



## CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS

Kajol's comment on Indian political leaders lacking education sparks controversy on social media

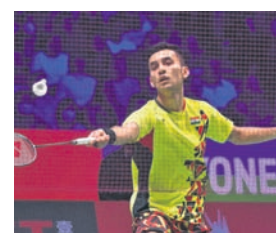
LEISURE P2



## BBC UNDER PRESSURE

The BBC says it has suspended a leading presenter who is alleged to have paid a teenager for sexually explicit photos

INTERNATIONAL P10



## SENSATIONAL SHOW

Lakshya Sen defeats higher-ranked Kenta Nishimoto of Japan to enter Canada Open final

SPORTS P12

Major fire at govt medicine godown in Bhub

# 19 dead as rains pound north

Flash floods wash away roads in hilly areas, leaving people marooned, while most rivers, including the Yamuna in Delhi, are in spate

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 9:** Torrential rains pounded several parts of north India Sunday with 19 people killed in landslides and other rain-related incidents, while most rivers, including the Yamuna in Delhi, were in spate. In cities and towns across the region, many roads and residential areas were submerged in knee-deep water with the civic system unable to hold on in the face of record rains.

Frightening images of the chaos unleashed by the rains - vehicles floating like paper boats on inundated roads, muddy waters gushing into residential areas, temples and other structures submerged on the banks by swollen rivers and land cave-ins - were shared online by people from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi, among other places.

Heavy downpour warnings have been issued for certain areas of J&K, Ladakh and Himachal, while in Delhi, which recorded its highest rainfall in a single day in July since 1982, authorities have cautioned over rising water level of the Yamuna.

With normal life paralysed, schools in Delhi and its adjoining NCR cities of Gurugram and Noida will be closed on Monday, according to officials.

In three separate incidents of landslides in Himachal, where a red alert of extremely heavy rains has been issued for 10 districts, five people were killed.

Three members of a family were killed in a house collapse following a landslide in Shimla district's Kotgarh area, while one death each was reported



Swollen Beas River as monsoon rain continues in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, Sunday.

from Kullu and Chamba districts. In Rajhana, on the outskirts of Shimla, a girl was buried as a huge amount of debris swept by rainwater fell on her house. Officials said an elderly woman was reportedly trapped under debris and rescue operations are underway.

In Uttarakhand, three pilgrims drowned in the Ganga after their jeep fell into the river amid a landslide near Gular on the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway. In Kashipur area of the state, two houses collapsed killing a couple and injuring their granddaughter, while in Uttarkashi district's Barkot, a policeman engaged in managing traffic on the Yamunotri

## REGIONAL VARIATIONS

The IMD said the bountiful rains in many parts of India in the first eight days of July have bridged the rainfall deficit for the entire country. The cumulative rainfall in the monsoon season has reached 243.2mm, which is two per cent above the normal of 239.1mm

However, there are large-scale regional variations in rainfall. While the eastern and northeastern region has recorded a deficiency of 17 per cent (375.3 mm against a normal of 454 mm), north India has witnessed 59 per cent excess rainfall (199.7 mm against a normal of 125.5 per cent)

Central India, where a large number of farmers rely on monsoonal rains, has recorded 264.9 mm rainfall against a normal of 255.1 mm, an excess of four per cent. The rainfall deficiency in south India has reduced from 45 per cent to 23 per cent.

The IMD said an interaction between a western disturbance and monsoonal winds is leading to an intense rainfall spell over northwest India, including Delhi which experienced the season's first 'very heavy' rainfall

National Highway died after being hit by a boulder that rolled down a hill. Two people were killed in J&K

after a landslide hit a passenger bus in Doda, while in Ladakh's Kargil district, a man was killed under his vehicle got crushed after a boulder that rolled down a hillock. Bodies of two soldiers, who were swept away by flash floods while crossing the Dogra Nallah Saturday, were recovered in Poonch district.

Widespread rainfall was also reported in Uttar Pradesh where a 10-year-old girl died Sunday when a tree branch fell on the tin shed of her house in Kaushambi following rains. In Muzaffarnagar, a woman and her six-year-old daughter were killed after the roof of their house collapsed due to heavy rain.

## SHORT TAKES

### Bahanaga Station Master summoned

**Bhubaneswar:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team probing into the tragic triple train accident at Bahanaga Sunday summoned the Station Master of Bahanaga Bazaar railway station for questioning. The Station Master has been asked to appear before the CBI at its office in Unit-VIII area, here. The central agency had earlier arrested senior section engineer (signal) Arun Kumar Mahanta, section engineer Mohammed Amir Khan and technician Pappu Kumar in the accident that claimed 293 lives so far. They were arrested Friday on the charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and destruction of evidence.

### Digvijaya booked for Golwalkar post

**Bhopal/Indore:** The Indore police have registered a case against Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh for allegedly sharing a controversial post on former Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief MS Golwalkar on social media, an official said Sunday. Singh Saturday tweeted a picture of a page carrying several controversial comments quoted to the former RSS head, known as 'Guruji' among his admirers. Golwalkar was quoted as saying he would rather live under the British rule than have equal rights given to Dalits, backwards and Muslims.

### Gun running racket busted; six arrested

**Sambalpur:** Police busted an illegal firearms trading racket in Sambalpur district and arrested six hardcore criminals apart from seizing eight guns from them. Eight country-made guns, 22 live bullets, six mobile phones, a motorcycle, a sword, a scooter, a car and ₹1,20,850 in cash were seized from them. Speaking at a press conference, SP Mukesh Kumar Bhamo Sunday said that the accused were arrested as part of a special drive conducted by the district police.



GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** A major fire broke out at a government medicine godown near Mancheswar police station here late Sunday night.

Fire personnel along with three fire tenders reached the spot and were engaged in dousing the fire.

The fire services department was yet to ascertain the cause behind the mishap. The godown belongs to the Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL) where medical equipment and medicines were stored.

The fire was so severe that the Fire department has sought more firefighters and tenders. OSMCL started using the godown to store medical items during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A security personnel deployed at the godown claimed that the fire was followed by a huge explosion.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



PM has called me the most corrupt man. Seems we will soon have an alliance with his party!

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.4°C	33.8°C
MIN	26.8°C	27.0°C
Humidity	85%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	CLOUDY SKY LIGHT RAIN	

# ATS, IB, STF grill man for ISI links

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS), Maharashtra, Intelligence Bureau, and the Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police Sunday grilled Abhijeet Sanjay Jambure, arrested for his alleged involvement in sharing of OTP with Pakistani intelligence operatives, an officer said.

The Odisha STF had arrested Abhijeet from Pune June 29 and brought him to Bhubaneswar on transit remand after getting evidence against him on his

links with Pakistani intelligence operatives, the officer said.

"Senior officers of the ATS, IB and STF grilled Abhijeet on

## OTP SHARING SCAM

Sunday to confirm his link with Pakistani intelligence operatives. Abhijeet was in link with a Pakistani agent since 2020 and he was sending money to another arrested accused including Pathanisamanta Lenka of Odisha. ATS is likely to take the accused on transit remand. We

will seek NIA help if needed," STF SP KK Panigrahi said.

Panigrahi said six persons were arrested in this connection and more arrests could be made. The STF has taken Abhijeet on a four-day remand from Saturday. The grilling of Abhijeet is significant as he is suspected to have links with Pakistani intelligence officials, he said.

The STF official said that Abhijeet met one Danish alias Syed Danish Ali Naqvi of Khanki, Faisalabad, Pakistan through Facebook Messenger, who identified himself as

Freelancer at 'Chegg' in 2018.

Danish in fact introduced Abhijeet to his friend Khurram alias Abdul Hamid of Karachi. Khurram is suspected to be a senior Pakistan Army intelligence officer having a big network of agents in India.

The officer said that Abhijeet used to transfer money to various Pakistani intelligence operatives working in India.

It is also suspected that Abhijeet has shared some secret documents relating to the Indian Army, Navy and other defence materials with ISI.

# Pak's fresh rider for World Cup

AGENCIES

**Karachi, July 9:** Pakistan's Minister in Charge of Sports Ehsaan Mazari has said that if India avoids travelling across the border for the Asia Cup 2023, his country will withdraw from the ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023 in India.

"My personal opinion, since the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) comes under my ministry, is that if India demands to play their Asia Cup games at a neutral venue, we would also demand the same for our World Cup games in India," Sports Minister Ehsaan Mazari told Indian Express.

The statement from Mazari came just a day after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formed a committee over the nation's participation in the World Cup, to be held in India this year.

The minister also targeted the BCCI saying India's reluctance to play cricket in Pakistan baffles him.

"India brings sports into politics. I don't understand why the Indian government doesn't want to send their cricket team here. Some time back a huge baseball contingent from India was in Islamabad to play. There was also the bridge team that had travelled to Pakistan. There were around 60-plus people, I was the chief guest of the event. They won here and left. Pakistan's football, hockey and chess teams



My personal opinion, since the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) comes under my ministry, is that if India demands to play their Asia Cup games at a neutral venue, we would also demand the same for our World Cup games in India

EHSAN MAZARI | PAKISTAN SPORTS MINISTER

also travel to India," he said. The International Cricket Council had recently sent a 'reminder' to Pakistan about the agreement the PCB had signed over its participation in the ODI World Cup in India.

# 'I am Indian now': Pak woman who crossed border for love

Seema and Sachin fell in love in 2019 while playing PUBG and decided to live together in India - all unknown to her husband Ghulam Haider who was away in Saudi Arabia for work

a visa via Nepal with her four children, all aged below seven years, while Sachin was put behind bars for sheltering the illegal immigrants.

"My husband is a Hindu, so I am a Hindu. I feel I am an Indian now," Seema told NDTV.

Seema and Sachin had got in touch in 2019 while playing online game PUBG and eventually grew closer to the extent that they decided to live together in India - all unknown to her husband Ghulam Haider who was away in Saudi Arabia for work.

In a video message from Saudi Arabia, Ghulam Haider urged the Indian government to help him reunite with his wife. He said it was through the Indian media that he got to know that his wife and children are in Greater Noida. However, Seema told reporters



Seema Haider and Sachin Meena speak to media in Greater Noida, Sunday

that she did not wish to go back to Ghulam Haider and claimed threat to her life if she returns to their native place in Pakistan, citing stringent local laws.

In March this year, Sachin and Seema met in Kathmandu where they stayed together for seven days and got secretly mar-

ried, according to police and advocate Parashar. Later, she went back to Pakistan and Sachin returned to India. Back home, Seema, who claimed discord with her husband, sold a plot for Pakistani rupees 12 lakh, arranged for fight tickets and visa for Nepal for

herself and her children, according to police. In May she reached Nepal via Dubai and spent some time in the tourist city of Pokhara in the Himalayan nation. Then she took a bus for Delhi from Kathmandu and reached Greater Noida May 13 with her children where Sachin had made arrangements for her to stay in a rented accommodation without disclosing her Pakistani identity, officials said.

More than one-and-a-half-month later, local police got a whiff of a Pakistani woman and her children's illegal presence in their area. Sachin, Seema and her children tried to evade police arrest and fled, but were caught in Ballabgarh in Haryana. Police then questioned them and officially arrested them July 4, the officials said.

AGENCIES

**Noida, July 9:** Their cross-border love story hit a dead-end after they were arrested and put in jail, but India's Sachin Meena and Pakistan's Seema Haider are set for a new turn as they walked out of prison on getting bail.

Seema was arrested July 4 for illegally entering India without



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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

**ARIES**  
Today even if you are alone, you may not really feel lonely. You will desire to listen to your inner self, so that you can express yourself more imaginatively. Ganesh says spend the evening with your beloved who can listen to your voice in your silence also.

**TAURUS**  
This all matters are likely to revolve around the opposite sex. Women are going to feature prominently and significantly in everything that you do. So says Ganesh. That is good. But you will be inclined to be lazy and laid back and may thus reduce the effect and impact of efforts.

**GEMINI**  
You need to pay more attention to yourself today. Your kind and generous nature means you often think about others rather than about yourself. Now is the time to pay attention to your own needs. You need to spend more time with your family and friends as well, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will secure your place with hard work in your job or business. Ties with partners will improve. Closeness with spouse is indicated. Melody and joy will mark domestic bliss. You will spend the evening with your beloved. Ganesh's blessings are with you.

**LEO**  
The pressure at work will be high. Some person may try to tempt you with lucrative offers to go against your principles. However, you will be able to resist the lure of easy money. Your health may suffer today, so be on guard, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
You will stay calm and steady today, and there is hardly anything that can disturb your peace of mind. Your family and friends will back you fully and motivate you to overcome hurdles. You will work with devotion, says Ganesh. You may ask for work that others may find very difficult to do.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says people will try to take advantage of your amiable nature and disposition. Small issues will crop up today making your nature a little tensed and enhance your anger too. You will be inspired to take chances in monetary matters. Ganesh says you need to keep your mind steady and regain your lost charm soon.

**SCORPIO**  
Your imagination runs wild today. Though you do not travel geographically, your mind travels beyond boundaries. Think and act according to your will, advises Ganesh. However, practice caution before taking any major step.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You will be loaded with responsibilities at work today, fore sees Ganesh. But, you are pro challenges and will take it up sportingly. On personal front, the list of your friends is likely to get longer. All in all, Ganesh sees you in an active avatar today.

**CAPRICORN**  
Don't let your emotions play a spoilsport while deciding about the future. Think practically, otherwise, your expectations and reality will not be on the same boat, guides Ganesh. Friendly and supportive, today you will spread happiness and win the love of one and all. Whenever you get confused about which path to take, take advice from the experienced people around you.

**AQUARIUS**  
Set any target, take up any activity or accept any challenge; you will succeed in any of them with flying colours, foresees Ganesh. Your well-wishers will shower praises upon you for those hard earned achievements. Friends are like family to you, take them out and have a gala time before another busy day begins.

**PISCES**  
You will be busy with romance throughout the day. While singles are likely to find the person of their dreams, those who are married will establish a new closeness in their relationship. Your attitude towards work will begin to change. You will become more serious about your career, and the fruits of this transformation will be reaped by you shortly in the near future, says Ganesh.



## ATWELL BREAKS SILENCE ON HER ROMANCE RUMOURS WITH CRUISE

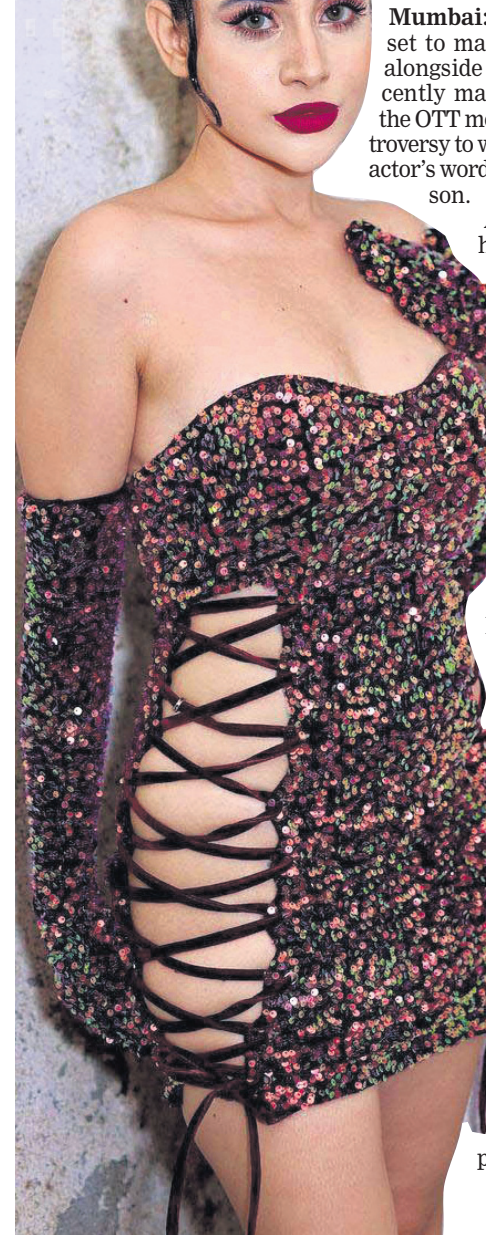
Actress Hayley Atwell addressed rumors of a romance with Tom Cruise, her *MI 7* co-star, dispelling speculation about their off-screen connection during filming. The romance rumors during the latest installment of the franchise were unfounded, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

## BRITNEY TO COLLABORATE WITH RAPPER WILL.I.A.M

Singer Britney Spears has reunited with fellow superstar Will.i.am to make a brand new song, after their last chart topping collaboration. The 41-year-old pop sensation and the 48-year-old *Black Eyed Peas* star have recorded a top-secret song and the pair are all set to release it later this month, reports *TheSun.co.uk*.



## UORFI TAKES A DIG AT AMEESHA



**Mumbai:** Actress Ameesha Patel is all set to make her big screen comeback alongside Sunny Deol with *Gadar 2* recently made a shocking remark about the OTT medium, which has sparked controversy to which Uorfi Javed reacted to the actor's words criticising her as a bitter person.

Ameesha has recently made headlines for accusing Anil Sharma's production house of mismanagement during the filming of *Gadar 2*. Now, she is facing criticism for her negative opinion on the OTT medium. Recently talking to media, the *Race 2* actress said, "OTT is full of homosexuality, gay-lesbianism... Scenes where you have to cover your kids' eyes or actually put a child lock on your television so they can't access those platforms. It's not something you want your kids to watch."

Uorfi took to her Instagram stories and shared a clip of Ameesha's controversial remark and took a brutal dig at her. She wrote, "What is actually gayism, lesbianism? Keep your children away from it? So when she said 'kaho na Pyar hai' she meant only straight people. Public figures speaking without educating themselves on such sensitive topics really irks me! Not getting work for 25 years has made her into a very bitter person."



