



SEEKING VERSATILITY

Actor Bhumi Pednekar says she is glad that she hasn't been stereotyped which is common in the film industry

LEISURE P2



DRONES DESTROYED

Despite damages, Ukraine shoots down 20 Iranian-made drones fired by Russia mostly in the Kyiv region

INTERNATIONAL P10



JYOTHI CREATES HISTORY

Jyothi Yarraji becomes the 1st Indian to secure a gold in women's 100m hurdles at Asian Athletics meet

SPORTS P12

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SHORT TAKES

Murmu's 2-day visit to Odisha starts July 26

Bhubaneswar: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Odisha in the last week of July on a two-day visit, officials said here Thursday. This will be her third visit to Odisha after assuming the office of the President in May 2022. Murmu will attend three programmes in Cuttack July 26 including the valedictory session of the 75th anniversary celebrations of Orissa High Court. She will travel July 27 to Bhadrak to attend the diamond jubilee celebrations of Bhadrak Autonomous College, officials informed. She is also likely to visit Katak Chandi Temple during the trip, they added.

Prisoner escapes from court premises

Sambalpur: An undertrial prisoner identified as Gulgula Khan escaped from a court here Thursday by breaking the ventilator of the bathroom. Khan had been arrested Wednesday by Town police and was to be produced in court Thursday. He went to the bathroom on the pretext of relieving himself, but even as police stood guard outside, he managed to flee. He is one of the accused in a murder which took place in 2001. Police have launched a manhunt to nab him again.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not car. I want to buy a hovercraft. You see, I live in a smart city

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	65558.89	↑ 164.99
NIFTY	19413.75	↑ 29.45
DOLLAR	82.17	↓ ₹0.24
EURO	91.81	↑ ₹0.55
GOLD	₹59,288	↑ ₹100
SILVER	₹75,201	↑ ₹1,655

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.6°C	33.4°C
TEMP MIN	26.6°C	26.5°C
Humidity	80%	79%
Rainfall	Trace	1.4mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky with light rain



ON A ROLE: Cyclists of different countries negotiate a steep turn during the 10th stage of the Tour de France held Wednesday

REUTERS

10 more GPs brought under SETU scheme in Swabhiman Anchal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 13: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik directed officials Wednesday to add 10 more gram panchayats (GPs) in cut-off Swabhiman Anchal to the socio-economic transformation and upliftment (SETU) scheme for development in Maoist-infested Malkangiri district. Patnaik also doubled the scheme's fund from ₹50 crore to ₹100 crore.

As per the order issued by the CMO, nine GPs namely Andrapalli, Jodamba, Raligada, Panasput, Badapada, Gajalmamudi, Papermetla, Jantri and Dhuliput under Chitrakonda block and Nakamamudi under Korukonda block will be benefitted after coming under the SETU scheme. Sources said that to tackle the Maoist menace the Odisha government is emphasising on development of these areas.

Patnaik also approved an additional ₹9.60 crore under the scheme for development and expansion of paramilitary forces deployed in Swabhiman Anchal. The forces will be utilised to maintain law and order in the entire Anchal.

The move came following a field visit of ST Secretary VK Pandian and other senior government officials to Chitrakonda block in Malkangiri district March 28 this year. Pandian held detailed discussions with local people and promised them that development work will continue as promised by the state government.

It is worth mentioning that nine cut-off GPs of Chitrakonda block is connected by Gurupriya Setu, the bridge constructed over the Gurupriya river in 2018. The SETU scheme is being executed for social and economic development of people residing in Swabhiman Anchal since that year, officials said.

It should be stated here that since the implementation of the SETU scheme in Swabhiman Anchal in 2018, the Odisha government has spent more than ₹110 crore to develop the infrastructure of the area including road connectivity. Substantial amounts of money have also been spent on the development of the education system for the kids residing in the area.

Jolt to research as Centre stops funds

Since March 2023, most research institutes including IITs have not received any financial grant from central agencies which has hindered their functioning

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 13: Research bodies are facing a lot of problems since the flow of funds from central agencies has stopped since April this year. This development comes amid the backdrop of the Centre promising more funding for the research bodies by setting up the National Research Foundation (NRF). Many research bodies are currently spending out of their own pockets while project staff has not received salaries for more than three months, according to reports on various national news websites.

Senior Congress leader P Chidamabram took a swipe Thursday at the Centre on this issue and said that maybe the government will coin a new slogan - 'minimum funds, maximum research'.

The problem has increased manifold with the Centre formulating a new method of transferring funds to elite institutes including the IITs and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). All such institutes have been asked to open zero balance accounts and

- Many institutes are paying project staff out of their own funds
- New transaction rules have compounded the problem of the institutes

the money gets deposited in it only after expenses have been incurred. Sadly, deposits have also stopped for the last three months beginning this fiscal.

"My last grant came in March 2023. Since then we have been told that unless we clear all the projects that we have got, there will not be any annual grant," BHU senior scientist SC Lakhota was quoted as saying by a website. "This is an issue with every Indian scientist working in the Department of Science and Technology (DST) or Department of Biotechnology (DBT). I have been paying my project staff from my own pocket," he added.

An IIT researcher had a far more problematic story to narrate. He informed that the last time he got grant money was way back in 2020. "Since then we have been told that nothing is

under the control of the DBT. However, we do not know who is controlling what," the researcher said on condition of anonymity. He was apprehensive that if his name became public he may not even get his outstanding arrears.

Lakhota also stated that he and others have submitted utilisation certificates till March 2023, but till now funds have not been credited to their accounts. "The way things are turning out we may have to stop our research," he lamented.

A senior dean of a college here informed that he had received the unspent amount from the last fiscal in May this year. However, even before he could withdraw it, the account became zero balance and the bank concerned could not help much, he added.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also hit out at the Centre over this issue. He alleged that the Modi government is 'hell-bent' on killing scientific research in India. "Modi govt is hell-bent to kill scientific research in the country, thus hampering a nation's progress," Kharge said in a tweet.

LADY COP HELD FOR TAKING BRIBE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 13: Vigilance officials Thursday arrested a woman cop deployed at Saheed Nagar police station while taking bribe from a lady. The woman was allegedly paying a bribe of ₹15,000 to clear her name as an accused in a harassment case. The arrested cop was identified as Mamata Bastia who works as an ASI in Commissionerate Police. Mamata has been posted at the police station for the last 18 months.

Sources claimed that 72-year-old Subhashri Mishra, from whom the bribe was demanded, and her tenant have been at loggerheads for the last couple of years. A case in this regard has been pending in a local civil

court since long. Both the parties had numerous arguments over non-payment of rent since 2018. Few days back, they again had an argument and the tenant moved the court against Mishra.

Following directions of the court, Saheed Nagar police registered a complaint case in this regard last month. Police during the probe found that allegations against Mishra were fabricated.

However, Mamata who was the investigating officer (IO) of the case, asked the septuagenarian lady to pay ₹15,000 or face arrest. Mishra then informed the Vigilance officials. Accordingly a trap was set and Mamata was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe at Mishra's residence.



Bolangir girl found dead with throat slit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, July 13: A minor girl was found dead Thursday with her throat slit in Nikhil Nagar locality near Kendriya Vidyalaya under Bolangir Town police limits in this district. The deceased was identified as 15-year-old Seshadri Nag, a Plus II first year student of Commerce at a local college. Police suspect it to be a case of murder, though they are yet to ascertain the motive behind

the killing of the minor girl.

Police said that parents of the girl were not at home when she was killed. They said that Seshadri's mom Poornami Nag is a cleaning staff at the waste management centre of Bolangir civic body office and had left for work early in the day. The deceased's father Makardhwaj Nag, a mason was also not at home. They informed the police that they had asked their daughter to cook lunch for them and bring

it to the municipality at 12 noon.

A senior police officer said that taking advantage of the fact that no one was in the house the miscreant managed to enter and carry out the gruesome murder. Bolangir SDPO Tofan Bagh said that a forensic team has been pressed into service to crack the case. "Prima facie it looks like that the act was carried out by a single person. We are probing all angles," the officer said.

Deal finalised for 26 Naval Rafale jets, 3 subs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: The Centre cleared Thursday proposals to procure 26 Naval variant of Rafale jets from France and three French-designed Scorpene class submarines. The procurement proposals were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Defence Ministry said.

Four of the 26 Rafale-M jets, the naval variant of the deck-based platform, will be trainer aircraft, sources in the ministry informed. The delivery of the aircraft will begin within three years of signing of the contract, they said. "The DAC granted Acceptance

of Necessity (AoN) for procurement of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft along with associated ancillary equipment, weapons, simulator, spares, documentation, crew training and logistic support for the Indian Navy from the French Government based on Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The DAC also cleared a proposal for construction of three Scorpene submarines in India. "The DAC also granted the AoN for procurement of three additional Scorpene submarines under Buy (Indian) category which will be constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)," the Defence Ministry said.

Thailand 'high' over new weed laws

■ With most Asian countries having strict drug laws including death penalty, more and more visitors are being lured by the 'forbidden' leaf

AGENCIES

Bangkok, July 13: A Japanese tourist reaches into a baggie of cannabis he's just bought in a weed shop, pulling out a gram of buds to chop down in a small black grinder, before rolling them neatly into a joint. The slight spillage onto the table and his cough as he lights up and inhales deeply betray the fact until two weeks ago, he had never

tried marijuana.

Most Asian nations have strict drug laws with harsh penalties. Thailand's de facto legalisation of marijuana last year has brought a wave of tourists from the region like the visitor from Japan, intrigued by the lure of the 'forbidden' leaf.

"I was curious about how I would feel after smoking," said the 42-year-old tourist who spoke on condition that his name will not be used for fear his experimentation here could lead to legal issues at home. "I wonder why Japan bans it? I wanted to try it," he pondered.

Even as more countries around the world legalise marijuana, Thailand has been the outlier in Asia, where several countries still have the death penalty for



some cannabis offences.

Singapore has already executed two people this year for trafficking marijuana and its Central Narcotics Bureau has announced plans to randomly

test people returning from Thailand. Japan does not have the death penalty for drug offences, but has warned that its laws on cannabis use may apply to its nationals even

when they are abroad. It's no wonder that weed dispensaries here say that customers from Singapore, Japan and China are among the most cautious. They ask questions about how long traces of the drug remain in the system and whether there are detox products. Thailand's cannabis industry has grown at lightning speed, with weed dispensaries now almost as common as the ubiquitous convenience stores. Through February, nearly 6,000 licenses for cannabis-related businesses have been approved, including more than 1,600 in this city alone, according to official figures. There are no figures on how many tourists come specifically to smoke marijuana, but shop owners say most have a go.

leisure



BRITNEY DEMANDS PUBLIC APOLOGY FOR SLAPGATE

Pop star Britney Spears has demanded a public apology from NBA star Victor Wembanyama's guard who "backhanded" her causing her to fall to the ground. In an Instagram video, Spears (41), spoke about the run-in with the basketball player's bodyguard in Vegas last week.

WHEN MATT DAMON FELL INTO DEPRESSION

Actor Matt Damon said that at one point he fell into a depression midway when shooting a movie he knew was 'a lost cause'. The actor spoke of this incident while promoting *Oppenheimer* on Jack's Takes.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You are very apprehensive about your possessions today, and will not like to share them. This mood may be because of someone particular. Affairs regarding love, Ganesh says, are progressing fine, and your married life will bloom.

TAURUS
This day you will have an urge to take a trip, be it a small one. Ganesh sees you enthusiastically making detailed plans and arrangements, arranging for funds and getting in touch with all those you desire to take along. It is possible that you may ultimately scrap your plans and choose to stay at home. However, be sure you'll be making that trip in due course.

GEMINI
You will make a reputation for yourself as a leader in your social circle. You yearn for something in your heart, and need to concentrate your energies upon attaining it. Your creative mind will come up with solutions today, to certain questions that have been perplexing you for quite some, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will get a surprise gift or god news from your friends or relatives. You will enjoy with your family. You will get the affection and co-operation of family members. Happiness and rapport in domestic life is indicated. Ganesh's grace is upon you.

LEO
You will pay more attention to matters at home. You may take up home renovation projects. You may end up replacing the entire furniture at your place even. You will spend the day enjoying with your family members and friends, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Emotions that have been locked in the inner recesses of your heart might just surface today. You may develop an emotional attachment with your material possessions. However, Ganesh says, if you don't find your surroundings conducive, you will feel extremely restless.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today will be an auspicious day for starting any new work. In the office you will be assigned new positions and you shall excel in the same. Whatever work is undertaken by you will see you attain success in it. Today is a lucky day for you Ganesh says

SCORPIO
Today, there may come up situations which may test your patience, predicts Ganesh. However, it would be wise to sit and sort out all the differences with your colleagues or family members or your partner.

SAGITTARIUS
You need to increase your tolerance power as you may have to face criticism from close ones. However, it is not feasible to please everyone around. You may just be happy doing basic favours for your loved ones. Ganesh asks you to be patient.

CAPRICORN
You'll kick start the day in high spirit which will take everyone by surprise. You will shift gears at work so that you can perform more efficiently and productively. Such a change will boost your confidence as you will see the positive results for yourself. Most of the day, you will work like a busy bee, but at the end you will listen to music or be with your friends to relax your mind, foretells Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Today is a day of communication and associations. While at a family gathering, you will enjoy chatting nineteen to the dozen! But at work, you may be left teaching, explaining, negotiating, co-ordinating and arranging meetings. A productive but draining day, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Compromise is the name of the game when it comes to relationships, and you are adept at it. You realise the importance of losing an argument to win over a heart, and do so with panache. Indeed, this is an area where others emulate you, says Ganesh.



Succession creates history

Los Angeles: The American satirical-comedy-drama series *Succession* has made history at the 2023 Emmy Awards as it became the first show where all three of its lead actors, Brian Cox, Kieran Culkin and Jeremy Strong each received a nod in the Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series category. Furthermore, *Succession* has managed to get the most number of nominations garnering a

EMMYS 2023

total of 27 nominations for its final season, and prior to this the show has already won 13 Emmy Awards and getting 25 nods for its third season in 2022. According to *Deadline*, Both Cox and Strong have already competed in this category twice. Strong is looking to take home

his second Lead Actor trophy this year, after previously winning in 2020. He was also nominated in 2021 along with Cox (who lost the trophy to Strong in 2020).

This marks Culkin's first foray in the Lead Actor category, though he was previously nominated twice for the Supporting Actor: Last year, he competed alongside Matthew Macfadyen and Nicholas Braun, and Macfadyen prevailed.



Phalguna Chaitra returns to theatres

Bhubaneswar: After being screened in India and 12 other countries last May, acclaimed Odia film *Phalguna Chaitra* is returning to the theatres of four other towns - Berhampur, Dhenkanal, Sunabeda and Koraput- of Odisha from today.

The movie was released in theaters May 12 at several locations in Odisha, Bangalore, Karnataka, and many other nations, including the USA, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Malaysia, Australia and Singapore. The film, however, couldn't be released in many parts of the state for various reasons.

"*Phalguna Chaitra* is being re-released in Odisha in consideration of the interest expressed by some movie en-

thusiasts. Hope, it will meet the expectations of the viewers of these regions," said producer Sakti Jagdev ahead of its release.

Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Partha Sarathi Ray, BM Baishali, Ananya Mishra, Sukant Rath, Pranab Rath, Chandan Biswal and Bhaswati Basu play key roles in the movie. The Pinaki Singh-Shishir Kumar Sahu directorial has its story written by Sulagna Mohanty while Pranab Rath has written the screenplay and dialogues. Jerry Silvester Vincent has scored the music while JP Wordsmith, Shitha Patnaik, and Sumit Panda have penned the songs.

Actor Babushaan Mohanty is the co-producer of the film.



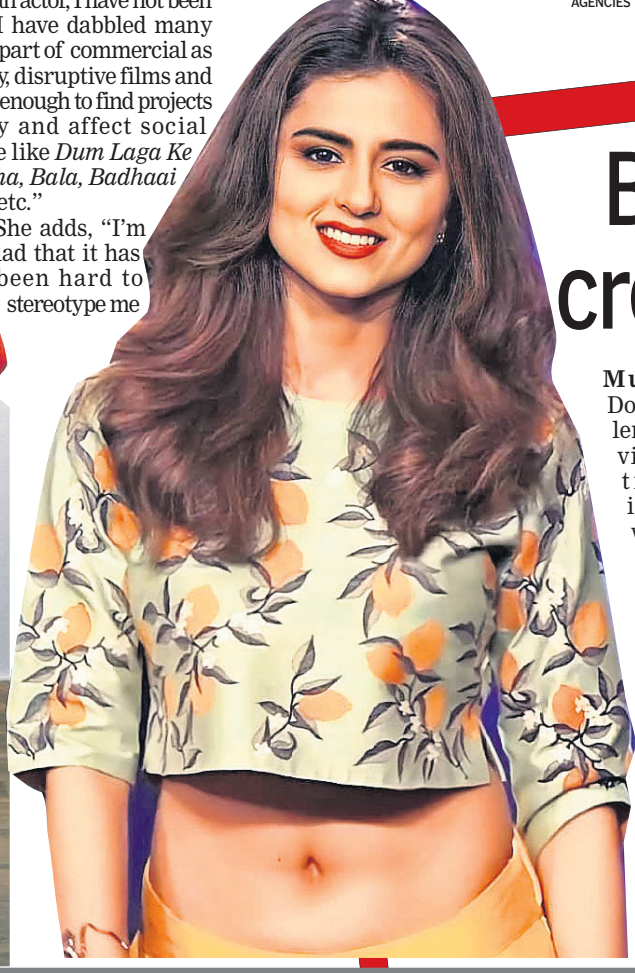
Bhumi hates to be put in a box

Mumbai: In an industry that stereotypes actors constantly, Bhumi Pednekar has been a rare talent! Extremely versatile and considered one of the best actors of this generation with stellar performances since her debut in the Hindi film industry, Bhumi Pednekar hates to be put in a box. The *Badhaai Do* actress says, "I'm fortunate that as an actor, I have not been put in a box. I have dabbled many genres, been part of commercial as well as edgy, disruptive films and fortunate enough to find projects that try and affect social change like *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, *Bala*, *Badhaai Do*, etc."

