



HUMBLING EXPERIENCE

Actor Tara Sutaria gets invitation from the Majesty of Bhutan to attend the Drukyl's Literature Festival

LEISURE P2



VIEW OF MOON

A day after Chandrayaan-3 entered the lunar orbit, the ISRO Sunday released a video of the Moon 'as viewed by Chandrayaan-3'



PRANNOY SUFFERS DEFEAT

HS Prannoy finishes runner-up at Australian Open after his gallant fight ends in a loss to Weng Hong Yang

SPORTS P12

QUIZZING WIZARDS



Orissa POST & Dharitri Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy hands over a cheque of ₹1 lakh to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, the Senior category champions of Mettle Meet, 2023, while Odisha Mining Corporation CSR Consultant Radhey Shyam Bhol, Orissa POST & Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy, quizmaster Ajay Poonia and anchor Shovna Mishra look on



Aditya Birla Vice President Dr Bibhudatta Mahapatra and General Manager (Administration & PR CC) Ashutosh Rath present a cheque of ₹1 lakh to DAV Public School, CDA, Cuttack, the Junior category champions of Mettle Meet, 2023, while Orissa POST & Dharitri Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, Editor Tathagata Satpathy, quizmaster Ajay Poonia and anchor Shovna Mishra look on

AIIMS, DAV-CDA win battle of nerves

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 6: The finals of Mettle Meet 2023 witnessed not only stiff competition and a fierce battle of wits but also edge of the seat excitement, Sunday.

In a nail-biting finish, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar bagged the crown in the contest after achieving first runner-up and second runner-up status in 2017 and 2019 respectively in the Senior category.

DAV Public School, CDA,

Cuttack emerged victorious in the Junior category.

The entire event was packed with drama and suspense with teams edging past each other at times while being overtaken the next moment.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar who were leading till the fourth round, won the title by answering the last question of the evening and clinched the title, leaving VIMSAR Burla at second position and IIT Bhubaneswar at third.

DAV-CDA, Cuttack, on the other hand, emerged winners

in the Junior category by defeating their closest rival Loyola School by a slender margin. Loyola put up a tough fight but failed short despite the winning team failing to get a single point in the last round. Blessed Sacramento High School, Puri were the second runner-up.

Compared to day 1, the finale saw intense battle among the 16 finalists - eight each from the Junior and Senior groups. Altogether 69 teams from school and colleges across the state participated in the competition.

On the final day, Adyasha Satpathy, Chief Executive, Orissa POST, encouraged all participants and lauded their performance. She said both the prelims and finals were exciting



and all the teams, which participated in the event, deserved to win. "In my eyes, all are winners," she said.

Tathagata Satpathy, Editor, Orissa POST, said the newspaper's initiative to revive the spirit of quizzing in Odisha has already created a buzz across

the state. "Quizzes of this kind help raise the ability of participants to think and grow. In Mettle Meet, everyone is a winner and nobody is a loser," he said.

Quizmaster Ajay Poonia said the standard in the competition was quite high in both the fi-

nals. "Both the finals saw winners edge past their rivals by one or two points," he said.

The event was watched live by many on social media platforms of the newspaper's digital ventures.

The winners got ₹1,00,000 as prize money while first and second runners-up got ₹50,000 and ₹25,000 respectively in both Senior and Junior categories.

Kaustuv Kumar Sahu of DAV-CDA said: "At the end we can say we were very lucky. If Loyola

would have answered the last question correctly we would have been second. Mettle Meet is an exciting quiz contest and is a great effort of Orissa POST to resume it after a gap of three years due to Covid-19."

Bighnesh Das of AIIMS Bhubaneswar said: "We finally became champions of Mettle Meet. We will party now after working hard for the competition and winning it in such a tough contest. Mettle Meet is a great platform for quiz talents."

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BIGHNESH DAS | AIIMS BHUBANESWAR

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KAUSTUV KUMAR SAHU | DAV-CDA

25 rly stations to be redeveloped in state

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday laid the foundation stone through virtual mode for redevelopment of 25 railway stations in Odisha, which are among 508 such stations across India that will be modernised under the 'Amrit Bharat Station Scheme'.

