



SARA MANTRA

Actor Sara Ali Khan opens up about how she deals with adulation and hate on social media

LEISURE P2



US WARSHIP IN OZ

The United States commissions a warship in Sydney, the first time a US Navy vessel joins active service at a foreign port

INTERNATIONAL P10



SENSATIONAL VICTORY

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stun World No.2 Chinese pair of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang to enter Korea Open final

SPORTS P12

Sepoy on Srimandir duty suspended over bribery for 'darshan'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, July 22: At a time when devotees are only allowed to enter Srimandir through Singhadwar, the eastern gate, a sepoy of Indian Reserve Battalion-3, Koraput was suspended Saturday for receiving bribe from a devotee to facilitate darshan of deities at the Srimandir here.

The sepoy, identified as Subhashish Das, was suspended by Puri Superintendent of Police Kanwar Vishal Singh for dereliction of duty.

According to sources, Das, who was deployed at the western gate of the 12th century shrine, was seen receiving money from a devotee. The devotee, after having darshan, was seen handing over cash to Das at the western gate, the video of which has gone viral.

Meanwhile, questions are being raised on the policy of the temple administration as entry is restricted to Singhadwar only.

Additional SP Sushil Kumar Mishra has directed Srimandir security officer Koushik Nayak to conduct a detailed probe into the incident and submit a report.

With the demand for reopening of all 'Dwaras' (gates) of Puri Srimandir gaining momentum, the incident has evoked sharp reactions among the devotees and servants.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Great news! Govt has declared us out of poverty!!

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.9°C	33.2°C
TEMP MIN	26.6°C	27.0°C
Humidity	84%	84%
Rainfall	4.7mm	3mm
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

World's biggest permafrost crater thaws

While it may attract tourists, the slump's expansion is a sign of danger, according to researchers

REUTERS

Batagai (Russia), July 22: Stunning drone footage has revealed details of the Batagaika crater, a kilometre-long gash in Russia's Far East that forms the world's biggest permafrost crater.

In the video two explorers clamber across uneven terrain at the base of the depression, marked by irregular surfaces and small hummocks, which began to form after the surrounding forest was cleared in the 1960s and the permafrost underground began to melt, causing the land to sink.

"We locals call it the cave-in," local resident and crater

Scientists say Russia is warming at least 2.5 times faster than the rest of the world melting the long-frozen tundra that covers about 65% of the country's landmass



explorer Erel Struchkov told Reuters as he stood on the crater's rim. It developed in the 1970s, first as a ravine. Then by thawing in the heat of sunny days, it started to

Thawing permafrost has already threatened cities and towns across northern and northeastern Russia, buckling roadways, splitting apart houses, and disrupting pipelines

expand. Scientists say Russia is warming at least 2.5 times faster than the rest of the world, melting the long-frozen tundra that covers about 65 per cent of the coun-

try's landmass and releasing greenhouse gases stored in the thawed soil.

The gateway to the underworld, as some locals in Russia's Sakha Republic also call it, has a scientific name -- a mega-slump. And while it may attract tourists, the slump's expansion is a sign of danger, said Nikita Tananayev, lead researcher at the Melnikov Permafrost Institute in Yakutsk.

"In future, with increasing temperatures and with higher anthropogenic pressure, we will see more and more of those mega-slumps forming, until all the permafrost is gone," Tananayev told Reuters.

Now, CBSE pupils can learn in Odia

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: In a major step taken in accordance with New Education Policy (NEP)-2020, the CBSE through a circular dated July 21 has allowed its affiliated schools to use their mother tongue language as an optional medium of instruction from pre-primary to Class XII in addition to other existing options.

Schools may explore the available resources, consult with experts in the field, and collaborate with other schools to share best practices to make multilingual education in CBSE schools a reality, the board said adding that the NCERT has taken this serious task on highest priority so that textbooks in 22 scheduled languages can be made available to all students from next session.

Notably, there are approximately 300 CBSE-affiliated schools across the state. Among those are the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalayas (OAVs), Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs).

Concerns were raised over the challenges posed by the implementation of multilingual edu-

'Will enhance critical thinking of students'

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday said the decision of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to use mother tongue as an optional medium of teaching up to Class XII will enhance critical thinking of the students. Citing an example, he said, "In Odisha, the CBSE school students can learn subjects like mathematics and environmental science in Odia language. Learning through Odia language will be an optional for the students in addition to Hindi or English." The main objective of the move is that the students learn the subjects properly without any doubt and language should not be a barrier in learning, Pradhan said.

education and utilisation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction which include availability of skilled teachers capable of teaching multilingual subjects, the creation of high-quality multilingual textbooks and time limitation, especially in two-shift government schools. According to some CBSE-affiliated schools' authorities, the move, despite seeming problematic initially,

will help the students to a great extent in the long run, especially those kids who face difficulty while being taught in English or Hindi medium.

Principal Kasturi Khadanga of Dream India School in Cuttack's Netaji Nagar said, "The move is in line with the NEP-2020 objective of giving regional languages a boost. This will not be very difficult as teachers in the schools are able to deliver classes in both English and Odia. However, children who want to be taught in Odia must make it clear during admission process.

Ipsita Das, principal of DAV Public School at Unit-8 in Bhubaneswar said that not all students are bound to choose Odia as their medium of learning. Only those who want to take classes in Odia will be given the chance to study in their mother tongue. However, there is a need of discussion with the parents before implementing this move, she added. Odisha Parents' Association was of the opinion that the decision is easier said than done. However, it may also prove to be a boon for the children who are weak in English. P3

SHORT TAKES

Survey for error-free electoral roll begins

Bhubaneswar: A month-long survey in order to prepare an error-free electoral roll ahead of the General Election next year started across Odisha. State Chief Electoral Officer NB Dhal said the survey which started from July 21 will continue till August 21 next month all over Odisha covering all 30 districts and 147 Assembly constituencies. Over 37,606 Booth Level Observers (BLO) will conduct door-to-door surveys for a month. The main purpose of the survey is to enlist eligible voters and remove errors from the Electoral Rolls, he said.

Russian strikes kill at least 8 civilians

Kyiv: Russian attacks on 11 regions across Ukraine overnight killed at least eight civilians and wounded others, authorities said Saturday, as fierce fighting continues in Ukraine's attempts to dislodge Russian forces from territory they have occupied. The regional prosecutor's office in the eastern Donetsk region said that at least four people, including a married couple, were killed as Russian forces Friday night shelled the settlement of Niu-York. Also Saturday morning, Ukraine's interior ministry said that two civilians died as Russian forces Friday struck Kostiantynivka, a city in the Donetsk region, from multiple rocket launchers.

MANIPUR SHAME

Oppn MPs to press for PM's statement

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: Amid the stalemate in Parliament over holding a debate on Manipur violence, MPs of various opposition parties have planned a protest Monday near Mahatma Gandhi's statue in the Parliament complex to press for the prime minister's statement on the issue in both houses.

Sources said leaders of various opposition parties who have now formed the INDIA alliance will meet in the chamber of Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and will discuss their further strategy in Parliament.

After the meeting at 10am Monday, July 24, the leaders will hold a protest near the Gandhi statue before entering both houses.

The government has agreed to hold a short-duration discussion on the Manipur issue with the Home Minister replying to it, but the opposition is adamant on its demand for the prime minister's statement first, especially after a video of two women being paraded naked and assaulted in a Manipur village appeared on social media.

Also, the opposition wants a debate allowing all parties to speak without any time restrictions and has been holding protests on the issue since the Monsoon

2 MORE APPREHENDED

Imphal: Two persons, including a juvenile, were apprehended by Manipur Police Saturday in connection with the May 4 parading of two women naked in Kangpokpi district of the state. Till now, six persons, including one who was seen in a viral video dragging one of the women at B. Phainom village, have been nabbed. Police said all-out efforts are being made to arrest the remaining culprits by conducting raids at many suspected hideouts. They also added that strict security measures have been taken in all vulnerable locations of the state, which has been on the boil since May 3. Earlier in the day, a 19-year-old man was arrested.

Session started on Thursday.

The government has accused the opposition of running away from a debate on the all-important issue and has questioned their seriousness towards it.

Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have failed to transact any business amid the stalemate between the opposition and the government over the Manipur issue.

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MARGOT ROBBIE WANTS FANS TO FORM AN OPINION ON BARBIE

Hollywood star Margot Robbie has revealed her specific ambition for her latest release *Barbie*. She says people should form an opinion on *Barbie* even if they don't like the movie.

SHAKIRA FACING FRESH TAX FRAUD PROBE

After moving to Miami, Shakira is facing a new investigation for alleged tax fraud in addition to other charges in Spain that may end in her being sent to prison for eight years and fined \$27 million. Shakira has denied any wrongdoing and claims she owes nothing to the Spanish tax office.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

For no reason whatsoever, you may clam up today. Of course, you will give credit to others wherever they've contributed. But you need to be more generous than that, says Ganesh. And share the secrets of your success with your compatriots. Also, do you really need to buy that \$100 wallet?

TAURUS

This is a bright, rosy day for students and scholars, particularly who are engaged in, or are looking forward to higher studies, specializing in a particular professional stream. This is a great day for making plans for higher studies abroad. Do not miss this opportunity. Plans made today are likely to materialize.

GEMINI

It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesh. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero, today. Pleasure is the key word for you.

CANCER

A shopping spree with your darling is likely to be the highlight of the day, even though you will be paying for almost everything. Though you have decided to be this lavish out of sheer love, your sweetheart will more than return the favour with a sweaty thank you 'return gift' in the evening.

LEO

Seems today is just one of those days when things simply refuse to go your way. It happens to the best of us, says Ganesh, and there isn't much one can do about it except slog it out and find that hidden reserve of moral support. On a brighter note, Ganesh observes the possibility of you meeting the right person who shall help you rekindle your imagination.

VIRGO

Today is the right time to start a new project, while older projects which had been postponed will be finished. Over the next week you will try to boost your energy levels. Parties will lead to a lot of entertainment and joy, Ganesh says children will bring home pride which will put you in even higher spirits.

LIBRA

The clock ticks on, but chances are it can hardly beat you in the race, thanks to your prompt and sincere efforts. Today, you shall be a paragon of excellence. However, Ganesh waves the red flag of caution; it always pays to be safe rather than sorry. Keep your eyes open and pay attention to the fine print before signing any contract or paper.

SCORPIO

Add a pinch of innovation and inventiveness to your daily working style. There shall be order in the chaotic way you perform your tasks - though not apparent to others. Revitalise yourself and plunge into work with new-found zest and vigour, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, find yourself driving all your thoughts and actions towards your family. You will also spend some superb time with your dearie and discuss intimate matters. A relaxing day today as you spend time with your friends and family, chilling out and having a good laugh or two.

CAPRICORN

Now is the perfect time to showcase your talents and skills. You are all geared up to hit your target and do everything that is needed to be done. Your efforts will not go in vain as they will bear fruits for sure, says Ganesh. You will spend quality time with your family member and catch with old friends.

AQUARIUS

It's a day you may want to spend with yourself. But it may still not bring the desired peace and tranquility. An unpleasant situation may force you to deal with reality, says Ganesh. You now realise how much strength you derive from your devotion to God.

PISCES

Of late, the harder you try, the more it seems you have to do. You are likely to put your foot down today and spend some time taking care of yourself and playing truant with your responsibilities. Recharge your batteries fully while you are at it, says Ganesh.

Ash gets trolled for her airport look

Mumbai: One of the most beautiful actresses, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's recent airport look has left fans disappointed, calling her fashion sense a 'disaster'. The *Jodha Akbar* actress was recently snapped at the Mumbai international airport with her actor husband Abhishek Bachchan and their daughter

Aaradhya, in the wee hours of Saturday. The Bachchan family seemed to have returned from a vacation, and they were all smiles for the cameras.

The former Miss World was seen wearing an all black outfit, paired with a red watch. Her hair had golden streaks, and she kept her tresses open. With her signature red lips, she flaunted her smile.

However, her look didn't go well with the netizens and they said that her dressing sense has 'deteriorated after marriage'.

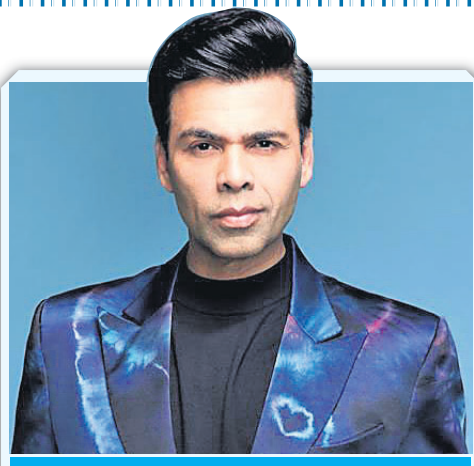
They wrote: "Aishwarya's dressing sense has gone complete disaster over the years (sic)."

A second wrote: "I love aishwarya but I don't know what's up with her sense of style."

"Nothing is permanent except her hairstyle," commented another.

One Internet user even went to demand 'justice' for her saying: "Abhishek wants to destroy Aishwarya's career. That's why he allows her to wear only black tent. We want justice for Aishwarya."

One more user wrote: "I don't know but somehow it seems as if Aishwarya is sad deep inside. Her style deteriorated after marriage. Always oversized black robe style." AGENCIES



KJo defends 'grey' shades in content

Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar, who has enjoyed immense success in cinema and OTT alike, believes that content is powerful these days and there is nothing wrong living in the grey.

Karan along with Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh, the lead pair of his upcoming film *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, was interacting with students and mediapersons at an event as part of the 'India's International Movement to Unite Nations (IIMUN) Back To School' series.

"I do believe that the content today is definitely broadening the human spectrum of relationships and pushing the envelope, by not sugar-coating it or doing puff pieces of love and romance. We are showing the grey areas, and you have to know, especially as students, that life is way beyond black or white," said the Kuch Kuch Hota Hai director.

"Walking the path of grey every day, it is not a bad thing, because grey is the actual representation of your vulnerable side, of your true side. And I think whether it's OTT platforms or new-age cinema, all of them expose the vulnerabilities of human beings and that is the strength of our content today," he added.

Also starring Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi, *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* is slated to hit the theatres July 28. IANS

SARA WANTS TO STAY UNFILTERED

Mumbai: Sara Ali Khan is known for being friendly with the paparazzi. The actress recently also opened up about being outspoken in nature.

In an interview with an entertainment portal, the *Simmba* actress said, "Honestly, I don't know whether it's good or bad. A lot of people have told me that I should have a filter. But there are some things that you can't change, you know. I work so hard and so sincerely on all my characters that when I get to be Sara, I just want to be unabashed, unfiltered Sara."

When asked about how she deals with adulation and hate on social media, the actress added, "I hear everything, but listen to only what's constructive, if people don't like my work that's a problem. So any inputs

regarding my work I listen to, but comments made on my personal life and beliefs are always ignored by me."

On the work front, Sara will be seen in *Ae Watan Mere Watan* and Anurag Basu's *Metro...In Dino*. The actress also has Homi Adajania's *Murder Mubarak*.

Sara's last theatrical release was *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke* by Laxman Utekar. The actress romanced Vicky Kaushal for the first time on the big screen. AGENCIES



Rekha's in a live-in relationship!

Mumbai: The enigmatic veteran actress, Rekha, has always been shrouded in mystery, leaving fans and the media curious about her personal life. Be it her equation with actor Amitabh Bachchan, wearing Sindoor; her late husband's death, other aspects of Rekha's personal life have always been the subject of much debate over the years.

Now, as per revelations from the biography *Rekha: The Untold Story*, it came to light that the Silsila actress shares a live-in relationship with her secretary.

