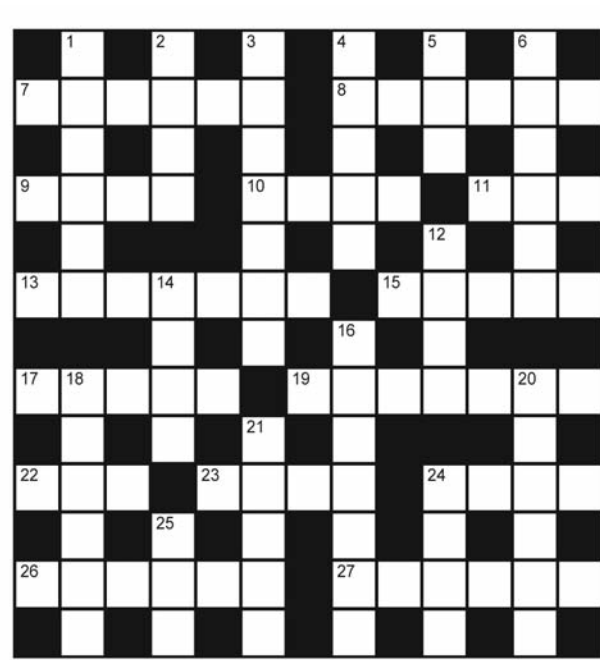


### BREVITY



### FUN post

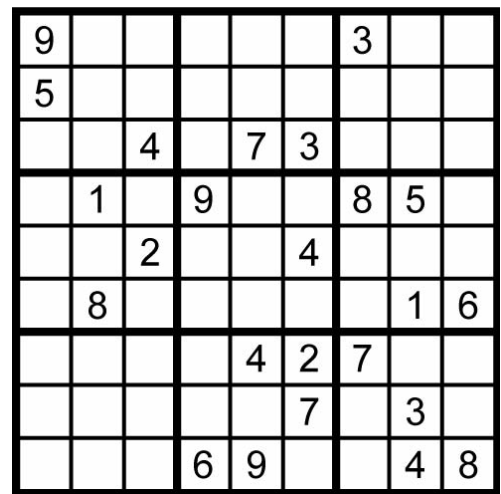
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Sound system
  - 8 Donnybrook
  - 9 River of Hades
  - 10 Culminating point
  - 11 Iranian city
  - 13 Shoulder bone
  - 15 Perfumed defender?
  - 17 Arthurian legend, e.g.
  - 19 Spanish nobleman
  - 22 Clumsy sort
  - 23 Drawn butter
  - 24 Fort-Lamy
  - 26 Fancy fabric
  - 27 Short-sighted
  - 6 Public house
  - 12 Stew
  - vegetable
  - 14 Blanched
  - 16 Quandary
  - 18 Turkey's highest peak
  - 20 Free of charge
  - 21 Agreement word
  - 24 Large blackbird
  - 25 Cow chow
- Down
- 1 Radio interference
  - 2 African antelope
  - 3 Drink
  - 4 Many times
  - 5 Winery sight

### SUDOKU

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

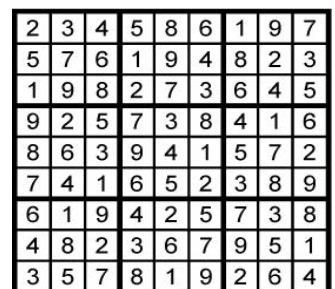


### SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## ART LOVERS' DELIGHT

Artistes perform a play 'Michha Marichika' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, as part of OMC annual day celebrations



# Pipe water in Kantamal, Boudh blocks by Sept



**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** Mega pipe water supply projects in Boudh and Kantamal blocks of Boudh district will be completed by September this year, while households in Harbhanga block will get pipe water by June 2024, an official said, Wednesday. This was learnt during a field visit and subsequent review meeting by 5T Secretary VK Pandian, Wednesday. According to sources, water supply projects worth ₹770 crore covering 1,06,399 households in three blocks of the district are underway. Pandian asked the officials to ensure that the timelines are strictly adhered to. As per the direction of Chief

**Water supply projects worth ₹770 crore covering 1,06,399 households in three blocks of the district are underway**

Progress of five lift irrigation projects being executed at a cost of ₹247 crore under Cluster V of Parbati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation Scheme were reviewed

The 5T Secretary visited Maa Bhairabi Temple in Purunakatak and directed the district administration to prepare a DPR for development of the shrine

Minister Naveen Patnaik, the 5T Secretary visited Boudh district Wednesday to review the progress of various projects in the district and redress public

grievances. He reviewed the progress of five lift irrigation projects being executed at a cost of ₹247 crore under Cluster V of Parbati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation Scheme. The projects are nearing completion and will be operationalised in July, providing irrigation to 8,570 hectare land across three blocks of the district, it was learnt. The 5T Secretary later visited Ambagaon High School covered under the 5T High School Transformation Programme, interacted with students and encouraged them to study well and fulfil their goals. He also visited the District Museum, an ambitious initiative of the Boudh administration. He assured all possible support of the government in maintenance of the museum. He then interacted with Plus II and degree college students. Pandian informed them about approval of the Chief Minister to take up all the colleges under 5T transformation and sanction of ₹6.75 crore for the ambitious initiative. The 5T Secretary visited Maa Bhairabi Temple in Purunakatak and directed the district administration to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for development of the shrine.



**WAIT OVER:** The newly-constructed bridge connecting Cuttack and Dhableswar shrine was opened to public, Wednesday. **Inset:** Priests performing puja on the bridge

## STATE DEMANDS ₹11K-CR PENDING FOOD SUBSIDY

**New Delhi, July 5:** Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister of Odisha Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak drew the Union government's attention towards the pending food subsidy to the state during the national conference of food ministers here, Wednesday. Nayak said he demanded the release of the pending food subsidy amounting to more than ₹11,000 crore to Odisha. He further requested the Centre to direct the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to lift surplus parboiled rice from Odisha under the Central pool.

The conference organised by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution was aimed at strengthening the focus on food and nutritional security. Discussion was also held on developing an action plan for procurement of coarse grains during Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2023-24. It further discussed the key initiatives undertaken by the government for effective implementation of PMGKAY. The conference was chaired by Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Piyush Goyal.

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## Ratna Bhandar: HC notice to Chief Secy, 3 others

**Cuttack, July 5:** The Orissa High Court Wednesday served notices on four persons, including the Chief Secretary and Sriramandir Managing Committee chairman, seeking their responses in connection with a plea for reopening Ratna Bhandar and inventory of the precious ornaments therein. Hearing a petition filed by BJP leader Samir Mohanty, a division bench of Justices Subhasis Talapatra and Savitri Ratho asked the Sriramandir Managing Committee chairman, Chief Secretary, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Director General (DG) and its superintendent to file their responses on reopening the temple treasury. The HC bench posted the next hearing to August 7 this year.

**THE HC ASKED THE SRIRAMANDIR MANAGING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, CHIEF SECRETARY, ASI DIRECTOR GENERAL AND ITS SUPERINTENDENT TO FILE THEIR RESPONSES ON REOPENING THE TEMPLE TREASURY**

**A DIVISION BENCH OF HIGH COURT JUSTICES SUBHASIS TALAPATRA AND SAVITRI RATHO POSTED THE NEXT HEARING TO AUGUST 7 THIS YEAR**



In his petition June 30 this year, the former state BJP president informed the HC that the state government was not taking any step to reopen Ratna Bhandar on the premises of the 12th-century shrine in Puri despite the ASI and Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb expressing concern over the dilapidated condition of the temple treasury.

He sought the HC's intervention in directing the state government to reopen the Ratna Bhandar to carry out necessary repair work and make a fresh inventory of ornaments of the deities stored there for decades. Sources said the previous inventory was made in 1978 even as the Shree Jagannath Temple

Act, 1954 has a provision to undertake the exercise every three years. The ASI had earlier requested the state government and the temple managing committee to reopen the inner chamber of Ratna Bhandar so that it could be repaired, but to no avail. The temple treasury was last opened in April 2018. A 16-member team, including experts of the ASI, had entered the outer chamber but could not go to the inner chamber as its key was missing. They inspected the structure from a distance and reported that its condition was weak. Though a judicial commission was set up to probe the missing key episode, the state government was yet to table the findings of the report in the Assembly, Mohanty pointed out in his petition.

## SIX BOOKED FOR FAKE ADS

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** Badagada police Wednesday registered a case against six persons for putting up fake advertisements. An FIR was filed by Siddhartha Advertising CEO and proprietor Diljit Khanna against Nihar Ranjan Mahapatra, Harendra Kumar Jena, R Purushottam, Pradeep Kumar Mohanty, Mamtamayee Rath and Suchitra Jena for alleged embezzlement of ₹2.50 crore. Out of the six, four are employees of Sidhartha advertising. Mamtamayee Rath and Suchitra Jena are spouses of Nihar Ranjan Mahapatra and Harendra Kumar Jena respectively. The case was registered under Sections 406, 420, 468, 408, 408 and 34 of IPC. As per a release issued by the agency, some employees of Siddhartha Advertising are involved in the scam involving over ₹2.50 crore that has taken place in lieu of fake release orders. The branch manager and three other employees of Siddhartha Advertising, Bhubaneswar branch collected and published the advertisements and paid the concreted newspapers. But in the process, these employees played a trick. Bhubaneswar branch manager (BM) along with other employees started publishing a newspaper titled 'The Utkal' similar to a popular newspaper of Bhubaneswar 'The Utkal Mail'.

## NSUI workers hurl veggies at min house



**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** Peeved at the alleged inaction of the state government in curbing rising prices of vegetables, activists of National Students' Union of India (NSUI) staged a demonstration outside the official residence of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak here, Wednesday. Wearing garlands made of green vegetables, the student Congress workers took out a rally to the residence of Nayak. When they tried to barge into the residence of the minister, police prevented them from doing so. Angry NSUI activists hurled tomatoes and lady's fingers at the Nayak's residence. Stating that the prices of almost all the vegetables including tomatoes and beans have crossed the ₹100 mark in Odisha, NSUI Odisha president Yashir Nawaz said common people are hit hard due to the exorbitant price of vegetables.

Nawaz said every single household is affected by inflation and the skyrocketing vegetable prices. However, the Chief Minister and the Food Supplies minister have remained mute spectators, he alleged. During its 23 years tenure, the BJD government has failed to construct cold storages in several blocks. At least Barghar district should have cold storage facilities for the vegetables grown there, he pointed out. As the protesters tried to enter the minister's house, a scuffle broke out with police personnel deployed at the site. The protesters also burnt the photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over the issue. Stating that the state government should take immediate steps to control the rising prices, he demanded that cold storages should be constructed in every block of the state.

## PROBING ROAD MISHAPS

### Training for cops, transport officials

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** A state-level training programme on investigation of crash, integrated road accident database (iRAD) and e-Detailed accident report (e-DAR) was inaugurated by Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur and Twin city Police Commissioner SK Priyadarshi. As suggested by the Supreme Court, this training programme was organised for 70 Transport department officials and police officials of all 567 police stations across the state. There will be 17 batches of training at eight locations with 45 participants in each batch. The knowledge partners for the training are: JP Research India Ltd, Coimbatore (a leading institute for crash investigation) and NIC, India. The training started Wednesday and will continue till July 25. The training programme will enhance the skills of the officers for investigating a road crash with a holistic approach.



Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister TS Singhdeo being welcomed by state Congress leaders in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## NHRC summons Balasore DM, SP on death of fisherman

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued conditional summons to the Balasore District Magistrate (DM) and Superintendent of Police (SP) in connection with the death of a fisherman and injury to another who were hit by splinters of an artillery shell fired from DRDO, a defence establishment at Chandipur in the district. The summons were issued July 4 to the DM and SP under

Sections 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 for appearance before the commission August 14 next. Both the officers were asked to report before the commission along with the requisite action taken report (ATR) on the incident that took place last year. The NHRC also stated that if the requisite reports are received on or before August 7, the personal appearance of the authorities shall stand dispensed with. The NHRC passed the order acting on a petition filed by rights

activist Radhakanta Tripathy who alleged that one fisherman - Kamal Lochan Majhi - was killed and Padma Lochan Mallik sustained injury after being hit by splinters of an artillery shell fired from the DRDO. It was alleged that the fatal incident took place inside the prohibited area of Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE), a unit of DRDO at Chandipur. Hence, an intervention of the commission has been sought for assessing the situation and ascertaining the reasons behind the



mishaps, permanent steps taken to curb such incidents and for compensation to the family members of the deceased and the injured fishermen. Taking cognizance, the commission November 10, 2022 had directed Ministry of Defence Secretary, Balasore DM and SP

to submit an ATR in the matter. Pursuant to the direction and subsequent reminder, the Deputy Director of PXE submitted a detailed report stating that PXE is in existence for last 125 years and operates on the basic principles of 'safety first and always'. The Deputy Director further stated that a number of measures and mechanisms, including internal SOPs, were in place to ensure safe trial operations. As per norms, the PXE intimates to the various authorities regarding firing activities at least 15 days in advance and

based on which the district authorities issue 'Clearance of Range for Artillery' practices at PXE on monthly basis. The practice, the officer said, was duly adhered to even during the month of September 2022. After taking all precautions, the firing test took place September 28, 2022 between 11:20am and 1:20pm during high tide which is a natural barrier for movements of human beings. All shells which were fired during trials under discussion had fallen/functioned within the prohibited range area.

# EOW crackdown on online ponzi schemes



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has cracked down on several online ponzi schemes and frozen around ₹75 lakh lying in 14 different bank accounts across India, the police said Wednesday.

Earlier, EOW had frozen ₹1.22 crore in similar schemes/apps. There are multiple illegal apps and websites available on internet which misleads people by running advertisements to multiply money within a few days/months, but after a few months these apps close their operation, the police said.

The online fraud apps are Dice, Quickwrummy, Fly Aviator, Weonlinepro Three, MVP trader, Ft11, UNO, ForexDana, Live 22 cash, Aviator X, City5, Homer Alexander and others. Together, these apps had more than 1.56 crore downloads.

To lure the investors, these scammers are using morphed photographs of celebrities such

**To lure the investors, these scammers are using morphed photographs of celebrities such as Amitabh Bachchan, Mukesh Ambani, Ratan Tata, Sachin Tendulkar and others**

as Amitabh Bachchan, Mukesh Ambani, Ratan Tata, Sachin Tendulkar and Technical Guruji (famous YouTuber).