The 25 railway stations under East Coast Railways in Odisha which will be redeveloped with a sum of ₹547.7 crore include Sakhigopal, Mancheswar, Dhenkanal, Chhatrapur, Angul, Meramandali, Balugaon, Lingaraj Temple Road, Talcher Road, Khurda Road, Kantabanji, Bargarh Road, Hirakud, Rairakhol, Barpali, Muniguda and Bolangir.

The design of the station buildings will be inspired by

local culture, heritage and architecture, the prime minister said while laying the foundation stone.

Of the 25 stations in Odisha, 11 were located under Khurda Road Division. The work of redevelopment of the stations will be completed within 18 months.

Odisha's Minister for Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Public Enterprises, Science & Technology Ashok Chandra Panda attended the function at the Lingaraj Temple Road railway station, which will be redeveloped with an investment of ₹19 crore.

Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi and Bhubaneswar-North MLA Susant Kumar Rout were present at Mancheswar railway station on which ₹26 crore will be spent for redevelopment.

NDA ally withdraws support from govt

Imphal, August 6: NDA partner Kuki People's Alliance (KPA) Sunday announced withdrawal of support from the N Biren Singh government in Manipur.

In a letter to Governor Anusuiya Uikey, KPA president Tongmang Haokip informed about the party's decision to snap ties with the BJP-led government in Manipur, where ethnic rioting since the last three months has claimed more than 160 lives.

"After careful consideration of the current conflagration, the continued support for the incumbent government of Manipur led by Chief Minister N Biren Singh is no longer fructuous. Accordingly, the support of the KPA to the



Government of Manipur is hereby withdrawn and can be considered null and void," Haokip said in the letter.

In the 60-member House, the KPA has two MLAs - Kinmeo Haokip Hangshing from Saikul and Chinlunthang from Singhat. The development will have no impact on the stability of the government, as the BJP has 37 members

in the Manipur Assembly. The NPP has seven MLAs and the NPS has five. The Congress has five legislators. Meanwhile, most of the Kuki MLAs irrespective of their party affiliations are unlikely to attend the Manipur Assembly session slated to be called from August 21 in view of the continued ethnic violence, according to leaders from the community.

Fresh violence, arson

Imphal: Fifteen houses were set on fire in Manipur's Imphal West district where fresh violence broke out, officials said Sunday.

The incident happened Saturday evening at Langol Games village as a mob went on a rampage, they said.

Security personnel fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the mob and bring the situation under control, they added.

A 45-year-old man was shot during the violence. He was admitted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) with bullet wounds on his left thigh, and is stated to be out of danger at present, officials said.

Fresh violence was also reported from Imphal East district's Checkon area where a large commercial establishment was torched Saturday, officials said.

Three nearby houses were also set on fire, they said, adding that firefighters doused the blaze.

Also, a gunfight broke out between security forces and militants in Kangpokpi district Saturday evening.

SHORT TAKES

Girl's body found in MLA's official quarters

Bhubaneswar: A minor girl was Sunday found hanging inside the official quarters of Rairangpur MLA Naba Charan Majhi in MLA Colony area under Kharvela Nagar police limits, here. The deceased, a relative of Majhi, was staying in the quarters along with her brother and an uncle. She was a student of Plus II first year at a local college in Nayapalli. Sunday, when she didn't wake up till 11am, her brother and other inmates knocked at the door of her room, but there was no response. Later, he broke into the room and found her hanging from the ceiling fan with her stole. Police sent the body to Capital Hospital for post-mortem and registered an unnatural death case.

30 killed, 80 injured in Pak train mishap

Karachi: At least 30 people were killed and 80 others injured Sunday when several compartments of an express train derailed in Pakistan's southern Sindh province. The Hazara Express travelling from Karachi to Rawalpindi derailed in Nawabshah district near the Sarhari Railway Station, 275 kilometers from the provincial capital Karachi. Commissioner Benazirabad division Abbas Baloch said in a statement that at least 30 people died in the accident. P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No small feat! Govt disciplined citizens. Now, we're willing to stand in a Q for every little thing

Musk vs Zuck fight to be live-streamed on X

The social media moguls have been egging each other into a mixed martial arts cage match in Las Vegas since June

San Francisco, August 6: Elon Musk said in a social media post that his proposed cage fight with

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg would be live-streamed on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

The social media moguls have been egging each other into a mixed martial arts cage match in Las Vegas since June.

"Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X. All proceeds will go to charity for veterans," Musk said in a post on X early Sunday morning, without giving any further details.

Earlier, Musk had said on X



that he was "lifting weights throughout the day, preparing for the fight," adding that he did not have time to work out so brings the weights to work.

When a user on X asked Musk the point of the fight, Musk responded by saying "It's a civilized form of war. Men love war."

Meta did not respond to a Reuters request for comment on Musk's post.

The brouhaha began when Musk said in a June 20 post that he was "up for a cage match"

with Zuckerberg, who is trained in jiu-jitsu.

A day later, Zuckerberg, 39, who has posted pictures of matches he has won on his company's Instagram platform, asked Musk, 51, to "send location" for the proposed showdown, to which Musk replied "Vegas Octagon," referring to an events centre where mixed martial arts (MMA) championship bouts are held.

Musk then said he would start training if the cage fight took shape.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.0°C	32.2°C	
MIN	26.9°C	26.0°C	
Humidity	98%	81%	Forecast
Rainfall	21.6mm	Nil	Light to moderate rain

BACK WITH A BANG

Orissa POST Mettle Meet 2023 once again proclaimed its dominance as the numero uno quizzing event of eastern India as curtains came down on the two-day event Sunday evening. The grand show added a few more feathers to its glorious hat on the swashbuckling comeback after a three-year break. Following a spectacular beginning Saturday that witnessed over 69 teams from top educational institutions of the state engaged in a battle of nerves to qualify for the finals, Sunday's Grand Finale saw 16 of them in Junior and Senior categories locked in a battle of minds to etch their names in the quizzing landscape of the state. Nevertheless, in the end, the message emanating from the marquee event was loud and clear: Everyone is a winner.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

The fifth edition of **Orissa Post** Mettle Meet 2023 was a grand success in its comeback streak this year, after 2019, for the sheer response of the participating institutions and the unprecedented excitement it evoked in students, parents and teachers as well.

The preliminary rounds and the finale of the two-day quizzing extravaganza witnessed packed houses with lots of twist and turns, laughter and tense moments for the participants and spectators.

Kaustuv, part of team DAV-CDA, which bagged the top trophy in the Junior category, described Mettle Meet as a 'very exciting quiz tournament' and said, "It is indeed a great effort by **Orissa POST** to start the event once again after three years of global disruptions caused by Covid-19."

Sarat Kar, an official from SAI International School, said such grand-scale quizzing event with top educational institutions of the state participating is a hard thing to miss for any educational institution. "We are very happy to participate in the meet. Winning and losing is a part of life, but the knowledge the students gain from this tournament is huge."

Sriman Mishra from DAV Kalinganagar, one of the finalists in the Junior category, said in tournaments like this one must expect a nail biting finish. "And that is how it went. In all the rounds it was an 'if and but' scenario. We could have been a little confident in answering, but didn't. The winner DAV-CDA grabbed maximum points in the starting round which proved crucial," he added.

Rabmit Das of NISER Jatni, one of the finalists in the Senior category, said Mettle Meet is becoming a 'big thing' with every passing year with top teams vying for the honour. "Qualifying for the finals alone is a big task and we were happy for reaching up to the finals," he said.

Mentors happy

Teacher and student relationship is crucial for the development of a child's facets and the same goes for quizzing too. **Orissa POST** Mettle Meet 2023 showcased the way teachers groom and mentor students for the finals. Durga Madhav Mishra, a teacher from DAV-CDA said the students had prepared very hard for the tournament. "We had selected the best team for the tournament. Our boys practiced really hard for it." Tushar Sasmal, a teacher from Blessed Sacrament High School, Puri which emerged Second runner-up in the Junior category said, "We identify, tap and groom talents from a very early age and nourish them to participate in quizzes."