## Kangana goes all praise for Sharmila

**Mumbai:** Actress Kangana Ranaut showered praises on Padma Bhushan and National award winning thespian, Sharmila Tagore for her performance in the streaming family drama *Gulmohar*, and termed her craft as 'elegant' like the 'warmth of winter sun'.

In an Instagram story, Kangana shared a smiling picture of Sharmila and penned, "On a different note, I recently saw a lovely film *Gulmohar*. I was beyond delighted to see veteran super star Sharmilaji back on screen... her screen presence, voice modulation, nuances in her performance was like the warmth of winter sun... so beautiful and elegant."

The Bollywood diva known for her role in *Gangster*, further expressed her desire to see one of the Hindi cinema's finest actresses, Waheeda Rehman in a full fledged role.

"Now hoping to see Waheeda ji in a full fledged role soon... come on everyone let's manifest this," read Kangana's post.

*Gulmohar* starred Sharmila Tagore, Manoj Bajpayee, Simran, Suraj Sharma, Amol Palekar, and Kaveri Seth. On the work front, Kangana has *Emergency* and *Tejas*.

## Kajol faces flak for her two cents on politicians

**Mumbai:** Actress Kajol recently comment about Indian political leaders lacking education caused disappointment and backlash on social media, drawing criticism from both the public and politicians.

In a recent interview, the *Dilwale* actress told media, "Change, especially in a country like India, is slow. It is very very slow. Because we are steeped in our traditions and steeped in our thought processes and, of course, it has to do with education."

"You have political leaders who do not have an educational system background. I'm sorry but I'm going to go out and say that. I'm being ruled by leaders, so many of them, who do not have that viewpoint, which I think education does give you, at least the chance to look out for a different viewpoint," she added.

Reacting to her words, a user wrote on Twitter, "Kajol herself is a school dropout after class 8th." "She lacks education but isn't leading the nation. She focuses on her personal life and avoids deceitful promises made by uneducated politicians. Don't tarnish her image," yet another one user came out in her support.

The actor also issued a statement clarifying her remark. She tweeted, "I was merely making a point about education and its importance. My intention was not to demean any political leaders, we have some great leaders who are guiding the country on the right path."

## Ishaan: One has to accept failure and move on

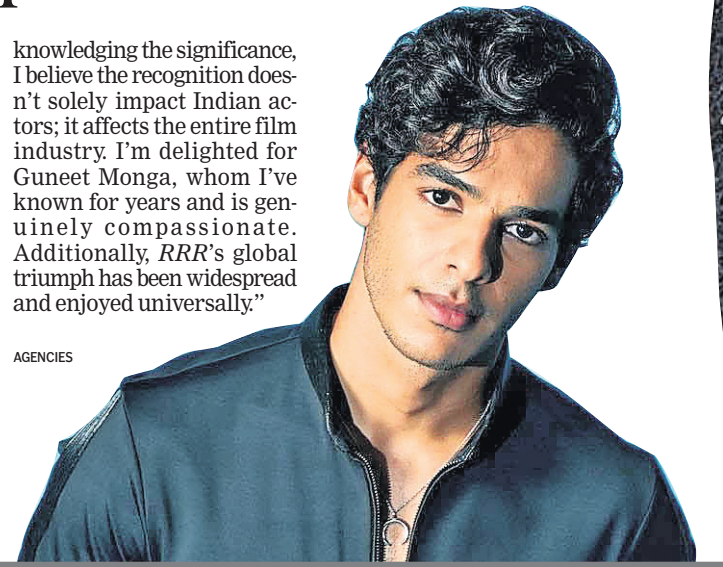
**Mumbai:** Actor Ishaan Khatter acknowledges that he is affected by the box-office results of his films but doesn't let it bring him down instead he is focusing on improving and taking on new projects, including his Hollywood debut.

"The *Phone Bhoot* actor said, "Crafting a narrative requires great commitment and determination, fueled by the longing for it to come alive and engage a wide range of people. Yet life is full of ups and downs. Embracing both successes and failures, I aim to handle them gracefully, constantly improving through

each encounter. I can't arrogantly assert that my film selections have made me a superior actor; that judgment lies with the audience. Nonetheless, I have consistently strived to resume where I left off and evolve with each new endeavor."

"The language of cinema has always been universal but there has never been such a strong foundation and initiative for crossover work as there is now and the first step is exchange of talent," he says, stressing on the growing recognition for Indian talent in the West. The actor adds, "While ac-

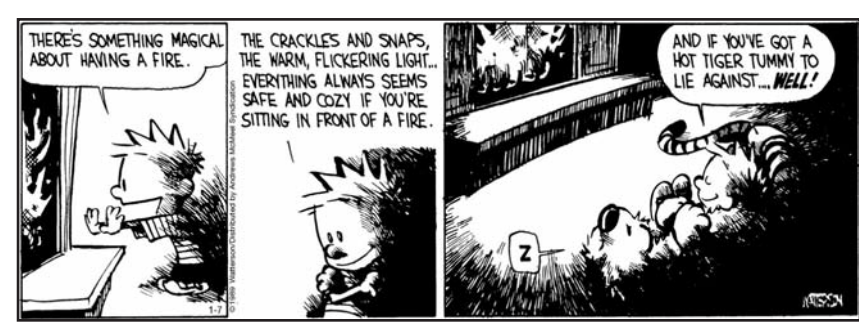
knowledging the significance, I believe the recognition doesn't solely impact Indian actors; it affects the entire film industry. I'm delighted for Guneet Monga, whom I've known for years and is genuinely compassionate. Additionally, *RRR*'s global triumph has been widespread and enjoyed universally."



## PEANUTS



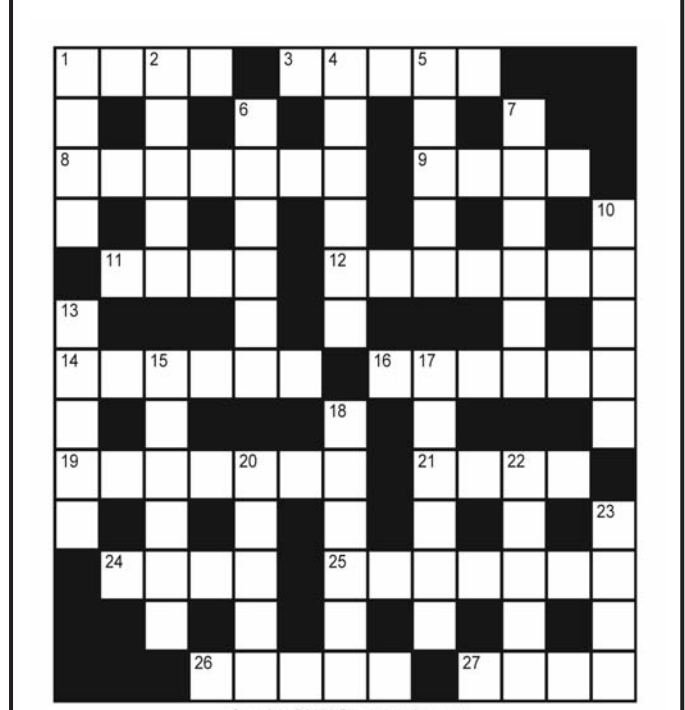
## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY



## FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Libertine
  - 3 Blotto
  - 8 Draw in
  - 9 Attention-getter
  - 11 Young salmon
  - 12 Funny
  - 14 Eminence
  - 16 Flag
  - 19 Russian urn
  - 21 Annul
  - 24 Scheme
  - 25 Health problem
  - 26 Smug smile
  - 27 Plant fibre
  - 6 Constrictive
  - 7 Guiding light
  - 10 On the ball
  - 13 Cheeky
  - 15 Light-footed
  - 17 Lucky charm
  - 18 Pergola
  - 20 Animal toxin
  - 22 Practice session
  - 23 Wildcat
- Down**
- 1 Gallivant
  - 2 Extreme
  - 4 All together
  - 5 Paroxysm

## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

C	W	A	P	S	T
P	A	G	O	D	A
S	R	R	A	E	T
S	T	E	M	D	A
L	V	T	L		
R	E	D	F	L	A
A	R	E			
T	A	L	C	K	I
V	E	T	F	A	S
D	I	S	C	O	V
A	A	E	I	A	T
S	T	R	E	E	
E	D	S	E	R	

**SUDOKU**

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



# downtown

IN SYNC

Artistes perform during a cultural event organised by Learn Geeta at Rail Auditorium in Chandrasekharapur area of Bhubaneswar, Sunday





## Reserve Bank - Integrated Ombudsman Scheme

Single window for resolution of complaints against RBI regulated entities





Complaints not resolved within 30 days or not resolved satisfactorily by Banks/NBFCs/Credit Information Companies/Payment System Participants regulated by RBI, can be lodged with the RBI Ombudsman

Call **14448** for more information. visit <https://cms.rbi.org.in> to lodge a complaint



RBI Kehta Hai...  
**Jaankaar Baniye,  
Satark Rahiye!**



For more details, visit <https://rbikehtahai.rbi.org.in/>  
For feedback, write to [rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in](mailto:rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in)



Issued in public interest by  
**भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक**  
**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA**  
[www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)

### KANDHAMAL MIGRANT'S HANDS CHOPPED OFF

# NCST notice on Chief Secy, DGP

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has served notices on the Chief Secretary, Director General of Police (DGP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) Director General (DG), seeking action taken report (ATR) in connection with brutalities inflicted upon a 22-year-old migrant worker from Kandhamal.

The commission's move came in response to a petition filed by rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy who sought justice for Angad Mallick, a resident of Dahalapadi Sahi in Baliguda Notified Area Council (NAC) in Kandhamal, whose hands were allegedly chopped off by miscreants in Mumbai while he was on way to Gujarat in search of work.

The NCST has directed the Chief Secretary, DGP and RPF DG to investigate the barbaric in-



HANDS OF ANGAD MALLICK, 22, A RESIDENT OF DAHALAPADI SAHI IN BALIGUDA NAC OF KANDHAMAL, WERE CHOPPED OFF BY MISCREANTS IN MUMBAI WHILE HE WAS ON WAY TO GUJARAT IN SEARCH OF WORK

creants assaulted Mallick leaving him unconscious.

The Mumbai GRP found Mallick in a critical condition and admitted him to a nearby hospital. After regaining consciousness, he was shocked to find his hands chopped off from the elbow. Later, the 22-year-old was sent to an ashram in Gujarat's Kutch.

Back home, Mallick's family lodged a complaint with the Baliguda police April 29.

After learning Mallick's details like his house address June 22, the ashram authorities informed Baliguda police about the 22-year-old's plight.

Soon after, Mallick's family reached Gujarat and brought him back to Odisha June 30.

Sources said the Baliguda police has contacted the Mumbai GRP for details of the case registered by them. Police have also interrogated Rabi. The Kandhamal administration has asked the Labour department to investigate the incident.

cident and file ATR in its connection within 15 days.

In case, the commission does not receive reply within the stipulated time, it may exercise the powers of Civil Courts conferred on it under Article 338-A of Constitution and issue summons for appearance in person or by a representative before it, the NCST order read.

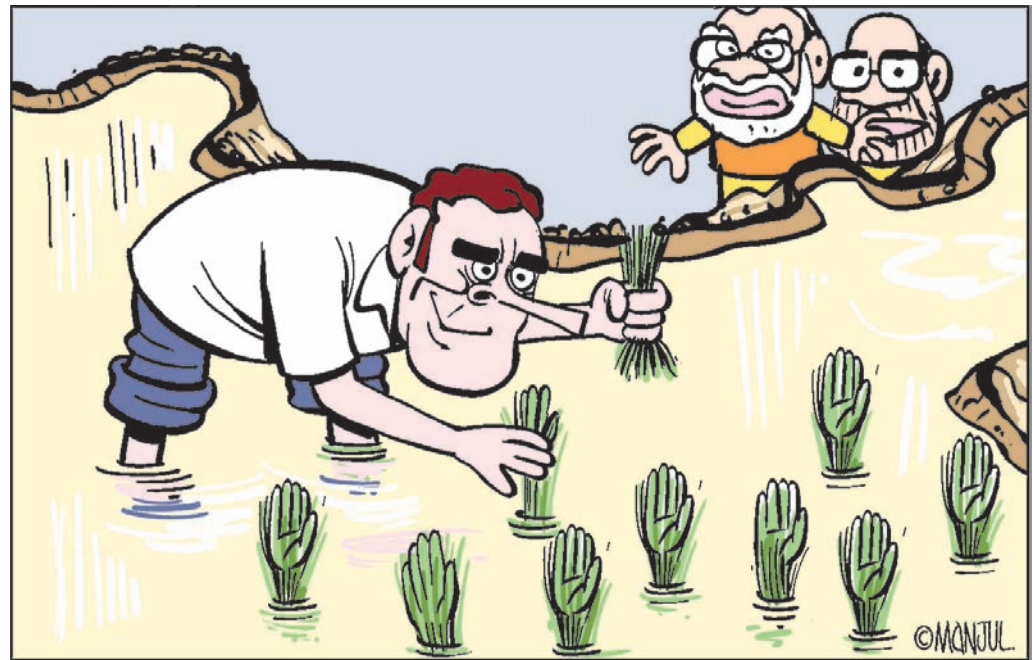
The incident came to the fore after Mallick returned home

with severed hands June 30, 2023.

Sources said Rabi Sahani of Bhagnunda village offered work to Mallick in Gujarat and even paid an advance of Rs 8,000 to him.

Mallick left home without informing his family members and boarded a Mumbai-bound train with Rabi April 27. After alighting at a railway station in Mumbai, Rabi was busy attending a phone call when mis-

### POLITICKLE by MANJUL



### CUTTACK TECHIES LOSE ₹43 LAKH

AGENCIES

**Cuttack, July 9:** Two IT professionals of the Silver City allegedly fell prey to cyber scammers as they lost Rs 43 lakh in Bitcoin fraud.

The victims, residents of CDA and Purigat areas here, have lodged separate complaints with the Cyber police in this regard.

"Two separate cases have been registered and further investigation is underway," said Anil Mishra, Additional DCP, Cuttack.

Two months ago, the victims had received messages on WhatsApp from unknown number while they were asked to review a hotel and get paid in return, sources said.

As they agreed to the offer, the two were then asked to join a group on Telegram app. After completing several tasks assigned in the group, they were initially paid by the fraudsters.

Later, the victims were told to complete 24 tasks. However, the scammers this time asked them to pay money in advance towards allotment of tasks. Though the victims carried out the tasks, they did not get back their money.

# Lisa, state's first AI news anchor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** In a first in Odisha, a private news channel launched its virtual news anchor created by using artificial intelligence (AI) here, Sunday.

An artificial woman clad in Odisha's handloom saree will present news both in Odia and English for OTV network's television and digital platforms, a company official said.

OTV is gifting Odia television journalism its first Artificial Intelligence (AI) news anchor, Lisa, the official said.

Though Lisa can speak in many languages, for the time being, she will only present news in Odia and English for the network's television and digital platforms.

Efforts are underway to make Lisa more proficient in Odia in the coming days. You can find and

follow Lisa on all the prominent social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, among others, the official added.

Addressing media, OTV's managing director Jagi Mangat Panda

said there was a time when computer used to be an astonishing thing. "But the time has changed. Nowadays, people are spending more time on internet. Therefore, keeping pace with the time, OTV has set another milestone by

introducing Odisha's first AI news anchor (Lisa)."

She said the use of AI has just begun in television broadcasting and for that reason AI news anchor Lisa is all set to create many new milestones.

"Lisa is the first AI anchor in the free-to-air regional television broadcasting arena. Similarly, Lisa is also the first Odia news anchor," she added.



### 1.1 KG BROWN SUGAR SEIZED

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The Special Task Force (STF) of the state Crime Branch Sunday claimed to have arrested a drug peddler from Simar-Banki Road near Ostapur village in Khurda district after recovering over 1 kg brown sugar worth over Rs 1 crore from his possession.

Based on intelligence input, a team of STF and Khurda police carried out a raid on Simar-Banki Road near Ostapur village July 8 evening and arrested Suresh Kumar Mohapatra of Podadiha village under Baghmari police limits of the district, STF sources said, Sunday.

Based on intelligence input, a team of STF and Khurda police carried out a raid on Simar-Banki Road near Ostapur village July 8 evening and arrested Suresh Kumar Mohapatra of Podadiha village under Baghmari police limits of the district



**HOLY SHRAVAN:** Kanwaris throng Gadagadia Ghat of Mahanadi in Cuttack, Sunday

PIC: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

# RATNA BHANDAR ISSUE GATHERS STEAM AS POLLS NEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** Ratna Bhandar, the treasure trove of Srimandir, continues to remain a mystery for the people. There is doubt whether the Lord's ornaments are intact inside or have gone missing over the period of time. With the state Assembly and Lok Sabha polls approaching nearer, the BJP has again brought to the forefront the issue of the reopening of Ratna Bhandar.

According to a statement by the state government in the Assembly, Ratna Bhandar was last opened in 1985 but the latest inventories of the valuables were made in 1978.

Until 1985, nobody had seen the inner chamber of the Ratna Bhandar, which was divided into two parts. The outer chamber is regularly opened and orna-

ments are taken out by the servants on festivals.

Following an order of the Orissa High Court, there was an attempt to open the inner chamber April 4, 2018. But it could not be opened as the temple administration could not find the keys. The officials, servants and experts, who went inside the Ratna Bhandar, had to return from the outer chamber.

But the administration did not make it public that the keys were missing until the matter was raised in the managing committee meeting two days after the attempt.

Interestingly, after some days, following a hue and cry, all of a sudden the Puri district administration claimed that a duplicate key was available. Where did the duplicate come from and where has the original key gone? These questions created confu-

sion among the Lord's devotees.

Later, Justice Raghuraj Das Inquiry Commission on Ratna Bhandar was set up and Justice Das submitted the final report to the state government November, 2018. The commission report has not yet been placed in the Assembly.