She adds, "I'm glad that it has been hard to stereotype me

because in this industry that's the first thing that happens to anyone. I have only tried to break the mould with every film, with every role. I like disruption. I will always look to do the same. I hate doing the routine. I hate doing similar films and roles. It doesn't creatively inspire me."

Bhumi promises that audiences will be pleasantly surprised to see her dabble in multiple genres in her next slate of movies.



Bollywood lacks creativity: Ridhi

Mumbai: Actor Ridhi Dogra talks about the challenges she faced as a television actor, her perspective about the film industry and working with two of the biggest actors in the film industry.

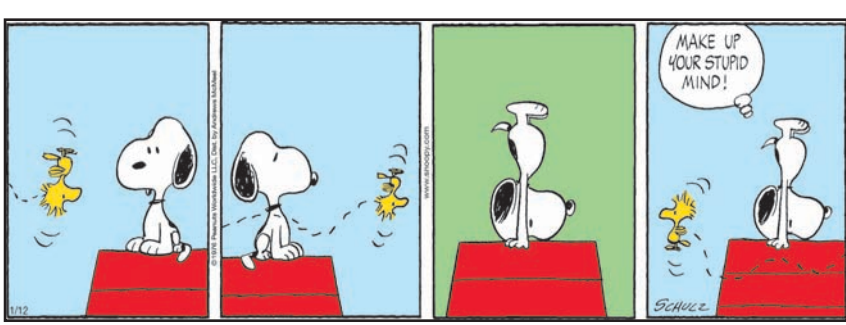
"There's a certain laziness in this industry. People don't see talent for what it can be, they see it for what it is. It is so sad and embarrassing. We don't have the conviction to use talent. We need people from around us to tell us, 'Arrey isme kuch baat hai'. The mo-

ment that happens, we are convinced to put our money on them safely," she says.

The 38-year-old says, "I face challenges all the time. Playing a role onscreen isn't the challenging part, but figuring things off camera is a task. You just want to act, but then you have to be a marketing person, too. During this process, you also realise that Bollywood — that claims to be a creative field — is actually such a closed setup and business-minded. Especially when there are big monies involved, makers want to put money on actors they are comfortable with, because they feel that particular star would listen to them".

FUN post

PEANUTS



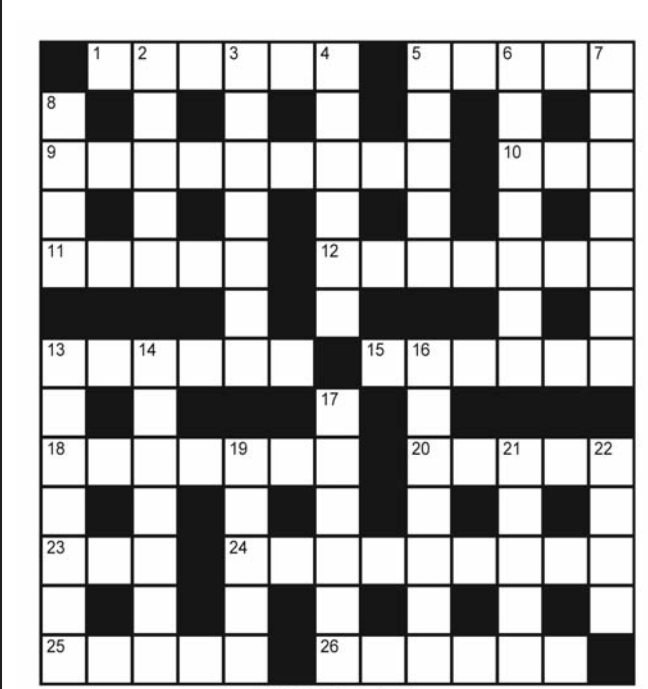
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Sistine, for one
 - 5 Catlike
 - 9 A place to start over? (6,3)
 - 10 Rummy
 - 11 Lustrous fabric
 - 12 Jubilation
 - 13 Vipers
 - 15 Nonstop
 - 18 Perform an organ transplant
 - 20 Writer Asimov
 - 23 Wool weight
 - 24 Beach find
 - 25 Hospital figure
 - 26 Make someone laugh
 - 7 Like the dinosaurs
 - 8 Egyptian fertility goddess
 - 13 Soup additive
 - 14 Kitchen appliance
 - 16 Nutty
 - 17 Abstain
 - 19 Confuse
 - 21 Lagoon surround
 - 22 Secret message

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.

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

SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

THREADS IN SILVER CITY

As the festival of 'Raksha Bandhan' approaches near, small-time vendors buy 'rakhis' from wholesale shops in Choudhury Bazaar area of Cuttack, Thursday



Flood warning: Odisha among top 5 states

72% DISTRICTS IN INDIA EXPOSED TO EXTREME FLOODS BUT ONLY 25% OF THEM HAVE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS, CLAIMS A REPORT BY THE COUNCIL ON ENERGY ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 13: An estimated 72 per cent of districts in India are exposed to extreme flood events but only 25 per cent of them have level flood forecasting stations, or early warning systems, a new report said Thursday, adding that Odisha is among the best-performing states in terms of flood warning.

According to the report by independent policy research think tank The Council on Energy Environment and Water (CEEW), despite high exposure to floods, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Sikkim are the best-performing states in terms of flood early warning systems (EWS).

The report showed that Himachal Pradesh, currently battling massive floods, is among the states with the lowest availability of EWS. Uttarakhand, on the other hand, is moderately exposed to extreme flood events but has a high availability of flood EWS, it said.

Delhi, in the throes of severe flooding due to a raging Yamuna, is moderately exposed to extreme floods and has a moderate level of resilience through EWS. Approximately 66 per cent of individuals in India are exposed to extreme flood events. However, only 33 per cent of them are covered by flood EWS. Moreover, 25 per cent of the Indian population is exposed to cyclones and their impacts, but cyclone warnings are available to 100 per cent of the exposed population, the report said.

States such as Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and West Bengal are at the forefront of building resilience by establishing cyclone EWS.



A flooded Ring Road in New Delhi, Thursday

OP PHOTO

"District-level analysis revealed that while 72 per cent of districts in India are exposed to extreme flood events, merely 25 per cent of these exposed districts have level flood forecasting stations. This means that two-thirds of individuals in India are exposed to extreme flood events, and only one-third of them have flood EWS," the report said.

According to the CEEW, 12 states – Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Bihar – are highly exposed to extreme flood events. However, only three – Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Bihar – have a high availability of flood early warning systems.

Odisha has moderate EWS availability and the rest low

States such as Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and West Bengal are at the forefront of building resilience by establishing cyclone early warning systems, says the report

availability, indicating a gap in the planning for installing flood monitoring and forecasting stations, the report said.

Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana are moderately exposed to extreme floods.

While Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tripura have a high availability of flood early warning systems, the rest have a moderate resilience through flood EWS. States such as Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana have the lowest availability of flood EWS.

Research shows that 97.51 million people in India are exposed to extreme flood events, and most districts are exposed to more than one extreme event, highlighting the importance of making EWS available to all in the country, especially in the states and districts most exposed to its impacts, the report said.

It said that more than 88 per cent of the Indian states exposed to floods and 100 per cent of the states exposed to extreme cyclone events have a high tele-density ratio, which means to access early warnings through telecommunications.

The recent floods in India and Cyclone Biparjoy have once again shown the importance of investing in EWS, said Vishwas Chitale, senior programme lead, CEEW. "The country is rapidly expanding its early warning coverage by embracing transformative technologies. However, as we witness swapping patterns in the climatic extremes in the country, where previously drought-prone areas are now facing floods, all states need to ramp up their early warning systems to safeguard lives and livelihoods," he said.

According to him, states should leverage state-of-the-art technologies to build inclusive, impact-based multi-hazard early warning systems that involve the local communities for last-mile connectivity.

"Intensifying adaptation finance for enhancing disaster preparedness is the need of the hour," he said.

A CEEW study released in 2021 found that 27 of 35 Indian states and union territories (UTs) are vulnerable to extreme hydro-met disasters and their compounding impacts. Eighty per cent of India's population resides in these vulnerable regions.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



HC records highest case disposal in first half of '23

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Cuttack, July 13: With a net improvement of 14.66 per cent in clearance rate over the last year, the Orissa High Court has recorded the highest disposal of cases in the first half of 2023, compared to those of 2021 and 2022, revealed case statistics published by the court for the period from January to June, 2023.

During the period, 49,635 cases were instituted, while 62,869 cases were disposed of at a case-to-clearance rate of 126.66 per cent. Compared to this year's numbers, in the first half of 2022, 53,155 cases had been instituted with 59,850 cases being disposed of at a case-to-clearance rate of 112.59 per cent and similarly, in the first half of 2021,

42,278 cases had been instituted with 39,259 cases being disposed of at a case-to-clearance rate of 92.85 per cent.

Notably, the disposal rate dropped in May and June, 2023, as the court was in summer vacation with only the vacation courts functioning during the period. However, excluding these two months, the case clearance rate from January to April 2023 was 141.71 per cent.

To bring the performance of the state judiciary to public domain, the Orissa High Court has been publishing the case statistics on its website. "It can be seen from the first half yearly statistics of 2021, 2022 and 2023 that irrespective of the institution of cases, the disposal has steadily grown every year and

it has been the highest in the first half of 2023," said a court official.

On comparison of the statistics of the first halves of 2022 and 2023, it can be seen that 3,019 more cases have been disposed of with a net 14.66 per cent improvement in clearance rate. The rate of increase in disposal in 2021 in comparison to that of 2020 was 42.58 per cent, and the rate of increase in 2022 in comparison to 2021 was 52.44 per cent.

Similarly, the rate of increase in disposal in 2023, in comparison with 2022, has been 5.04 per cent, said the official. The number of judgements delivered by the HC in the first halves of 2021, 2022 and 2023 has also steadily grown every year.

Chandrayaan-3 launch: Live streaming at RSC

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: With the countdown for the July 14 launch of Chandrayaan-3 has already begun, the Regional Science Centre (RSC) here has decided to organise an interactive session and live streaming of the scheduled launch from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The purpose is to give the students an insight into the mission and its achievements.

The RSC is one of the constituent units of National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) under Union Ministry of culture. The main objective of the council is to propagate scientific education among the people at large and students in particular. The council achieves the objectives through its mobile science exhibitions, science demonstrations, science & technology based galleries, training and workshops.

"We are happy to inform you that on the occasion of the launch of Chandrayaan-3, India's third lunar exploration mission by ISRO July 14, 2023 at 02:35PM, Regional Science Centre,



Bhubaneswar is going to organise an interactive session and live streaming of the scheduled launch from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota for the students to give an insight into the mission and its achievements in the domain of space science & technology in India," said Kapil Jain, RSC project coordinator.

Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar exploration mission and is a follow-up to Chandrayaan-2, to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

The launcher identified for Chandrayaan-3 is GSLV-Mk3 which will place the integrated module in an Elliptic Parking Orbit (EPO) of size ~170 x 36500 km. The mission is expected to support ISRO's future inter-planetary missions.

Strive for faster devpt of state: CM

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday advised the newly-joined 181 officers to make efforts to see Odisha transformed faster.

Patnaik said this while addressing an orientation programme for the new recruits at the convention centre of Lok Seva Bhawan. As many as 181 new officers of different departments - 104 teacher educators under School & Mass Education department, 62 assistant directors of Law in Home department and 15 assistant directors of Statistics in the Planning & Convergence department.

The Chief Minister asked the new officers to make efforts to see Odisha transformed faster. He said, "All of us have a common objective to see Odisha's transformation in the fastest time possible. All of us need to serve Odisha with a kind of passion that no one has seen ever. There is nothing more happiness than to see our motherland transform where we have a significant contribution. The new recruits need to put in the same efforts to build a new and empowered Odisha as



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik addressing the orientation programme at Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

OP PHOTO

they have made to build their career."

He also said the 5T Initiative has accelerated the development process of the state. He asked the new recruits to follow the principles of this initiative.

He further said that the new officers are highly educated, talented and committed youths of the state. He said he has great hope and confidence in them.

The CM expressed confidence that the contribution of the new recruits to the state will have significantly impact the transformation process.

He said that the teacher educators will have a significant role in developing realistic and progressive curriculum and textbooks for schoolchildren. The quality of teacher training is critical for transforming the

classroom practices and integrating technology by use of smart classrooms and ICT laboratory, he added.

Assistant directors of Law, he said, are required to assist the government for timely and accurate handling of various cases. It will help the public in getting justice and the rightful fulfilment of their obligations, thus fostering good governance, he mentioned.

Statistics assistant directors have a huge role in the planning process, he said further adding that "Realistic and accurate planning is reliant on the quality of statistical data we can generate."

Planning & Convergence Minister Rajendra Dholakia and School & Mass Education Minister Sudam Marndi spoke on the initiatives of their departments and asked the new recruits to work with dedication to realise the objectives of the government.

Chief Secretary PK Jena exuded hope that the new officers would work with enthusiasm for the development of Odisha. He underlined the importance of transparency and technology in governance.

200 ELECTRIC MO BUSES BY NEXT YEAR

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: If things go well, Mo Bus service regulator Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) will add 200 e-buses to its existing fleet by the end of 2024, an official said, Wednesday.

CRUT General Manager (P&A) Dipti Mahapatra said, "CRUT, which runs Mo Bus service in the urban pockets of Odisha since 2018, has closed another tender process of adding 200 e-buses by 2024."

Mahapatra, however, clarified that a few e-buses will be running by the end of this year, and all arrangements are being made for the purpose.

"Due to less number of original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in India, the process will take a little more time. After the bid was finalised, we are now awaiting the government nod for this big-budget project. After the approval of the same, it will take another 6-8 months to get all the 200 e-buses," Mahapatra said.

Your canine friends can pave way for cancer cure

New York: In a breakthrough research, US scientists have identified dog genes that can hold potential cure for cancer in humans.

A team from Broad Institute of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University, and the University of Georgia, conducted the largest-ever genomic sequencing study of canine tumours.

The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, examined real-world clinical genomic data from 671 pet dogs with cancer across the US and analysed tumour samples to identify genetic mutations driving canine cancers.

These samples were then compared to a large database of



nearly 25,000 human tumour samples to identify overlapping mutations between the two species.

The researchers identified 18 mutation 'hotspots' that are likely primary drivers of canine cancers. Although 10 of these

hotspots have not been previously reported in humans, the remaining eight were shared by humans and dogs.

Many of these hotspots can also be targeted with small molecule drugs that are already approved for human cancer pa-

tients. This means canine cancer patients will have increased access to highly effective precision treatments that can replace or augment traditional one-size-fits-all approaches such as chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery.

At the same time, the genetic data from canine tumours can accelerate the development of precision cancer drugs for humans. The findings also showed several previously unreported mutation hotspots in canine cancers, demonstrating their ability to reliably predict whether a tumour is somatic or germline based on tumour tissue alone.

"This study provides the most comprehensive genomic se-

quencing data on canine cancers, including several previously unsequenced types, and serves as a much-needed resource for comparative oncology," said Shaying Zhao, a professor at the University of Georgia and a co-author of the study.

By addressing the significant gap in genomic data on canine cancers, this study also ushers in an era of precision veterinary medicine through clinical genomics.

Prior to this study, fewer than 2,000 canine tumours had been genetically sequenced. This study alone increased the number of canine tumours that have been sequenced by more than 33 per cent, the researchers said.

ED seizes Golden Baba's luxury car

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Bhubaneswar has seized another luxurious vehicle owned by Jyoti Ranjan Beura alias Golden Baba under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. Sources said the BMW car parked on the premises of a private hospital had no registration plate.

The ED had earlier seized a high-end Audi Q5 car worth over Rs 50 lakh in the name of Golden Baba April 26, 2023. The accused has been on the run for the last three years after walking out of jail on bail in connection with multi-crore fraud case.

Notably, the fraudster was arrested by Chandrasekharpur police in December 2018 for al-

legedly duping a Keonjhar-based businessman of Rs 12.04 crore. He is involved in around seven multi-crore fraud cases.

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of state Crime Branch during a raid at the house of Golden Baba at Kalarahanga here recovered incriminating documents regarding various financial frauds.

As per sources, he had allegedly duped a private hospital in Thane area of Maharashtra and a construction firm in Hyderabad on the pretext of providing them loans to the tune of Rs 200 and Rs 300 crore respectively.

The EOW had in 2021 announced bounty on the head of fugitive Golden Baba wanted in several cases of fraud.