Reportedly, nobody other than the secretary is allowed to enter Rekha's bedroom. Written by Yaseer Usman, the book mentions, "Farzana is a perfect partner for Rekha. She is her consultant, her friend, and her supporter, and Rekha simply can't live without her."

Yaseer further adds, "In fact, only Rekha's trusted secretary Farzana — who some have claimed is her lover



— is permitted inside her bedroom; not even domestic help are allowed entry." AGENCIES

a lot around the actress' household.

The excerpt also mentions, "Farzana controls and tightly monitors the comings and goings in Rekha's life and household. She is a formidable gatekeeper and is said to vet each phone call and choreograph practically every minute of Rekha's life. Rekha has clothed herself in mystique and secrecy - and it is Farzana who makes it possible for her to have such a hermetic existence."

Rekha was married to the Delhi-based industrialist Mukesh Agarwal who committed suicide when Rekha was away in London. Although his suicide note claimed that no one should be held responsible for his death, the biography mentioned that the primary reason for Mukesh taking away his life was Farzana.

FUN post

PEANUTS



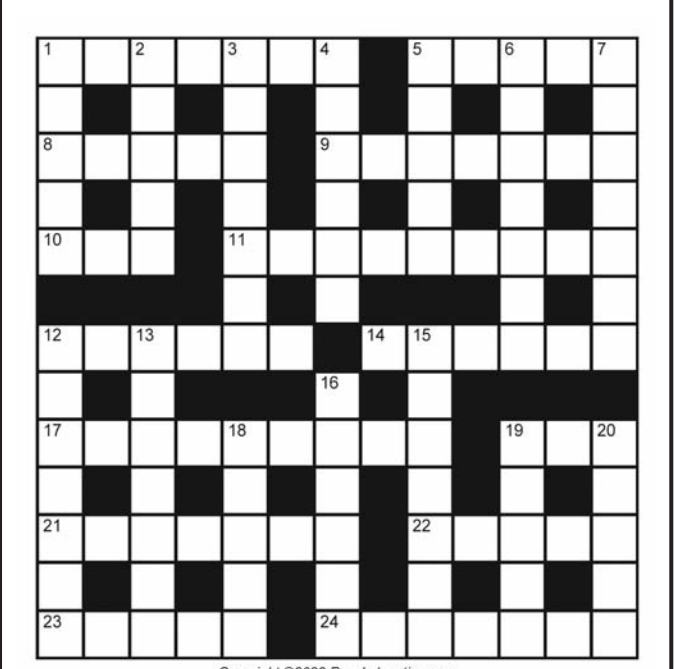
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



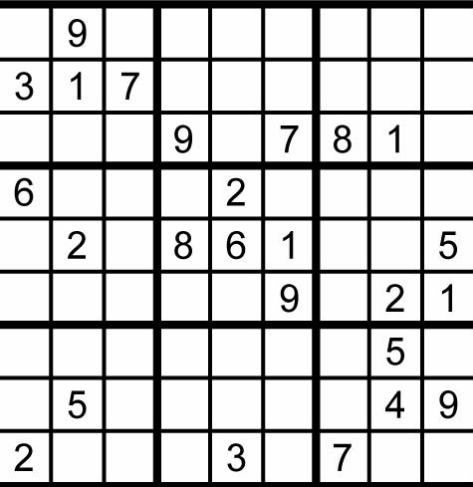
CROSSWORD



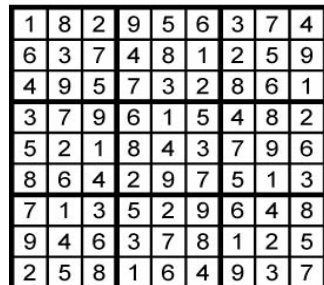
- Across**
- 1 Dessert dish
 - 5 Pago Pago locale
 - 8 Scimitar
 - 9 Inert medication
 - 10 Arles assent
 - 11 Contact sport (3,6)
 - 12 Saunters
 - 14 Unnerve
 - 17 Baked potato topping (4,5)
 - 19 Stage hog
 - 21 Compel
 - 22 Talking bird of poetry
 - 23 Flower girl, sometimes
 - 24 Nipper
 - 5 British military hat
 - 6 Four-toed African viverrine
 - 7 Altar boy
 - 12 Election loser (4-3)
 - 13 Curt
 - 15 Popular
 - 16 Veto
 - 18 Upbraid
 - 19 Shanty
 - 20 Underground worker
- Down**
- 1 Basil-based sauce
 - 2 Persian Gulf emirate
 - 3 Enumerate; list
 - 4 Pouched rat

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Congress Executive Committee meeting was held at a City hotel, Saturday, to discuss the party's strategy for 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections



downtown



ODISSI TREAT: Artistes gave a scintillating Odissi dance performance during 4th 'Samarpan Samaroh' of 'Nrutyalaya & Nrutyanakita' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday
PIC: MANORANJAN MISHRA

Revenue collection nosedives by 2.39%

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The state government's own revenue collection till June 30 of financial year (FY) 2023-24 has dipped by 2.39 per cent as compared to the revenue collected during the same period of the last fiscal.

According to official sources, the state government has generated ₹22,780.70 crore revenue during the first quarter of the current fiscal. The revenue generation has come down due to a contraction in mining royalty collection.

The own non-tax revenue collection has witnessed a contraction of 18 per cent during the first quarter of this year as compared to the previous year. The sources also said that total own non-tax revenue collection stood at ₹10,658.55 crore till June 2023 as against ₹13,040.65 crore during the corresponding period of the previous year. This contraction is primarily because of a shortfall in mining revenue, the sources said.

Mining revenue has decreased by 15.33 per cent during the first three months of FY 2023-24.

However, total own tax revenue of the state government has registered a growth of 17.73 per cent upto June of the current financial year as against the same period of last fiscal.

The state has collected ₹12,122.12 crore own tax revenue during April to June of 2023-24 against the collection of ₹10,296.90



Mining revenue has decreased by 15.33 per cent during the first three months of FY 2023-24

crore during April to June of 2022-23. The own tax revenue witnessed a significant growth on account of good performance in goods and service tax (GST) collection and electricity duty.

The state has collected ₹5,625.45 crore GST upto June 2023 as against ₹4,350 crore during the same period last year – a growth of 29.30 per cent. Similarly, taxes and duties on electricity witnessed a significant growth of 52.58 per cent during the first quarter. The collection from this source has increased to ₹1,345.45 crore (upto June 2023) from ₹881.82 crore (upto June 2022).

period of the previous year. Moreover, the share in Central taxes increased by 65.7 per cent and grants from the Centre increased by 20.8 per cent till June 2023 as compared to the same period last year.

On the other hand, total expenditure as percentage of budget provision stands at 14.63 per cent as compared to 12.29 per cent during the same period last year.

Utilisation of allocated expenditure in agriculture and allied sector is 16.90 per cent as compared to 16.05 per cent previous year while infrastructure spending has risen to 15.88 per cent from 9.26 per cent in previous year. Utilisation of the allocated expenditure in social sector is 15.92 per cent as compared to 14.33 per cent last year.

NAVEEN REPLACES BASU AS 2ND LONGEST-SERVING CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Odisha's Naveen Patnaik Saturday became the second longest-serving Chief Minister in the country, replacing West Bengal's Jyoti Basu.

Former Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling still holds the record of being the longest-serving Chief Minister in the country. He was the Chief

Minister of the Himalayan state from December 12, 1994 till May 27, 2019 – more than 24 years.

Patnaik, the five-time Chief Minister of Odisha, took charge March 5, 2000, and holds the post for 23 years and 138 days.

Basu served as the Chief Minister of West Bengal from June 21, 1977 to November 5, 2000, which was 23 years and 137 days. Patnaik is also the third leader after Chamling and Basu

to become the Chief Minister of a state for five consecutive times. If the ruling BJD wins the 2024 elections, Patnaik will be the longest-serving Chief Minister in India.

BJD vice president Prasanna Acharya said, "We are happy that our Chief Minister has crossed the record of West Bengal's former CM Jyoti Basu. I am sure that Patnaik will break all the records of the past, and

will emerge as the longest-serving CM."

Congress leader Santosh Singh Saluja said, "We congratulate Naveen Patnaik for becoming the second-longest-serving CM, but we are pained that Patnaik is not doing anything during his term."

Senior BJP leader Suresh Pujari said history will not remember how long one serves as the Chief Minister; but how one creates history within a short span of time.

Man arrested with deer, leopard hides

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Special Task Force (STF) of Crime Branch has arrested one wildlife criminal and seized three leopard hides, as many deer skins, and other incriminating materials from his possession during a raid near Madanpur Rampur in Kalahandi district here, police said Saturday.

The accused has been identified as Khageswar Puteel, 56, of Gunangbeda area under M Rampur police limits.

Following a tip-off, the STF sleuths with the help of local police carried out raided Sripali Chhak on Madanpur Rampur-Narla State Highway-6A and arrested the accused wandering there suspiciously. The cops later recovered three leopard hides and three deer skins and other incriminating materials during the search.

When asked, the accused failed to produce any official document in support of his possession of the prohibited wildlife parts. The cops Saturday arrested the accused by registering a case (14/23) under sections 379, 411, 120(B) of the IPC and 51 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. He was produced before a local court that later sent him to judicial custody.

"The skins will be sent to Director, WII, Derhadun for biological examination. Investigation is going on," STF stated in a press note here.

TEACHERS, STUDENTS WELCOME CBSE MOVE

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: In a major move to promote multilingual education, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has allowed schools to offer education in 22 scheduled Indian languages, including Odia.

Currently, in majority of CBSE affiliated schools the medium of instruction is English and, in some, Hindi.

OrissaPOST spoke to teachers, students and parents about the possible impact of the CBSE move on education.

Welcoming the CBSE initiative, Principal of SAI International School, Nilakantha Panigrahi said the introduction of regional languages at school level will make education more accessible to all. "Learning in one's regional language can enhance communication and it will constrict language barrier in learning which is prevalent at present. This can foster a more conducive learning environment, leading to increased participation and engagement."

Moreover, he said it will help in cognitive development of students, improve their problem-solving skills and creativity. It will also reduce dropout rates in rural

areas and improve retention rate, raising the literacy rate in India.

Poly Patnaik, founder and principal of Mother's Public School, said that the decision will be helpful in imparting education properly to students as they will be able to understand and gain knowledge if they get it in their own language. "Students in rural Odisha will stand benefitted," she added.

Educationist and chairman of Odisha Parents Federation, Basudev Bhatta said the CBSE step will help in improving the level of education. He added that the state government must take steps to help all block-level schools to get CBSE affiliation so that the students get NCERT textbooks in their own language.

Meanwhile, Awdhesh Kumar Sahu, a Class XI student, said multilingual study is a positive step. "Obviously it is good for those who are not comfortable in English," he said.

Sneha Priyadarshini, a Class X student, said education in multiple languages is good for the growth of students.

Sujata Subudhi, a parent, said the system will help in improving Odia oration of students who otherwise struggle to speak in their own state language fluently.

'Women's rights from village to Parl'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will fight for women's rights from village to Parliament, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said Saturday.

Patnaik, who heads BJD, said that while women are empowered at the grassroots level, they are less visible at the state and national levels.

"BJD will fight for women's rights from villages to Parliament ... We must raise our voice for one third reservation for women in Parliament and Assembly," he said addressing the party's state executive committee meeting here.

The Chief Minister said that women are demanding equal credit as men in the development of Odisha. They are doing excellent work in all fields and therefore the state government has made provisions for their empowerment.

Women empowerment, he said, is



something very close to his heart. It was not just a slogan for BJD, but a formula for development.

"I have all along said that no society, state or nation can develop without empowerment of women," he said.

Patnaik said women have been visible in different fields and are now equal partners in Odisha's progress. They are now taking on leadership roles in villages and panchayats.

"Mission Shakti has become the power centre for women ... Efforts are on to take Mission Shakti movement to the next level and transform women self help group members as entrepreneurs," Patnaik said and urged them to take the message of de-

velopment and empowerment of people to every household in every village and every town.

He made this statement two days after asking his party MPs to raise the issue of Women Reservation Bill in Parliament.

To ensure 33 per cent reservation for women BJD had fielded women candidates for seven out of the total 21 parliamentary seats in the state during the last general election in 2019. Five of them had won the election that year.

The Chief Minister said that the state Cabinet Friday approved a proposal for providing interest-free loans up to ₹1 lakh for women self help group leaders to purchase scooters.

He said that ₹11,000 crore loan has been disbursed to women in the state during last year, Patnaik said.

Patnaik urged the BJD women to remain connected with people, serve them and be an agent of transformation of the state.

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NATIONAL BROADCASTING DAY

'One feels connected as the medium touches soul'



able to relive the moments through this medium", Suwendu concluded.

Subrat Pati, a renowned broadcaster and journalist who worked with radio for more than 15 years, said, "Radio broadcasting has observed a remarkable digitization in the recent years. People prefer to listen to radio in Radio Garden. The rampant use of internet services has given rise to the popularity of digital platform but it cannot be considered an alternative for radio because radio broadcasting has been available during calamities. Odisha, is prone to cyclones almost every year when people have least access to network and connectivity. It is radio which comes handy as the only mode of communication."

"There are a lot of restrictions for radio broadcasting in India like the private radios cannot tune in news; hence the popularity of radio broadcasting in India is losing its hold with time. AIR is losing its listeners due to lack of inclusion of advanced technologies. The government should take steps in this regard," he said.

"The importance of radio broadcasting has never gone down because that is a kind of culture and tradition we all have grown with. Technology has advanced and now we have AI as well but it can never replace the originality of pure broadcasting. Listening to radio gives people a special connection they feel with their specific RJs. We are able to address various issues the listeners are dealing with and through radio they are able to speak with us", said RJ Smita, Red FM.

touched every part of our country. 'Mam Ki Baat' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again revived the importance of broadcasting media," said eminent educationist and former news presenter DD Odia and AIR Suwendu Mohanty.

"Broadcasting can never fail in any calamity in comparison to visual medium. In 1999, as I can remember, the devastating Super Cyclone in the state shattered every medium but AIR Cuttack worked

which touched thousands of people affected to record and broadcast. We were given very small but powerful recorders by which we were able to reflect their suffering," he added.

"Now the technology has developed even in broadcasting media, they have become digital which is an advantage but the nuances of initial broadcasting are still alive in the heart of millions. The songs of Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi and speeches of Pt Jawaharlal Nehru and veteran persons who are no more with us but we are



SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Prior to the technological advancements and emergence of television, radio served as the sole broadcasting medium. Initiated by the Radio Club of Bombay, India witnessed its first radio broadcast in June 1923. Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) became country's first radio company after 4 years July 23, 1927 which is now celebrated as National Broadcasting Day.

The country had six All India Radio (AIR) stations by the time it got its independence in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Lucknow and Tiruchirappalli and now it AIR has 262 radio stations with seven FM radio stations in Odisha and more than 14 All India Radio stations.

"Broadcasting particularly in India is beyond the touch of time; it encompasses various aspects of every age and touches millions of hearts since time immemorial. In the national stage it was limited to a certain cities of India but later on it has

Cops stop woman BJD worker's march

GYANA RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Commissionerate Police Saturday intercepted woman BJD worker Sanjukta Mahal while she was on her way to the residence of the Chief Minister to air her grievances related to her alleged physical and mental harassment by former minister and Polasara MLA Shrikant Sahu.



She claimed to have filed a grievance petition at the Chief Minister Grievance Cell.

"I had sought permissions to meet the CM around 10 days ago but did not get any response. So, today (Saturday) I came to meet the CM at his residence. The cops stopped me and told me that the CM will talk to me at the grievance cell," said Mahal.



