



## KUBBRA'S WISHLIST

Actor Kubbra Sait shares a set of new goals, both personal and professional, ahead of her 40th birthday

LEISURE P2



## CHANDRAYAAN GOES FARTHER

Chandrayaan-3 launched by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) achieved the orbit of 127603km X 236km. The next firing, the TransLunar Injection (TLI), is planned for August 1, 2023



## POOR RUN CONTINUES

PV Sindhu makes yet another first-round exit as she bows out of the Japan Open Super 750 badminton tournament

SPORTS P12

### SHORT TAKES

#### President thrust on speedy justice

**Cuttack:** President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday paid her tribute to the heroes of Kargil War on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas here, Wednesday, and called upon those connected with Orissa High Court to work for speedy dispensation of justice. Murmu, who is on a three-day visit to her home state, paid her homage to those who made their supreme sacrifice for the country in 1999 war with Pakistan and recounted the valour of Padmapani Acharya from Odisha who was bestowed the Mahavir Chakra. P3

#### Indo-Pak clash likely to be rescheduled

**New Delhi:** The blockbuster India-Pakistan contest in the upcoming ODI World Cup could be advanced by a day to October 14 due to the opening day of Navratri celebrations in Ahmedabad, a development which may lead to logistical nightmare for the fans. International Cricket Council (ICC) and BCCI had announced the World Cup schedule last month and awarded the marquee clash to the world's largest stadium in Ahmedabad. The hotel and air fares for Ahmedabad skyrocketed after the schedule announcement, and if the game is indeed moved by a day, the ordeal of the fans is likely to worsen. P12

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Instead of 'No Confidence', you should have moved 'Over Confidence' motion against us



**IN SAFE HANDS:** Rescuers tend to a pod of long-finned pilot whales, Wednesday, after nearly 100 whales beached themselves at Cheynes Beach east of Albany in Australia. PTI PHOTO

## Rain claims 1 in Malkangiri

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/Malkangiri, July 26:** A man was washed away in Malakangiri district as heavy rains under the influence of a low pressure area in Bay of Bengal lashed most parts of western Odisha, officials said Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Ghenu Chalan, 42, a farmer of Muduliguda village under Khairaput block in the district.

Malkangiri, which experienced flash floods last week, recorded the highest rainfall of 80.4 mm since Tuesday followed by 53 mm in Ganjam. In Kandhamal district, Phiringia reported 34.8 mm at Phiringia and 33 mm in Kalinga, they said.

An official report said the farmer was swept away by the swirling waters when he had gone to a farmland Tuesday. His body was later found in a nearby canal.

The incessant rain since Tuesday night has led to the submergence of Kangurukonda bridge in Malkangiri, snapping road communication between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh via the NH-326. The IMD said the intensity of the rainfall will increase once the well marked low pressure intensifies into a depression.

The well-marked low pressure is likely to concentrate into a depression over the same region in the Bay of Bengal.

# Come, Speak

## State's dropout rate highest in country

Govt has heeded to the demand made by INDIA bloc for a discussion on Manipur, but rejected statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

**New Delhi, July 26:** In what is clearly a move to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show up in the Lok Sabha and speak on the poignant issues plaguing the country, including the unending saga of violence and human rights abuse in Manipur, the newly-formed Opposition bloc - INDIA - moved a no-confidence motion against the NDA government which was accepted by Speaker Om Birla Wednesday. Admitting the motion moved by Congress MP from Assam Gaurav Gogoi after a head count of 50 members in its support, a mandatory requirement, the Lok Sabha Speaker said a date for a discussion on the motion will be decided after consulting the leaders of all parties. As per rules, the discussion has to be scheduled within 10 days. "The motion is admitted. I will schedule discussion on the no-confidence motion after a discus-

sion with the floor leaders of all the parties," the speaker said. While the government faces no threat as it has a brute majority in the Lok Sabha with about 332 members, the opposition parties attempt to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make a statement on Manipur violence. Significantly, the INDIA bloc has been protesting in both the Houses since July 20 over Manipur violence and demanding a statement from the Prime Minister on ethnic clashes in the north-eastern state. While the government agreed for the discussion on the issue, it did decline the demand for a statement by the Prime Minister.

As the impasse continues in both the Houses, the opposition parties Tuesday took a decision to move a no-confidence motion against the Modi government

#### WHAT WILL BJD DO

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has so far kept the cards close to its chest on the no-confidence motion. According to a senior party MP, the BJD will decide its stand on the motion when it will come up for discussion. The regional party claims to maintain equidistance from the ruling as well as opposition parties. Significantly, the BJD had staged walkout in 2018 when the TDP had moved a no-confidence motion against the Modi government.

in the Lok Sabha. The opposition hopes that the move will force the Prime Minister to make a statement on the ethnic clashes that erupted in Manipur.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi told media that the opposition is aware of its numbers in the lower house but this about Manipur's fight for justice. "We want to send a message to the people of Manipur that the Prime Minister might have forgotten Manipur but the INDIA alliance is fighting for them in the House. We want to tell PM Modi to come to the Parliament and address the nation. This violence is spreading to other states as well," Gogoi said.

Congress MP Rajeev Shukla said, "No-confidence motion has been accepted by the Speaker. Now it should be given overriding priority because normally the convention is that once a no-confidence motion comes, all other businesses are suspended and that should be taken up."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 26:** Odisha has the highest student dropout rate at secondary school level followed by Meghalaya and Bihar, according to the Education Ministry.

Union Minister of Education for State Annapurna Devi shared the data in response to a question in Rajya Sabha. According to the data, the national dropout rate for secondary school is 12.6 per cent while Odisha has a dropout rate of 27.3 per cent followed by Meghalaya 21.7 per cent, Bihar 20.5 per cent and Assam 20.3 per cent.

States with dropout rates of more than 15 per cent are Andhra Pradesh (16.3 per cent), Gujarat (17.9 per cent), Punjab (17.2 per cent) and West Bengal (18 per cent).

At primary school level, the highest dropout rate is in Manipur (13.3 per cent) followed by Meghalaya (9.8 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (9.3 per cent).

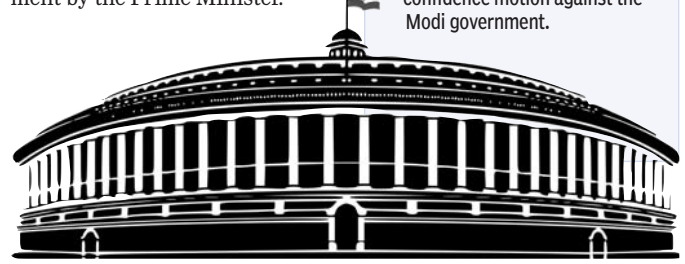
At upper-primary level, the highest dropout rate is in Meghalaya (10.6 per cent) followed by Assam (8.8 per cent) and Punjab (8 per cent).

The data shared in Parliament is that of the Department of School Education and Literacy's (DoSEL) Unified District Information System for Education Plus.

"The Government of India launched Samagra Shiksha -- an integrated scheme for

While national dropout rate for secondary school level stands at 12.6%, in Odisha it is 27.3% followed by Meghalaya 21.7%

school education -- from 2018-19 as an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education to attain 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio," Devi said.



| MARKET WATCH |          |           |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| INDEX        |          | VARIATION |
| SENSEX       | 66707.20 | ↑ 351.49  |
| NIFTY        | 19778.30 | ↑ 97.70   |
| DOLLAR       | 82.00    | ↑ ₹0.05   |
| EURO         | 90.75    | ↑ ₹0.26   |
| GOLD         | ₹59,361  | ↑ ₹172    |
| SILVER       | ₹74,638  | ↓ ₹135    |

| WEATHER  |                        |        |
|----------|------------------------|--------|
|          | BHUB                   | CTK    |
| TEMP MAX | 33.4°C                 | 32.8°C |
| TEMP MIN | 25.7°C                 | 25.5°C |
| Humidity | 94%                    | 94%    |
| Rainfall | 3.4mm                  | 4.6mm  |
| Forecast | Light to moderate rain |        |

## Blair calls on CM over devpt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** Former Prime Minister of United Kingdom Tony Blair met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas here Wednesday. Both the leaders discussed economic development and growth of Odisha and the future perspectives.

It may be mentioned here that the state government had inked an MoU with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI) July 21, 2023, as per which the latter will provide free policy support and assistance in developing a comprehensive economic strategy for Odisha.

The Chief Minister appreciated the preliminary suggestions of the institute, and expected this cooperation will help in securing a balanced indus-



trial growth and resultant inclusive benefit to citizens. Patnaik thanked Blair for the support.

The UK ex-Prime Minister also praised Patnaik for the state's success in different sectors.

He appreciated the 5T initiative for bringing transformative changes in governance.

According to officials, the TBI will deploy resources for a period of 24 months. This project team will work under the direct guidance of TBI's leadership and its network of global experts.

## RECORD HEAT Sea-ice growth halts in Antarctica

Antarctic sea ice usually reaches its nadir between February and March before regrowing over the next six months but this year it struggles to grow back

AGENCIES

**Columbia, July 26:** Antarctica, the continent at the bottom of the world, normally sees a halo of sea ice grow around it each summer (or winter, if you're in the southern hemisphere), but this year has been anything but normal. Scientists have been watching with shock as sea-ice growth stalls out in ways unseen in modern history, said a report by Bloomberg. Sea ice, unlike ice on land, has

a negligible effect on rising ocean levels. But the lack of rebound has entered territory known as "six sigma", an obscure scientific term that denotes the extraordinary situation unfolding, the report claims.

Antarctic sea ice usually reaches its nadir between February and March before regrowing over the next six months. This year, it hit an all-time low in February and has struggled to grow back. As of mid-July, there was an Argentina-sized chunk of ice missing, according to an analysis by National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC).

That's a record low for this time of the year in the satellite record of Antarctic sea ice, which goes back nearly 45 years. But "record low" doesn't encapsulate it. Enter the term "six sigma".



AS OF MID-JULY, THERE WAS AN ARGENTINA-SIZED CHUNK OF ICE MISSING, AS PER AN ANALYSIS BY NATIONAL SNOW AND ICE DATA CENTER

Scientists refer to deviations from the norm in terms of sigmas, as a way to standardise data and make it easier to compare and test hypotheses.

An event that falls within the one sigma range is something pretty close to average. Reach two sigma and you're starting to get into slightly odd territory, while three sigma events are outside the expected range of normal. The sea ice was around that level in June, according to Lettie Roach, an associate research scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Columbia University.

But something that's a five or six sigma event is extraordinary. Researchers have pegged the odds of an austral winter like this as somewhere in the range of once in about every 7.5 million years. Some days have yielded even more eye-watering odds, though focusing on a single day alone doesn't quite capture the big picture.

## SC revives Gyanvapi panel's petition

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 26:** The Supreme Court Wednesday revived a Gyanvapi panel plea it inadvertently disposed of July 24 while staying an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) survey on the mosque premises to determine if it was built upon a temple.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the Committee of Management Anjuman Intezamia of the Gyanvapi mosque. He said the main plea was disposed of by the court on the last date of hearing instead of the interim plea seeking halting of the ASI work. P9

# leisure



## CHINA BANS GALLAGHER FOR GIG ON TIBET

Britpop superstar Noel Gallagher has revealed that he is banned from China with Beijing deeming him 'an enemy of the people' because he had performed at a gig calling for freedom in Tibet.

## IDRIS ELBA NEARLY LOST HIS LIFE WHILE TRYING TO SAVE A WOMAN

English actor Idris Elba, who is well known for his roles in films such as *The Suicide Squad*, *Pacific Rim*, and *Mandela: Walk to Freedom*, has revealed that he once nearly lost his life in the US as he was held nearly at gunpoint while trying to protect a woman.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Someone new in your life is going to make you smile; remember, however, that it doesn't always have to be fur and diamonds. A song sung straight from the heart makes a greater impact, says Ganesh. Today's the right time to go out and do things which will make you proud later.

**TAURUS**  
This day you will be inclined to act tough and pick up a fight with everyone whom you are likely to encounter, warns Ganesh. Those who know you well will be at a loss to make anything out of your belligerent attitude and may not be able to keep up with you for too long.

**GEMINI**  
Today, your enthusiasm for sports and outdoor activities is palpable. According to you, variety is the spice of life. You will keep on jumping from one venture to another. You will establish a good rapport with your bosses and colleagues.

**CANCER**  
It is likely that you will reach an important milestone in life today. Keep in mind that your success may be a cause of envy for a few people, some of whom may want to harm you. You are left with two choices: either try to help them out of their troubles and miseries, or prepare for a battle.

**LEO**  
It is a good day to renew old acquaintances and make new relationships. Your friends and relatives will probably visit you today. A jovial feeling will pervade your home. You may throw a grand party for your guests, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Logic as well as emotions will hold sway in your relationships today. Emotionally you will feel a little confused and will swing between your feelings and what is actually expected of you. However, finally you will pay more heed to your inner voice rather than depending on the views of others.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh advises you not to take stress about small issues or matters. To avoid tension and to gain mental peace it is advised you perform yoga or meditation. There will be pressure put on you regarding certain matters at the work-front. You should take decisions regarding critical matters only after carefully weighing the pros and cons.

**SCORPIO**  
Retail therapy with your loved ones is a perfect recipe to have a good time! You will be more than willing to buy things of their choice. Hagging will be a trait you have closeted today as you go about being lavish in your expenses, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Tedious day in store for you as hectic work is likely to keep you one toes; this is not-so-good-news. And well, it's time for some good news now. You will do so much running around for your work, that you will actually shed a few kilos of weight. Celebrate by treating your taste-buds, but with low-cal food!

**CAPRICORN**  
Normally, others, especially colleagues get jealous of one's success, but yours is a different case. They will not only motivate you, but also guide you while you take up new projects and assignments. Not everyone is blessed with such cooperative colleagues, says Ganesh. Those of you who wish to change their current job, better wait for a while as times are not favouring you, today.

**AQUARIUS**  
God helps those who help themselves. You have experienced this plenty of times as your efforts have been paid off. While your colleagues at work may pass negative comments at your work, your boss will not have any complaints with you.

**PISCES**  
You will be able to come up trumps against the competition today. You should be wary of hidden enemies, for they might be involved in slandering you. It is best to reach out to others and make friends before they take it upon themselves to hinder your progress.

# KUBBRA REVEALS HER FRESH GOALS

**Mumbai:** Actor Kubbra Sait is entering the new decade in her life, and there's a set of new goals both personally and professionally that she wishes to accomplish. "Well, the real turnover for me happened last decade when I turned 30. However, I am entering this new decade as a more comfortable person. Imagine if I'm this level of chaos now, how much more level chaos I was 10 years ago," quips Sait, who turns 40 Thursday. "The last ten years have been great in terms of self discovery. Now, in the coming decade, starting from today, I am going to be kinder to my personal self," she says adding, "I've spent many years chasing and hustling after professional goals. Today, I am in a very secure place. I am doing things that make me proud of myself. I feel fulfilled as a human being professionally, but personally, that's a phase that I've been putting behind me. So, this year would be a year of achieving personal goals, like starting with a boyfriend." When it comes to her personal growth, Sait says accepting rejections in her career has played a big role in shaping her personality.



Actors from the neighbouring nation are hopeful of opening of borders for the artistes following the broadcast

## Pak TV show to air in India

**New Delhi:** Popular Pakistani television show *Mere Paas Tum Ho* (MPTH) will air on Zindagi channel's DTH services from August 2.

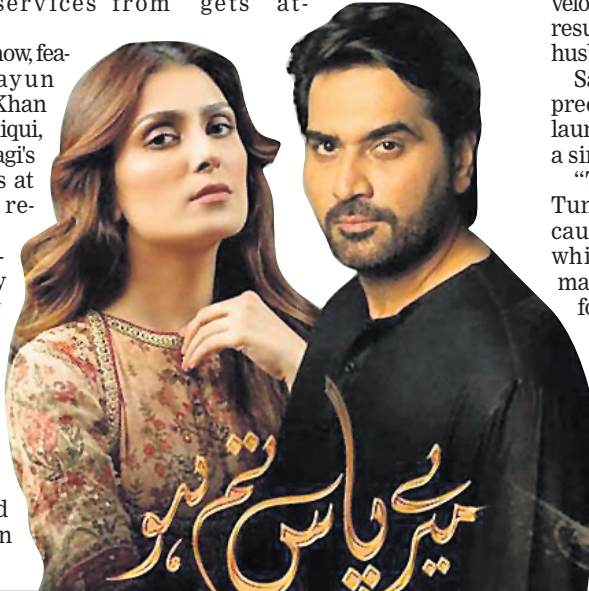
The story revolves around a married woman, named Mehwish (Khan), who gets at-

tracted and carried away by a manipulative rich businessman Shehwar (Siddiqui). The two develop an extramarital affair which results in Mehwish leaving her husband Danish (Saeed) and son.

Saeed said the series was appreciated in Pakistan when it launched there and he hopes for a similar reception in India.

"The reason for Mere Paas Tum Ho's huge success is because of its unique storyline which is different than usual making it an untouched topic for entertainment," he added.

Siddiqui added, "MPTH releasing in India is also a kind of collaboration between Pakistani drama and Indian audiences, thanks to Zindagi for creating the connecting bridge. Hope it's the first step towards opening borders for artistes."



# 'The world needs to know a lot about Odia culture'

Though Ratha Jatra, the annual Car Festival of Lord Jagannatha, is celebrated in nearly 200 nations, Odisha's art, culture, heritage and mythology are little known to the wider world. Internationally acclaimed mythologist **Devdutt Pattanaik**, in an attempt to introduce Odisha's cultural riches to non-Odias, has recently come up with an anthology of 30 short essays. Titled *Tales from the Land of Jagannatha*, the book, expectedly, centres on the Lord of the Universe. The renowned author took some time off to share with **Orissa POST** his views about several features of the book.

Below are the excerpts.