The EOW officials said that the scammers also used logos of big companies like Tata to mislead/impress people on various social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube.

In the earlier case, the EOW had found that an app named 'Join trade-Financial growth' was using morphed pictures of leading Bollywood personalities like Akshay Kumar and Manish Paul in order to mislead and in-

still trust in the investors.

They also used some so-called social media influencers to promote these apps/schemes through their accounts.

Some TV stars/small celebrities were found to be endorsing such social media influencers and their advice related to making quick money through these online ponzi apps, the EOW revealed.

People from lower middle class families, including students, wishing to become rich in a short span of time using these shortcuts became the victims of the online scam.

The scammers were collecting money only through UPI IDs reflected in the fraudulent app, which keep changing constantly each minute and such IDs were linked to savings and current accounts maintained in the name of many shell companies/firms as well as individual persons.

Total transactions in the above suspected bank accounts are of more than ₹1,000 crore. However, it is suspected that these accounts are also used in other cyber/financial crimes related to online ponzi schemes, illegal digital loan apps, courier scam, sextortion, work from home scam, YouTube liking scam, rating scam and others.

The EOW further noticed that the deposited money is routed through very complex multi-layering of various mule accounts and finally the money is transferred out of India using Crypto trade. Most of these scams are operated from or have links in the UAE.



**GREENER TOMORROW:** Students and teachers of DAV Public School, Pokhripur during a 'seed ball challenge' organised by the Forest department to mark Van Mahotsav in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

## OJEE counselling to begin today

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE) committee will begin counselling registration from July 6 onwards. The candidates who appeared for OJEE and want to take admission in various courses can apply online through the official website of OJEE at ojee.nic.in. More than a month after the publication of the OJEE results, the counselling process for seats is set to begin Thursday. As per reports, the OJEE has announced to start counselling in three phases for 39,000 engineering seats in 10 government and 80 private engineering colleges.

## City AIIMS-SVNIRTAR ink MoU to boost healthcare



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** The City AIIMS has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Swami Vivekananda National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (SVNIRTAR), Cuttack for academic, research and comprehensive rehabilitation care Wednesday.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas and SVNIRTAR Director PP Mohanty signed the MoU to jointly work on several aspects for holistic rehabilitation care.

Speaking on this occasion, Biswas said that two prominent national institutes will work on referral of patients of various departments. The patients of AIIMS departments like neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedics, burn and plastic surgery and SVNIRTAR departments including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and orthopedics will collabo-

rate to improve healthcare and research in specialised areas.

He also emphasised on scope of expansion for rehabilitation care to other patient groups including cardiovascular, mental and cancer.

Mohanty said that the collaboration will give an opportunity for exposure to acute care at AIIMS so that the rehabilitation facility can be programmed and initiated at a very early stage.

The collaboration aims for human resource development in the area of rehabilitation, tertiary prevention, biomedical engineering and technology. It further aims to develop academic credit sharing mechanisms under various programmes as per the provision under NEP 2020.

It will also promote designing various short-term academic programmes in the form of fellowship, collaborative research, symposia, colloquium, workshops, seminars and conferences on chosen topics.

## Asia Univ delegation visits KIIT, KISS

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 5:** A five-member delegation led by Yinghwei Chen from Asia University visited KIIT & KISS recently. The delegation members Chun-Wei Remmlin, Jiunn Jong Wu, Ching Jsein Hsu and Charles CN Wang interacted with the top officials of KIIT including the vice chancellor, registrar and various deans of different schools and discussed modalities of student and faculty exchange programmes and research collaborations.

During their meeting with KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, the members were all praise for KIIT and termed it as an example for the world. They praised Samanta for his efforts to create wonderful institutions. They lauded Samanta's role for his contribution towards the society.

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KIIT has consistently excelled in various rankings and accreditations. Every year, universities and educational institutions are ranked according to various criteria by various government and private organisations globally. As the only institution in Odisha, KIIT has always excelled due to its quality.

Asia University (AU) is a visionary, pioneering, and fast-growing school and was founded with the goal of establishing a remarkable and comprehensive university with international competitiveness.

# STIHL to showcase farm mechanisation

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Cuttack, July 5:** STIHL India Wednesday launched the month-long 'Parivartan Yatra' – a campaign to initiate a positive dialogue of transformation through farm mechanisation. The campaign aims to drive the right technology adoption to the farmers of Odisha. The Yatra will pass through the key agricultural districts including Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur and Sundargarh.

The Yatra was flagged off from District Agriculture Office, Cuttack by Chowdwar MLA Souvic Biswal in the presence of executive engineer and district agriculture officer. Speaking on this occasion, Biswal hailed the initiative taken by STIHL India and expressed his delight in seeing technological transformations in the farming sector. He said that the campaign will be beneficial for the farming community in the state.

During the Yatra, STIHL India will provide on-site demonstrations of its innovative and German technology-based cutting-edge agriculture equipment, allowing farmers to witness the benefits and ease of operation at the comfort of their farms.



community in the state.

During the Yatra, STIHL India will provide on-site demonstrations of its innovative and German technology-based cutting-edge agriculture equipment, allowing farmers to witness the benefits and ease of operation at the comfort of their farms.

Additionally, the authorised dealership executives will be available to address any queries or concerns raised by the farmers.

Andreas STIHL, a 96-year-old Germany-headquartered company is one of the leading global firms in the field of outdoor

handheld power tools that are widely used in professional logging, landscaping, horticulture, agriculture, plantations and government institutions like railways, disaster management, emergency services, health services, municipal corporations and defence establishments.

# Climate Change: Record for the 'hottest day' on Earth

**THE GLOBE'S AVERAGE TEMPERATURE REACHED 62.9 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT (17.18 DEGREES CELSIUS) TUESDAY, ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE'S CLIMATE REANALYZER, A COMMON TOOL BASED ON SATELLITE DATA AND COMPUTER SIMULATIONS**



The planet's temperature spiked Tuesday to its hottest day in at least 44 years and likely much longer, the latest in a series of climate-change extremes that alarm but don't surprise scientists.

The globe's average temperature reached 62.9 degrees Fahrenheit (17.18 degrees Celsius) Tuesday, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a common tool based on satellite data and computer simulations and used by climate

scientists for a glimpse of the world's condition. Monday, the average temperature was 62.6 degrees Fahrenheit (17.01 degrees Celsius), breaking a record that lasted only 24 hours.

While it is not an official National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration record, "this is showing us an indication of where we are right now," NOAA chief scientist Sarah Kapnick said. Even though the dataset used for the unofficial record goes back only to

1979, she said that given other data, it's likely the hottest day in "several hundred years that we've experienced."

The previous hottest day was in August 2021, Kapnick said.

"A record like this is another piece of evidence for the now massively supported proposition that global warming is pushing us into a hotter future," said Stanford University climate sci-

entist Chris Field, who was not part of the calculations.

With many places seeing temperatures near 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius), the new average temperatures might not seem very hot. But Tuesday's global high was nearly 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (a full degree Celsius) higher than the 1979-2000 average, which already tops the 20th- and 19th-century

averages. Higher temperatures translate into brutal conditions for people all over the world. When the heat spikes, humans suffer health effects — especially young and elderly people, who are vulnerable to heat even under normal conditions.

"People aren't used to that. Their bodies aren't used to that," said Erinanne Saffell, Arizona's state climatologist and an expert in extreme weather and climate events.

"That's important to understand who might be at risk, making sure people are hydrated, they're staying cool, and they're not exerting themselves outside, and taking care of those folks around you who might be at risk."

The highs come after months of "truly unreal meteorology and climate stats for the year," such as off-the-chart record

warmth in the North Atlantic, record low sea ice in Antarctica and a rapidly strengthening El Nino, said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado.

Scientists generally use much longer measurements — months, years, decades — to track the Earth's warming. But the new figures are an indication that climate change is reaching uncharted territory even if the data aren't quite the type used by gold-standard climate measurement entities such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

The figures legitimately capture global-scale heating, and NOAA will take them into consideration for its official record calculations, said Deke Arndt, director of the National Center for Environmental Information, a division of NOAA.

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**GREEN INITIATIVE:** A sapling sale van being flagged off at Sadeibereni-Nabajivanpur village under Sadar block in Dhenkanal district as part of 74th district-level Vana Mahotsav, Wednesday  
OP PHOTO

# DEVELOPMENT WOES

## Children wade through river to reach school in Koraput village

**Dasmanthpur, July 5:** Despite the state government's tall claims on bringing in development throughout Odisha, there are some villages in Koraput district where the residents are yet to get a taste of development, a report said Wednesday. The harrowing tale of the dwellers of Routput village along the Chabri river is a case in this point.

The administration is yet to connect this riparian village under Adamunda Malkangiri panchayat of Dasmanthpur block in Koraput district with the outside world through construction of a bridge.



As a result, the residents and students have to wade across the river to attend to their works as well as school. The river has proved a roadblock in the development of the village. The district administration and the state government, although aware of the problem, are yet to construct a bridge and alleviate the sufferings of the villagers.

While crossing the river is relatively easier during summer and winter, it is a risky proposition for them to cross the swollen river in rainy season. Bercif of any other option, the students endanger themselves and cross the river in knee deep water during rains.

The village surrounded by rivers and streams, forest and hills does not figure in the development map and the residents continue to live a life of

seclusion and deprivation due to lack of a bridge.

Sources said that the village has a population of 900 comprising 120 families but has not seen any development till date. The Chabri river has turned a curse for them and deprived them of basic amenities and development.

The villagers have to depend on Chabri river which is the only route for them to connect with the outside world. They cross the river all round the year to travel to any destination across the river. However, things go out of hands when rainy season arrives, alleged villagers Rama Chandra Goud, Amir Takri, Kunti Khara and Lakshman Goud.

The villagers remain water-logged during the monsoon season. In the absence of any road or bridge, students wade through knee deep water to reach their school during rainy season. Their studies get hit if the water level rises in the river.

Left with no option, the students remain at home without going to school. Some of the students are accompanied by their guardians who drop them at school while others face all kinds of difficulties in crossing the swollen river.

This is not the lone problem of the villagers as they face immense difficulties in carrying patients to the hospitals, visiting the local market to buy provisions, subsidised rice from panchayat office, getting allowances and old age pension. They have knocked the doors of the local block development officer and the district administration praying for construction of a bridge on the river but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

The villagers said that if the administration constructs a bridge, it will be easier to construct a road to the village. The villagers warned to boycott polls in the next general elections if the district administration fails to intervene and construct a bridge.

# Work on NH-55 reaches its last leg

**Sambalpur, July 5:** The National Highway-55 connecting Sambalpur with Cuttack has turned into a death trap with several road mishaps taking place during last eight years. However, there is a reason for relief as the project has reached its last leg, a report said Wednesday.

The road which was in bad shape and the ongoing construction work were blamed as reasons behind these mishaps. Meanwhile, 80 per cent of the works on the highway has been completed while construction of underpasses (for movement of elephants) and footpaths are pending.

The highway works will be completed by September while the underpasses will get com-



Completed by December, this year. This was stated here by project director N Nageswar Rao of National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to this correspondent, Wednesday.

Works on the bridge were first assigned to a consultancy agency Gayatri Constructions. However, the project failed to make any headway after the agency stopped

passes has started while bridge works will continue in this rainy season. The highway project is expected to get completed by December if work progresses as per plan. It is being supervised and reviewed frequently and the agency has been reminded of the deadline.

Notably the expansion works of NH-55 was taken up in 2015 after a series of agitations by the residents and various voluntary outfits. However, the project failed to make any headway due to delay in land acquisition as forest land was involved. The plan outlay for the project was fixed at ₹18,000 crore but the consultancy agency is implementing it at ₹1,255 crore at 30 per cent rebate. The project includes construction of 147-km stretch of highway.

# 108 ambulance staffers carry patient for 1 km on stretcher

**Balasure, July 5:** Owing to bad road condition, staffers of a 108 ambulance carried a cancer patient on a stretcher for 1 km at Ishwarpur village under Nilagiri subdivision in Balasure district, Wednesday.

As per reports, the health condition of a cancer patient named Barendra Behera in the village suddenly deteriorated after which his family members called the 108 ambulance service.

After getting information, an ambulance immediately headed to Ishwarpur village but due to the bad road condition, the ambulance could not reach the patient's house.



Later, the EMT of the ambulance Bijayee Kishan Sen, driver Gayadhar Dash and attendant Prashant Kumar Behera went to the patient's house with a stretcher. With the help of the patient's family members, they carried the patient till ambulance by walking on road for 1 km. The patient was brought to Bhadrak district headquarters hospital (DHH).

**Malkangiri, July 5:** Computed Tomography Scan (CT scan) facilities will now be available for free to patients at the Malkangiri headquarters hospital, a report said Wednesday.

Thousands of patients from Malkangiri district or from neighbouring Chhattisgarh who are dependent on this hospital will get the facility. A CT scan machine has been provided to the hospital by the state government and separate technician to run the equipment has been appointed in the hospital.

The matter came to the fore after the facility was inaugurated by Nabarangpur MP Ramesh

# CT scan launched at Malkangiri DHH

## PATIENTS TO GET THE FACILITY FOR FREE OF COST

Manas Madkani, Zilla Parishad chairperson Samari Tangu, Tuesday.

Malkangiri Municipality chairperson Manoj Kumar Barik, his deputy Kabita Mohanta and chief district medical officer Dr Prafulla Kumar Nanda also attended the inauguration.

This development has spread cheers among the residents as they thanked the Chief Minister for installing the equipment and making the facility operational which is a major initiative of the state government. Patients and their attendants borrowing for treatment of various ailments will now get relief after installation of the facility, the report added.



Chandra Majhi in the presence of Chitrakonda MLA Purna Chandra Baka, his Malkangiri counterpart Aditya Madhi, special development council chairperson Adma Raba, former ML

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of **AASHA BHAROSA PARTY**. The office of the party is located at Bhagabanpur, Post: Goudarama, Police Station and Block: Kuliana, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha - 757030. The party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Names/address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows:

**National President:** SURENDRANATH HANSDAH, Village: Bhagabanpur, Post: Goudarama, Block: Kuliana, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha - 757030.

**National Vice President:** JAGENDRA HEMBRAM, Village: Khadisholajamuna, Post: Deulia, Block: Badasahi, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha - 757026.

**National General Secretary:** JYOTI PRAKASH, Tanki Sahi, Post: Bhanpur, Block: Baripada, Dist: Mayurbhanj, Odisha - 757002.