VOICING ANGER: Members of 'Backward Class, Dalit, Tribals and Minority Federation' staging a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar against the sexual assault on women in Manipur, Saturday

'Digital addiction affecting kids' overall health'

NATIONAL PARENTS DAY



The children feel isolated and get addicted to phones and other technological gadgets

Subhangini Das, a banker and mother of two sons said, "I believe engagement of children with phones has increased after Covid. I know that lack of attention from family and parents drive children to other source of distraction and fun. Therefore, I always make sure my children are surrounded by family or their parents. However, it is not always possible to be beside them and so I have enrolled

them into various classes which keeps them engaged and always let them explore their limits. When children have digital disengagement, they can focus on a brighter and hopeful future."

"It is equally important for them to pursue their passion which will keep them engaged, be it sports, friends or other activities. But, it is often seen that because of over addiction or wrong choices the children

get spoiled. I have been married for a year now and I also have an experience as a teacher for the last 7 years. It helps me understand the children, their lives, their passion and their distractions towards phone", said Rituparna Satapaty.

Bigyan Das, a professor and a father said, "It gives me immense stress to see my two sons whiling away hours surfing internet, playing video games and scrolling social media. I am yet to find a way to control them. It is also a fact that they are often given assignment in schools for which they need to surf internet.

Their digital addiction makes them savvy but more than pride it fills me with stress. I feel helpless as a parent. I wish I could spend some quality time with them planning for weekend getaways to reduce their digital addiction to some extent."

4-day expo 'Propack Odisha' & 'Odisha Plast' from Sept 29

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Odisha Assembly of Small & Medium Enterprises (OASME) in association with Futorex Trade Fair and Events Pvt Ltd., New Delhi Saturday announced their forthcoming "Propack Odisha" and "Odisha Plast" from September 29 to October 2 at Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar.

In a press meet, it was announced that the 2nd edition of this 4-day-long expo will focus mostly on packaging, printing, converting, food processing industries and plastic. There are vast opportunities and a prosperous future for these sectors in Odisha. More than 200+ participants from aforesaid sectors



have been invited from Odisha, different parts of India and globally renowned companies to participate in the exhibition and showcase their products. This mega event is supported by the Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India and MSME department, Govt. of Odisha.

Delegates and companies from 5 foreign countries will also be participating in the exhibition. This platform aims to offer a showcase of new business and networking opportunities to the MSMEs, support creation for emerging markets and business

channels for the exhibitors, visitors as well as local prospective entrepreneurs.

Many state level seminars / technical sessions on myriad topics in purview to various sectoral subjects will be organised during these four days at the same venue.

On behalf of OASME, Gauri Sankar Dash, Chairman, Satwik Swain, Secretary General (Hon.), Adikanda Rout, Secretary Finance, Abhilash Dash, Addl. Secretary General, Pratishruti Jena, Debaprasad Mishra and Shalin DDML Agarwal and on behalf of FUTUREX, Swami Prem, Managing Director, Nimit Gupta, Director and Mubashir Elahi, Project Head were present in the press meet.

People with heart disease suffer from sleep problems

Hearth diseases, which affect the production of the sleep hormone melatonin in the brain, are the major reason why people with cardiac problems find it hard to sleep, according to a research.

Around one third of people with heart disease suffer from sleep problems such as sleep apnea, insomnia, waking up throughout the night and restless legs syndrome.

The study led by a team from University of Munich (TUM) in Germany showed that heart diseases affect the production of the sleep hormone melatonin in the pineal gland, located inside the brain. The link between the

two organs is a ganglion in the neck region.

Melatonin is produced in the pineal gland. Like the heart, it is controlled through the autonomic nervous system, which regulates involuntary processes in the body. The related nerves originate in the ganglia, among other places. Particularly important for the heart and pineal gland is the superior cervical ganglion.

"To get a clear sense of our results, imagine the ganglion as an electrical switch box. In a patient suffering from sleep disturbances following a heart disease, you can think of a problem with one wire causing a fire to



break out in the switchbox and then spreading to another wire," said Stefan Engelhardt, Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology at TUM. The team discovered that macrophages - cells that eat dead cells - accumulate in the cervical ganglion of mice with heart disease.

These cause inflammation and scarring in the ganglion and the destruction of nerve cells. In mice, as in humans, long fibres extending from these nerve cells, called axons, lead to the pineal gland. At advanced stages of disease, there was a substantial decrease in the num-

ber of axons connecting the gland to the nervous system.

There was less melatonin in the bodies of the animals and their day/night rhythm was disrupted. Comparable organic effects were seen in humans. The team investigated the pineal glands in nine heart patients. Compared to the control group, significantly fewer axons were found.

As with the mice, the superior cervical ganglion in the humans with heart disease showed scarring and was noticeably enlarged. The researchers assume that the negative effects of the dead axons become permanent at an advanced stage.

"In an early stage we were able to return melatonin production in mice to the original level by using drugs to destroy the macrophages in the superior cervical ganglion," said first author Dr Karin Ziegler. "First, this demonstrates the role of the ganglion in this phenomenon.

And second, it inspires hope that we can develop drugs to prevent irreparable sleep disturbances in heart disease." The researchers believe the study shows new hope for a large number of heart patients that a treatment will be found for sleep disturbances and that ganglia could become important from a diagnostic standpoint.

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Public hearing for Bharatpur OCP



POST NEWS NETWORK

Talcher, July 22: A public hearing camp for environmental clearance on expansion of Bharatpur Opencast Project (OCP) of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) under Talcher coalfields in Angul district was held at Jagannath Kalakendra here, Friday.

Angul ADM Rajanikant Singh presided over in the meeting and the affected villagers of Nakeshpasi, Niladripur, Satyabadiapur, Kishorechandrapur, Sarang, Tileipasi, Khajuria, Prasannagar, Solada, Danra, Joragadia (partial) and Khurian (partial), public representatives, local intelligentsia and members of various voluntary outfits attended the meet and voiced their opinions

on the mine expansion.

The villagers and various stakeholders expressed their support to the expansion of the mines while a few apprehended that it might affect the environment. However, majority of the villagers supported the project as it is believed to create employment opportunities in the region. They requested the authorities to ensure that the expansion does not affect the environment and take step to resolve the education, drinking water, rehabilitation and resettlement issues.

The MCL in a press release said that the Bharatpur opencast mine will be expanded to 1556.94 hectares from its lease area of 972.42 hectare. The annual production capacity of the mines will increase to 20 million tonne after acquisition of an additional 629.52 hectare of land.

The project will create direct employment opportunities for 490 people and indirect opportunities for 1,600, claimed the authorities.



MOCK DRILL: Fire personnel performed a mock drill on fire safety at a petrol pump in Sambalpur organised by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd in assistance with the district administration and fire department, Saturday

OP PHOTO

FLOOD CONTROL IN BAITARANI, BUDHABALANGA

14 more forecasting systems in state soon

THIS WORLD BANK AIDED PROJECT WILL BE SET UP AT A COST OF ₹1,279 CRORE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 22: In order to alert people in advance about flood, the state water resources department will build 14 more forecasting systems in Baitarani and Budhabalanga rivers, a report said.

Six systems will be built on the Baitarani river basin in Jajpur and Bhadrak districts while eight will be in place on the Budhabalanga river basin spread in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts.

Baitarani has a catchment area of 13,482 sq.km. The six automatic water level recorders (AWLRs) will be constructed at Akhua Biridi bridge in Jajpur district, Bankasahi, Pangata, Chandbali and Rajghat bridge in Bhadrak district and one at Jalasuan Patna station in Keonjhar district.

Similarly, eight AWLRs will be built on 4,838 sq.km catchment area of Budhabalanga at Nalua, Central Division, Betanoti, Suliapada, Jambhira, Barang side in Mayurbhanj district and at Kanshabansa and Totapada stations in Balasore district.

This World Bank aided project will be set up at a cost of ₹1279 crore, it was learnt.

Earlier, these two rivers had



FILE PHOTO

48 AWLRs. However, with the extent of devastation caused by these two rivers increasing every year, it has been decided to additionally build 14 AWLRs. These will be built to help in measuring the rising water level in the rivers from time to time during floods. Residents said controlling the floods in Baitarani is more important as they devastate a large stretch of land in Jajpur and Bhadrak districts.

Sources from the state water resources department said that the major rivers in the state like Mahanadi, Subarnarekha, Brahmani, Baitarani, Rushikulya, Vamshadhara and their distributaries face flooding every year, which affects humans and livestock and destroys homes and crops.

As a result, the flood fore-

casting systems when built will greatly help in flood management. Reports said that the state government had sanctioned ₹9.90 crore for the construction of the right embankment of Baitarani river from Ranpur to Mathurapur bridge while it sanctioned ₹8.80 crore for construction of the left embankment from Daspari to Astaka in Bhadrak district.

Earlier, it had sanctioned ₹9.96 crore for construction of embankment at Balarampur, Balipatna, Hemantpur to the right of Baitarani river. The three projects when completed will help in flood control in Korei and Dasarathpur blocks in Jajpur district and in Bhandaripokhari block of Bhadrak district, the water resources department said. The flood in August 2020 was

one of the most severe ones in Baitarani and Brahmani rivers in the 21st century. This flood affected over 10 lakh people residing in 612 villages and one ward of 143 panchayats in all blocks and one municipality area in Jajpur district. As many as 25 breaches occurred and 12 persons died in this calamity for which panic grips residents ahead of every rainy season.

On the other hand, the government has planned for integrated river management and construction of barrages but these are yet to be implemented.

The illegal sand mining and disposal of waste from mines and industrial firms is burying up the riverbed. The people of Jajpur and Keonjhar districts have been agitating to resolve the issues. The state government has constructed 210 km and 180 km of river embankments to the right of Baitarani River, to the left of Brahmani, Kharasrota and Budhabalanga rivers and to the right of Birupa river. However, it has failed to ensure that breaches do not occur on these embankments.

It is alleged that the Baitarani riverbed is shrinking as several developmental works have been undertaken on the river basin, which is in Jajpur district.

Zoo at Motijharan gets a new name



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, July 22: In a bid to create awareness about wildlife and increase footfall in the district, the state forest department has renamed the zoo at Motijharan here as "Sambalpur Zoo and Rescue Centre."

Spanning 13 hectares, the zoo was established in 1980 at the heart of this town.

A year ago, Hirakud Wildlife Division set up a botanical garden spreading over four hectares with more than 6,000 plant species on the premises of the zoo, which was earlier known as Deer Park & Wild Animal Conservation Centre. Now the facility has 27 enclosures with 333

animals belonging to 15 species. It includes five species in Schedule 1: leopard, sloth bear, chousingha, python, and peacock. The zoo also has 123 deer, 41 sambars and four sloth bears.

The zoo acts as a centre for awareness and education on wildlife for the Sambalpur residents. In the last one year, the zoo authorities have created better visitor amenities like more toilets, drinking water, a cafeteria, exclusive parking, a children's park, and a complete renovation of drainage and enclosures. Every Saturday, storytelling sessions by eminent speakers on wildlife and conservation are also held by the authorities.

Attack by smugglers leaves two excise sleuths critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kotpad, July 22: An excise inspector and a constable sustained critical injuries after smugglers attacked them when they intercepted a ganja-laden vehicle at Godaghat jungle near Kolab river close to Malchamal village under Kotpad police limits in Koraput district late Friday night.

The two were identified as excise Inspector Durbadal Biswal and a constable Meghanad Sabar of the department. The two were rescued and admitted to the Kotpad community health centre first and later, shifted to SLN Medical College and Hospital in Koraput after preliminary treatment. Acting on a tip-off, the excise sleuths conducted a raid and apprehended the vehicles smuggling ganja to Chhattisgarh. However, around 20-25 miscreants launched an attack on the team with sharp-edged weapons and rendered them critical. The miscreants fled the scene after the incident.



According to reports, the ganja traders belonged to a neighbouring state and were smuggling the contraband from Koraput.

A case has been registered by the local police and a manhunt launched to nab the attackers.

Man kills wife over trivial issue

POST NEWS NETWORK

Talagaon, July 22: A man axed his wife to death over a minor issue here in Boudh district, Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Dullabha Naik (37) of Gandapaju village under Talagaon panchayat of Harbhanga block.

As per the report, Dullabha requested her husband Kishori to go to the forest to bring bamboo so that she could make some handicraft items, as the couple makes a living by selling these crafts. However, the latter was reluctant, and an argument broke out between the two over the issue. Kishori suddenly lost his cool and assaulted his wife with an axe. Dullabha died on the spot.

Spotting the event, some villagers tried to overpower Kishori



but failed. Later, they informed the police. A team led by SDPO S Barala, Purunakatak IIC Jyotshna Kauri, and Adenigarh police outpost in-charge Brahmananda Pradhan reached the spot and arrested the accused. Police seized the murder weapon and the body, which was sent to Boudh DHH for post-mortem. A murder case was registered.

The couple has a 17-year-old daughter and an 11-year-old son. The villagers demanded assistance from the administration for the children who became helpless following the incident.

Delayed restoration of 'Dhyanchand' irks locals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 22: It was on the 12th of last month that the statue of a hockey player, which was erected near the Rourkela Airstrip during the World Cup, came crashing down with the first nor-westerly. Soon, an inquiry committee was formed, with sub-collector Rourkela heading it. And more than a month has passed and everybody here is waiting keenly for the report but in vain.

"They are taking time to give a plausible logic to the wrongdoing in the statue erection for that they are taking so much time," said a local in Chhend.

The committee also has one NIT professor, SE R&B Sundergarh, SE RD Rourkela



and EE R&B Rourkela as members. On being brought to the attention of the sub-collector Abhimanyu Majhi, he said, "The investigation is complete. And the report is under preparation." When asked about the likely date of submission, he said, "Maybe in a week we will sub-

mit the report to the authorities for action at their end."

Reacting to the development, the legend's son Ashok Kumar said, "Let's forget that it's the statue of a legend. It still belongs to a hockey player. How can one keep it lying around for so long without really bother-

ing about reinstatement? This is really an insult."

In fact, the administration is reluctant to identify the statue. When questions were raised about whether it was that of hockey great Major Dhyanchand there was no concrete answer. However, the place has been named Dhyanchand Square.

When this was brought to the notice of the sub-collector he said, "The square can be named after the hockey great but the statue can be of anyone."

Reacting to this Dhiren Senapaty, state spokesperson of BJP, said, "Everyone knows that the statue belongs to the hockey great. But, why the board is so small that hardly anyone can notice that the square has been named after Major Dhyanchand."

SAND MAFIA POLLUTING SANKHA RIVER

BLACK CHARCOAL, AN INDUSTRIAL RESIDUE OF SPONGE IRON UNITS, BEING DUMPED IN THE RIVER DELIBERATELY

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, July 21: The unabated dumping of black charcoal, an industrial byproduct from the sponge iron plants, is posing severe environmental hazards to Sankh river, one of the major tributaries of Brahmani river.

Locals, who didn't want to be identified, said the sand mafia is responsible for the pollution as well as illegal lifting of sand from the



river bed. "They have been doing this with impunity," said one of them. Elaborating further, he said, "The mafias have made roads on the river bed using large cement hume pipes so that they can cross to the other side of the river and mine sand sans permission."

A visit to the spot confirmed that

black charcoals have been kept on the river bed. When asked, another local said, "These are put on the river bed for construction of makeshift roads for sand extraction. They also put large hume pipes on the river bed for passage of water and they construct roads using the same industrial waste

to reach the other side of the river." The makeshift bridge is not visible at this moment due to the increase in water inflow. "Just fifteen days back the bridge was visible," he informed.