Workshop will assist in quality packaging: Amat

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: A two-day workshop on packaging of food, handloom and handicraft product by Odisha Rural Development And Marketing Society (ORMAS) was inaugurated by Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Minister Pradip Kumar Amat at Bhubaneswar Thursday.



Addressing the participants, Amat said, "The workshop by ORMAS is a welcome step. It will assist quality packaging of products made by various producers' groups and companies and enhance retail, online and export sales, through quality testing and certification."

ORMAS CEO Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar said, "The workshop is an endeavour to learn new technologies in supply chain management, packaging development and certifications. We are also planning to set up pack-

aging units in some districts to accelerate the process."

The major objective of the workshop is to know more about prevailing packaging options in the market and adopt suitable scientific packaging technologies for the rural products produced and manufactured by the producers' groups and companies.

Till date, ORMAS has developed 3812 producers' groups, 23 producers' companies and 45 FPOs and production clusters under various schemes.

The products include food and spices, handloom and handicrafts. The role of good packaging material and equipment is important to increase the longevity and shelf-life of products, indicate nutritional parameters by certifications including FSSAI. Besides, packaging of is important for retail, online marketing and export quality processing and value addition.



UP IN ARMS: Members of All Odisha Computer Teachers' Association demonstrate at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar demanding fulfilment of their three-point charter of demands, Thursday

Minor drowns in pond

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: Two days after the tragic drowning of four students in Kuakhai river, a 10-year-old minor student met with a watery grave after falling into a pond in Mancheswar area of the City here Thursday evening. The deceased was identified as Sipun Pradhan of Pattapur in Ganjam district.

Sipun's father Babula Pradhan, who works as a daily wager, has been staying at Kapileswar Vihar under Mancheswar police limits.



Sipun along with one of his friends had gone to a nearby pond in Kapileswar Vihar area to feed puffed rice to the fish. While feeding, he suddenly slipped after losing control and fell into the deep water.

The locals who immediately reached the spot hearing screams of his friend called the Fire services personnel who later fished out Sipun and rushed him to a nearby hospital that declared him brought dead.

OPS, Rotary join hands for better mental health

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: The Odisha Psychiatric Society (OPS) joined hands with Rotary International (District 3,262) to promote mental health, wellness, and to spread awareness about mental health issues among the people of the state.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two organisations during the district governor Jayashree Mohanty' installation ceremony here at the Odisha State Convention Centre recently. Rotary was represented by Pranab Mahapatra, the district chair on mental wellness, and Amrit Pattojoshi, president of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Odisha branch.

Both the parties agreed to work on mental health issues in Odisha and thereby contribute to creation of a healthy society. "We will promote mental well-being and healthy living and encourage people to seek help. We will also work to guide people in identification and prevention of suicide," informed a Rotary member.

Mental health problems have become an important issue after the pandemic and there remain lakh of people untreated for mental illness in Odisha. Despite the National Mental Health Programme, that ensures the availability and accessibility of minimum mental healthcare, many people do not seek help due to stigma and financial issues.

"This trend of not seeking help is particularly prevalent in rural areas, where access to care is further limited. The psychiatrists, through Rotary, will work to fill the gaps in mental health services, providing counseling, crisis intervention, and other forms of support," said Pattojoshi.

Special trains by ECoR

Bhubaneswar: Keeping in view the demands from travelling public and to clear additional rush in regular trains, East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to extend the services of special trains from and through ECoR jurisdiction. 08465 Puri-Udhna (Surat) Jan Sadharan Weekly Unreserved Special Train will leave from Puri at 1455hrs every Wednesday from July 12 to August 2. In the return direction, 08466 Udhna-Puri Jan Sadharan Weekly Unreserved Special Train will leave from Udhna at 2300hrs every Thursdays from July 13 to August 3. This train has 17 unreserved second class seating coaches and two Guard-Luggages cum second class seating coaches having stoppages at important stations including Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar, Dhenkanal, Talcher Road, Angul, Rairakhol, Sambalpur City, Jharsuguda Road, Ib, Bilaspur, Raipur, Nagpur, Wardha and Bhusabal.

Govt to bear farmers' share of premium under PMFBY

According to a Cooperation department official, the state government has decided to continue with the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) insurance cycle from Kharif 2023 to Rabi 2025-26

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 13: The state government has decided to bear farmers' share of the premium under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) crop insurance scheme from this Kharif season, the state cooperation department informed Thursday.

The decision has been taken to ensure that the small and marginal farmers do not get deprived of the benefits of the scheme for lack of premium money. "Such a transformative decision has been taken by the government in the interest of the farmers so that it would increase the coverage of farmers and cultivated areas, official sources said.

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is being implemented in the state since Kharif 2016 to protect farmers



against potential losses to their crops due to uncertainties of the weather. Under this crop insurance scheme, the final yield of the farmers' is insured along with losses due to prevented sowing, mid-season adversity, localised calamities, and post-harvest damages.

"The Odisha government has decided to continue with the PMFBY insurance cycle from Kharif 2023 to Rabi 2025-26. The scheme is being implemented by insurance companies selected once every 3 years through an open bidding process from among the companies empanelled by the Central government," informed the official.

Under the scheme, the farmers usually pay a premium of 2 per cent of sum-insured (SI) for Kharif and 1.5 per cent of the SI for Rabi for all crops except commercial crops, for which they pay 5 per cent of the SI. The differential premium amount is

paid as a subsidy and shared equally by the Central government and the state government.

This year, a fresh insurance cycle has started, with four insurance companies that have been selected through e-tender: Agricultural Insurance Company of India Ltd, SBI General Insurance Company Ltd, Future Generali India Insurance Ltd and Reliance GIC Ltd for this cycle.

"This premium subsidy extended by the state government is over and above the normal state subsidy under the scheme. However, this benefit has been limited to 2 hectares (5 acres) per farmer, so that the resources of the state are targeted more towards the small and marginal farmers," said the official.

Farmers will have to enroll under the scheme to avail the benefit. And to validate the bank accounts, ₹1.00 will be debited from their accounts as a token.

'Dogs too are prone to cardiac problems'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 13: Dogs, a man's most faithful friend, too are prone to cardiac problems.

As they cannot communicate, the owners of the canines are often unaware of their heart ailments, which can be either congenital or acquired like humans, experts attending the two-day national symposium on canine cardiology said here.

"It is observed that cardiac disease is common in dogs whose life span ranges between 12 to 15 years. The cardiac issues often set in when the animal is barely five to six years of age," Bramhadev Pattnaik, dean of the Institute of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (IVSAH) under SOA deemed university here, said Wednesday.

What is required is timely diagnosis and pet owners need to observe whether their dogs are showing signs of fatigue, are unable to walk properly, refusing food or not responding to the owner's commands, he said.

Since it is difficult to ascertain whether a pet dog has cardiac problems, it is required to get the animal go through regular cardiac health check-ups. New diagnostic techniques could be used to identify the problem, he said. "Even dogs have pace-makers these days," he said speaking of advancement in techniques.

Y Vijay, said there is need to raise awareness about the subject and owners of dogs have to understand their pets' symptoms.

IBDP extended for another four years



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 13: For maintenance and creation of new residential and non-residential buildings nearer to irrigation work sites, the state government has extended the Irrigation Building & Development Programme (IBDP) for a period of another four years, from 2023-24 to 2026-27.

The Water Resources department has issued a resolution in this regard, Thursday.

The state government has decided to extend the tenure of the ongoing scheme for another four years with an outlay of ₹49.90 crore, which will be met from state's own resources.

As per the resolution, the ongoing scheme has been extended to meet the requirement by way of constructing new buildings and completing ongoing building works under IBDP phase II along with refurbishing the ex-

isting buildings of the department. IBDP envisages construction and refurbishing of new and existing buildings respectively of the department to meet the space requirements after restructuring of cadre.

State government has decided to extend the tenure of the ongoing scheme for another four years with an outlay of ₹49.90 crore

Repair and maintenance work of residential and non-residential buildings which could not be taken up due to paucity of normal maintenance fund on need basis, would be taken up under the programme.

The Water Resources department has proposed to construct, extend, renovate and refurbish 94 non-residential and residential buildings under the scheme during the four years.

As per the plan, the government has proposed to utilise ₹5 crore during the current financial year while ₹21.45 crore will be spent in 2024-25 and ₹13.45 crore in 2025-26. Similarly, the department has earmarked ₹10 crore for the financial year 2026-27.

Scientists identify paths for reducing air pollution in India

Researchers have evaluated the contribution of various emission sectors and fuels to small particulate matter (PM2.5) for 29 states in India and six surrounding countries, identifying potential pathways to reduce air pollution and improve population health across South Asia.

The results, published recently in the journal Environmental Science & Technology, identify primary organics—organic particles emitted directly into the atmosphere from various sources—as the main drivers of high concentrations of PM2.5 in these countries.

PM2.5 are fine inhalable pollution particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

"Countries in South Asia have substantial emissions and associated air pollution and mortality burden," said study first author Deepangsu Chatterjee, a doctoral student at Washington

University in St. Louis, US.

"Our study shows that over 1 million deaths in South Asia attributable to ambient PM2.5 in 2019 were primarily from residential combustion, industry and power generation," Chatterjee said.

The study found that solid biofuel is the leading combustible fuel contributing to the PM2.5-attributable mortality, followed by coal and oil and gas.

"Air pollution, both indoors and outdoors, is the leading risk factor for death in South Asia," said study co-author Michael Brauer, professor at the University of Washington and the University of British Columbia, Canada. "Understanding the major contributing sources is a critical first step towards management of this serious problem," Brauer said.

A major challenge in evaluating the impacts of PM2.5 is to understand how it is produced and distributed over time.



The researchers combined global emission inventories, satellite-derived fine surface particulate matter estimates and state-of-the-art global scale modeling capabilities to develop regional simulations.

They also accounted for long-range transport to understand how different emission sectors and fuels contributed to PM2.5

and associated mortality rates.

"Advances in modeling atmospheric composition with constraints from satellite remote sensing enabled our assessment of the sources of PM2.5 across South Asia," said Randall Martin from the Washington University.

"That helped draw our attention to large contributions from

The results, published recently in the journal Environmental Science & Technology, identify primary organics as the main drivers of high concentrations of PM2.5

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The study found that solid biofuel is the leading combustible fuel contributing to the PM2.5-attributable mortality, followed by coal and oil and gas

The team's PM2.5 composition analysis can be particularly useful to develop mitigation strategies associated with particular species

The researchers suggest several strategies for future interventions throughout South Asia, including policies encouraging the replacement of traditional fuel sources with sustainable sources of energy

burning biofuel and coal," Martin added.

Chatterjee also noted that PM2.5 mass composition in South Asia is driven by primary organics across major contribut-

ing sectors.

The team's PM2.5 composition analysis can be particularly useful to develop mitigation strategies associated with particular species.

A few other notable features include high contribution from coal in central and eastern India, higher household air pollution in north-east and central India, biofuel contributions in Bangladesh and open fires in Myanmar, the researchers said.

"This study shows that the air pollution problem in South Asia is not just an urban scale problem, so policies targeted at urban scale development will not be enough to mitigate the national level PM2.5 exposure," Chatterjee said.

The researchers suggest several strategies for future interventions throughout South Asia, including policies encouraging the replacement of traditional fuel sources with sustainable sources of energy

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POWER WOES: Residents of Nua Sahi village under Harirajpur panchayat of Dampada block near Banki in Cuttack district staging a road blockade on Banki-Cuttack main road over frequent power-cuts and low voltage, Thursday

Champua voters on lookout for clean, talented candidate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, July 13: All political parties have launched hectic preparations to win the Champua Assembly segment with only a few months left for the 2024 general elections, a report said Thursday.

The ruling BJD and opposition BJP have already started conducting meetings and rallies while the grand old party Congress is lagging behind in preparations for the 2024 polls.

Political observers predicted that under the given circumstances the fight to represent the constituency will be mainly between the ruling BJD and opposition BJP with Congress missing from the scene.

The past elections were mainly fought on pension, allowances and attractive promises but Champua has not witnessed much development on the expected line, political observers said.

This has disappointed the youths in particular, who have probably made up their mind not to fall for money offerings. What may decide the outcome of the polls is that they are in search of a candidate who is talented and carries a clean image as their elected MLA.

Reports said that Champua Assembly segment in Keonjhar district was earlier reserved for the Scheduled Tribe (ST). However, the political scene in the constituency went through a change after the Assembly seat was de-reserved for the candidates from general category.

The Assembly seat has always been in the news due to the muscle flexing between the leaders of all categories from various political parties. Jitu Patnaik won from this constituency in 2009, Sanatan Mahakur in 2014 as an independent and Minakshi Mohanta won on a BJD ticket in 2019 by defeating BJP's Murali Sharma.

Ex-MLA Sanatan Mahakur



during his tenure distributed allowances to the voters for some years and later closed it down. Mahakur, who was a miner, tried to keep people in good mood by distributing allowances. However, the voters in the constituency were left disillusioned of allowances after the shrink in employment resulting from closure of mines in the area.

Mahakur lost the trust of people after he stopped distribution of allowances. Later, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched a probe against him.

Politics is expected to undergo massive change here as the constituency has failed to witness the kind of development that is befitting to it. As a result, youths have become disillusioned of money offers and started demanding for development of the constituency before the leaders of various political parties.

They are now looking for a young, talented candidate with a clean image on whom they can rely upon as their representative in the state Assembly.

In this situation, people are getting increasingly drawn towards the ruling party due to frequent visits of its leaders and the ST secretary to the constituency and promising them to implement the development agenda of the Chief Minister.

Work on the Kanpur mega irrigation project nearing completion, completion of Joda flyover, start of construction of Barbil-by-pass road, up-gradation of Joda and Champua hospitals and launch of development pro-

grammes in tourist sites of the district are also drawing people to the ruling party.

However, despite the ruling party enjoying good support of people, winning from the constituency will not be a cakewalk for the party as it will have to fight it out with BJD.

Saffron party leaders are also touring the area and strengthening the organisation through meetings and demonstrations.

The Champua Assembly segment was earlier a stronghold of the grand old party but it has fallen into pieces due to internal squabble plaguing the Congress party. Some aspirants have been lobbying for the party ticket with hopes that they can win the election with money power.

However, the Congress party is way behind the BJD and BJP and is nowhere in the race, a retired teacher Somanath Mohanty said.

BJD youth leader Susant Barik said that his party will fight the election on development plank as people want development in various sectors which will be reflected in the 2024 elections.

Radha Mohanta, vice-president, state BJP Krushak Morcha said that doling out allowances will no more work in favour of any candidate as the voters have become aware. The fight will be mainly between the candidate of his party and that of BJD, he said.

Joda BJD leader Susant Bebarata said that the fight will be mainly between his party and the BJD and his party will leave no stone unturned to win.

NABA DAS MURDER

Prime accused Gopal produced in court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, July 13: Mystery continues to shroud the murder case of former state health minister Naba Kishore Das as Crime Branch sleuths produced the sacked police SI Gopal Das in the JMFC court at Jharsuguda, Thursday.

Gopal Das is the prime accused in the case. Police brought Das to Jharsuguda from Choudwar Circle Jail in Cuttack under tight security, Wednesday and produced him in the court, Thursday.

The JMFC court heard the matter for 10 minutes and transferred the case to District & Sessions Judge Court, Jharsuguda. It was learnt that the state Crime Branch will soon file the chargeframe in the case before the District Judge, Jharsuguda. On the other hand, accused Gopal agreed to contest



the case in coming days before the judge. The defendant's lawyer Dayanidhi Chand said that the sacked SI Gopal was produced in the JMFC court where he expressed his interest to fight the case in coming days before the magistrate, Thursday.

The JMFC court has transferred the matter to the court of district judge and a copy of the

chargesheet has been given to the accused SI. The hearing in the case will start after the chargeframe in the case.

Meanwhile, 166 days have passed since the incident but the Crime Branch is yet to unravel the mystery behind the murder. The chargesheet mentions that the accused SI murdered Naba Das over personal

reason but the Crime Branch has failed to clarify as to why a police SI thought of killing a person who was then the state's health minister.

The Crime Branch submitted the 534-page preliminary chargesheet at Jharsuguda JMFC Court in the Naba Das murder case, May 26. The agency had prepared the chargesheet on the basis of the statements recorded by 89 witnesses including IO Ramesh Dora, DSP of the Crime Branch, and reports of the scientific team.

Notably, Naba Kishore Das was gunned down by the accused at Gandhi Chhak in Brajarajnaragar of Jharsuguda district when he had been to the area in connection with a programme, January 29 this year.

After his arrest, Gopal was first kept in Jharsuguda Jail but was later shifted to Choudwar Jail in Cuttack district.

Pvt college girl's suicide: Case lodged against hostel warden



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, July 13: Four days after a girl studying in Plus II first year science at Jhadeswar Residential Science College allegedly committed suicide at Suteibadagaon under Remuna block in Balasure district, the district police here registered a case against the college warden Chandrika, Thursday.

The deceased student Samikhya Mohanty allegedly committed suicide in her hostel room, Sunday. Her body was found hanging from the ceiling fan of her hostel room-6 in the college, in the wee

hours of Monday. While the college authorities have termed the girl's death as suicide, family members cried foul alleging that she was forced to commit suicide due to mental pressure and torture by college authorities.