Friendship matters

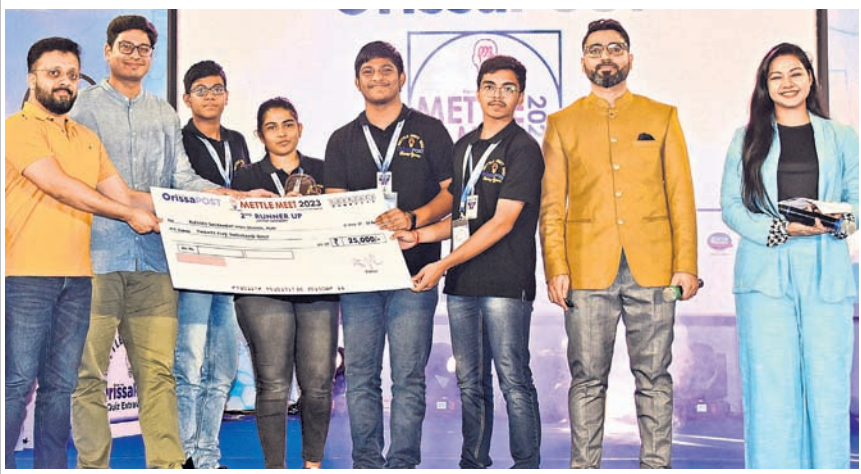
Friendship Day which coincided with the finals of Mettle Meet 2023, Sunday had its reflection on the event. The camaraderie and chemistry between team members was writ large the whole day. Pratyaksh Rastogi of Loyola School said friendship helps in understanding each other which, in turn, helps in quizzing. "The whole quizzing is all about coordination which becomes easy if we are friends." Ankit Kumar Swain of DAV-CDA said that friendship helps in winning the quiz because it enables knowing each other's mindset quickly.

Shlok Samanta of Loyola school, first runner up in Junior category said he will try to come back in Senior category next year. Asish Nayak of SCBMCH said, "We were thrilled to be in the finals of **Orissa POST** Mettle Meet."

Meanwhile, Swagatika Lenka, a parent, said that all are winners in a quiz like Mettle Meet since such quizzing tournament provides an opportunity to hidden talents to blossom.



Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy and Vajirao IAS Academy Chief Executive Officer Subhransu Sekhar Ojha hand over a cheque of ₹50,000 to Loyola School, Bhubaneswar, the first runner-up in Junior category of Mettle Meet 2023, at Hotel Swosti Premium in Bhubaneswar, Sunday as the newspaper's Editor Tathagata Satpathy looks on



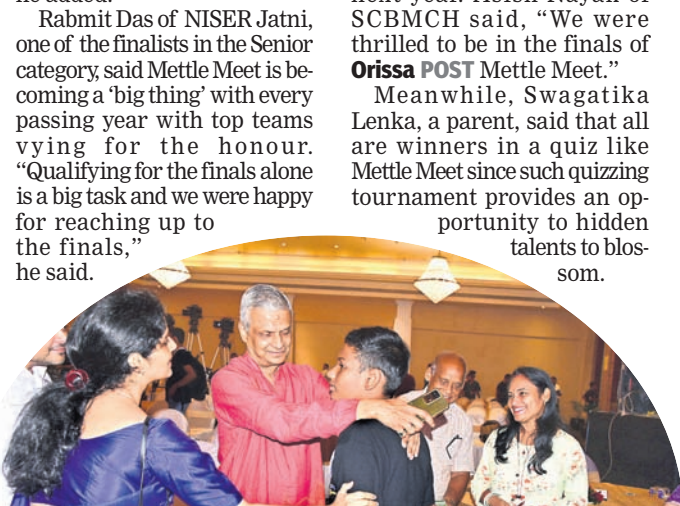
Vedanta Business Development and Strategy Lead Anirudha Sastri and Ruchi Masala Sales Head Debabrata Pattnaik hand over a cheque of ₹25,000 to Blessed Sacrament High School, Puri, the second runner-up in Junior category, in the presence of quizmaster Ajay Poonia and anchor Shovna Mishra



Indian Oil Corporation Limited General Manager Susmita Tripathy hands over a cheque of ₹50,000 to Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Burla, the first runner-up in Senior category of Mettle Meet 2023



Vedanta Business Development and Strategy Lead Anirudha Sastri and Ruchi Masala Sales Head Debabrata Pattnaik hand over a cheque of ₹25,000 to Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar, the second runner-up in Senior category, as quizmaster Ajay Poonia looks on





God loves to play the fool in season; man does it in season and out of season. It is the only difference.