One person has been awarded the lease of Vedvyas side of Sankh river for mining sand. However, there are always complaints of excessive mining and at the same time, the presence of many operators, the sand mafias.

Black charcoal is causing problems for the locals who depend on the river for irrigation, fishing, bathing and domestic use. "Now, we are experiencing severe itching after taking bath in the river and the water is not safe for drinking purpose," said a person who stays nearby. Even the availability, variety and quality of fish in

the river have also been affected.

When this was brought to the notice of tehsildar Lathikata Nandita Kujur, she informed that she was in know of things and taking necessary actions against it. "It came to my notice only yesterday and now I am investigating it. I asked the RI for a spot visit and he did that yesterday. He confirmed the dumping of black charcoals in the river," she said. When asked about the steps taken in this regard, she said, "I talked to the leaseholder who is outside at this moment and ordered him to take immediate action to clean whatever has been dumped is there. He said he would do it." "I have brought this to the notice of the state pollution control board officials and have asked them to take necessary actions," she added.

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FOCUS SOCIETY

VIOLENCE WITHIN US



Even in a country where violence is the language of power and an instrument of control used by the powerful against the weak, some cases cross all sane limits and bring a level of shock that stirs us to ask some searching questions

The horror video from Manipur showing two women being paraded naked has shocked the national conscience. Suddenly, everyone is speaking up. The accused have been arrested. The house of one of the accused has been burned down in retaliatory violence which is now a part of the cycle that has seen the majority Meiteis and the minority Kukis at war in recent months. Even in a country where violence is the language of power and an instrument of control used by the powerful against the weak, some cases cross all sane limits and bring a level of shock that stirs us to ask some searching questions. The Manipur case will stay in the headlines for some more time. It will then be relegated to the files and will probably be forgotten.

Earlier this month, another gruesome story made headlines. On a Saturday evening, a 45-year-old woman was sowing paddy in her field in Mehandipur, a village in Bihar's Khagaria district when she was attacked and killed over a protracted land dispute. Four men on two bikes stopped by her field, beat her to death, gouged out her eyes and cut off her tongue. She died on the spot. Her family held five of their neighbours responsible for the crime. The accused had been arrested for killing the victim's husband and brother-in-law nine years ago and were now out on bail. The horrific crime led to protests by villagers who blocked the highway and refused to cremate the body till the killers were arrested. They relented only after assurances of stringent action. The story was soon deluged in the heavy rains that left Delhi flooded. Violence of course takes on many hues. Violence is written

into many actions and sometimes policies that are legitimised in the name of keeping peace but are violent in themselves. Inequality is also violence. But wild, violent, in-your-face violence of the kind seen in some of the crimes that continue to happen, particularly against women, indicates that the nation isn't really progressing, never mind what the GDP numbers may say. They show a new normalisation of the toxic cocktail of power, anger and hatred along with a deadening of the soul. And since these cases are not infrequent, they indicate that 75 years after Independence, the bulwark of the democratic system which rests on ideas of justice and good governance practices is not holding up. Worse, this violence is carried out in open spaces, in front of eyewitnesses and sometimes in broad daylight before a crowd. A woman was attacked last December in a crowded market in Bihar's Bhagalpur, with her ears, hands, legs cut off with a chopper used to slaughter chicken. Her eyes were gouged out. The victim died in hospital. Shortly thereafter, so did her story.

The main reasons for crimes in Bihar were given as property disputes while the reasons in the Manipur case are political. Sometimes wild and extreme forms of violence carry undertones of local power structures that perpetrate this monstrosity to kill and maim but more importantly to subjugate and warn others to fall in line.

But what is worrying is that most of us have this propensity to turn our heads away in cases where intervention may have helped. Eye witnesses rarely help. We may not rush to blame them. The attacks in the other cases of violent crime cited here were probably so swift and horrifying that those around might have been too stunned to intervene or even react. That hopefully is an explanation for eyewitnesses not taking any action to help victims. But they are also indicative of "the violence in our bones," as

the title of a book puts it. It suggests: "the mounting data on violence may have turned us into cynics, we seem to accept that violence is endemic to the project of living together."

Violent crime has the further fallout of creating insecurity for all those who will probably never encounter a case of violence on the streets. For example, a survey in the UK in 2021 reported that as many as 49% of women out of the 16112 contacted, felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a busy public place, like a high street or a railway station. In India, the capital city itself has red flags. According to NCRB, Delhi is the most unsafe city in India for women.

It is of course important to study the numbers and analyse the big picture. It is equally important to hold the law-and-order machinery to account. But all of it is one aspect, the aspect of the normal course of business. It still cannot account for the idea of brazenness, the nature of wildness and the complete collapse of humanity that comes with some of these crimes that cause alarm. A murder will add to one number of the statistics of murders. A murder after which the victim's eyes are gouged out also adds one to the total. Both are classified as violent crime but that does not help us understand or analyse the issue. Some cases open to issues of psychopathology save that in most of the cases we see, the criminals are not insane. They are in fact telling us about the society we have created. They are telling us that we may be failing in many ways, and we better sit up and take note.

The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.

Acts of Inaction

What is gained when I avoid acknowledging that I have a problem? And what, if anything, is lost? The Prime Minister conceded there was violence in Manipur after 79 days of pretending that there wasn't. A video that was two months old and produced outrage that returned Manipur to the public debate forced him to speak. The Chief Justice of India also said angry words and the police in Manipur, which had been dormant for all that period, immediately made arrests on a case it had ignored.

Why did it take all this time? It did because the Prime Minister demoted the issue and signalled to the rest of the BJP and the pliant media not to speak about it. When the incident, and others like it, were actually happening, he was in Bangalore holding road shows. He put off one road show, not because of Manipur but because it would clash with exams and he did not want to inconvenience students. He continued with the others.

After that he went abroad a couple of times, attending parties and watching parades. Within India he continued his routine of train flagging-off and inaugurations and felicitations of people on their birthdays and so on. He made not a single reference to Manipur. The question is, again, what does one gain in not acknowledging that there is a problem even if the problem is obvious to everyone else?

The first thing is to signal that it is not my problem. If my house is on fire then I will rush to save it. If my family is under attack, I will hasten to protect it. If I not only do not act, but if I pretend as if nothing happened then I do not concede that it is my problem. And therefore I do not have to solve it.

That is the second advantage: I avoid having to deal with a difficult situation immediately and it is possible that it will go away on its own. In a previous column I spoke about how this was the tack the Prime Minister used during the second wave of the COVID pandemic. Normally visible every day at some event whether physically or virtually, he disappeared for 20 days after cancelling his Bengal rallies. While hundreds of thousands of people perished, desperate without oxygen and the crematoria overflowed, he was gone.

He returned three weeks later when things were better and fewer people were dying and made a show of having "high level meetings." A BJP resolution from earlier in the year that said that India had defeated the pandemic under Modi was removed from the party's website. Once the wave subsided, he moved on from the subject completely. He also did the same thing after Galwan. There has been no military briefing more than three years after the clash. The only brief statement he made on the issue came after days of silence and then he was silent about it again.

The third advantage that I have in not acknowledging a problem is that in some sense I can keep my image intact. My followers and devotees (who number many in the case of the Prime Minister) will not have to suffer the trauma of seeing me accept that something wrong has happened under my watch. The other benefit of this is that because their devotion continues, I can also accept to myself that I have done nothing wrong. If so many people continue to believe in me, then my actions are right and so are my acts of inaction.

What else? There may be some smaller benefits. Perhaps some people only remember the bluster of claims and not the avoidance of bad news. How many times have we heard that India is the fastest growing economy? Many continue to believe we are, but, as a newspaper reported on 22 July: "India is no more the fastest-growing large economy. Saudi Arabia is with 8.7 per cent growth in 2022, followed by Vietnam at 8 per cent. In the first quarter of 2023, the Philippines bettered India, at 6.4 per cent."

If I avoid talking about "fastest growing" at this point completely and surface when again a few years later, then many will feel that I have always been on top.

Let us now turn to what is lost when I, as leader, avoid acknowledging that there is a problem. The first is that the problem will continue and often, as was the case in Manipur, it will get worse. How many more people died, how many more women and girls were assaulted, how many more houses were burnt because the Indian government ignored the problem? Perhaps the historians will tell us because most of our media will not.

The second one is that people will take advantage. Why should the Chief Minister of Manipur resign when there is no problem according to the Prime Minister himself? When there was some external pressure, he made a drama of resigning but remained because he was smart enough to know that he could use the silence to his advantage and he did.

The third one is that the nation, this nation, can continue in its stupor that it is marching towards greatness and not be distracted by the fires that are burning inside. Perhaps this behaviour of avoidance comes from cold calculations made by the Prime Minister, or perhaps it comes from instinct. Whichever is true, there is sufficient evidence in year 10 to show what its benefits to him are and what its damage to us.



Hidden nature is secret God.
SRI AUROBINDO



Lekha Rattanani

THE MANIPUR CASE WILL STAY IN THE HEADLINES FOR SOME MORE TIME. IT WILL THEN BE RELEGATED TO THE FILES AND WILL PROBABLY BE FORGOTTEN



Aakar Patel

How many more people died, how many more women and girls were assaulted, how many more houses were burnt because the Indian government ignored the problem?

SPECTRUM POLITICS

The spectre of populist nationalism



Gordon Brown

ACROSS EUROPE, THE GROWING POPULARITY OF FAR-RIGHT PARTIES HAS DRIVEN PREVIOUSLY MODERATE PARTIES TO EMBRACE EXTREME POSITIONS

Spain's general election Sunday matters not just for the country's future but also for the future of Europe. A defeat for socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez would likely propel the extreme right-wing Vox party from back street demagogues to parliamentary power, and if, as is widely expected, Vox and the Popular Party (PP) enter into a coalition government, it will mark the end of Spain's long aversion to far-right politicians, which has endured since the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in 1975.

Should Vox become part of Spain's government, its chilling, hyper-nationalist, anti-LGBTQ, anti-feminist, and anti-immigrant agenda would push Europe one step further into a right-wing abyss. The capitulation to Vox by Spanish center-right conservatives, who have traditionally rejected alliances with the far-right but are now desperate to return to power, would reverberate across the continent, particularly given that Spain recently assumed the presidency of the Council of the EU.

This alignment between Spain's conservative and far-right parties has resulted in an election campaign dominated by culture-war issues. Lurid Vox propaganda has demonised immigrants, gays, and feminists, portraying Sánchez and his party

as enemies of the state.

In reply, Sánchez has characterised the upcoming election, which follows the Socialist Party's poor showing in local and regional elections in May, as an existential battle for the future of Spanish democracy. And now, the socialist former PM José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has raised the stakes, claiming that "the center-right no longer exists," only the ultra-right, and that having abandoned the center, PP "has gone off the map."

The right's embrace of the culture wars is a deliberate strategy to obscure the threat that their neoliberal economic policies pose to living standards and social equity. The PP's agenda, which is taken straight from the Reagan-Thatcher playbook, seeks to abolish Spain's current wealth tax, slash the personal income tax, privatise the country's utilities, and cut social security.

At the same time, the PP's focus on culture-war issues is aimed at diverting attention from the economic achievements of Sánchez and his coalition as well as his green agenda. Since taking office in 2018, Sánchez's government has made significant strides in reducing high levels of inequality and poverty in Spain.

Moreover, Sánchez has successfully brokered an inflation-stabilising agreement on wages, endorsed by both unions and

employers, calling for a 4% wage increase in 2023 and 3% increases in 2024 and 2025, and, currently, the country has the highest growth rate and one of the lowest inflation rates in the eurozone.

Spain is far from the only European country where the rise of the extreme right poses a threat. Across the continent, the growing popularity of far-right parties has driven previously moderate parties to embrace extreme positions. In Germany, the nativist Alternative für Deutschland, now rising in the polls, is pushing Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, further to the right. And in Finland, the ultra-conservative Finns Party has formed a coalition government with the center-right, forcing it to pursue tough anti-immigration policies. A similar pattern can be observed in other Western European countries from Sweden to Austria, and it may appear in next year's European Parliament elections. And, of course, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Brothers of Italy, is further right than any leader Italy has had since Benito Mussolini.

The emerging symbiosis between Europe's far-right movements has been supported by wealthy allies in the US. In September 2022, representatives from 16 European nativist par-

ties, including Poland's ruling Law and Justice, Slovak populists led by ex-PM Robert Fico, and former Slovenian PM Janez Janša's far-right movement, gathered in Miami for National Conservatism Conference, where the keynote speaker was Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is also a Republican presidential candidate and Donald Trump impersonator.

The Florida conference bore a striking resemblance to another far-right summit organised by the same group and held at Rome's Grand Hotel Plaza in February 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ironically, each member of this unlikely global coalition of anti-globalists claims to speak for their own country's unique cultural heritage and their desire to be free from international entanglements while simultaneously using identical us-versus-them xenophobic rhetoric to stoke nativist fears. It has been 175 years since Karl Marx heralded a spectre haunting Europe. Today, however, it is not the spectre of communism, as Marx had hoped, but that of populist nationalism. The outcome of Spain's election could highlight the gravity and urgency of the threat.

The writer is a former Prime Minister of the UK.

WISDOM CORNER

- Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. **ALBERT SCHWEITZER**
- God is a comedian, playing to an audience too afraid to laugh. **HL MENCKEN**
- There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded. **MARK TWAIN**

WORDSWORTH

Malapert

Today's desk dictionaries often include this word, defining it as boldly disrespectful or impudent, not because it is current — it's archaic, last used unselfconsciously in the seventeenth century — but because it was once common enough that readers are still likely to encounter it. Some writers — such as Sir Walter Scott — have since borrowed it to provide a bit of period flavour in historical novels. It's formed from the equally archaic *apert*, from Latin *apertum*, open, through French. The oldest English sense was 'public, plain, unconcealed', but this shifted over time until it came instead to mean outspoken and later insolent. Our word seems to have been created from *apert* in either the sense of a person who is outspoken or clever, since the *mal-* prefix means 'improperly, badly, wrongly', so creating *malapert*, of somebody improperly outspoken or inappropriately clever. We still know *apert* in its aphetic form *pert*, which retains the idea of insolence, though weakened into cheekiness or impudence. The idea was personified into Jack Malapert, an insolent person, which is in one of the first printed books in English, Caxton's *Book of Curtesye* of about 1477-78. In modern form, the line would be "Don't play Jack Malapert, that is, don't be presumptuous".

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

Orissa POST
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Rap on knuckles

Sir, The Supreme Court has done well to rap the Centre on the knuckles over the worrying rate of cheetah deaths in Kuno National Park. The big cats, translocated from Namibia and South Africa last year, have witnessed 40 per cent fatalities in less than a year in their new home. Last week, two more cheetahs perished at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh which hosts them. Until now, eight cheetahs, including three cubs born in March, have died. Some of the deaths have been caused by unavoidable reasons, such as cardiac failure precipitated by stress or mating injuries. The Supreme Court has asked the Central government to file an affidavit explaining the reasons behind the frequent cheetah deaths and the remedial steps that need to be taken in this direction. The million dollar question remains: What was the need to bring the big cats over and keep them in an unfamiliar terrain?