■ While there is no dearth of books on the state's culture and heritage, could you briefly state how *Tales from the Land of Jagannatha* differs from other works?  
■ My book is done from the point of view of someone who's not born and brought up in Odisha. I was raised in Mumbai and I've seen how Odisha is seen by outsiders. And that plays an important role in my work.

■ What is the objective of publishing this book, which includes writings that have previously been appreciated by readers after appearing in a number of newspapers and

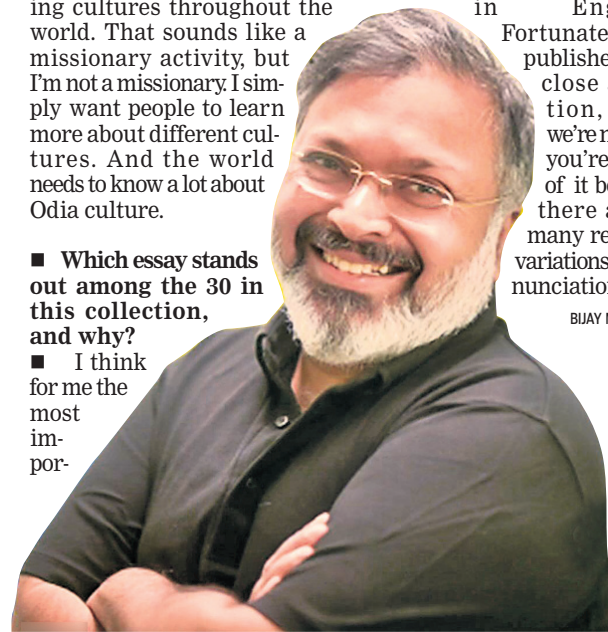
journals?  
■ The best newspapers in India reach less than 1% of the population. I've been writing for newspapers for over 20 years. I doubt people remember what they read in the newspaper seven days ago. It is a common failure of publishing columns from various newspapers. People also enjoy seeing them all together because we produce a new flavour.

■ Do you think the book, which centres on Lord Jagannatha, will aid in the spread of the Jagannath Culture globally, particularly among non-Odias?  
■ I do not believe in spreading cultures throughout the world. That sounds like a missionary activity, but I'm not a missionary. I simply want people to learn more about different cultures. And the world needs to know a lot about Odia culture.

■ Which essay stands out among the 30 in this collection, and why?  
■ I think for me the most im-

portant essay is an essay which talks about the temple of resilience that is Jagannatha. Everybody in India knows that so many temples were destroyed. But nobody talks about temples that survived, especially temples as grand as the Jagannath temple. We as Indians always talk about how we were defeated by the Muslims, by foreign invaders, we rarely highlight temples, which despite a lot of attacks survived and thrived. I think that is very important.

■ Which of the book's essays was the most difficult to write?  
■ Pronunciation was the most difficult aspect, to write words from Odia, Sanskrit, and Hindi in English. Fortunately, the publisher paid close attention, but we're not sure you're aware of it because there are so many regional variations or pronunciations.



## KALINGA LITERARY FESTIVAL PARTNERS WITH CUTTACK HERITAGE WALKS

### Bi-monthly literary fest in Silver City on July 30

**Bhubaneswar:** The organisers of Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF) are joining hands with their counterparts of Cuttack Heritage Walks (CHW) to present an extraordinary bi-monthly literary celebration in Silver City Cuttack. The event is set to take place July 30 to celebrate Cuttack's rich heritage and cultural splendor.

"As experts in showcasing the city's architectural marvels, cultural landmarks, and hidden gems, CHW is a valuable partner in our mission to explore and celebrate the heritage of this glorious city," said Rashmi Ranjan Parida, Founder & Director of Kalinga Literary Festival.

KLF Cuttack, to be held on the last Sunday in

every two months, is an attempt to engage with & celebrate Cuttack's glorious past, the vibrant present and an inspiring future, added Parida.

The event will host some of the legendary names of Odia literature such as Padma Shri Jayanta Mahapatra, actor Kuna Tripathy, poets Saroj Ranjan Mohanty, Amaresh Patnaik and Deepak Samantray among others.

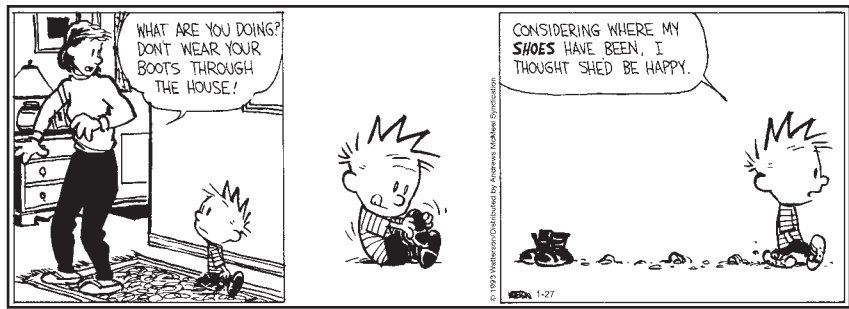
Other well known poets like Jnane Debasish Mishra, Amiya Ranjan Mohapatra, Suresh Nayak, Bijay Malla, Ranjita Nayak, Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Prof Anjuman Ara, Chinmay Jena, and Frederick Wright will also be in attendance, it was learnt.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

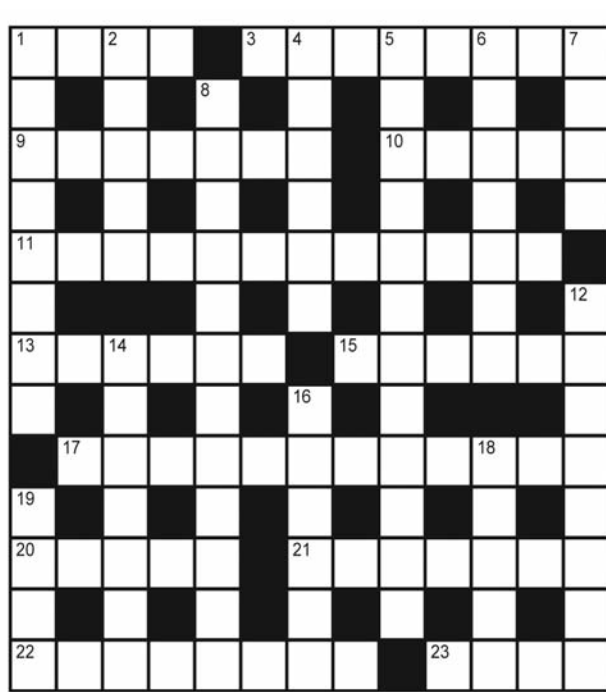


### BREVITY



### FUN post

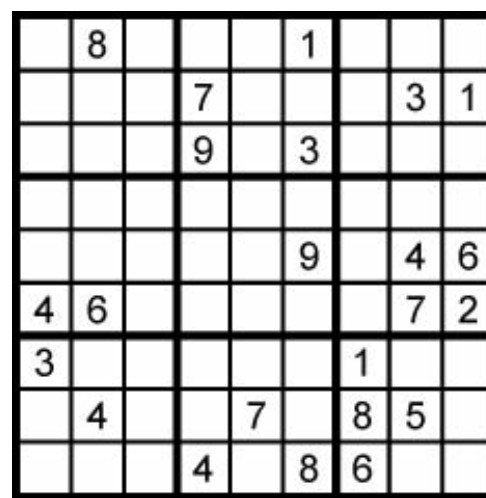
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Rooster's headdress
  - 3 Archer's weapon
  - 9 Keyed-up
  - 10 Man-made waterway
  - 11 Total authority to act (5,7)
  - 13 Back streets
  - 15 Decadent; pathetic
  - 17 Type of situation (4-3-5)
  - 20 Rah!, e.g.
  - 21 Hand over
  - 22 Fought back
  - 23 Bond
  - Down**
  - 1 BBQ item
  - 2 Kitchen utensil
  - 4 Consequence
  - 5 Subordinate role (6,6)
  - 6 Female spirit (Irish folklore)
  - 7 Pack animal
  - 8 Type of club, unfortunately (6,6)
  - 12 Aquarium denizen (3,5)
  - 14 Mills about
  - 16 Jittery (2,4)
  - 18 Smithy's tool
  - 19 Melee memento

### 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

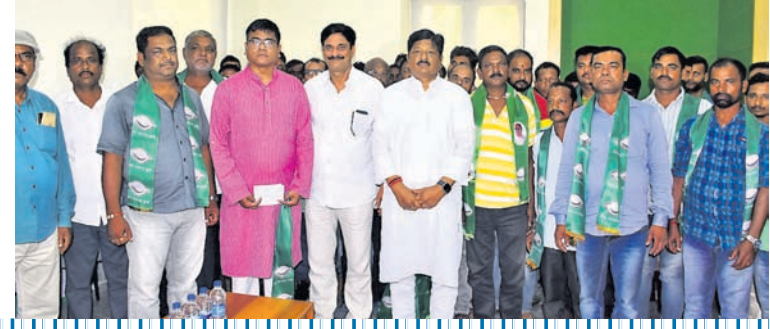


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## SUPPORT POURS IN

BJP workers from Nimapara join ruling BJD at Sankha Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



# PREZ FOR SPEEDY JUSTICE

President Droupadi Murmu offers prayers at Chandi Temple, visits Netaji Birthplace Museum, SCBMCH and NLUO in the Silver City

PNN & AGENCIES

**Cuttack, July 26:** President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday paid tribute to the heroes of Kargil War on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas here and also called upon those connected with the Orissa High Court to work for the speedy dispensation of justice.

Murmu, who is on a three-day visit to her home state, paid her homage to those who made their supreme sacrifice for the country in the 1999 war with Pakistan and recounted the valour of Padmapani Acharya from Odisha who was bestowed the Mahavir Chakra.

Addressing the valedictory function on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the establishment of Orissa High Court, the President called upon those connected with it to work for the speedy dispensation of justice and set an example for the country.

Murmu exhorted all concerned to work expeditiously to free the innocent who are languishing behind the bars on trivial charges.

Iterating the adage that 'justice delayed is justice denied', the President said due to the delayed justice many people lose the prime period of the lives. The victims too lose their hopes to see the guilty being punished by the court during their lifetime.

"This is a subject close to my heart and I have spoken about it on previous occasions also," she said.

The President reminded the legal fraternity of the court of the failures in the justice delivery system and asked the judges to fulfil their fundamental duties.

Murmu said that the authors of the Constitution gave priority to the delivery of justice to the socially and economically underprivileged sections of the society. People from such sections of the society neither have much knowledge nor re-

## Focus on research: Murmu to SCB medicos

President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday urged the students of SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) here to focus on research.

While addressing the annual function of SCBMCH, Murmu said developing new medicines is as important as prescribing the existing one.

"Hence, students should focus on research as it would give a new identity to Indian medical scientists in the world," she said.

The President said medical profession is a vow of serv-

ice. One cannot become a good doctor until one has sincerity towards service and commitment to the society.

Healthcare is important for any society, she said, adding, "With the advancement in medical sciences, we have been able to save precious lives."

The President was happy to note that once a small Pilgrim Hospital, SCBMCH has become one of the leading institutions where people not only from Odisha but also from other eastern states come for treatment.

## 'Dedicate time for underprivileged'

President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday called on law students to dedicate some part of their professional time to serving the unserved or underprivileged.

Addressing the convocation of National Law University, Odisha (NLUO) here, she urged the students to devote at least a small part of their professional activities in helping the poor and the weak with a sense of genuine compassion. Murmu said a very large number of underprivileged and vulnerable fellow citizens do not even know about their rights and entitlements, nor do they have the means to move the courts to seek relief or justice. It is the duty of the law students to dedicate some part of their professional time to serve the unserved or underprivileged.

sources to access justice. Therefore there is a need for 'deep churning' on the question how will they get justice.

Murmu, who is paying her third visit to her home state for the third time since assuming office a year ago, remembered the Kargil war heroes

and paid her tributes to the soldiers who made their supreme sacrifice for their motherland in 1999.

She said the legal profession in the country has stood the test of time and has earned the trust and respect of its citizens. She congratulated the country's judiciary for being one of the pillars of the world's largest democracy.

Commending the changes witnessed by the Orissa High Court during the past 75 years since Independence, she said any institution which does not change with time lags behind.

"I am told that the High Court of Orissa has endeavoured to incorporate technological advancements in the justice delivery system," Murmu said and complimented the HC's initiatives to streamline and accelerate the pace through several modern innovative and technology-driven changes.

Noting that natural calamities pose a challenge to humanity, Murmu said adaptation to nature is the need of the hour. Along with the executive and legislature, the judiciary should also give top priority to environment and wildlife protection.

The President also released a souvenir on the occasion.



MUSEUM OF JUSTICE



CHANDI TEMPLE



NLUO



NETAJI BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM



SCBMCH



CITIZENS PATIENTLY WAIT TO WELCOME THE PRESIDENT IN CUTTACK

## 8 YRS & COUNTING

# Coastal highway nonstarter

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** Although eight years have passed into its announcement in 2015, work for the ambitious coastal highway project is yet to begin, according to Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Wednesday.

Replying to a query of BJD MP Sasmit Patra in Rajya Sabha, Gadkari said the project is divided into two parts—Rameshwar (near Tangi) to Ratanpur, having a length of about 176 km, and Ratanpur to Digha, with a length of about 170 km.

The Union minister said the stretch from Rameshwar to Ratanpur has been divided into four packages for implementation. "While three packages are under bidding stage, the fourth one is under DPR preparation stage,"



he said, adding that work for preparation of DPR for Ratanpur-Digha section has been awarded. "The projects under coastal highway viz. Rameshwar (near Tangi) to Ratanpur and Ratanpur to Digha are not yet sanctioned and it is premature to ascertain the estimated cost at this stage," Gadkari informed the House.

Earlier in March, Gadkari, in a reply to the Upper House, had said that work of preparation of DPR for Rameshwar-Ratanpur

section was taken up and the final DPR was submitted January 23, 2023. The total expected expenditure, including land acquisition, for this section of the project is estimated to be around ₹8,000 crore. The alignment for Ratanpur-Digha stretch has been finalised and it is targeted for award in FY 2023-24. The work would take approximately 30 months for completion from its commencement, as per Gadkari's March statement.

# 2 new guests at NZP fall ill

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, July 26:** Two of the four new animals, who were brought to the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here from the Itanagar zoo in Arunachal Pradesh Tuesday, reportedly took ill, Wednesday.

NZP sources said a female leopard cat and a female hoolock gibbon have been kept in quarantine and their health is being constantly monitored by experts from the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT).

Nevertheless, the incident has raised a question mark on the competence of the zoo veterinarians.

On Tuesday, two leopard cats and an equal number of hoolock gibbons were brought to NZP under an exchange programme.

# 325 PGTs JOIN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

# Encourage students to follow 'own' dreams, CM tells teachers

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik called upon teachers to encourage students to pursue their own dreams which will help them succeed in life.

"If students are encouraged to pursue their own dreams, and, not that of the parents, or the dreams guided by conventional wisdom, then, I believe, there will be no stopping in their path to success," Patnaik said in his address to the first batch of 325 Post Graduate Teachers who were appointed in Higher Secondary schools, under the School & Mass Education de-

partment, during the 'Nijukti Parva' at Lok Seba Bhawan, Wednesday. These teachers will impart education in 21 subjects.

The CM told the teachers that they were the first batch of Post Graduate Teachers at Higher Secondary level, a crucial stepping stone in a student's career. "From here, the students can have a whole world of opportunities for them. As teachers, you should try to understand the students, their potential, and their passion," he added.

Stating that 'Education' is a top priority of the government, Patnaik said under 5T programme, more than 6,800 High Schools have undergone signif-

icant transformation.

To provide more access to Higher Secondary Education, the government has recently upgraded 110 High Schools to Higher Secondary Schools. Over 900 teaching and non-teaching posts have been sanctioned for these schools, he added.

Congratulating the toppers of the annual Higher Secondary Examination 2023, the CM said the topper students are jewels of the state.

He hoped they will continue to excel in career, life, and contribute immensely towards the society. 17 toppers in different streams were felicitated on the occasion.

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# State delegation holds talks with top US cos

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** The state government delegation, which is now in the Silicon Valley, USA, Wednesday engaged in a series of discussions with high-ranking officials of multiple leading business organisations to attract investment in Odisha.

In the first focused meeting of the day, the delegation visited the manufacturing site of Sanmina Corporation, and met its Co-founder and Chairman Jure Sola and other officials. Sanmina Corporation is one of the largest global independent manufacturers of Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs) and a leading electronics services provider that serves Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

The delegation gave a detailed presentation on Odisha's industrial ecosystem to the Sanmina team and briefed it on the various incentives available under Odisha's different policies. Sanmina team was impressed by the support and the generous package of incentives the Odisha government provides to companies.

The company also gave a presentation to the state delegation,

providing details of its products and solutions as well as expansion plans. It further added that it is looking favourably at India for expansion and diversification of its global supply base.

The company has expressed its intent to submit a detailed proposal to the state government at the earliest. The delegation assured all possible support in facilitating the investment journey and highlighted the customized and curated package of incentives which are available based on investment size.

The delegation also visited the premises of Palo Alto Networks, a leading cyber security firm and met its senior VP and GM Anand Oswal.

The delegation and the Palo Alto team discussed collaboration opportunities in a range of areas which include providing solutions for a cyber-security focused centre of excellence, assistance in developing Odisha's Cyber Security Policy, and supporting Odisha Cyber Security Operations Centre through automation.

To augment nature conservation efforts in Odisha and adopt best global practices, the delegation met with George Jacob, President and CEO of

BayEcoTarium. It is the largest watershed conservation organisation in San Francisco and is a combination of institutions, united under one mission to protect and conserve the Bay Area ecosystems.

BayEcoTarium also submitted a letter of intent to provide help in establishing a living oceanarium and a sustainable design museum in the state.

In a meeting at Stanford University, the delegation interacted with the distinguished professor and founder of Rambus, Mark Horowitz. He founded Rambus which designs, develops, and licenses chip interface technologies and architectures and played an instrumental role in the company's transformation into a global player.