THE MOTHER



Zero Hunger

This year marks the halfway point for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ambitious set of global targets introduced by the United Nations in 2015. These 17 goals, devised to address today's most pressing challenges and put the world on the path to sustainability, seek to reduce poverty, improve access to health care and education, and mitigate the worst effects of climate change by 2030. But when it comes to meeting the critical goal of eradicating food insecurity, much of the progress made over the past decade has been undone.

When the SDGs were launched, the target of eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide within 15 years seemed ambitious but within reach. At the time, hunger levels had been trending lower for more than two decades, largely thanks to rising agricultural productivity and global economic growth.

Over the past few years, however, the world has been hit by a series of compounding crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine to extreme weather events caused by climate change. As a result, global hunger has surged, with the world's poorest people suffering the most.

According to a new UN report, approximately 735 million people are experiencing food insecurity, an increase of 122 million people since 2019. Alarming, seven countries – Somalia, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Yemen – are now on the brink of famine. Not only are we falling short of reaching zero hunger by 2030, but we are worse off than we were in 2015.

So, where do we go from here? To meet the UN's zero-hunger target, we must first recognise who makes up the majority of the world's poor and understand where most of their food comes from. The answer to both questions is surprisingly straightforward.

The vast majority of the world's poorest individuals are the smallholder farmers who also produce most of the food consumed in many developing countries. These farmers have been hit hard by the shocks of the past few years, in addition to the systemic challenges that have kept them trapped in poverty and food insecurity. Yet within the current crisis lies an opportunity. By supporting smallholder farms, the international community could make significant strides toward ending global hunger.

Governments and international institutions can aid smallholder farmers and eliminate global food insecurity in several ways. First, most smallholder farms in developing countries generate disproportionately low crop yields compared to their developed-country counterparts, largely because they lack basic inputs, such as improved seeds and organic fertilizers. This is particularly evident in Sub-Saharan Africa, where yields for staple food crops are significantly lower than global averages. Increasing access to high-quality farm inputs, especially those that help farmers adapt to climate change, could thus greatly enhance food security.

Second, lack of access to credit prevents most smallholder farmers from purchasing improved agricultural inputs or investing in their farms. Greater global support for programmes that provide these farmers with financing would help.

Third, smallholder farmers typically harvest crops once or twice a year. This means that food must be stored for months to ensure that supplies last until the next harvest. Given the limited access to proper storage technology, staple food grains are frequently exposed to damage by insects, mold, and other pests, contributing to post-harvest crop losses and household hunger. These smallholder farms require greater access to advanced storage options, including low-cost, hermetically sealed bags that can preserve crops for extended periods and eliminate the need to treat stored grains with potentially harmful insecticides.

Finally, smallholder farmers need better access to viable markets for their crops, enabling them to move beyond subsistence and build reliable livelihoods. The international community, alongside public- and private-sector actors, must do more to bolster local capacity and encourage investment in agricultural value chains. This would empower more smallholders to develop sustainable businesses.

Despite the massive challenges ahead, achieving zero hunger remains a feasible target. In September, global leaders attending the UN General Assembly will evaluate progress toward achieving the SDGs. If we are to create a world free from hunger, supporting agriculture and smallholder farmers must be at the top of the agenda.

The writer is a social entrepreneur. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Jordan Dey

Not only are we falling short of reaching zero hunger by 2030, but we are worse off than we were in 2015



Shivaji Sarkar

THE AVERAGE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE TEN MOST AFFECTED COUNTRIES BY VIOLENCE WAS EQUIVALENT TO 34% OF WORLD GDP

Communal violence has a cost. Manipur may be far from the national capital, or Nuh in Haryana may be just 60 km or so away, but violent incidents impact the country's global reckoning, investment flows and lead to overall losses. The recent violence in Nuh has jolted the Gurugram-based multinational and Indian companies. As a caution they have gone back to work from home as they perceive that the state government has reneged on maintaining law and order and faltered on checking violence, around 30 km away. If the mosque burning and its imam's death in Sector 70 are included, it is a mere 25 km away. When it comes to safety, Noida is a better choice than Gurugram. The crime rate in Gurugram is higher than in Noida. Hence young people and families are increasingly choosing Noida over Gurugram.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) produced by the Sydney-based Institute of Economics and Peace notes the India has a dismal rank of 72. The 2020 violence has cost India \$646 billion, enough to fund most of its budget expenditures and welfare programmes. The average economic impact of the ten most affected countries by violence was equivalent to 34% of world GDP, the report says. The economic cost of violence in India in constant purchasing power parity (PPP) terms in 2017 was \$806.2 billion, or 9% of the GDP. The Delhi riots in 2020, one of the worst in recent past, resulted in the death of 53 people. The economic cost of violence in India is 6% of the GDP. Over 2,900 cases of communal