The case was registered against warden Chandrika after senior police officials intervened over a complaint filed by Manoj Kumar Mohanty, uncle of the deceased.

Family members have expressed their resentment over the case being registered against only the hostel warden while excluding the name of the college

authorities and the hostel superintendent. They informed that they will meet the SP and plead with him to take action against all persons responsible for their daughter's death.

Earlier, the Silpanchal police had only registered a case without taking any action after the post-mortem. The deceased girl's uncle had filed a written complaint in the police station alleging that warden Chandrika of the ladies' hostel, hostel superintendent and college authorities had tortured and abused his niece. They also put on her unnecessary mental pressure due to which she was forced to end her life.

IIC Salkhan Murmu neglected the complaint and had then assured the deceased's uncle that they will take action after receiving the post-mortem report. Expressing resentment, family members met the senior police officials and lodged a complaint.

Apprised of the matter, IG (Eastern Range) Himanshu Lal had discussion with SP Sagarika Nath. The SP directed the Sadar SDPO Sashank Sekhar Behera to specially probe the case following which a case registered against the college hostel warden, Thursday.



RAIN PAIN: Students waded through a waterlogged road at Nayak Sahi under ward no-8 of Brahmabara panchayat under Rasulpur block of Jaipur district after a bout of rainfall in the area

Jumbo tramples woman to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 13: A wild tusker trampled a woman to death in Dengula village under Koida police limits in Sundargarh district, in the early hours of Thursday.

Reports said that Seeta Munda, 36, wife of Parama Munda, was attacked by a tusker, while she was fast asleep along with her family members. Seeta, a resident of Dungula village was inside her house when the elephant attacked.

The family members somehow managed to escape. However, luck was not with Seeta as the jumbo caught her before she could do anything. It lifted her in a fit of rage with its trunk and banged her to the ground and then trampled her to death.

Subsequently, the tusker finished the country-made brew of tribals, handia, and left the house. Soon, enraged villagers gathered there and informed the police and the forest officials. They staged a road blockade along Tensa-Koida road demanding compensation for the bereaved family.

The enraged villagers let the body be taken for post-mortem only after they were placated by Forest officials. They alleged that the Forest department was not doing enough to protect their lives.

RSP top mgmt's close interaction with mediapersons

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 13: The top management including the Director in-Charge of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) interacted with mediapersons in a workshop.

The workshop on 'Rourkela Steel Plant: Today & Tomorrow Media as Partners in Progress' was a first-of-its-kind interaction where media representatives expressed their views and the Director in-Charge and his team explained what could be done.

"Media acts as a mirror of the society. We see the world through their reports or lenses," said Director in-Charge Atanu Bhowmick at the beginning of

his speech. Elaborating further on the topic he underlined the critical role played by the media in shaping the views of common men towards the society.

He asserted that for many years no competitive cricket match has taken place at Rourkela. He explained that the RSP stadium lacked quality changing rooms and lounges for the players. He assured that he would talk to top officials and have one IPL standard changing room first. Besides, a new ground adjacent to the old stadium would be completed soon, he said.

RSP would continue to reduce its carbon footprint and by 2030 it would be reduced considerably. Plans are afoot to have big



ponds and trees around so that it will help in keeping the atmosphere clean and stop also the encroachment, he added. He was keen about the revival of old Odia medium schools and explained that there was a craze

for English medium schools. The top official also touched upon issues relating to Rourkela Airport, IGH and multi-specialty hospital, RSP's relationship with the state government, its expansion plans and sought media

cooperation to RSP. Earlier, a documentary chronicling RSP from its inception till date was shown. And then chief of communication at RSP Archana Satpathy made a power point presentation on RSP's performance and future plans.

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Executive Director (Commercial-Mktg)
CBC 2611/12/0002/2324

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2023-22, Dt.: 07.07.2023
NAME OF WORK: PROVISION OF INTEGRATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM) AT BARGARH ROAD, KESINGA & KANTABANJI STATIONS OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION IN EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Tender Value: ₹ 79,41,621.30, EMD: ₹ 1,58,800/-
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1100 hrs. on 31.07.2023.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders. Even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and receipt in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.

Div. Signal & Telecom Engineer (Signal), Sambalpur

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER NAYAGARH IRRIGATION DIVISION, NAYAGARH
e-mail: eenidivn@gmail.com

NOTICE
No.A-325:It is notified that tender invited for the works from Sl.No. 07,14,01,15,13,05,09 vide "e" procurement Notice No.-01 (NGR) 2023-24 dated 03.04.2023 is hereby cancelled.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Nayagarh Irrigation Division, Nayagarh
OIPR-32303/11/0015/2324

Whenever in your life, you meet with a hardship, take it as a boon from the Divine's Grace and it will become so.

THE MOTHER



Righting Past Wrongs

At long last, European countries have begun to grapple with their colonial legacies. In the Netherlands, the government has issued an apology for the country's role in the global slave trade, and the king has "asked for forgiveness." The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has urged Denmark to "address the negative impacts" of its colonisation of Greenland. And in the United Kingdom, media outlets, the Church of England, and cities like Manchester have acknowledged the hard truth: their wealth and power were built on the backs of enslaved people.

While these efforts are rightly recognised as historic, they have also been criticised for a lack of consultation with affected communities and an apparent reluctance to provide meaningful reparations. In fact, these statements and apologies often sidestep the question of what reparations should entail, rendering them toothless gestures of pseudo-accountability.

To be sure, the discussions such public apologies spark help raise the public's awareness about the horrors of colonialism. The conversations they nurture are crucial, and the fact that they are occurring in Europe's most venerable institutions – royal palaces, museums, centuries-old foundations, businesses, and media conglomerates – is a testament to the relentless efforts of organisers and communities to keep history from being swept under the proverbial rug.

But we must be wary of what Georgetown University's Olufemi O. Taiwo calls "elite capture," whereby potentially transformative and liberating concepts are stripped of their radical content and appropriated by the political, social, and economic forces they target. In many ways, the reparations discourse is already being co-opted in this way.

While important, none of the recent acknowledgments and apologies seeks to tackle the living legacy of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and the extractive capitalism that they underpinned. Official apologies can serve as a good starting point, but those in positions of power must not be permitted to use the process of reckoning with the atrocities of colonial plunder to evade real accountability.

Focusing solely on memorialising and apologising for historical injustices without acknowledging their enduring effects risks perpetuating structural inequalities. Colonialism undergirded the international economic order: The over-policing of Black youth, disproportionately high mortality rates among non-white mothers, workplace discrimination, migrants' limited access to social services, and the necropolitics of "Fortress Europe" are all part of the legacy of the racist imperialism upon which Europe's wealth was built.

To address these systemic injustices, we must recognise that the emphasis on financial restitution in current debates about reparations is a problem. If we are not careful, governments and institutions could use this money-centric definition of reparations as a cop-out. As we know from international law, countries often prefer to pay damages for their human-rights violations rather than take meaningful steps such as revising laws, policies, and practices.

This is not to downplay the vital role of wealth redistribution in building a just world. But financial settlements that seek merely to placate those who call for justice are not the same as redistributive policies that target systemic inequality. So far, European governments and institutions have been more than eager to blur the distinction between the two.

As Esther Stanford-Xosei and the Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe have argued, the financial aspect of reparations "will be meaningful only if it serves the holistic purpose and strengthens the integral whole of our self-repair process." In other words, any form of reparations must enable communities to reclaim power, dignity, and stewardship over their shared wealth and resources. If reparations are solely focused on the past, we risk neglecting the present and weakening their emancipatory potential. A more historically informed approach would view reparations as part of a larger project.

Much like the broader struggle for racial, social, economic, and climate justice, the purpose of reparations is to help build a more equitable world. The transition to such a world will not be costless and will undoubtedly require sacrifices. Reparations should ensure that these costs are distributed fairly rather than provide a monetary band-aid.

To bring about a more just future, we must first meet the most urgent needs of communities grappling with the lasting legacies of colonialism. This means dismantling the unequal power structures in our legal, education, health-care, and political systems, as well as our workplaces and public services.

By adopting a community-oriented approach to addressing structures of oppression, we can ensure that marginalised groups have equal access to essential public goods. But we must also be willing to challenge the inherently harmful and extractive systems that we often take for granted.

Simply put, we can no longer accept that any framework, institution, or process that affects marginalised communities is established or operated without their meaningful participation. Rectifying historical injustices is not just about righting past wrongs. To create a more equitable society, we must also address colonialism's ongoing effects.

The writer, a human-rights lawyer, is Founder of Systemic Justice, an NGO that works with communities to address racial, social, and economic injustices through strategic litigation.

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WISDOM CORNER

Don't gain the world and lose your soul; wisdom is better than silver or gold. **BOB MARLEY**

A friend is someone who gives you total freedom to be yourself. **JIM MORRISON**

I'd rather be hated for who I am, than loved for who I am not. **KURT COBAIN**

WORDSWORTH

Lustrum

In English, lustrum is a rather rare literary word that means a period of five years, a quinquennium. Dictionaries don't agree about the source of lustrum. Some argue it comes from luere, to wash, because the ceremony originally involved ritual cleansing; others say it's from lustrare, to purify or brighten, which would make lustrum a close relative of lustre and some other English words. Others warily include variations on "ultimate origin unknown".

FOR A FAIRER MOBILITY

FOCUS CYCLING

The harsh summer is over. We can assume the rest of the year is good for cycling in Bhubaneswar. Cycling is not only a healthy way of getting around, but also a very sustainable one. At the same time, cycling offers a plethora of benefits that are hard to deny. Cycling is one of the most complete exercises and brings health and economic benefits in any given city. Then, why don't more people bicycle to work? How do we make Bhubaneswar more appealing to cyclists?



A lack of cycling infrastructure in Bhubaneswar, such as dedicated lanes, traffic lights, signage, and parking spaces, do substantially add up to the reasons why people stop choosing the bicycle as a mode of transport



Piyush Ranajn Rout

CYCLISTS TEND TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD BETTER, PARTICIPATE IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SPEND MORE MONEY IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

New research found it has a lot to do with the cities in which people live. Even 20 minutes of cycling per day can increase the blood flow in the body and improve lung capacity. But we live in a city where many face obesity related complications, waiting for medical attention to deal with diabetics, blood pressure, depression. Many of us have pedalled the last time decade ago or in their schools days, while an accessible and a cheap sport like cycling would have avoided their obesity.

Bhubaneswar now adding metro to its larger public transport system sounds great. But if expenses of one pillar of that metro get invested in cycling infrastructure then a substantial burden on metro would be taken by cycling. Cycling is always an affordable and safe mode of transport in Bhubaneswar when compared to other forms of mobility. Citizens looking to cut down on unnecessary costs can save a lot by running errands on their bicycle. Travelling by bicycle also helps reduce carbon

footprint.

Not everything starts and ends with good memories, there are some risks attached to cycling. Bhubaneswar residents lack cycling awareness, which means that drivers and pedestrians are often not aware of cycling laws and regulations, which leads to confusion. A lack of cycling infrastructure in Bhubaneswar, such as dedicated lanes, traffic lights, signage, and parking spaces, do substantially add up to the reasons why people stop choosing the bicycle as a mode of transport.

The COVID-19 pandemic has motivated many people throughout the world including Bhubaneswar to initiate cycling. New pop-up bicycle lanes came up in Paris, Milan, Mexico City, and countless other cities have

provided a safe space to try out this mode of transport. This drastically reduced risk of contagion. Even though Bhubaneswar didn't offer much benefit to cyclists with pop-up lanes research found restrictions in vehicular movement in major streets unofficially became pop-up lanes for cyclists that witnessed surge in cycling during the pandemic.

Bhubaneswar can take cue from car-free Sundays of Bogotá, Colombia, where one or several main streets remain closed to vehicular traffic on Sunday afternoons. Instead, the streets belong to pedestrians, cyclists, and all other kinds of non-motorised transport. Bogotá has also shown that cycling infrastructure can overcome class differences and improve the sense of community. This makes

cycling a democratic form of transport, while also being extremely sustainable.

Various researches have been proven cycling improves the health of citizens, reducing the chance of heart disease by as much as 52% and some cancers by up to 40%. Similarly, it reduces the risk of type-two diabetes and stroke, supports mental health, and increases happiness levels. Bhubaneswar can learn this from the Netherlands where more than 70% of children cycle to schools and it is no coincidence that they are among the happiest and healthiest children in the world.

Cyclists tend to know about their neighbourhood better, participate in a circular economy and spend more money in the local economy. Some people who don't ride a bicycle – safety is their biggest concern. They were afraid of vehicles on the road and crimes.

If politicians, bureaucrats, engineers, and town planners want to increase the percentage of people living happily, then they must ensure commuting by bicycle is safe, should focus on protected bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle parking just like they have for cars. Such measures will ensure that Bhubaneswar takes care of its cyclists. Finally, Bhubaneswar needs to incentivise its citizens to take bicycle rather than car for 5 to 10 km trips. This will lead to a transformation towards a greener, healthier, and fairer mobility.

The writer is an urban planner

SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

Insurtech as a game changer

Insurtech companies in Indian insurance industry have seen significant growth in recent years. With the emergence of such companies, the industry has witnessed a digital transformation. Increased digital penetration along with product innovation has been the driving force for the exponential growth of the insurance industry. As per a report by Redseer, the overall insurance market stands at \$131 billion in 2022, which is poised to reach \$222 billion by 2026 growing at CAGR of 13%. Out of this, insurtech market stands at \$2 billion as of 2021 and is expected to reach \$13 billion by end of 2026.

Insurtech refers to the use of technology to innovate and disrupt the traditional insurance industry, often through digital platforms and data analytics. This shift towards technology-driven solutions is helping the industry to deepen insurance adoption and make it more accessible to people across the country.

Nowadays, both traditional and start-up companies are encouraged and prompted to take up innovative technology in the form of insurtech. This innovation driven technology is the outcome of increased digitalisation, emergence of new customer segment, rise in use of mobile phones, sheer competition, changing pattern of customer expectation, enhanced customer experience and importance of higher insurance penetration and reach. Insurtech as an innovative and emerging

technology is being accepted in property, casualty, life and health sectors of insurance industry which resulted in improved growth in many parameters. The insurtech solutions are getting higher position by getting the support of potent technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, big data, comparators, Robo-advisor, automation and cloud computing by giving real time surveillance and monitoring the business performance. The emergence of insurtech has helped insurance companies improve their customers' experience, develop new products and services, lower costs, better assess risks, identify fraudulent claims and enhance underwriting and actuarial processes. But at the same time, insurtech startups will likely face a number of challenges in coming years in different forms like navigating regulatory compliance, intense competition, gaining customer adoption, customer data privacy, equality of access and integrating with traditional insurers.

Chatbots are an example of AI-based applications used by insurance companies to respond to customer queries. Insurance companies develop different smartphone apps for streamlining backend operations and improving customer experience. Drones can be used especially by property and casualty insurance companies for identifying the susceptible danger zones and inspect accident sites. ML which

is a subdivision of AI uses algorithms to replicate neural networks of a human brain. It enables the devices to collect valuable information of customers through which insuring provider forecast and estimate their requirements. The use of block-chain as a technology helps to enhance data security and build trust between the insurance company and policyholders.

Have you ever given it a thought? How the decade-long photovoltaic plants harnessing solar energy have been running efficiently with an increase in output at a lower operational cost despite hidden faults in their internal system. The answer to this is the sincere efforts of tech-driven companies working under autonomous operation centers (AOCs) through cloud based SaaS platform which are ultimately AI driven software. They guarantee 100% performance relevant fault detection powered by ML expertise. These AI driven AOCs help systems to run with incredible efficiency. The performance of these AI driven companies to guarantee 100% fault detection and zero false alarms for PV plants is guaranteed by insurers/re-insurers. This symbiotic relationship between technology and insurance companies has successfully enhanced the profitability of PV plants and they are greatly improving the technology and insurance penetration worldwide.

What if the farmer who adopts a particular crop plan offered

by some tech-company are able to plant, grow, and harvest crops more efficiently and if that crop plan underperforms under any event then warranty payments are reimbursed to farmers for yield losses. This AI-based and data-driven tech company's solution when backed by insurance enables the farmers to gain additional confidence in the outcome. Such scenarios are now feasible when technology and insurance cross paths.

In recent years many companies providing the insurtech have revolutionised and reshaped the Indian insurance industry. The underwriting system in such insurance companies is completely AI driven and offer customised policies for various sectors. Now, customers can compare and purchase policies from different leading companies in technology driven platforms. When technology is imbibed into insurance domain the positive impact is it makes insurance more accessible, affordable and creates awareness worldwide. Overall, the insurtech landscape in India is dynamic and rapidly changing, and it is likely to continue to evolve and grow in coming years. Insurtech companies will play a crucial role in shaping the industry's future.

Puspalata Mahapatra is, professor in KIIT School of Social Financial & Human Sciences, KIIT DU. Sumagna Panda is Reinsurance Underwriter, Digital Business, Munich-Re, Mumbai. Views are personal.