**National Treasurer:** CHANDRA MOHAN MURMU, Village: Deulia, Post: Deulia, Block: Badasahi, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha - 757026.

If anyone has any objection to the registration of AASHA BHAROSA PARTY, they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi - 110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

# Case filed over medicos' clash at VIMSAR

**Sambalpur, July 5:** Police Wednesday registered a case in connection with a clash between students of two government medical colleges on the premises of VIMSAR in Burla, an officer said Wednesday.

A case under sections 147 (Rioting), 148 (Rioting armed with a deadly weapon) and 149 (Unlawful assembly) of IPC has been registered after the authorities of the VIMSAR lodged an FIR in this regard.

"Further investigation into the matter is underway," said sub-divisional police officer (SDPO), Burla, S.Dash.

On Tuesday, the students of the MKCG medical college and hospital, who had come to VIMSAR to participate in the inter-medical college festival, 'Euphoria', were allegedly attacked by students of the VIMSAR on the premises of the institution.

The students of VIMSAR hurled abuses, pelted plastic bottles and even sprayed a fire extinguisher on the bus carrying MKCG medical col-



lege students leading to the suffocation of nine students who were hospitalised.

The incident came to the fore after videos of the violence went viral.

According to an official of VIMSAR, while the cultural events of the inter-medical college festival, Euphoria are scheduled to begin July 7 and conclude July 10, the athletic events started Tuesday.

Dean and principal of VIMSAR, Jayashree Dora said, "We have already lodged an FIR with the police in connection with the incident."

"The students of the MKCG medical college and hospital decided not to participate in the Euphoria and returned. However, students of other medical colleges are here. The festival will be held as per the schedule," she said.

# Rourkela start-up makes farming easy

**Rourkela, July 5:** Prakriti Gau Anusandhan Kendra Pvt Ltd, a start-up of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) here is doing innovative work in the field of organic manure and pesticides.

The start-up was established in November 2020 by Gokul Minj, the present founder and CEO of the company. Minz's objective was to go green with utilisation of organic products like cow dung and urine in farming and agriculture as an alternative for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Minz had realised the harm caused



to the soil and crop through the use of chemical fertilizers containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. He decided to do away with the use of such fertilizers and set out on fulfilling his mission.

So, he decided to produce environment-friendly organic manure and pesticides which would be economical

also. He and his team worked on a specific mixture of cow dung, other organic components and rock phosphates. It was found out that the entire mixture was fully absorbed by the plant in the first or second cropping.

Minz himself designed a mechanical apparatus for making the manure mixture easily. The roughly-granulated manure then passes through another machine which helps in getting small, dried and uniform granules ready for packaging in small packets as 'Prakriti Sanjivani'.

The start-up has the capacity to produce 10 tonne of organic manure per month.

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**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

**E-auction Sale Notice for the Sale of Immovable Assets under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with Proviso to Rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and particular to the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the **Symbolic Possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Chola Mandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited, the same shall be referred hereinafter as **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**. The Secured Assets will be auctioned on **10.08.2023** on **"AS IS WHERE IS"**, **"AS IS WHAT IS"** and **"WHATSOEVER THERE IS"** basis through E-auction.

It is hereby informed to General Public that we are going to conduct public E-Auction through website <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notice>

Sl. No.	Account No. and Name of the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor	Date & Amount as per Demand Notice U/s. 13(2)	Description of the Secured Assets (Immovable Property)	a) Reserve Price (RP) b) Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) c) Bid Increment Amt.	a) E-Auction Date and Time b) EMD Submission Last Date c) Inspection Date d) Date of Possession (Status of Possession)
1.	Loan A/c. Nos. : X0HEBHU0002901642 & X0HEBHU0002951694 <b>Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor :</b> 1. Bidyaraj Jena (Applicant) 2. Ms. Meena Basralaya (Co-ApPLICANT) 3. Sumita Jena (Co-ApPLICANT) 4. Lakmidhar Jena (Co-ApPLICANT) 5. Smita Mohanty (Co-ApPLICANT) 6. Susama Jena (Co-ApPLICANT) 7. Debraj Jena (Co-ApPLICANT) All are at : Plot No. 31/A, Near BDA Park, BJB Nagar, Near Bjei School, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin - 751 014.	10.04.2023 Rs. 2,62,08,103.00 as on 06.04.2023	District - Khurda, Tahasil - Bhubaneswar, under the Jurisdiction of Office of the District Sub-Registrar, Khurda (BBSR), P.S. - New Capital, P.S. No. 52, Mouza - Bhubaneswar Sahara Unit No. 30, Laxmisagar-1, Mutation Khata No. 1593/1005, Shitibhan Plot No. 2534, Area Ac 0.096 Decs, KISSAM-Gharabari-1 which corresponding to Khata No. 1927, Plot No. 2534 which further corresponding to G.A. Plot No. A/32, Drawing No. C/3654, measuring an extent Dimension and Area (55 X 80) Ac. 0.096 Decimals approximately. Bounded by : North - Conservancy Lane, South - Road, East - Plot No.A/31, West - Plot No. A/33.	a) Rs. 3,50,00,000.00 b) Rs. 35,00,000.00 c) Rs. 1,00,000.00	a) 10.08.2023 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) (with unlimited extension of 5 min) b) 09.08.2023 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 02.08.2023 & 03.08.2023 (10.00 A.M to 1.00. P.M.) d) 21.06.2023 (Symbolic Possession)
2.	Loan A/c. No. : X0HEBHU0002551992 <b>Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagor :</b> 1. Purna Chandra Samantray Plot No. 1106, Mahavir Nagar, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 006. Also at : Plot No. 581/3560, Madhupatna Unit No. 32, Cuttack Sadar, Cuttack, Pin - 753 010. And also at : Rahangorada, Adhena, Rahangorada, Puri, Odisha, Pin - 252 121. 2. Bishnu Priya Samantray Plot No. 1106, Mahavir Nagar, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 006. Also at : Plot No. 1127/2036, Lotus Enclave, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin - 751006. 3. Rangalata Samantray Plot No. 1106, Mahavir Nagar, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 006. 4. Rangalata Samantray Plot No. 1127/2036, Jaydurga Nagar, Bhorimkhal, Budheswari Colony (MC), Khorda, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 006. 5. Ms. New Kalika South Indian Hotel Plot No. 661, Bomikhal, Cuttack Road, Ward 31, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751 006.	12.01.2023 Rs. 29,27,403.00 as on 11.01.2023	All that piece and parcel of the property and construction thereon situated in Dist- Cuttack, P.S. - Madhupatna No. 7, Tahasil & D.S.R.O. - Cuttack Sadar, Tahasil No. 231, Mouza - Cuttack Sahar, Unit No. 32 Madhupatna, Mutation Khata No. 861/518, Plot No. 581/3560, KISSAM - Gharabari One, Area Ac. 0.020 dec, Hal Khata No. 818, Hal Plot No. 581. Butted and bounded by : North - by Road, South - by Govt. Land, East - by Building (Mr. Panda), West - by Vacate Land.	a) Rs. 38,00,000.00 b) Rs. 3,80,000.00 c) Rs. 25,000.00	a) 10.08.2023 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) (with unlimited extension of 5 min) b) 09.08.2023 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 02.08.2023 & 03.08.2023 (10.00 A.M to 1.00. P.M.) d) 27.04.2023 (Symbolic Possession)

1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notice>. For details, help, procedure and online training on E-auction prospective bidders may contact M/s. 4 Closure; Contact : Jaya Prakash Reddy, Contact No.: 81240 00064, Mr. Muhammed Rahees, Contact No. : 81240 00030, E-mail ID : [info@bankauctions.in](mailto:info@bankauctions.in), Odisha Contact No. : 98365 22775, 79787 44193.

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notice> to take part in E-auction.

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Date : 06.07.2023  
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Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited  
Authorised Officer

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THE MOTHER

## Biden's India Bet

The unprecedented lovefest between the United States and India has been striking and, frankly, puzzling. Following the pageantry of US President Joe Biden hosting a state dinner for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and of US Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy inviting Modi to address a joint session of Congress for a second time, one wonders if America is giving away the store and getting very little in return.

After all, symbols such as these are the least of it. Among other things, the US is transferring sensitive military technology to a non-treaty partner, nudging its companies to invest in India, easing visa restrictions for Indian nationals, and desisting from publicly chastising Modi's government for its democratic backsliding. In effect, America has drawn India into a one-sided quasi-alliance: it seems to have taken one, at most one-and-a-half, to tango. The strategic rationale, of course, is the need to counter-balance China. But what is the Indian quo for the American quid?

The former US diplomat Ashley J. Tellis believes the US is making a "bad bet," because India will never participate in coalition warfare with the US against China unless its interests are directly threatened. In a Sino-American conflict over Taiwan, India would remain on the sidelines, despite the generosity the US has shown it. Even US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has acknowledged this.

But India experts such as Pratap Bhanu Mehta, a former vice chancellor of Ashoka University, point out that the US will increasingly need India as its own hegemony erodes. The new axis of autocracies includes not only China, Russia, and Iran but also Saudi Arabia and even Turkey.

Faced with this geopolitical development, the US at least needs to forestall any potential cooling with India, lest it find itself more isolated. Not only is America's adversary count rising, but its allies leave something to be desired. Europe is predictably inconsistent and ambivalent, especially when it comes to China; and though Japan and South Korea are reliable allies, their demographic decline deprives them of real heft.

But more to the point, it is not clear that the US needs to go to such lengths to prevent India from joining the axis of autocracies. After all, China is a hostile neighbour, Saudi Arabia is a global financier of militant Islam, and Russia - its primary military supplier - is headed for disorder. Partnership with such countries is not remotely enticing for India. Likewise, India, with its influential diaspora and basic congruence of economic and military interests, has little to gain by openly snubbing the US.

So, the US is giving away quite a lot either for something that India will never sign up to (military engagement against China), or for something that India would do regardless of the enticements on offer. What are American strategists thinking?

One plausible explanation is simply the economic arithmetic of hard power: Democrats and Republicans alike have concluded that China poses an existential threat that cannot be neutralised, only counterbalanced. According to the International Monetary Fund, America's GDP in 2023 will be \$26.9 trillion, whereas China's will be \$19.4 trillion (at market exchange rates). But over the next two decades, that 30% American edge will likely narrow.

Yet for all the euphoria around India's growth prospects, it is still a long way from matching Chinese economic and financial capabilities. China's GDP is more than five times greater than India's at market exchange rates, and about 2.7 times greater at purchasing-power-parity rates. Moreover, China's military spending is 3-4 times greater, and its foreign exchange reserves (to the extent that they can now be measured) are easily 6-7 times larger. The multiple on China's total trade over India's is similar, and its lead in global development lending is astronomical.

China's overwhelming economic advantage helps to explain why India often appears helpless in the face of provocations like China's extensive land grabs along the countries' border in the Himalayas. Such episodes make it painfully evident that India is no counterbalance to China.

But America's wager is based not on the present, but on the expectation that China and India's fortunes may change over the long term. Owing to longstanding structural and demographic challenges, not to mention Chinese President Xi Jinping's increasingly repressive approach to the private sector, China's long-run growth rate could well fall to about 2.5%. At the same time, India could continue to grow at perhaps 5-6% per year.

Though by no means guaranteed, this scenario is plausible if India develops better policies and stronger institutions. It would not eliminate the large China-India hard-power differential, but it could narrow the gap enough to force China to re-calibrate its decision-making. For example, if China's five-fold GDP advantage over India was to be halved over the next two decades, Chinese leaders could no longer afford to discount the possibility of India retaliating on trade or along the border.

Moreover, the future is a process, not some hypothetical endpoint. If Chinese growth were to wane and India's were to remain durably robust, its relative attractiveness as a partner, market, and investment destination would increase. In that case, the strategic calculus would change well before India reached a size sufficient to counterbalance China.

True, whether India can grow at 6% will be determined by Indian, not American, policymakers. But the US believes it is providing an important nudge at a critical geopolitical moment to boost India's fortunes. With China becoming more aggressive as its long-term growth prospects are revised downward, US actions also could encourage more capital to exit the Chinese market. And while re-shoring is the preferred outcome, the US will not object if fleeing capital decamps to India. US actions could also help upgrade India's military capabilities. In effect, the US is proclaiming to the world that India is "one of us." The fact that India is being coy about openly embracing that status ultimately may be less important.

Properly understood, Biden's "India Bet" is not about securing Indian military support in a hypothetical standoff with China, nor is it designed to prevent India from drifting toward the axis of autocracies. Rather, it is a calculated prod aimed at narrowing the real and perceived power gap between India and China. The smaller their hard-power imbalance, the more effective the counter-balance for America vis-à-vis China.

*The writer, Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Global Development, is currently advising the Tamil Nadu government on power sector reform and the green transition.*

### WISDOM CORNER

- He who loves, flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free and nothing holds him back. **HENRI MATISSE**
- To love abundantly is to live abundantly, and to love forever is to live forever. **HENRY DRUMMOND**
- Love cures people - both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it. **KARL A. MENNINGER**



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

### THE UPCOMING MISSION IS EXPECTED TO AUGMENT THE UNFINISHED TASKS OF THE TWO EARLIER MISSIONS



Arvind Subramanian

### America's wager is based not on the present, but on the expectation that China and India's fortunes may change over the long term

### SPECTRUM POLITICS

## Issues prevail over personality



Dhurjati Mukherjee

### WHAT IS STRIKING IN A PLURALIST DEMOCRACY IS WHY SHOULD A NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY PORTRAY JUST ONE LEADER?

A journalist and BJP MP, in a recent article, mentioned that the party has to overcome Opposition unity with "an aggressive marketing of Modi, his domestic achievement and his tall global standing." What is striking in a pluralist democracy is why should a national political party portray just one leader? It's clearly emerging that the BJP will be fighting the elections with Modi as the mascot and the harbinger of all development. Obviously, this is being viewed as a trend towards autocracy mirrored in an individual, a growing tendency criticised globally.

The other point is the so-called "global standing of Modi," wherein number of reports have questioned his 'autocratic' mode of functioning, fomenting Hindu nationalism and exploiting the minority communities, especially Muslims. The functioning aids spreading social disharmony, jealousy and violence through what is commonly said to be hate speeches.