With this in the background, there has been a demand for reopening Ratna Bhandar for a long time. During his visit to Odisha in December last year, BJP national president JP Nadda had raised the issue and targeted the state government. He had asked about the missing keys. The BJP chief had also alleged that the state government had failed to protect the valuable gems and

assets of Lord Jagannath.

On different occasions, the saffron party has demanded for reopening of Ratna Bhandar, which is also reportedly in need of repairs. Not only the BJP, several opposition parties, including the Congress, Gajapati

Dibyasinha Deb and many senior servants of Puri temple have also urged the state government to reopen the treasure trove to undertake repairing work and take inventory of the valuables. Chhattisgarh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan has also demanded for reopening. However, the state government has not paid any heed to the demand.

The BJP has recently knocked at the doors of the Orissa High Court. Admitting a petition filed by former BJP state president Samir Mohanty, the HC July 5 served notices on four persons about opening of Ratna Bhandar.

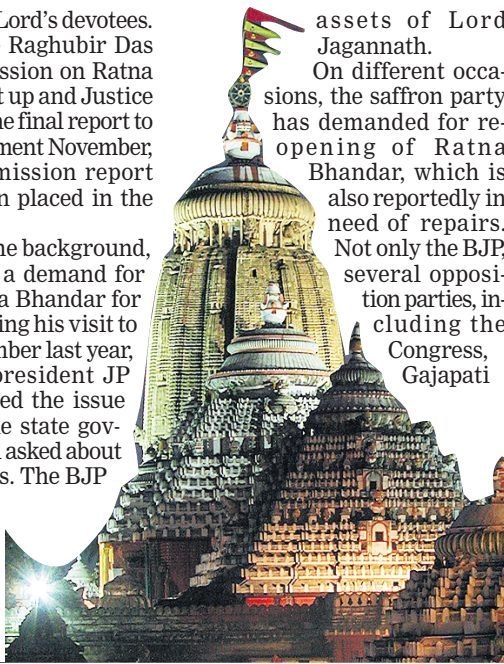
"Though 45 years have passed, the government has not reopened the Ratna Bhandar. When the Puri king and Lord Jagannath's devotees across the

world are waiting to know whether the valuables of Lord Jagannath are safe or not. The government is in deep sleep," alleged Mohanty.

The BJP leader said he has moved the HC and the court has taken it seriously. The next hearing is set for August 7.

When asked about the reopening, Law Minister Jagannath Saraka said, "We do not know whether the keys have gone missing or not. The matter is now before the HC. The state government will take necessary steps after examining different aspects as per the directive of the court."

In 2021, then Law Minister Pratap Jena informed Assembly that the Ratna Bhandar was opened in 1978. At that time, it had more than 12,831 'bhari' of gold and 22,153 'bhari' of silver (one bhari equals 11.66 grams).





# Heavy rain likely in 7 districts: IMD



IMD has forecasted light to moderate rain or thundershower at many places in the state Monday. Heavy rainfall warnings have been issued for districts like Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangapur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundargarh

Odisha, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Khurda, Nayagarh and at a few places over the rest districts of Odisha," the IMD stated.

Similarly, the Capital City is very likely to have a partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain / thundershower. The maximum and minimum temperature is very likely to be around 36 degrees and 27 degrees Celcius respectively in Bhubaneswar, the IMD forecast read.

IMD has forecasted light to moderate rain or thundershower at many places over the districts of the state Monday. Heavy rainfall warnings have been issued for districts like Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangapur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundargarh.

Similarly, light to moderate rain with thundershower is likely to occur Tuesday at most places over the districts of south interior Odisha and at many places over the rest districts. IMD has issued heavy rainfall alert at one or two places over the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangapur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Angul, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj.

## City sees uptick in conjunctivitis cases

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

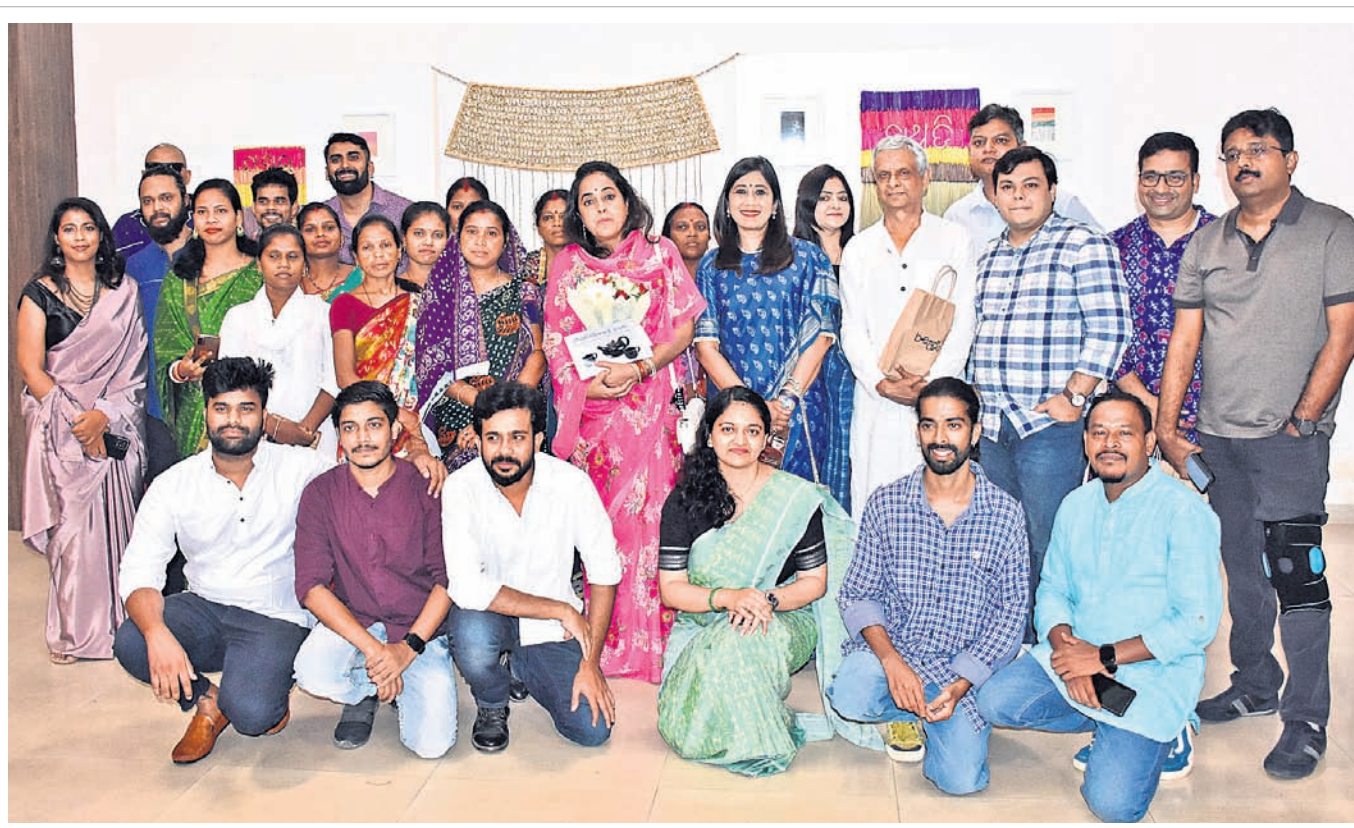
Bhubaneswar, July 9: In less than two weeks, cases of conjunctivitis have grown in various localities in the City. With the cases surging manifold and the state government issuing guidelines for this communicable disease, the vendors have shared their helplessness towards it. The schools and offices have asked the students and the employees to stay at home to prevent contamination of virus.

Conjunctivitis or pink eye is the inflammation or infection of the transparent membrane that lines the eyelid and eyeball. Several hospitals are registering more than 20 cases of conjunctivitis daily. "Weather is a player here, and this environment is suitable for the microbes to sustain. We witness cases every year but it is higher than usual this year, said Lopa, an ophthalmologist in a private hospital.

When asked about the transmission of virus through the vendors, she said, "They are doing their job and it is unavoidable. All we can do is avail medical camps and provide them eye drops and let them do their work. On our part, we should maintain as much sanitation that is required and wash the vegetables and fruits to avoid the contagious virus to pass."

Speaking about the rising cases in the city, Capital Hospital Director Laxmidhar Sahoo said, "It is a seasonal disease and happens every year, but reports show huge numbers of cases being reported this year.

Since it is caused by a virus which doesn't have a medicine we advice people to use eye drops to prevent further bacterial infection. This usually subsides within 5 to 7 days, till then people should avoid contact."



ARTISTIC VISION: Guests including Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy, artist Rohit Kale, Director of the Belgadia Palace and Mayurbhanj Foundation, Rashmi Rajya Laxmi Bhanj Deo, Chairperson of IPCA managing committee Panchami Manoo Ukil attending the open day of The Belgadia Palace X BEADS Residency programme to explore contemporary art and craft in the state at Press Club of Odisha in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## 'Art gives opportunity to learn something new'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 9: An 'artist in residency' programme was organised by the Belgadia Palace and 'Bhubaneswar Experimental Art and Design Studio' (BEADS) at Press Club of Odisha, Sunday. An exhibition of art was put on display on this occasion.

Joining as the chief guest, Tathagata Satpathy, Editor of Orissa POST and Dharitri, said that art gives opportunity to learn something new and such exhibition helps in learning

new things.

Normally, we think of Sabai grass, which is found widely in Mayurbhanj, being used only for making Sabai rope, but it can also be used for other things. We must promote art in Odisha and such events and collaborations are good ways of doing so, he added.

The Belgadia Palace and Mayurbhanj Foundation director Rashmi Rajyalakshmi Bhanjdeo said, "The Belgadia Palace in Baripada stands as a testament to the region's architectural grandeur and cul-

tural heritage.

The Mayurbhanj Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the palace, is dedicated to preserving this heritage and promoting sustainable development in the region, she added.

The residency programme offers exceptional opportunities for contemporary artists to nurture their creativity, expand artistic vision and foster meaningful collaborations.

Rohit Kale, an artist-in-residence, with a background in research-based contemporary

fine arts and an MFA from Nottingham Trent University, brings a fresh perspective to the programme. He has developed an artistic response that seamlessly integrates craft practices, resulting in inclusive and thought-provoking works of art.

Julius Das, the curator of the residency programme, said, "Our goal is to regenerate creative processes, explore new ideas and foster collaborations. We firmly believe that craft clusters hold immense potential to inspire future ventures."

## Uncertainty looms over functioning of Odia Univ

Bhubaneswar: With the construction work of the campus of the Odia University at Satyabadi still going on even after four years of laying foundation stone, the students are at a crossroads. Even though the construction work has not been completed, nor has vice-chancellor, registrar, comptroller of finance been appointed, the Higher Education department has decided to start classes from this education year. Since the campus is yet to be ready, the department has planned to start classes at the administrative building of the adjacent Utkalmani Gopabandhu College. But the uncertainty regarding when the classes will start is haunting students. Earlier, it was decided that the entrance examination of the Odia University will be conducted simultaneously with the Common PG Entrance. The department in a letter directed the concerned authority to end the admission process by June and inaugurate the University by July. Surprisingly, though the Common PG Entrance is already over, the entrance examination of the Odia University couldn't be held. Now, it has been decided that PG Entrance will once again be conducted only for the Odia University.



BUDDING TALENTS: Children drawing sketches at a competition organised by Shishu Samachara in Puri, Sunday

## Higher Education dept to have dedicated pension cell: Nayak

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 9: The department of Higher Education will have a dedicated Pension Cell and must maintain integrity and transparency in adherence with the 5T governance of the government, Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak instructed the department officials following a review at Lok Seva Bhawan Saturday.

Nayak reviewed various activities of the department for more than two hours. A dedicated pension cell should start functioning immediately and the employees must receive their pension on the very day of retirement. All the pending pension cases must be cleared up within a specific timeline, he directed.



"All out efforts should be made to fill up the vacancies of teaching and non-teaching staff in the colleges. He impressed upon the officers to create a database of all the faculty of the government-aided /GIA colleges through software so that the vacancy can be monitored and rationalised," the Minister stated. He also reviewed the status of RUSA and World Bank funding, Student scholarships among others things. A detailed discussion was made on further

improvement in the standard of higher education and the development of educational institutions in the state.

He stressed on proper utilisation of the provision/allotment of funds in different heads in due time and directed the officials to take measures to achieve higher NAAC ranking and participation in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

While advising the officers of the department to maintain absolute integrity and transparency, Nayak warned for any deviation to this will not be tolerated. He asked the department's Secretary Aravind Agrawal to personally review the funds pending in various colleges and ensure its early utilisation.

## What to eat, consumers ask as markets pose grim picture

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 9: The situation in the vegetable markets in many parts of the state wears a gloomy look as vendors desperately wait for consumers to turn up and buy their stock. But unfortunately, the consumers are not in a position to help as they are also hit hard by the soaring vegetable prices. Be it tomatoes, green chillies or lemon, the prices of almost every vegetable have skyrocketed in the past one week.

The bad weather, as a result of rainy season, is being attributed for the price hike in the food market. Also, the vehicles carrying vegetables from neighbouring states are getting stranded midway on account of the onset of monsoon. The low yield of crop this year is one of the major reasons for rise in price of commodities including vegetables.

Buyers come to ask the rates

and take a turn, some purchase low-priced vegetables and some just don't as if it is the vendors who are deciding the prices, said a trader.

It is like we are being punished because of the bad yield this year. I request all the buyers to purchase from us, after all this is our means of sustenance, she added.

Dalma, being the staple diet for most of the government schools in the state, is being provided to the students without vegetables. This, in turn, has peeved the students. They complain they are intentionally not given vegetables.

Denying the students' claim, a teacher from the school said, "We are providing all the raw vegetables, just the quantity per serving has reduced a little bit owing to the rise in prices"

Speaking on the issue, a member of a SHG group said, "The funds allocated for everyday meals are not sufficient now

## SOARING VEGETABLE PRICES



Chhatra Congress workers selling vegetables in front of the residence of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain to protest government apathy towards skyrocketing vegetable prices in Bhubaneswar, Sunday op photo

when the prices of vegetables are skyrocketing. We cannot quit

providing food to the students who are dependent on the meals

hence we have already taken groceries and vegetables in credit. We expect the kind attention of the government towards this major issue."

The SHG women who work for an Aahar Kendra said, "It has become difficult for us to make a profit from the funds allotted, not that we are not putting vegetables in dalma.

We are providing the best we can, but serving dalma and rice at Rs 5 is pretty difficult now.

The prices of vegetables are sky high, first time in the last 4-5 years. Serving a vegetable thali is more expensive than plating a non vegetarian thali these days.

The problem is that the government itself is unsure by when the prices will drop, hence we are indecisive of increasing our rates, said an owner of a restaurant in the City.

Shalima Roy, who runs a cloud kitchen in Bhubaneswar, said, "Without getting any clue from

the government about when the prices shall fall, it is becoming really difficult to manage the canteen with 100 student subscriptions."

The prices of meals are pre-decided and now if we put a hike in rates of meals, we will lose the subscribers who take food on a daily basis, she added.

Every year we observe a slight rise in vegetable prices around this time of the year because of changes in weather.

With the import of vegetables from different states a balance is created in the market.

Now that the imports are at a pause, the prices in the market are surging and it might stretch for one month, says Gayadhar Swain, member of Vegetables Traders' Association, Bhubaneswar.

An improvement in the situation will be observed very soon as an attempt is being made to bring local vegetables back to the market, added Swain.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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



# Sankhamedi villagers vote in WB rural polls

Residents of this border village have voter identity cards of both the states and they vote during elections in both the states



FILE PHOTO

■ Odisha government was collecting revenue from Sankhamedi village from 1927 to 1980 but it stopped from 1978

■ After the then WB government declared it as part of their province by including it in Ramnagar block of East Midnapore district from 1978. Since then, both the states have entered into a face-off over possession of the village

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhogarai, July 9:** At a time when border disputes of Odisha are increasingly complicated with Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal, residents of Sankhamedi village under Analia panchayat of this block in Balasore district cast their votes in the panchayat polls of West Bengal held Saturday.

Over 300 voters in Sankhamedi village were learnt to have exercised their franchise in the rural polls of West Bengal, Saturday. People of this border village have voter identity cards of both the states and the residents vote during elections in both the states.

This has dealt a severe blow to the state government which always vouches to guard the borders of the state from the neighbouring states.

Reports said that Sankhamedi village is not a lone example as voters of 12 other villages in Bhogarai and Jaleswar blocks of Balasore district bordering West Bengal have voted in the rural polls of the neighbouring state.

The villagers enjoy ration supplied by both the states, speak both Odia and Bengali,

and use SIM cards of both the state telecom circles. The development has come in the backdrop of Odisha completing 86 years of its formation as a separate province.

Local intelligentsia have alleged that such large number of voters voting in West Bengal rural polls is indicative that the neighbouring state has almost gobbled up Sankhamedi which is a revenue village of Odisha. This has sparked concern in various quarters in the state.

On record, the people come under two villages—Sankhamedi (ward No 18 of Analia panchayat) of Bhogarai block in Odisha and Bagbrajakishore (ward no 14) of Ramnagar block in West Bengal.

The Sankhamedi has about 320 voters while Bagbrajakishore village has over 700 voters, including the rest from nearby West Bengal hamlets. The villagers revealed that they have been voting in both the state elections for the last 30 years. However, the Election Commission has apparently not taken note of it.

Reports said that the Odisha government was collecting revenue from Sankhamedi village from 1927 to 1980 but it stopped from 1978 after the then West

Bengal government declared it as part of their province by including it in Ramnagar block of East Midnapore district from 1978. Since then, both the states have entered into a face-off over possession of the village.