Puspalata Mahapatra & Sumagna Panda

THIS SHIFT TOWARDS TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS IS HELPING THE INDUSTRY TO DEEPEN INSURANCE ADOPTION AND MAKE IT MORE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Leader of mettle

Sir, One man has emerged a clear winner from the "Pawar play" in Maharashtra: Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The former Leader of the Opposition, like NCP chief Sharad Pawar, has friends in all parties. It is not an exaggeration to say that without his man for all seasons, Devendra Fadnavis, the BJP would not have been able to pull-off both the short-lived midnight coup of 2019 and the present day stunner of inducting Ajit Pawar as Deputy Chief Minister in the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra. Fadnavis, as the second youngest CM of one of India's largest and important states in 2014, flowered into a leader of mettle. Fadnavis is increasingly being seen as a go-getter and a canny tactician who knows his limits. His tirelessness, as evidenced by more than 60 rallies he addressed at a stretch during the last election campaign, was a revelation. **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

Lunar expedition

Sir, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is all set to launch a lunar exploration mission on Friday, 14 July, at 2.35 PM. The spacecraft will take off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The ISRO continues to make advancements with every launch, and Chandrayaan-3 showcases notable improvements compared to Chandrayaan-2. The lander now incorporates a Lunar Descent Vehicle (LDV) and has been equipped with additional fuel. To enhance safety, multiple contingency systems have been introduced, and the structural rigidity has been enhanced. These developments aim to ensure a smooth and successful landing on the moon's surface. It is expected that India will achieve this significant milestone, leaving those who previously doubted the ISRO and Indian space programmes to regret their skepticism and ridicule. **Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD**

Fantasy sports

Sir, Fantasy sports are often misunderstood as gambling in India but it's not the case. "Fantasy sport" refers to the type of online sport where the player creates or assembles an imaginary team composed of representations of real players of a professional sport such as Kabaddi, Hockey, Soccer, Cricket, etc. Gambling is making a bet on the outcome of an event or game which can have an uncertain result. **Isha Tapadiya, UJJAIN**

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

BJP keen for AIADMK alliance in LS polls



Chennai, July 13: Even as the Tamil Nadu BJP state president and former IPS officer, K. Annamalai has time and again been making unruly comments against the AIADMK and its leaders, the central leadership of the BJP is keen that the party is in its fold.

The invitation extended to AIADMK general secretary and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS) to attend the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) meeting on July 18 at New Delhi is a

THE INVITATION EXTENDED TO AIADMK GENERAL SECRETARY AND FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU, EDAPPADI K. PALANISWAMI TO ATTEND THE NDA MEETING JULY 18 AT NEW DELHI IS A CLEAR INDICATOR TO THIS

THERE WERE REPORTS OF THE BJP TRYING TO GO IT ALONE IN THE 2024 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS FROM TAMIL NADU

clear indicator to this.

There were reports of the BJP trying to go it alone in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Tamil Nadu. However, sources

in the BJP said that the national leadership had conducted a detailed survey on the prospects of the party and found that without the AIADMK it would not stand a chance to win any seat on its own.

It may be noted that for the past five decades, politics in Tamil Nadu revolved around the Dravidian majors, and the Congress, which had once ruled Tamil Nadu, is relegated to political oblivion without the support of a Dravidian major. If the Congress which had once ruled Tamil Nadu is relegated to a minor party status, then the BJP, which had never got proper recognition in the state, will not be able to do anything without the support of a Dravidian major.

R. Kalayanasundaram, political analyst and retired Professor of Political science from Madurai said, "The BJP state president was doing political suicide by speaking out against AIADMK as any political student can understand that the only solution to reap benefit in Tamil Nadu is to piggy ride one of the Dravidian majors. Fortunately for the BJP, it already has an alliance with the AIADMK, but the unnecessary uttering of its state president was creating problems for its fortunes in the state. The national leadership of the party will be willing to accept the formula of seat sharing pushed forward by the AIADMK and the saffron party will have to be satisfied with the seats the AIADMK offers it."

OMAR 'DENIED' SECURITY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 13: Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah Thursday set out from his home on foot to reach the party office here after police allegedly denied him escort vehicles and ITBP personnel cover.

Abdullah, the vice president of the National Conference (NC), was scheduled to address a function at the party headquarters, Nawa-i-Subah, to pay homage to 22 Kashmiri people who were killed by the army of a Dogra ruler on this day in 1931. He alleged the Jammu and Kashmir Police denied him his security escort vehicles and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) cover to visit the party headquarters.

There was no immediate reaction from the police. Unfazed by the alleged denial, Abdullah set out to the office near Zero Bridge -- around one kilometre from his residence in the Gupkar area -- on foot. A handful of his special security group personnel -- a wing of J-K Police responsible for guarding VVIPs -- walked along with him.

The former J-K chief minister took to Twitter and posted a video of his walk. "Dear @JmuKmrPolice don't think that refusing to give me my escort vehicles & ITBP cover will stop me. I'll walk to where I have to get to & that's exactly what I'm doing now," Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

After reaching office, where party leaders and activists were waiting for him, the NC vice president said the "police would now send everything" for his security. "Now that I've got to the of-



ice & will go ahead with my programme you will send everything. The fact is @JmuKmrPolice has stopped a lot of my senior colleagues from coming to the @JKNC office today by adopting the same tactics of stopping them in their homes. Notable amongst those stopped are Abdul Rahim Rather Sb, @Alimsagar_Sb, Ali Mohd Dar Sb and others," he said.

July 13 was a public holiday in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and a grand official function was held every year on this day where the chief minister or the governor would be the chief guest.

However, the governor administration dropped the day from the list of gazetted holidays in 2020, after the abrogation of Article 370 and splitting of

UNFAZED BY THE ALLEGED DENIAL, ABDULLAH SET OUT TO THE OFFICE NEAR ZERO BRIDGE -- AROUND ONE KILOMETRE FROM HIS RESIDENCE IN THE GUPKAR AREA -- ON FOOT

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT HIS PARTY OFFICE, ABDULLAH SAID HE DOES NOT HAVE A HABIT OF CREATING A "DRAMA" AND HE DID NOT HAVE ANY PLANS FOR A FOOT MARCH

the erstwhile state into two Union territories by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

Apart from the official function at the Martyrs' graveyard in the city, mainstream political leaders also used to visit it to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiris who fell to the bullets of the Dogra army while protesting the autocratic

rule of Maharaja Hari Singh.

However, there have been no official functions since 2018 when J-K went under the governor's rule. For these last few years, political parties have alleged their movement was restricted on the day and they were not allowed to visit the graveyard.

Speaking to reporters at his party office, Abdullah said he does not have a habit of creating a "drama" and he did not have any plans for a foot march.

"I wanted to come in vehicles. I do not have a habit of creating a drama. But, today they compelled me to come out of home and walk on foot, as they stopped all my vehicles, did not allow the security to move, because they did not want me to reach the office and pay homage to July 13 martyrs," he said.

Restoration of twin lakes to begin soon



Chennai, July 13: The Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department has floated tenders for the restoration of the twin lakes in Chennai and the work is likely to commence by August.

The twin lakes, commonly known as Retteri, will be desilted and cleared of encroachments. A Department official said that an invasive species of water hyacinth which reduces oxygen supply and creates breathing difficulty for fish has occupied a large portion of the lakes.

The water hyacinth, according to the official, also acts as breeding ground for mosquitoes. The twin water bodies comprise the Madhavaram inlet channel and Manali lake and according to Department officials, an amount of Rs 44 crore have been sanctioned for the restoration work.

According to officials, a portion of the lake is occupied by 40 illegal structures and these have

to be removed first. On the western side, the Department will construct a wall for a distance of 3 km and to prevent garbage dumping.

Towards the eastern side, pillars will be installed and a fence erected. The water level in the twin water bodies is presently 32 million cubic feet and the Department will dig deep to increase the holding capacity to 45.13 mcf.

One million liters of water a day was pumped from the twin lakes by the Metrowater to its Kolathur plant and from their water supplied to the houses in the vicinity of the lake. However, this is not being done due to illegal encroachments and dumping of garbage in the lake.

Sources in the Department said that after the restoration work is completed water will again be pumped to the Kolathur plant and after treatment supplied to locals in the vicinity of the two lakes.

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR CHANDRAYAAN-3 MISSION

The Chandranaar Temple is one of the Navagraha temples, all located near Kumbakonam and devotees pray at these temples to get rid of negative planetary influence on them

Chennai, July 13: Seeking the Moon God Chandran's blessings for Indian space agency's third moon mission -- Chandrayaan-3, a special puja has been arranged at the Chandranaar Temple, in Thingalur near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu.

The Chandranaar Temple is one of the Navagraha temples, all located near Kumbakonam, and devotees pray at these temples to get rid of negative planetary influence on them. While the presiding deity at the temple is Soma (Moon), the main deity is Lord Shiva.

"On Friday morning, a yagna between 8-10 a.m and an 'Abhishekam' for the Moon God has been arranged. Following that, there will be 'Annadhanam' or free food for about 100 persons," D. Govindharaju, Deputy General Secretary, Desia Thirukovilgal Koottampattu (National Federation for Temples) said.

An Indian rocket LVM3 will lift off at 2.35 p.m. on Friday carrying Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft. The spacecraft in turn holds a lander and a rover. The primary purpose of this mission is to soft land the lander on the moon

and the rover to do some experiments on the moon soil.

This is the third time special prayers are being arranged for the success of Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) moon mission.

A special puja was also organised for the success of Chandrayaan-1 before the rocket lifted off in 2008. V. Kannan, Retired Manager at the Sri Kailasanathar Temple or Chandranaar Temple said.

Interestingly, prior to the second moon mission -- Chandrayaan-2 special prayers

were not arranged. The launch originally slated for July 15, 2019 got postponed due to technical glitch.

According to Kannan, the glitch it was thought may be due to the non-offering of the prayers to the Moon God. Hence, prior to the Chandrayaan-2 launch on July 22, special prayers, 'Abhishekam' and 'Annadhanam' were conducted.

Kannan said the special prayers were their contribution for India going forward in its scientific programme. According to Kannan, around 500 devotees come to the Chandranaar Temple daily and on Mondays the number goes up to 5,000.

The nine Navagraha temples are: Suryanaar (Sun), Chandranaar (Moon), Angaragan (Mars), Budhan (Mercury), Guru (Jupiter), Sukran (Venus), Shani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu.



Devotees through booking counters



Jammu, July 13: A day after Tatkal registration for the Amarnath Yatra resumed here after suspension for three days, hundreds of people thronged the on-the-spot booking counters.

The Tatkal registration resumed Wednesday after the pilgrimage was suspended from Saturday to Monday due to inclement weather and the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway for repairs in the Ramban section.

Braving the hot and humid weather conditions, devotees including women are patiently waiting in long queues to get a registration token.

"We have been waiting in long queues since morning for the registration. We will first get a token and then have to get a health checkup done, only after which we can proceed with the registration process," Kapil Dev Pandey, a Maharashtra resident who came here for the pilgrimage, said.

Pandey, however, pointed out that there should be more counters to attend to the huge number of people. Over 1,500 unregistered pilgrims, including women, who have arrived in Jammu city, have been registered so far for the Yatra to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas.

Five counters have been set up for Tatkal registration of the

devotees. While three counters have been put up at Vaishnavi Dham, Mahajan Sabha, and Panchayat Ghar for registration of the general public, two have been set up at Geeta Bhawan and Ram Mandir for the registration of 'sadhus', the officials said.

Dharminder Bhargava, a pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh, standing in the queue for three hours, said he arrived here a week ago and has been waiting for the Amarnath Yatra registration to resume.

"We visited the Mata Vaishnodevi cave shrine during the suspension of Yatra last week. There should have been more counters so that registrations could have been conducted faster," Bhargava said.

Pilgrims waiting in the queues said the shelter and drinking water facilities at the registration spots were inadequate. While 1.40 lakh pilgrims have paid obedience at the Icelingam of Lord Shiva at Amarnath so far this year, over 53,000 devotees in 11 batches have left for the shrine from the Jammu base camp.

The Yatra remained suspended for three days from Saturday to Monday and was resumed on Tuesday from Jammu. In view of the suspension, around 8,000 pilgrims were stranded in Jammu, particularly the Bhagwatinagar base camp. The 62-day annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine began on July 1 and is scheduled to conclude on August 31.

The Tatkal registration resumed Wednesday after the pilgrimage was suspended from Saturday to Monday due to inclement weather and the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway for repairs in the Ramban section

The 62-day annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine began July 1 and is scheduled to conclude August 31

Kalaingar central library to house nearly 3.3L books

Chennai, July 13: The Kalaingar Central library in memory of late Chief Minister, writer and author, M. Karunanidhi in Tamil Nadu's Madurai will house nearly 3.3 lakh books and will be inaugurated July 15 by Chief Minister MK Stalin.

The library will be an iconic landmark in Madurai just like the Anna Central Library in Chennai. The Rs 150.91 crore project is executed by the Tamil Nadu Public Works Department.

Sources in the PWD said that the project cost was revised to accommodate additional amenities.

The library will house rare



books and journals like 'Saduragaradhi' first edition that was published in 1824. The library is aesthetically designed

to attract readers and has a large dome with a chandelier measuring eight feet in diameter. The library department is tak-

ing measures to totally digitalise books for e-library and format all books to enable visually challenged people read various ti-

ties in the library. The library will also have sections that include reading your own books, a children's section designed with vibrant coloured paints, one section for competitive examinations and will have disabled friendly features.

The Kalaingar central library will house several other amenities such as an art gallery, multipurpose hall, children's theatre with interactive floors, and conference hall that can accommodate 700 people. The library has a virtual reality facility of operating a flight. The library will conduct workshops for children and self-help groups and will have programmes for students and unemployed youths.



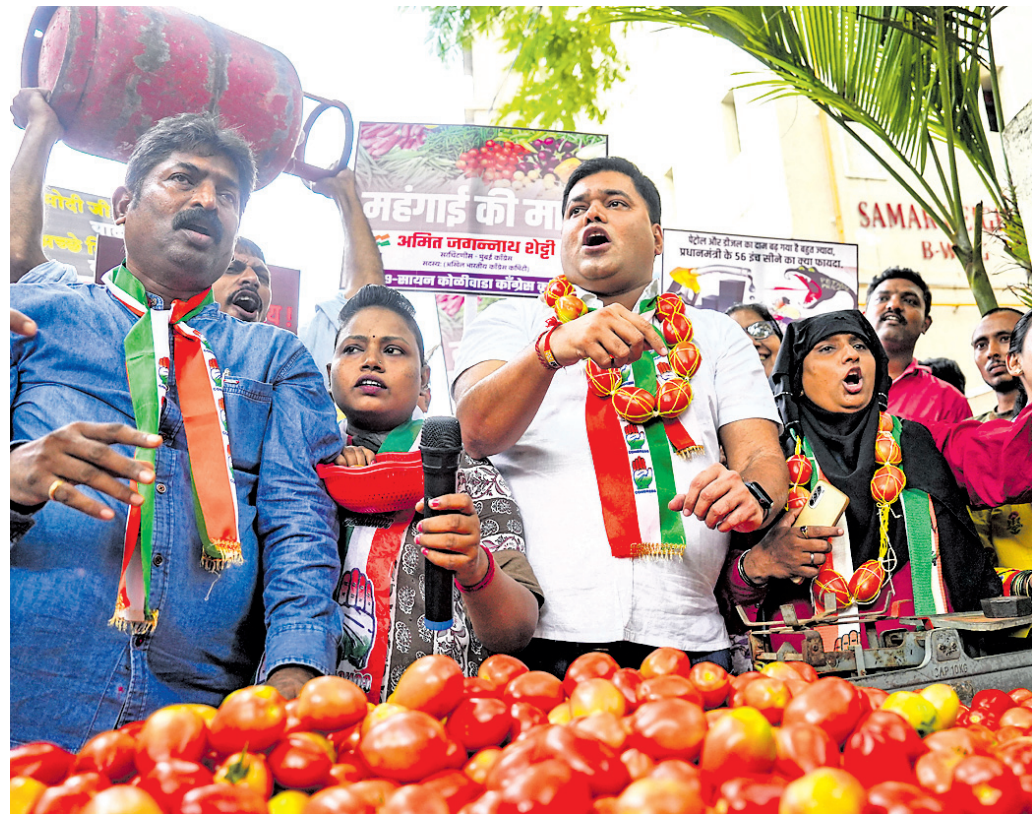
This photo provided July 13, by the North Korean government shows what it says is the test-firing of an Hwasong-18 ICBM, at an undisclosed location, in North Korea, July 12. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government



INS Chennai arrives in France to participate in Bastille Day celebrations



Security personnel baton charge BJP supporters during their protest march towards Vidhan Sabha in support of demands of teachers' job aspirants in Patna, Bihar. A BJP leader died while taking part in the march, evoking allegations from senior party leaders that he was "killed in a brutal lathi charge"



Congress workers raise slogans during a protest over the rise in prices of tomatoes and other essential commodities in Mumbai, Maharashtra



A Lord Shiva devotee or 'Kanwariya' wears a mask as he carries holy water from the Ganga during his pilgrimage in the month of 'Shravan' in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh



Chief Justice of India (CJI) Justice DY Chandrachud with judges of the Supreme Court at a cafeteria in New Delhi



A local rescues a dog as he walks through a flooded area in New Delhi



Members of various political parties protest against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and State Election Commissioner Rajiva Sinha over the violence during West Bengal Panchayat elections, in Kolkata



When I have raised the serious issue of corruption, the issue is being given a caste colour. Does corruption have a caste?