FOCUS SOCIETY

THE COST OF RIOTS



The 2020 violence has cost India \$646 billion, enough to fund most of its budget expenditures and welfare programmes

rioting were registered in the country between 2017 and 2021, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in a reply to a question in Rajya Sabha in December 2022. Citing National Crime Records Bureau data, he said a total of 378 cases of communal or religious rioting were registered in 2021, 857 in 2020, 438 in 2019, 512 in 2018 and 723 in 2017. Uttar Pradesh tops the list with the highest number of reported crimes in 2023. The state's population size and socio-economic factors contribute to its elevated crime rate, a reason for a large number of industries shifting from western UP despite it being a big hub. Even Honda closed its car manufacturing unit there.

Even as India is a shining case of unity in diversity, several innocent people die each year due to communal violence.

In 2017, 822 incidents of communal violence were seen killing 111 people. Religious intolerance is on the rise. The year 2019 saw cow vigilantes take to mob lynching against beef-eating and cattle-trading communities.

Communal riots affect the economy. Businesses shut down and people do not go out of their homes. Long-term violence leads to deterrence in investment and destruction of property. After the Gujarat riots 2002, investments flowing into the state had seen a decline.

An observation by Sriya Iyer in her book *The Economics of Religion in India* notes that economic growth also increases inequality and polarisation, which in turn incites religious conflict. She says that this is the root cause of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in

the country. Economic growth leads to a greater spirit of competition among businesses. The 1991 Varanasi riots and 1984 Bhiwandi riots were reportedly caused by this phenomenon, according to PR Rajgopal in his book *Communal Violence in India*. This syndrome leads to power conflicts.

In the South Asia region, or the Indian subcontinent, the economic impact of violence has risen to \$1.27 trillion in 2019, the highest level ever recorded for the region. The Economic Impact of Violence report 2021, also by IEP, found that since 2013, the impact has increased almost every year. The region consists of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and is the second least peaceful after the Middle East and North Africa and has one of the widest disparities between its most and least peaceful countries.

The historical rivalry between Kukis and Meiteis in Manipur or Hindus and Muslims in Nuh continues for reasons beyond religion. The ascendancy of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has more to do with this power syndrome in Haryana and so is the feeling of superiority among the Meiteis in Manipur. Religion in both the places is being used a conduit of expression. Even feeble formal dialogue between communities has been blocked by religious passion. If dialogue is not resumed it can definitely hurt the delicate social fibre and economic well-being. However, efforts for resumption of dialogue either in Manipur or Haryana remain a pipedream. The jolt to the economy is bound to be felt.

INFA

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

Safeguarding our source of sustenance

In recent years, climate change has escalated to alarming proportions, posing an imminent threat to global agricultural systems. Extreme weather events' increasing frequency and intensity have disrupted the intricate balance between temperature, precipitation, and other climatic factors. Consequently, this disruption is anticipated to profoundly affect various crops throughout their entire growing period, jeopardising food security and livelihoods worldwide.

The looming spectre of climate change casts a shadow over crop production throughout the growing season. The adaptability of crops to the capricious whims of climate becomes a critical dimension. The hike in the frequency of extreme weather phenomena necessitates strategies for effective coping. Anticipated climate change encompasses sweltering heatwaves, chilling cold spells, amplified fluctuations in rabi and kharif yields, and extreme weather events. Monsoons may display erratic onsets and premature retreats.

The growing season, a critical phase in the lifecycle of crops, is susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change. This period encompasses planting, germination, vegetative growth, flowering, and finally, the maturation of crops. Each of these stages is influenced by specific climatic conditions that are vital for optimal growth. However, the intensification of extreme weather events such as droughts, heatwaves, floods, and storms

disrupt these conditions, leading to a cascade of negative consequences.