The delegation briefed him on Odisha's O-Chip program under which infrastructure, design, and training support will be provided to companies and startups.

Horowitz's advisory support, given his vast experience, will greatly aid the development of a semiconductor ecosystem in the state and in the flourishing of Intellectual Property (IP) ventures.



**GLORIOUS VICTORY:** Utkal University students in celebratory mood as they pose for photo-op on Kargil Vijay Diwas in front of university main gate in Vani Vihar, Wednesday

## CM pays tributes to soldiers on Kargil Vijay Diwas

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** On the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik paid tributes to the bravery and courage of the soldiers who made supreme sacrifice for the nation, Wednesday.

In his official social media account CM said, "Tributes to the

bravery and courage of our soldiers who made supreme sacrifice for the nation in Kargil War. On Kargil Vijay Diwas, join the nation to offer homage to all the martyrs who showcased fearless determination and leadership to protect every inch of our motherland," he said.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated July 26 in honour of the

Kargil War heroes and to observe India's victory over Pakistan.

July 26, 1999, the Kargil War came to an end, with Indian soldiers successfully recapturing mountain heights that had been seized by Pakistani intruders. There were many more who laid down their lives during the war. It was their raw valour and steely

resolve that gave India a decisive victory.

As many as 527 soldiers laid down their lives while over 1,300 sustained injuries during Operation VIJAY as the Indian Army repulsed an attack by Pakistan. Among the martyrs are several Odia soldiers who were forefront warriors and laid their lives for the motherland.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Sasmita, Spouse of EX-HAV Ramesh Chandra Samal, resident of Udayanathpur, PO-Ratalanga, Tehsil/PS-Binjharpur, Dist- Jajpur, Odisha, Pin- 755004, have changed my name from Sasmita to Sasmita Samal, vide affidavit dated 18.07.2023 before Notary, Jajpur.

By virtue of affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Chatrapur, I, Kailash Chandra Agarwal, S/o Late Prabhu Dayal Agarwal as per my Aadhaar Card ..... 7655 and Pan Card No. ADTPA 9146R but in my Passport (J3043879/17.04.2012) recorded as Kailash Chandra Agrwal. Both Kailash Chandra Agarwal & Kailash Chandra Agrwal are one and same person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Kailash Chandra Agarwal in all correspondences.

I, Sarita Chakraborty, W/o Abhijet Chakraborty, resident of 260/1393, Cuttack Road Bhubaneswar - 751006 Odisha, declare by virtue of affidavit No.23 Dated - 08.09.2021, that I shall be known as Sorita Chakraborty for all future purposes.

## Aakash Byju's launches 'ANTHE' 2023



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** Aakash Byju's unveiled the 14th edition of Aakash National Talent Hunt Exam (ANTHE 2023) in Bhubaneswar Wednesday.

The flagship annual scholarship exam presents the chance for Class VII-XII students to unleash their potential with up to 100 per cent scholarships and remarkable cash awards.

Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) CEO Abhishek Maheshwari said, "ANTHE opens doors for students to prepare for NEET and IIT-JEE exams at their own pace, wherever they may be. We anticipate strong participation in ANTHE 2023 and remain steadfast in our mission of propelling students closer to a promising future."

ANTHE scholarship recipients can enroll in Aakash and re-

ceive expert guidance and mentorship to prepare for various exams, including NEET, JEE, state CETs, School/Board exams, and competitive scholarships like NTSE and Olympiads.

An exciting addition for students this year is the chance for 100 students from various classes to win a 5-day all-expenses paid trip to a National Science Expedition.

ANTHE 2023 will take place from October 7 to 15 in both online and offline modes across 26 states and union territories in India. ANTHE online will be held between 10am and 9pm during all exam days, while the offline exams will be conducted October 8 and 15 in two shifts i.e. 10:30am to 11:30am and 4pm to 5pm at all 315+ centers of Aakash Byju's across the country. Students can choose a one-hour slot convenient to them.

## Ex-Min bats for 27% reservation for OBC, SEBC

**Bhubaneswar:** Former Union Minister Srikanth Jena Wednesday wrote a letter to Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCB) chairperson Raghunath Biswal urging him to suggest the state government to implement 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC). He said that by not providing 27 per cent reservation, OBC and SEBC students lost about 4,000 seats in MBBS and thousands in engineering and other technical education and thousands are losing job opportunities every year for the last 20 years. He said that Odisha is the only state in the country where 'no' reservation is available in education for OBC/SEBC students though it was implemented from 2005 by government of India in all central universities and educational institutions.

# This robotic hand rotates objects using touch, not vision

Inspired by the effortless way humans handle objects without seeing them, a team of US engineers has developed a new robotic hand that can rotate objects solely through touch, without relying on vision.

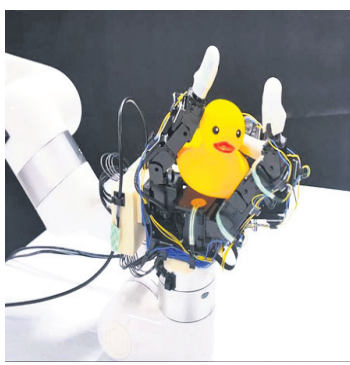
The robotic hand built by a team from the University of California San Diego can smoothly rotate a wide array of objects, from small toys, cans, and even fruits and vegetables, without bruising or squishing them.

The work could aid in the development of robots that can manipulate objects in the dark, said the team who recently presented their work at the 2023 Robotics: Science and Systems Conference in Daegu, South Korea.

To build their system, the researchers attached 16 touch sensors to the palm and fingers of a four-fingered robotic hand. Each sensor costs about \$12 and serves a simple function: detect whether an object is touching it or not.

What makes this approach unique is that it relies on many low-cost, low-resolution touch sensors that use simple, binary signals - touch or no touch - to perform robotic in-hand rotation. These sensors are spread over a large area of the robotic hand.

This contrasts with a variety of other approaches that rely on a few high-cost, high-resolution touch sensors affixed to a small area of the robotic hand, primarily at the fingertips.



"We show that we don't need details about an object's texture to do this task," said Xiaolong Wang, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at UC San Diego, who led the current study.

The robotic hand built by a team from the University of California San Diego can smoothly rotate a wide array of objects, from small toys, cans, and even fruits and vegetables, without bruising or squishing them

The work could aid in the development of robots that can manipulate objects in the dark, said the team who recently presented their work at the 2023 Robotics: Science and Systems Conference in Daegu, South Korea

"We just need simple binary signals of whether the sensors have touched the object or not, and these are much easier to simulate and transfer to the real world," Wang added.

The researchers further noted

that having a large coverage of binary touch sensors gives the robotic hand enough information about the object's 3D structure and orientation to successfully rotate it without vision.

The system assesses which sensors on the hand are being touched by the object at any given time point during the rotation. It also assesses the current positions of the hand's joints, as well as their previous actions.

Using this information, the system tells the robotic hand which joint needs to go where in the next time point.

The researchers then tested their system on the real-life robotic hand with objects like a tomato, pepper, a can of

peanut butter and a toy rubber duck.

The robotic hand was able to rotate a variety of objects without stalling or losing its hold. Wang and his team are now working on extending their approach to more complex manipulation tasks.

They are currently developing techniques to enable robotic hands to catch, throw and juggle, for example. "In-hand manipulation is a very common skill that we humans have, but it is very complex for robots to master," said Wang. "If we can give robots this skill, that will open the door to the kinds of tasks they can perform."

## NATIONAL REFRESHMENT DAY

# A glassful makes the day

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** National Refreshment Day is observed on the fourth Thursday of July, every year. The Day draws attention to the much-needed de-stressing activities people need to do for peace of mind and, of course, a healthy body.

The repetitive work schedule in the 21st-century with all the gadgets and daily grind leaves many of us feeling drained and exhausted to the point that even lifting a finger feels like the biggest chore. Moreover, be it summer heat or the monsoon moist, it leaves all with a crashing feeling.

Nevertheless, away from the cool confines of air-con chambers, one can also unwind and chill with a sip of a refreshing drink and light food. And that is precisely the reason to observe the 'National Refreshment Day'; to promote the super liquids which have branched out to hundreds of varieties these days.

Needless to say, once recharged with a glass of freshening drink, one can be more productive and better able to carry out the day's work with élan.

In food trucks lined up in the



by-lanes of Bhubaneswar selling multi-cuisine, it has now become common to find an extra counter offering sassy unfamiliar drinks. The very sight of the rows of colorful fruit mixes arranged in transparent containers beholds the patron, irrespective of age or profile.

Food truck owner Tukuna Sahu advanced reasons for his decision to include refreshing drinks to his food menu. "It came through observations."

Elaborating, Sahu, who's been in the business at Saheed Nagar for nearly four years now, said, "People mostly order cold or masala drinks after dinner in restaurants. While at food trucks, they usually have food and then hit ice cream parlours for desserts or drinks. That gave me an idea to add a few re-

freshment drinks to the menu. And it clicked," he added.

Sahu now offers food & drink combos and said customers mostly go for soothing mojitos, lemonades and shakes after a heavy meal. "And we make good profit by serving these drinks," Sahu said with a beaming face.

"Tea and coffee are the oldest refreshments. Therefore, I thought of sticking to the tradition with a touch of modernization", said Sharat Sahoo, founder, Tapri Time.

"One of my greatest joys is serving a variety of tea to customers. I believe a well-brewed cup of tea can create moments of comfort and relaxation. I find immense satisfaction in seeing the glint on customers' faces as they savor the flavors I serve" he said.

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# Malnutrition malady forces state to moot action plan

SEVERAL CHILDREN RESIDING IN SUKINDA AND DANAGADI BLOCKS IN JAJPUR DISTRICT ARE AFFLICTED WITH MALNUTRITION



has defeated the government's plan of eradicating malnutrition.

In his petition Das had alleged that over 50-60 children residing in Kiajhar, Ranagundi, Salijanga, Nadijhar, Trijanga in Danagadi block have been afflicted with malnutrition while naming 14 of the affected children. The Orissa High Court heard the matter and directed the state government to take necessary steps on reducing the number of malnourished children.

The meeting also decided to issue directions to state School and Mass Education department to provide dry ration and study materials to children who are unable to study in schools either due to physical disability or health related reasons. The school authorities will have to visit the houses of such children on regular basis. They will visit the houses of children on first seven days of reopening of schools and encourage the guardians to admit their wards in the schools.

They should ensure that no child is deprived of availing education. The Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department was also directed to ensure that no beneficiary is devoid of benefits under National Food Security Act and state food security scheme. If a person does not have an Aadhaar card, they should be provided ration for three months and an Aadhaar card has to be prepared for them during this period.

The Chief Secretary also directed the state Women and Child Development department to launch a campaign to identify children suffering from acute malnutrition and provide them necessary treatment. The district Collectors, Panchayati Raj, Drinking Water Supply, Health and Family Welfare departments were also directed to take necessary steps to remove malnutrition.

state government.

Attending the meeting, state Chief Secretary directed to launch programmes on mass scale to uproot malnutrition from the state and ensure availability of the benefits of welfare schemes to all eligible beneficiaries.

Reports said several children residing in Sukinda and Danagadi blocks in Jajpur district are afflicted with malnutrition.

Rescue of three children severely affected by malnutrition from Tata Colony Anganwadi centre by director Lingaraj Panda of state Women and Child Development department and their subsequent admission in nutrition rehabilitation centre (NRC), July 14, 2023 is a case in this point.

The state government is spending a lot in preparation of 'sattu' which is provided as a nutritious food to the children. Funds worth ₹17 crore are being spent on preparation of 'sattu' through 16 self-help groups (SHGs) in Jajpur district. It is alleged that some of the SHGs have turned it into a business and are more interested to earn profits. This

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 26:** Nothing has changed after the malnutrition death of several children in Jajpur district seven years back as the lingering malady continues to haunt the children in state, a report said Wednesday.

While Jajpur administration is yet to wake up and take remedial steps, realising the gravity of the situation, the state government has prepared a blueprint to address the problem.

The matter came to the fore after the state Women and Child Development department in a meeting decided to prepare an action plan on reducing the number of children affected by acute malnutrition to zero by the end of 2023, June 8, this year.

The meeting was convened following filing of public interest litigation (12966/2023) by social activist Mantu Das in the Orissa High Court on the issue.

Moreover, all the district Collectors were directed to include children, including the school going and those out of schools, in their respective districts under the food security scheme floated by the

## 5 JMC students of Central University bag placements

**Koraput:** Five students from the department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) of the Central University of Odisha, Koraput, have received placements in government, public, and private sectors. The placed students include Aniruddha Jena of MAJMC (2013-15) batch and MPhil (2017) joined as assistant professor at IIM, Kashipur (Uttarakhand); Joydev Mazumdar of MAJMC (2017-19) batch joined as a management trainee in Rourkela Steel Plant; Pramod Tadingi of MAJMC (2020-22) batch joined as assistant superintendent in Odisha State Warehousing Corporation; Amisha Sargharia of MAJMC (2021-23) batch joined as executive trainee in corporate communication in TPNODL, Balasore and Mritsa Hota of MAJMC (2021-23) batch joined as PR executive in JB Consultancy & Strategies, Bhubaneswar. Prof Chakradhar Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, CUO, expressed great satisfaction and congratulated the department's achievers and teachers.

## COP SHOTS SELF, CRITICALLY INJURED

**Koraput:** An officer of the Odisha Police sustained critical injuries on the left side of his face after shooting himself with an AK-47 rifle at the office of the superintendent of police (SP) in Koraput district Wednesday, a senior officer said. The injured policeman, identified as 37-year-old deputy subedar Narendra Biswal, a sub-inspector rank officer posted in the anti-Naxal unit of the district police, was admitted to Sahid Laxman Nayak Medical College and Hospital and later shifted to Visakhapatnam in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh as his condition deteriorated, he said. The incident took place around 11.40am at Biswal's chamber situated inside the district police headquarters at Koraput. Preliminary investigation suggests it was a suicide bid but the reason is yet to be ascertained, DIG (south-western range) Charan Singh Meena said, adding further investigation is underway.

## Youth awarded 20 yrs RI for minor's rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 26:** Berhampur special POCOS court judge Prabhat Kumar Rajguru Wednesday convicted a youth for raping a minor girl and sentenced him to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) along with a fine of ₹10,000. The convict Santosh Naik (36) will have to undergo additional 12 months of imprisonment if he fails to pay the fine, the judge ordered.

According to sources, the 12-year-old girl had gone to her sister-in-law's house during the Dussehra holidays October 24 in 2018. She was playing with some of her friends in the afternoon when Naik, a resident of Bhanjagiri under Bhanjanagar police limits, took the girl to Rampur

forest on a motorcycle after luring her and raped her there on the same day.

After committing the crime he dropped the girl on the embankment of a canal near the village. The victim then first informed her sister about the matter then her sister lodged a complaint at Bhanjanagar police station.

Police then registered a case and launched an investigation. Police arrested the accused Santosh Naik November 9, 2018 and forwarded him to court. The then investigating officer and IIC of Bhanjanagar police station Sundipta Kumar Sahu submitted the chargesheet in court. After his arrest, Santosh was lodged at Berhampur circle jail as an UTP.

## Setting up of mega park on schedule

RECREATIONAL AREA BEING DEVELOPED AT A COST OF OVER ₹23 CRORE

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, July 26:** The recreational park which is being constructed on the banks of the Koel river which flows through this city, will be completed as per schedule, officials of the Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) informed Tuesday. The OFDC is building the park in association with Rourkela Smart City Limited.

OFDC divisional manager Bijay Rout claimed that the work for setting up the park is on schedule. "The project will be completed as per schedule November 30, 2023. I assure you that there will not be any delay. Work is progressing smoothly and we are not facing any hindrances," Rout claimed.

The park is coming up on 36 acres of land and is being built at a cost of ₹23.68 crore. Initially the plan was to build the park on 24 acres, but later



on 12 more acres were added to the project.

"Following the increase in the park area, the cost was revised and it went up to over ₹23 crore. The boundary walls of the park have now been stretched close to Koel river. Visitors to the park can now have a closer glimpse of the river," Rout stated.

The majority of the civil work has been completed and now land-

scaping is on. The rainy season has slowed the project a little bit. However, the officials are not worried and are confident that the project will finish on time.

Rout also informed about the facilities that will be available in the huge park. "There will be two artificial ponds with boating facilities. There will also be a food court. We will also have facilities for conducting marriages and other functions," Rout said.

"However, the main attraction of the park is the yoga platform and a garden with medicinal plants. A watch tower will also come up which will help visitors have a panoramic view of the whole park," added Rout.

Among other attractions at the park will be a skating rink and facilities for sports lovers. The riverfront view will also definitely attract a huge number of visitors, officials added.

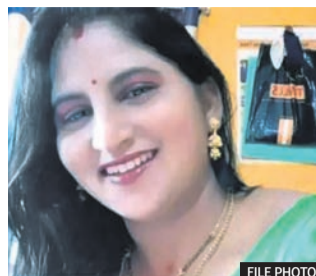
# Dayal Ashram caretaker's sensational claim

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, July 26:** A caretaker of Dayal Ashram in Bhubaneswar has made a sensational claim regarding lensman Manas Swain murder case as she deposed in the court and recorded her statement as a witness in the much-hyped murder case, Wednesday.

Caretaker Sarojini Seth alias Soni deposed in the court of district and sessions judge and recorded her statement as the fourth witness. The counsel for the defendant failed to interrogate her due to lack of time. The court scheduled the next date of hearing to August 2 when the defendant's lawyer can interrogate her.

In her statement, Sarojini said that she came to Bhubaneswar from Ranpur in Nayagarh district searching for a job and worked under Sharmistha Rout, the owner of Dayal Ashram. She took leave and went to her house January 22, 2022 after being per-



mitted by Sharmistha but had to rush back, January 29 after being directed by the latter.

After her arrival, Sarojini went to the office of Sampurna web channel owned by Sharmistha which was at some distance from the Dayal Ashram. There she found Sharmistha, Jhuna Bhoi, Niranjan Sethi and others.