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Shame & shock

Sir, The Manipur incident is highly unspeakable, and brought utter disgrace to the entire nation. The horrifying incident exposes the incompetence and maladroitness of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to control the ethnic violence in the small north-eastern state, which has been raging for well over two months now. The video of the sexual assault that went viral, drives home the message for India and the rest of the world that such horrors are happening in Manipur for long, and that till today the law of the land is not enforced without fear or favour, because the State's Chief Minister, N Biren Singh under whose government the flame of ethnic violence was ignited, has been left untouched and insulated by the Centre. The shame and shock felt by every sane and civilised citizen of the country after the video went viral, has rightly and naturally caused massive outrage. The horrifying incident in Manipur raises serious doubt whether we are living in a civilised society or not. After a prolonged lull, Prime Minister Narendra Modi finally spoke about the beleaguered state for a couple of minutes. But what adds to the pain is that even in his short address, sadly, he didn't speak about the ethnic conflagration in Manipur at all.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Gujarat tribal belt to observe bandh today

Opposition Congress decides to support the bandh in protest against the ruling BJP's 'failure' to control the situation in the north-eastern state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, July 22: A bandh will be observed in the tribal belt of Gujarat Sunday in protest against the ethnic violence and atrocities against women in Manipur, a tribal leader said.

The opposition Congress has decided to support the bandh in protest against the ruling BJP's 'failure' to control the situation in the north-eastern state, a party spokesperson said Saturday.

Several tribal outfits, including Adivasi Ekta Manch, have come together to call for a shutdown in the tribal-dominated districts of Gujarat.

"Sunday, a bandh will be observed in the tribal belt in Gujarat as per the call given by the tribal community to protest against violence and atrocities against women in Manipur; Madhya Pradesh urination incident, and atrocities on tribals in Gujarat," said tribal leader Praful Vasava, who recently resigned from AAP.

He said the call for a shutdown is not announced under the banner of any single organisation or a political party but with the consensus of various tribal and other socio-political organisations. "Several tribal



organisations have given a call for a bandh to protest against the Central government's stance on Manipur. They requested Congress for support to the bandh and the party has decided to fully support it. The BJP is responsible for the situation in Manipur," said Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi.

A video shot May 4 surfaced last Wednesday, showing two women from one of the warring communities in Manipur being paraded naked by a few men from the other side, sparking national outrage. Gujarat accounts for around 8% of the ST population of India which is mainly concentrated in the eastern districts of the state.

More than 160 people have lost their lives, and several have been injured since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur May 3, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in hill districts to protest against Meitei community's demand for ST status.

Wooed by BJP & SP, small parties look to big bargains

THE SMALL PARTIES DRAW THEIR STRENGTH FROM THE FACT THAT THEY REPRESENT VARIOUS CASTE AND SUB-CASTE GROUPS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 22: In Uttar Pradesh, small parties are making big bargains ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The two major political parties - the ruling BJP and Samajwadi Party - are going out of their way to win over these parties that are mostly caste-specific and have limited area of influence.

Political experts feel that the bigger parties are invariably gripped by a sense of insecurity that makes them sew up alliance - some of which may not bring any benefit.

An example of this is the ruling BJP that has a strong presence, but is still looking to further consolidate its position by wooing smaller parties.

The BJP has the Apna Dal (S) and Nishad Party as its allies, but wants to win over other parties. The BJP has already brought back the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaja Party (SBSP) into its fold.

The Samajwadi Party, meanwhile, is said to be trying to bring back estranged allies like the Mahan Dal and Janwadi Party. The SP already has the rival Apna Dal faction, led by Krishna Patel, as an ally.

Its biggest ally is the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) that wields influence in western UP.

The small parties draw their strength from the fact that they represent various caste and sub-caste groups. The bigger parties

feel that by bringing these parties into their fold, they will earn their caste votes.

The Apna Dal, for instance is a Kurmi-based party that has made inroads into the Kurmi community which happens to be the second largest caste block in the OBC category.

While the Apna Dal founder Sonelal Patel could never win an election himself, his daughter Anupriya Patel, now a Union minister, has led the party to greater success.

The Apna Dal contested two seats and won both in 2014 and then repeated the feat in 2019. It now has 12 members in the UP Assembly.

Under the leadership of Anupriya Patel, the party has built up a strong organisation in almost every district and has earned the reputation of being a no-hassle ally.

The BJP has benefited from Kurmi votes because of Apna Dal.

The SBSP, led by Om Prakash Rajbhar - a former auto driver and then a sub-inspector - meanwhile, is a Rajbhar-centric party that claims influence on seats like Ghosi, Ghazipur, Lalganj, Ballia, Jaunpur, Azamgarh and Ambedkar Nagar.

The SBSP was a BJP ally in 2017 assembly polls but parted ways on a bitter note in 2019, only to return to the saffron fold a week ago.

The BJP feels that Rajbhar voters can give the alliance an



upper hand but Om Prakash Rajbhar's son Arvind Rajbhar had been defeated by BJP's Anil Rajbhar in the last assembly elections - giving rise to debates about who is a more acceptable Rajbhar.

However, the BJP will need to handle over-demanding Rajbhar as an ally.

The Nishad party which draws its strength from the fishermen community, is also a BJP ally in Uttar Pradesh.

Its president Sanjay Nishad is a minister in the Yogi Adityanath government and his son Parveen Nishad is a MP while his younger son Sarvan Nishad is an MLA. Sanjay Nishad has not won an

election himself but claims that he wields influence on 27 Lok Sabha seats in UP.

The Samajwadi Party, on the other hand, is in alliance with RLD which banks on support from Jats in western UP.

The RLD has given a push to the Samajwadi Party which was facing rough weather in western UP after the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013.

However, the alliance is now facing turbulence because RLD wants to join hands with the Congress for the 2024 polls but SP is not enthused by the idea.

Though both parties deny it, speculations are rife that RLD may ultimately opt for an alliance with the Congress if the

SP does not relent.

The Mahan Dal, which had contested the 2022 Assembly polls in alliance with the SP, has now announced unconditional support to the BSP.

The Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) is a splinter group of the Apna Dal founded by Kurmi leader Sonelal Patel. It is led by Krishna Patel, widow of Dr Sonelal Patel.

Patel's daughter Pallavi Patel contested the 2022 election on an SP ticket and won in Surathu, defeating Keshav Prasad Maurya with a margin of 7,000 votes. This faction, however, is nowhere near the Apna Dal, led by Anupriya Patel.



RESCUE ACT: An earthmover helps rescue an Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation bus that got stuck in the strong water current of the Kotawali river in Mandawali area in Bijnoor district, Saturday.

AMU examining records of student held for ISIS 'link'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aligarh, July 22: The authorities at Aligarh Muslim University are examining the records of Faizan Ansari, the 19-year-old student arrested by the NIA for allegedly being an ISIS member, a senior official at the institution said Friday.

The entire record of Ansari alias Faiz is being examined by the university authorities. A clearer picture of his antecedents should be available once the institution resumes regular functioning after the summer vacations, Aligarh Muslim University Proctor Mohammad Waseen told PTI. The 19-year-old student was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for allegedly being a member of global terrorist group ISIS after searches at his home in Jharkhand and rented accommodation in Uttar Pradesh, a spokesperson of the federal anti-terror agency said on Thursday.

The arrest followed an ongoing crackdown against ISIS modules operating in the country after the registration of a case to thwart any terror attack, the official added. Waseen said Ansari secured admission in the university's BA (Economics) course last year. He had also applied for accommodation in a university hostel but "since there was no vacancy in the hostel allotted to him, he



did not reside on campus" and was staying in a rented accommodation.

The university is checking its records to determine if Ansari had appeared for the annual examinations in June. He had appeared for the first semester examination earlier this year, the proctor said.

Thursday, the NIA official said the searches at Ansari's home in Jharkhand's Lohardaga district and rented room in Aligarh were conducted on July 16-17 during which several electronic devices, incriminating material and documents were seized.

Ansari, along with his associates and other unknown individuals, had hatched a criminal conspiracy to support ISIS activities in India and disseminate the outfit's propaganda over social media. The conspiracy was aimed at carrying out violent terror attacks in India on behalf of ISIS, the agency spokesperson had said. Investigations revealed that Ansari and his associates had pledged their allegiance to ISIS, the official had said.

Agra's shoe industry on a warpath over BIS tag

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, July 22: Shoe factories in Agra are on a warpath protesting the imposition of BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certification.

The shoe units observed a total shutdown Monday and the owners held a series of meetings Tuesday.

"We all strongly oppose the BIS imposition and are unable to apply it on our own made shoes," factory owners said.

Most of the industries in Agra produce hand-made shoes and as these shoes are mostly made in small and cottage industry units, it is not possible to impose these rules here, the protesters said.

"This is my request and demand from our government that BIS should be removed from handmade footwear," a shoe manufacturer said.

An association's representatives said: "We demand that this is not just a shoe, it is the livelihood of millions of families who make it in small houses and this is the source of their livelihood. Our demand is that micro and small MSME units that make shoes for the common man should be kept free from BIS."



LEATHER HUB

■ AGRA CITY IS THE BIGGEST HUB OF LEATHER SHOE INDUSTRIES IN INDIA AND EXPORTS A MAJOR CHUNK OF ITS PRODUCTION

■ MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF ALL SHOES FOR THE ARMED FORCES AND PARAMILITARY AGENCIES ARE MANUFACTURED IN AGRA

The leather shoe industry in Agra is centuries old and takes care of more than 50 per cent of the country's needs.

The smaller units want "no arbitrary imposition" of standards, as the certification would add to the costs, and thus make their existence difficult in a highly competitive market. Industry sources claim that more than three lakh workers are de-

pendent on this industry. According to an official, the BIS certification is issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in India.

Agra city is the biggest hub of leather shoe industries in India and exports a major chunk of its production. More than 80 per cent of all shoes for the Armed Forces and paramilitary agencies are manufactured in Agra.

How visa applicants fall prey to fraud in Gujarat

FRAUDSTERS MAKE UNAUTHORISED BIOMETRICS ENROLMENT OF 28 UNSUSPECTING VISA APPLICANTS WANTING TO MIGRATE TO CANADA

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, July 22: The Ahmedabad police have arrested three persons, including two employees of a visa outsourcing firm, for carrying out unauthorised biometrics enrolment of 28 unsuspecting visa applicants wanting to migrate to Canada, an official said.

Based on a complaint given by VFS Global, a visa outsourcing and technology services firm having its centre on Ashram Road here in Ahmedabad, the police crime branch here July 16 registered a case against four persons - Melvyn Christy, Sohil Dewan, Mehul Bharwad and an unidentified man.

While Christy and Dewan work at VFS Global's visa application centre in Ahmedabad, Bharwad is a former employee of the firm. They were booked on the charges of cheating, criminal breach of trust, forgery and criminal conspiracy, police said.

Following an investigation, the city crime branch Wednesday arrested Christy, Dewan and Bharwad, the police said in a release. As per the laid down procedure, Canadian visa applicants are required to give their biometric information, such as fingerprints, at the VFS Global's visa application centres only after getting an appointment letter or biometric instruction letter, the police said.

July 5, the Canadian High Commission, through an email, informed the company that it has received biometric data of 28 persons from VFS Global's visa application centre in Ahmedabad, but appointment letters to these persons were never issued by the Canadian au-

thorities. After going through the CCTV cameras of the centre, the company officials learnt Christy and Dewan carried out the biometric enrolment of these 28 persons without the knowledge of the officials, the police said.

It was also revealed the 28 persons were given forged appointment letters because the official data of the company did not reflect the names of these persons.

Following the arrest of the trio, it was revealed that Bharwad, who works for an immigration agent, had approached the two VFS Global employees with an offer to carry out biometric enrolment of 28 persons sans enrolment letters, and offered to give ₹5,000 to ₹7,000 per person, the crime branch said.

Christy and Dewan called these 28 persons on different dates and enrolled their biometrics without any valid documents. To dodge the security set up, the duo used to take these persons inside the office from other entry points instead of the main entry door, said the release.

Talking to reporters, Prabuddha Sen, Chief Operating Officer (South Asia), VFS Global, said the 28 persons were duped by the agent because they were under the impression that the appointment letters given by the agent were altered using software. "The agent gave them a forged letter to claim their applications for Canada immigration have moved forward and now they need to give their biometric data at their centre," he said. This is another incident of unsuspecting visa applicants falling prey to fraudulent or grey operators who are taking advantage of the high demand for outbound travel from India, he said.

Sen said the company has hired the services of former IPS officer Muktesh Chander to keep a tab on such activities. A day after the FIR was registered, a person approached the VFS Global office here saying he was among those 28 persons who had given biometrics as instructed by his immigration agent, said Chander.





Participants march during a rally for peace unification of the Korean peninsula in Seoul, South Korea. Hundreds attended the rally commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice Agreement that ended the Korean War on July 27, 1953



People walk through a waterlogged road on Heritage Street near the Golden Temple, in Amritsar



Schoolchildren waded through a waterlogged road amid monsoon rains, in Amritsar



A fruit vendor looks for customers at Maidan in Kolkata



Parked buses catch fire at Gardanibagh area in Patna

national

of the day quote

Nothing has changed since Nirbhaya: Unnao, Hatharas, Kathua, Bilkis (convicts release). Beti bachao PM ji!

KAPIL SIBAL | RAJYA SABHA MP

It is very unfortunate that Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit does not know whether calling of the two-day special Assembly session in June was legal or illegal

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

It is scientifically proven that cognitive learning in the initial years, is the fastest in the native language

JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

44-yr-old man gets death penalty

Idukki (Kerala): A special POCOS court here Saturday sentenced to death a 44-year-old man for murdering a minor boy, and awarded him jail term till the end of his natural life for raping the victim's minor sister two years ago. Idukki Fast Track Special Court Judge T G Varghese gave capital punishment to Idukki resident Sunil Kumar for the murder of his nephew, the six-year-old boy, and sentenced him to cumulative imprisonment of 92 years including four life terms in the 2021 case registered at the Vellathooval police station. The sentences will run concurrently. However, the court also said the convict will remain in jail for the remainder of his natural life.

Maha rains: More than 100 rescued

Yavatmal: Around 110 people stranded due to floods in Mahagaon tehsil of eastern Maharashtra's Yavatmal district were rescued on Saturday, officials said. Besides the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), a Mi-17 V5 chopper of the Indian Air Force was also pressed into service for the rescue operation at Anandnagar Tanda village, district collector Amol Yedje said. The SDRF shifted the stranded people to safe places and the rescue operation was over, he added.

India gifts INS Kirpan to Vietnam

New Delhi: India Saturday gifted its in-service missile corvette INS Kirpan to Vietnam in reflection of growing bilateral strategic and defence partnership amid common concerns over China's increasingly aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea. It is for the first time that India handed over a fully operational corvette to any friendly foreign country, officials said. Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, currently on an official visit to Vietnam, presided over the ceremony at Vietnamese deep water bay of Cam Ranh where the frontline warship was handed over to Vietnam People's Navy.

Naxalite killed

Bijapur: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Saturday, a police official said. Arms, ammunition and Maoist-related materials were recovered from the encounter site at a forested hill, he said. Blood stains found at the spot suggest that 3-4 Naxalites were either killed or injured in the gunfight but their colleagues managed to drag them inside the forest, the official said, adding that the search operation was underway in the area.

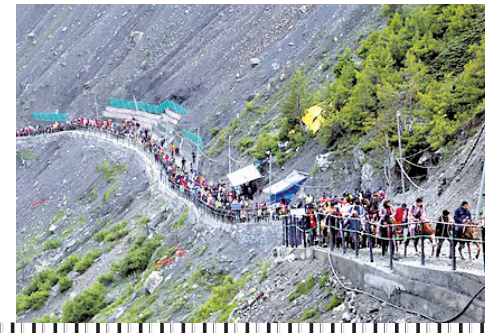


In the past, the industrial policy implemented by our government was appreciated by the industry fraternity. It was known to be the most progressive industrial policy. Our government will shortly discuss with industrialists and the exporters to bring out a new and progressive industrial policy

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

OVER 3L PERFORM AMARNATH YATRA

More than three lakh pilgrims performed the Amarnath Yatra in last 21 days as another batch of 3,475 pilgrims left Jammu for the Kashmir valley Saturday, officials said



Oppn, govt slugfest over Manipur intensifies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The political war of words over Manipur intensified Saturday with the BJP raising the incidents of atrocities against women in West Bengal and Rajasthan and questioning the "silence" of the opposition, which termed it as a diversionary tactic to avoid debate on the situation in the north-eastern state.