HD KUMARASWAMY | EX-CM OF K'TAKA

SC TO HEAR SISODIA'S BAIL PLEAS TODAY

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Friday the bail pleas of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia in the Delhi excise policy case being probed by the CBI and the money-laundering matter arising out of it



of the day quote

The lathi charge on BJP workers in Patna is the result of the failure and nervousness of the state government



Coal companies should pay compensation for the land they have acquired, even if mining work has not started on it



I am writing to express Government of Tamil Nadu's strong opposition to the idea of implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India that is known for its multicultural social fabric



SHORT TAKES

NIA raids 5 places in Pulwama, Shopian

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out raids at five locations in Pulwama and Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday in a terror conspiracy case, officials said. "As part of its ongoing investigations in the Jammu and Kashmir terrorist conspiracy case, the NIA conducted another round of raids at the premises of hybrid terrorists and underground workers (OGWs) of the outfits and affiliates of Pakistan-backed banned terrorist organisations," an NIA spokesman said.

All 256 tourists evacuated in HP

Shimla: Rescue workers Thursday evacuated all 256 tourists stranded at Chandertal in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul and Spiti for five days after snowfall blocked the road leading to the spot, officials said. Authorities claim to have shifted 60,000 tourists in the state to safer areas over the past four days. But 10,000 tourists stuck at different places in Kasol, Kheerganga and adjoining areas are refusing to trek to safety as they do not want to leave their cars behind, the officials said.

4 pilgrims among 5 killed in accident

New Delhi: Two trucks collided head-on in outer Delhi early Thursday, leaving five people, including four 'kanwariyas', dead while 14 others injured, police said. A call about the accident at Siraspur GTK road was received at 12.44 am, they said. The truck driver of the offending truck who fled the spot was later held from Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar, Samaypur Badli, they added.

AIADMK to hold protests July 20

Chennai: The AIADMK will conduct statewide protests July 20 condemning the ruling DMK for failing to rein in the prices of tomatoes and other essential commodities and also the alleged irregularities in government departments, party's general secretary K Palaniswami said Thursday.

14 killed as rains continue to lash UP

Lucknow: As many as 14 persons were killed in rain-related incidents in Uttar Pradesh in the past 24 hours as several rivers crossed the danger mark, officials here said. Owing to torrential monsoon rains that continued to lash the state Thursday, the Ganga breached the red mark at the Kachhla bridge in the Budaun district, a report from Central Water Commission said.

DELHI FLOOD SITUATION WORSENS

Schools, colleges closed till Sunday

As the Yamuna waters spilled into more areas of Delhi and rescue efforts intensified, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said private establishments across the city have been advised to allow their staffers to work from home



Commuters wait to make through a flooded road near the Red Fort PTI PHOTO

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 13: The Delhi Disaster Management Authority Thursday directed that all schools, colleges and government offices for non-essential services in the city be closed till July 16 as water of the raging Yamuna inundated several areas of the national capital.

Commercial establishments in and around Kashmere Gate currently underwater will be asked to close down till the situation improved, officials said.

Twelve National Disaster Response Force teams, equipped with inflatable boats, ropes and other equipment, have been deployed in Delhi to help the administration in its rescue efforts. More than 20,000 people have been shifted to the relief camps so far. There are 50 boats and more will be deployed if

The city is also staring at a drinking water shortage as the Delhi government decided to cut down supply by 25% following the closure of three water treatment plants -- Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla -- due to the rising level of the Yamuna

needed, said Kejriwal who attended the DDMA meeting chaired by Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena.

Kejriwal, who visited the Wazirabad water treatment plant, warned of rationalising water supply to deal with "acute shortage". He, however, said the water treatment plants will be

resumed as soon as the situation turns to normal. The DDMA decided to take proactive relief and preventive measures in areas such as Sonia Vihar, Mukherjee Nagar and Haqueqat Nagar susceptible to flooding, said a statement from the LG office.

The meeting was also attended by Revenue Minister Atishi and Irrigation and Flood Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj, besides chiefs of police and civil administration.

"All schools, colleges and universities are being closed till Sunday," Kejriwal told reporters after the meeting.

Waterlogging at the Kashmere Gate bus terminal forced the Delhi Transport Department to terminate buses from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and elsewhere at the Singhu border. DTC buses will ferry people from there, officials said.

The Delhi Chief Minister said in view of the problems faced by the people in relief camps, they will be shifted to school buildings which have proper toilet facilities. Apart from the 12 NDRF teams, additional personnel have been deployed to help in the relief and rescue operation, said the LG office statement. Additional personnel will be deployed for traffic management in affected areas. Entry of heavy vehicles, except those carrying essential goods, will be banned at the city borders of Chilla, Loni, Singhu and Badarpur, it said.

HAND-CHOPPING CASE

NIA court sentences 3 to life term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, July 13: A special NIA court in Kerala Thursday sentenced to life imprisonment three of the six persons convicted in the sensational 2010 case in which a college professor's hand was chopped off.

The right hand of T J Joseph, professor of Newman College in Thodupuzha in Idukki district, was chopped off by alleged activists of the now banned radical Islamic outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) July 4, 2010. Special NIA court judge Anil K Bhaskar sentenced Sajil, Nasar and Najeeb to life term under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for the offence of being part of a terrorist organisation. The remaining three convicts - Noushad, P P Moideen Kunhu and Ayob -- were sentenced to three years for harbouring the offenders in the case. "What has been committed is a terrorist act. The nation and its citizenry also suffered a lot. Terrorism has been recognised as one of the six most severe threats to civilisation, security and humanity. The act of the accused is a challenge to the secular fabric of our nation. "It attempts to establish a parallel religious judicial system which



The court termed it a "terror act" for which the convicts "don't deserve any leniency"

is absolutely illegal, illegitimate and unconstitutional. It has no place in independent India under our constitutional scheme. A country governed by the rule of law cannot fathom it," the court said in its order on the sentence. The special court further said that in the instant "horrible" incident, the accused, "as prescribed in their religious text", were delivering a sentence on the professor for allegedly blaspheming Prophet Mohammed and Islam in a question paper set by him. It observed that the mental trauma and physical pain suffered by the professor was terrible, and his wife who had witnessed the attack could not withstand the trauma for long and committed suicide.

COAL SCAM

Delhi court convicts former MP Vijay Darda, ex-coal secy HC Gupta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jul y13: A Delhi court Thursday convicted seven accused, including former Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Darda and ex-coal secretary H C Gupta in a case related to irregularities in the allocation of a coal block in Chhattisgarh.

In the 13th conviction in the coal scam, the scandal which rocked the erstwhile Manmohan Singh government, Special Judge Sanjay Bansal also convicted Darda's son Devender Darda, two senior public servants K S Kropha and K C Samria, M/s JLD Yavatmal Energy Pvt Ltd and its Director Manoj Kumar Jayaswal.

The court held the accused guilty of criminal conspiracy (punishable under Section 120-B of IPC) and cheating (punishable under section 420 of IPC), and under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The judge will hear argument on quantum of punishment July 18. The court accepted the submissions made by senior Public Prosecutor A P Singh that the CBI was able to prove its case beyond all reasonable doubts.



Flood affected kids play near the Old Yamuna Bridge (Loha Pul) in New Delhi PTI PHOTO

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Law Commission receives more than 50L responses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: With the deadline to respond to the politically-sensitive issue of uniform civil code (UCC) ending Friday, the Law Commission has so far received over 50 lakh views online on the subject.

Besides online responses received on its website, the Commission has also received "hard copies", sources said Thursday, adding that the final number would be much higher. Some organisations have approached the law panel seeking personal hearing on UCC.

While it scrutinises the responses, it would take a call on inviting the organisations for a personal hearing, the sources said. On June 14, the Law Commission initiated a fresh consultation process on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) by seeking views from stakeholders, including public and recognised religious organisations, on the politically sensitive issue.

Earlier, the 21st Law Commission, the term of which ended in August 2018, examined the issue and solicited the views of all stakeholders on two occasions. Subsequently, a consultation paper on "Reforms of Family Law" was issued in August 2018.

"Since more than three years have lapsed from the date of issuance of the said consultation

paper, bearing in mind the relevance and importance of the subject and also the various court orders on the subject, the 22nd Law Commission of India considered it expedient to deliberate afresh over the subject," the panel had said in a 'public notice'.

Appearing before a parliamentary committee earlier this month, representatives of the law panel had defended the fresh consultation exercise, noting that the preceding commission had brought out its suggestions in 2018 and its term had also come to an end. That is why, they have begun a fresh initiative which is essentially "informational".

In its consultation paper issued on August 31, 2018, the previous Law Commission headed by Justice B S Chauhan (retd) said while the diversity of Indian culture can and should be celebrated, specific groups or weaker sections of the society must not be "disprivileged" in the process.

It said the Commission dealt with laws that are discriminatory rather than providing a uniform civil code "which is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage". The consultation paper said most countries are now moving towards recognition of difference, and the mere existence of difference does not imply discrimination but is indicative of a robust democracy.



CHANDRAYAAN-3 LAUNCH TODAY

ISRO aims to master soft landing on lunar surface

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (AP), July 13: As the scientific community is waiting with bated breath aiming for the successful third edition of India's moon mission, Chandrayaan-3 Friday, here is a quick look at how the country's lunar expedition evolved over the years.

The Chandrayaan programme was conceived by the Government of India and formally announced by former Prime Minister, the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee August 15, 2003.

Subsequently, the hardware of the scientists paid off when the maiden mission onboard ISRO's trusted PSLV-C 11 rocket

lifted off October 22, 2008.

According to the Indian Space Research Organisation, PSLV-C11 was an updated version of the standard configuration of a PSLV. Weighing 320 tonnes at lift-off, the vehicle used larger strap-on motors to achieve higher payload capability.

It carried 11 scientific instruments built in India, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, and Bulgaria. Noted scientist Mayilsami Annadurai from Tamil Nadu led the project as the Mission Director of the Chandrayaan-1 mission.

The spacecraft was orbiting around the moon at a height of 100 km from the lunar surface



for chemical, mineralogical and photo-geologic mapping of the

moon.

While the mission achieved all the desired objectives, the orbit of the spacecraft was further raised to 200 km in May 2009, months after the launch.

The satellite made over 3,400 orbits around the moon, more than what was expected by the ISRO team, and the mission finally concluded as the space agency's scientists

declared communication was lost from the spacecraft August 29, 2009.

The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram designed and developed the PSLV-C11. Buoyed by the success, Chandrayaan-2 was conceived as a more complex mission by ISRO as it carried an orbiter, lander (Vikram) and rover (Pragyan) to explore the unexplored South Pole of the moon.

After the lift-off July 22, 2019, Chandrayaan 2 was successfully inserted into a lunar orbit August 20 the same year. Every

move of the spacecraft was precise as the Lander 'Vikram' successfully got separated from the Orbiter in preparation for the landing on the lunar surface.

After circling the moon at an altitude of 100 km, the descent of the lander was as planned and it was normal up to an altitude of 2.1 km. However, the mission met with an abrupt end as scientists lost communication with Vikram, named after the father of India's space programme, the late Vikram Sarabhai.

The Chandrayaan-2 mission failed to achieve the desired soft landing on the moon's surface, leaving the ISRO team dejected.

international

of the day quote

There is work ongoing with a number of economies, including the UK, on the issue of intellectual property rights and modernisation in an effort to improve Indian protocols

PIYUSH GOVAL | UNION MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN INDIA

Wagner's commanders pledged loyalty to Putin and are ready to fight for the Motherland

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

Sweden's NATO membership bid will not be ratified by Turkey's parliament before October

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

12 killed, 5 injured

Islamabad: At least 12 Pakistani soldiers were killed and five injured in separate encounters with militants in the country's Balochistan province, the Army has said, the heaviest single-day loss suffered by the military in the restive region. The attacks occurred on Wednesday in the Sui and Zhoab areas of the province, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the Army's media wing - said in a statement. At least seven militants were also killed in the two encounters. Unidentified gunmen attacked security forces conducting an operation in Sui, killing at least three soldiers and injuring five.

UK visa fees, health surcharge to rise

London: The fees and health surcharge paid towards the UK's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) by visa applicants from around the world, including Indians, are set to rise "significantly" to meet the country's public sector wage increase, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Thursday. The British Indian leader, who was under pressure to accept the recommendation of an independent review of pay for teachers, police, junior doctors and other public sector workers, confirmed a hike between 5 and 7 per cent across the board. However, he stressed that this would not be met with higher government borrowing for fear of further stoking high inflation and therefore the costs would need to be found elsewhere.

Kim vows to boost nuclear capability

Seoul (South Korea): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to further bolster his country's nuclear fighting capabilities as he supervised the second test flight of a new, powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the mainland United States, state media reported Thursday. Kim's statement suggested North Korea would ramp up weapons testing activities to expand its arsenal in response to recent US steps to enhance its security commitment to ally South Korea.

Mild quake hits western Nepal

Kathmandu: An earthquake measuring 4.6 magnitude on Richter scale hit western Nepal's Humla district Thursday morning, officials said. No loss of life or property has been reported. According to National Seismological Centre, the earthquake was recorded at 11:17 am with its epicentre located at Kalika area of Humla.



The debt crisis faced by 40 per cent of the developing countries is because of the inequality built into our outdated global financial system, which reflects the colonial power dynamics of the era when it was created

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The IMF has transferred \$1.2 billion to Pakistan, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said Thursday, a day after the global lender approved a \$3 billion bailout programme for the cash-strapped country



Modi in France to boost ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Thursday accorded a red-carpet welcome as he arrived in Paris on a two-day visit during which he will hold wide-ranging talks with President Emmanuel Macron and join him for the French National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour. "Landed in Paris. Looking forward to boosting India-France cooperation during this visit. My various programmes today include an interaction with the Indian community later in the evening," Modi tweeted soon after his arrival here.

In a special gesture, French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne received Prime Minister Modi at the airport. A ceremonial welcome and Guard of honour were accorded to Prime Minister Modi upon his arrival. "PM @narendramodi alights at the Paris airport. Accorded a ceremonial welcome. In a special gesture, PM @Elisabeth_Borne received him at the airport. PM's intensive programme in Paris includes participation in the Bastille Day celebrations & a slew of engagements with the French leadership, Indian diaspora, CEOs and prominent personalities," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

Prime Minister Modi interacted with children and members of the Indian diaspora on his arrival at the hotel in Paris.

"A warm welcome by the Indian diaspora in Paris! Across the world, our diaspora has made a mark for themselves and are admired for their diligence and hardworking nature," Modi said. Ahead of his departure, Modi expressed confidence that his visit will provide a new impetus to the bilateral strategic partnership. Expansion of bilateral



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne upon his arrival at Orly Airport, in Paris, France, Thursday

From Paris, Modi will travel to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, for an official visit on July 15

Prime Minister Modi interacted with children and members of the Indian diaspora on his arrival at the hotel in Paris

Expansion of bilateral defence ties is expected to be a key focus of Prime Minister Modi's talks with Macron

defence ties is expected to be a key focus of Prime Minister Modi's talks with Macron.

"I look forward to meeting President Macron and holding wide-ranging discussions on taking forward this longstanding and time-tested partnership over the next 25 years," Modi said in his departure statement.

"We also work together on regional and global issues," he added. Modi said his visit to France was particularly special as he will join President Macron for the French National Day, or Bastille Day celebrations in Paris as the Guest of Honour.

A 269-member Indian tri-services contingent will participate in the parade. Three Rafale fighter jets of the IAF will also join the flypast on the occasion along with French jets. Noting that this year marks the 25th anniversary of India-France

strategic partnership, Modi said that rooted in deep trust and commitment, the two countries cooperate closely across various domains, including defence, space, civil nuclear, blue economy, trade, investment, education, culture and people-to-people ties.

Modi had the opportunity to meet President Macron several times since his last official visit to France in 2022, most recently in Hiroshima, Japan in May 2023 during the G-7 Summit. "I also look forward to my interactions with the French leadership, including Elisabeth Borne, Prime Minister of France, Gerard Larcher, President of the Senate, and Yael Braun-Pivet, President of the National Assembly," he said. Modi will also meet the vibrant Indian community, leading CEOs from both countries as well as prominent French personalities.

Harris sets another record in US history

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, July 13: Kamala Harris has set another record in US history when she matched a 191-year-old record of casting tie-breaking votes as a vice president and backed the nomination of Indian-origin Kalpana Kotagal to be a member of a federal agency.

Harris, who made history as the first woman or person of colour in 2020, equalled the record held by Senator John C Calhoun, a Democratic-Republican who served as vice president to John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson from 1825 to 1832.

On Wednesday, Harris, 58, cast her vote on cloture for the nomination of Kotagal, a diversity, equity, and inclusion expert to serve as a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

Harris broke a 50-50 tie on a vote in the Senate on the nomination of Kotagal, to bring her total of tie-breaking votes cast as vice president since she assumed office to 31. That matches the record set by Calhoun, a Democratic-Republican and an avowed proponent of states' rights and slavery.



20 drones shot down over Kyiv

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, July 13: Ukrainian officials said air defences shot down 20 Iranian-made drones fired by Russia mostly at the Kyiv region early Thursday, but wreckage fell on four districts of the capital, wounding two people and destroying several homes.

The latest barrage by the Kremlin's forces began shortly after midnight, and explosions shook different parts of the city. Two people were hospitalised with shrapnel wounds, authorities said. In the capital, rescuers extinguished a fire in a 16-story building, as well as in a non-residential building, the Interior Ministry said. Debris also smashed into the frontage of a 25-story apartment building, it said.