There she heard them talking about getting the camera chip back from cameraman Manas Swain. All of them came to the ashram the next day and made video call to Manas telling him to return the camera chip. Manas informed them that they

have to come to Chandbali and refused to return the camera chip unless they pay him ₹10,000.

Later, all of them discussed how to bring back Manas from Chandbali. The next day, February 7, she visited Sharmistha's house on some work but found her absent. There she talked to her sister-in-law when Sharmistha and Jhuna Bhoi arrived.

When enquired by Sharmistha's sister-in-law, Jhuna informed her of having brought back Manas by staying awake all night. Jhuna made a video call and showed Manas sitting inside a car along with three others when Sharmistha's sister-in-law wanted to see him.

Later, they brought Manas to the ashram. There he was thrashed black and blue, dragged by his collar to the top floor and brutally assaulted again. They snatched wallet and ATM card from his pocket and locked him up inside the room.

All of them again came back in evening and brutally assaulted Manas with bamboo stick and wooden plank. At that time, Sarojini was watching television on the ground floor. She confirmed in her statement that she heard the sound of assault on Manas. Later, all of them closed the door from outside and went away.

Next day morning, she found out that Manas was missing from the room and found some broken pieces of bamboo stick and wooden plank in the room. There she found a handwritten letter of Manas with his address written on it along with his appeal to rescue him.

Sharmistha flung the letter and the fragments of bamboo stick and wooden plank out of the window when she informed her about the letter.

She came to know about Manas's death when media-persons arrived at their ashram, she said in her statement.

## Nuagaon Road-Daspalla rly line construction over

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 26:** The construction of the Nuagaon Road-Daspalla Railway Section, part of the ongoing Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project, has been completed.

Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) South Eastern Circle, Kolkata, AM Choudhary inspected the 15.445-km rail line between Nuagaon Road and Daspalla Railway Section of the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project Wednesday.

All safety-related works on the new line were inspected and thoroughly checked before commissioning.

Chowdhary examined safety aspects such as overhead equipment, bridges, signal and telecommunication equipment, railway track, and manned level crossings. Additionally, a speed trial was also conducted between Daspalla and Nuagaon Road Stations to review the safety aspects of the section.

The Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project will boost the economy of the region and foster socio-cultural connections between Western Odisha and Coastal Odisha, apart from promoting tourism.

Out of the 301 km length of the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project, a total of 142.505 km has been completed, including approximately 106 km from Khurda Road to Daspalla and 36 km from Bolangir to Khambeswarapalli.

EOCR also aims to complete an additional 84 km of rail line from Khambeswarapalli to Purunakatak in the fiscal year 2023-24.

## Vig sleuths unearth DA worth crores from AE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, July 26:** Vigilance sleuths Wednesday unearthed disproportionate assets worth crores of rupees from the possession of an assistant engineer of General Public Health (GPH) section, Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district.

Acting on the allegation of possession of assets disproportionate to the known sources of income by assistant engineer Kishore Chandra Sahu, the simultaneous house searches were being conducted by officials at as many as three



places, Vigilance sources said. During the search, the team detected a triple-storied building with an approximate valuation of ₹1.10 crore, two plots, bank and insurance deposits over ₹1.03 crore, cash amounting to ₹2.65 lakh, 235 gram gold



ornaments along with other assets and properties linked to Sahu.

The measurement and valuation of the buildings/plots were being carried out by the Vigilance technical wing and the searches were on, it was learnt.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. O-473**

**"e" Procurement Notice**

e-mail ID: [rw\\_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in](mailto:rw_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in), Phone No.: 0663-2401850  
No. 3564 Date: 25.07.2023

**Bid Identification No. TENDER ONLINE SBPR - 02 of 23-24**

- Name of the Work : Road Works as per DTCN available in the website: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)
- Total No. of Work : 21 (Twenty One) Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.1.26 lakhs to Rs.25.21 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 01 (One) to 03 (Three) Calendar Months
- Period and time of availability of bid document in the portal for bidding : 03.08.2023 at 11.00 A.M. to 11.08.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.
- Date and time of opening of Tender : 14.08.2023 at 11.00 A.M.
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : S.E.R.W. Divn., Sambalpur

(1) Other details can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website: [www.tendersodishagov.in](http://www.tendersodishagov.in).  
(2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website: [www.tenderodisha.gov.in](http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in).

Sd./- Superintending Engineer  
Rural Works Division, Sambalpur

OIPR-25076/11/0002/2324

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**

Tender Notice No. ST-OT-SIDING-  
JKR-326, Dt : 20.07.2023

**NAME OF WORK: SIGNAL & TELECOM WORK OF PROPOSED MML/PFT SIDING OF CONCOR OF JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD STATION OF KHURDARA ROAD DIVISION.**

Tender Value: ₹ 2,71,45,155.90, EMD: ₹ 2,85,700/-

Bidding Start Date: 28.07.2023.

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1100 Hrs. of 11.08.2023.

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

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

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

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer,  
PR-386/0/23-24 Khurda Road

**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, JATNI**

Phone:-0674-2490826, Mail-municipalityjatni@gmail.com  
No:3461 Date:25.07.2023

**"e" Procurement Notice**

No.C-909:Bid Documents consisting of Work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, time of completion, Class of contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

- Tender Reference No : EO/JMC/068/2023-24
- Tender I.D No. : 2023\_ORULB\_91014\_1 to 2
- Name of the Work : Civil Construction works as mentioned in website
- No. of works : 02 nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs.16,35,171/- and Rs. 42,11,109/-
- Period of Completion : 30 days
- Date and Time of Bidding : 27/07/2023 to 10/08/2023 up to 05:30pm
- Last date and time for receipt of bids in the portal : 10/08/2023 up to 05:30 pm
- Bids received online shall be opened on : 11/08/2023 at 11.00 am
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, Jatni Municipality

Further details can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

Sd./- Executive Officer  
Jatni Municipality

OIPR-13041/11/0020/2324

**INTEGRATED TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, KUCHINDA, DIST: SAMBALPUR**

Email: [itda-kuchinda@gov.in](mailto:itda-kuchinda@gov.in)  
No.CAD-1448: **e-Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No: ITDAKCD-03/2023-24  
Letter No.668/ Dated 25.07.2023

- The Project Administrator, ITDA, Kuchinda on behalf of the Govt. of Odisha in pursuance to OM No.12586/W Dt.09.09.2022 of Works Department, Government of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bids in online mode single cover system through e-procurement for execution of works as detailed in DTCN from the eligible CDMS registration contractors.
- No. of works= 12 (Twelve) Civil Works.
- Put to Tender Amount: Varies from Rs.10.00 Lakh to Rs.27.00 Lakh
- Class of contractor: "D", "C" & "B"
- Date & Time of available in website & receipt of bids: From 10.00 AM of 28.07.2023 to 5.00 PM of 06.08.2023.
- Last date of submission online bid at 5.00 PM of Dt.06.08.2023.
- Date of opening & scrutiny of technical bid: Dt.11.08.2023 at 10.00 AM onwards.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).
- Any corrigendum/addendum will be displayed in the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in) / through I & PR Department, Govt. of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- The rules under OPWD Code regarding tender process will prevail.
- Name & address of officer inviting tender: Project Administrator, ITDA, Kuchinda, Dist-Sambalpur.

Sd./-Project Administrator  
ITDA, Kuchinda  
OIPR-26074/11/0004/2324

**Bank of India**

Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(Rule-8(1)) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Chakeisiani Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Co-Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Chakeisiani Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

| CHAKEISIANI BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Borrower  | Liabilities due as per Notice               | Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession | Description of the Immovable Property   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Borrower: Mrs. Bandana Paikray, W/o: Mr. Prashanta Sharma / Co-Borrower: Mr. Prashanta Sharma, S/o: Mr. Upendra  | ₹ 31,50,222/- + interest & expenses thereon | 18.04.2023 / 21.07.2023                   | All that part and parcel of Land and Building situated over Khata No.: 194, Plot No.: 63, Sub Plot No.: 4, Area: Ac.0.036 Dec., i.e. 1560sqft, Kissam: Homestead at Plaza, Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar - 751002 |
| Dist.: Khurda Standing in the name of Mrs. Bandana Paikray, W/o: Mr. Prashanta Sharma, Bounded by North: Road Left out from Plot No.: 63, South: Plot No.: 64, East: Rest part of Plot No.: 63 and West: Rest part of Plot No.: 63 |   |   |   |

**Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 27.07.2023**

**Authorised Officer, Bank of India**

What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Vain War

The recent NATO summit in Vilnius concluded with a pledge to admit Ukraine once its war with Russia ends. While the benefits of Ukraine's accession to the alliance are well established, and most NATO countries view Ukraine as a prospective member, a consensus on the country's immediate accession remains elusive.

But Ukraine and NATO's existing members are not the only potential beneficiaries of Ukrainian membership. Even Russia, which invaded Ukraine under the pretext of preventing the alliance's enlargement, has much to gain from this prospect. Ukraine's entry into NATO would enable Russia to waste fewer resources on producing and stockpiling munitions. Although the Kremlin's obsession with restoring the Russian empire will not vanish overnight, its impact on decision-making could be reduced. Much like Finland's recent accession, once Ukraine's entry is a fait accompli, it will cease to be a point of contention.

While Ukraine's accession to NATO would be bad news for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his allies, it could yield significant benefits for Russia's citizens. With the dream of imperial restoration all but dead, future Russian leaders would find it increasingly difficult to use revanchist and isolationist rhetoric to consolidate power.

Although it is hard to calculate the direct costs of Russia's war against Ukraine, even conservative estimates illustrate the conflict's massive economic toll. Over the past 20 years, Russia is estimated to have spent billions of dollars on military equipment such as shells, tanks, howitzers, fighter jets, and helicopters, resources that could have been used to invest in essential public services like education and health care. And the invasion of Ukraine has likely compounded the country's economic problems: while headline GDP figures show a mild 2-3% decline, retail sales fell by 6.7% in 2022. Moreover, the GDP figures do not reflect the Russian economy's structural shift toward regressive import substitution amid a massive exodus of highly educated workers.

To be sure, bringing Ukraine into NATO would not undo the damage Putin has inflicted on the Russian economy. But it would be much harder to justify prioritising military production over economic growth once the war ends.

In his brilliant biography of Joseph Stalin, historian Stephen Kotkin meticulously established how the Soviet dictator leveraged perceived external threats to gain and consolidate personal power. The relentless drumbeat of warnings about impending foreign invasions and monarchist insurrections was used to justify banning opposition parties and suppressing dissent within the Communist Party itself. Under the guise of rooting out foreign spies, Stalin conducted multiple elite purges and terrorised the population. Anyone who challenged him was quickly labeled an agent of a hostile foreign power.

Although the USSR's brutal repression eased somewhat following Stalin's death in 1953, the pervasive paranoia that characterised his rule persisted for generations as subsequent Soviet leaders used isolationist policies and an aggressive military buildup to consolidate their hold on power. This approach was bound to fail – and it did. Exorbitant military spending was one of the main causes of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. While millions of people waited in line for bread, eggs, and sugar, the USSR devoted massive resources to manufacturing tanks and missiles. Putin has added a new element to Stalin's recipe. Whereas Stalin used terror to keep the Party's leaders in line, Putin leveraged greed, using military spending to turn his associates into billionaires. The families of those who planned and executed the war against Ukraine – from Putin himself to Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, and various cabinet ministers – have all become extraordinarily wealthy over the past decade.

The Ukraine war's first year has exposed the effects of rampant graft and corruption within the Russian military-industrial complex, including untrained troops and equipment that exists only on paper. Nevertheless, all the major figures who have profited from this corrupt war remain firmly entrenched in their positions.

Putin's supporters often claim that Russia would lose the war in Ukraine without him. In reality, Russia will lose because this is a criminal war initiated by a ruler who has built a highly personalised, militarised regime centered around his and his accomplices' desire to retain power and enrich themselves. If Ukraine joins NATO, Putin and future leaders like him will have a difficult time persuading Russians that massive military investments are necessary.

Foreign affairs scholars such as Harvard's Stephen Walt and the University of Chicago's John Mearsheimer have argued that Russia's posture toward Ukraine and other neighbouring countries is a consequence, rather than a cause, of NATO's expansion. This argument has been put to rest following Russia's invasion. While Russia has indeed cited NATO enlargement as a justification for invading Ukraine, its annexation of four Ukrainian regions in September 2022 has proven that this is a war of conquest. Russian officials routinely deny the existence of the Ukrainian state, much like how Nazi and Soviet officials refused to recognise the Polish state in 1939.

The fact is that Putin's war against Ukraine has catalysed NATO's further enlargement, prompting Finland and Sweden to abandon their long-standing neutrality and ask to join the alliance almost immediately after the invasion. Finland joined in April, and Sweden is poised to become a member in the coming months.

Although these developments have extended Russia's border with NATO countries by 1,340 km, Moscow's response has remained muted. While the spectre of NATO expansion has served Putin well as a propaganda tool, Russia does not consider it a serious threat. And though Ukraine's potential accession remains valuable as a rallying cry amid Russia's ongoing difficulties on the battlefield, its utility will diminish once the war concludes.

Russia's interests might be the last thing that those who decide on Ukraine's NATO membership – Ukraine itself and the alliance members – should take into account. But Ukraine's accession would provide real benefits to Russia. First, strengthening Ukraine's security would enhance the security of neighbouring countries, including Russia. As the final nail in the coffin of Russian imperialism, it would bring welcome relief to Russia's citizens who have borne the costs of Putin's vain ambitions. Most importantly, Ukraine's entry into the alliance could act as a deterrent against a future Stalin or Putin who might be tempted to rely on isolationism and militarism to gain and retain power.

The writer is a professor at the University of Chicago.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

There is a condition worse than blindness, and that is, seeing something that isn't there.

THOMAS HARDY

Reflect upon your present blessings of which every man has many - not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

CHARLES DICKENS



Bikash Narayan Mishra

PSBs HAVE WEATHERED MANY STORMS DURING THE LAST 54 YEARS



Konstantin Sonin

Russian officials routinely deny the existence of the Ukrainian state, much like how Nazi and Soviet officials refused to recognise the Polish state in 1939

### FOCUS PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

# A TURNAROUND

Indian banking is over 50 years old. Broad based pan India banking, however, started with nationalisation of 14 private banks on 19 July 1969. On the eve of bank nationalisation we had only 8000 bank branches catering to 52 crore people - one branch for every 65,000 people. Only 5000 of the 6,38,000 villages had a bank branch; including a cooperative bank. We now have over 1,52,000 bank branches; a branch for every 9,000 people. Besides we have over 2 lakh ATM kiosks. Domestic credit to private sector as a percentage of GDP which was below 10% before nationalisation has risen to over 55% in the recent past.

Digitisation is happening in a big way. We have the largest and safest payments platform in world in Unified Payments Interface (UPI) through which over 9 billion payments are being effected every month. Traditional banking has given way to modern tech savvy banking. The Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile (JAM) trinity has brought about a transformation in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). All these developments have not happened overnight. Nor it is the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) that alone can be credited with these landmarks. The Private Sector Banks (PVBs) entered into the space in a big way in 1990s post liberalisation and they too have played a great role.

In the first two and a half decades post nationalisation the PSBs had an absolute monopoly with 90% share in total banking business. Then came the new generation PVBs - Axis Bank in Dec 1993, ICICI Bank in Jan 1994, HDFC Bank in Jan 1995. The cake being the same it is natural that PSBs lost some shares to PVBs. With their vast network and over 100 years of presence in the nook and corner



From a net loss situation to the extent of ₹66,636 crore five years back as of March 2019, the PSBs have ended up with ₹10,4,649 crore profit for FY23

of the country the PSBs will continue their dominance. However, the factual position is at variance with expectations. During the last three decades following liberalisation the PSBs have lost more than 30% of their business share.

The PSBs have contributed creditably towards nation building. Be that green revolution, white revolution, financial inclusion, Jan Dhan, assistance during demonetization, services during pandemic, and digitisation, the PSBs have always led from the front. The 12 PSBs with nearly 85,000 branches and 9.5 lakh employees undoubtedly continue to play a great role in nation building. But of late their efficiency and competency is being debated.

As far as governance challenges are concerned some PVBs have hit the headlines for wrong reasons and the government and the regulator had to come to their aid and depositors' rescue. It is universally agreed that the PVBs executives are better paid. While the 85,000 branches of PSBs are manned by 9.5 lakh employees, for managing less than half of the branches the

PVBs have engaged more than twice manpower (including contract workers).

The last five years have been a kind of watershed in the history of PSBs in India. The PSBs and for that matter the banking sector is resilient with adequate capital, improved asset quality and high provision coverage as of March 2023. Besides the PSBs have the twin balance sheet advantages - improved health of banks and corporates. Lower concentration of large borrower accounts in total advances and availability of high-quality liquid assets to withstand liquid pressure are the other advantages. Further as things stand all PSBs are capable of absorbing any macro-economic shock and no capital infusion is required in current FY.

From a net loss situation to the extent of ₹66,636 crore five years back as of March 2019 the PSBs have ended up with ₹10,4,649 crore profit for FY23. The gross NPA and net NPA ratio has also come down considerably. Sounds good. But the continuous decline of share of PSBs and their key numbers viz net profit, CASA, NIM, CAR, EPS not com-

paring favourably vis-a-vis PVBs remain a concern.

Where did they go wrong and what could be the course corrections? With the recent merger of HDFC with HDFC Bank this organisation has become a banking behemoth. With over ₹2.20 trillion gross advances portfolio, post-merger, it will be short of State Bank of India (SBI) credit portfolio by only ₹6.5 trillion. Besides the asset size of the merged entity will be more than the sum total of assets of the three leadings PSBs after SBI - Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank as of March 2023. When it comes to other key parameters; net profit, NIM, CASA ratio, CAR and EPS these new generation PVBs private banks are way ahead of PSBs.