While the opposition has been demanding a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Manipur inside Parliament followed by an unhindered debate in both houses, the government has accused the opposition of running away from such a debate by putting conditions and alleged that they lack seriousness on the issue.

The BJP fielded Union minister Anurag Thakur who alleged that there is a long list of heinous crimes against women in states ruled by opposition parties such as Rajasthan, West Bengal and Bihar, but they were playing politics over the Manipur incident.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Thakur slammed former Congress presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and the leaders of other opposition parties, accusing them of remaining silent on cases of crimes against women in non-BJP ruled states. "Over one lakh cases of crimes against women have been registered in Rajasthan in the last four years. A total of 33,000 cases pertaining to sexual assault on women in Rajasthan," Thakur alleged.

The ruling party also highlighted a video of two tribal women being beaten up and stripped in Malda district and



Members of Adivasi Sengel Abhiyan protest against Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh over sexual violence against women in the state, at Gazole in Malda district



Women's wing of the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum stages a protest near the 'Wall of Remembrance' erected to honour lives lost during the ongoing ethnic violence in the state, in Churachandpur

targeted opposition leaders. Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan hit out at West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee. "What happened in Manipur is unfortunate, but what happened in West Bengal is more

unfortunate. The people who were expressing outrage over the Manipur incident, a similar barbaric incident happened in West Bengal," Pradhan said. Union Ministers Smriti Irani

The opposition has mounted a fresh attack on the government after a May 4 incident video surfaced on Wednesday showing two women from one of the warring communities in Manipur being paraded naked and assaulted by a group of men from the other side. The Congress accused the BJP of resorting to whataboutery and running away from discussion in parliament like "fugitives".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter, "The Prime Minister and his drum beaters are diverting and deflecting from the enormous tragedy that has overtaken all of Manipur in the past 80 days by creating false equivalence with an issue relating to Rajasthan." The Congress also put up a picture of Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani on its Twitter account with



People stage a protest over the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur

and Thakur also hit out at the Congress for sacking its minister in Rajasthan after he raised the issue of crime against women in his state. Thakur alleged that it has been done on the instructions of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

a "Failed report card". Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi alleged that the prime minister is "protecting the (Manipur) chief minister and covering up his failures." AAP's Sanjay Singh demanded the imposition of President's rule.

Girl, man stripped, beaten up in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Begusarai (Bihar), July 22: A girl and a man were allegedly stripped and beaten up by three persons after the two were caught in a compromising position in Bihar's Begusarai district, police said Saturday.

A video of the incident went viral on social media Friday, purportedly showing three persons assaulting and stripping the minor and the man, an officer said. The man has been identified as a music teacher and is in his mid-40s, he said.

"We have arrested the music teacher based on the statement given by the victim. A case under relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Section 67B of

the Information Technology (IT) Act and Section 376 of the IPC (sexual offences) have been registered against the accused," Begusarai Superintendent of Police Yogendra Kumar said.

A search is on to apprehend the three persons who assaulted the minor and the accused, the SP said, adding, a preliminary investigation reveals that the incident took place on Thursday. "The police are examining the video and have also sent clothes of the two persons and other evidence recovered from the spot for forensic examination," Kumar said.

A team under the supervision of a senior women police officer has been constituted to investigate the case, the SP said. "Medical examination of the victim is also being conducted. Her statement will also be recorded before the magistrate," he added.

Raigad landslide: Toll climbs to 27, 81 untraced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 22: The death toll in the landslide at Irshalwadi hamlet in Maharashtra's Raigad district mounted to 27 Saturday with the recovery of five more bodies from the debris on the third day of the search and rescue operation, an NDRF official said.

He said 81 persons are yet to be traced. The search and rescue operation was called off for the day due to bad light and inclement weather and it is likely to resume on Sunday morning.

Of the five bodies, four are identified while the identity and gender of the body recovered later in the day is not known yet, the official said.

"With the recovery of five bodies today, the death toll in the landslide tragedy has now reached 27," the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) official said.

Earlier in the day, the four persons whose bodies were retrieved from the debris were identified as Mahi Madhu Tirkad (32), Aashi Pandurang (50), Bharati Madhu Bhutabra (18), and Kishan Tirkad (27), officials said.

The rescue operation is being carried out manually as earth movers and excavators could not be easily moved to the village, overlooked by Irshalgad fort, a popular trekking destination, in the absence of a pucca road.

ED arrests IAS officer in C'garh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, July 22: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Saturday arrested IAS officer Ranu Sahu in Chhattisgarh in connection with a money laundering case linked to alleged coal levy scam in the state, officials said.

Following her arrest, Sahu, who was posted as the director of the state agriculture department, was presented in a court that sent her to three-day ED custody. She is the second IAS officer in the state to be arrested in the case.

Her arrest came a day after the central agency conducted raids at her premises. "Sahu was arrested this morning in connection with the alleged coal levy case. She was later produced in a court hearing Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cases, which sent her to three-day ED custody," ED's lawyer Saurabh Pandey said.

The court of Additional District and Session Judge Ajay Singh Rajput passed the order. Investigation into the case revealed the involvement of Sahu, who had served as Raigarh and Korba collector, in the money laundering offence. Proceeds of the crime as immovable property to the tune of Rs 5.52 crore were found in her possession, Pandey said.

The ED demanded her 14-day



ED officials arrest IAS officer Ranu Sahu in Chhattisgarh, a day after the central agency conducted raids at her premises in connection with a money laundering case

Ranu Sahu, a Chhattisgarh-cadre IAS officer of the 2010 batch, is currently posted as the director of the state agriculture department. Prior to this posting, she had served as Collector of the coal-rich Korba and Raigarh districts

custody, but the court granted her custody to the agency till July 25, he added. Talking to reporters earlier, Sahu's counsel Faizal Rizvi said she was arrested on completely fictional grounds.

"She had cooperated with the central agency in the alleged coal levy case and appeared be-

fore it whenever she was summoned between October last year and January this year. After January, she was never summoned by the ED. There are no facts that establish her involvement in the alleged offence," he said.

The properties that have been attached under the PMLA linking to Sahu belong to her parents. These properties dated back prior to 2019, while the ED states proceeds of crime are from 2020, he said. "We opposed the 14-day custodial remand sought by the ED," Rizvi added.

According to him, Sahu told the court that she has already replied to all queries of the ED and now it does not have anything to ask.

Termining the action against her as "politically motivated", she requested the court not to send her to the ED custody, he added.

Motive necessary for commission of crime if no witness: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The prosecution will have to establish motive for commission of crime if there is no eyewitness of an incident, the Supreme Court has said while acquitting a man convicted in a 2008 murder case.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Ahsanuddin Amanullah noted that all the witnesses have stated that there was no enmity between the petitioner and the deceased. "Once there is no eyewitness of the incident, the prosecution will have to establish a motive for the commission of the crime inasmuch

as in a case of direct evidence, motive may not have a major role," the bench said.

"If there is no motive setup or proved and there are direct eyewitnesses, motive may lose its importance but in the present case as admittedly no one has seen the occurrence, the motive has an important role to play," it said.

The observations came while hearing a plea by a man challenging an order of the Chhattisgarh High Court which confirmed his conviction under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code and the sentence to undergo life imprisonment along with fine.



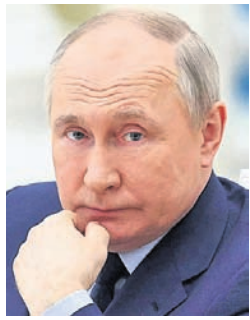
According to the prosecution, the uncle of the deceased lodged a complaint that his nephew, while he was returning home, was assaulted by the appellant. He further claimed that when he rushed to the place of occurrence, he saw the accused running away and the murder weapon was lying there.

The top court said the testimony of the deceased's uncle was not reliable and could not have formed the basis of conviction. It said apparently, he was influenced by a sarpanch whose active participation in the proceedings subsequent to the incident cannot be ruled out.

"The medical evidence did not support the prosecution case as the weapon of assault could not have caused injury on the deceased as noticed in the post-mortem report," the court observed.

"There was no motive as to why the appellant would commit the murder of an acquaintance and a friend for no reason. The defence version that the deceased was under the influence of alcohol and could have tripped and fallen on a sharp object resulting into the ante-mortem injury reported in the post-mortem was quite possible," the bench said.

international



Moscow would react to any aggression against Belarus with all the means at our disposal
VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

2K PENGUINS DEAD

Around 2,000 penguins have appeared dead on the coast of eastern Uruguay in the last 10 days, and the cause, which does not appear to be avian influenza, remains a mystery, authorities said



of the day quote

We must give armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine because Ukrainians are fighting not only for their freedom but also for ours



IVAYLO MIRCHEV | LAWMAKER, BULGARIA

The United States and like-minded countries including India need to work together to shape the course of artificial intelligence



ARATI PRABHAKAR | SCIENCE ADVISOR TO US PRESIDENT

The BRICS Urbanisation Forum will go a long way to sharing insights, exchanging best practices, and fostering collaboration on urban development challenges among the BRICS member countries



THEMBI NKADIMENG | MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, SA

SHORT TAKES

Biden brings CIA chief to cabinet

Washington: US President Joe Biden Friday said he had asked CIA Director William Burns to become a member of his cabinet, elevating one of his closest advisers on national security and foreign policy. "Under his leadership, the CIA is delivering a clear-eyed, long-term approach to our nation's top national security challenges," Biden said in a statement, referring to Burns' approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and US competition with China. Burns is not the first CIA director to attain cabinet status. Former President Bill Clinton also named his CIA directors - John Deutch and George Tenet - to serve in his cabinet, as did Ronald Reagan with William Casey.

Lula stricts gun laws in Brazil

Brasilia: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed a decree Friday tightening restrictions on civilian access to guns in Brazil, in a move aimed at reversing the pro-firearms policies of his right-wing predecessor Jair Bolsonaro. The decree reduces the number of guns civilians can possess for personal safety from four to two, reduces the allowed ammunition for each gun from 200 rounds to 50 and requires documentation proving the need to hold the weapons. It also bars civilians from owning 9 mm pistols, restricting them to members of the police and military.

Drone attack on Crimea

Russia seized and annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, eight years before launching its full-scale invasion of the country

REUTERS

Moscow, July 22: A drone attack on an ammunition depot in Crimea prompted authorities to evacuate everyone in a five-km (3.1-mile) radius and briefly suspend road traffic on the bridge linking the peninsula to Russia, the Moscow-installed regional governor said Saturday. Sergei Aksyonov said there was an explosion at the depot in Krasnohvardiiske in central Crimea but reported no damage or casualties. Footage shared by state media showed a thick cloud of grey smoke at the site. Aksyonov blamed it on a Ukrainian drone attack. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv. Russia seized and annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, eight years before launching its full-scale invasion of the country.

The brief halting of traffic on the Crimean Bridge, about 180 km (110 miles) to the east of the drone incident, came five days after explosions there killed two people and damaged a section of roadway - the second major attack on the bridge since the start of the war.

The 19-km (12-mile) road and rail bridge is a vital logistics link for Russian forces, and is also heavily used by Russian tourists who flock to Crimea in summer.

Russia accuses Ukraine of carrying out the attacks on the bridge. Officials in Kyiv have welcomed them, without directly claiming responsibility.

Ukrainian President



This is the route used to feed the war with ammunition and this is being done on a daily basis

VOLODYMYR ZELENKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday that the bridge was a legitimate target because it was a military supply route for Russia. "This is the route used to feed the war with ammunition and this is being done on a daily basis," he said.

Russia is on high alert for incidents at the bridge, and an of-

ficial Telegram channel tells people not to panic in the event of an alarm.

In a further sign of security concerns in Crimea, Oleg Kryuchkov, an adviser to Aksyonov, warned people not to post images of critical infrastructure on the internet.

He urged people who knew the authors of such posts to report them to the interior ministry or the FSB security service.

"Remember that a video posted on the web of military or other critical facilities is work for the enemy," he said.

Russian scribe killed by cluster munitions

A Russian war reporter was killed and three were wounded on Saturday in what Moscow alleged was a Ukrainian attack using cluster munitions, prompting outrage from politicians. The defence ministry said the wounded journalists were evacuated from the battlefield after coming under fire in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia region. It said Rostislav Zhuravlev, who worked for state news agency RIA, died while being transferred. Ukraine received cluster bombs from the United States this month, but it has pledged to use them only to dislodge concentrations of enemy soldiers. Many countries have ban the weapon because they disperse bomblets that rain shrapnel over a wide area and can pose a risk to civilians. Some typically fail to explode immediately, but can blow up years later. Konstantin Kosachyov, deputy speaker of the upper house of parliament, said the use of cluster munitions was "inhuman" and the responsibility lay both with Ukraine and the United States. Leonid Slutsky, a party leader in the lower house, called it a "monstrous crime". Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, tweeted: "I wonder what US public opinion thinks of their country crossing all moral red lines in futile attempt to save crumbling corrupt Kyiv regime."

N Korea fires cruise missiles



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Seoul, July 22: North Korea fired several cruise missiles toward its western sea Saturday, South Korea's military said, marking the second launch event this week apparently in protest of the docking of a nuclear-armed US submarine in South Korea.

While adding to its barrage of missile launches in recent months, North Korea remained publicly silent for a fifth day on the fate of an American soldier

who bolted into the North across the heavily armed Korean border this week.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were detected beginning around 4 am but did not immediately report how many missiles were fired or how far they flew. It said the US and South Korean militaries were closely analysing the launches.

On Wednesday, North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. They flew about 550 kilometers (341 miles) before landing in waters east of the Korean Peninsula.

The flight distance of those missiles roughly matched the distance between Pyongyang and the South Korean port city of Busan, where the US Kentucky Tuesday made the first visit by a US nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s.

Italy honours Indian troops' contribution during World War II

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: A memorial has been unveiled in Italy as a tribute to the Indian troops who fought in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War, officials said Saturday. The memorial is in the form of a live sundial. The motto of the memorial is "Omnes Sub Eodem Sole" which translates to "We all live under the same sun", the Defence Ministry said in a statement here.

"Remembering the supreme sacrifices by Indian soldiers, the Commune of Monotone (in Italy) and Italian military historians have unveiled the 'VC Yeshwant Ghadge Sundial Memorial' at Montone (Perugia, Italy), as a tribute to the Indian troops who fought during Italian Campaign, during the Second World War, and to honour Naik Yeshwant Ghadge, Victoria Cross, who was killed in action fighting on the heights of Upper Tiber Valley," the statement said.

Neena Malhotra, Ambassador of India in Italy, and the Indian defence attaché represented India during the ceremony.

"Indian soldiers played a central role in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War, wherein more than 50,000 Indian Army soldiers from 4th, 8th and 10th Divisions were involved," the ministry said.

Out of the 20 Victoria Crosses awarded in Italy, six were won by Indian soldiers. Indian soldiers suffered 23,722 casualties, of which 5,782 made the supreme sacrifice, and are commemorated in the 40 Commonwealth War Graves spread all over Italy, it added.

In order to make this memorial a participative endeavour, an Indian Army plaque has been placed at the memorial commemorating the gallant sacrifice of all ranks of the Indian Army who fought in the Italian Campaign, officials said.