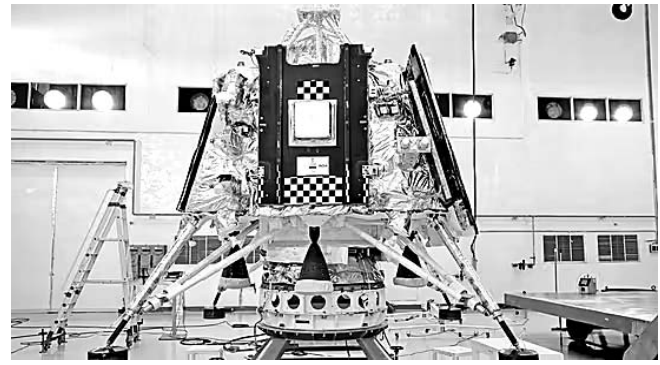
Apart from 75 members of the US Congress who wrote to President Biden urging him to discuss with Prime Minister Modi the need to protect human

In a significant move, India is poised to embark on a new mission to the Moon with the launch of its Chandrayaan-3 on 13 July 2023 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The prime goal of the mission will be to land some of its crucial instruments safely on the Moon in a landmark demonstration of technology. The last mission of the series under the name Chandrayaan-2 was sent on July 22, 2019. This mission basically consisted of two modules: one Rover module and the other Lander module. It was inserted into the Moon's orbit on August 22, 2019 with the Orbiter module successfully revolving around the Moon. However, the prime task assigned to the mission was to softland its Vikram lander and to release the Pragyan rover from it onto the Moon's surface for physical exploration. However, in an unfortunate turn of event, the Vikram lander crash-landed on the Moon on September 6, 2019 during the descent stage and lost communication with the ground control. Thus, the Chandrayaan-2 mission which cost India Rs 603 crore, hugely fell short of our aspirations and met with partial success only.

India started the Moon race with the launch of the Chandrayaan-1 mission on October 22, 2008. The spacecraft was inserted into lunar orbit on November 8, 2008 and started orbiting the Moon collecting valuable information like the Moon's mineralogical resources through its onboard remote-sensing instruments. In a landmark achievement, a Moon Impact Probe was ejected from the orbiting spacecraft to be deliberately crashed on the lunar surface placing the country's national flag on the Moon making India the fourth country in the world to accomplish the feat after the USA, Russia and China. Unfortunately, after successfully completing 3400 orbits, the spacecraft went out of control

on August 9, 2009. One of the path-breaking achievements of the mission, however, was the discovery of water molecules on the Moon which scientists of NASA and ISRO concluded after analysing the data collected by the mission's orbiter module. Chandrayaan-1 mission cost India Rs 386 crore. Now, Chandrayaan-3 is set to accomplish yet another stupendous feat of soft-landing on our celestial neighbour for safely delivering its scientific instruments on the lunar surface which was not achieved by the two previous missions. If India could do so, it would again be the fourth country in the world to achieve the feat after the USA, Russia and China. While the Chandrayaan-1 mission had no provision for a soft-landing on the lunar surface, its successor Chandrayaan-2 failed in achieving the feat. Hence the upcoming mission is expected to augment the unfinished tasks of the two earlier missions and fulfill India's long-cherished aspirations of a flawless touchdown on the lunar surface.

However, soft-landing on the Moon is practically an uphill task and a difficult technology to master. When the craft would be hurtling at an incredible pace towards the Moon accelerated under its gravity, its velocity must be quickly brought down



Soft-landing on the Moon is practically an uphill task and a difficult technology to master

to a safe level and almost to zero on touchdown in order to enable it to have a soft landing. Otherwise, the craft will crash-land on the Moon damaging valuable instruments. However, one of the difficulties in this task is that the Moon has no atmosphere like the Earth and, hence, conventional parachutes could not be deployed to retard the craft's velocity. Rather, the craft is provided with a number of retro-rockets whose engines continuously fire in opposite direction of the craft's velocity to slow down its motion. This itself is a complicated exercise as firing of engines have to be controlled in a precise and synchronous manner so as to achieve the desired reduction in speed. Because of the complexities involved in the procedure, only three countries have so far been able to accomplish controlled soft-landings on the Moon and that is why the earlier Chandrayaan-2 mission failed while trying to achieve the feat. Even just before the Chandrayaan-2, an Israeli spacecraft Beresheet's lander, during its descent, crashed onto the lunar surface on April 11, 2019 and lost contact with ground control. Considering the difficulties in the technology, it is no surprise to note that, of the 30 soft-landing attempts made by various space agencies of the

world so far, more than one-third have ended in failure. ISRO Chairman, S Somnath had asserted that the shortcomings of the previous missions will be taken care of in the design of the current mission to enable a flawless performance. Once the craft lands safely on the Moon, a rover will be rolling out of it on the vast void lunar surface for a physical exploration mission. Chandrayaan-3 has not been provided with an orbiter module as it can still use the orbiter facility of its predecessor (which is still active in the lunar orbit) for communication with the Earth.

The cost of the mission is Rs 615 crore. For a developing country like India, spending a staggering amount like this for exploration of an alien body should bring some tangible benefits for the nation.

In recent times, space has become a new avenue for humanity for furthering its scientific pursuits needed to boost its economy by harnessing crucial space-based services and applications. One direct application of space-based platforms is the fleet of communication satellites deployed in space that have been helping us immensely in global communication. Forecasting of weather and remote-sensing of Earth's surface for meteorology and disaster management and for mineralogical mapping have directly benefited humanity. For continuing our march in space exploration, there is no doubt the Moon will be an important destination. Moon's treasure trove of mineral resources and, more importantly, its strategic significance for establishing a nation's space supremacy, calls for sustained lunar missions for any country.

Chandrayaan-3 is a step forward for realising this far-reaching goal.

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Chandrayaan-3 is a step forward for realising this far-reaching goal.

*The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhopal.*

### Caribbean crisis

Sir, The failure of two-time champions West Indies to qualify for the 2023 Cricket World Cup has shocked cricket connoisseurs. After the greats who graced successive Windies' teams hanged their boots one by one, their replacements, though not short of talent, were either complacent or really didn't have the wherewithal to go all the way. Frequent run-ins between the players and the cricket board didn't help either. The advent of T20 ate into the motivation of modern day Windies cricketers because quick games meant little patience and, of course, more money. When horses for courses theory never really mattered for the management or captain, what exactly can a player do? Lack of strong mentors who could guide youngsters in hours of crisis compounded the problems. All hope, however, is not lost for Caribbean cricket. It can rise like a phoenix provided there are fresh thoughts and innovative ideas from self-less individuals.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

### Balancing blocs

Sir, This year India was the host of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired this year's summit virtually and the member states agreed on various issues. The groupings called for a multi-polar world and decided to act on terrorism, the Afghanistan crisis, the economy collectively. Iran was added as a new member this year. SCO is now a nine-member grouping often seen as a counter to the West. India through this organisation seeks to establish good relations with the Central Asian nations. New Delhi also wants to maintain peace in the region through the cooperation of the member states of the SCO. The members like Russia, China, and Iran do not have a good relationship with the USA and its Western allies, so it is challenging for the Indian side to balance between the two blocs. India is among the few countries which shares strategic ties with both the blocs. New Delhi has to manage both sides strategically which will help India evolve as a global leader.

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

# Schools reopen in Manipur after 2 months

**ATTENDANCE THIN ON FIRST DAY**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, July 5:** After remaining shut for more than a couple of months because of ethnic clashes, schools reopened across Manipur Wednesday.

Though attendance in most institutes was extremely low on the first day, students, parents and guardians welcomed the state government's decision to resume classes.

Chief Minister N Biren Singh had Monday announced the government's decision to reopen schools up to Class VIII from July 5.

Most students with whom PTI interacted were happy to get back to school.

Class I student Linthoi said, "I am very happy. Finally, after

a two-month wait, I will be able to meet my friends and teachers. Moreover, I will learn new things."

She said the shutting down of schools had made her life extremely idle and boring.

Several students said the state government should take steps to ensure that schools remain open for at least a few hours daily even if the situation is tense.

Bhabesh Sharma, father of a Class IV student, hoped that the situation remains normal for classes to continue.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Education is the key and I sincerely hope that peace returns to the state," he said.

He, however, added that students' security remains his

concern. Laishram Ibochouba, parent of a Class V boy, appreciated the government's decision to resume classes.

"I hope the government takes safety measures for students in case of any untoward incident," he said.

"I am not scared to send my kids to school because the institute lies in the heart of Imphal. But it will be great if the government makes arrangements for the safety of students," he said.

Upendro Pukhrabam, whose daughter studies in Class II at UNACCO, said, "I sent my kid to school. The unrest is mostly on the outskirts of Imphal valley and Greater Imphal area has been mostly peaceful. It's time we gradually return to normal life."

Headmistress of Wangkhei High School RK Ranjita Devi welcomed the government's move to resume classes.

"With schools remaining closed since the first week of May, most of the students could not concentrate in their studies and their minds remained diverted," Devi said.

She said attendance on the first day in her school was just around 10 per cent. "I am hopeful that it will increase in the days to come," she added.

"We cannot neglect the future of students. This is the time they acquire new knowledge. Therefore, we should try our level best to continue with regular classes," she said, adding that the school will take necessary steps for the security of students.

She said no student will be allowed to go home if any violent incident occurs when classes are going on.

"We will allow students to go home only if their parents come to pick them up," she added.

Devi said since there is a ban on internet, online classes are also not possible. "Due to internet ban, online classes are not possible. So in the interest of students, we will give assignments and homework during regular classes," she said.

Sister Binda, principal of St George's School, said, "Less than 100 students turned up for classes on the first day, but we expect the numbers to rise in the coming days. Many of the schools are serving as relief centres and some well-known schools in Imphal have central forces stationed in them. Under such circumstances, it will take some more time for things to get normal."

**PRESTIGE FIGHT**

## Battle lines drawn as TMC looks to wrest Nandigram



*The Purba Medinipur Zilla Parishad, under which Nandigram falls, has been a pocket borough of the TMC since 2008*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nandigram (WB), July 5:** In Nandigram, where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee faced a narrow defeat at the hands of her rival, the echoes of a resolute fight reverberates once again as the upcoming panchayat polls poses a crucial challenge for the ruling party which seeks to storm its opponent's stronghold.

Nandigram first came into prominence when Banerjee had led a movement against land acquisition by the then Left Front government in 2007 and later when her erstwhile protégé Suwendu Adhikari challenged her in elections in 2021.

The saffron camp, on the other hand, is pinning hopes on former local TMC leaders-turned-independent candidates to turn the tide in favour of the party. "For us, the challenge is to regain the lost ground in Nandigram as this is not just any other place for us but a political pilgrimage for all those who believe in the ideology of Mamata Banerjee. The BJP had won the assembly

■ With no industries since the villagers' uprising against a proposed chemical hub, Nandigram has primarily an agricultural economy supplying rice, vegetables and fresh fish to adjoining areas, skirted as it is by the Hooghly and Haldi rivers

■ Control of the village council is not just about political turf war but also about livelihood and economy, as people here mainly depend on the government and panchayat to earn their livelihood

segment by using unethical means. But Nandigram would teach BJP a lesson this time," Sheikh Sufyan, vice-president of Purba Medinipur Zilla Parishad, told PTI.

The anti-land acquisition movement veteran, who has been denied a ticket this time, conceded that several aspirants, who were denied tickets and are fighting as independents, might prove to be a problem in some areas but added that they won't be a deciding factor in the polls.

The Purba Medinipur Zilla Parishad, under which Nandigram falls, has been a pocket borough of the TMC since 2008, when it first snatched the district, which has a considerable minority population, from the Left Front. Since then, there has been no looking back for the party.

The party won the 2013 and 2018 rural polls in the area with massive margins, with the last one being mainly uncontested. However, the loss in 2021 to Suwendu Adhikari, a former TMC leader who crossed over to the BJP, still rankles for the ruling party.

In the two blocks of Nandigram -- block 1 and 2 -- which have around 40 and 17 per cent minority population respectively, the TMC has decided to put up new faces in 80 per cent of seats leading to a contest as independents, thus exposing the fissures in the party ranks. The BJP, for its part, hopes this rebellion will help it by dividing votes.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the BJP consolidated its position, with its candidate clinching over 5.34 lakh votes, followed by its victory in Nandigram and six other assembly segments in the district in the 2021 assembly polls.

Adhikari who was earlier Banerjee's lieutenant during the agitation here against the chemical hub, switched to the BJP in December 2020 and fought successfully against his former mentor in assembly polls in 2021.

However, the key to victory lies with the independents and the CPI(M), which for the first time in the last ten years, has been able to put up candidates in around 70 per cent of the village council seats.



RAIN RESPITE: A man rows a boat as dark clouds hover in the sky during monsoon season, in Nadia, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

## MCC breach: Adhikari moves Calcutta HC against Mamata

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, July 5:** Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari Wednesday filed a petition at the Calcutta High Court accusing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in the run up to the panchayat polls, scheduled for July 8.

Despite the MCC being in place, Mamata Banerjee is participating at a mass-outreach programme christened 'Sorasori Mukhyomntri' (chief minister directly), wherein the people convey their grievances to the chief minister directly, he said in the plea.

It is learnt that Adhikari had originally filed the petition at Calcutta High Court's single-judge bench of Justice Amrita Sinha Tuesday.

But Justice Sinha refused to

admit that petition and the BJP leader to approach the division bench of Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya in the matter.

On Wednesday, Adhikari drew attention of the said division-bench of the Calcutta High Court and his petition was admitted there.

The matter will come up for hearing Thursday. According to Adhikari, the same number is used for the new mass-outreach programme that was used in a similar programme introduced before the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls called 'Didike bolol' (Tell the chief minister).

While 'Didike bolol' was a political campaign programme, how the same number can be used in case of 'Sorasori Mukhyomntri', which is an administrative initiative, asked Adhikari.

**PANCHAYAT POLLS**

## Bengal's borders with Bihar, J'khand, Odisha to be sealed

**THE RULING TRINAMOOL CONGRESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN VOCAL ABOUT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES BRINGING IN ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS FROM NEIGHBOURING STATES**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, July 5:** West Bengal's borders with Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha will be sealed ahead of the July 8 panchayat polls in the state, according to a decision taken by the state police.

A decision to this effect was taken to prevent anti-social elements from the other states crossing over to the poll-bound state with arms and explosives.

Before every election there are instances of anti-social elements importing huge quantities of arms and explosives especially from Munger in Bihar, which is traditionally notorious as the hub for illegal arms manufacturing, a senior official of the state police said.

Although it is not yet clear till when these inter-state borders will remain sealed, state police sources said that in all probability this will continue till the elections results are announced.