The initial stages of the growing season, planting, and germination are pivotal for establishing healthy crops. However, the changing climate presents challenges that can hinder these crucial processes. Erratic precipitation patterns can result in saturated or parched soil, impeding germination. Moreover, unpredictable temperature fluctuations may alter seed dormancy periods and affect the synchronisation of germination, further compromising crop establishment.

During vegetative growth, crops rely heavily on consistent temperature and water availability. Water stress becomes a critical issue with climate change inducing more extended periods of heatwaves and droughts. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures accelerates water loss through transpiration, stunting plant growth and reducing overall biomass. In addition, increased atmospheric carbon dioxide levels may initially enhance photosynthesis but can also result in imbalanced nutrient uptake, diminishing crop quality.

Flowering marks the transition from vegetative growth to reproduction, requiring precise conditions for successful pollination and fruit development. However, altered climatic patterns can disrupt this delicate process. Unseasonal frosts triggered by erratic temperature fluctuations can damage blossoms, reducing fruit sets.

Furthermore, shifts in the behaviour of pollinators due to changing temperatures and habitat availability may hinder adequate pollination, leading to decreased crop yields.

The final stage of the growing season, maturation, demands a stable climate to ensure optimal crop development and ripening. Yet, the increasing frequency of extreme weather events threatens to shorten this critical phase. Sudden heatwaves can accelerate maturation, resulting in smaller and less nutritious yields. Conversely, unexpected heavy rainfall can lead to waterlogging and disease outbreaks, compromising crop quality and post-harvest storage.

Efforts to counteract the detrimental impact of climate change on crop production necessitate immediate and concerted action. As the frequency of extreme weather events heightens, the adaptability of crops to varying climatic conditions becomes paramount. Resilient crop varieties, equipped to endure temperature fluctuations and water scarcity, must be integrated into agricultural practices. Precision agriculture technologies offer a solution by optimising irrigation and fertilisation, curtailing resource wastage. Diversifying crop types and cropping systems further bolsters resilience by distributing risks across diverse species and varieties.

Climate-induced water management modifications, refined

land and soil practices, and nutritional enhancements are imperative. Water use inefficiencies must be curtailed, and preserving genetic plant and animal resources becomes paramount. Shifts in dietary patterns and the promotion of eco-friendly adaptations are crucial. Ecosystem-based risk management approaches and alterations in cropping strategies are indispensable.

The pursuit of adaptation strategies has already yielded progress in domains like crop enhancement, risk financing, and disaster management. The urgency to reshape agricultural paradigms in response to climate change is undeniable. Its footprint is already discernible, and the trajectory is unwavering, even if greenhouse gas emissions are held at current levels. The agriculture sector stands at a crossroads, beckoning for comprehensive adaptations to safeguard global food security and guarantee the sustainability of crop production in the face of an evolving climate.

To sum up, climate change's impact on various crops during the growing period is a pressing concern. By embracing innovative strategies and fostering international collaboration, humanity can strive to safeguard its essential source of sustenance in the face of an ever-changing climate.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune.

WISDOM CORNER

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The prison of life and the bondage of grief are one and the same, before the onset of death, how can man expect to be free of grief?
MIRZA GHALIB

A slave is one who waits for someone to come and free him
EZRA POUND

WORDSWORTH

■ Balderdash

The standard dictionary definition – senseless talk or writing; nonsense – may seem anodyne, lacking the fire and passion that so often comes attached to the word. It's often reserved for circumstances in which common-or-garden invective would be thought inadequate. This has been so for two centuries. Here is the grandly-named Victorian historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, writing in a footnote in his *History of England* from James II: "I am almost ashamed to quote such nauseous balderdash". One of the great wielders of balderdash – it seems somehow to be akin to a bludgeon – was the American journalist H.L. Mencken; he was in fine form castigating "the general run of business and professional men" in his book *In Defense of Women*: "Their very capacity to master and retain such balderdash as constitutes their stock in trade is proof of their inferior mentality". It's a pity that such a fine word should come of unknown stock, but we really don't have a clear idea where it comes from. Some argue its origin lies in the Welsh *baldorddus*, idle noisy talk or chatter (though that is pronounced very differently), while others point to related words in Dutch, Icelandic and Norwegian, such as the Dutch *balderen*, to roar or thunder. It appears around the time of Shakespeare with the meaning of frothy or frothy liquid, or a jumbled mixture of liquids, such as milk and beer, or beer and wine. Only in the latter part of the seventeenth century did it move towards its modern meaning, through the idea of speech or writing that is a senseless jumble, hence nonsense or trash. It has also been used as a verb, meaning to make a jumbled mixture of ingredients or, in plain English, to adulterate. Tobias Smollett used it in his *Travels through France and Italy* in 1766 to refer to French wine: "That which is made by the peasants, both red and white, is generally genuine; but the wine-merchants of Nice brew and balderdash, and even mix it with pigeons' dung and quick-lime".