The steps taken by the government during the last 5/7 years including recapitalisation, amalgamation of banks, setting up of BBB/FSIB, the EASE Reforms initiatives are all steps in the right direction and have indeed impacted the performance of PSBs positively. In order to make them perform more efficiently so as to improve their numbers and not lose their business share further PSBs have to self-reform and perform so as to remain relevant for the industry and for the society. With Artificial Intelligence (AI) getting gradually accepted all over the world PSB employees have to sharpen their skills to cope with the unavoidable new situation.

PSBs have weathered many storms during the last 54 years. The present challenges are just another set of difficult and delicate impediments which they will scale over brilliantly.

The writer is a Senior Adviser to the Indian Banks' Association. Views are personal.

### SPECTRUM POLITICS

# Countering BJP brand of nationalism

There has been much hype about the new Opposition alliance named INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) which has recently been formed with 26 parties with focus on nationalism to contest the BJP's perceived monopoly over nationalism. This also incorporates the central message of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, which was driven by the quest for protecting the idea of India and forging solidarities across caste, community and cultural barriers to march towards inclusive development.

Apart from the name, Jeetega Bharat (India will win) has been finalised as the tagline of the coalition that aims to take on the BJP in 2024 general election. "The fight is between NDA and INDIA, Narendra Modi and INDIA, his ideology and INDIA. India always wins all fights," aptly pointed out Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Whether the Samuhik Sankalp (collective resolve) would be able to unite the Opposition in letter and spirit remains a big question. The electoral success of BJP in post-2014 period played a significant role in providing Hindutva flavour to nationalism. In fact, it is reasonable to describe Hindutva-driven nationalism as the principal narrative of contemporary Indian poli-

tics. No political party is in a position to ignore Hindu issues, Hindu sentiments and Hindu interests. BJP played the Hindu card extremely well and emerged as the hegemonic political entity through there.

The nationalism factor would become crucial in the coming months. It is an irony of Indian politics that BJP, an RSS product, has usurped the nationalism plank from Congress, which inherited the legacy of the freedom movement. As is well known, the RSS had no role to play in the freedom movement, but the BJP succeeded in attaching the 'nation first' tag to its politics despite its 'Hindu nationalism' not being in conformity with the constitutional principles. This propagation of nationalism was to attract the majority Hindus and bring them to the party's fold while pushing the secular parties out of the nationalism framework.

Moreover, judged from economic perspective, the so-called Hindutva nationalism did not truly help the poor and the impoverished sections of Hindus. Modi's brand of nationalism apparently had two aspects, one an ethno-majoritarian model of building a Hindu rashtra and the other framing such policies that helped the rich and a major section of the middle class as

welfare expenditure was steadily curbed. And this notion has now been challenged by the new alliance. One may mention here that he considered 'freebies', which help the lowest segments of society get the bare essentials, a serious threat to India's economy. While the Congress confronted Modi's claims on freebies by recalling how his government wrote-off debt worth over ₹10 lakh crore, what could deeply impact the BJP's electoral prospects is the successful implementation of welfare schemes in states ruled by rival parties.

Though a section of analysts has blamed the government's pro-rich attitude, there has not been proper propagation of this fact at the grassroots where people are enamoured by Modi's charisma, speeches, especially because of protecting Hindu nationalism and curbing corruption. The new alliance has to focus on economic issues, jobless growth, hike in food prices and highlighting corrupt and uneducated BJP leaders who know nothing except religious fundamentalism, which was not accepted by a major section of our political leaders as also religious luminaries, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

It remains to be seen how the Opposition alliance will propa-

gate their brand of nationalism - both social and economic - and attract the masses as also the minority communities. There are many questions that remain unresolved. Firstly, the leadership issue is crucial and it would wise for the Congress to lead the alliance. Secondly, the bitter infighting in some states like in West Bengal between Congress and CPM, on one side and the TMC, on the other and in Kerala between Congress and CPM have to be tactfully resolved.

Apart from these, corruption charges brought by Modi against these leaders need to be effectively countered. Those within and close to the BJP, who have amassed huge money - like the Adanis - have to be highlighted among the masses.

People, who want the BJP to go, have innumerable questions whether the new coalition would be able to work unitedly and carry on development priorities in a judicious and inclusive manner. Analysts would eagerly watch the next conclave at Mumbai where a common minimum programme is expected to be announced which the parties would highlight in coming months.

The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidy Bhavan, Kolkata.

INFIA

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Totalitarian turn

Sir, The Israeli Knesset eventually approved the contentious Reasonableness Bill by a vote of 64-0, limiting the Supreme Court's jurisdiction. This legislation limits the Supreme Court's ability to overrule government decisions. The law, billed as the first phase of judicial reform, is part of the Netanyahu administration's larger aim to weaken the court and has been the subject of significant demonstrations for nearly six months. The opposition was not present in Parliament when the bill was enacted. Thousands of people were protesting on the streets outside Parliament at the time. Workers, professors, businesspeople, and the public have already rallied against the initiative to restrain the judiciary, which has been in the works for the past eight months. The reserve forces, which are called on to help the armed forces in times of crisis, have also spoken out against the bill. If their disagreement is pursued to its natural conclusion, there will undoubtedly be conflict with fatal repercussions. What is evident from all of this is the government's totalitarian turn. Although the Netanyahu government does not see this bill as an attack on the court, he sees it as an attempt to rebalance the country's power dynamic. But there is little doubt that, in the guise of rebalancing the power balance, the government has limited the judiciary's authority. After this bill becomes law, the judiciary will no longer be able to evaluate government decisions and declare them illegal. Clearly, this is a case of an elected administration undermining the country's democracy, which should serve as a warning to all democratic governments and cultures throughout the world. This should not be taken lightly.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

### Attack on heritage

Sir, The Russian strike on the historic Odesa cathedral has infuriated Ukrainians and further escalated tensions between the two warring nations. The 18th-century Transfiguration Cathedral, the biggest Orthodox church in Odesa, is in the UNESCO-protected historic city centre. Two people perished in the attack, reducing the shrine to rubble, leaving only the bell tower intact. The strike came just hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Belarus counterpart for talks. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has vowed to make Putin pay for this.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

MAINTAINING PEACE IN MANIPUR

# Assam Rifles finds itself in trying circumstances

KNOWN AS 'SENTINELS OF THE NORTH EAST' AND 'FRIENDS OF THE HILL PEOPLE', THE OFFICERS, DRAWN FROM THE ARMY, AND JAWANS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING A WAR OF NERVES SINCE THE ETHNIC CLASHES ERUPTED MAY 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, July 26:** The Assam Rifles, which operates under the command of the Army's 3 Corps, finds itself in the midst of trying circumstances while maintaining peace between the two warring ethnic groups in Manipur; with officials saying the country's oldest paramilitary force often face a hostile crowd and at times a non-cooperative state machinery.

These clashes have resulted in the death of over 160 people till now.

Having footprints in entire Manipur, the Assam Rifles along with the Army and other paramilitary forces has been tasked with maintaining peace or ensuring some semblance of calming angry people of the two communities.

"But at the end, we are facing flak from every side," says a senior officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The officer, who has been monitoring the situation in the valley and hill areas since the outbreak of violence, said, "None of us slept for 96 hours and we had thrown open our camps for the displaced people be it Meitei or Kuki. Everyone caught in the riots knew the address of safety and that was the Assam Rifle or Army camp."

"But today both the communities are accusing us of helping the other whereas our only job is to ensure that peace is the

RECENTLY 31 MLAs DEMANDED REPLACING THE 9TH, 22 AND 37 BATTALIONS OF THE ASSAM RIFLES WITH OTHER CENTRAL SECURITY FORCES CITING NEED FOR PROMOTING UNITY IN THE STATE

THE DEMAND BY THE MLAs HAS LEFT THE OFFICERS AND JAWANS OF THESE UNITS SHELL SHOCKED AS THEY WERE THE SAVIOURS OF MANY PEOPLE WHEN THE VIOLENCE BROKE OUT



order of the day and human life and dignity is respected," the officer said.

Recently 31 MLAs demanded replacing the 9th, 22 and 37 battalions of the Assam Rifles with other central security forces citing need for promoting unity in the state.

While 9 Assam Rifles is placed at the border of Churachandpur and Bishnupur districts, 22 AR is deployed in Kangpokpi area and 37 in areas of Sugnu.

However, the demand by the MLAs has left the officers and jawans of these units shell shocked as they were the saviours of many people when the violence broke out. After that, these units have been maintaining peace at the 'buffer zone', an area where the villages of

the two ethnic groups are in close proximity.

Explaining the operations of these strategically-located units, the officials said that from May 3 they were instrumental in saving many people who had fled their homes due to clashes.

The officials feel that some people are making desperate attempts to undermine the credibility of a witness and in this case, the Assam Rifles has a fair amount of idea where things have gone right or wrong.

Citing an example, another official referred to an incident at Sugnu, a small town at the southern tip of Kakching, where an officer of the rank of a Colonel of the Indian Army was roughed up by Manipur Police personnel.

The entire incident was caught

on camera in which a junior police officer, wearing an undershirt, cocked his rifle in anger at the Army officer, who had come to complain about digging of an entire road in front his camp by miscreants.

The digging of roads was done to ensure that vehicles of Assam Rifles could be prevented from moving out in case an armed clash takes place in the vicinity which houses both sides of warring communities.

The officials said that even before May 3, Army and Assam Rifles had kept 17 columns on standby to respond to any contingency at a short notice. One column of the Assam Rifles and the Army comprises 40 to 50 personnel.

It was the presence of Assam

Rifles and the real time assessment of the situation that helped Army and the AR in saving around 8,000 people, mainly from the majority community, within the first few hours across Manipur, they said.

Another senior official said the numbers of displaced people started swelling within the first few days to 24,000. It was the fast-paced movement of Assam Rifles and the Army from neighbouring Assam and other states that 128 columns were mobilised within the first five days. The number at present is around 170.

The officials pointed out that in Churachandpur, where the majority community was facing the gravest of threats, over 4,600 civilians were safely rescued from Khumujamba, Hmar Veng, Saikot and Mantop Leikai.

A pro-active deployment facilitated faster reaction in notified areas of Imphal as also in villages of Tegnoupal and Churachandpur districts where Assam Rifles do not have any company operating base in the vicinity.

"Imagine," says an official of the paramilitary force, "our ration trucks meant for troops stationed in hills were stopped in Imphal valley by people. We can't be using force against our own people to whom logic was failing."

"I guess the hatred runs deep between the two communities and it will take a while before we will see Manipur prosperous again," he added.

## Mobs burn empty houses in Moreh, buses in Kangpokpi



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, July 26:** A mob set afire at least 30 houses and shops and engaged in a shootout with security forces in Manipur's Moreh district Wednesday, officials said.

The abandoned houses were in the Moreh Bazar area close to the Myanmar border.

Following the arson, a gun battle also broke out between the miscreants and security forces, officials said adding that it is not yet clear whether there was any casualty.

The incident came a day after two buses used by security forces to transport personnel were set on fire by a mob in Kangpokpi district, the officials said.

The incident occurred at Sapormeina when the buses were coming from Dimapur Tuesday evening. No casualty was reported.

Locals stopped the buses bearing Manipur registration numbers at Sapormeina and insisted that they would check if any member of another community were on board, the officials said. Some of them set the buses on fire.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister N Biren Singh said construc-

tion of temporary houses at Sajiwa in Imphal and Yaithibi Loukol in Thoubal district is nearing completion.

"Very soon, families from relief camps will be able to move into these homes. The state government is taking up all possible measures to rehabilitate the people affected by the recent violence, both in the hills and the valley," Singh said in a Twitter post.

The chief minister had last month said that his government will build 3,000-4,000 pre-fabricated houses to accommodate people who had to flee from their homes because of ethnic strife in the northeastern state.

Ethnic violence broke out in the northeastern state nearly three months ago, killing over 160 people since then, and injuring hundreds.

The violence erupted May 3 after a Tribal Solidarity March was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts.

## CM Himanta claims 'love jihad' behind Assam triple murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 26:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Wednesday claimed the recent triple murder in Golaghat was an outcome of 'love-jihad', and said the chargesheet will be filed within 15 days to try the culprit in a fast track court.

On Monday, a 25-year-old man killed his wife and her parents over some family issues, and later surrendered before the police in Golaghat district of Upper Assam.



'Love jihad' is a term often used by right-wing activists to allege a ploy by Muslim men to lure Hindu women into religious conversion through marriage.

Sarma visited the family of the deceased and asserted that a thorough investigation would be carried out in the case, and the guilty would not be spared.

"The deceased family was Hindu and the accused belongs to the Muslim community. He first introduced himself with a Hindu name on Facebook... The woman learnt to use drugs when the couple had escaped to Kolkata," the chief minister said.

Information has been received that the accused, a mechanical engineer, was a drug addict and involved with trafficking of contraband substances, Sarma said.

The woman was given injectable drugs under the influence of which she was impregnated. She was tortured when she went to live at the house of the accused, and returned to her maternal home later, he claimed.

Sarma said the woman had filed a complaint alleging torture, and her husband was jailed. "I am personally concerned about such a case in which religious identity is hidden on Facebook to influence a woman for marriage, and at last such a situation is created that she cannot return. Even if she returns, the society will not accept her," the CM said.

In such a situation, she ultimately converts her religion, sacrifices everything and assimilates into a different life, he said.

## '718 Myanmarese entered Manipur illegally last week'

AGENCIES

**Imphal, July 26:** Manipur government has said that at least 718 Myanmar nationals, including 301 children, have illegally entered the northeastern state last week.

A statement issued by Home Department said that the illegal influx was reported July 22 and 23 in Chandel district by Assam Rifles, the India-Myanmar border guarding force.

Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi sought to know from the Assam Rifles how the Myanmarese were allowed to enter India without proper travel documents and asked the force to push them back immediately.

Report has been received from the Headquarters 28 Sector Assam Rifles that 718 fresh refugees have crossed India-Myanmar border and entered into the general area of New

Lajang, Joshi said in the statement. Of the 718 Myanmarese, 209 are men, 208 are women and 301 are children. Thirteen Myanmar nationals entered Lajang area July 22.

On July 23, a total of 230 Myanmarese arrived in New Lajang, 89 in New Santal, 143 in Yangmophei village, 175 in Yangmophei Saw Mill, 30 in Aivomjang and 38 in Bhone, it said.

The state government had clearly informed the Assam Rifles, as border guarding force, to take strict action to prevent entry of Myanmar nationals into Manipur without valid travel documents as per instructions of Union Home Ministry.

The state government views the illegal entry very seriously with utmost sensitivity as the same may have international ramifications more particularly in view of the law and order situation, the statement said.

MANIPUR SHARES A 398-KM-LONG POROUS BORDER WITH MYANMAR  
CHINS, WHO SHARE ETHNIC TIES WITH KUKIS OF MANIPUR, RESIDE ON THE MYANMAR SIDE



VENTING ANGER: People protest against the Mizoram CM Zoramthanga a day after his participation in a rally over ethnic violence in Manipur, at National Highway 37 in Imphal, Wednesday

## Assam Police innovates to create awareness about 'sharenting'

Assam Police has been using pop culture, memes, humour, modern day idioms among others as means in the campaign '#DontBeASharent' which urges parents not to make their children social media trophies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, July 26:** Four 'created children' are leading an awareness campaign launched from Assam on the perils of oversharing of information online of minors by parents.

The four are the latest 'recruits' by the state police in its pioneering drive on the ills of 'sharenting', which deals with sharing of photographs and personal information of children on the social media by parents.

The special director general of police Harmeet Singh said the four 'children' are artificial intelligence (AI)-generated creatives being used by Assam Police in its campaign against 'sharenting' and have attracted attention online.

"We started the 'sharenting' awareness campaign in 2021. As AI is in the rage now, we thought of using it and it has caught everyone's attention. We are riding the AI wave to spread the message," Singh, who is leading the drive, said.

Assam Police has been using pop culture, memes, humour, modern day idioms among others as means in the campaign '#DontBeASharent' which urges parents not to make their children social media trophies as it could lead to potential threats at different levels for the children, a concept which is relatively new for Indian parents.

A poster of Amitabh Bachchan's film 'Shahenshah' is being used to drive home the point. It parodies the famous dialogue from the film, 'Rishte main to hum tumhare baap lagte hain, naam hai sharent' replacing the word 'shahenshah' of the original.

A nursery rhyme 'Johnny, Johnny' is also tweaked to urge parents not to share photographs of their children without their consent.

One poster presents data on the parents' awareness about the dangers of online sharing. It claims that 61.6 per cent of the parents in the country believe



that they have the right to share images of their children without the latter's consent.

Ironically as much as 98 per cent of parents consider the images they post of their children may be embarrassing, but do so anyway.

An alarming fact is that 76 per cent of the parents, who share details of their children online are aware that the images could end up in wrong hands, yet don't stop from putting them up

on the social media.

Singh said people in the Western countries are discussing 'sharenting' and in India, where digital footprint is increasing at a phenomenal speed, there is an urgent need to educate the people.

"What parents think to be innocent fun on the social media could actually lead to a lot of trouble for the children in future. Some parents start sharing as early as from the image of the foetus," he said.

What parents think to be innocent fun on the social media could actually lead to a lot of trouble for the children in future. Some parents start sharing as early as from the image of the foetus

HARMEET SINGH | SPL DGP (ADMN./BORDER), ASSAM

The oversharing of information on children on the social media could lead to cyber bullying, real life bullying, identity theft, financial fraud and 'online grooming' which could turn to 'sextortion'.

Instances of girls being stalked physically after their fathers posted online information about their whereabouts to men, who posed as fathers of other girls on the social media, have been reported in different parts of the world.

Singh also pointed at the danger of children posting sensitive and private information about themselves later in life after having seen their parents do so in their early years.

"Also, the COVID pandemic led to a situation where entire life went online. Young children are growing up with the feeling that

the way of the world is through media and not physical contact. So, they tend to share more on social media," he added.

"Social media has lot of pros and has become the idiom of the new world. But we have to be updated on the privacy rules before using it extensively. It is great that some children are great achievers and their parents want to share it with everyone. But we have to keep the personal information restricted," the special DGP added.