QURAN DESECRATION

Protesters try to storm Baghdad's Green Zone



The protest came two days after people angered by the planned burning of the Islamic holy book in Sweden stormed the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baghdad, July 22: Tensions flared again in Iraq Saturday after a series of recent protests in Europe involving desecration of the Quran, Islam's holy book, which have sparked a debate over the balance between freedom of speech and religious sensitivities.

Hundreds of protesters attempted to storm Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses foreign embassies and the seat of Iraq's government, early Saturday following reports that an ultranationalist group burned a copy of the Quran in front of the Iraqi Embassy in the Danish capital, Copenhagen.

Security forces Saturday pushed back protesters, who blocked the Jumhuriya bridge leading to the Green Zone, preventing them from reaching the Danish Embassy.

Elsewhere in Iraq, protesters

burned three caravans belonging to a demining project run by the the Danish Refugee Council in the city of Basra in the south, local police said in a statement.

The fire was extinguished by civil defense responders, and there were "no human casualties, only material losses," it said.

Iraq's prime minister has cut diplomatic ties with Sweden in protest over the desecration of the Quran in that country.

An Iraqi asylum-seeker who burned a copy of the Quran during a demonstration last month in Stockholm had threatened to do the same thing again Thursday but ultimately stopped short of setting fire to the book.

He did, however, kick and step on it, and did the same with an Iraqi flag and a photo of influential Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada al-Sadr and of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

All Islamic scholars agree that those who desecrate the Koran deserved the most severe punishment. The duty of that (Swedish) government is to hand over the perpetrator to the judicial systems of Islamic countries

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN



JUDICIAL JEOPARDY: Thousands of Israelis march along a highway towards Jerusalem in protest of plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to overhaul the judicial system, near Abu Gosh, Israel, Saturday. The 70-kilometer march from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is growing as Netanyahu vows to forge ahead on the controversial overhaul. Protest organisers planned to camp overnight outside Israel's parliament

US sends first Navy warship to foreign port

REUTERS

Sydney, July 22: The United States commissioned a warship in Sydney, Australia, Saturday, the first time a US Navy vessel joined active service at a foreign port, as the two close allies step up their military ties in response to China's expanding regional reach.

The Independence-class littoral combat ship - named after a Royal Australian Navy cruiser that was sunk while supporting the US Marine landings on Guadalcanal in 1942 - was commissioned at a ceremony at an Australian naval base on Sydney Harbour, officially joining the US Navy's active fleet.

The ceremony comes amid the biennial Talisman Sabre military exercises between the US and Australia, seen as a show of force and unity as China increasingly asserts power in the Indo-Pacific.

The exercises, taking place in various locations across Australia over two weeks, in-



clude mock land and air combat, as well as amphibious landings.

In addition to Australia and the US, forces from Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Tonga and Britain are taking part.

As part of the war games, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) Saturday launched a

surface-to-ship missile off Australia's east coast at Jervis Bay, about 195km (121 miles) south of Sydney.

Australia's Defence Department said the drill "marked the first time the JGSDF has tested the capability in Australia".

Germany is participating for the first time with 210 paratroopers and marines taking part, as the European nation

Australians can be proud that this ship, designed in Western Australia by local industry and named after HMAS Canberra, is being commissioned here for the first time in the history of the United States Navy

RICHARD MARLES | DEFENCE MINISTER, AUSTRALIA

bolsters its presence in the region.

Under the AUKUS project announced in March, the United States and Britain have agreed to help Australia acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines.

Before that, in the early 2030s, the United States is supposed to sell Australia three US Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines, with an option for Australia to buy two more.

Malaysia shuts music fest over same-sex kiss onstage

HOMOSEXUALITY IS A CRIME IN MUSLIM-MAJORITY MALAYSIA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kuala Lumpur, July 22: Malaysian authorities cancelled a weekend music festival Saturday after the frontman of a British indie rock group kissed his male bandmate following a tirade against the country's anti-LGBTQ laws.

Homosexuality is illegal in Malaysia and laws criminalising sodomy are punishable by imprisonment. LGBTQ people in the country also face regular discrimination by authorities.

British rockers The 1975 cut their Friday show at the Good Vibes music festival short after lead singer Matty Healy slammed Malaysia's anti-gay laws in a profanity-filled speech, before kissing bassist Ross MacDonald on stage. Healy told fans the band had thought of pulling out



of the event, saying: "I do not see the point of inviting The 1975 to a country and then telling us who we can have sex with."

He later abruptly ended the set, saying: "All right, we gotta go. We just got banned from Kuala Lumpur."

The on-stage protest was not a first for Healy, who kissed a male fan at a 2019 concert in the United Arab Emirates, which also has tough anti-LGBTQ laws. Vowing swift action early

Saturday, Malaysian Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil posted a news report about the kiss and called it a "very rude act".

He later ordered the "immediate cancellation" of the three-day festival after meeting with organisers. "Never touch the sensitivities of the community, especially those that are against the manners and values of the local culture," he said in a subsequent tweet.

of the day quote

The Global South faces the challenge of addressing the trilemma of energy availability, affordability and sustainability. Biofuels, biogas, and green hydrogen hold great potential for energy sustainability, and the scope for experience sharing in the Global South is immense

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | OIL MINISTER

The massive changes taking place on the regulatory front in the insurance space will help in ease of doing business, encourage development of longer-term products and improve persistency, thereby creating value for customers

DEEPAK PAREKH | CHAIRMAN, HDFC LIFE

Every time a technology comes, the nature of the job changes, not the jobs get reduced. In fact, jobs get augmented because whatever you could not do earlier, now you can serve even that market...This actually expands the business horizon and that's why we need more people

DINESH AGARWAL | CEO, INDIAMART

Q1 RESULTS

ICICI beats hopes

Mumbai: ICICI Bank beat first-quarter expectations Saturday as higher interest income and loan growth helped deliver a record net profit for India's second-largest private lender. Net profit rose 39.7% to ₹96.48 billion for the April-June quarter, beating the ₹91.8 billion expected by analysts Refinitiv IBES data showed. Net interest income - the difference between interest earned and paid - rose 38% to ₹182.27 billion as ICICI's net interest margin expanded to 4.78% from 4.01% a year earlier. The Mumbai-based lender's total advances grew by 20.6%, largely led by retail loans, while deposits grew 17.9%.

Kotak's big jump

Mumbai: Fourth largest private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday reported a massive 67 per cent on-year jump in standalone net income at ₹3,452 crore for the June quarter. On a consolidated level, the profit, which includes net gains from its brokerage/i-banking, ARC, wealth management and insurance businesses, grew 51 per cent to ₹4,150 crore, the city-based lender said.

Yes Bank up 10.3%

Mumbai: Private sector lender Yes Bank, which has been down in the dumps since March 2020, Saturday reported a 10.3 per cent on-year growth in net profit for the June quarter at ₹343 crore, buoyed by a massive improvement in the asset quality as bad loans plunged to 2 per cent on-year from 13.2 per cent. However, the bank, majority-owned by other lenders led by the State Bank, reported a robust 69.2 per cent growth in profitability sequentially, the chief executive and managing director Prashant Kumar said.

Paytm loss narrows

New Delhi: Fintech firm One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, Friday reported narrowing of loss to ₹358.4 crore. The company had posted a loss of ₹645.4 crore in the same period a year ago. The revenue from operations of the company increased by 39.4 per cent to ₹2,341.6 crore during the reported quarter from ₹1,679.6 crore in the June 2022 quarter. The company said that its merchant payments volume (GMV) grew 37 per cent YoY to Rs 4.05 lakh crore in the April-June quarter of FY2023-24.



We are on our committed guidelines of becoming free cash flow positive by the year-end
VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA | FOUNDER AND CEO, PAYTM

BIGGEST FOREIGN BILLS SEIZURE

Customs officials at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport made the "biggest ever" seizure of foreign currency, worth over ₹10 crore (\$7,20,000 and Euro 4,66,200), from three Tajikistan nationals Friday. This is the biggest ever case of smuggling of foreign currency through any airport in India



GO FIRST GETS CLAIMS WORTH \$2.9 BILLION

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 22: Go Airlines Ltd has received claims worth Rs 240 billion (\$2.9 billion) from operational and financial creditors so far as part of the carrier's ongoing insolvency, two banking sources told Reuters.

The process is in line with procedural requirements under Indian law which allow every creditor a right to payment and remedy by submitting claims if a company is under bankruptcy. Once the claims are filed, the resolution professional has to check its authenticity.

"Claims from the lenders are around Rs 50 billion, while lessors' claims amount to Rs 180 billion so far," a banker with a state-run bank, who has exposure to Go Airlines said, after a meeting of the committee of creditors Friday.

The bankers did not wish to be identified because they were not authorised to speak to the media. Go Airlines, which operated the Go First carrier, filed for bankruptcy protection in May blaming "faulty" Pratt & Whitney engines for the grounding of about half its 54 Airbus A320neos.

The Raytheon-owned engine maker has said the claims are without merit.

The company earlier this month invited investor interest in the company through a court-appointed administrator. The last date to submit an expression of interest (EOI) is August 9. "The airline has received 40 queries on EOIs from potential bidders, but no formal submissions have been made as yet," the second banker said.

India's coal mining bet stumbles

Bankers' wariness is partly seen stemming from India's parallel push to boost green energy - which raises questions about coal's long-term viability - and from global investors' demands for lenders to limit their fossil fuel exposure

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 22: India's drive to ramp up coal output to meet growing energy demand is faltering due to banks' reluctance to finance newly auctioned mines, though most lenders remain far from ditching fossil fuels for good, analysts and officials said.

Of the 87 mines auctioned to private companies in the past three years in a push called "Unleashing Coal" - part of India's energy self-sufficiency plans - only four are operating, with the rest awaiting financing, a federal coal ministry official said, asking not to be named.

Coal officials and banking executives in the world's second-largest coal producer discussed the issue at a June meeting called by the government in a bid to ease the funding deadlock.

Past legal troubles on mine block allocations also explain funders' caution, analysts said. "Going forward, everyone knows coal is a financially risky bet," said Saurabh Trivedi, research analyst with the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

Global investors who fund private banks increasingly consider coal "a no-go asset class" as they align with ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) values, Trivedi added.

Climate campaigners and investors are asking banks globally to rein in funding to coal, oil and gas - the leading sources of



Dozens of new mines on hold awaiting financing
Banks wary over legal risks, ESG investors and renewable
Indian banks lag Asian peers in coal divestment policies

the man-made greenhouse gas emissions heating up the planet, but reports suggest money continues to flow.

India's central bank cautioned banks in its bulletin last year to limit their exposure to fossil-fuel related industries and to boost green finance in a larger push to mitigate climate-related financial risks.

Still, only one Indian bank - Federal Bank, a private bank headquartered in southern Kerala - has put coal on its exclusion list for loans, according to energy think-tanks.

Elsewhere in Asia, 41 financial institutions implemented formal coal exit policies in 2022, up from only about 10 between 2013 and 2019, with Japan and South Korea front-runners, found an IEEFA analysis released in

With clean energy capacity growing and the possibility of energy storage systems approaching fast, the incremental market and the readiness of customers to buy coal at any price may disappear. This risk of migration could be influencing banks' investment decisions

SUTIRTHA BHATTACHARYA | FORMER CHAIRMAN AND MD, COAL INDIA LIMITED

May this year. "Indian financial institutions are a long way behind in terms of formulating coal divestment policies," the report said.

Besides growing global pressure for banks to shun coal, the financing delays to new mines reflect bankers' concerns about the granting of environmental permits that are required by miners prior to acquiring land - used by banks as collateral.

Such concerns were addressed at last month's meeting.

"We made the banks aware of the (land acquisition) process and we are hopeful they will finance these new miners," the coal ministry official said.

The banking sector has been more cautious about granting loans to coal miners since 2014, when India's Supreme Court scrapped all but four of 218 coal blocks allocated by the government since 1993, describing the allocations as illegal.

India's simultaneous push to build its renewable energy capacity to 500 gigawatts (GW) by

SL may allow ₹ for local trade

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, July 22: Sri Lanka is considering the possibility of allowing the usage of the Indian rupee for local transactions just like the dollar, euro and yen to facilitate Indian tourists and businessmen, Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said Saturday.

Sabry was briefing the media here on President Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to India July 20-21, his first since assuming office last year. He held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday.

"We have considered the possibility of using the Indian rupees like we accept the dollar, euro and yen," he said.

Allowing its direct use would prevent the need for multiple currency conversions for Indian tourists and businessmen.



On Friday, the two countries noted that the decision to designate INR as currency for trade settlements between the two countries has forged stronger and mutually-beneficial commercial linkages, and agreed to operationalise the Unified Payments Interface-based digital payments for further enhancing trade and transactions between businesses and common people.

The two countries signed the Network to Network Agreement between NIPL and Lanka Pay

for UPI application acceptance in Sri Lanka after bilateral talks between Modi and Wickremesinghe.

On an MoU signed with India on the development of Trincomalee as a regional hub for industry, energy and bilateral cooperation, Sabry saw no objections coming from China.

"We are a non-aligned state, we have only signed an MoU to identify feasible projects through a joint committee. I don't think any country would object to such open and transparent dealings," Sabry said.

Sabry said both leaders agreed on the importance of port connectivity between the two countries.

"To reach the next level, we need investments. We discussed ways which would be mutually beneficial to both countries. The tie-ups between not only the two governments but between the private sector were emphasised," Sabry said.

India junks BYD's factory proposal

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 22: India has rejected Chinese automaker BYD Co's proposal to set up a \$1 billion factory in India in partnership with Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd, the Economic Times reported Saturday.

Reuters reported this month that BYD had submitted a \$1 billion investment proposal to build electric cars and batteries in India in partnership with a local company.

India's Department of Commerce, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had sought opinions from other departments on the investment proposal, the report said.

"Security concerns with respect to Chinese investments in India were flagged during the deliberations," the report quoted an Indian official as saying.

'Export curbs on rice put deals worth \$1bn at risk'



Traders say while global prices will go up because of India's export ban, local rates are likely to drop

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 22: India's decision to ban non-basmati white rice exports will spur traders to cancel contracts to sell around 2 million metric tonne (MT) of the grain, worth \$1 billion, on the world market, dealers said Friday.

India, which accounts for 40% of world rice exports, Thursday ordered a halt to its largest rice export category to calm domestic prices, which climbed to multi-year highs in recent weeks as erratic weather threatens production.

Anticipating that the government would impose restrictions on rice exports, traders have obtained letters of credit (LCs), or payment guarantees, over the past few days, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a

global trade house. "But the trade wasn't expecting the government to impose restrictions so soon. It was expecting them to come into effect in August or September. As a result, these traders have no choice but to use the force majeure clause to cancel the contract," he said.

Force majeure refers to unexpected external circumstances that prevent a party to a contract from meeting their obligations. Four dealers confirmed that export contracts of around 2MT of rice, worth \$1 billion, are at the risk of being cancelled.

On Thursday, the government said the ban would be effective from July 20, and only vessels currently loading would be allowed to export, not future shipments backed by LCs.

"Traders typically sign contracts in advance, so the contracts signed for the next few months cannot be executed now," Nitin Gupta, senior vice president of Olam Agri India Ltd told Reuters.

Top tech firms vow protections on AI risks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, July 22: Seven leading artificial intelligence (AI) tech companies like Google, OpenAI and Meta have reached a deal with the Joe Biden administration to roll out fresh guardrails to manage risks associated with AI.

The measures would include testing the security of AI and

making the results of those tests public. The companies are Amazon, Anthropic, Meta, Google, Inflection and OpenAI.