The ruling Trinamool Congress had always been vocal about the opposition parties

bringing in anti-social elements from neighbouring states before any important event and creating tension in the state.

The ruling party has especially targeted BJP on this count. The Munger-theory surfaced this year after the clashes over Ram Navami processions this year when the Trinamool alleged that individuals from Munger came with arms to participate at the procession.

In fact, recently West Bengal Police and Bihar Police have initiated a coordinated approach in taking action against such inter-state arms smuggling rackets.

Information had been exchanged between the authorities of the two state police forces on this count.

## Mob sets IRB personnel's house on fire after clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, July 5:** The house of an Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) personnel was torched by a mob in Manipur's Thoubal district after he foiled the attempts of rioters to loot firearms from the police armory, officials said Wednesday.

The incident took place at Samaram Tuesday night after a 27-year-old man, identified as Ronaldo, was killed in a clash when a 700-800-strong mob tried to storm the camp of the 3rd IRB at Wangbal, 4 km away, to loot firearms from the police armory.

The jawan performed his duty well and did not allow the rioters to loot the police weapons store, security officials said. He was part of the IRB unit guarding the armory, they added.

Police said that four bunkers were destroyed in Kangpokpi, Imphal West and Churachandpur districts Wednesday by a combined team of the state police and central forces.

Firing between groups of

unidentified gunmen was reported during the day in Luangshangol Phaileng area along the border of Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts. Security forces controlled the situation, the police said in a statement.

On Tuesday, the forces used teargas shells and rubber bullets at first when the IRB camp was attacked. But as the armed mob opened fire, the forces shot back, the officials said.

The mob also blocked the roads leading to the camp at multiple locations to prevent reinforcements from reaching there, but the forces moved through, they said.

The mob attacked a team of the Assam Rifles that was on the way to the camp. They fired on the personnel injuring a jawan, and torched their vehicle, officials said.

The jawan was shot in the leg, they said. After Ronaldo was shot, he was taken away by the mob to the Thoubal district hospital, but was later referred to a hospital in Imphal as his condition was critical. He died on the way to the state capital.

## Manipur stares at food shortage as farming hit

**WHILE SOME FARMERS IN THE OUTLYING AREAS OF IMPHAL ARE TENDING TO THEIR FIELDS DESPITE FEAR OF BEING SHOT AT BY MILITANTS FROM THE NEARBY HILLS, MANY ARE ABSTAINING FROM FARMING IN THE PEAK SEASON FOR FEAR OF THEIR LIVES**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, July 5:** Agriculture has been affected in Manipur as many farmers are unable to tend to their fields due to the ongoing ethnic violence, and if the situation does not improve, food production in the northeastern state will be affected, a senior official said Wednesday.

Department of Agriculture Director N Gojendro told PTI that farmers were unable to cultivate at least 5,127 hectares of agricultural land, leading to a loss of 15,437.23 metric tonnes till June 28.

If the farmers are unable to cultivate paddy this monsoon season, the loss will increase by

the end of July. The department has, however, readied fertilisers and seeds that can be harvested in a shorter period of time and required lesser amount of water, he said.

There are around 2-3 lakh farmers in the state cultivating paddy on 1.95 lakh hectares of agricultural land.

Thoubal district has the highest yield per hectare in the state, he said.

Farmers fear that there might be a shortage of locally grown 'Meitei Rice', leading to price rise next year, if farming is not carried out in full swing in all areas by the end of this month.

While some farmers in the outlying areas of Imphal are tending



to their fields despite fear of being shot at by militants from the nearby hills, many are abstaining from farming in the peak season for fear of their lives.

Thokhom Milan, a farmer from Moidangpokpi area in

Bishnupur district, which has seen many such happenings, said, "Incidents of firing on farmers from bunkers of militants on hilltops has paralysed paddy cultivation in the periphery of Imphal Valley."

"Some of us go to the fields with fear in our hearts but we have to cultivate else we will go hungry an entire year," he said.

The 40-year-old farmer said lesser food production this year will mean shortages and higher prices of 'Meitei Rice' next year.

Sabit Kumar, another farmer in Moirang Khunou in the same district, said, "Sowing and cultivation of the indigenous variety of rice is done in June and July, while harvesting are done five months later in November-end."

Chief Minister N Biren Singh had earlier said that 2,000 state forces have been deployed in sensitive areas to patrol and provide security to farmers during cultivation.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPALITY, NABARANGPUR

No.2383/Date: 04.07.2023

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No.C-741:Nabarangpur Municipality invites tender in sealed cover (02 envelope system) from the experienced, competent, eligible, registered, Firms/Consultancy/Joint-venture/Consortium/Asso. Cations for the work: Conducting Drone Survey, Hydrographic Survey for "Rejuvenation of Water bodies" under Jurisdiction of Nabarangpur Municipality having valid GST, PAN card, Firm Registration Certificate. The prescribed bid documents /related terms & condition shall be available at Nabarangpur Municipality office on payment of Rs.600/- from 05.07.2023 to 11.07.2023 during the office hour and can be downloaded from following websites i.e www.nabarangpur.nic.in and https://nawarangpuram.in from 05.07.2023 to 11.07.2023. Bidders shall furnish the paper cost in shape of Demand Draft for an amount of Rs.600/- of any nationalized bank/scheduled Commercial bank in favour of Executive Officer, Nabarangpur Municipality payable at Nabarangpur. Sealed Tenders should reach to the office of the undersigned before 5.00 PM on 12.07.2023 by Regd. Post/Speed post / by hand. Which will be opened on 13.07.2023 in the office of the Municipal Council in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives in any at the time. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./-Executive Officer, Nabarangpur Municipality OIPR-13230/11/0016/2324



1. Sailors participate in the Hyderabad National Sailing Week 2023 at Secunderabad Sailing Club, Hussain Sagar in Hyderabad, Telangana



Audience members sing along during the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular at the Hatch Shell



People covered with San Fermin's red color protest against animal cruelty before the start of the San Fermin festival at Plaza del Ayuntamiento square, in Pamplona, northern Spain



Rear Admiral Nishiyama Takahiro (R) of the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force during the seventh edition of the bilateral Japan-India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23) hosted by the Indian Navy, in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh



Combo picture shows craters formed on roads in Jaipur (top-L), New Delhi (top-R), Ahmedabad (bottom-L) and Mumbai, owing to rains



6. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar inspects the construction of Ganga Path in Patna



Children play as sea waves lash the shore during monsoon season in Kochi. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an Orange alert for all districts of Kerala except Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram for the day





## of the day quote

The BJP government of Madhya Pradesh should take action against the criminal not only by invoking NSA but also by confiscating or demolishing properties owned by him. It also should not shield the accused

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

The LG made an announcement about giving land to 1.99 lakh landless people in JK. Doubts and concerns have come to the fore as to who these landless people in Jammu and Kashmir are

MEHBOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

The actions of the Left government against the media and media personnel clearly showed its political vendetta against those who expose the alleged wrongdoings of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led dispensation

PRAKASH JAVADEKER | EX-IB&B MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Lightning strikes kill 23 in Bihar

Patna: At least 23 people were killed due to lightning strikes across Bihar in the last 24 hours, an official said Wednesday. Rohtas district reported six deaths, the highest number, followed by three each in Jehanabad, Buxar and Jamui; two each in Gaya, Banka and Bhagalpur; and one each in Aurangabad and Katihar. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has expressed condolences and has announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakhs to the family members of the deceased. The SDMA has warned people to avoid going to the rooftop of buildings. The SDMA has been appealing to people, especially those living in rural areas, to avoid going to agricultural fields or stand under the trees, electric poles or temporary houses made of clay, during heavy rain.

### Firing at Delhi's Tis Hazari court

New Delhi: A firing incident was reported in the Tis Hazari court premises here Wednesday, police said, adding that two groups of lawyers were allegedly involved in opening fire. No one was injured in the incident, they said. In a video of the incident being circulated on social media, a person can be seen firing in the air, while others are throwing stones and wooden planks.

### Man forced wife to dress like porn star

New Delhi: A man here has been booked for allegedly forcing his 30-year-old wife to watch porn and dress up like pornstars, police said Wednesday. The woman, a resident of East Rohtash Nagar, alleged that her husband is addicted to porn. The couple had got married in 2020, police said. In her complaint, the woman also accused her husband and his family of demanding dowry, and mentally and physically harassing her, police said.

### SIU raids houses of six terrorists

Kishtwar/Jammu: The Special Investigation Unit of the Jammu and Kashmir Police Wednesday raided houses of six terrorists at various places in Kishtwar district in connection with a terror funding case, officials said. "The SIU of Kishtwar Police again carried out raids at multiple locations in Kishtwar District in the house of terrorists who are operating from POK and Pakistan," SSP Kishtwar Khalil Poswal said.



In the BJP rule, there are only empty claims and empty words about tribal interests. Why doesn't the government take real steps to stop atrocities on tribals?

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

## SC RELIEF FOR TEESTA SETALVAD

The Supreme Court Wednesday extended interim protection from arrest till July 19 to activist Teesta Setalvad in a case linked to the 2002 post-Godhra riots. A bench of Justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna and Dipankar Datta issued notice to the Gujarat government on the appeal filed by Setalvad against the Gujarat High Court order



# Want to become CM: Ajit Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/New Delhi, July 5: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar Wednesday said he aspired to become the CM of the state and also took a jibe at his 83-year-old uncle asking when will the Maratha strongman retire from active politics, as he appeared to be ahead in the numbers game for control of the NCP after its vertical split.

As the warring Pawar camps held separate meetings in Mumbai in a show of strength, the remarks by 63-year-old Ajit Pawar, who has never hidden his chief ministerial ambitions, is certain to unsettle Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, whose Sena-BJP coalition government completed one year last week. Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnis, a former chief minister, is also a deputy chief minister.

"I was sworn in deputy CM five times. It is a record but the vehicle stops there, doesn't proceed further. I feel from the bottom of my heart that I should become pramukh (cm) of the state. I have some things which I want to implement and for that becoming pramukh (CM) is essential," Pawar told a meeting convened by him in Bhujbal Knowledge City in suburban Bandra. As many as 32 of the 53



Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule hits back at her rebel cousin Ajit Pawar, saying she would not tolerate a single word spoken against her father

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MLAs attended the meeting called by the Ajit Pawar group, while 18 MLAs were present at the conclave addressed by the NCP chief, sources in both factions said.

Addressing separate meetings, their first after the July 2 split in the 24-year-old party, Sharad Pawar criticised his nephew for joining the Shiv Sena-BJP government as they took jibes at each other over the octogenarian politician's age and use of his photo.

Surrounded by NCP workers, including 32 of the party's 53 MLAs, Ajit Pawar, who took oath as deputy CM on July 2 along with eight other party leaders who also joined the government, suggested that his uncle should give way for the younger generation.

A statement issued Wednesday on behalf of the Ajit Pawar-led faction also said that Praful Patel, who has deserted Sharad Pawar, continues to be the NCP working president. The NCP has also decided to appoint Ajit Pawar as the

The factional fight of the NCP also reached the doorstep of the EC with the group led by Ajit Pawar filing over 40 affidavits of MLAs and MPs in his support

The Sharad Pawar camp has filed a caveat with the poll authority urging it to hear them first before passing any directive in connection with the factional fight, EC sources said in Delhi

leader of its Legislative Party in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and this decision was also ratified by the resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of NCP MLAs, the statement said.

The veteran politician, who has battled many crisis in the six decades of his political career, objected to his big photo adorning the stage at the meeting convened by the Ajit Pawar group, said those using his image are aware that they have nothing else to show.

On the Ajit Pawar-led faction approaching the EC and staking claim to the party symbol, the four-time chief minister of Maharashtra and a former union minister assured his supporters he won't allow anyone to snatch the party symbol.



SPACE RACE: Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft being mated with LVM3 ahead of its launch, at the Satish Dhawan Space Station, in Sriharikota, Wednesday PTI PHOTO

## AIMPLB sends objections to Law Commission on UCC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 5: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board on Wednesday said it has sent its objections on Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to the Law Commission and demanded that tribals and religious minorities be kept out of the purview of such a statute.

The working committee of the Board had approved the draft response prepared on UCC in the executive meeting June 27 and, Wednesday, it was presented for discussion in the virtual general meeting of the Board, the spokesman of the Board, Kasim Rasool Ilyas, told PTI. This report was unanimously approved, after which it has been sent to the Law Commission, he said.

In a statement, the Board gave several arguments in support of its stand. "National integrity, safety and security and fraternity are best preserved and maintained if we maintain the diversity of our country by permitting minorities and tribal communities to be governed by their own personal laws," the statement issued by the office secretary of the Board,

Mohammad Waqaruddin, said. It said that the fundamental religious book of Muslims, "being the holy Quran, Sunnah, fiqh (Islamic law) in the form of religious texts, which are matters of articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution, mandate its believers to follow the injunctions and the same are non-negotiable terms.

"Personal relationships of Muslims, guided by their personal laws, are directly derived from the holy Quran and Islamic laws and this aspect is linked with their identity. Muslims in India will not be agreeable to lose this identity of which there is space within the constitutional framework of our country," the statement said. It said they were making this submission for multiple reasons because though the issue is purely legal, it has been fodder for politics and media-driven propaganda. This matter becomes further important because this Commission's predecessor had examined the very same issue and reached a conclusion that UCC is neither necessary nor desirable, the statement said.

## Ten years of RI for 10 in Tabrez Ansari lynching case

Seraikela (Jharkhand): A court in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharswan district Wednesday sentenced 10 people to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment in the Tabrez Ansari lynching case of 2019. Accusing him of trying to steal a motorcycle, a mob beat up Ansari June 17 of that year. A video showed that the 24-year-old man was purportedly made to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Jai Hanuman' in the Seraikela Kharswan district of Jharkhand. He died five days later. The incident had led to a political furore at the national level. Additional District Judge-I Amit Shekhar had convicted the 10 and acquitted two other accused persons due to lack of evidence June 27 last. Pronouncing the quantum of punishment on Wednesday amid tight security through video conferencing, the court awarded 10 years of rigorous imprisonment to all the convicts under IPC Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder). The judge also slapped a fine of ₹15,000 on each of them. The incident in Jharkhand, which was ruled by the BJP then, had triggered a political storm at the national level.