The Odisha government has established a primary school, constructed a road, supplied power and drinking water, constructed toilets and providing the villagers with ration cards. Similarly, the West Bengal government is also providing other basic facilities and houses under Awas Yojana to the villagers.

The students of this village continue to study in the new building of the primary school where the state government has appointed Odia teachers. However, the students of this village have failed to get caste certificates as the state government is not collecting revenue from this village. As a result, students studying in Odia medium schools have been deprived of getting higher education.

The dual rule of both the state government continues in Sankhamedi village while the voters continue to cast their votes in the elections of both the states with the voter cards they have acquired from Odisha and West Bengal.



**ANTI-DRUG PLAY:** Students of Khetrajpur school staging a play on drug awareness at Paban Sarovar in Padhanpali of Sambalpur district during the launch of Drug Free India campaign (Nisha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan), Sunday

## Sarala shrine bans entry of cellphone

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, July 9:** The district administration has implemented some new rules at the famous Sarala shrine at Jhankada in Jagatsinghpur district. Entry of mobile phones and use of polythere have been completely banned inside the temple premises.

Now, visitors can not take their mobile phones inside the main temple and the sanctum sanctorum. Taking photos of the idol inside the temple has also been prohibited and anybody found capturing pictures inside the temple will be fined.

Steps will be taken for taking action against the servitors who are found harassing the tourists. Servitors who are not yet married or performed their thread ceremonies have also been banned to enter the sanctum sanctorum. Strict action will be taken against the violators, said the temple administration.

## Apex safety committee meeting of SAIL held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 9:** SR Surwanshi, ED (Works) presided over the fourth Apex Safety Committee meeting of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) which was held at his conference hall. The top executive of RSP congratulated the collective for achieving the record performance of 400 days of zero fatality and 218 days without any reportable accident. This remains the best-ever figure attained since inception.

"I sincerely thank and congratulate all of you and especially the efforts of the safety engineering department for achieving this best-ever performance," he said to all present over there.

During the meeting, presentations were made by Abakasa Behera, GM (Safety), and the



convener of the apex committee, chairperson and co-chairperson of 8 sub-committees of the NISCHAY safety initiative.

The meeting was attended by CGM in-charges, Chief General Managers, HODs and representatives from the safety engineering department and sub-committee NISCHAY convener as well as representatives from Messrs E&Y. The meeting was convened under the guidance of Asha Kartha, GM In-charge (Safety).

## SEXAGENARIAN JUMPS IN FRONT OF TRAIN; DIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rairangpur, July 9:** A sexagenarian committed suicide by jumping in front of a train at Anlajodi railway station platform number 1 under Bahalda police limits in Mayurbhanj district, Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Ranjit Sengupta (68) of Gorumahisani area in Mayurbhanj. As per reports, a man allegedly jumped in front of Tata Nagar bound DMU passenger train from Badampahad Sunday morning when it was passing through platform number 1 at Anlajodi railway station. As a result, his head was severed and he died on the spot.

Police seized the body and sent it for post-mortem. Balasore railway police then reached the spot and kicked off a probe.

## Man kills wife at in-laws' house

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur Town, July 9:** In a shocking incident, a man killed her wife at his in-laws' house in Katarapura village under Sadar police limits in Jajpur district.

The woman was identified as Madhusmita Guin, daughter of Bishnucharan Guin of the village. Madhusmita was in love with Alok Mishra, son of Biswanath Mishra of Malapada village and they got married in 2021. Due to some familial dispute, Madhusmita left her in-laws' house and was residing at her paternal house for the last seven days.

A quarrel broke out between the couple, Friday. Later at night, Madhusmita called Alok to her parents' house. All went to bed after finishing dinner. Later around 1am when Madhusmita's father woke up, he did not find his daughter and son-in-law in their room. He then called Alok and asked about the whereabouts of Madhusmita. To his utter shock, Alok confessed that he murdered Madhusmita and threw her into a pond nearby.

Madhusmita's family members rescued her from the pond and rushed her to the Jajpur DHH but the doctors declared her dead on arrival. A case (No-172/23) was registered at the Sadar police station and Alok was arrested.

## 5T school: Parents warn stir as basic infrastructure missing



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bangiriposi, July 9:** Parents of the students of Adarsha Vidyalaya, Bangiriposi through principal Monalisha Nayak have presented a written complaint to the district Collector over lack of basic infrastructure in Adarsha Vidyalaya at Jamadapala of Banakati panchayat under Bangiriposi block in Mayurbhanj district.

As per reports, students of classes VI and VII in the school are sitting on the classroom floor and studying as there is no facility of bench and desk for the students.

Notably, construction of the school was started in 2019. Due to unprecedented delay in construction of the classrooms, students took admission and studied for two years sans basic facilities. When construction was completed in 2021, the students went to the smart class-

rooms with lots of hope. Even as two more years have passed after they moved to the newly constructed classrooms, they are still deprived of the most basic facilities. The smart pictures of the smart schools under 5T have been exposed.

On the other hand, the government is declaring that it will open smart schools in each block of the state. Here, there is no facility of laboratory and computer teaching available in the school for the students of Classes IX and X, for which the students are suffering a lot.

The parents also threatened of agitation if their demands are not fulfilled within seven days of receiving the written complaint. Upon being asked in this regard, principal Monalisha Nayak said, "I have informed the higher authorities many times to draw their attention towards the plight of the school but till now no steps have been taken."

## Road mishap kills man in Gajapati

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paralakhemundi, July 9:** A man died in a road accident near Sariapalli village under Garabandha police limits and Goshani block in Gajapati district, Saturday.

The deceased was identified as T. Simanchalam (52) of Kaithada village. He was working as a plumber. As per the report, Simanchalam was returning to his house from Garabandha on his two-wheeler when a truck hit him from the rear after the driver lost control on the wheel.

Simanchalam was critically injured and immediately rushed to Gurandi community health centre in Garabandha police vehicle after being rescued by the locals. After knowing that none of the doctors or staff were available at the health centre, he was shifted to the district headquarters hospital at Paralakhemundi where the doctors declared him 'brought dead'.

On the other hand, the villagers of Kaithada village alleged that if the preliminary treatment of Simanchalam would have been done at Gurundi health centre then he would surely be alive.

The body of the deceased Simanchalam was handed over to his family members after conducting a post-mortem at the district headquarters hospital at Paralakhemundi. A case (No-46/23) was registered in this regard at Garabandha police station. IIC Gobind Goud said that investigation in this regard has been initiated.

## Mega awareness meeting for protection of forest resources

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, July 9:** The second phase of the Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project (OFSDP-II) is underway in 31 Van Surakhya Samitis (VSSs) of Ujalpur range of Sundargarh forest division with the aim of restoring degraded forests, protecting the existing ones, and improving the quality of life of the families who depend on the forest. Wide awareness is being created through Forest Protection Committees on behalf of this project to reduce dependence on forests and find alternative livelihoods.

A mega awareness programme on forest and environment protection and tree plantation programme by Shramadan was organised July 7 by Katra-Budabahal VSS of Ujalpur forest range on the eve of Van Mahotsav-2023. At first Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Miras highlighted the objectives of the Van Mahotsav and presented various programmes being run by Sundargarh forest division. He made everyone take oath to protect our precious national assets - 'forests'.

Sundargarh zilla prasad president Kunti Pradhan joined the programme as the chief guest and opined that our precious forest resources can be protected through collective unity and cooperation. Joining as the guest of ho-



nour, Sadar MLA Kusum Tette called upon women to take the lead in protecting the precious national asset as women are deeply involved with forests and environment. Tette said that every tree is the abode of lord Jagannath as trees are needed to build his idol. Damodar Dehuria, superintendent engineer (Research) of Sundargarh Irrigation department attended as the guest of honor and stressed on taking tree plantation as an addiction and continuing efforts for its care.

In this context, 500 fuel and fodder varieties of saplings were planted by members of Katra-Budabahal VSS in a land adjacent to the rural forest through Shramadan and another 500 saplings will be planted within the next week, said president of the VSS Basanta Pruseth. Digambar Upadhyay, team leader of Ujalpur field management unit coordinated the programme and gave a detailed presentation of the various programs running under OFSDP-II.

Upadhyay informed that "Memorable Plantation Campaign" has been started

at VSS level of Ujalpur field management unit during Van Mahotsav-2023. It is an innovative initiative by which people will be sensitised from village to village to plant one tree on different important occasions like child birth, birthday, wedding anniversary, death anniversary etc.

Ujalpur forest range officer Prensagar Naik, foresters Hembati Singh and Santosini Sahani, forest guard Chandni Dehuria, Meghdega PS member Kumudini Majhi, youth leader Sanjeev Singh and Mitranu Seth joined the programme as other guests.

On this occasion, P-NGO team leader Digambar Upadhyay, development officers HariPriya Naik and Manoranjan Mallick were specially felicitated on behalf of Budabahal VSS for their continuous support and guidance in every work at VSS level. The programme was organised by Basant Pruseth, Madan Mohan Delhi, Sushma Bhoi, Jina Badhek, Ganesh Naik, Raviratna Bhoi and women of different Self Help Groups (SHGs).

## Users lament as 'smart' bus stops lack smart thinking

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, July 9:** Good to look at, small cubicle like smart bus stands have been set up all over the Steel City for the commuters' ease. However, commuters, who are the end users, feel that these 'smart' bus stops are anything but smart. They lamented that no smart thought has gone into conceptualising these shelters.

"No doubt they are very good looking, rather smart looking. But that smartness is limited to the looks only, otherwise they are not very helpful," said an elderly woman Banaja Das of Koel Nagar. Her main complaint was that during heavy rain, the shelters are not able to save commuters from the shower. "I was almost fully drenched while waiting for the 'Mo Bus'. Because the shelter was unable to protect those inside when there is slanted rainfall," she said.



Another person said, "Even the space under it is inadequate if there are large numbers of persons under its roof. And if you have cow or dog taking shelter from sun or rain, then space gets squeezed."

However, the most practical criticism was regarding the platform created for the super elderly, sick, pregnant ladies and especially for the physically challenged. A ramp

has been constructed in all these bus stops with proper steel bars to hold as support.

However, what really causes the problem is the height of the bus shelter and the direction of the ramp. In most cases, the bus stop is at an inconvenient height for persons of all the four mentioned categories. Besides, the direction of the ramp is on the side of the stop. This is again another problem

for these people to use it. "Why have you constructed the bus stops at such great height when one finds it difficult to use stairs back home," said a septuagenarian Alibha Patnaik. Most of them and even general commuters say that the height of the bus stops could have been reduced.

"You have to construct one smart stop but where is the smart thinking? If the spot is at a height it could have been reduced," made this point another person at Chhend. Most of the elderlies' observation was, "Had the height of the bus stops in most cases reduced a bit then the ramps could have touched the road and there would have been no problem in using it."

Besides, when this reporter visited some of the stops to take stock of the situation, it was found that the approach road to the ramp was yet to be cleared of garbage post construction.

**GOVT. OF ODISHA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES,**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,**  
**RENGALI RIGHT CANAL DIVISION NO-I, KHUNTUNI, DHENKANAL**  
e mail Id - eebaghuab01@gmail.com  
**'e' Procurement Notice**

No.A-309: The Superintending Engineer, Rengali Right Canal Division No-I, Khuntuni, Dhenkanal on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage basis bids in single cover system for construction of the work as detailed below:

1. Name of the work : **Special repair to E type quarters (Block No E-2, E-3 & E-8) at Old Irrigation Colony, Mahisapat, Dhenkanal.** 2. Tender Cost : Rs. 15.89 lakh. 3. Bid Document Cost : Rs. 6,000.00 (Online). 4. Bid Security : Rs. 15,900.00. 5. Class of Contractor: D & C Class. 6. Period of Completion : 02 calendar months (60 days). 7. Other details are as follows :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for bidding		Date of Opening of Bid
		From	To	
Superintending Engineer, Rengali Right Canal Division No-I, Khuntuni, Dhenkanal	SERRCDI-01/2023-24	10.07.2023 10.00 AM	19.07.2023 5.30 PM	21.07.2023 11.00 AM

8. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation to the above notice will be published in the Govt. website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in).

Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
Rengali Right Canal Division No-I, Khuntuni, Dhenkanal  
OIPR-32510/11/0001/2324



FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# GENDER & CLIMATE ACTION



**Gender equality is a crucial missing piece of the climate puzzle. If governments want a fighting chance of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and shifting to renewable energy, they must give women more access to inputs, education, and capital**

than 34% of country teams. In 2020, women led only 15% of environmental ministries in 193 countries.

Deploying capital to support women in agriculture, keep girls in school, fund women entrepreneurs, and support women-led emergency-information networks has long been recognized as essential to achieve the goal of inclusive economic growth. But it will also contribute to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and keeping global warming within the 1.5° Celsius limit set by the Paris climate agreement.

Imagine a world in which women farmers have equal access to inputs, women have the funds to become clean-energy entrepreneurs, girls learn the skills required to take advantage of new green jobs, and women-led networks, such as Women Wetem Weta in Vanuatu, provide early disaster warnings to safeguard their communities. This is a world of "more for more": more children are educated, more societies can sustain themselves, and everyone can enjoy greater prosperity, security, and stability.

To realise this vision, those in positions of power must seize this moment of peril and possibility to ensure that women and girls can fulfill their potential and, in doing so, support the shared fight against climate change and its effects. The energy transition is an opportunity for us all. Making the most of it will require investing in those who will drive it forward.

*The writer is Adjunct Senior Fellow for Women and Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

In the battle to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and avert the worst impacts of climate change, the world has a vast resource that remains largely untapped: women. Preventing the catastrophic effects of climate change requires understanding what – and who – drives transformation on the ground. Investing in women, which means improving their access to education, economic inputs, and capital, gives governments a fighting chance of meeting their ambitious climate goals.

Several studies have shown how advancing gender equality can spur climate action. States with larger proportions of women in their legislatures are more likely to approve environmental agreements and treaties. And when more women are involved in group decisions about land management, the group conserves more. Moreover, it is estimated that boosting the productivity of women smallholder farmers could reduce carbon emissions by up to two billion tonnes by 2050.

The transition to clean power requires a transition in power. Or, put another way, changing power systems requires changing systems of power. Despite being responsible for half of the world's food production, women own less than 20% of the world's agricultural land. And although women comprise 45% of the agricultural workforce across developing countries (and 37% worldwide), they receive only 7% of investment in the sector. If they received the same access to productive resources as men, women in developing countries could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% and lift 100-150 million people out of hunger.

As matters stand, women and

girls disproportionately bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. According to the United Nations, women comprise 80% of those displaced by climate change and are 14 times more likely to die in a climate-related disaster than men are. And by 2025, climate change could prevent at least 12.5 million girls from completing their education each year. As the Malala Fund has noted, "following climate shocks, stressed families often pull girls out of school to help with an increase in household responsibilities – such as fetching water and firewood – or to enter early marriage to ease the burden of scarce household resources." In Botswana, an estimated 70% of children who dropped out of school during drought were girls, while in Ethiopia, child marriage increased by 119%, on average, in regions suffering the most from drought.

When extreme weather events rob family breadwinners of their livelihoods and their homes, they can no longer afford to have children studying instead of working; sometimes, girls as young as 11 or 12 become brides. That means squandered talent and lost potential, as well as early motherhood for many. Moreover, children with less education are less fluent in sustainable agriculture practices.

The good news is that investing in women and girls promises high returns in terms of fostering growth, building resilience, and strengthening adaptation efforts. But taking advantage of this opportunity requires a shift in imagination and a concerted effort to make women more visible – especially in policymaking settings. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Egypt (COP27), women made up less



Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

**DESPITE BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR HALF OF THE WORLD'S FOOD PRODUCTION, WOMEN OWN LESS THAN 20% OF THE WORLD'S AGRICULTURAL LAND**

## Khalistan Not Again

The fact that a pro-Khalistan protest outside the Indian High Commission in London 8 July passed off without incident and there are no reports of any trouble by Khalistani activists from Canada, the US or Australia on the same day, as had been feared, are only cold comfort to the Indian foreign service establishment. That such an orchestrated terrorist campaign could be planned simultaneously in four major countries shows there is something seriously wrong in the way India is conducting its diplomacy. On top of it, the comment by the Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar that India will not tolerate the country's flag in the London embassy having been lowered by Khalistani activists reflects rather a streak of arrogance and lack of diplomatic finesse not expected from a career diplomat that he is. Repeatedly issuing demarches and summoning diplomats from the countries where Khalistani operatives have been threatening and attacking Indian diplomatic staff is certainly not the way to effectively deal with the snowballing crisis. It is no use blaming Pakistan for allegedly sponsoring the terrorist movement and promoting its supposed latest champion - Amritpal Singh trying to be a clone of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who caused incalculable harm during the movement's earlier manifestation in the 1980s.

The current wave of protests by Khalistani activists is part of a series of demonstrations organised in several cities across the world, such as Melbourne, San Francisco and Toronto to protest against the killing of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia on 18 June. Nijjar was wanted in India on terrorism charges and his killing has caused outrage among his followers who accuse the Indian government of being involved in eliminating him.

There has been an outpouring of outrage on social media and in conversations. It seems to be India's intelligence failure that an obscure, lone man Amritpal Singh suddenly shot into the limelight and kept foxing the police and other law enforcing agencies as he roamed free in India dodging arrest for months till he finally surrendered before the court. He is being described as "the man from nowhere," unknown to Indians. He was a clean-shaven transporter from Dubai who suddenly emerged in India as a self-styled heir to the toxic legacy of actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu who had played a role during the farmers' protest in Punjab-Haryana-Uttar Pradesh-Rajasthan against the Modi government's three anti-farmer legislations. After he died in a car accident, Amritpal Singh donned the mantle of spearheading the Waris Panjab De movement of Deep Sidhu that clamoured for the rights of the people of Punjab. His transformation into a bearded pro-Bhindranwale activist even led many to suspect that he is the creation of Pakistan planted to launch terrorist attacks in India.