The sharenting campaign, which is assisted by consultant Salik Khan and his team, has reached about half a million people through social media and other fora. It has also bagged the special mention award at the DEF India Social Media for Empowerment Awards 2022-23 for best digital intervention in south Asia on community mobilisation, he said.

"We try to keep the campaign interesting so that it creates curiosity among the people to know more and leads to greater awareness. We appeal to parents to practice cyber hygiene on personal information about their children like they do in respect of their personal and financial transactions," Singh added.



Shia muslims wave religious flags as they participate in the 7th Muharram procession in Srinagar



Congress MP Sonia Gandhi meets AAP MP Sanjay Singh who is protesting over the Manipur crisis and his suspension from Rajya Sabha for the remaining Monsoon session, at the Parliament House in New Delhi



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, left, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas review a military honour guard during a welcome ceremony in Ankara, Turkey



Students protest against the punishment of another student for not answering a question, outside a school in Birbhum, West Bengal



Rescuers carry pigs inside boats along floodwaters caused by Typhoon Doksuri as they evacuate them to safer grounds in Laoag city, Ilocos Norte province, northern Philippines. Typhoon Doksuri blew ashore in a cluster of islands and lashed northern Philippine provinces with ferocious wind and rain Wednesday, leaving at least a few people dead and displacing thousands of others as it blew roofs off rural houses, flooded low-lying villages and toppled trees, officials said



Visitors pose in front of the Gateway of India during monsoon rains in Mumbai, Maharashtra . Incessant heavy rain lashed Mumbai, slowing down road traffic but services of suburban trains remained normal with slight delays



South Korean honour guards carry coffins containing the remains of South Korean soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean War, during a repatriation ceremony, at Seoul Air Base in Seongnam. The remains of seven South Korean soldiers killed in the Korean War were sent back to their homeland after forensic reviews in Hawaii, a day before the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement





When elections approach, for the BJP its government is the NDA government. After the polls are over, it becomes the Modi-government

UDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) CHIEF

## SHORTAGE OF POLICE PERSONNEL IN MAHA

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis Wednesday asserted in the state legislature that police personnel will not be appointed on a contractual basis and said Mumbai faces a shortage of around 10,000 cops



## of the day quote

A health fair is organised every week at every primary health and wellness centre in the state. Two and a half to three lakh poor people are treated at such fairs. We will implement this model in the whole country

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE MINISTER

What has happened in Manipur, the way women were stripped and paraded naked, is appalling. The Centre should have come out with a statement. This is what parties in the opposition have been demanding in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER

The SAD is of the firm opinion that one seat should be reserved for Sikhs residing in Jammu and Kashmir regions respectively, while additional seats should be reserved for those who were forced to relocate to J&K in 1947, including Sikhs

SUKHBIR BADAL | SHIROMANI AKALI DAL (SAD) PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Court summons Jagdish Tytler

New Delhi: Nearly 39 years after three people were killed and a gurudwara was set afire in Pul Bangash area during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, a Delhi court Wednesday summoned former union minister and Congress leader Jagdish Tytler August 5, saying "sufficient material" was available on record to proceed against him in the case. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vidhi Gupta Anand, who took cognisance of the charge sheet against Tytler, noted that the public prosecutor for the CBI placed reliance on the statements of eyewitnesses who specifically stated during further investigation that they had seen the accused at the spot where the incident occurred.

### Girl filmed in college washroom, 3 booked

Bangalore/Udupi: An FIR has been registered against three girl students over allegedly recording a video of their fellow female student in a college washroom in Udupi, days after the incident, as the BJP demanded their arrest and Home Minister G Parameshwara blamed the saffron party for indulging in "petty politics" over a "small incident".

### Six killed in lightning strikes

Chandrapur: At least six persons, including five women, died after being struck by lightning in four places in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district in the last 24 hours, police officials said Wednesday. The electrical discharge from the sky also left seven women injured, they said. Two women, aged 45 and 47, working in a paddy field died on the spot in a lightning strike at Delanwadi village in Sindewahi tehsil, some 75 km from the district headquarters, Wednesday, an official said.

### 2 killed in police firing in Katihar

Katihar/Patna: Two persons were killed and several others injured as police opened fire Friday in Bihar's Katihar district following stone-pelting by protesters who were demanding better power supply, officials said. According to the police headquarters in Patna, "more than a dozen police personnel and power department employees" sustained injuries in the incident that took place barely "100 meters away from Barsoi police station".

# Allahabad HC extends stay on ASI survey of Gyanvapi mosque

The Archaeological Survey's response on their methodology has not satisfied the Allahabad court, which wanted details on how the survey can be conducted without damaging the existing mosque



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj (UP), July 26: The Allahabad High Court Wednesday extended the stay on a survey of the Gyanvapi mosque premises by the Archaeological Survey of India till Thursday.

The high court was hearing a plea against a Varanasi district court order directing the ASI to conduct a survey to determine if the Gyanvapi mosque was built upon a temple.

During the hearing, a senior ASI official was present in the court. The official told the court that the ASI team was not going to "destroy the structure (mosque)" in any way.

After hearing the plea by Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, which manages the mosque, Chief Justice Pritinker Diwaker posted the matter for further hearing Thursday.

The court ordered that the stay on the ASI survey will continue till then.

The hearing of the case will re-

The Anjuman Mosque Committee moved the High Court Tuesday challenging the order of the Varanasi court directing the ASI to survey the mosque premises (except for wuzukhana)

This order was passed on an application filed by 4 Hindu women who are party to a suit filed before the district court seeking year-round access to worship inside mosque premises

sume at 3:30 pm Thursday. During the hearing in the morning session Wednesday, Chief Justice Diwaker asked the additional solicitor general of India to call any expert member of ASI from Varanasi to demonstrate to the court how survey will be conducted, and fixed 4:30 pm for further hearing in the matter.

In pursuance to the court order, Alok Tripathi, Additional Director of ASI, was present in the court. He filed an affidavit before the court regarding the survey process. The counsel for

mosque committee, SFA Naqvi, submitted that while passing the order July 21, the Varanasi district court had come to conclusions that in absence of a survey report, the issue cannot be decided but the court did not discuss the materials before it to come to such a conclusion.

Naqvi also raised an objection that the ASI was not made party to the suit and still it was directed to conduct the survey and give its opinion in the matter.

On this, counsel for the Hindu side Vishnu Shankar Jain argued that there is no such law that an expert has to be made party in a case where their opinion is sought, giving an example of handwriting experts who are never made party in a case.

Naqvi also submitted before the court that plaintiffs have no evidence in their plaint and they wanted to produce evidence only with the help of the ASI survey. On this, the high court asked him that if law permits for such a way of collection of evidence (ASI survey/expert survey) then what harm will be caused to the petitioner.

Naqvi said that this is not the proper stage in the trial before Varanasi district court for ASI survey/expert opinion.

However, Jain submitted that a survey by the ASI is not going to cause any harm to the structure. Report of the survey will be further subject to examination and proof, the Hindu side counsel said.

## PM opens IECC, names it Bharat Mandapam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday inaugurated the International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC) complex and unveiled its new name -Bharat Mandapam.

Modi unveiled the name of the new complex through a drone in the presence of Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and other ministers.

The IECC will host the G20 summit in September under India's presidency. The summit will be attended by heads of states of 20 nations including the US, the UK and China among others. The inaugural ceremony was attended by around 3,000 guests including Cabinet ministers, captains of industry, film personalities and others.

The IECC complex is India's largest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) destination. In terms of the covered space available for events, the complex finds its place among the top exhibition and convention complexes in the world. It comprises multiple modern facilities, including convention centres, exhibition halls and amphitheatres.



RAIN FUN: Men play Kabaddi during monsoon rains at Marine Drive in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

# Centre moves SC seeking extension of ED director's term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: Days after the Supreme Court held as "illegal" the repeated extension granted to ED Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra, the Centre Wednesday moved the apex court seeking his continuance till October 15, saying his absence during the ongoing FATF review will adversely impact India's national interests.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told a bench of Justices BR Gavai, Hima Kohli and Prashant Kumar Mishra that the government has moved an application seeking modification of the apex court's July 11 verdict. "There is some urgency with regard to that matter. We request urgent listing of the miscellaneous application," Mehta told the bench.

Justice Gavai said the July 11 verdict was pronounced by a three bench, also comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Sanjay Karol, and currently they are sitting in different combinations. "Let the registry request

the Chief Justice of India for constituting a bench." Justice Gavai told Mehta. The solicitor general requested the bench to list the matter urgently, saying this application needs to be heard by July 28 (Friday). The bench then agreed to hear the matter Thursday at 3.30 PM. The top court had July 11 held as "illegal" two successive extensions of one year each granted to Mishra and said that the Centre's orders were in "breach" of its mandamus in the 2021 verdict that the IRS officer should not be given further term. It had also curtailed Mishra's extended tenure to July 31 from November.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai, Vikram Nath and Sanjay Karol had said in view of the peer review being conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) this year and to enable smooth transition, Mishra's tenure will be till July 31.

The 1984-batch IRS officer was otherwise to remain in office till November 18, 2023, according to the notification issued by the government.

## Hyderabad woman found starving on Chicago street

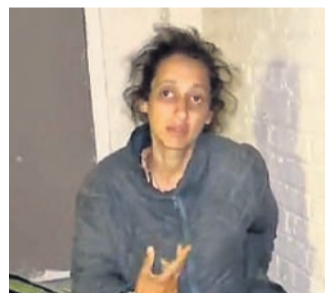
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 26: A woman from Hyderabad, who went to the US two years ago to pursue a masters' degree, has been found starving on the roads of Chicago.

Syeda Lulu Minhaj Zaidi, who was doing Masters in Information Science from TRINE University, Detroit, is said to be in depression.

Her mother Syeda Wahaj Fatima has appealed to Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar to intervene to bring her daughter back to India as soon as possible.

Minhaj Zaidi, 37, a resident of Moula Ali in Medchal district on the outskirts of Hyderabad, went to the US in August 2021. Wahaj Fatima wrote to the minister that she was not in touch with the family for the last two months.



"Recently through two Hyderabad youths we came to know that my daughter is under deep depression and her entire belonging have been stolen due to which she is on verge of starvation and being spotted on roads of Chicago," reads a letter by Wahaj Fatima which was posted on Twitter by Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) leader Amedjullah Khan.

The MBT leader also posted a video of Minhaj Zaidi. A man is heard assuring her help and promising to arrange food. He also advised her to return to India.

The woman, who looks malnourished, was having difficulty in expressing herself.

Reacting to the video, a Twitter user commented that he was shocked to see her condition. He said that they lived as neighbours for many years.

# Oppn parties to wear black in Parl today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: Leaders of various opposition parties who are part of the INDIA alliance will wear black dresses Thursday as a mark of protest against the treasury bench for not allowing a discussion on Manipur and not starting a discussion on their no confidence motion.

Leaders of the opposition parties have urged all their MPs to wear black dress Thursday as they meet in the chamber of the leader of opposition in the morning. The parties will chalk out their strategy on the no confidence motion, moved through Gaurav Gogoi in the Lok Sabha, seeking an immediate discussion on it. The opposition MPs have been protesting in Parliament every day against the government for not allowing a discussion on the Manipur issue, as well as against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not making a statement in both houses on the violence-racked northeastern state.

The Congress Wednesday said the no-confidence motion against the government is a collective ef-



fort by all the constituents of the INDIA alliance and urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to take it up for discussion Thursday itself.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi Wednesday moved a no-confidence motion against the Modi government in the Lok Sabha on behalf of the opposition alliance, to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi to speak on the contentious Manipur issue.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla admitted the motion after a headcount of over 50 MPs as required under the rules. At a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said the opposition was compelled to bring the no-trust motion as the law-and-order situation in Manipur has broken down, communities have been divided and "there is nothing in the name of the government" there for the past 84 days.

# INDIA OBSERVES 24TH KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU, PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, UNION MINISTERS, CHIEF MINISTERS AND LEADERS CUTTING ACROSS PARTY LINES PAID HOMAGE TO THE SOLDIERS WHO HAD DIED IN THE WAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: India Wednesday recalled the valour of the armed forces and paid tributes to its fallen soldiers as it marked its victory over Pakistan in the 1999 Kargil War, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh asserting the country is ready to even cross the Line of Control (LoC) to maintain its honour and dignity. Various events were organ-

ised in states and at the Kargil War Memorial in Drass in Ladakh to mark the 24th Kargil Vijay Diwas. In Parliament, members paid their homage to the fallen soldiers.

In a tweet in Hindi, the president said, "Today, on the glorious occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, all the people of the country remember the victory achieved by the extraordinary valour of our armed forces. On behalf of a grateful nation, I pay trib-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets with the family members of the Kargil War martyrs on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas in Drass, Ladakh

ute and bow to the memory of the fighters who paved the way for victory by sacrificing their lives to protect the country. Their heroic stories will always inspire generations to come. Jai Hind!"

Modi said Kargil Vijay Diwas brings to the fore the bravery of India's unparalleled warriors who will always remain a source of inspiration to the people of the country.

Addressing a gathering at the Kargil Memorial in Drass, Defence Minister Singh said India is ready to cross the Line of Control (LoC) to maintain its honour and dignity, and called upon civilians to be

ready to support the soldiers in such a situation.

Citing the example of the Russia-Ukraine war, he said it has been going on for more than a year because civilians have stepped up and are participating in the war.

For the families of the jawans who laid down their lives protecting Indian territory from intruders, Kargil Vijay Diwas is an occasion that invokes feelings of both pain and pride.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi paid tributes to the Kargil heroes on the occasion.

# international



**“We were shocked and horrified by the video of this extreme attack on two women in Manipur. We convey our profound sympathies to the survivors of this act of gender-based violence and support the Indian Government’s efforts to seek justice for them”**  
VEDANT PATEL | DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, US

**\$1MN FOR TUPAC’S RING**  
A gold, ruby and diamond crown ring worn by rap legend Tupac Shakur during his last public appearance sold for \$1 million at auction in New York Tuesday. The winning bid becomes the most valuable hip-hop artifact ever sold



## of the day quote

I think there is no question that we have a different position around nuclear, in terms of nuclear propulsion is also covered by New Zealand’s nuclear-free arrangements  
CHRIS HIPKINS | PM, NEW ZEALAND

Climate change is redefining every human experience on the planet, especially in Pakistan. In the long journey to build resilience, our government is proud to pass our country’s National Adaptation Plan, which will give Pakistan the essential tools to adapt to the risks of climate stress  
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

The waste is being brought illegally and the complaint is a step toward taking Germany to the European Court of Justice  
ANNA MOSKWA | MINISTER FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT, POLAND

## SHORT TAKES

**Wang returns as China foreign min**  
Washington: China’s decision to reappoint its top diplomat Wang Yi as foreign minister one month after former rising star Qin Gang disappeared from public view means Washington will be dealing with a familiar face in its bid to steady relations with its main strategic rival. But Wang’s return to a post he held for most of the past decade is unlikely to alter the trajectory of a troubled bilateral relationship or dispel concerns about the opaque workings of President Xi Jinping’s government. The removal of Qin, reputedly a Xi protege, Tuesday came barely half a year after he assumed the role.

**No relief for Khan**  
Islamabad: In a jolt to Imran Khan, Pakistan’s Supreme Court Wednesday rejected the ousted prime minister’s plea to stay the criminal proceedings against him in the Toshakhana corruption case. The case pertains to the allegations that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party chief had “deliberately concealed” details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana - a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept - during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales. Imran Khan is accused of misusing his 2018 to 2022 premiership to buy and sell gifts in state possession that were received during visits abroad and worth more than Rs 140 million.

# TERRORISM PLAGUES WEST AFRICA

THE REGION HAS RECORDED OVER 1,800 TERRORIST ATTACK IN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2023 WITH NEARLY 4,600 DEATHS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**United Nations, Jul 26:** West Africa recorded over 1,800 terrorist attacks in the first six months of the year resulting in nearly 4,600 deaths with dire humanitarian consequences, and a top regional official said Tuesday that’s just “a snippet of the horrendous impact of insecurity.”

Omar Touray told the UN Security Council that half a million people in the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States known as ECOWAS are refugees and nearly 6.2 million are internally displaced. If there isn’t an adequate international response to the 30 million people ECOWAS assesses need food right now, he said, the number of people in need will increase to 42 million by the end of next month.

Touray, who is president of the ECOWAS Commission, singled out the following drivers of insecurity in the region: terrorism, armed rebellion, organized crime, unconstitutional changes of government, illegal maritime activities, environmental crises and fake news.

He said the region is worried about the resurgence of the military, with three countries - Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea - under military rule.

For example, Touray said, the 4,593 deaths in terrorist attacks between January and June 30 include 2,725 in Burkina Faso, 844



in Mali, 77 in Niger and 70 in Nigeria. He added that terrorist attacks in Benin and Togo which have coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean are a “stark indication of the expansion of terrorism to littoral states, a situation that poses additional threat to the region.”

Touray said there have been a multiplicity of initiatives to tackle terrorism and insecurity which have had an impact on the ground, but there is a lack of coordination and ECOWAS wants to integrate the various initiatives into a regional plan of action.

ECOWAS military chiefs of staff have held consultations to strengthen a regional standby force “in a manner that will en-

**The reversal of democratic gains runs parallel to insecurity that West Africa and the Sahel have been facing for some time now. Insecurity continues to inflict pain and suffering on millions of people**  
OMAR TOURAY | REGIONAL OFFICER, WEST AFRICA

able to support member states in the fight against terrorism and against threats to constitutional order,” he said.

Touray said the military chiefs proposed two options, establishing a 5,000-strong brigade at an annual cost of \$2.3 billion or de-

ployment of troops on demand at an annual cost of \$360 million.

He reiterated the African Union’s request for African peace operations to receive funding from the UN Regular budget, to which all 193 UN Member states contribute.