Russian strikes have become a grim part of everyday life in Ukraine over the almost 17 months of the war. Meanwhile, a senior officer leading Russian forces against Kyiv's recent counter-offensive in southern Ukraine, Lt. Gen. Oleg Tsokov, was reportedly killed by a Ukrainian missile strike.

Tsokov died when the Ukrainian military struck the city of Berdyansk on Tuesday with UK-supplied Storm Shadow missiles, according to retired Gen. Andrei Gurulev, who commanded the 58th Army in the past and currently serves as a lawmaker. Russia's Defense Ministry hasn't reported Tsokov's death.

In the aftermath of the nighttime attack on Kyiv, Volodymyr Motus, a 22-year-old resident of the 25-story building, carefully picked his way across the floor of a destroyed apartment,



Russian strikes have become a grim part of everyday life in Ukraine over the almost 17 months of the war

The latest barrage by the Kremlin's forces began shortly after midnight and explosions shook different parts of the city

During the summer, attacks came less frequently, but they still strike unpredictably across the country

his footsteps crunching shattered glass. The mangled furniture was coated in a thick layer of dust.

"I was in my apartment and suddenly I heard a boom, that's all. Then the alarm went off and I went down to the shelter." He said that some people were injured, but they were all alive. In May, Russia launched dozens of drones and missiles at Kyiv almost every night, forcing its residents to spend their nights in shelters.

During the summer, attacks came less frequently, but they still strike unpredictably across the country. Ukraine's human rights chief Dmytro Lubinets wrote on Telegram, "It should be explained that each air alarm in Ukraine is like playing Russian roulette... It's unknown the number of people who could be affected, and it is uncertain from which part of Ukraine bad news about the strike of an enemy drone or missile will come."

Thailand's Pita defeated in parliament in bid for PM



REUTERS

Bangkok, July 13: Thailand's Pita Limjaroenrat failed Thursday in his initial bid to become Thailand's next Prime Minister, after he was thwarted in a high-stakes parliamentary vote that included a host of no-shows and nearly 200 abstentions.

The leader of election winners Move Forward was unopposed in the contest but struggled to muster the required support of more than half of 749-member the bicameral parliament, despite the backing of his eight-party alliance.

Another vote is expected to

be held next week, which Pita can contest if nominated again. The progressive Move Forward party and its alliance partner, Pheu Thai, thrashed conservative pro-military parties in the May 14 election, seen widely as a resounding rejection of nearly a decade of government led or backed by the royalist military. Thursday's vote was a critical test of Pita's political clout and a gauge of the opposition to his party's anti-establishment agenda, which includes removing the military from politics, curbing business monopolies and amending a law that prescribes long jail terms for insulting the monarchy.

His defeat was the latest blow in a torrid two days for the 42-year-old, U.S.-educated Pita, who saw two legal complaints against him gain momentum on the eve of the vote, including a recommendation to disqualify him, prompting hundreds of demonstrators to gather and warn of moves afoot to keep Move Forward from power.



Lawmakers push each other as a brawl breaks out in Kosovo's parliament in Pristina, Kosovo, Thursday. A brawl erupted in the Kosovo parliament after an opposition lawmaker threw water on Prime Minister Albin Kurti while he was speaking about government measures to defuse tensions with ethnic Serbs in the country's north. Kosovo opposition parties have criticised Kurti's policies in the north that have strained relations with key Western allies

Deadly heatwave sweeps across southern Europe

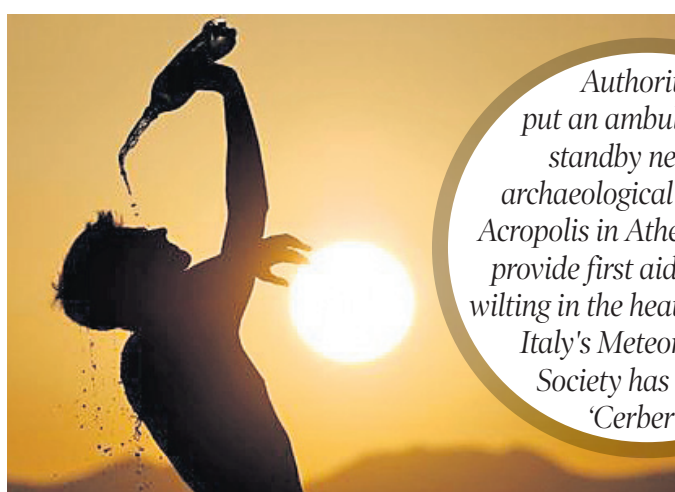
REUTERS

Athens/Rome, July 13: Southern Europe sweltered under a fierce heatwave Thursday, with a warning that temperatures could hit record highs for the continent next week, raising fears about the impact on human health, crops and animals.

Weather alerts were in place across Spain's Canary Islands, Italy, Cyprus and Greece, with the Greek authorities expecting temperatures to reach as high as 43 Celsius (109.4 Fahrenheit) or 44 Celsius on Friday or Saturday.

Authorities put an ambulance on standby near the archaeological site of the Acropolis in Athens, ready to provide first aid to tourists wilting in the heatwave, which Italy's Meteorological Society has named "Cerberus".

The European Space Agency (ESA), whose satellites monitor land and sea temperatures, said



July could be a torrid month.

"Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Poland are all facing a major heatwave with temperatures expected to climb to 48 Celsius on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia - potentially the hottest temperatures ever recorded in Europe," it said.

The impact of extreme summer heat has been brought into focus by research this week that said as many as 61,000 people may have died in Europe's sweltering heatwaves last summer. Governments and employers are under pressure to do more to protect workers exposed to the

burning sun in the latest heatwave, named after the three-headed dog of the underworld in Greek mythology.

There are concerns about the impact on those working outdoors in Italy after a 44-year-old man who was painting road markings in the northern town of Lodi collapsed and died this week.

"Heat is a silent killer. So this is the main concern that people's lives are at risk," said climate scientist Hannah Cloke, a professor at England's Reading University. "Certainly, we should immediately stop pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere," Cloke added, warning that some changes to the climate were already locked in.

SCORCHING EARTH FROM

BALKANS TO SPAIN

Health authorities issued a top, red alert warning for 10 Italian cities for the next two days, including Rome, Florence, Bologna and Perugia.

In Greece, the government has ordered the suspension of work between 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. local (0900-1400 GMT) in areas where the risk from heat is very high, and also requested remote work for private sector employees with health conditions.

In the Balkans, beachgoers in the Croatian town of Nin smeared themselves in its medicinal local mud to protect themselves from the sun while 56 firefighters with 20 vehicles and three aircraft struggled to contain a brush fire near the Adriatic town of Sibenik.

Cloke said that the current heatwave was caused by hot air coming up from the Sahara, with the air mass then becoming lodged across parts of Europe.

Mass grave with 87 bodies found

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, July 13: The bodies of dozens of people allegedly killed by Sudanese paramilitary and allied militia have been uncovered in a mass grave in West Darfur, the United Nations said Thursday.

According to "credible information" obtained by the UN Human Rights Office, the bodies of the 87 people, some of whom belong to the ethnic African Masalit tribe, were dumped in a one-metre (around three-foot) grave just outside the West Darfur city of Geneina.

The first 37 bodies were buried on June 20, the UN agency said in a statement from Geneva. The next day, another 50 bodies were dumped at the same site. Sudan has been rocked by violence since April 15 when tensions between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces erupted into open fighting.

business



The exchequer would get estimated additional revenue of ₹20,000 crore annually following the decision of the GST Council to levy 28 per cent tax on full bet value on online gaming

INDIA MULLS BANNING RICE EXPORTS

India, the world's biggest rice exporter, is considering banning exports of most rice varieties, Bloomberg News reported Thursday. The government is discussing a plan to ban exports of all non-Basmati rice, the report said



of the day quote

For India to meet growing electricity demand while addressing climate concerns, increased integration of clean energy, including variable renewable energy, is essential

The space sector is opening up for the Indian industry and we will leverage this long association with ISRO to play a bigger role in space programmes of the future

AT RAMCHANDANI | EXECUTIVE VP, I&T DEFENCE

We are adequately funded to add 4 more aircraft on top of that were adequately funded to place another three-digit aircraft order between now and the end of this year

VINAY DUBE | FOUNDER AND CEO, AKASA AIR

₹20L for a Tesla: Musk's factory plan gathers speed

TESLA IN TALKS TO SET UP FACTORY TO MAKE ABOUT HALF MILLION EVs ANNUALLY IN INDIA

REUTERS

Bangalore, July 13: Tesla is discussing an investment proposal with the Indian government to set up a factory with an annual capacity to produce about half a million electric vehicles, reports said Thursday, citing government sources.

The company, led by billionaire Elon Musk, is also looking at using India as an export base to ship cars to countries in the Indo-Pacific region, the report said.

The starting price for the vehicles will be ₹20 lakh (\$24,400.66), the report added, which is more than double of India's cheapest EV, MG Comet, and ₹5 lakh costlier than Tata Nexon EV, the top-selling electric car in the country. Last year, Tesla's India entry plans were stalled after the country's government refused to lower import taxes on its cars. The country levies as much as 100% import tax on electric vehicles.

India was keen for Tesla to manufacture vehicles locally, but the company said it wanted



to export its cars first to the country so that it could test the strength of demand.

In renewed efforts to enter the domestic market with a change of stance, Tesla held discussions in May with officials about incentives being offered by

the government for its cars and battery manufacturing.

The Indian commerce and industry ministry is leading the talks this time and hopes to put together a "good deal", while maintaining a level-playing field as talks now involve both local

manufacturing and exports.

NO TAX SWEETENERS

India's finance ministry is not considering any duty waivers for Tesla, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra told Reuters.

In the past, talks between the U.S. carmaker and the Indian government have involved seeking customs duty waivers for importing its electric vehicles, which was rejected by India.

Last month, Tesla CEO Elon Musk said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was pushing the car maker to make a "significant investment" in the country, adding that such an announcement was expected soon.

9 banks register double-digit percentage gains in market value



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 13: Eighteen of India's 20 largest banks saw increases in market capitalization in the second quarter, boosted by a stock rally amid the banking sector's strong recovery, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence data and analysis.

Nine banks reported double-digit percentage gains in market capitalization, led by IDFC First Bank Ltd. with a 44.53% climb to \$6.41 billion. The lender rose to 11th rank from 14.

IDBI Bank Ltd climbed three spots to 8th spot after a 23 per cent expansion to \$7.25 billion, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence data and analysis.

Large Indian banks retained their top spots in the second quarter. HDFC Bank Ltd maintained the top spot with a market capitalization of \$115.93 billion after its merger with Housing Development Finance Corp Ltd July 1.

ICICI Bank Ltd and State Bank of India kept second and third place, respectively, while Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd and Axis Bank Ltd ranked fourth and fifth.

IndusInd Bank Ltd and Bank of Baroda Ltd switched spots at 6th position and 7th spot, S&P Global Market Intelligence data shows.

Central Bank of India dropped to 20th place even after a 20.54 per cent market cap expansion. Indian Overseas Bank fell to 14th spot from 8th position and Canara Bank dropped to 10th rank.

UCO Bank made the list at 17th position after its market cap increased 12.76 per cent.

Just two lenders - Bank of India Ltd and The Federal Bank Ltd - posted market cap declines.

INTRA-DAY PEAKS

D-St shines at new highs

Sensex breaches record 66,000-mark, Nifty scales fresh lifetime high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 13: Benchmark stock indices hit their record high levels in intra-day trade Thursday, with Sensex breaching the historic 66,000-mark for the first time following a rally in global markets amid moderating US inflation data.

Buying in market heavyweight stocks Infosys, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services also helped markets settle in the positive territory.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 670.31 points or 1.02 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day peak of 66,064.21. The barometer settled 164.99 points or 0.25 per cent higher at 65,558.89.

The NSE Nifty went up by 29.45 points or 0.15 per cent to close at 19,413.75.

During the day, it rallied 182.7 points or 0.94 per cent to reach its lifetime high of 19,567.

"Today's domestic rally was supported by the contra bet buying of the IT stocks which was supported by stable margins, new generation business opportunities and increase in pricing power due to moderation in USD, as latest US inflation is fast approaching the Fed's target levels," Vinod Nair, Head of



The broad market was trading positively at all-time high levels in anticipation of buoyant Q1 results and low volatility. However, a mixed start to bank earnings, coupled with ongoing concerns about domestic inflation, attracted bearish sentiment towards the latter half

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Research at Geojit Financial Services said.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Wipro and Bajaj Finance were among the major gainers.

TCS climbed 2.47 per cent a day after announcing its June quarter earnings.

Power Grid, Maruti, NTPC, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever and Nestle were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the

BSE midcap gauge declined by 0.64 per cent and the smallcap index fell by 0.54 per cent.

The rupee strengthened further by 10 paise to close at 82.08 against the US dollar Thursday, marking its fourth straight session of gain following a firm trend in domestic equities and a weak greenback against major crosses overseas.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) emerged as net buyers in the capital markets Thursday as they bought shares worth Rs 2,237.93 crore.

Domestic air traffic soars 42.85% in H1

DOMESTIC AIRLINES REGISTERED AN ANNUAL GROWTH OF 32.92% AND MONTHLY GROWTH OF 18.78% DURING JAN-JUNE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 13: Passengers carried by Indian domestic airlines during January-June 2023 were 760.93 lakh, as against 572.49 lakh during the corresponding period of 2022, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

Earlier June 15, DGCA data said that during January-May 2023, the passengers carried by Indian domestic airlines were 636.07 lakh, as against 467.37 lakh during the corresponding period of 2022.

In the month of May, 132.14 lakh passengers were carried by Indian domestic airlines. They registered an annual growth of 36.10 per cent and monthly growth of 15.24 per cent.

The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines for the month of May 2023 was just 0.44 per cent. It is to note that Go First stopped operations May 3.

During May operations, a total of 556 passenger-related complaints were received by the scheduled domestic airlines. The number of complaints per 10,000 passengers carried for the month of May 2023 was 0.42.

The country's domestic air passenger traffic grew 18.78 per cent to around 1.25 crore in June compared to the year-ago period, according to official data re-

leased Thursday.

In June, IndiGo, Air India, Vistara, AirAsia India and Akasa Air saw an increase in their respective market share amid the grounding of budget carrier Go First. However, SpiceJet's market share continued to decline and fell to 4.4 per cent last month whereas it stood at 7.3 per cent in January this year.

The data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) showed that domestic carriers flew 124.87 lakh people in June compared to 105.12 lakh in the same period a year ago.

IndiGo, which carried around 79 lakh passengers in the previous month, increased its market share to 63.2 per cent from 61.4 per cent in May.

Tata Group airlines - Air India and AirAsia India (now re-branded as AIX Connect) - flew 12.37 lakh and 10.4 lakh passengers, respectively in June. The market share of Air India stood at 9.7 per cent while that of AirAsia India was at 8 per cent, as per the data.

In terms of On Time Performance (OTP) in June, Vistara topped the list at 88.3 per cent, followed by IndiGo and Akasa Air (both at 87.6 per cent). The OTP is calculated for four key airports - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, as per the data.

SHORT TAKES

HDFC onboards over 1L customers

Mumbai: The largest private sector lender HDFC Bank Thursday claimed that it has on-boarded over 1 lakh customers and more than 1.7 lakh merchants on the CBDC pilot programme and activated an interoperable UPI QR code with the e-rupee platform. The Reserve Bank of India last November launched the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) pilot programme, a tokenised digital version of the rupee for wholesale and retail early December. Earlier this week, RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar said the monetary authority is planning to increase the digital rupee transactions to 10 lakh/day by the end of the year from 5,000-10,000 per day now.

Federal Bank Q1 profit rises 39%

Mumbai: Federal Bank Thursday reported 38.77 per cent jump in June quarter consolidated net profit at ₹880.12 crore, and guided towards growing its loan book by up to 18 per cent in FY24. The private sector lender's profit in the year-ago period was ₹634.22 crore, while the same for the preceding March quarter was ₹953.91 crore. On a standalone basis, Federal Bank reported 29 per cent rise in net profit at ₹854 crore. Its core net interest income on consolidated basis increased 19.57 per cent to ₹1,918.59 crore during the quarter on the back of a 21 per cent growth in advances and a 0.07 per cent narrowing in the net interest margin at 3.15 per cent.

Wipro Q1 rises 12%

Bangalore: IT services company Wipro Thursday reported a 12 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to about ₹2,870 crore for the June 2023 quarter. It had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹2,563.6 crore in the year-ago period (Q1FY23). Wipro's income from operations in the June quarter increased 6 per cent to ₹22,831 crore. "We expect revenue from our IT Services business segment to be in the range of \$2,722-2,805 million. This translates to sequential guidance of -2 per cent to +1 per cent in constant currency terms," the company said.

Swiggy to buy LYNK

New Delhi: Food and grocery delivery platform Swiggy Thursday said it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire LYNK Logistics Limited for an undisclosed amount. The deal paves the way for Swiggy's entry into India's massive retail market with a technology-led distribution platform.