The most intriguing development in recent times is the re-emergence of the Khalistani movement even when it does not get traction from a majority of the people of Punjab. The country was taken by surprise when a Khalistani activist hoisted the outfit's flag at the height of the farmers' march towards the Red Fort in protest against the controversial farm laws. At that point the BJP-led Centre even sought to portray the agitation as a Khalistani-backed one.

It seems the government in its desperation and subsequent frustration over not being able to shove the laws down the throats of the farmers apparently at the behest of big corporate houses blackened the movement by bracketing it with Khalistani terrorists operating from outside, especially Canada where there is an influential Sikh diaspora.

Last month, Amritpal Singh invoked Bhindranwale's rhetoric by saying Union Home Minister Amit Shah could meet the same fate as former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gunned down for launching Operation Blue Star to flush out Sikh terrorists, led by Bhindranwale, from the Golden Temple complex. Shah spoke against Khalistan.

Amritpal Singh's father, Tarsem Singh, has complained the hunt for his son was a "conspiracy," and that his son was working to fight drug addiction.

Whatever the truth, the fact remains that Khalistani activists are operating on foreign soil with the aim of carving out a separate state for the Sikhs. Their deep ties with their native land, Punjab, and moorings with Punjabi culture are strong enough. The government needs to handle the issue with far more care and isolate the subversive forces from the patriotic people of Punjab who form the bulwark for a strong and prosperous India. Bigotry and narrow religious ideology of the BJP are not the answer to the problems in Punjab and the divisive Khalistani movement.

### WISDOM CORNER

- To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge. **CONFUCIUS**
- Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy. **THICH NHAT HANH**
- Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life. **ECKHART TOLLE**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Logocidal

Taking a line through suicidal, genocidal and dozens of words of similar form, we know this must mean the killing of something. The Greek logos can mean a word, as in logophile, a lover of words, but logocidal instead borrows its associated abstract senses of discourse and reason. Logocidal refers to the destruction or perversion of meaning, something deadly to reason and communication. Newspeak in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four was a logocidal creation since it was designed to limit what it was possible to think about or discuss. Logocidal is an extremely rare word, whose appearances can be counted on both hands with fingers to spare. However, it has been wielded twice in recent years by the journalist Marina Hyde in the Guardian. She uses it for language that's obfuscatory to the point of meaninglessness, the kind employed by politicians and public figures to avoid committing themselves, a travesty of communication that Orwell parodied in his essay Politics and the English Language. *David Cameron is far less of a logocidal maniac than Miliband, it must be said, but to listen to the message from any side these days is to wonder if they focus-grouped it in a head trauma unit. If so, my double sympathies to the poor patients (Guardian, 9 May 2014).*

#### Lollygag

Its main meaning today is of purposeless activity, of fooling around, spending time aimlessly or dawdling or dallying. Many American veterans will remember it, since it is part of the standard repertoire of insults used by NCOs to verbally chastise new recruits – in this case to accuse them of fooling around or wasting time. To American civilians, however, it sometimes has a subsidiary meaning of "to indulge in kisses and caresses". This sense featured in a memorandum by the commandant of the St Alban's Naval Hospital in New York just after the end of the Second World War: "Male and female personnel should only be together when conducting hospital business, and this should be in an orderly manner. Lovemaking and lollygagging is hereby strictly forbidden." The expression "lolly-gagging" is a new one, even to most New Yorkers ... but the Thesaurus of American slang describes it as "A young man who lingers to spoon in a hallway after bringing his inamorata home" Truth, Sydney, Australia, 6 Jan. 1946).

### SPECTRUM INVESTMENTS

## DEA cautious, FPIs jittery

These are interesting times, trying times and growth times. India's FDI in greenfield projects rise to \$49.3 billion. And the end of sops has sent jitters down foreign portfolio investors (FPI), reveals a tax authorities meet on the sidelines of G20 meeting in Paris.

The World Investment Report of UNCTAD has come with good news that FPI in greenfield projects has increased by \$5 billion in 2022 from a previous of \$44 billion. Apart from a sharp increase in foreign investments in greenfield projects, the report also noted the country was the second-largest recipient of international project finance in 2022.

Greenfield projects occupy those areas of land that have minimal to no structure. So, there are no expenditures associated with the clearance of farmlands at the greenfield sites. In short, these are farmlands close to cities and have many strings attached. Farmers have reason to feel concerned as say in the Jewar area of Bulandshahr/Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Finance Ministry has issued a significant caution in the pre-poll year. In its Annual Review 2023, it

says despite growth, resilience in urban demand conditions with higher auto sales, fuel consumption and UPI transactions and rural demand on path to recovery, the pace can be hit by increasing geopolitical stress, volatility in global systems, sharp correction in global stock markets, deep impact of El Nino, modest trade activity and lower FDI inflows owing to frail global demand.

"In 2022, emerging market economies (EMEs) remained subdued and volatile as geopolitical uncertainties rose. Global slowdown in investment flows to EMEs led to India's net FDI inflows dipping in FY23," the report says. Those investment blues have given sharp jitters to FPIs as the Indian and French tax authorities meet in Paris. During the course of the meeting on double taxation avoidance agreement between India and France there was apprehension among foreign funds that India may soon renegotiate the treaty to eliminate capital gains tax exemption.

Currently, France and the Netherlands have major exemption on capital gains as per treaties with India for share sales. This comes ahead of PM Modi's visit to Paris in the com-

ing week. In 2017, India renegotiated similar tax treaties with Singapore and Mauritius, ending capital gains exemptions. Similar provisions with Cyprus were also removed.

Consequently, many foreign banks and large funds shifted their India equity trades away from Mauritius and Singapore to France, which is the tenth largest source of FPI funds to India. It holds ₹1.2 lakh crore securities in Indian market as on May 31. If this happens, the FPI flows would shift elsewhere and the exposure to Indian markets may get reduced.

The UNCTAD report also notes that the inflow into India in 2022 was, however, significantly lower than what was seen in 2020, when \$64 billion of FDI entered the country. Still Indian stock markets are zooming to new highs but on the weekend on July 7, Nifty 50 fell for the first time since it has been rising with the HDFC merger. The US rate hikes have weighed on global equities. The Nifty fell by 0.85% to 19331 and BSE Sensex lost 0.77% at 65280. This in itself may not be an exact indicator, but the US rate rise will have an impact on fund flows to India on many counts.

It has been observed whenever fund flow moves back to

the US, the dollar becomes expensive, gold prices fall and capital flow to the US increases at the cost of the developing world. The rupee may fall again. This looks strange despite the growth statistics not being so dismal. If nothing ails it calls for retrospection as to why a \$3 trillion economy wavers. There is a perception strengthened by the RBI that the prices are not softening to the extent it is required.

It is also an indicator that rising capital expenses largely on constructions and rebuilding of structures is not boosting the economy to the desired levels. This has made steel, cement and other essentials expensive, but it calls for a study whether the benefits are percolating down.

The greenfield investments that UNCTAD mentions also are not that easy. It is bound in chains of rules and takes time to get released.

A streak of hope larks in the project capital flows, as the World Investment Report says. It is a silver lining that India has to weigh against the geopolitical crisis. Despite India taking a lead in world affairs, it has to trudge cautiously to put the economy on fast track overcoming the hurdles.

©INFIA



Shivaji Sarkar

**WHENEVER FUND FLOW MOVES BACK TO THE US, THE DOLLAR BECOMES EXPENSIVE, GOLD PRICES FALL AND CAPITAL FLOW TO THE US INCREASES AT THE COST OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

#### Two Indias

Sir, What distresses us is that we have two Indias. One India where the corrupt get absolved of all sins by just switching political parties and in the other India, the ordinary citizen has to go through the hoops for the smallest of infractions, including speeding ticket. We have one India where people with connections with the judiciary will get the attention of the highest court of the land even on a weekend and a holiday and in the other, the vast majority of Indians have to wait forever for their moment in courts. For a nation which aspires to be a world leader, if we have these two irreconcilable versions of India, then we can forget about all our aspirations.

**Akhila Gopalan,**  
MUMBAI

#### Sticky wicket

Sir, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi continues to be on a sticky wicket after the Gujarat High Court refused to stay his conviction in the criminal defamation case. Gandhi's legal team has planned to appeal for a stay of the sentence in the Supreme Court. The defamation case against Rahul Gandhi concerns the "Modi surname" remark. The Congress leader had called people with Modi surnames "thieves" and was disqualified as Lok Sabha MP after his conviction by a Surat court in March.

**NJ Ravi Chander,**  
BANGALORE

#### Record sales

Sir, It's definitely music to ears for car manufacturers and car users in India as car sales in the country has reached an all time record within six months, starting from January to June 2023. Business reports say that it is for the first time that the country has seen a record sale of cars - more than twenty lakh units sold within six months. Automobile analysts say that if this trend continues India will rank third after China and the US. Launch of new and updated vehicles, consumer friendly prices, easy loans, the need for a safe family vehicle post COVID are some of the factors for the boost in sales of passenger vehicles.

**M Pradyu,**  
KANNUR



# Fresh sinkhole revives fears of subsidence in Joshimath

It was almost six months to the day land subsidence around Joshimath January 2-3 led to hundreds of residents fleeing their homes, which had developed cracks, and taking refuge in hotels, rest houses and at houses of relatives and friends



AGENCIES

**Dehradun/New Delhi, July 9:** A sinkhole, more than six-feet wide, emerged near the Saklani home in Joshimath last week. And the crippling anxiety of 'what next' gripped the residents of the ecologically fragile Himalayan town once again.

That was the dead of winter, this is the monsoon, and nothing seems to have changed, said Anju Saklani. As the rain fell steadily, land near their home caved in with water seeping into their home.

"We have since filled the sinkhole with debris and stones," Anju told PTI over the phone. But that is a band-aid solution at best, added Atul Sati, environmental activist and coordinator of the Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti (JBSS).

The Saklanis were the first to reports cracks in their home, as early as September 2021. That they are also the first to report a sinkhole has led to trepidation on what lies ahead for their town, a gateway to the ski resort of Auli, several mountain climbing expeditions as well as the pilgrim centres of Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib, and the Valley of Flowers, a UNESCO world heritage site.

The sinkhole near the Saklani's house in Sunil ward is not the only one, he said, expressing his grave concern over the situation.

Several sinkholes have been reported in Joshimath in the past and, with the onset of the monsoon season, there is fear of more

**IN JANUARY, 868 HOUSES IN JOSHIMATH HAD DEVELOPED CRACKS OF THESE. 181 HOUSES WERE DECLARED UNSAFE BY THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND THEIR OCCUPANTS WERE EVACUATED TO SAFE LOCATIONS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE TOWN SIXTY FAMILIES IN JOSHIMATH ARE LIVING IN RELIEF CAMPS**

such incidents occurring in the future.

Officials say several programmes have been started by the government to save Joshimath since the land subsidence event.

Shedding light on the geological factors contributing to the sinkhole formation in Joshimath, geologist Y P Sundriyal said the presence of loose and soft rocks beneath the surface makes the area more susceptible to erosion caused by water movement. Over time, this erosion weakens the ground, resulting in depressions such as sinkholes.

Exacerbating the crisis is the perilous situation of the residents, some, like the Saklanis, who have been forced to move back to their still unsafe homes.

According to Sati, only 30 per cent of the affected population has received any compensation, and even that has

been inadequate.

The JBSS, he said, recently met the authorities over possible threats to the town during the monsoon and presented 11 demands. It also staged a sit-in on Monday to draw the attention of the government.

Anju Saklani's brother-in-law Durga Prasad Saklani, for instance, said they were compelled to move back to their damaged home after spending several months in a government-arranged hotel.

According to Rautela, however, 1,600 of the 2,600 houses in Joshimath are fine.

In addition to reckless construction, experts blamed the tunnel for a hydroelectric power project around the town for the January 3 subsidence - and the fear that another one might be around the corner.

In January, 868 structures in Joshimath developed cracks and 181 of them were officially deemed unsafe. As a result, several hundred residents were evacuated at the time.

Chamoli's District Disaster Management Officer N K Joshi said a proper relief package has been given by the government to the affected people.

The government's relief camps, he said, in which 259 people from 64 families have been staying are still being run; 736 people from 232 families are living on rent and in the houses of relatives.

A town of over 20,000 people in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, Joshimath stands at a height of over 6,150 feet.

Uttarakhand has a long history of natural disasters. Earthquakes, landslides, cloud bursts, and flash floods have claimed thousands of lives in the past.

Over 1,000 people were killed in such extreme weather events between 2010 and 2020. Many villages in the state have been marked unsafe for living.

Several sinkholes have been reported in Joshimath in the past and, with the onset of the monsoon season, there is fear of more such incidents occurring in the future



**MATTER OF FAITH:** Kanwariyas (Lord Shiva devotees) gather to collect holy water from the river Ganga for 'Kanwar Yatra' during the holy month of Shrawan, at Har Ki Pauri Ghat in Haridwar, Uttarakhand

## NPP to oppose implementation of UCC in Arunachal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Itanagar, July 9:** The Arunachal Pradesh unit of the National People's Party (NPP) has decided to oppose the immediate implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the north-eastern state.

The decision was taken at the state executive meeting of the party here Saturday, NPP state general secretary Paknga Bage said.

NPP state working president Likhra Saaya told reporters, "Though NPP is in alliance with the BJP on developmental issues, but the regional party follows its own ideology".

The party unanimously adopted a resolution at the meeting opposing the UCC, citing the state's diverse multi-ethnic and multi-tribal composition, as well as its strong customary and traditional identity, Bage said.

Elaborating the reason as to why NPP is opposing UCC, Bage said since Arunachal Pradesh has its own unique laws, the NPP has unanimously adopted a resolution to go with the customary laws with certain modifications.

## Manipur ethnic violence: Banks announce relief measures on loans

The Manipur government has recently issued a notification saying that relief measures may be taken up under RBI's (Relief Measures by Banks in Areas Affected by Natural Calamities) Directions, 2018

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Imphal, July 9:** In view of over two-month long ethnic violence in Manipur, banks would provide relief measures by way of rescheduling the existing loans. Accordingly, banks have been instructed to extend the moratorium period up to 12 months, officials said.

Manipur Institutional Finance Department Director Anna Arambam said that a Special State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) meeting recently decided that banks would provide relief measures by way of rescheduling of existing loans and sanctioning of fresh loans as per the emerging require-



ments of all loan borrowers in agricultural, MSME and other retail loans.

He said that banks have been instructed to extend the moratorium period up to 12 months from the date of implementation of the rehabilitation, restructuring measures and for retail loans under P-segment (Personal/Pension/Vehicle/Housing loans etc), EMI repayment may be deferred by 12 months.

Those borrowers, whose repayment capacity has been severely affected due to disruption of economic activities and loss/damage of economic assets, including agriculture and allied activities may contact the concerned banks for availing

the moratorium and other rehabilitation and restructuring measures, the official said. Arambam said that opening of bank branches was also reviewed by Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi. Out of a total of 241 bank branches in Manipur, 218 have been opened as July 6. Efforts are being made to reopen the remaining 23 branches at the earliest. Out of 396 ATMs, 320 are functioning.

Banks were requested to make all-out efforts to ensure that the remaining 70 ATMs are also made functional.

The government has conveyed its readiness to extend all possible assistance to the banks, the official said.

## After 'Chotu', 'Munna' to hit NE markets soon: IOC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 9:** After 'Chotu', Indian Oil is all set to launch 'Munna' in the North Eastern region soon, a top official said.

The PSU is also focusing on infrastructure development in the region, including setting up LPG bottling units in all the seven states, he added.

Addressing a press conference here, executive director and state head, IndianOil, Assam Oil Division, G Ramesh said, "After introducing the 5-kg LPG cylinder 'Chotu' in NE last year, we will also be launching the 2-kg cylinder 'Munna' soon."

Ramesh said bottling units for 'Munna' will be launched in Tripura and North Guwahati soon. "These lightweight LPG cylinders are catering to migrant population in urban and semi-urban areas who do not have local address proof, people with lower gas consumption and commercial establishments with limited space. 'Munna' will be particularly helpful for people in hilly areas as it will be easy to carry," he added.

Ramesh said the response for 'Chotu' has been good in the region, with about 60,000-65,000

■ IndianOil currently has 871 LPG distributorships in the North East, with an active customer base of 91 lakh out of the total LPG customer base of 112 lakh in the region, which is approximately 81% of the total LPG connections covering the highest market share of 87% in the seven states

■ The per kg price of 'Munna' is nearly same as the regular domestic cylinder, while non-domestic 'Chotu' (free trade LPG cylinder) is a little higher

units sold last fiscal and another 15,000 units in the first quarter of the current financial year.

Ramesh said in order to have LPG bottling infrastructure in all NE states, projects are being planned in Meghalaya and Mizoram - the two states which didn't have such facilities so far.

A new 30 TMTPA (Thousand Metric Tonnes per annum) LPG bottling plant at Umiam, Meghalaya, at an approved cost of Rs 75.54 crore is currently under execution, and there is plan for a new 30 TMTPA bottling plant in Mualkhang, Mizoram, at an estimated cost of Rs 193 crore, he added.

## Lumpy skin disease resurfaces in U'khand

IANS/ 101REPORTERS

**Almora (Uttarakhand) July 9:** "One of my cows has not stood up for the last 24 days. When the first one got sick, we could not separate it due to lack of space. Now both are sick, and we have no milk to consume. We are forced to buy powdered milk for my four-year-old grandson," says Kaushaliya Devi, a Dalit farmer from Dhudholi village in Almora.

The World Organisation for Animal Health categorises the LSD (Lumpy Skin Disease) as a notifiable disease, which means it must be reported to an appropriate authority if suspected or confirmed.