Touray said the military staff recommendations were made before Mali’s military junta demanded that the more than 15,000-strong UN peacekeeping force in the country leave, which was followed by the Security Council’s unanimous vote June 30 to immediately end the mission. Mali has brought in mercenaries from Russia’s Wagner Group to help fight an Islamic insurgency. Touray told the council that

ECOWAS leaders “have reflected on the possible adverse impact of the withdrawal on the region and have decided to convene an extraordinary session on peace and security by the end of August.” Ahead of that meeting, he said, Benin’s president will visit Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea and press for “an expeditious return to constitutional order.”

The Security Council was also briefed by the new head of the UN Office for West Africa, Leonardo Santos Simão, who said the security situation in the central Sahel, especially the border region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, “has deteriorated further, with multiple attacks against civilians and defense and security forces.” He also said “the southward expansion of insecurity remains a potent threat.”

Simão appealed for “robust and decisive support” for the ECOWAS action plan to eradicate terrorism in the region and for the African Union and efforts by countries to stem insecurity in the Sahel.

US Deputy ambassador Robert Wood told the council “the United States remains gravely concerned by democratic backsliding across the region” and is “deeply concerned by the spread of instability in coastal West Africa.” He accused the Wagner Group of “committing human rights abuses and endangering the safety and security of civilians, peacekeepers and UN personnel.”

## TAX CHARGES

### Hunter Biden pleads not guilty

REUTERS

**Wilmington, July 26:** US President Joe Biden’s son Hunter Biden pleaded not guilty to tax charges Wednesday after a federal judge in Delaware said she needed more time to review a proposed deal with federal prosecutors to avoid a felony gun charge.

The stunning turnaround came after what was expected to be a routine plea hearing turned into a three-hour affair featuring hushed negotiations between lawyers and pointed questions from US District Court Judge Maryellen Noreika.

“I cannot accept the plea agreement today,” she said, asking the parties to brief her on why she should accept it. That means that Hunter Biden’s lawyers and prosecutors may yet persuade Noreika to approve the deal as it was previously negotiated, or to alter it to a form she can accept.

But the news means the saga will continue to drag out even as the elder Biden campaigns for reelection in 2024, in a possible rematch with former President Donald Trump, who faces his own extensive legal woes.

Hunter Biden was accused of failing to pay taxes on more than \$1.5 million in income in 2017 and 2018 despite owing more than \$100,000, prosecutors allege. He is charged in a separate case with unlawfully owning a firearm while addicted to and using a controlled substance, a felony.

## SEXUAL OFFENCES

### SPACEY CLEARED OF ALL 9 CHARGES

REUTERS

**London, July 26:** A tearful Kevin Spacey was found not guilty Wednesday by a jury at a London court of committing historical sex offences against four men.

After more than 12 hours of deliberation, a jury acquitted the Oscar-winning US actor of nine charges, including sexual assault, causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent, and causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity.

Spacey, who turned 64, began to cry and mouthed “thank you” to the jury, before wiping away tears with a tissue.

After he was released from the dock, he shook hands with his lawyers before leaving the court via a side door.

Spacey told the court three of the four complainants had brought civil lawsuits against him, saying one had contacted him seeking a payment of more than 450,000 pounds (\$577,400), and accepted tending private investigators to look into at least three of the men.

His lawyer Patrick Gibbs said it was not a crime to like sex or have casual sex even if you were a famous person and that it was “not a crime to have sex with someone of the same sex, because it’s 2023 not 1823”.

## NatWest CEO quits after Farage fiasco

REUTERS

**London, July 26:** NatWest CEO Alison Rose stepped down with immediate effect Wednesday after she admitted to a “serious error of judgment” in discussing former Brexit party leader Nigel Farage’s relationship with the bank with a BBC journalist.

Paul Thwaite, the head of the bank’s commercial and institutional business, will helm NatWest for an initial period of 12 months, the company said in a statement.

NatWest has faced intense political and media scrutiny over a decision by its private bank Coutts to close Farage’s accounts. An internal review obtained by the politician-turned-TV show host showed Coutts’ wealth reputational risk committee had said his values did not align with the bank’s own.

Some major NatWest investors are also applying pressure on the bank’s chair Howard Davies to step down for mishandling the fallout, including saying Rose had the board’s “full confidence” hours before she stepped down, the Financial Times reported.

In a post on the X social media platform Wednesday, Farage



called for further heads to roll in the wake of Rose’s resignation. “Others must follow,” he said. “I hope that this serves as a warning to the banking industry,” he said, pledging to speak up for other people who had their accounts shut down.

A government official told Reuters ministers had been unhappy with the way Rose behaved and she did “the right thing” by resigning. NatWest remains 39% owned by taxpayers following its bailout in the 2008-9 financial crisis.

Keir Starmer, leader of the opposition Labour party, told a BBC radio phone-in that Rose was right to resign and said no one should be refused banking services over their political views.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### Ocean temp hit hot-tub levels

Water at tip of Florida hits hot tub level and may have set world record for warmest seawater

REUTERS

**Key Largo, July 26:** The surface ocean temperature in and around the Florida Keys soared to typical hot tub levels this week, amid recent warnings from global weather monitors about the dangerous impact of warming waters on ecosystems and extreme weather events.

A water temperature buoy located inside the Everglades National Park in the waters of Manatee Bay hit a high of 101.19 degrees Fahrenheit (38.44 Celsius) late Monday afternoon, US government data showed, while other buoys nearby topped 100F (38C) and the upper 90s (32C).

Normal water temperatures for the area this time of year should be between 73F and 88F (23C and 31C), according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which published the findings from the National Data Buoy Center.

The readings add to previous warnings over Florida’s warming waters in the southeastern United States as prolonged heat continued to bake other parts of the country.

The growing frequency and



intensity of severe weather - both on land and in oceans - is symptomatic of global, human-driven climate change that is fueling extremes, experts in the field say, with current heatwaves expected to persist through August.

Earlier this month, the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said global sea temperatures have reached monthly record highs since May, also driven in part by an El Nino event. The WMO and NOAA say temperatures like those in South Florida can be deadly for marine life and threaten ocean ecosystems.

That can also impact human food supplies and livelihoods for those who work is tied to the

water. As he worked his knife to filet fish hauled into Key Largo Tuesday, fishing boat captain Dustin Hansel said the catch has been getting “slower and slower” for the past five summers. He’s also been seeing more dead fish in waters around Key Largo.

“As far as all of our bay waters, any near-shore waters, everything is super, super hot,” Hansel told Reuters.

NOAA warned earlier this month that the warmer water around Florida could supercharge tropical storms and hurricanes, which build more energy over warmer waters. Rising temperatures are also severely stressing coral reefs, the agency said.

## Japan’s population falls while foreigners rise

The country’s population has fallen every year since peaking in 2008 due to a low birth rate, reaching a record low last year

REUTERS

**Tokyo, July 26:** The number of Japanese people has decreased at the fastest pace ever while the number of foreign residents has risen to a record of nearly 3 million, government data showed Wednesday.

The data showed that Japanese society is aging across the country and suggests that foreign nationals are playing an ever bigger role in making up for the shrinking population.

The number of Japanese nationals living in Japan was a record 2.99 million, a 10.7% increase from the previous year, the biggest year-on-year increase since the ministry began track-

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES



of Internal Affairs and Communications.

For the first time, the number of Japanese residents fell in all 47 prefectures, the data showed.

The number of foreign nationals living in Japan was a record 2.99 million, a 10.7% increase from the previous year, the biggest year-on-year increase since the ministry began track-

**To secure a stable workforce, the government will promote labour market reforms to maximise the employment of women, the elderly and others**  
HIROKAZU MATSUNO | CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY, JAPAN

ing the data a decade ago. As of January 1, 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic

spread around the world, there were 2.87 million foreigners living in Japan.

Japan’s total population fell to 125.42 million, a decrease of about 511,000, the new data showed.

The government aims to address the problem by various means, including employing more women, the top government spokesperson said.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has made reversing the sliding birth rate a top priority and his government, despite high levels of debt, plans to earmark 3.5 trillion yen (\$25 billion) a year for child care and other measures to support parents.

A group of Tokyo-based public think tanks said last year that Japan needed about four times as many foreign workers by 2040 to achieve the government’s economic growth forecasts.

Tokyo had the most foreign residents with 581,112 of them, or 4.2% of the capital’s population.

## SHIP CARRYING 3K CARS UP IN SMOKE, ONE DEAD

REUTERS

**Amsterdam, July 26:** A fire blazed Wednesday on a ship off the Dutch coast with nearly 3,000 vehicles, killing one person and injuring several others, the coastguard said.

The fire began Tuesday night on the 199-metre Panama-registered Fremantle Highway, which was en route from Germany to Egypt, forcing several crew members to jump overboard.

Rescue ships sprayed water onto the burning boat to cool it down, but too much water risked its sinking, the Dutch coastguard said. A salvage vessel hooked on to stop it drifting.

“The fire is most definitely still not controlled. It’s a very hard fire to extinguish, possibly because of the cargo the ship was transporting,” said Edwin Versteeg, a spokesperson for the



Dutch Department Of Waterways and Public Works.

The coastguard said on its website that the cause of the fire was unknown, but a coastguard spokesperson had earlier told Reuters it began near an electric car.

The coastguard said the Fremantle, which had departed from the port of Bremerhaven, had been towed out of shipping lanes and could sink. It was 27 km (17 miles) north of the Dutch island of Ameland when the fire started.

All 23 crew members were evacuated.

A helicopter took some suffering from smoke inhalation to medical facilities on the mainland.

Coastguard spokesperson Edwin Granneman said salvaging experts were trying to work out next steps for the burning boat.

A spokesperson for Shoen Kisen Kaisha, the Japanese ship leasing company that manages the Fremantle, was not immediately available for comment.

The incident was the latest of several fires in recent times on car carriers.

Earlier this month, two New Jersey firefighters were killed and five injured battling a blaze on a cargo ship carrying hundreds of vehicles.

A fire destroyed thousands of luxury cars on a ship off the coast of Portugal’s Azores islands in February last year.

## of the day quote

India is still not a proven ground, which explains the skepticism of global chip giants to come here and set shop

**ARUN MAMPAPHY** | FORMER MANAGER, GLOBALFOUNDRIES

We are at the moment working with commerce layer ONDC to see what more we can do and to make sure card payments and merchant payments are facilitated

**NICK CLEGG** | PRESIDENT (GLOBAL AFFAIRS), META

As the world's largest consumer and importer of edible oils, with a demand of about 23 million tonne annually, India is a powerful market with remarkable opportunities

**MANNAN KHAN** | DIRECTOR, MK AGROTECH

## Q1 RESULTS

### PNB surges 4X

**New Delhi:** State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) Wednesday posted a four-fold surge in standalone net profit at ₹1,255 crore in the April-June quarter, mainly due to decline in bad loans and improvement in interest income. The bank had posted a net profit of ₹308 crore in the year-ago period. Total income in the first quarter of the current fiscal rose to ₹28,579 crore as against ₹21,294 crore, PNB said in a regulatory filing. The lender's interest income also increased to ₹25,145 crore from ₹18,757 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The gross Non Performing Assets (NPAs) declined to 7.73 per cent of the gross advances by June 2023 from 11.2 per cent a year ago.

### BPCL net jumps

**New Delhi:** State-controlled Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) Wednesday reported a net profit of ₹10,644 crore in the June quarter as a freeze on the retail selling price of petrol and diesel despite a fall in oil prices helped turn around fuel marketing margins. The consolidated net profit of ₹10,644.30 crore in April-June (first quarter of current 2023-24 fiscal year) compared to a net loss of ₹6,147.94 crore in the same period last year, according to a company's filing with the stock exchanges. The earning in the first quarter was 55 per cent higher than the net profit of ₹6,870.47 crore in the preceding January-March quarter.

### Bajaj Finance shines

**Mumbai:** The most valuable non-banking lender Bajaj Finance Wednesday reported a 32 per cent on-year growth in consolidated net profit to ₹3,437 crore for the June quarter on record disbursements that sniffed at almost 10 million new borrowers. The Pune-headquartered company, which has the highest market capitalisation of more than ₹4.5 lakh crore among non-banking lenders, said the quarter under review saw them adding 38.4 lakh customers, taking the overall customer base to 7.29 crore, up 21 per cent from 6.03 crore a year ago.

### Tech Mahindra dips

**Mumbai:** The country's fifth largest IT services company Tech Mahindra Wednesday reported a 38 per cent fall in June quarter net profit at ₹692.5 crore due to a sharp narrowing of the profit margins. The Mahindra group company had reported a net profit of ₹1,131.6 crore in the corresponding April-June period last year. In the preceding quarter, the same stood at ₹1,117.6 crore.



**We are open to doing business with any company anywhere as long as they are investing and conducting their business lawfully and are in compliance with the Indian laws**

**RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR** | DEPUTY MINISTER FOR IT

## RAZORPAY OPENS EXPORT ACCOUNT

Fintech company Razorpay Wednesday announced the launch of its MoneySaver Export Account to offer up to 50 per cent savings on international bank transfers for Indian exporters. The company will help small and mid-size exporters open an account in a country of their choice and receive payments locally via Razorpay's platform, hence avoiding chargebacks and transfer costs



## DOUBLE GROWTH

**INDIA IS THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST MAKER OF DRUGS BY VOLUME AFTER US, CHINA**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, July 26:** India's pharmaceutical exports this fiscal year are set to grow nearly twice as fast as last year to hit sales of \$27 billion, driven by strong US buying, a government-backed trade body told Reuters, despite deaths linked to Indian-made cough syrups.

The robust forecast comes against the backdrop of earlier concerns from the government that last year's deaths of dozens of children in Gambia, which the World Health Organization (WHO) linked to drugs made in India, had "adversely impacted the image of India's pharmaceutical products across the globe".

Two other cough syrups made in India killed 19 children in Uzbekistan around December, according to the Uzbekistan government.

India is the world's third largest maker of drugs by volume after the United States and China, and senior pharma trade official Udaya Bhaskar said the country was too big a player for buyers to move away because of "these aberrations" in Gambia and Uzbekistan.

"As far as the Gambia and Uzbekistan incidents are concerned, if you see in terms of the image of the country, there is a dent," Bhaskar, director gen-

# Pharma exports soar



**Manufacturing a drug in Europe or the United States costs more than 30% than in India, giving India a big advantage. India is known for producing quality drugs at an affordable price. That is the major advantage for India and we are enjoying that for the last 15-20 years**

**UDAYA BHASKAR** | DIRECTOR GENERAL, PHARMACEUTICALS EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

eral of the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil), said Tuesday. "But if you see our (April-June) exports, they have grown. We are doing very well in the US market, we are growing at more than 10% there. In the past four-five months, the growth in exports shows that people have not taken very, very seriously (any concerns about) the quality of Indian pharmaceuticals."

India's pharma exports rose 3.25% in the year to March 31 to \$25.4 billion and Bhaskar said it was set to grow by about 6.3% to \$27 billion this fiscal year.

Sales to the United States, India's biggest market with 30% of its overall pharma exports, rose 6.2% to \$7.5 billion last fiscal year, government data show.

India's overall pharma exports in the April-June quarter

rose 5% to \$6.58 billion. India is seeing good overall demand for drugs for central nervous system conditions, cardiovascular and oncology, Bhaskar said.

### COUNTRY VISITS

Pharmexcil delegations have visited countries including Nigeria, Egypt and Russia in recent months to allay any concerns about Indian drugs, he said.

"Wherever we are going, people are asking and we are clarifying," Bhaskar said. "We are telling them our stand. We are trying our level best."

India has denied links to the deaths in Gambia but found another company guilty of sending adulterated products to Uzbekistan and cancelled its licence. The company, Marion Biotech, has denied wrongdoing.

Gambia has made it mandatory for all Indian drugs to be

**PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTS SET TO GROW BY ABOUT 6.3% TO \$27BN THIS FY**

**OVERALL PHARMA EXPORTS IN THE APRIL-JUNE QUARTER ROSE 5% TO \$6.58BN**

tested before being exported to the African country since July 1. India has since June 1 made it compulsory for all cough syrups to be tested before export. But India's cough syrup exports, including those made by drugmakers that follow the traditional Indian method of Ayurveda, are only about \$15 million a year and exports have largely remained intact, he said.

### RUSSIA SALES DIP

India's exports to Russia, however, have suffered because of the Ukraine war. Sales to the country fell 4.2% last fiscal year to \$573 million, according to government data, taking Russia to the seventh position from fourth among India's biggest pharma importers. Russia's share in India's pharma exports is generally around 2.5% but has now dipped to 2.2%.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine February 24 last year and until June 5 this year, India's pharma exports to Russia fell 4.6% to about \$691 million from the corresponding period a year earlier, a government source said.

Bhaskar said the fall could be due to a dollar shortage for Russia, its attempts to prop up the domestic market and some reluctance among big Indian companies to do too much business with it while also trading with the United States, even though there are no Western sanctions on pharma products.

# Sensex snaps its 3-day losing run



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 26:** Benchmark Sensex bounced back 351 points while Nifty closed above the 19,750 level Wednesday following buying in capital goods, banking and oil shares amid fresh foreign fund inflows.

Snapping its three-session losing run, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 351.49 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 66,707.20. During the day, it jumped 541.56 points or 0.81 per cent to 66,897.27. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 97.70 points or 0.50 per cent to end at 19,778.30. As many as 31 Nifty shares closed in the green, 18 declined and one closed flat.

From the Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro jumped over 3 per cent. ITC, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, Infosys and State Bank of India were the other major gainers.

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints and Titan were among the major laggards.

Optimism inched back after three trading days of consolidation ahead of the US Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.34 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.22 per cent. Among the indices, telecommunication jumped 2.31 per cent, capital goods rallied 1.59 per cent, realty climbed 1.17 per cent, FMCG (1.03 per cent) and industrials (0.98 per cent).

Auto and services indices fell. A total of 1,906 stocks advanced while 1,630 declined and 160 remained unchanged.

The rupee fell 13 paise to settle at 82.01 against the US dollar due to elevated crude prices in international markets and month-end dollar demand from importers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets Wednesday as they bought shares worth ₹922.84 crore, according to exchange data.