"These commitments are real, and they are concrete. AI is going to change the lives of people around the world. The people here will be critical for shepherding that innovation with responsibility and safety by design," Biden said at the White



House following the meeting. As part of the agreement, the tech companies have agreed to se-

curity testing of their AI systems by internal and external experts before their release.

This will ensure that people are able to spot AI by implementing watermarks and publicly report AI capabilities and limitations on a regular basis.

These companies will also research the risks such as bias, discrimination and the invasion of privacy.

After McDonald's, tomatoes vanish from Subway outlets

THE SALADS AND SANDWICHES GIANT HAS DROPPED TOMATOES CITING POOR QUALITY AMID EXPONENTIAL PRICE SURGE OF THE STAPLE VEGETABLE

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 22: Some Subway India outlets have stopped serving tomatoes in their salads and sandwiches due to quality problems, the latest move by a foreign brand as prices of the staple have soared nearly 400% to record highs in the country.

A Subway outlet at a Delhi

airport terminal announced the "Temporary Unavailability of TOMATOES" in a sign saying the restaurant could not get enough supply that passed its quality checks.

"Hence for the time being we are forced to serve you products without tomatoes," it said. "We are working to get the tomatoes supplies back."

Everstone Group's Culinary



Brands, which has the master franchisee for some 200 of India's 800 Subway and manages the supply chain for all of them,

did not respond to a request for comment.

It was not clear how many outlets were affected.

Many Indian outlets were still offering tomatoes, according to checks of food ordering apps and calls to stores, but at least two in New Delhi, one in Uttar Pradesh and one in Chennai in the south had stopped.

"It's very expensive," said one Subway store employee.

Two weeks ago McDonald's restaurants in India dropped tomatoes from their burgers and wraps in many parts of India due to quality issues.

In the capital New Delhi, tomatoes was retailing for about ₹168 a kg Saturday, after touching around ₹240.

The government blames the higher prices of tomatoes on a

lean production season as monsoon rains disrupt transport and distribution. It follows months of higher prices for items ranging from milk to spices.

The government in recent weeks has organised mobile vans to supply tomatoes at cheaper rates, with hundreds queuing each day.

Global restaurant chains like Domino's and KFC are also launching lower-priced products in India, where consumers have cut spending due to high inflation. Domino's is aggressively promoting a 60-cent seven-inch pizza, the brand's cheapest worldwide, in the country.

Windies reach 117/2

India eves tie 3rd ODI with Bangla

Labuschagne ton resists England's push for Ashes win



At the time of going to press, West Indies were 172/3 with Jermaine Blackwood (16 batting) and Alick Athanaze (12 batting) at the crease. Kraigg Brathwaite was the only wicket to fall post lunch.

MATCH SCHEDULE

2nd Test, Day 4
Time: 7:30 pm

Telecast: DD Sports
Streaming: Jio Cinema

left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat. The domestic workhorse undoubtedly is the weakest link in the Indian bowling attack as he has so far given away 31 runs in nine wicket-less overs so far. More than not getting the wickets, Unadkat hasn't even looked incisive enough to create problems for Brathwaite, who has a compact defensive game. The lack of pace and not having enough movement off the surface meant that Unadkat was the easiest bowler to negotiate.

With the next series in South Africa, Unadkat with two wicket-less Tests in the West Indies might find it extremely difficult to hold onto his place in the squad. The difference between him and Mukesh has been the length that the Bengal pacer found which is slightly fuller despite both of them bowling at the same pace. There is also that slight hint of movement inward or outward that can cause confusion for batters while Unadkat's stock delivery is one that is pushed across the right-handers, which is quite predictable. **BRIEF SCORES:** India 438; West Indies 117/2 (Kraigg Brathwaite 49 batting, Kirk McKenzie 32; Mukesh Kumar 1/11). Match to continue.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mirpur, July 22: India botched up an easy run chase as a tenacious Bangladesh rallied to tie the final ODI as well as the three-match series here Saturday. Needing 10 runs from 19 deliveries with four wickets in hand, India looked on course to a comfortable win. However, the visitors suffered a batting collapse towards the end to lose their last four wickets within the span of 16 balls while chasing 226 for victory. India were all out of 225 in 49.3 overs and with the scores levelled and the scheduled time over, the match was called a tie as the two sides shared the trophy. India collapsed from 191/5 in the 42nd over to 217/9 in the 48th, but the last-wicket pair of Jemimah Rodrigues (33 not out) and Meghna Singh (6) took the team close to the finish line. But with one run needed to win off the last four balls, Marufa Akter had Meghna caught behind as half centuries by Smriti Mandhana (59, 85b, 5x4) and Harleen Deol (77, 108b, 9x4) went in vain. The duo had stitched a 107-run stand for the third wicket after India were reduced to 32/2.

After Mandhana's departure in the 29th over, Deol stitched small partnerships of 21 and 31 with captain Harmanpreet Kaur (14) and the experienced Jemimah to help India inch closer to the target. Deol was finally out in the 42nd over and it was left to Rodrigues to hit the required runs, but all she could do was watch as wickets tumbled at the other end. Earlier, opener Fargana Hoque became the first Bangladesh woman player to hit an ODI century (107, 160b, 7x4) as she led a solid batting display to power the hosts to a competitive 225/4. Opting to bat first, Bangladesh managed to play a calculated and risk-free innings for major part with Fargana producing a fine innings. Fargana stitched a steady 93-run opening stand with Shamima Sultana (52, 78b, 5x4) to lay the platform for the 200-plus score. For India, Rana (2/45) and Devika Vaidya (1/42) were among wickets.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 225/4 (Fargana Hoque 107, Shamima Sultana 52; Sneha Rana 2/45); India 225 (Harleen Deol 77, Smriti Mandhana 59, Jemimah Rodrigues 33 n o; Nahida Akter 3/37). Match tied.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, July 22: Joe Root kept England's hopes of a series-leveling win alive in the fourth Ashes Test by dismissing centurion Marnus Labuschagne on a rain-affected fourth day Saturday. The worst fears of a washout at Old Trafford were not realized, with persistent showers finally clearing in time to get play underway at 2:45 pm. But a stand of 103 between Labuschagne and Mitch Marsh threatened to shut the door on the home side. Labuschagne made a defiant 111 to nudge his side closer to a draw that would see Australia retain the urn. But he was finally removed about 15 minutes before tea when he nicked Root's occasional off-spin to Jonny Bairstow, who gathered well at the second attempt. That left the tourists on 214/5, 61 behind England having ended day three 167 adrift. Root bowled only because of bad light, with the umpires deciding that conditions were too gloomy for the seamers, but his unpredictable offerings provided the biggest threat and he was unlucky not to have Labuschagne caught at slip on 93. Marsh was not out on 31 at tea having eaten up 107 deliveries for his side in a knock that forced him to curb most of his attacking instincts. Cameron Green had 3.



Port of Spain, July 22: Debutant Mukesh Kumar was rewarded for his nagging channel bowling as his maiden wicket in international cricket gave India something to cheer about as West Indies reached 117/2 when rain forced umpires to take an early lunch on the third day of the second Test here Saturday. Skipper Kraigg Brathwaite (49 batting, 161 balls) continued to frustrate the Indian bowlers. The West Indies batters didn't look in any sort of trouble for the 10-odd overs on third morning during which 31 more runs were added. Mukesh, who bowls a line which is right on off-stump or shade outside of it, bowled a

fuller delivery and with not enough room to cut fellow debutant Kirk McKenzie (32 off 57 balls) edged it to Ishan Kishan for a regulation catch. McKenzie, who hit four boundaries and a six, looked in fine touch and played with a lot of purpose during his 57-ball stay. With the pitch not having any purchase for either spinners or pacers, it has indeed been a hard toil for the Indian bowlers so far. However, one man who would be itching to get into the wickets column will be veteran Saurashtra

Satwik-Chirag stuns Wei Keng-Chang duo

India A face Pak A for Asian crown

Antim makes statement winning 53kg trial, promises to move SC

Indian World No.3 pair seals 21-15, 24-22 victory over Chinese 2nd-ranked pair to reach Korea Open badminton final



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MATCH SCHEDULE

INDIA A vs PAKISTAN A
Time: 2 pm

Telecast: Star Sports Network

Colombo, July 22: India A will be keen to assert their dominance in the Emerging Asia Cup tournament when they face Pakistan A in a potentially high-voltage summit clash here Sunday. Generally, it is tough to pick a favourite in the matches between India and Pakistan, but in this instance, the former stands out as the clear front-runner. India will also draw confidence from the fact

that they have already beaten Pakistan in the league stage. This crop of young Indian players carries a lot of flair in their approach, but beneath the flashiness bubbles a layer of stone-cold determination to win from any situation. The semifinal against

Bangladesh was a microcosm of that trait. India were bundled out for 211, a below-par total even on a sluggish R Premadasa Stadium pitch. The Bangladesh openers, who were in good touch in this tournament, started briskly scoring over 6 runs an over. They raced to 94/1 in the 18th over, and looked poised for a smooth win. But the Indian spinners - Nishant Sindhu and Manav Suthar - owned the stage from thereafter, rolling over Bangladesh for 160. The captaincy of Yash Dhull, who also made a crucial 66, and the fielding too were spot on as India snatched a win that looked improbable at one stage. This cohesion within the team will be India's primary weapon going into the final against Pakistan. Having said that, underestimating Pakistan will be naive. They are a talented side, and many of their players have considerable international and Pakistan Super League (PSL) experience behind them.

New Delhi, July 22: Talented youngster Antim Panghal made a statement by winning the 53kg trials, moments after her plea challenging the exemption given to Vinesh Phogat was dismissed while Mansi Ahlawat surpassed expectations by sealing her place in the Indian team for the Asian Games from the 57kg field that had two World Championship medalists, here Saturday. The 19-year-old Panghal put up a dominant show in the 53kg category, winning all her bouts without much fuss. Handed a bye in the first round, the 2022 U-20 World Champion began with a 7-2 win over Tamanna and followed that up with a technical superiority win against Neha to move into the semifinals. The final was even better as she pinned her rival Manju inside two minutes. However, it will be Vinesh Phogat who will represent India

in this category during the Hangzhou Asian Games as the selection committee has already given her direct entry in the 53kg category along with men's freestyle wrestler Bajrang Punia (65kg). "I won the trial fair and square. Why should I be the standby player, I won the trial. The one who did not compete should be standby player in 53kg. My petition has been dismissed but I won't stop, I will keep fighting, we will move the Supreme Court." Panghal told reporters. "If she keeps getting direct entries like this, how will one know how good we are. We will keep trying. My coach will decide what we are going to do next but the fight will continue. What's the point of me winning three bouts. I know she is pretty good and has many medals but she must fight against us in the trials," she said, adding that she will now gear up for the World Championship trials.

The lead swelled to 14-8 with the Chinese finding the net and going long. Satwik then dished out his trademark smash but the Chinese duo got a couple of points, mainly due to Chirag's judgement error on the backline. Another smash going to net from Liang and it was 17-11 up for Indians, who soon made it 19-12 with Satwik producing an accurate cross court return. Satwik and Chirag had six game points after Wang sent one to the net. The Indians squandered one before sealing the net when Liang failed to negotiate a serve. The second game was no different with both the pairs alternately taking points, moving from 2-2 to 8-8. Soon the Indians grabbed two quick points with Chirag leading the charge. The Chinese then hit wide to give an 11-8 advantage to the Indians at the break. After resumption, Wang's backhand went to net as the Indians soon jumped to 14-9. A cross court return by Wang and Liang's brilliance in the front court kept the Chinese in the hunt as it was 12-14. The Chinese kept breathing down their neck till 17-15 before Liang unleashed a smash as the match headed to a tight finish. The Indians regained the two-point lead after the Chinese went wide but Liang once again pounced on a weak return at the net and then sent down another jump smash to claw back at 18-18. After missing a few match points, India grabbed their fourth match point and converted it. He soon broke into his trademark dance.

Both pairs engaged in short rallies and pounced on anything weak. The result was the pairs moved neck-and-neck from 3-3 to 5-5. India had a slender 7-5 lead but Liang unleashed a precise smash between the two. The Indians, however, managed to hold on to a three-point cushion at the interval once Liang found the net.

A FAIRYTALE BEGINNING FOR MESSI

ARGENTINE'S SENSATIONAL FREE-KICK ON DEBUT SEALS INTER MIAMI VICTORY OVER CRUZ AZUL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fort Lauderdale, July 22: Some people paid hundreds of dollars to be able to say they were in the stadium for Lionel Messi's debut for Inter Miami. Some paid thousands for their seats. The team's owners committed well over USD 100 million just to have a chance at moments like this. So far, it looks like money well spent. From the you-can't-make-this-up department, Messi capped the opening night with his new club by delivering the unforgettable. His magical left foot sent a free-kick into the upper left corner of the net in the 94th minute Friday night, giving Inter Miami a 2-1 win over Mexican club Cruz Azul in a Legends Cup match. "What I saw was the goal," Messi said in an on-field interview amid the postgame celebration. "I saw the goal. I knew that I had to score." He makes it sound so easy. Made it look so easy, too. The game's greatest active player - a seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and a World Cup champion - sent the ball over a wall of four Cruz Azul defenders for the winning goal, unquestionably the greatest moment in

The Herons' brief history. Fireworks shot into the night sky, and play resumed for roughly a minute before the referee's whistle blew. "It's a movie that we have seen before," Inter Miami coach Tata Martino said. Messi was a showman throughout his debut for his Major League Soccer (MLS) club. He waved at fans while he was seated on the bench. Waved at them while he was warming up. Waved at them while he was actually in the game. And if that wasn't enough, he saved his best moment for the end. He watched the ball sail into the net, something he's done about 800 times before for club and country, then sprinted to the right corner of the field and leaped into the arms of teammates. The team's owners - David Beckham, Jorge Mas and Jose Mas - were waiting as he left the pitch; Jorge Mas planted a kiss onto the superstar's sweat-coated cheek. Some Cruz Azul players stood in silence and just watched; they'll have a story to tell, too, about how it took an incredible Messi moment to defeat them. Nobody even left their seats when the halftime whistle blew. The reason: Messi was on the field. He warmed up for about 5



minutes during intermission with the other reserves before they all left for the locker room. That's when the fans, finally, could put their phones down and take a breath. Temporarily, anyway. The wait was officially on: When was Messi coming in? He resumed warm-ups while the second half was getting underway, jogging around behind the end line near Miami's supporter

section, and fans roared in delight when he gave them a wave. And about eight minutes into the second half, the answer: It was Messi time. Messi checked in early in the second half with Inter Miami leading 1-0. He hugged the player he was replacing, midfielder Benjamin Cremaschi, then trotted onto the field as the estimated crowd of 21,000 all seemed to be standing,

almost all of them with phones out to chronicle the moment. Had he missed the free-kick, the game would have gone to a penalty shootout. Instead, Messi ended it on his terms. The first Inter Miami goal of the Messi era was scored by Robert Taylor, who took a long cross from Robbie Robinson, moved into the box and sent a low drive off the inside of the far post and into the back of the net for a 1-0 lead late in the first half. Messi leaped from his seat, threw his hands in the air, applauded several times and broke into a wide smile. Cruz Azul tied the game shortly after Messi checked in and had plenty of chances to take a late lead. But the final act belonged to Messi, a storybook ending if there ever was one. It was a gathering of GOATS at Messi's debut match: LeBron James and Serena Williams were there - like Messi in football, they're in the conversation of "greatest of all time" when it comes to the NBA and tennis. Music legends Gloria and Emilio Estefan showed up, as did Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, and Kim Kardashian arrived saying one of her sons had a particular reason why he had to attend.