"There are many animals that cannot get up and many that cannot sit down for days because their feet are swollen.... others have swollen udders or briskets. Some will develop nodules, while

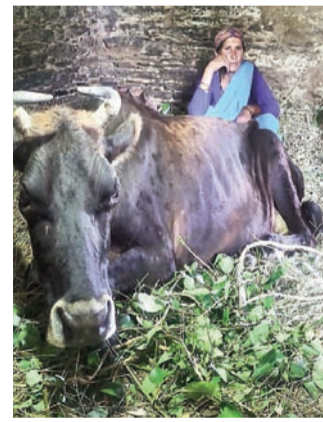
others will not," Dr Surbhi, a government veterinary doctor in Champawat district, tells 101Reporters.

"When cows are ill, milk production drops. We dairy farmers have spent twice as much on treatment as we make from milk sales. We are completely dependent on farming and dairying, so it has been difficult," says Bhuvan Purohit from Dhudholi.

**ACCESSIBILITY AN ISSUE**

The Central government's action plan has mentioned a vaccination target of 9,10,000 out of the total 18,52,123 cattle in Uttarakhand. According to Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board, 2,92,748 cattle have been vaccinated so far.

While the action plan to control the spread and severity of the disease involves vaccination push, many villagers in Almora



have claimed that lack of accessibility prevented them from benefitting from such drives.

With new cases surfacing since March this year, the state animal husbandry department launched a doorstep vaccination drive using animal ambulances. On getting a request from helpline

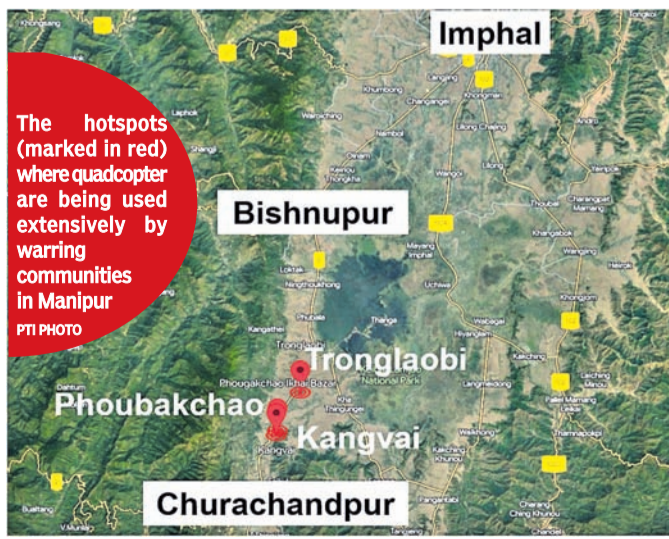
## Warring groups use quadcopters to target each other

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bishnupur (Manipur), July 9:** Technology has become both a boon and a bane in the restive Manipur state. While Army and Assam Rifles are deploying drones to rescue and save people, clashing ethnic groups are using quadcopters to target each other.

It has been noticed by security agencies that quadcopters have been put to use by warring factions - Meiteis, mostly concentrated in Imphal valley, and Kukis, mainly on the hillside - to know each other's positions, officials said.

There have been places like Phougakchao, Kangvai Bazar, and Torbung Bazar in the south-



west part of Manipur where the quadcopters have been put to extensive use by the two communities where their villages face each other. The security forces have created buffer zones at these places to keep the agitated communities away from each other. However, Loibol in Senapati district and Leimaram in Bishnupur district have been hotspots during the violence despite the presence of security forces, the officials said.

Mistrust runs deep in the two communities which rely on technology to monitor each other's movement, the officials said.

Quadcopter, often called a quadrotor, is an uncrewed rotary wing aircraft that can take

flight using four rotors, each consisting of a motor and propellers. Unlike conventional fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters, which rely on engines or tail rotors to take flight, quadcopters have neither. Quadcopters, after being airborne, have the ability to hover in place, whereas fixed-wing aerial drones have to be on the move constantly. Quadcopters are also capable of much more precise aerial maneuvers while fixed-wing aerial drones can only make much less precise fly-by runs. At the same time, drones have also assisted the Army and Assam Rifles in rescue operations and helped save nearly 2000 civilians in the Kakching district of South East Manipur.





Swollen Chenab river at Akhnoor after rain in Jammu



A crater is formed after a road caved in after heavy rain at Rohini in New Delhi



Powai lake overflows due to heavy rain at Powai in Mumbai



Traffic moves at slow pace due to waterlogged roads following rain near Tilak Bridge, ITO, in New Delhi



A temple is submerged in flood water due to the swollen Narmada river in Jabalpur



A commuter sits atop a car stuck on a waterlogged road at Subhash Chowk after rain in Gurugram



Rescue operation being carried out after an elderly woman was buried under debris after a landslide in Shimla



# national

## of the day quote

Earlier, it used to be the dream of the youth to join the Army and serve the country. Respecting the resolve of the youth to serve the country, they were given better facilities and job security. The very foundation of Agniveer Yojana is wrong. It has shattered the dreams of the youth to serve the country and has created various apprehensions. The result is before everyone

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's sudden desire and "desperation" to get real is "laughable"

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

The Childline will be handed over to states so that the distress call gets connected to local police stations and the issue is resolved quickly

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Stray dogs kill boy

**Kota (Rajasthan):** A 12-year-old boy was killed in an attack by three stray dogs while he was on his way to agriculture field in Rajasthan's Bundi district Sunday, police said. The incident took place in the morning in Tikha Barda village, they said. Mangilal Gurjar, a Class 5 student and resident of Tikha Barda village, suffered critical injuries after stray dogs attacked him, said Shyam Sunder, Duty Officer at Bundi Sadar police station.

### 6 dead in accident

**Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh):** Six persons, all from the same family, returning from a visit to Tirumala died in a road accident Sunday afternoon at Mittakandriga village in Tirupati district, police said. The accident took place between Tirupati-Sri Kalahasti on the national highway when the car in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck, police said.

### One arrested

**Sonbhadra (UP):** A contractual employee of the electricity department has been arrested in this Uttar Pradesh district for allegedly beating up a Dalit man and forcing him to lick his slippers, police said Sunday. A video purportedly of the incident had gone viral on social media, they said, adding that the accused has been "terminated from the service".

### Teacher held

**New Delhi:** A 30-year-old male tuition teacher has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 10-year-old girl at his house in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar area, police said Sunday. The incident took place Saturday when the minor girl went for tuition at his place, they added. Finding the girl alone, he allegedly sexually assaulted the girl.

### Rijiju and mysterious audio tape

When Kiren Rijiju was removed as Union Law Minister on May 18 and shifted to the insignificant Earth Sciences Ministry, it came as a bolt from the blue. After all, Rijiju was BJP's original face in the North East and the party's three term Lok Sabha MP from Arunachal Pradesh. The popular belief is that he was shunted out as PM Modi wanted to buy peace with the judiciary in an election year particularly after the BJP's humiliating defeat in the Karnataka Assembly polls. But insiders have a different take. They say that it's a misplaced notion as the reason for his removal from the Law ministry was linked to the surfacing of an audio tape. No one is sure about the contents of this audio

# Ravi unfit to be Governor: Stalin to President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, July 9:** Governor R N Ravi is unfit to hold the gubernatorial office as he functioned as a political opponent and looked for 'opportunities to topple the state government', Chief Minister M K Stalin has conveyed to President Droupadi Murmu, the government said Sunday.

"Ravi 'defamed' Tamil culture, indulged in 'cheap politics,' instigated 'communal hatred' and he is a 'threat' to Tamil Nadu's peace," he said adding through such actions the Governor violated his oath. In a letter to Murmu, Stalin said that Ravi has violated the oath of office he took under Article 159 of the Constitution, the government said in an official release.

"A Governor who looks for 'opportunities to topple the state government' in a state ruled by a party (DMK) opposed to the party in power at the Centre (BJP) could be regarded as a mere agent of the Union government. Such a course of action pursued by a Governor would destroy the Indian democracy's basic tenets by damaging the principle of federalism. Governor R N Ravi is 'a good example' of such behaviour. "Ravi is stoking communal hatred and he is a threat to Tamil Nadu's peace," Stalin said in a letter dated July 8, 2023.

On the recent issue of the Governor's move to dismiss minister V Senthil Balaji from the Cabinet, which he later backtracked from, Ravi showed



his political slant, the CM claimed in his letter. Balaji was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate last month in a cash-for-jobs case.

On the one hand, Ravi delayed sanction to prosecute former ministers in the previous AIADMK regime and on the other hand, through his hasty action in Senthil Balaji's matter - against whom only now a probe has begun - he has displayed his political inclinations, the letter said.

In handling the Senthil Balaji issue, Stalin said Ravi made serious violation of Constitutional provisions. Initially he had declined to accept the recommendation of retaining Balaji as a Minister. Ravi also demanded on May 31 that Senthil Balaji be dropped from Cabinet till he was cleared of all criminal charges against him. Citing Constitutional provisions and

ON THE RECENT ISSUE OF THE GOVERNOR'S MOVE TO DISMISS MINISTER V SENTHIL BALAJI FROM THE CABINET, WHICH HE LATER BACKTRACKED FROM, RAVI SHOWED HIS POLITICAL SLANT, THE CM CLAIMED IN HIS LETTER

"BY WAY OF HIS BEHAVIOUR AND ACTION, THE GOVERNOR HAS PROVED TO BE PARTIAL AND INELIGIBLE TO HOLD THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR; RAVI IS FIT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE HIGH OFFICE," THE CM EMPHASISED IN HIS LETTER

relevant laws, the CM said it was his prerogative to induct Ministers into the Cabinet or remove them.

"By way of his behaviour and action, the Governor has proved to be partial and ineligible to hold the office of Governor; Ravi is fit to be removed from the high office," the CM emphasised in his letter. Stalin told Murmu that

he was leaving the matter - of removing Ravi from office - to her, to decide whether Tamil Nadu Governor's continuation in office would be desirable or suitable considering the sentiments and dignity of the founding fathers of India's Constitution.

BJP State president K Annamalai in a tweet dismissed the letter as a 'long crime note' and posing several questions asked Stalin to 'stop complaining & start delivering.' The CM said he believed Murmu would accept that a Governor must be secular in outlook, transcend political likes and dislikes and have no expectations in respect of 'party politics' and future appointments.

In a 19-page statement - extracts from Stalin's letter to Murmu - the government quoted the CM as saying that Ravi openly functioned against the policies of the Tamil Nadu government. The Governor caused unnecessary delay in clearing Bills passed by the Assembly besides files and posed hindrance to the work of the state government and the Assembly.

Stalin said Ravi's tenure as Governor in Nagaland was also not satisfactory and the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) there had said that there was peace only after his exit. Ever since he assumed office as TN Governor in September 2021, Ravi had all along been involved in an ideological and political battle with the DMK regime, duly elected by the people.

# Golwalkar tweet: Digvijaya booked



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal/Indore, July 9:** The Indore police have registered a case against Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh for allegedly sharing a controversial post on former Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief MS Golwalkar on social media, an official said Sunday.

Following the post, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan accused Congress leaders of spreading "misinformation" and creating social hatred by sharing a "false" post on Golwalkar. Chouhan said the former RSS head worked throughout his life to remove social differences and build a harmonious society.

However, a state Congress leader said Digvijaya Singh shared facts on the basis of a book and that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) cannot silence the voice of his party. Golwalkar was the longest serving RSS chief and was at the helm of the organisation from 1940-73.

Digvijaya Singh on Saturday tweeted a picture of a page carrying several controversial comments quoted to the former RSS head, known as 'Guruji' among his admirers. Golwalkar was quoted as saying he would rather live under the British rule than have equal rights given to Dalits, backwards and Muslims. Some other controversial comments were also attributed to him.

Following the post, senior RSS functionary and its publicity department head Sunil Ambekar accused the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister of posting a "photoshopped" image.

It is baseless and is meant to cause social disharmony, he

said, adding that 'Guruji' never made such remarks.

His life was spent removing social discrimination, he said. Based on a complaint filed by lawyer and RSS worker Rajesh Joshi, an FIR was registered in Indore on Saturday night against Digvijaya Singh under Indian Penal Code sections 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence), 469 (forgery for purpose of harming reputation), 500 (defamation) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief), an official from Tukoganj police station said.

Talking to reporters on Sunday, Indore Police Commissioner Makarand Deuskar said, "We received a complaint claiming that Singh in the post attributed some remarks to Golwalkar which the latter never made. Based on this complaint, the case has been registered against Singh."

Further steps would be taken after a probe into the charges against Digvijaya Singh, Deuskar said.

In his complaint, Rajesh Joshi alleged Singh had shared a controversial poster on Facebook and Twitter bearing the name and picture of "Guruji" to incite people by creating conflict among Dalits, backward classes, Muslims and Hindus, as per the FIR.

The complaint claimed Singh's post on Golwalkar allegedly hurt the religious beliefs of Sangh workers and the entire Hindu community, according to the FIR.

In a statement sent to the media, a Sangh official from Indore alleged Digvijaya Singh had made a "false and unwarranted post" about Golwalkar on social media to tarnish the organisation's image.



Members of Durga Vahini, the women's wing of Vishwa Hindu Parishad during a week-long self-defence training camp in Jammu

# NAKED MAN THRASHED WITH STICKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sagar, July 9:** A video of a naked man being beaten up by some persons has surfaced on social media following which the police in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar city have registered a case against unidentified persons, an official said Sunday.

In the purported video, some persons are seen beating up the man with sticks and pieces of pipes while accusing him of theft. Superintendent of Police Abhishek Tiwari said that the viral video has come to his attention.

An initial probe revealed the video was shot in Dharam Kanta area under Motinagar police station limits, he said.

An FIR has been registered and the police are in the process of identifying the accused, Motinagar police station in-charge Manas Dwivedi said. Further details of the video and the case will be revealed after the accused are arrested and interrogated, he said.

The video from Sagar is the latest in the spate of clips of such attacks in Madhya Pradesh that have surfaced on social media in the last one week.

Recently, a video showed a man urinating on a tribal youth in MP's Sidhi district, which triggered national outrage.

The accused, Pravesh Shukla, was arrested and booked under provisions of the stringent National Security Act, and his family's house was also demolished.

# Bengal SEC orders repolling in 696 booths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 9:** As sporadic protests and incidents of post-poll violence continued to plague West Bengal, the State Election Commission (SEC) announced Sunday that repolling will be held July 10 in 696 booths where voting for the rural elections has been declared void.

In Saturday's violence scarred panchayat polls, people had cast their votes in 61,636 booths for 2.06 lakh candidates who were in the fray for elections to 73,887 seats in the three-tier panchayat system in the state. The SEC, which held a meeting on Sunday evening, went through reports of vote-tampering and violence



BJP workers protest outside West Bengal State Election Commission office against the violence during West Bengal panchayat elections, in Kolkata

which affected polling in many places, and passed the order, an official said.

At least 4 central police force personnel will be posted at each of these booths where re-polling

any booth in three districts of Jhargram, Kalimpong and Darjeeling.

Meanwhile, Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose on Sunday flew to New Delhi, where he is likely to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and submit a report on the violence that took place during the panchayat elections. Protests were held in different parts of West Bengal Sunday against the violence that rocked the panchayat elections and over allegations of irregularities. The toll in the violence rose to 15 after a man was found dead in South 24 Parganas, and two others succumbed to their injuries Sunday morning, officials said.

has been ordered, he said. Among districts where repolling was announced, Murshidabad has the highest number of booths at 174, followed by Malda with 109. No repolling has been ordered in

# Amarnath yatra resumes after 3 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, July 9:** The Amarnath yatra resumed Sunday from Panjarni and Sheshnag base camps after remaining suspended for three days due to inclement weather in Kashmir, officials said here.

As soon as the skies cleared around the cave shrine, the authorities opened the gates and allowed the stranded devotees to offer prayers at the naturally formed ice-lingam in south Kashmir Himalayas, they said. "Those devotees who had already performed 'darshan' have been allowed to return to Baltal base camp," a senior official at the Panjarni base camp said.

The Army has sheltered more than 700 Amarnath pilgrims at its camp in Qazigund in Anantnag district after they were stranded due to heavy rainfall in the valley. Earlier, in the day no fresh batch of pilgrims was allowed from Jammu owing to inclement weather and closure of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, officials said.

Efforts are on to restore traffic on the highway which was blocked by multiple landslides and washing away of nearly 40-metre road stretch in Ramban district, leaving over 3,500 vehicles stranded, officials said. While most parts of Jammu and Kashmir experienced incessant rains since Thursday night, some areas near the high altitude Amarnath shrine recorded snowfall as well.





# international



While strengthening our relations with Ukraine, we did not allow our relations with the Russian Federation to deteriorate  
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

## SRI LANKA DEBT TREATMENT

India has assured Sri Lanka that it will play a constructive role as a Co-Chair of the Creditors Committee along with Japan and the Paris Club. The assurance came from Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Colombo Vinod K Jacob



## of the day quote

India and Tanzania have agreed on a roadmap to further boost their time-tested ties by identifying new areas of cooperation in sectors like trade, investment, agriculture, defence and education

S JAISHANKAR | EAM OF INDIA

Imran Khan continues to engage in a vile, sinister and malicious campaign against COAS General Syed Asim Munir. His trick of using proxies to threaten the Army Chief of an assassination attempt has been badly exposed

SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PAKISTAN PM

The Russian government has so far declined our request to access the areas under its temporary military control

DENISE BROWN | UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR UKRAINE

## SHORT TAKES

### US drone strike kills IS group leader

Washington: A US drone strike killed an Islamic State group leader in Syria hours after the same MQ-9 Reaper drones were harassed by Russian military jets over the western part of the country, according to the Defence Department. Three Reapers had been flying overhead searching for the militant Friday, a US defence official said.