## BIZ BUZZ



Under its CSR initiatives, V-Guard Industries has donated a total of 25 fans to Bharatiya Vidyalaya (High School) and Government UP School Bhubaneswar in presence of Sasmita Mali, Deputy Director, Mo School, proprietor of Shree Ram Agency Nayagarh (distributor) among others.

## Dalmia EV enters Odisha market

**Bhubaneswar:** Dalmia Electric Vehicle Pvt Ltd enters the electric vehicle market in Odisha with the launch of a new innovative range of E-bikes, E-scooters, and E-ricshaws.

Dalmia EV has unveiled one E-bike Beamer, five E-scooters Hi-Speed Skyhawk, Escout, Mctly, Ewon and McAir, and E-cycles I spark under Dalmia Cyborg Brand range. The company also launched a passenger vehicle E-Rickshaw E20 Super and a goods vehicle E-Rickshaw Chhota Bheem - under Dalmia Neuron Brand range for the state's fast-growing EV market. Dalmia EV intends to strengthen its distributor network across Odisha. Currently Dalmia EV has 16 exclusive showrooms to sell its electric vehicle products and very soon it will reach all major locations of the state to expand its sales and distribution network.



## IN LAST NINE YEARS

# Banks recover NPAs worth ₹10L-cr

*Bad loans stood at ₹709,907cr at 2018-19 end which has come down to ₹2,66,491cr at the end of March 2023*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 26:** Aided by measures taken by the government and the RBI to reduce bad loans, banks, including public sector lenders, have recovered more than ₹10 lakh crore in the last nine years.

According to the Reserve Bank data, Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have done aggregate recovery of ₹10,16,617 crore during the last nine financial years.

As per the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) data, the total funded amount outstanding of SCBs to corporate company borrowers, classified as non-performing assets (NPA) and having amount outstanding of ₹1,000 crore or more was ₹1,03,975 crore as March 31, 2023.

CRILC collects, stores and disseminates credit data to lenders, and banks are required to sub-



mit report on a weekly basis to CRILC, in case of any default by borrowing entities with exposure of ₹5 crore and above.

NPAs over ₹20 crore and above of Scheduled Commercial Banks and All India Financial Institutions have seen a reduction in the last five financial years, the RBI data said.

At the end of 2018-19, the outstanding NPAs stood at ₹7,09,907 crore. In the following year, it came down to ₹6,32,619 crore. NPAs came down further to ₹2,66,491 crore at the end of March 2023.

Comprehensive measures have been taken by the government and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to reduce non-performing assets (NPAs), enabled by which gross NPAs of SCBs have declined from the peak of ₹10,36,187 crore (gross NPA ratio of 11.18

per cent) as on March 31, 2018, to ₹5,71,515 crore (gross NPA ratio of 3.87 per cent) as of March 31, 2023, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad had said in a written reply in Lok Sabha earlier this week.

Talking about various steps taken by the government, he had said, the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, has been amended to make it more effective.

The pecuniary jurisdiction of debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) was increased from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh to enable the DRTs to focus on high-value cases, resulting in higher recovery for the banks and financial institutions, the minister had said.

In addition, he had said, National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited has been set up as an asset reconstruction company with an aim to resolve stressed assets above ₹500 crore each.

The government has also approved extending a guarantee of up to ₹30,600 crore to back Security Receipts issued by NARCL to lending institutions for acquiring stressed loan assets, he had said.

## Edible oil prices fall up to 29% YoY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 26:** The retail prices of refined sunflower oil, refined soyabean oil and refined palmolien have fallen by 29 per cent, 19 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, in the last one year due to steps taken by the central government and a decline in global prices.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti said the central government is "closely monitoring the domestic retail prices of edible oils to ensure that the full benefits of a decrease in international prices are passed on to the end consumers".

"As on July 20, 2023, the international prices of major edible oils such as crude soyabean oil, crude sunflower oil, crude palm oil and refined palm oils have decreased drastically since last year. Due to continuous efforts made by Government, the retail prices of refined sunflower oil, refined soyabean Oil and RBD palmolien have decreased by 29.04 per cent, 18.98 per cent and 25.43 per cent, respectively, over a year," the minister said.

## TELECOM PLI

# Firms clock ₹6,911cr exports till May 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 26:** Companies under the Production Linked Incentive scheme for local manufacturing of telecom and networking products have done exports worth ₹6,911 crore till May 2023, Parliament was informed Wednesday.

Production Linked Incentive scheme was launched February 24, 2021, to promote domestic manufacturing of specified telecom and networking products, including 4G, 5G products and also design-led manufacturing in the country.

The companies under the scheme have made an export of ₹6,911 crore up till 31.05.2023, Minister of State for Communications Devushin Chauhan said. He also shared the operator-wise data for the same, which showed Airtel had 53,223 5G BTSs, Reliance Jio (2.28 lakh) and Vodafone Idea (36).

# Tomato price rise shock a boon for puree sales

**GOOGLE TRENDS DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF ONLINE SEARCHES FOR TERMS "TOMATO PUREE" AND "TOMATO PUREE 1KG PRICE" IN RECENT WEEKS IN INDIA HAVE BEEN HIGHEST IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, July 26:** Many Indian restaurants are cutting back on tomatoes in their popular dishes and consumer companies are ramping up production of cheaper purees that are flying off the shelves, after prices surged more than 500%.

Used widely in Indian cooking, prices of tomatoes have hit record highs in recent weeks as monsoon rains disrupted supplies at a time when seasonal production is typically low, forcing the government to organize mobile vans for subsidised sales.

Many McDonald's and Subway outlets have dropped tomatoes from their menu items, citing quality issues, but higher food prices are having a broader impact across the industry, while



pushing headline inflation numbers above the central bank's medium-term target.

Consumers, already struggling with rising living costs, are desperate for cheaper options.

Milk and vegetable retailer

Mother Dairy has seen a 300% jump in tomato puree sales in the last 15 days in New Delhi, a spokesperson said. Indian consumer giant Dabur said it has ramped up production of puree to meet growing demand.

Puree sales at Tata's online

shopping website BigBasket surged 175% in early July, with senior executive Seshu Kumar saying customers who earlier bought an average of 1 kg fresh tomatoes per order were buying half of that.

Amazon said demand for tomato puree on its platform rose five times over the past month, while ketchup sales rose 30%.

Packs of puree typically contain around 40% tomato paste and the rest water, and cost 130 rupees/kg. Tomato prices on Wednesday in New Delhi were ₹199/kg, from around ₹30 in April. Puree prices have so far not changed.

"With the prices going over ₹100, I tried to experiment with tomato ketchup for Indian gravies ... Not everyone in the

family liked it," said 34-year-old Praveen Sridhar, who runs a laundry business in Chennai.

Crop damage and transportation woes due to rain have also led to a rise in prices of other vegetables. Surging food prices accelerated India's annual retail inflation rate in June to 4.81%, snapping four months of easing and fuelling bets that the central bank will keep interest rates high into mid-2024.

Vegetables are a politically-sensitive commodity in India, where average per-capita income was estimated to be around \$200 per month in 2022-23. Price spikes in onions - another key ingredient used in Indian cooking - contributed to the fall of more than one state government in the past.

THE SQUADS

**WEST INDIES:** Shai Hope (C), Rovman Powell (vc), Alick Athanaze, Yannic Cariah, Keacy Carty, Dominic Drakes, Shimron Hetmyer, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Gudakesh Motie, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Kevin Sinclair, Oshane Thomas.

**INDIA:** Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Rituraj Gaikwad, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya (vc), Shardul Thakur, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Mohd. Siraj, Umran Malik, Mukesh Kumar.



# SURYA seeks course correction

Suryakumar, who has not been able to replicate his superhuman T20 form in the ODIs, can stake a claim for the number four spot in the absence of injured Shreyas Iyer.

Though he recorded a hat-trick of first ball ducks in the previous series against Australia, the X-factor batter is expected to start the series.

KL Rahul, who is undergoing rehabilitation after a thigh surgery, will be a strong contender for the number one wicket-keeper's slot when he returns to action. In his absence, both Kishan and Samson have a chance to make a claim for the second wicket-keeper's slot with Risabh Pant unlikely to be fit in time for the World Cup.

Samson is used to being in and out of the team but he will be hoping to get game time in his comeback series and build on his average of 66 in 11 ODIs.

Kishan, who impressed with the bat and was behind the stumps in the Test series, is likely to be the wicketkeeper for the opening ODI. That leaves Samson and Suryakumar to battle for the remaining spot in the middle order.

Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill will open the innings which means more time on the bench for Rituraj Gaikwad.

Vice-captain Hardik Pandya, who has not played since the IPL, has a hectic schedule ahead of him with the five T20s following the ODIs, bringing workload management to the forefront.

Considering that he will captain the T20I side, he might get a breather during the ODI series.

In the bowling department, it is another opportunity for tear-away pacer Umran Malik to make an impact. The 23-year-old batter from Jammu and Kashmir has the tendency to leak runs but is a genuine wicket-taking option. He has taken 13 wickets in seven ODIs.

Chahal has gone down in the pecking order of spinners and Kuldeep Yadav was picked ahead of him in the last series against Australia. The leggie will be eagerly waiting for his chance.

Mohammed Siraj will lead the pace attack with Jaydev Unadkat, Mukesh Kumar and all-rounder Shardul Thakur being the other options.

The West Indies, who have failed to qualify for the ODI World Cup, will be eyeing a fresh start with the India series. The return of Shimron Hetmyer and Oshane Thomas will boost the home side. Both played their last ODI in 2021.

Alick Athanaze, who was among the few West Indies batters who showed promise in the Test series, will be the one to watch out for.

**MATCH SCHEDULE**

**India vs West Indies  
1st ODI  
Time: 7 pm  
Telecast: DD Sports  
Streaming: Jio Cinema & Fan Code**

## Indo-Pak tie may be rescheduled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The blockbuster India-Pakistan contest in the upcoming ODI World Cup could be advanced by a day to October 14 due to the opening day of Navratri celebrations in Ahmedabad, a development which may lead to logistical nightmare for the fans.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and the BCCI had announced the World Cup schedule last month and awarded the marquee clash to the world's largest stadium in Ahmedabad.

The hotel and air fares for Ahmedabad skyrocketed after the schedule announcement, and if the game is indeed moved by a day, the ordeal of the fans is likely to worsen.

"Since October 15 coincides with the opening day of Navratri celebrations, the security agencies have advised that the big game, which will also need heavy deployment of security officials, should be rescheduled," a BCCI source told PTI.

The ICC will need to sit with BCCI to decide on the date change if the need arises. "Further discussion required and we'll advise of any changes, when we can," sources close to the ICC said.

PTI has learnt that the game will not move out of the Narendra Modi Stadium but the fans will still need to change their travel plans.

With the hotel fares going through the roof, it was reported earlier this month that the passionate fans who will be flying in from all around the world have resorted to booking hospital beds in the city.

India play their opening World Cup game against Australia in Chennai October 8 while Pakistan's first two games have been scheduled in Hyderabad October 6 and October 12.

Advancing the Indo-Pak game by a day might also impact the Babar Azam-led side, which will get a day less to prepare for the high profile clash.

**BCCI calls meeting**

The BCCI has called the state associations hosting World Cup matches for a meeting in New Delhi Friday to take stock of the preparations. The board will also discuss the possible date change of the India-Pakistan game in the meeting. "The meet-



ing has been called to assess the preparations for the World Cup," a state unit official told PTI.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah, Wednesday, wrote to the state associations on formation of a Working Group for the World Cup. The five office-bearers of the BCCI, including Shah and BCCI president Roger Binny, will oversee the preparations of all the venues, including the warm-up ones in Trivandrum and Guwahati.

The office-bearers will also be part of the infrastructure and subsidy committee which will include IPL chairman Arun Dhimal, former BCCI treasurer

Anirudh Chaudhry, former Apex Council member Prabhat Bhatia and KSCA secretary A Shankar.

"We anticipate that these sub-committees will work diligently towards achieving our shared goals and objectives. Together, we can make the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 a resounding success and further elevate the standards of infrastructure and development in Indian cricket," said Shah in the letter.

The World Cup will run from October 5 to November 19 across 10 venues, including Delhi, Dharamsala, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Chennai and Kolkata.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bridgetown (Barbados), July 26:** Suryakumar Yadav will be aiming to improve his 50-over credentials while Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson are likely to audition for the wicketkeeper's slot when India play a three-match ODI series against the West Indies, beginning here Thursday.

The West Indies to test out a few players to finalise their combinations ahead of the Asia Cup, which will precede the ODI World Cup at home in October-November.

Like the two Tests, India will be expected to dominate the West Indies but the series presents a crucial opportunity for the likes of Suryakumar, Kishan, Samson, Yuzvendra Chahal and Umran Malik.

## Indian men's, women's football teams cleared for Asiad participation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The Indian men's and women's football teams are set to participate at the upcoming Asian Games in Hangzhou, China after the Sports Ministry decided to relax the existing selection criteria.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) had earlier refused to clear the Indian football teams for the Asian Games on the ground that they were not ranked in the top 8 in Asia.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) then made an appeal to the Sports Ministry to allow the men's and women's sides to take part in the prestigious event with national senior team head coach Igor Stimac also seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention.

"Good news for Indian football lovers! Our national football teams, both Men's and Women's, are set to participate in the upcoming Asian Games," Sports Minister Anurag Thakur tweeted Wednesday.

"The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, has decided to relax the rules to facilitate participation of both the teams, which were not qualifying as per the existing criterion.

"Keeping in mind their latest performances in the recent times, the Ministry decided to grant the relaxation. I am sure they will put their best foot forward in the Asian Games and make our country proud," he added.

Since 2002, football in the Asian



**Bhagat secures Para Asiad berth**

New Delhi: Odisha para shuttler Pramod Bhagat qualified for the upcoming Asian Para Games scheduled to be held from September 23 to October 8 in Hangzhou, China. Bhagat booked his spot in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Sukant Kadam will partner Bhagat in men's doubles, while Manisha Ramadas will partner him in mixed doubles.

Games has been an U-23 affair with three players above that age are permitted in a team. AIFF had earlier planned that Stimac would take an U-23 Indian side to the September 23 to October 8 Asian Games after the Kings Cup in Thailand (September 7-10).

However, the Sports Ministry in a letter sent to IOA and all the National Sports Federations (NSFs) said that "for team events, only those sports which have achieved a ranking up to eighth among participating countries of Asia in the last one year should be considered for participation in Asian Games".

Indian men's team is nowhere close to the top 8 in Asia. It is currently in the 18th spot among countries under the Asian Football Confederation, while the women's side is ranked 11th.

The AIFF then appealed to the sports ministry to reconsider the decision with even coach Stimac making a plea for an exception to be made for the football teams in a social media post. The Sports Ministry then gave a green signal.

## Another 1st-round exit for Sindhu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 26: Double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu made yet another first-round exit but Lakshya Sen staved off a spirited challenge from fellow Indian Priyanshu Rajawat to progress to the second round of the Japan Open Super 750 badminton tournament here Wednesday.

Newly-crowned Korea Open champion Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also made a positive start to their campaign, extending their unbeaten run to 11 matches, following the wins in Yeosu and Indonesia.

Enduring a tough phase of her career, Sindhu lost 12-21, 13-21 to Zhang Yi Man of China in her opener that lasted 32 minutes. It was her seventh first round exit in 13 BWF World Tour events this year.

Canada Open champion Sen, returning to action after skipping the Korea event, too showed better mental fortitude to survive a scare against compatriot Rajawat, prevailing 21-15, 12-21, 24-22 in a 65-minute battle. Sen will face Kanta Tsuneyama of



Japan in the second round.

Sindhu, the 2019 World Champion, has looked a pale shadow of her past self after her injury rehabilitation and has dropped to World No.17 after a series of first round exits. She has been error-prone and struggling to finish points even against lower-ranked players.

Recently, Sindhu has come under the guidance of new coach Muhammad Hafiz Hashim, and is hoping to change her fortunes for the better.

Sindhu had beaten World No.18 Zhang in the Malaysian Open quarterfinals in May this year but the Chinese avenged that defeat and also made the lifetime win-loss record to 3-2 against the

## TRIALS WINNERS REQUEST TIME FOR TRIALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The wrestlers, who recently won the Asian Games trials, have requested the IOA ad-hoc panel and the Sports Ministry to not conduct the World Championship trials before August 20, saying repeating the painful and tedious process of weight-cut could lead to injuries ahead of the big-ticket event.

Mansi Ahlawat (women's 57kg), who shocked World Championship medalist Sarita Mor in the trials on July 22, Vishal Kaliraman (men's 65kg), Aman Sehrawat (men's 57kg), Pooja Gehlot (women's 50kg), Vicky (men's 92kg), Sunil (Greco Roman 87kg) and Narinder Cheema (Greco Roman 97kg) have all made a similar request. Antim Panghal (53kg), Radhika

(62kg) and Kiran (76kg) have also written mails to the authorities. The letter has also been marked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The delay in announcing the date and criteria for the Asian Games trials by the Bhopender Singh Bajwa-led IOA ad-hoc panel had kept the hopefuls in a tight spot and it did affect their performance.

The World Championship trials are expected to be held by August 10, giving the wrestlers, who competed in Asian Games selection competition, just about 17 days to be ready for another gruelling contest.

"Losing weight affects our performance and health and it will increase the chance of injury. We just lost weight for Asian Games trials and now it would not



be possible for us to lose weight again and compete in the trials within 10-15 days (of Asian Games

trials)," the letter read.

According to experts, the body needs at least 10 days to recover

from the impact of weight loss and subsequent competition.

"One week before and one week after the competition, a wrestler's routine is different. Weight-loss management is an altogether different kind of training. When will you work on strengthening and other aspects like mat-training if you stay focussed only on weight maintenance," said a coach. "Ideally, they should not conduct trials again and that too within such a short period of time," he added.

The World Championship is scheduled to be held in Belgrade, Serbia from September 16-24. The last date to send entries to the world governing body UWW is August 16. The panel is yet to announce a final date and criteria for the World Championship trials.