IndiGo leads in market share followed by Air India, AirAsia India, Vistara, Akasa Air and SpiceJet in June



PVR Inox cuts snacks' prices after flak

THE COMPANY'S 40% PRICE CUT COMES MORE THAN 10 DAYS AFTER SOCIAL MEDIA USERS COMPLAINED ABOUT THE EXORBITANT PRICES OF ITS FOOD AND BEVERAGES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Leading multiplex chain PVR Inox has slashed food and beverages prices by up to 40 per cent after facing backlash on its rates on social media.

The film exhibitor introduced food combos starting from ₹99 from Monday to Thursday between 9 am and 6 pm, while on weekends it has offered bottomless popcorn with "unlimited refills" and "bottomless Pepsi", the company said.

"Cinephiles who plan to watch films during the weekend can claim bottomless popcorn featuring unlimited tub refills, along with attractively priced Family Meal Combos, bringing down the food & beverages (F&B) spends by as much as 40 per cent," PVR Inox said in a statement.



According to offer details available for its 'Bestseller @ 99', the offer is not applicable for group bookings or special shows, and could be purchased offline only. The combo will also not be available in any of its luxury cinema formats like LUXE/Gold and TLC cinemas as Director's Cut. Earlier, a tub of cheese popcorn

We have been actively listening to consumers' thoughts on our F&B pricing strategy and have, therefore, curated cost-effective F&B deals that will appeal to moviegoers and address their concerns

SANJEEV KUMAR BIJLI | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PVR INOX

was available at PVR Inox for ₹450, while 600-ml soft drinks would cost ₹360.

It started with a tweet from a handle @tridipkmandal, "₹460 for 55gm of cheese popcorn, ₹360 for 600ml of Pepsi. Total ₹820 at @_PVRcinemas Noida. That's almost equal to an annual subscription to @PrimeVideoIN. No wonder people don't go to cinema anymore. Movie watching with the family has just become unaffordable."

INVESTORS SEEK HIGHER RETURNS

Weak demand for SBI perpetual bonds

The country's biggest lender received bids worth ₹59.20bn, with the highest bid at 8.42%

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 13: India's largest lender State Bank of India raised only the base amount in its first perpetual bond issue for fiscal 2024 as investors sought higher returns than the bank was willing to offer, merchant bankers said. SBI raised ₹31.01 billion via the Basel III-compliant Tier-

1 bond issue at a coupon of 8.10%. The issue had a base size of ₹30 billion, with the option to retain another ₹70 billion.

It received bids worth ₹59.20 billion, with the highest bid at 8.42%, according to bankers.

"The investors expected a higher coupon than the secondary market trading levels and the cutoff was very low com-



pared to the market's comfort," said Venkatarishnan Srinivasan, founder and managing partner of debt advisory firm Rockfort Fincap.

Questions around the viabil-

ity and pricing of perpetual bonds resurfaced after similar securities were written off as part of the rescue of Credit Suisse in March.

However, bankers attributed the weak demand for SBI's issue to the bonds' 10-year call option instead of the more common five years.

Investors also demanded a better coupon as the supply of bonds from the federal and state governments is scheduled to rise in the current quarter.

'Foxconn backing out of chip JV credit negative for Vedanta'

REUTERS

Chennai, July 13: A decision by Taiwan's Foxconn to withdraw from a \$19.5 billion semiconductor joint venture with Vedanta is a "credit negative" for the Indian conglomerate's UK parent Vedanta Resources, debt research firm CreditSights said Thursday.

Earlier this week, Foxconn said it had withdrawn from the JV, dumping a deal they had signed last year to set up semiconductor and display production plants in India. Vedanta Wednesday said it would still enter the space this year having lined up partners.

CreditSights had previously expected a "minimal credit impact" on Vedanta Resources based on the old arrangement, as Volcan, Vedanta's holding entity was undertaking the semiconductor investments. "Since the semiconductor ven-



ture will be now parked directly under Vedanta, we see a higher probability that a good portion of the project funding will come from Vedanta," CreditSights, part of the Fitch Group, wrote in a note.

CreditSights also expects further strain on credit metrics and free cash flows for both Vedanta Resources and India's Vedanta with Foxconn's exit also resulting in a loss of a partner to split manufacturing costs

CreditSights maintained its "buy" rating on Vedanta Resources' bonds saying its refinancing outlook for some debt maturities have improved, helped by \$1.3 billion of fresh loan fundraisings.

ROHIT, JAISWAL KEEP CALM

A SLOW MORNING SESSION SEES INDIA OPENERS TOIL HARD FOR EVERY RUN AS THEY REACH 146 FOR NO LOSS AT LUNCH ON DAY 2 OF 1ST TEST AGAINST WEST INDIES



At the time of going to the press, India were 240/2, having a lead of 90 runs. Yashasvi Jaiswal was batting on 114, his maiden Test century on debut, with Virat Kohli (0 batting). The two wickets to fall were Rohit Sharma (103) and Shubman Gill (6). Jaiswal and Rohit put on 229 runs for the opening wicket.

In ICC Test bowlers' ranking to decimate the hosts for a lowly 150 in 64.3 overs with Ravindra Jadeja (3/26) beautifully complementing him to make life miserable for the home team batters.

With more than an hour available for batting skipper Rohit and debutant Jaiswal added 80 runs for the opening stand to bring down first innings deficit to 70 going into second day.

But the opening day's honours went to Ashwin, whose unmatchable artistry was too much to handle for an under-cooked batting line-up.

Making full use of the slow two-paced track that also offered turn and bounce, Ashwin had reasons to be chuffed as he became third Indian bowler after Anil Kumble (956 wickets) and Harbhajan Singh (711) to complete 700 scalps across formats in international cricket.

He also achieved the distinction of being first Indian bowler to dismiss father and son when he got rid of Shivnarine Chanderpaul's son Tagenarine, having dismissed the father on his Test debut in 2011.

Save debutant left-hander Alick Athanaze (47 off 99), who batted responsibly till his dismissal, none of the Caribbean batters had the technique to survive on a slow turner as none of them could even cross 20-run mark.

Earlier, nursing a bruised ego after WTC final snub last month, Ravichandran Ashwin made the best possible comeback as his 33rd five-wicket haul (5/60) put India in the driver's seat against a below-par West Indies on the first day, Wednesday.

at the top on debut. It was a pull shot off Alzarri Joseph (0/42 in 8 overs), whose bowling lacked sting during that first session.

The old Dukes ball also didn't offer much reverse swing and Rohit's flick off Joseph to get a six over mid-wicket was the best shot of the morning. He also rocked on back-foot and hit a square cut off Jomel Warrican and punched his full-toss through the covers after a quiet first hour.

With so much time left in the match, the Indians are rightly aiming to bat West Indies out of the game as it will get very difficult to bat in the third innings on a worn out track.

Earlier, nursing a bruised ego after WTC final snub last month, Ravichandran Ashwin made the best possible comeback as his 33rd five-wicket haul (5/60) put India in the driver's seat against a below-par West Indies on the first day, Wednesday.

Ashwin justified his top billing

MATCH SCHEDULE

1st Test (Day 3)

Time: 7:30 pm

Telecast

DD Sports

Live stream

Jio Cinema & FanCode

Roseau (Dominica), July 13: Debutant opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (62 batting, 167b, 7x4) displayed perfect composure and admirable temperament with a well-compiled half century as Indian openers were in control, taking the score to for 146 for no loss at lunch on the second day of the opening Test against the West Indies here Thursday.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (68 batting, 163b, 6x4, 2x6) also curbed his natural stroke-making instinct for the better part to reach his 15th half century in Test cricket as India are only four runs short of West Indies' first innings score of 150.

The Windsor Park pitch got even slower on the day with most of the deliveries stopping and coming onto the bat. Only 66 runs were scored during the session as Indian batters didn't take any undue risks and batted in an un-

hurried manner against an insipid Caribbean attack that didn't score much on potency quotient.

The two spinners - offie Rahkeem Cornwall (0/22 in 11 overs) and left-arm orthodox Jomel Warrican (0/34 in 14 overs) bowled tight lines but didn't bowl too many wicket-taking deliveries. The lack of pace off the track also made it easier for Indian openers to defend.

Jaiswal, who started the day on 40, struck his first boundary on Friday that got him to his half century, which was also a vindication of the team management's decision to promote him

Batters flop again as India women go down



Bangladesh players celebrate after getting the wicket of Smriti Mandhana as the Indian opener looks at the pitch haplessly, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRIEF SCORES

India Women 102/9
(Harmanpreet Kaur 40, Jemimah Rodrigues 28; Rabeya Khan 3/16, Sultana Khatun 2/17) lost to **Bangladesh Women 103/6**
(Shamima Sultana 42; Devika Vaidya 2/16, Minnu Mani 2/28) by 4 wickets.

Mirpur, July 13: Indian batters' struggles against spin bowling continued as Bangladesh held their nerve to pull off a four-wicket consolation win in the third and final women's T20I here Thursday.

India produced another underwhelming batting performance to end up with 102/9 after opting to bat. It seemed Bangladesh, who could not chase 96 in the previous game, had taken the self destructing route again but managed to cross the line in 18.1 overs. Opener Shamima Sultana (42 off 46) held the innings together for Bangladesh.

India sealed the series 2-1 but their performance left a lot to be desired. The three-match ODI series between the two teams will begin here July 16.

Batting on spin friendly wickets was the biggest let down as the batters lacked the firepower to put pressure on the slow bowlers. Barring skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, none of the batters could clear the fence in the three games.

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur struck a solid 40 off 41 balls before a batting collapse in the death overs saw India lose their last six wickets for 11 runs. Leggie Rabeya Khan was the

standout bowler for Bangladesh with three wickets for 16 runs in four overs. Off-spinner Sultana Khatun was impressive in the powerplay, removing the star opening duo of Shafali Verma (11) and Smriti Mandhana (1).

The surface has proved to be 'tricky' throughout the low-scoring series and considering that, Harmanpreet opted to bat first. Shafali and Mandhana once again failed to provide a good start to leave India at 27/2 in six overs.

Mandhana got herself into an awkward position while trying to work one towards the leg side and ended up getting a leading edge with Bangladesh captain and keeper Nigar Sultana doing the rest. Shafali was caught at long on, failing to clear the fence.

Jemimah Rodrigues (28 off 26) and Harmanpreet stitched a 45-run stand to take the innings forward before the former was stumped off leg-spinner Shorna Akter.

Women wrestlers write to PM, IOA, SAI demanding fair Asian Games trials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Several women wrestlers, including medal winners from Commonwealth Games and Asian Championship, Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the ad-hoc panel running the WFI, requesting "fair trials" for Asian Games amidst reports that the six protesting grapplers may be given exemption.

The 24 women wrestlers from Sir Chhotu Ram Akhda in Rohtak, who also wrote to SAI Director General Sandeep Pradhan, have conveyed that they won't accept two-stage trial or any other relaxation given to the protesting grapplers.

The IOA-appointed ad-hoc panel has announced that Asian Games trials will be held July 22-23 but did not reveal the criteria. The wrestlers are even preparing to hit the roads for a fresh protest and approach the judiciary if any discriminatory decision is taken by the IOA ad-hoc committee.

Panel head Bhupender Singh Bajwa had June 16 conveyed to the six protesting wrestlers - Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, Sangeeta Phogat, Satyawart Kadian and Jirender Kinha - that they will have to compete in just one final bout against the winners of the initial trials.

According to sources, the ad-hoc panel is deliberating over a criteria which will exempt current Olympic and World Championship medallists from the trials, which will benefit Bajrang, Vinesh and Ravi Dahiya. The IOA has to submit the names of the participating wrestlers by July 23.

"Even if only three Olympians were to be given concessions, this would be wrong to the youngsters," the wrestlers said in the letter that was also marked to Home Minister Amit Shah and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur.

ASIAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS Yarraji 1st Indian to bag eves' 100m hurdles gold



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, July 13: India bagged three gold and two bronze medals on the second day of the Asian Athletics Championships with Jyothi Yarraji becoming the first from the country to secure top podium finish in women's 100m hurdles in the continental showcase here Thursday.

The 23-year-old Yarraji opened India's gold medal account in the championships as she clinched her maiden yellow metal in a major international event.

Ajay Kumar Saroj ran a brilliant tactical race to win the men's 1500m gold before Commonwealth Games silver medallist Abdulla Aboobacker added a yellow metal for the country by clinching the men's triple jump event. It was an impressive show by the Indians as they won three gold medals out of 10 on offer Thursday.

Quartermiler Aishwarya Mishra (53.07 seconds) and Tajaswin Shankar were the other medal winning Indians on the day, with a bronze in women's 400m final and gruelling men's decathlon.

In fact, it was the maiden international medal for both Aishwarya and Tajaswin in the senior level in their respective events, competing in their maiden international event. Tajaswin had won a high jump bronze in the 2022 Commonwealth Games but had taken up to decathlon last year

only. It was a close 100m hurdles for Yarraji as she clocked 13.09 seconds ahead of two Japanese runners Terada Asuka (13.13s) and Aoki Masumi (13.26s) on a rain-drenched track at the Supachalasai Stadium. The event had long been dominated by the Japanese and Chinese in the championships.

Yarraji's national record stands at 12.82 seconds. She had won gold in the National Inter-State Championships last month in 12.92 seconds but the wet track, after rain lashed the stadium, was not ideal for a fast time.

In the men's 1500m, the 26-year-old Saroj ran a brilliantly executed race as he came out of nowhere in the final bend to go past two opponents and win the gold. He clocked 3:41.51 seconds, two and half seconds outside his personal best of 3:39.19 which he had recorded last month in an event in USA.

It was the third medal on the trot and second gold for Saroj, who had trained in the USA in May, in the Asian Athletics Championships. He had won gold in the 2017 edition in Bhubaneswar and silver in 2019 in Doha.

For Aboobacker, it was his season's best effort of 16.92m that fetched him the gold, ahead of Ikehata Hikaru (16.73m) of Japan and Jangwoo Kim (16.59m) of Korea. The 27-year-old began with a foul but cleared 16.92m in his fourth attempt for the gold.

Vondrousova ends Svitolina run

Czech's bid to become 1st unseeded woman to claim Venus Rosewater Dish continues

REUTERS

London, July 13: Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova showed there was no room for any gushing sentiment as she ended the remarkable run of new mum Elina Svitolina with a 6-3, 6-3 victory to reach the Wimbledon final for the first time Thursday.

In the run-up to a first All England Club women's semifinal featuring two unseeded players, Vondrousova said the Ukrainian was "incredible", "amazing", "a fighter" and "a superwoman" for reaching the last four of a Grand Slam nine months after giving birth to daughter Skai.

But that did not stop Vondrousova ending Svitolina's dreams and she now stands one win away from completing her own phenomenal comeback story after two wrist surgeries following her runner-up finish at the French Open in 2019.

"I cannot believe it. I am very happy that I made the final. Elina is such a fighter and a great person. It was a tough match. I am very happy," said Vondrousova.

She will be bidding to become the first unseeded woman to lift the Venus Rosewater Dish when she faces Tunisian sixth seed Ons Jabeur in Saturday's final.

The 24-year-old had fallen so far off the tennis radar that she has been playing at this year's championships without a clothing sponsor.

SCHEDULE
WIMBLEDON MEN'S SEMIFINALS
Novak Djokovic vs Jannik Sinner
Time: 6 pm
Carlos Alcaraz vs Daniil Medvedev
Time: 10:40 pm
Telecast: Star Sports channels

Svitolina had become a firm crowd favourite at Wimbledon after she produced a fearless brand of tennis to send four Grand Slam champions spinning out of this year's tournament.

But Thursday, no matter how much the crowd tried to lift the Ukrainian wild card with cries of "We love you Elina", Svitolina appeared to be weighed down with the expectation of giving her war-ravaged country "a little bit of happiness" and froze on the biggest stage in tennis.



EQUAL PRIZE MONEY FOR MEN, EVES AT ICC'S GLOBAL EVENTS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durban, July 13: The ICC Thursday announced equal prize money for men's and women's teams at its global events in a bid to bring in pay parity, ushering in a new era in world cricket. In the last 50 over men's World Cup, champions England got USD 4

million and runners-up New Zealand received USD 2 million. "The International Cricket Council (ICC) today announced equal prize money for men's and women's teams at ICC events. The decision was taken at the ICC Annual Conference in Durban, South Africa and ensures the ICC Board fulfilled its commitment to reaching prize money equity by 2030 well ahead of schedule," the ICC said in a statement.

"Teams will now receive equal prize money for the equivalent finishing position at comparable events as well as the same amount for winning a match at those events," it further stated.

Izagirre wins Tour de France Stage 12

REUTERS

Belleville en Beaujolais (France), July 13: Ion Izagirre gave his Cofidis team, and Spain, their second victory in this year's Tour de France when he won the 12th stage after a late, brutal attack Thursday.

The Basque rider went solo in the last short climb of the day, 30km from the finish, and never looked back to claim a second career Tour stage win.

Izagirre, who won the 20th stage of the Tour in 2016 in Morzine, is the second Spanish rider to win this year after Pello Bilbao Tuesday and the second for the Cofidis team after Victor Lafay in the second stage. Spain had not won a Tour stage since 2018 and French



outfit Cofidis had started the race without a victory since 2008.

Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard of Denmark retained the overall leader's yellow jersey and leads Slovenian Tadej

Pogacar by 17 seconds and Australian Jai Hindley by 2:40. France's Thibaut Pinot, who featured in the day's breakaway, moved up from 15th to 10th overall, now 6:33 off the pace.