### Six dead in private jet crash outside LA

Los Angeles: All six people aboard a small jet died when the aircraft crashed and burned in a field near an airport near Los Angeles Saturday, local and federal authorities said. The aircraft, a Cessna C550 business jet, was traveling from Las Vegas and crashed near French Valley Airport in Riverside County, about 85 miles (137 km) south of Los Angeles, at around 4:15 a.m. the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. The passengers and pilot who died were all adults, Elliott Simpson, an aviation investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, said at a news briefing.

### 6 killed in gas cylinder blast

Islamabad: At least six people were killed and 10 others injured Sunday when a three-storey building collapsed due to a gas cylinder explosion in Pakistan's Punjab province, officials said. The three-storey hotel building located on the Grand Trunk Road in Punjab's Jhelum area collapsed after the cylinder exploded in the kitchen, they said.

### Greek gov't wins confidence vote

Athens: Greece's conservative government has received a vote of confidence in Parliament. A total of 158 MPs voted in favour of the new administration led by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, while 142 voted against during the roll call vote in the 300-member strong assembly, reports said.

### 9 shot in Cleveland

Cleveland (US): An early morning shooting in a nightclub area of downtown Cleveland sent nine people to the hospital, but no fatalities were reported, authorities said. Police said preliminary information indicates that someone opened fire toward a group of people in the Warehouse District at about 2:30 am Sunday, about the time the clubs were closing.

# Sudan on the brink of a 'full-scale civil war': UN

SUDAN DESCENDED INTO CHAOS AFTER MONTHS OF TENSION BETWEEN MILITARY CHIEF GEN. ABDEL-FATTAH BURHAN, AND HIS RIVAL GEN. MOHAMMED HAMDAN DAGALO, COMMANDER OF THE PARAMILITARY RAPID SUPPORT FORCES, EXPLODED INTO OPEN FIGHTING IN MID-APRIL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, July 9: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Sudan was on the brink of a "full-scale civil war" as fierce clashes between rival generals continued unabated Sunday in the capital, Khartoum. He warned Saturday evening that the war between the Sudanese military and a powerful paramilitary force is likely to destabilise the entire region, according to Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the secretary-general. Health Minister Haitham Mohammed Ibrahim said in televised comments last month that the clashes have killed over 3,000 people and wounded over 6,000 others. The death tally, however, is highly likely to be much higher.

The fighting came 18 months after the two generals led a military coup in October 2021 that toppled a Western-backed civilian transitional government. The conflict dashed Sudanese hopes of a peaceful transition to democracy after a popular up-



The fighting came 18 months after the two generals led a military coup in October 2021 that toppled a Western-backed civilian transitional government. The conflict dashed Sudanese hopes of a peaceful transition to democracy after a popular uprising forced the military removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in April 2019

rising forced the military removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in April 2019.

The war has turned the capital Khartoum and other urban areas across the country into battlefields. Residents in Khartoum said fierce fighting was underway early Sunday south of the capital.

The warring factions were using heavy weapons in the battles in the Kalaka neighbourhood and the military's aircraft were seen hovering over the area, said resident Abdalla al-Fatih.

In his statement, Guterres also condemned an airstrike Saturday that health authorities said killed at least 22 people in Omdurman, a city just across the Nile from the capital, Khartoum. The assault was one of the deadliest in the conflict. The RSF blamed the military for the attack in Omdurman. The military, in turn, denied the accusation saying in a statement Sunday that its air force didn't carry out any airstrikes in the city that day. The secretary-general also de-

cried the large-scale violence and casualties in the western region of Darfur, which has experienced some of the worst fighting in the ongoing conflict, Haq said in a statement. UN officials have said the violence in the region has recently taken an ethnic dimension, with the RSF and Arab militias reportedly targeting non-Arab tribes in Darfur, a sprawling region consisting of five provinces.

Last month, the governor of Darfur, Mini Arko Minawi, said the region was sliding back to its past genocide, referring to the conflict that engulfed the region in the early 2000s.

Entire towns and villages in West Darfur province were overrun by the RSF and their allied militias, forcing tens of thousands of residents to flee to neighbouring Chad.

Activists have reported many residents killed, women and girls raped, and properties looted and burned to the ground. There were clashes between the military and the RSF elsewhere in Sudan Sunday including the province of North Kordofan, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

## Pope puts stamp on Church future with new cardinals

REUTERS

Vatican, July 9: Pope Francis Sunday announced that he would elevate 21 churchmen to the high rank of cardinal, again putting his mark on the group that will one day choose his successor after his death or resignation.

The ceremony to install them, known as a consistory, will be held September 30, the 86-year-old Francis announced during his noon prayer to pilgrims and tourists in St. Peter's Square.

It will be the ninth consistory called by the pope since his election 10 years ago as the first pontiff from Latin America.

The new cardinals come from countries including the United States, Italy, Argentina, Switzerland, South Africa, Spain, Colombia, South Sudan, Hong Kong, Poland, Malaysia, Tanzania, and Portugal.



Eighteen of the 21 are under 80 and will be able to enter an eventual secret conclave to choose the next pope. They are known as cardinal electors.

After the September consistory, there will be 137 cardinal electors, about 73 percent of them chosen by Francis. This increases the possibility that the next pope will share his vision of a more progressive, inclusive Church.

Francis has also increased the possibility that the next pope will come from Asia or Africa, having consistently named cardinal electors from those continents and giving less importance than his predecessor to countries in Europe.

Whether the pope will name even more cardinals depends on how long he lives.

## Yellen sees 'progress' in rocky US-China ties

REUTERS

Beijing, July 9: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said 10 hours of meetings with senior Chinese officials in recent days were "direct" and "productive", helping stabilise the superpowers' often rocky relationship as her four-day Beijing trip ended.

Before departing China Sunday, Yellen said the United States and China remained at odds on a number of issues but expressed confidence that her visit had advanced efforts to put the relationship on "surfer footing".

"The US and China have significant disagreements," Yellen told a press conference at the US embassy in Beijing, citing Washington's concerns about what she called "unfair economic practices" and recent punitive actions against US firms.

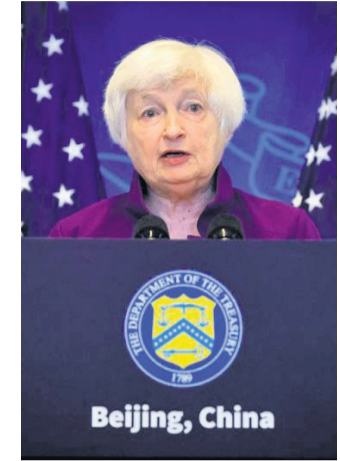
"But President (Joe) Biden and I do not see the relationship between the US and China through the frame of great power conflict. We believe that the world is big enough for both of our countries to thrive."

With US-China relations at a low over national security issues, including Taiwan, US export bans on advanced technologies and China's staled industrial policies, Washington has been trying to repair ties between the world's two biggest economies.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing last month, the first trip by the top US diplomat in Biden's presidency. Climate envoy John Kerry is expected to visit this month.

The US diplomatic push comes ahead of a possible meeting between Biden and President Xi Jinping at September's Group of 20 summit in New Delhi or a Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation gathering scheduled for November in San Francisco.

Yellen said her visit aimed to establish and deepen ties with China's new economic



US Treasury secretary ends four-day Beijing trip

Yellen: meetings with Chinese officials direct, productive

Trip seen laying groundwork for Biden-Xi meeting

Superpowers at odds over trade, tech, Taiwan, Ukraine

team, reduce the risk of misunderstanding and pave the way for cooperation in areas such as climate change and debt distress.

"I do think we've made some progress and I think we can have a healthy economic relationship that benefits both of us and the world," she said, adding that she expected increased and more regular communications at the staff level.

Briefing reporters after the visit, a senior Treasury official said the trip as expected did not result in specific policy breakthroughs, but was "very successful" in terms of "re-establishing contact" and building relationships.

She said Chinese officials raised concerns about an expected US executive order restricting outbound investment, but she assured them any such measure would be narrow in scope and enacted in a transparent way, through a rule-making process that would allow public input.

## Imran seeks IMF 'guarantee' for timely elections in Pak: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 9: Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has sought a "guarantee" from the International Monetary Fund that the general elections in the country will be held on time.

Days before the IMF executive board meeting to review and possibly endorse the Standby Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan, a delegation of the global lender met Khan Friday in Lahore to seek assurance and support for the key objectives and policies under the recently announced

USD 3 billion bailout programme, Geo News channel reported Saturday.

Pakistan and IMF reached a long-awaited staff-level agreement June 29 to inject \$3 billion Standby Arrangement into the ailing economy after months-long negotiations that pushed the country to the brink of default. The Executive Board of the IMF will meet July 12 to review the SBA for Pakistan.

Quoting sources, Geo News reported that Khan asked the IMF to ensure that the general elections, scheduled to take place in October, will be held on time.

"What guarantee can you (IMF) give that the elections in the country will be held on time," the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was quoted as saying in the huddle.

The IMF representatives, as per insiders, responded by saying that the Washington-based lender keeps a close eye on the situation in the country but "we cannot interfere too much in internal political matters".



A Russian TOS-1A Soltsepyok heavy flamethrower rocket launcher, captured by the Ukrainian army battalion "Da Vinci", fires towards the Russian positions on the frontline near Kreminna, Luhansk region, Ukraine, July 7. Writing on its body reads "Da Vinci", a code name of the battalion commander Dmytro Kotsiubaylo, who was killed in battle

# BBC suspends presenter over explicit photos claims

THE PUBLICLY FUNDED NATIONAL BROADCASTER IS UNDER PRESSURE AFTER THE SUN NEWSPAPER REPORTED ALLEGATIONS THAT THE MALE PRESENTER GAVE A YOUTH 35,000 POUNDS (\$45,000) STARTING IN 2020 WHEN THE YOUNG PERSON WAS 17

AGENCIES

London, July 9: The BBC said Sunday that it has suspended a leading presenter who is alleged to have paid a teenager for sexually explicit photos.

As senior British politicians urged a rapid investigation, the broadcaster said it was working to establish the facts of "a complex and fast-moving set of circumstances".

The UK's publicly funded national broadcaster was scrambling to head off a worsening crisis after The Sun newspaper

reported allegations that the male presenter gave a youth 35,000 pounds (\$45,000) starting in 2020 when the young person was 17. Neither the star nor the youth was identified. Amid speculation on social media about the identity of the presenter, several of the BBC's best-known stars spoke up to say it wasn't them. Though the age of sexual consent in Britain is 16, it's a crime to make or possess indecent images of anyone under 18. The Sun said the young person's mother had complained to the BBC in May but that the pre-



senter had remained on the air. The BBC said in a statement on Sunday that it "first became aware of a complaint in May" but that "new allegations were put to us Thursday of a different nature." The broadcaster said

not specify whether that was the police.

"This is a complex and fast-moving set of circumstances and the BBC is working as quickly as possible to establish the facts in order to properly inform appropriate next steps," the BBC

said. "We can also confirm a male member of staff has been suspended." Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer held crisis talks with the broadcaster's director-general about what she called "deeply concerning" allegations. She said Director General Tim Davie had assured her the BBC was "investigating swiftly and sensitively."

The BBC faces greater scrutiny than other taxpayer-funded and committed to remaining impartial in its news coverage. It was engulfed in a storm over free speech and political bias in March when its leading sports presenter, former England soccer player Gary Lineker, criticised the government's immigration policy on social media.





**AMD is deeply committed to serving the Indian market and is excited about the invaluable contributions of Indian engineers to our chipsets, which serve as the cornerstone of our enterprise**  
VINAY SINHA | CORPORATE VP (INDIA SALES), AMD

## ED TO SHARE DATA WITH GSTN

The government has amended provisions of the money laundering Act to allow enforcement directorate (ED) to share information with GST Network. The move would help recovery of Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded through money laundering



## of the day quote

That (high customs duty) is the downside. But X440 is made in India. It does not have tariffs, so that's a positive for those who want to get an experience of the Harley brand

Jochen Zeitz | PRESIDENT AND CEO, HARLEY-DAVIDSON

We are experiencing strong tailwinds of demand, and keeping our focus on consumer choice, sustainable model and costs...The opportunity is limitless as long as we stay focused on solving consumer needs and problems

Anubrata Biswas | CEO, AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK

We are approaching the first quarter earnings season, with HCL Tech, TCS and Wipro set to report their earnings this week

Santosh Meena | HEAD OF RESEARCH, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

## SHORT TAKES

### FM Sitharaman meets PSBs' heads

**New Delhi:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has asked public sector banks (PSBs) to take swift action in cases concerning fraud and wilful defaults to reduce bad loans and take steps to accelerate growth momentum, sources said. Banks have written off ₹11.17 lakh crore bad loans from their books in the last six years till the financial year 2021-22. The non-performing assets (NPAs), including those in respect of which full provisioning has been made on completion of four years, are removed from the balance sheet of the bank concerned by way of write-off. In a recent meeting with heads of PSBs, the finance minister urged them to focus on having robust risk management practices and mitigating Cyber Security risks.

### Adani raises \$1.4bn

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Gautam Adani has raised \$1.38 billion (Rs 11,330 crore) through stake sale in three group companies, taking the total capital raised over four years to \$9 billion as the conglomerate draws interest from a cross-section of investors. In a statement, the ports-to-energy conglomerate said it "is committed to raising capital to fulfill its 10-year roadmap of the transformative capital management program, which was formulated in 2016 to execute the plans for various portfolio companies." "In the most recent instance, Adani family has raised \$1.38 billion (Rs 11,330 crore) through stake sale in the three portfolio companies - Adani Enterprises Ltd, Adani Green Energy Ltd and Adani Transmission Ltd," it said.

### Goyal to visit UK

**New Delhi:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is scheduled to visit the UK July 10-11 to take stock of the negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) to promote economic ties between the two countries, an official statement said Sunday. The Minister's visit will be focused on the ongoing FTA negotiations between India and the UK besides discussing progress on a trade pact with ministers from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member countries, the commerce ministry said. The visit comes at a crucial juncture, as both India and the UK are committed to expanding their economic ties and exploring avenues for enhanced bilateral trade.

# Russia oil discount to India shrinks from \$30 to \$4

Indian refiners ramped up purchases from less than 2% of their entire buys in pre-Ukraine war times to 44% to capture the discounted oil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** The steep discounts on Russia crude oil that India gorged on since the Ukraine war, have plunged but the shipping rates charged by Russia-arranged entities continues to remain 'opaque' and higher than normal, sources said.

Russia bills Indian refiners at a price shade less than the \$60 per barrel price cap imposed by the West but charges anything from \$11 to \$19 per barrel, twice the normal rate, for delivery from the Baltic and Black Sea to the west coast, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The \$11-19 per barrel shipping costs from the Russian ports to India - some of it on the 100-tankers reportedly acquired by Russian actors for a shadow fleet - are higher than rates for comparable distances, such as a voyage from the Persian Gulf to Rotterdam.

Following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February last year, Russian oil was sanctioned and shunned by European buyers and some in Asia, such as

Japan. This led to Russian Urals crude being traded at a discount to Brent crude (the global benchmark). The discount on Russian Urals grade has however narrowed from levels of around \$30 a barrel in the middle of last year to closer to \$4 per barrel, sources said.

Indian refiners, who convert crude oil extracted from below ground into finished products such as petrol and diesel, are now the biggest buyers of Russian oil as Chinese imports have maxed out due to a massive electrification of vehicles and demand issues in a shaky economy.

But the discounts have been shrinking as companies such as government-controlled entities like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd as well as private refiners Reliance Industries



Ltd and Nayara Energy Ltd continues to negotiate deals with Russia separately. The discounts could have been higher if state controlled units, who account for roughly 60 per cent of the 2 million barrels per day of Russian oil flowing into India, negotiated together, sources said.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February last year, India was a minor importer of Russian crude, with purchases of about 44,500 barrels per day (bpd) in the 12 months to February 2022.

The actual sale price of Urals crude is about \$70-75 per barrel, channelling a large portion of Russian oil revenues to the three shadow agencies, they said.

# Startup funding dips

The funding winter at Indian startups has already led to layoffs and delayed stock listings. It is set to worsen and will likely lead to industry consolidation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** Funding in Indian startups fell by 36 per cent in January-June to \$3.8 billion, the lowest half-yearly number in the last four years, as investors are taking longer time in due diligence of every aspect of business, according to a PwC India Report.

Early-stage deals accounted for 57 per cent of the total funding in the first half of 2023 (H1 2023) in volume terms, said the report titled, "Startup Perspectives - H1 2023".

In value terms, early-stage deals contributed to approximately 16 per cent of the total funding in H1 2023 but was at its lowest in H1 2023 as compared to the previous two years.

"The Indian startup ecosystem reported the lowest six-month funding in the last four years in H1 2023 at \$3.8 billion across 298 deals - a decline of nearly 36 per cent as compared to H2 2022 (\$5.9 billion). Fintech, SAAS and D2C continued to be the most funded sectors in H1 2023," it said.

In addition, the number of funding rounds in the Indian

India still ranks among the top three funded geographies globally after the US and the UK



A funding winter is just a season in a startup's journey. There is a slowdown in startup funding despite significant untapped capital reserves held by venture capitalists. Active VC firms in India have secured new funds in the past year and we can expect the pace of investments to pick up in the next few months

AMIT NAWKA | PARTNER (DEALS & INDIA STARTUPS LEADER), PWC INDIA

startup ecosystem also experienced a decrease in H1 2023. In H1 2023, there were 536 funding rounds, while the numbers were 946 in H2 2022 and over 1,500 in H1 2022.

During the last few quarters, despite challenging funding market conditions, investors have shown strong support for

their portfolio companies by doubling down on their investments in companies that demonstrated positive growth, the report stated.

The report further said that while venture capital (VC) funding declined in H1 CY23, M&A transactions remained the same when compared to H2 2022.

Eighty M&A deals involving start-ups were executed in H1 2023. Of these, 80 per cent were domestic transactions and the rest were cross-border transactions.