## Data protection Bill gets Cabinet nod

THE BILL PROPOSES TO LEVY PENALTY OF UP TO ₹250 CRORE ON ENTITIES FOR EVERY INSTANCE OF VIOLATION OF NORMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: The Union Cabinet Wednesday gave its nod to the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill, which will be tabled during the monsoon session of Parliament, according to a source.

The bill aims to make entities like internet companies, mobile apps, and business houses more accountable and answerable about collection, storage and processing of the data of citizens as part of "Right to Privacy".

"The Cabinet has approved a draft of the DPDP bill. It will be tabled in Parliament in the upcoming session," the source said. The monsoon session of Parliament is scheduled to be held from July 20 to August 11.

The work on the data protection bill started after the Supreme Court in August 27 ruled that "Right to Privacy" is a fundamental right.

The government had in August withdrawn the personal data protection bill, which was first presented in late 2019, and issued a new version of the draft bill in November 2022.

The source did not share changes that have been made in the bill but said that most of the provisions that were present in the draft issued by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (Meity) in November 2022 are part of the approved draft.

The draft was placed before Cabinet after extensive consultation. A total of around 21,660 suggestions were received on the draft and each one of them were considered. Consultations were held with 48 organisations



According to the source, individuals will have the right to seek details about their data collection, storage and processing once the law is implemented

outside the government and 38 within the government before finalising the draft," the source said. Once approved, several entities, both public and private, will need to seek consent from users to collect and process their data. The draft bill had earned criticism around the government getting power to exempt entities from various clauses of the bill. The draft issued by Meity exempted entities notified by the Centre from giving notice to citizens to explain details of purpose of data collection and purpose of processing it.

The source said that there will be an exemption for some government or government-notified entities in special cases like pandemic, law and order etc.,

the source said. When asked about provisions that the draft has to check misuse of data collected by the central and state agencies, the source said there is no blanket exemption to government entities and the bill when enacted as law will evolve gradually.

The source said that the Data Protection Board will resolve issues on a case to case basis. Meity's draft bill had proposed to omit Section 43 A of the IT Act, which relates to the provision for compensation to be paid to victims in case of data protection.

The source said that the Data Protection Board (DPB) will decide on the disputes as per the clause in the Bill but victims will have the right to claim compensation by approaching civil courts.

The bill proposes to levy a penalty of up to ₹250 crore on entities for every instance of violation of norms in the bill.

However, in case multiple people are impacted by the violation of norms then DPB will assess the impact and decide on the scale of the penalty, the source said.

## Man accused of peeing on tribal youth held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, July 5: A man accused of urinating on a tribal youth in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district was arrested Wednesday and amid outrage over the incident and targeting of BJP from across the political spectrum, local authorities razed an illegal part of the house belonging to his father.

The opposition Congress demanded a CBI probe into the urination incident. The accused, Pravesh Shukla, who the Congress claimed is an aide of a BJP MLA, was arrested after the video of the incident surfaced on social media a day earlier. According to a district official, Pravesh Shukla was found to have a criminal background.

The accused was arrested at around 2 am Wednesday on the basis of leads. He is being questioned.

Additional Superintendent of Police Anjulata Patle said. "His father Ramakant Shukla's house was not constructed as per permissions and therefore the illegal portion of it is being demolished," a district official said. Opposition Congress and Mayawati-led BSP had demanded that the BJP government in MP use a bulldozer to demolish Shukla's properties.

Kamleshwar Patel, Congress MLA from Sihawal constituency in Sidhi district, went to Kubri village of the victim Wednesday and launched an indefinite protest for "justice".

Speaking to reporters in Bhopal, former Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kantilal Bhuria claimed the peeing video was a few months old.

In Indore city, Dalits and tribals staged a protest to condemn the peeing incident.

# Cities, villages see decline in air pollution: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 5: India's air pollution mitigation action is hugely concentrated in cities and often ignores the rural parts of the country, a new report said Wednesday.

The report, 'Status of urban and rural air quality exposure at a national scale: A comparative analysis', by Climate Trends revealed that air pollution continues to be a significant problem affecting both rural and urban populations.

According to the analysis, PM 2.5 levels in the rural and urban regions across India are not very different.

While these have witnessed a similar trend of decline over the last few years, levels con-

tinue to be higher than safe limits in most states.

PM 2.5 is fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller. Rural regions saw PM 2.5 levels decline by 19.1 per cent, and urban regions recorded an 18.7 per cent dip in PM 2.5 levels between 2017 and 2022, according to the analysis.

To bring focus on the possible impacts of air pollution on the country's rural population, Climate Trends used Dr Sagnik Dey's PM 2.5 SAANS data (satellite data) and the Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) data for urban and rural classification to analyse the air pollution levels across states between 2017 and 2022.

The analysis also showed that with a reduction of 37.8 per cent



and 38.1 per cent in urban and rural PM 2.5 levels, respectively, Uttar Pradesh has recorded the best progress from 2017 to 2022.

Maharashtra was the worst performing state, with only a dip of 7.7 per cent in its urban PM 2.5 levels, while with a decrease of 8.2 per cent in its rural PM 2.5 levels, Gujarat made the

least progress.

The Union Territories (UTs) of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, too, made little progress, with approximately a 4.7 per cent decrease in PM 2.5 from 2017 to 2022.

With urban PM 2.5 levels up by 0.3 per cent, Chandigarh was the only union territory or state

The analysis also showed that with a reduction of 37.8% and 38.1% in urban and rural PM 2.5 levels, respectively, Uttar Pradesh has recorded the best progress from 2017 to 2022

to see an increase.

The analysis also highlights the value of satellite data in tracking the air pollution problem in the country.

While satellite data has some limitations since it is retrieved from aerosol optical depth (AOD) and not the direct PM2.5 moni-

toring, this 1 km by 1km data set provides a holistic spread across the country, which the expensive ground-based monitoring network of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) stations currently do not cover.

Since rural areas are largely excluded from the air quality monitoring programme, the CAAQMS data supplied to validate the satellite-derived data results in a more homogenised outlook between the urban and rural air pollution levels.

However, the data is widely published in scientific journals and can give a starting point to highlight the need for a better rural monitoring network and for air pollution mitigation efforts to extend beyond the cities.

# international



This is tantamount to accelerating the transformation of Taiwan into a powder keg and pushing the Taiwanese people into the abyss of disaster

TAN KEFEI | DEFENCE MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

## WORLD'S HOTTEST DAY

July 3, was the hottest day ever recorded globally, according to data from the US National Centers for Environmental Prediction. The average global temperature reached 17.01 degrees Celsius (62.62 Fahrenheit), surpassing the August 2016 record of 16.92 degrees Celsius as heatwaves sizzled around the world



## of the day quote

The situation is quite tense. There is a great threat of sabotage by the Kyiv regime, which can be catastrophic in its consequences,

DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

Khalistanis in Canada continue to reach (a) new low in abusing our Charter of Rights and Freedom by promoting violence and hate

CHANDRA ARYA | MP, CANADA

I believe our position is substantially the same. We want to stop illegal immigration

GEORGIA MELONI | PREMIER, ITALY

## GUN CRIMES

# Violence continues to mar Fourth of July in US

AT LEAST TEN DEAD, 38 WOUNDED IN THREE US MASS SHOOTINGS ON THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND CELEBRATING THE US' INDEPENDENCE

REUTERS

Washington, July 5: Ten people were killed and 38 wounded in mass shootings in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Fort Worth ahead of the Fourth of July holiday, officials said, prompting a fresh call from President Joe Biden to pass gun control legislation. In Fort Worth, three people were killed and eight wounded in a mass shooting after a local festival to mark the US Independence Day holiday, police said Tuesday. In a separate mass shooting in

Philadelphia Monday evening, five people were killed and two were wounded, including a 2-year-old boy and 13-year-old boy, both of whom were shot in the legs, when a suspect in body armor and armed with an AR-15 opened fire on strangers, according to local police. The Monday night shootings came a day after two people were shot dead and 28 others injured, about half of them children, in a hail of gunfire at a neighborhood block party in Baltimore. The motives in all three recent shootings remained un-



clear. The United States is struggling with a large number of mass shootings and incidents of gun violence. There have been over 340 mass shootings in the country so far

in 2023, according to data collected by the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a mass shooting as an incident in which at least four people are shot, excluding the shooter. Biden condemned the violence

Our nation has once again endured a wave of tragic and senseless shootings. I want Republican lawmakers to come to the table on meaningful, commonsense reforms

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

Tuesday and renewed his calls to tighten America's gun laws. Citing constitutional protections for gun ownership, Republicans in Congress have generally blocked attempts to significantly reform gun safety laws and oppose Biden's push to reinstate a ban on assault weapons.

Witnesses heard a barrage of gunfire just before midnight that led some to initially believe it was fireworks but soon led to a stampede for safety, the Dallas Morning News reported. Hours later, defiant neighbors and community leaders held their July Fourth parade through Como. The latest shootings took place around the anniversary of last year's Highland Park mass shooting near Chicago, where seven people were killed and 48 others wounded at an Independence Day parade. A 22-year-old man remains in custody after being indicted on 117 felony charges for the carnage.

## AFTER TWO DECADES

# Israel ends West Bank raid

The Jenin raid was one of the most intense Israeli military operations in the West Bank since an armed Palestinian uprising against Israel's open-ended occupation ended two decades ago

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jenin Refugee Camp, July 5: Israel withdrew troops from a West Bank militant stronghold Wednesday, but warned that its most intense military operation in the occupied territory in nearly two decades could be repeated. Twelve Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were killed in the two-day raid. Residents of the Jenin refugee camp emerged from their homes to find alleys lined by piles of rubble and flattened or scorched cars. Shopkeepers and bulldozers started clearing the debris.



At these moments we are completing the mission, and I can say that our extensive operation in Jenin is not a one-off. We will eradicate terrorism wherever we see it and we will strike at it

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PM, ISRAEL

Thousands who had fled the fighting began returning. The army claimed to have inflicted heavy damage on militant groups in the operation, which included a series of airstrikes and hundreds of ground troops. But it remained unclear whether there would be

any lasting effect after more than a year of heavy fighting in the West Bank. Some of the scenes from Jenin, including massive army bulldozers tearing through camp alleys, were eerily similar to those from a major Israeli incursion in 2002, which lasted for eight

days and became known as the battle of Jenin. Both operations, two decades apart, were meant to crush militant groups in the camp and deter and prevent attacks on Israelis emanating from the camp. In each case, the army claimed success. However, the continued cycle of army raids and Palestinian attacks raised new questions about Israel's tactics. This week's raid had wide support across Israel's political spectrum, but some critics in the country argued the impact is short-lived, with slain gunmen quickly replaced by others. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose autonomy government administers parts of the West Bank, has rejected violence against Israelis, but has effectively lost control over several strongholds. Many Palestinians see the actions of the gunmen as an inevitable result of 56 years of occupation and the absence of any political process with Israel.

## SHORT TAKES

### China cancels Borrell's visit

Beijing: China has abruptly cancelled a visit to Beijing by the European Union's top diplomat, the EU said Wednesday, amid ongoing disagreements between the two powers over trade, human rights and the Ukraine war. Josep Borrell, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, was due to arrive in China July 10 for talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang and other officials, according to an announcement by the EU ambassador to Beijing Sunday. The European and Chinese diplomats were set to discuss topics including trade, human rights and China's stance on the war in Ukraine, according to Ambassador Jorge Toledo.

### 4 countries take Iran to top court

The Hague: The United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden and Ukraine have launched a case against Iran at the United Nations' highest court over the downing in 2020 of a Ukrainian passenger jet and the deaths of all 176 passengers and crew. The countries want the International Court of Justice to rule that Iran illegally shot down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 January 8, 2020, and order Tehran to apologise and pay compensation to the families of the victims. Those killed included nationals and residents of Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, as well as Afghanistan and Iran.

### Indian jailed for 7 years

London: A disqualified Indian-origin driver who was caught with more than GBP 1 million worth of cocaine after being stopped by officers has been sentenced to seven years and four months. Sukhchain Dale was found with a large stash of Class A banned drugs after his van was pulled over by police on the highway near Birmingham in May. The haul which had a street value of over GBP 1 million was seized and the 36-year-old driver was arrested.

### Summer storm

Amsterdam: A rare summer storm with winds of up to 145 kilometres (90 miles) per hour hit the Netherlands Wednesday, causing at least one death as people across much of the country were told to stay indoors and travel was severely disrupted. A 51-year old woman died in Haarlem after a tree fell on the car she was in, local police said. In Amsterdam, several people were injured as dozens of trees were toppled by the storm, damaging cars and houseboats along the city's canals.

## RARE PRAISE NYT lauds India's space programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, July 5: Lauding India's ambitious space programme, The New York Times has said the country, currently witnessing an "explosive" growth in space-tech start-ups, is set to "transform the planet's connection to the final frontier" and can emerge as a "counterweight" to China. "When it launched its first rocket in 1963, India was a poor country pursuing the world's most cutting-edge technology. That projectile, its nose cone wheeled to the launchpad by a bicycle, put a small payload 124 miles above the Earth. India was barely pretending to keep up with the US and the Soviet Union. In today's space race, India has found much surer footing," the leading US newspaper said. The article titled 'The Surprising Striver in the World's Space Business' notes that India has become home to at least 140 registered space-tech start-ups, "comprising a local research field that stands to transform the planet's connection to the final frontier." "The start-ups' growth has been explosive, leaping from five when the pandemic started. And they see a big market to serve," the paper said. In the joint statement, "the leaders called for enhanced commercial collaboration between the US and Indian private sectors in the entire value chain of the space economy and to address export controls and facilitate technology transfer." The NYT report added that both the US and India "see space as an arena in which India can emerge as a counterweight to their mutual rival: China." "One of India's advantages is geopolitical," the paper said as it added that Russia and China had historically offered lower-cost options for launches.

## Cocaine found inside White House



REUTERS

Washington, July 5: A white powder found inside the White House late Sunday was identified by Washington's fire department and emergency services as cocaine, a source familiar with the matter said Tuesday. The source said the powder was found in the West Wing, but gave no further details. The West Wing is attached to the executive mansion where President Joe Biden lives. It houses the Oval Office, the cabinet room and press area, and offices and workspace for the president's staff. Hundreds of people work in or come through the West Wing regularly. The Secret Service said Tuesday that an "unknown item"

had been found in work space within the West Wing Sunday, leading to the temporary closing of the White House complex. "On Sunday evening, the White House complex went into a precautionary closure as officers from the Secret Service Uniformed Division investigated an unknown item found inside a work area," a Secret Service spokesperson said in an emailed statement. A second source familiar with the matter said the substance was found during a routine Secret Service sweep of the area. It was later identified as cocaine. "The DC Fire Department was called to evaluate and quickly determined the item to be non-hazardous," the Secret Service spokesperson said, adding there was "an investigation into the cause and manner" of how the substance entered the White House. Biden was not in the White House Sunday. He and his family returned from a weekend at the presidential retreat Camp David Tuesday morning.

## N Korea satellite had 'no military utility': SK

First recovery of a North Korean satellite by the South

REUTERS

Seoul, July 5: South Korea's military said Wednesday it had retrieved the wreckage of a North Korean spy satellite that plunged into the sea in May after a botched launch and found it had no meaningful military use as a reconnaissance satellite. The military last month also recovered parts of the rocket used in the failed launch; the booster and payload crashed into the sea soon after takeoff. "After detailed analysis on major parts of North Korea's space launch vehicle and satellite which were salvaged, South Korea and US experts have assessed that they had no military utility as a reconnaissance satellite at all," the military said in a statement. The South's military said it had Wednesday ended salvage operations, which began immediately after the debris splashed down off South Korea's west coast May 31. It is the first time South Korea has secured a satel-



lite launched by the North, South Korean military experts said. The initial assessment indicated the reconnaissance capability of the equipment was poor in terms of resolution and tracking targets, said Lee Choon-geun, an expert at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute. Yang Uk, a fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, also said "the resolution of the optical device loaded on the satellite was not suitable for military use". North Korea last month made a rare candid public admission of the botched launch, saying it was the "gravest failure" but vowing to soon succeed in its orbital quest.

## Scots mark King Charles, Queen Camilla coronation

In a nod to the historical fact that England and Scotland had different monarchs until the crowns were united in 1603, there are separate Scottish celebrations to herald Britain King's coronation

REUTERS

Edinburgh, July 5: Scotland marks the coronation of King Charles and his wife Camilla Wednesday with a grand procession and a service of thanksgiving, where he will be presented with the "Honours of Scotland", Britain's oldest crown jewels. Charles and Camilla were crowned in London's Westminster Abbey in May in front of about 100 world leaders in Britain's biggest ceremonial event for seven decades. The 74-year-old succeeded his mother as monarch of the United

Kingdom and 14 other realms when Queen Elizabeth died in September. But in a nod to the historical fact that England and Scotland had different monarchs until the crowns were united in 1603, there are separate Scottish celebrations to herald his coronation on Wednesday. Crowds gathered on the famous Royal Mile street in Edinburgh where there will be a People's Procession, involving about 100 people representing various aspects of Scottish life, and a Royal Procession, featuring hundreds of service personnel. At a thanksgiving service in



the city's St Giles' Cathedral, Charles will be presented with the Honours of Scotland - the historic Scottish crown jewels. These include the Crown of Scotland, made for Scottish King

James V in 1540 and used to crown Mary Queen of Scots in 1543, and the Sceptre, thought to have been given to James IV by Pope Alexander VI in 1494. The regalia also features the

new Elizabeth Sword, named after his mother and made to replace one given to Scotland's James IV by Pope Julius in 1507 but now too fragile to use. "The Honours of Scotland have immense historical significance, having been present at many major ceremonial events over the past 500 years," Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf said. "Designed and crafted with care by some of Scotland's finest artisans, the Elizabeth Sword is a fitting tribute to the late queen as Scotland prepares to welcome the new king and queen."

## of the day quote

High growth of 8-9 per cent could be driven by focus on manufacturing and urbanization

**AMITABH KANT** | SHERPA, G20

An early solution for restoration of GSP benefits by the US to Indian exporters is the need of the hour as it would help further boost the bilateral trade

**SANJAY BUDDHA** | CHAIRMAN, EXIM

India needs to revamp and improve its higher education system to take advantage of the declining working age population in developed countries like the US and European nations

**ARVIND PANAGRYIA** | FORMER VC, NITI AAYOG

## SHORT TAKES

### HDFC Bank sees 15.8% loan rise

**New Delhi:** Private sector lender HDFC Bank Wednesday said it has registered a 15.8 per cent rise in loans to Rs 16,15,500 crore in the first quarter of current fiscal year. The credit book was Rs 13,95,000 crore as of June 30 last year. Gross transfers through inter-bank participation certificates and bills rediscounted, the bank's advances grew 20.2 per cent over June 30, 2022. HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank's deposits aggregated to approximately Rs 19,13,000 crore as of June 30, 2023, a growth of around 19.2 per cent over Rs 16,05,000 crore as of June 30 last year, it added.

### Steel imports from China up

**New Delhi:** India's finished steel purchases from China touched a six-year high in the first two months of the fiscal year beginning in April, according to provisional government data reviewed by Reuters, while its overall imports reached a three-year high. In April and May, China emerged as the second-biggest steel exporter to India, selling 0.2 million metric tons of the alloy, up 62% from the same period a year earlier. Imports from China accounted for a quarter of India's finished steel imports during the period. India imported 0.9 million metric tons of finished steel in April and May - the highest since 2021 - and up 27% from a year earlier.

### Largest net loss for S'pore bank

**Singapore:** Singapore's central bank has recorded its largest net loss of SGD 30.8 billion (\$22.8 billion) in the 2022-2023 financial year mainly due to its aggressive monetary policy tightening to bring down inflation, its Managing Director Ravi Menon said Wednesday. The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) also raised its end-2023 forecast for core inflation to 2.5 to 3 per cent, up from an estimate of around 2.5 per cent made in April.

### Paytm GMV surges

**New Delhi:** Fintech firm One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, posted a 37 per cent growth in gross merchandise value at Rs 4.05 lakh crore in the April-June quarter of this year, the company said. The company's gross merchandise value (GMV), which reflects total payments made to merchants on the platform, was Rs 2.96 lakh crore in the same period a year ago. The value of loan disbursed through Paytm grew over 2.5 times to Rs 14,845 crore, from Rs 5,554 crore a year ago.



**Green hydrogen is going to be the future fuel in India. We will help you (investors) in developing (green hydrogen) projects. We will also help you with demand as well. Come and partner with us**

**RK SINGH** | UNION MINISTER

**MSI UNVEILS ITS COSTLIEST CAR**  
Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Wednesday launched premium MPV Invicto at a starting price of Rs 24.8 lakh, making it the costliest car in its current portfolio. The introductory prices of the three trims of the model range from Rs 24.8-Rs 28.4 lakh (ex-showroom)



## THREE-MONTH LOW

# Services growth loses steam

Service sector growth weakened but remained resilient in June amid strong demand, despite high price inflation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 5:** India's services sector growth eased to a three-month low in June but service providers continued to signal positive demand trends, which resulted in a stronger increase in new business volumes and further job creation, a monthly survey said Wednesday. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell from 61.2 in May to 58.5 in June. Despite falling from May, the latest figure was consistent with a sharp pace of growth.

For the 23rd straight month, the headline figure was above the neutral 50 threshold. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

Services PMI Business Activity Index has been above breakeven for nearly two years, the longest stretch since August 2011. According to survey members, the upturn stemmed from on-going increase in new business, a healthy demand environment and marketing initiatives. "Demand for Indian services continued to surge higher in June, with all four monitored sub-sectors registering quicker increases in new business inflows," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence. On the price front, there were



**This bullish pick-up in growth momentum supported a further sharp upturn in business activity and encouraged another uplift in employment figures, boding well to near-term growth prospects**

**POLLYANNA DE LIMA** | ECONOMICS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, S&P GLOBAL MARKET INTELLIGENCE

mixed trends. Input costs rose at a slower rate that was broadly aligned with its long-run average, but charge inflation quickened to a near six-year high. "Combined with manufacturing, output prices across the private sector increased at the sharpest pace in over a decade," Lima said. One-in-ten firms noted higher operating expenses, citing greater food, construction material and wage costs. The remaining panellists indicated no change since the previous month.

"The latest PMI results for output charges coupled with upside risks to food prices suggest that interest rates are highly unlikely to be reduced as 2023 progresses," Lima said. The Reserve Bank of India June 8 left key interest rate unchanged for a second straight policy meeting but signalled that it wants to see inflation moderate more while preserving the growth momentum. The monetary policy committee (MPC), which has three members from RBI and an equal

SERVICES PMI FELL FROM 61.2 IN MAY TO 58.5 IN JUNE  
IT HAS BEEN ABOVE 50 THRESHOLD FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS  
PRICES RISING AT THEIR QUICKEST PACE IN NEARLY SIX YEARS

number of external experts, voted unanimously to keep the benchmark repurchase, or repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent. The survey further noted that predictions of further demand strength, favourable market conditions and customer relations boosted business confidence in June. "Companies were at their most upbeat towards growth prospects in 2023 so far," it said. Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index - which measures combined services and manufacturing output - fell from 61.6 in May to 59.4 in June. Despite falling from May, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index was still indicative of a sharp rate of growth, the survey said. The S&P Global India Services PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in December 2005.

# M&A value declines 75% in first half of '23 despite record volume

Merger and acquisition deals crossed an all-time high of 1,400

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 5:** The value of merger and acquisition (M&A) deals plunged 75 per cent to \$32.6 billion in the first half of 2023 even as the number of such deals crossed an all-time high of 1,400, according to industry data. More than 1,400 transactions in the first half, up 5.2 per cent on-year, made the first half of 2023 busiest semiannual period in terms of number of deals since records began in 1980. But the overall value of M&As fell 75 per cent to \$32.6 billion during the period due to the lack of mega deals above \$5 billion, unlike last year when the HDFC twins announced the \$40 billion record-breaking deal last April, according to financial markets data provider Refinitiv, a part of the London Stock Exchange Group. The volume rose because the market saw a healthier level of mid-market transactions dominating the deal street. No deals bigger than \$1 billion was announced during the first quarter of 2023, but there were four deals within the \$1-billion range announced in the



second quarter. The proposed merger of IDFC First Bank with IDFC will prop up the M&A activity for the rest of the year, the report said. **IPO market buzzing** In the equity space, the IPO market saw the busiest first half since 2018 as the number of initial public offerings grew 25 per cent on-year to 75 small-to-mid-sized listings, raising \$1.4 billion. But in terms of money raised, this was a steep 73 per cent lower than last year's. Follow-on offerings increased 127 per cent on-year, raising \$9 billion, driven by the share sale of four Adani group companies, which totalled \$1.9 billion, as well as record issuance of block deals, the report said. From the IPO space, the companies raised \$1.4 billion, down 73.4 per cent by proceeds, but number of IPOs saw a 25 per cent jump in terms of volume. Follow-on offerings accounted for 87 per cent of overall ECM proceeds, raising \$9 billion, up 127.2 per cent in value and 38.8 per cent in volume.

# ₹15K-cr tax evasion detected in 2 months

OVER 4,900 FAKE GST REGISTRATIONS CANCELLED SINCE MAY 16

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 5:** GST authorities have so far cancelled over 4,900 GST registrations and detected tax evasion of over Rs 15,000 crore during the ongoing two-month drive to weed out fake GSTINs which will end July 15, a senior tax official said Wednesday. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) member Shashank Priya said the large number of fake registrations unearthed during the drive underlines the need for policy changes to tighten Goods and Services tax (GST) registration and return filing process. Over 69,600 GST Identification Numbers (GSTINs) have been selected for physical verification, of which 59,178 have been verified by field officers during the ongoing pan-India special drive. "16,989 GSTINs are found to be non-existent. 11,015 GSTINs have been suspended and 4,972 have been cancelled," Priya said at Assocham's National Conclave on GST.



He further said tax evasion of Rs 15,035 crore has been detected and Rs 1,506 crore ITC has been blocked by tax officers since May 16. Around Rs 87 crore have been recovered. Businesses who register under GST are provided an unique GSTIN which is required for claiming ITC and filing tax returns. Companies operating in multiple states are required to obtain GST identification number in respective states. On trade facilitation front, Priya said monthly return form GSTR-3B will be made more trade friendly by providing additional fields to report more granular data. The number of registered taxpayers in GST has more than doubled to 1.40 crore since the implementation of the tax regime six years ago. The two-month long special drive to curb fake registration under GST, which began May 16, will end July 15.

## RECORD-BREAKING RALLY

# MARKETS TAKE A BREATHER

Equities were on a roll as they touched all-time highs in five straight sessions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 5:** Equity benchmark indices ended flat Wednesday with Sensex sliding 33 points and Nifty gaining 9 points after an unabated record-breaking rally in the last few trading sessions. Weak global market trends and fall in HDFC twins also spoiled markets party. The 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 33.01 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 65,446.04. The benchmark remained in the negative territory for most part of the trade and fell 222.56 points or 0.33 per cent to 65,256.49 in intra-day. The NSE Nifty eked out marginal gains of 9.50 points or 0.05 per cent to end at its fresh record high of 19,398.50. During the day, it hit a high of 19,421.60 and a low of 19,339.60. In the past five trading sessions, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped over 2,500 points and the Nifty climbed 723.5 points since June 26. Rallying for the fifth straight session Tuesday, the BSE bench-



## Mcap of BSE-listed firms at record highs

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reached an all-time high of Rs 299.90 lakh crore Wednesday despite the Sensex falling marginally after a remarkable record-breaking rally in the last few trading sessions. Investor sentiments largely remained unfazed by the muted trend in equities during the day, with the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms scaling a lifetime peak of 2,99,90,050.73 crore. The mcap of BSE-listed companies is Rs 9,949.27 crore away from the historic Rs 300 lakh crore mark. Investors' wealth also climbed Rs 1.32 lakh crore from Tuesday. The rupee fell 24 paise to close at 82.25 against the US dollar, weighed down by a weak equity markets and disappointing domestic macroeconomic data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.43 per cent to \$75.92 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets Wednesday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,603.15 crore.

# RBI seeks to give customers choice of card network

REUTERS

**Bangalore, July 5:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Wednesday asked banks and non-bank lenders to issue credit, debit and prepaid cards on multiple networks to give customers the freedom to choose. "On a review it is observed that arrangements existing between card networks and card issuers (banks and non-banks) are not conducive to the availability of choice for customers," the RBI said in a draft circular seeking comments. Networks of American Express, Diners Club International, Mastercard, Visa and homegrown RuPay provide services to customers in India, but the provider is usually predetermined by the bank depending on the card issued. Card issuers should issue them across more than one network, the RBI said in a circular, also adding that financial institutions should provide an option to their eligible customers to choose from the multiple card networks in the country. That option may be exercised by customers either at the time of issuing, or later, it added. These changes will be effective October 1 and stakeholder feedback is invited by August 4.