Similar to the VC funding activity, SaaS (23), FinTech (11) and e-commerce and D2C (10) continue to witness the highest number of M&A transactions during H1 2023, the report said.

On sector-wise investment, it said SaaS, D2C, FinTech, e-commerce B2B and Logi and AutoTech continue to be the top five invested sectors based on the funding received in the first half of the year. These contribute to approximately 89 per cent of the total funding received in H1 2023 in value terms.

According to the PwC India report, Bangalore, NCR and Mumbai continue to be the key start-up cities in India, representing around 83 per cent of the total start-up funding activity in H1 2023.

A decline in funding activity was noted across all cities in H1 2023 barring Chennai, which witnessed higher funding in the SaaS space, the report said.

## New GST rules on anvil

Biz may have to explain discrepancy in ITC claims



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** The GST Council is likely to decide on a new rule in GST law under which businesses would be required to explain the reasons for excess input tax credit (ITC) claimed or deposit the amount with the exchequer, sources said. They said the Law Committee,

comprising tax officers from Centre and states, has opined that where the ITC availed in GSTR-3B return exceeds the amount of ITC available in accordance with the auto-generated statement GSTR-2B by a specified threshold, the registered person may be intimated on the portal about such difference and be directed to either explain the difference or pay the excess ITC along with interest.

The Committee has suggested that the provision should kick in if the difference is more than 20 per cent and over ₹25 lakh.

GST Council is likely to take a final call on the recommendation of the Committee in its 50th meeting July 11.

## Positive pace in Q1 biz indicators: CII

The interest rate pause by the RBI is expected to bring down the cost of capital for India Inc, thus fuelling fresh investments and giving private capex a further leg-up



The positive momentum seen in CII Business Confidence Index in the first quarter of the current fiscal is encouraging and reiterates the on-ground experience of most of the industry players

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE | DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** The CII Business Confidence Index rose to 66.1 in April-June from 64 in the previous quarter, reflecting the positive momentum in a host of high frequency indicators such as GST collection and air & rail passenger traffic.

Majority of the over 180 firms surveyed in the Business Outlook

Survey (63 per cent) expect India's GDP growth to be 6-7 per cent in the current fiscal, decelerating from 7.2 per cent in the previous year, attributing it to global headwinds and uncertainties.

"It is important for the RBI to stick with a pause on the interest rate to preserve the growth impulses. This was emphasised in the survey results, as 53 per cent of the respondents expected the

RBI to maintain status quo on the key interest rates in the first half of the current fiscal," CII stated.

Notably, 65 per cent respondents are of the view that the fresh sightings in private investment will be sustained in the current fiscal.

There are several factors which are driving private capex such as deleveraged corporate balance sheets, which has in turn increased

the capacity of the corporates to invest once there is clear visibility on demand, it stated.

The survey results also show that 62 per cent of respondents expect muted global growth and geopolitical turbulence as the key business concerns in the current fiscal.

There are already signs of increase in capacity utilisation of the respondent companies, with more than half (52 per cent) expecting it to stand in a range of 75-100 per cent in April-June, up from 45 per cent in the previous quarter, it observed.

Nearly half of the respondents (47 per cent) expect an increase in employment in the first quarter of the current fiscal (Q1FY24) as compared to 43 per cent in the previous quarter.

## OTT GROWTH IN A DECADE

# Telcos' revenue share from voice calls dips 80%, SMS 94%

GROWING USAGE OF OVER-THE-TOP APPLICATIONS FOR MESSAGING, VOICE COMMUNICATION, HAS LED TO A TRANSITION FROM VOICE AND SMS TOWARDS DATA AS A PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR TELECOM SERVICE PROVIDERS GLOBALLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** Telecom operators' revenue share from voice calls has declined by about 80 per cent and by 94 per cent from SMS in the last 10 years as the usage of internet-based calling and messaging apps grew, according to a Trai paper.

Telecom regulator Trai in its latest paper to regulate internet messaging and calling apps like WhatsApp, Google Meet, Facetime etc said that with grow-

ing usage of over-the-top (OTT) applications for messaging, voice communication, has led to a transition from voice and SMS towards data as a primary source of revenue for telecom service providers globally.

"In India, composition of the revenue basket of wireless access service providers has undergone a sea-change in the period from the year 2013 to 2022," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in its consultation paper on "Regulatory



Mechanism for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication Services, and Selective Banning of OTT Services".

All the major components of average revenue per user (ARPU) - which is a key matrix to measure telecom operators' growth, except data revenue share, have declined between June 2013 quarter and December 2022 quarter.

According to the paper, while share of revenue from data has grown over 10-fold to 85.1 per

cent in December 2022 quarter from 8.1 in June 2013 quarter per subscriber, the ARPU grew only about 41 per cent to ₹146.96

from ₹123.77 during the same period.

The data in the paper shows that the share of revenue calls declined to ₹14.79 or 10.1 per cent in ARPU of ₹146.96 from ₹72.53 or 58.6 per cent between December 2022 quarter and June 2013 quarter.

Similarly, revenue share from SMS declined to 23 paise or 20 per cent of ARPU from ₹3.99 or 3.22 per cent.

Trai in the paper is exploring if OTT players can be brought under licensing framework which will result in them coughing up entry fees, pay revenue share, facilitate lawful interception, provide call data record, spend on regulatory compliance etc for providing service

The regulator in its past recommendations has allowed OTTs to operate in the country without obtaining any licence.

However, a Parliamentary panel on Communications and IT recommended evaluating a selective ban on services of internet calling and messaging apps to mitigate the impact of a complete internet shutdown in a disturbed area.

Trai in its examination of various recommendations, orders and studies said that shutdown of telecommunications or the internet can have significant ramifications for a country's economy and it also disrupts critical services such as education and healthcare.

"For these reasons, selective banning of specific OTT applications and websites etc., which are likely to be used by the terrorists or anti-national elements to ferment trouble in the specified regions, appears to be preferable as compared to complete internet shutdown," Trai said.



## Biggest Tour win for Canada's Woods

**Puy De Dome:** Canadian Michael Woods delivered an impressive solo effort to claim the biggest success of his career at the top of a legendary Tour de France climb Sunday. Woods, who rides for the Israel-Premier Tech team, has no ambition in the general classification and was part of an early breakaway that the main contenders allowed to form early in the ninth stage. Woods managed to catch American Matteo Jorgenson just 500 metres from the summit after his 24-year-old rival jumped away from the leading group with less than 50 kilometres left. Woods then dropped Jorgenson at ease and reached the summit of the Puy de Dome, a famed volcanic crater in the Massif Central region of south-central France that last hosted a stage 35 years ago. Frenchman Pierre Latour finished second with Matej Mohoric completing the stage podium.

## MB recruit Ali

**Kolkata:** Mohun Bagan Super Giant boosted their backline Sunday, roping in young national defender Anwar Ali, fresh from his exploits in India's SAFF Championship triumph. "The Warrior Arrives! Anwar Ali is a Mariner!" the defending ISL champions announced on Twitter without disclosing the particulars of the contract. "Every player has a dream to play in Kolkata. Since childhood I always wanted to play here," Anwar said in a club statement. "Mohun Bagan is the oldest club of India, and so I'm really excited to don the green-and-maroon jersey."

## Chhetri backs Stimac

**New Delhi:** Captain of the Indian football team, Sunil Chhetri backed head coach Igor Stimac's demand for a four-week camp before the Asian Cup early next year. He said that the team need to have enough preparation time to face the best sides in the continent. The 38-year-old Chhetri also pitched for at least one international friendly against a top-seven ranked country in Asia such as Iran, Japan or Saudi Arabia. "We are going to face Australia, Uzbekistan and Syria in the Asian Cup (group matches). That is why we need a long camp," Chhetri said.

# Sen in final, Sindhu exits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Calgary, July 9:** Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen stormed into the final of the Canada Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight-game win over Japan's Kenta Nishimoto here Saturday. Sen, who has slipped to World No.19 after struggling to find his form early in the season, saw off the World No. 11 Japanese 21-17, 21-14 to enter his second Super 500 final and first BWF summit clash in over a year. The 2021 World Championship bronze medal winner will next face China's Li Shi Feng for the title. However, PV Sindhu couldn't produce her best and went down tamerly 14-21, 15-21 to World No. 1 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the semifinals.

Sen last played a final at the Commonwealth Games in August last year. After a series of early exits from tournaments, he showed signs of recovery when he reached the semifinals of the Thailand Open. Sen has a 4-2 head-to-head record against Feng,



Lakshya Sen displayed admirable form to defeat Japan's Kenta Nishimoto

the reigning All-England champion. Sen had defeated him re-

cently at the Thailand Open. "It was a pretty bad start. I

couldn't control the shuttle well. The moment I got the rhythm at the net, it got better. Near-perfect play at the net was the key and we (he and Nishimoto) were both trying to do that," Sen said. "Overall, I played a good tactical game," he added.

Sen struggled to find his length early on and was 0-4 down in the first game, but he slowly engaged his rival in rallies by taking charge of the net to catch up at 8-8. Even though Nishimoto led 11-10 at the break, Sen soon gained advantage and he kept building on it. Sen's trademark smashes, net play and precision in returns helped him to stay a step ahead, as he wrapped up the game when his opponent hit long.

The second game started on an even note as the duo fought tooth and nail initially but, once again, Sen found his way as he was more alert. From 2-2, the duo moved to 9-9 before Sen managed a two-point cushion at the break after Nishimoto hit long. After the break, Sen used his netplay to perfection to build a 19-11 lead and won easily.

# Harman scripts easy win for Indian eyes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mirpur, July 9:** Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (54 n o, 35b, 6x4, 2x6) started the new international season with a smashing half century as the Indian women's team cantered to a seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the opening T20 International here Sunday.

Opting to bowl, the Indian spinners used the conditions to their advantage and restricted Bangladesh to a meagre 114 for the loss of five wickets. Even though the hosts reduced India to 21 for two, Harmanpreet and Smriti Mandhana (38, 34b, 5x4) put on 70 runs for the third wicket to take India over the line comfortably in just 16.2 overs.

It was however, Mandhana who was the pace-setter for India as she hit some delectable boundaries. This was after the Indian bowlers set it up perfectly for the batters, who had to hardly break a sweat while chasing down an easy target.



Indian eyes celebrate the dismissal of a Bangladesh batter

The spin attack, led by the experienced Deepti Sharma (0/14) along with debutants - slow left arm orthodox Anusha Baredy (0/24) and off-break bowler Minnu Manni (1/21) - bowled a restrictive line to restrict the Bangla batters. Part-time leg-spinner Shafali Verma (1/18) was also mostly on target, save a six that top-scorer Sorna Akhtar (28, 28b, 2x6) hit off her bowling. Pooja Vastrakar (1/16) was the other Indian bowler to take a wicket.

**Brief scores:** Bangladesh 114 for 5 (Sorna Akhtar 28) lost to India 118 for 3 (Harmanpreet Kaur 54 n o, Smriti Mandhana 38) by seven wickets.

## Andreeva, Dimitrov cruise

AGENCIES

**London, July 9:** Sixteen-year-old Mirra Andreeva, playing at Wimbledon for the first time, earned the final spot in the fourth round of the grass court Grand Slam tournament Sunday. The Russian qualifier is the latest teen sensation in tennis and became the youngest player since Coco Gauff in 2019 to reach the women's fourth round at Wimbledon. Despite trailing 1-4 in the second set, Andreeva beat 22nd-seeded Anastasia Potapova 6-2, 7-5 on No. 3 Court.

"I came back from 1-4, so of course I feel great," Andreeva said on court after the match. "I was out of breath for most of the time, but I just willed my way through It was indeed tough," Andreeva added.

Also winning on the day was Marketa Vondrousova who defeated 32nd-seeded Marie Bouzkova 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 to enter the quarterfinals. Fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula also reached the quarters beating Lesia Tsurenko 6-1, 6-3 to set up a clash with Vondrousova.

In men's singles, 21st seed Grigor Dimitrov beat Frances Tiafoe 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 in a match that started on Saturday to reach the fourth round. He will next face sixth-seeded Holger Rune. "I was happy the way I played. The rhythm was there all through the match," said Dimitrov, a one-time boyfriend of Maria Sharapova.

In another match on the day, Russian Andrey Rublev overcame Alexander Bublik 7-5, 6-3, 6-7 (6-8), 6-7 (5-7), 6-4 in a match that lasted over four hours to enter the quarterfinals.

## Brook keeps England alive in Ashes

AGENCIES

**Leeds, July 9:** Harry Brook (75, 93b, 9x4) came good when it mattered the most, as he with the help of Chris Woakes (32 n o, 47b, 4x4) and Mark Wood (16 n o, 8b, 1x4, 1x6) led England to a dramatic three-wicket win over Australia here Sunday to keep the hosts alive in the Ashes. Australia still lead the five-Test series 2-1, but England showed a lot of resilience Sunday to make a strong comeback.

At six for 171 with Joe Root (21), skipper Ben Stokes (13) and Jonny Bairstow (5) back in the hut, it looked like Australia's day. However, Brook playing his 10th Test match showed admirable character as he scripted a turnaround. With Woakes he put up



Harry Brook

a match defining 59-run partnership for seventh wicket to see England through. No praise will be enough for Woakes also as he defied the spell of Mitchell Starc (5/78) who bowled with a lot of fire

during the day. Sadly the Australian pacer lacked support.

After the dismissal of Brook, it was indeed a tense moment for England with 21 still required. However, Woakes and Wood then held on with the former hitting the winning boundary late in the afternoon session against Starc to mark celebrations in the England dressing room.

Earlier in the day openers Zak Crawley (44) and Ben Duckett (23) put on a stand of 42 runs to before Starc got into the act. The ball with which he dismissed Root was a real beauty with the batter falling to the late swing. **Brief scores:** Australia 263 and 224 lost to England 237 and 254 for 7 (Harry Brook 75, Chris Woakes 32 n o, Mitchell Starc 5/78) by three wickets.

## Priyansh, Aditi bag world titles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Limerick (Ireland), July 9:** India's Priyansh became the under-21 World Champion in compound archery with a flawless display here Saturday. He defeated Aljaz Brenk of Slovenia 147-141 in a one-sided men's U-21 individual final in the ongoing World Archery Youth Championships. With his win, India took their medals tally to nine including five gold medals. Earlier, Aditi Swami had prevailed over Leann Drake of the USA 142-136 to bag the women's under-18 title.

Priyansh was more or less dominant throughout the match never giving the former under-18 World Champion any opening.

**MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA**

Amrit Utsav

**SEIZE THIS INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY!**

**Hurry!**

**ZERO**

REGISTRATION COST\*

**ZERO**

DOWN PAYMENT\*

**IRRESISTIBLE PRICES**

**ALTO K10**

₹3,90,000\*

STD

**S-PRESSO**

₹4,10,000\*

STD

**CELERIO**

₹5,39,000\*

LXI

**UPGRADE**

2 WHEELER to from

4 WHEELER

**100%\***

ON-ROAD

FUNDING AVAILABLE

**ALTO S-PRESSO CELERIO**

E-book today at [www.marutisuzuki.com](http://www.marutisuzuki.com) or visit your nearest Maruti Suzuki dealership

<p><b>JYOTE MOTORS</b></p> <p><b>BHUBANESWAR:</b> LEWIS ROAD: 9798190190. NAYAPALLI: 9798190190. KEONJHAR: 9798190190. NAYAGARH: 9798190190. BALUGAON: 9798190190. ANANDPUR: 9798190190. KENDRAPARA: 9798190190. BALASORE: 9798190190. BHADRAK: 9798190190. BARIPADA: 9798190190. UDALA: 7064499950. RAIRANGPUR: 9853446906. JALESWAR: 7064499950. BASUDEVPUR: 9798190190.</p>	<p><b>SKY AUTOMOBILES</b></p> <p><b>BHUBANESWAR:</b> PATIA: 7381045356. CUTTACK: 9776677771, 7381873818. DHENKANAL: 7381045357. NARSHINGPUR: 7381045357. KAMAKHYANAGAR: 7381045357. JAJPUR: 9776900777. SALEPUR: 9583544555, CHANDIKHOL: 9583544555, TANGI: 7381045356.</p>	<p><b>NARAYANI MOTORS</b></p> <p><b>BHUBANESHWAR:</b> RASULGARH: 9583022019, 7440019592, 9583022013. JAGATSINGHPUR: 9583022090. PURI: 9583022035. NIMAPARA: 7381094851. PARADEEP: 9583022034/ 48. PURI HIGHWAY PIPLI: 9583022013. TIRTOL: 7381000159.</p>	<p><b>ODYSSEY MOTORS</b></p> <p><b>ANGUL:</b> 7752076136, 9776901481, PALLAHARA: 7873565435, 9437831123.</p>
			<p><b>TUSHI MOTORS</b></p> <p><b>CUTTACK:</b> 9078076450. <b>PANIKOLI:</b> 9078076450. <b>ATHAGARH:</b> 9078076450.</p>

\*Offer includes consumer offer, exchange bonus and institutional or rural offer, 2 ka 4 wheeler offer and Gold voucher (wherever applicable) on selected models/ variants. Above mentioned savings amount is the value of maximum savings on selected models. \*\*Terms and conditions apply. Finance scheme details mentioned in the advertisement are at the sole discretion of the financier and terms and conditions as specified by the financier shall apply. Credit at the sole discretion of the Bank. 100% on-road funding is provided by select financiers only. For more details, please contact your nearest ARENA dealership. Features and accessories shown may not be part of standard fitment. Black Glass Shade on the vehicle is due to the lighting effect. Images used are for illustration purposes only. Car color may vary due to printing on paper. Offers vary across variants. Maruti Suzuki India Limited reserves the right to discontinue offers without notice. The price given in the ad is based on Bhubaneswar prices and are subject to vary based on the dealer city. Above offers are valid till 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.