# RBI panel suggests steps for internationalisation of ₹

AN INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY IS ONE THAT IS FREELY AVAILABLE TO NON-RESIDENTS, ESSENTIALLY TO SETTLE CROSS-BORDER TRANSACTIONS, AND IN THE CASE OF THE RUPEE, THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY PROMOTING THE CURRENCY FOR IMPORT AND EXPORT, WITHOUT ANY LIMITS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 5:** A Reserve Bank-appointed committee Wednesday suggested a host of short-term and long-term measures for internationalisation of Indian rupee, including efforts for inclusion of the Indian currency in IMF's Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket. SDR is an international reserve asset created by the IMF to supplement the official reserves of its member countries. It is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. As such, SDRs can provide a country with liquidity. A basket of currencies defines the SDR: the US dollar, euro, Chinese yuan, Japanese yen, and the British pound. The Inter Departmental Group

(IDG) headed by RBI executive director RS Ratho in its report said that internationalisation is a process rather than an event, with continuous efforts to build upon all the initiatives that have been taken in the past. Suggesting short-term measures, the panel said, there is a need to design a template and adopt a standardised approach for examining the proposals on bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements for invoicing, settlement and payment in INR and local currencies and encourage opening of INR accounts for non-residents (other than nostro accounts of overseas banks) both in India and outside India. It also recommended integrating Indian payment systems with other countries for cross-border transactions and strength-



ening financial markets by fostering a global 24x5 INR market and promoting India as the hub for INR transactions and price discovery. There is also a need for recalibrating the FPI regime and

a need to review taxes on Masala bonds and international use of Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) for cross-border trade transactions and inclusion of INR as a direct settlement currency in the Continuous Linked Settlement (CLS) system. Examination of taxation issues in financial markets to harmonise tax regimes of India and other financial centres and allowing banking services in INR outside India through off-shore branches of Indian banks were part of medium-term suggestion given by the Reserve Bank panel. The Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was formed in December 2021. The objective of the IDG was to review the extant position of

INR as an international currency and to frame a road map for the internationalisation of INR. The IDG has since submitted its report containing its final set of recommendations. The report and its recommendations reflect the views of the IDG and do not in any way reflect the official position of the Reserve Bank of India. The recommendations of the report will be examined for implementation, it said. The IDG said that over the long term, India will achieve higher level of trade linkages with other countries and improved macro-economic parameters, and INR may ascend to a level where it would be widely used and preferred by other economies as a 'vehicle currency'.

# Jeakson creates flutter



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, July 5:** National team's Manipuri footballer Jeakson Singh created a flutter Tuesday night by wrapping himself in a Meitei flag while collecting his individual medal after India beat Kuwait in the final of the SAFF Championship.

The flag Jeakson wrapped himself in, is called Flag of Kangleipak or Salai Taret Flag – a rectangular seven-colour flag which represents the seven clan dynasties of the Meitei ethnicity in ancient Manipur. The North-Eastern state is in turmoil since ethnic clashes broke out between Meitei and Kuki communities in May.

The Meitei community has been demanding its inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list like the Kuki community, whose members primarily reside in the hills. The tribal communities have protested the Meitei demand.

The Indian government had to deploy military to restore peace in the region with more than 100 people losing their lives along with mass destruction of public and private property.

Jeakson belongs to Meitei clan and his gesture led to widespread criticism with netizens putting up photographs and stills of Salai Taret flag being hoisted after destroying Kuki churches.

The 22-year-old mid-fielder, who became the first Indian to score in a FIFA World Cup in the 2017 edition of the U17 tournament at home, late in the night backtracked after his symbolic gesture attracted criticism from some quarters.

Jeakson, took to twitter late in the night and defended himself. "Dear Fans, by celebrating in the flag, I did not want to hurt the sentiments of anyone. I intended to bring notice to the issues that my home state, Manipur, is facing currently. This win tonight

is dedicated to all the Indians," he tweeted.

Earlier in an interaction with ESPN.in, Jeakson urged people in his state to maintain peace. "It's my Manipur flag. I just wanted to tell everyone in India and Manipur to stay in peace and not fight. I want peace. It's been 2 months now and still fighting is going on," Jeakson said.

"I don't want that kind of thing to happen more and I just want to bring the government's and other people's attention to get peace you know.

"My family is safe but there are a lot of families who have suffered and lost their

home and all. Yeah it's difficult now...Even for me it's difficult to go back home now with the situation...Even I don't know what's going to happen. I hope things get well soon," the talented player added.

When AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey was contacted, he refused to comment on the issue. The FIFA rules states that no team can use any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images on team equipment.

It must be noted that during Qatar World Cup, FIFA rejected Denmark national team's request for wearing a 'Human Rights for All' logo inscribed on their training jersey as a mark of protest against the alleged violation of rights for all those workers who lost their lives while working on stadium construction site over the years.

Even England skipper Harry Kane was not allowed to wear a 'One Love' captain's arm-band in support of LGBTQ community. Jeakson may not get a sanction from the global body because the Meitei flag isn't part of team equipment.



# Tilak in for West Indies T20Is

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 5:** Two-format skipper Rohit Sharma and the peerless Virat Kohli are unlikely to feature anytime soon in the Indian T20 team as they were once again left out of the 15-member squad led by Hardik Pandya that will take on the West Indies in a five-match series, starting August 3.

The side led by Hardik has a youthful look to it with the only player above 30 being World No.1 batter and team's vice-captain Suryakumar Yadav.

The only new face in the team is Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians left-hander Tilak Varma, who had made a strong case for himself during the past two IPL seasons batting in the middle-order and donning the role of a finisher with a strike-rate of 142-plus in 47 IPL and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy games.

Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is set to make his Test debut next week, is also a part of the T20 squad after a stupendous IPL.

While the emphasis for the next three months is on the 50-over World Cup and people privy to development would term it as being rested, it is certainly not a pattern in isolation that two pillars of Indian batting have not been a part of the last three T20 series (Sri Lanka, New Zealand), including this one.

As the saying is in Indian cricket circles, the two contemporary doyens "would never be officially dropped" but "phased out" unless some remarkable turnaround happens, which would be nothing short of a miracle.

The meeting Wednesday was also Ajit Agarkar's first as chairman of the national selection committee and there weren't any names that would have surprised anyone.

Rinku Singh, whose finishing skills at No.5 or 6 for KKR in IPL have impressed one and all, didn't figure in the 15-member squad but it is understood that with only a week's gap between the West Indies series and Ireland T20Is, there is a high possibility



## THE SQUAD

Ishan Kishan (wk), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Surya Kumar Yadav (vc), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya (c), Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

September, will be playing first-class cricket for Gujarat this season. The team has three wrist spinners with Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal also being part of the 15-member squad.

Axar Patel, who going by current form is a better T20 bet compared to Ravindra Jadeja, has been picked in the squad. In Jadeja's case though, unlike Rohit and Kohli, he has been rested.

In the pace department, Avesh has been cranking it up with the red ball for Central Zone in the Duleep Trophy and in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj, the pace department will be handled by Avesh and Umran Malik along with left-arm seamers from Arshdeep Singh. Bengal's Mukesh Kumar is the back-up pacer.

# Swiatek sails through on rain-affected day



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Wimbledon, July 5:** WTA World No.1 Iga Swiatek eased into the third round at Wimbledon with a 6-2, 6-0 win over Sara Sorribes Tormo on a day when rain again affected play of the grass-court tournament, and environmental activists halted two matches as well.

Intermittent showers Wednesday forced matches on the outside courts to be suspended twice, while play in the main stadiums was also stopped for a short time because of the weather.

Two 'Just Stop Oil' protestors were arrested after disrupting one match by running onto Court 18 and throwing orange confetti onto the grass, before being led off by security. That stopped the first-round encounter between Grigor Dimitrov and Sho Shimabukuro early in the second set, and the rain then came before the confetti could be cleared.

The match resumed with the others after the rain delay. The two protestors were arrested "on suspicion of aggravated trespass and criminal damage," the All England Club said in a statement.

A few hours later during the next match on the same court, another man representing the same

organization also threw orange confetti on the grass before security guards corralled him and dragged him away.

Wimbledon increased its security in coordination with London police and other agencies for this year's tournament, in part as a result of protests at other major sports venues in Britain this year.

The rain had already created a major backlog of matches after the first two days, and only eight matches were completed Tuesday. Several matches scheduled for the outside courts Wednesday were pushed back to Thursday.

Only Centre Court and No. 1 Court at the All England Club have roofs. On Centre Court Wednesday, top-seeded Swiatek eased into the third round thrashing Tormo, hitting 27 winners compared to just three for her opponent.

On No.1 Court, third-seeded Daniil Medvedev beat British 20-year-old Arthur Fery 7-5, 6-4, 6-3. American duo Taylor Fritz and Frances Tiafoe both reached the second round, but in contrasting fashion.

The ninth-seeded Fritz came from a set down to beat Yannick Hanfmann of Germany 6-4, 2-6, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 on No.2 Court, while Tiafoe beat Yibing Wu in straight sets on No.3 Court.

# Team India meet WI great Sobers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Barbados, July 5:** Members of the Indian cricket team, currently touring the West Indies, met the legendary Sir Garfield Sobers and shared pleasantries with one of the all-time greats of the sport here.

The India team, led by Rohit Sharma, will play two Tests in Dominica and Port of Spain beginning July 12, following which the side will take on the Caribbean in three ODIs and five T20Is.

The BCCI shared a video of the meeting with the former West Indies captain, captioning it, "In Barbados & in the company of greatness. Team India meets one of the greatest of the game – Sir Garfield Sobers."

Sobers, 86, arguably one of the finest all-rounders to have played the game, scored 8,032 runs in 93 Tests besides taking 235 wickets with his left-arm bowling.

Among those to greet Sobers, who was accompanied by his wife, were Rohit, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Ravichandran Ashwin and India head coach



Casual meet: Virat Kohli and Gary Sobers, along with his wife, share a laugh in Barbados

Rahul Dravid. Kohli was, in fact, awarded the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for 'male cricketer of the decade' in 2020. During the brief interaction, Dravid introduced Ashwin and India head coach

exciting batsmen."

India, following the disappointment of losing the World Test Championship final to Australia recently at The Oval, will begin their next WTC cycle

## INDIA'S WI TOUR

**Mumbai:** Doordarshan (DD) will telecast the upcoming India's tour of the West Indies. The month-long bilateral series comprising 2 Tests, 3 ODIs, and 5 T20Is, is scheduled to take place from July 12 to August 13. DD will give viewers the choice to watch the games in their own language – with T20Is and ODI series being telecast in Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu, Bangla and Kannada on DD Sports along with the network's regional channels DD Podhigai, DD Saptagiri, DD Yadagiri, DD Bangla and DD Chandana. Test matches will be telecast on DD Sports. The primary telecast on DD Sports will be a combination of Hindi and English. This will be the first time team India will be in action after the loss at the WTC final, and the team will look to start off the new WTC cycle on a winning note. As the primary media rights holder, FanCode will stream the entire series on its digital platform.

# Ponting sees traits of Dhoni in Ben Stokes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, July 5:** Australia great Ricky Ponting has likened Ben Stokes' match-winning abilities to MS Dhoni's on-field demeanour, saying the England skipper is far ahead of his contemporaries in pressure situations just like the Indian legend used to be.

Stokes almost single-handedly carried England to a series-levelling win, scoring 155 off 214 balls in the second Ashes Test at Lord's. It wasn't the first time he had terrorised Australia. In the 2019 Ashes, he smashed an unbeaten 135 to help the hosts register a remarkable one-wicket win at Leeds.

"I think any international player is under pressure anytime they walk out to play, but Ben batting in the middle order or later order like he does, probably finds himself in more match-winning opportunity situations than some others might," Ponting said on the latest episode of The ICC Review.

"The first one that comes to mind is maybe someone like a Dhoni, who's there at the end in a lot of T20 games, and finishing games, whereas Ben's doing it at the end of Test matches, and there's not, probably not many, many players through the history of the game that have found themselves in that sort of role and are there at the end winning games, and especially as a captain."

Ponting said he had Stokes' match-winning innings at Headingley in his mind during the thrilling final day at Lord's. "I thought and everyone probably thought he could do it again because we've seen it happen before, but this was probably, slightly more runs that they were chasing (in 2019)," he said.

# HINDLEY WINS TOUR MOUNTAIN STAGE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Bayonne (France), July 5:** Former Giro d'Italia champion Jai Hindley seized the Tour de France's yellow jersey Wednesday after claiming the first mountain stage of this year's race during an eventful ride in the Pyrenees.

Hindley was part of an early breakaway and became the first Australian leader of the race since Rohan Dennis back in 2015.

Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard showed his great form in the last climb of the day when he dropped two-time winner Tadej Pogacar with a sharp attack. Vingegaard moved into second place, 47 seconds behind Hindley, according to provisional results.

Former Paris-Nice champion Luis Leon Sanchez has withdrawn from the race after a crash that left him with a broken left collarbone. The Spanish rider was involved in one of the many crashes that marred the finale of Tuesday's fourth stage of the race.

# Praveen Kumar, his son survive car crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Meerut, July 5:** Former India pacer Praveen Kumar and his son had a narrow escape when his SUV collided with a trailer truck in Meerut Tuesday night. The accident brought back memories of Rishabh Pant's horrific car crash last year.

Kumar, a resident of Multan Nagar on Baghat Road, was coming from Pandav Nagar in his car with his son when the incident took place, Circle officer (Civil Lines) Arvind Chaurasia said.

As soon as his car reached near the Commissioner's residence, a speeding truck rammed into his car from behind. A case has been registered against the truck driver and he has been arrested, added Chaurasia.

The 36-year-old Kumar, who played six Tests, 68 ODIs and 10 T20s for India in a career that promised a lot more, told PTI that he and his son are doing fine.

"It could have been a lot worse. By the grace of god we are okay



and I am talking to you. I had gone to drop my nephew but a massive truck hit my car from behind around 9:30pm. Thank God it was a big car, else there could have been injuries," Kumar, who lives in Meerut with his family, told PTI. "I initially thought just the bumper would be broken but the car is badly

damaged."

In December last year, stumper-batter Pant also had a miraculous escape when he dozed off at the wheel on the Delhi-Dehradun highway. His luxury car had crashed into the road divider and caught fire, leaving him with severe injuries. He is now rehabilitating.