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Relief for Rahul

Sir, What the Supreme Court said while staying Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's sentence in a defamation case demonstrated once again why Indian judiciary is so powerful and respected around the world. In response to the lower courts' findings, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court declared unequivocally that "in such circumstances, when the offence is bailable, the trial judge is expected to provide convincing reasons for assigning the maximum punishment." However, not only did the trial court fail to do so, the Gujarat High Court too missed this critical factor in denying the petitioner's appeal for relief. However, now that the sentence has been suspended, all of Rahul Gandhi's previously closed doors of opportunity have reopened. In such a context, it's no surprise that as soon as the Supreme Court's verdict was announced, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary urged that the Speaker to immediately reinstate Rahul Gandhi's membership. Rahul has received relief, but the court deemed his words to be beyond the bounds of decency, and it is required that a public figure exercise discretion in his speeches. In our country, the level of public debates, and even legislative debates, can occasionally be so low that it puts listeners and watchers to shame; in such a case, prominent politicians should be held accountable for the establishment of our public discourse.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Call for action

Sir, In July 2023, the world witnessed the hottest month on record. This led to severe heatwaves and devastating wildfires in different regions. UN Secretary-General António Guterres urgently called for immediate action on climate change, declaring Earth in an "era of global boiling" and urging leaders to commit to carbon neutrality swiftly. To assess global temperatures, scientists rely on data from various sources, including agencies like the UK Met Office Hadley Centre, NASA Goddard Institute, and others. They collect data from weather stations, ocean vessels, buoys, and satellites to understand temperature trends and the impact of climate change. The World Meteorological Organization and Copernicus Climate Change Service confirmed that human-made climate change, along with a natural El Niño event, played a significant role in driving extreme temperatures.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Instructions issued for deworming

ALL DISTRICT COLLECTORS WERE ASKED TO GIVE CONCERTED EFFORTS ACROSS ALL DEPARTMENTS AT THE DISTRICT AND BLOCK LEVELS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND INCREASED COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAMME

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 6: To combat the threat of intestinal worms pose to children's health, the state government has asked Collectors of all the districts and commissioners of five municipal corporations to ensure effective implementation of the National Deworming Day (NDD) in their respective jurisdictions in this month.

In this regard, Health and Family Welfare secretary Shalini Pandit, Women & Child Development secretary Shubha Sharma, School & Mass Education secretary Aswathy S and ST & SC Development secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo jointly wrote letters to all Collectors and municipal commissioners.

Soil transmitted helminths (STH) is a significant public health concern in India. As per Centre's estimate, 29.7 per cent of Odisha's children have STH, which is detrimental to physical and cognitive development.

In areas where parasitic worms are endemic, administering safe, effective deworming drugs to children at schools



For the National Deworming Day, children aged 1-19 and women of reproductive age 20-24, non-pregnant and non-lactating, will be provided with Albendazole, suspension or tablet, at respective schools and AWCs

and anganwadi centres (AWCs) leads to significant improvement in outcomes related to education, career, earnings, and long term wellbeing.

"Therefore, the four departments and Panchayati Raj & DW are conducting the biannual mass deworming across the state in all schools and AWCs," explained an official, adding intensive awareness campaigns

focusing on benefits of Aibendazole and water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices have also been undertaken.

This year, the NDD August 2023 round will be conducted August 10 and mop up day, August 17, in 19 districts: Balasore, Bhadrak, Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Deogarh, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendrapara,

Khurda, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Puri and Raygada.

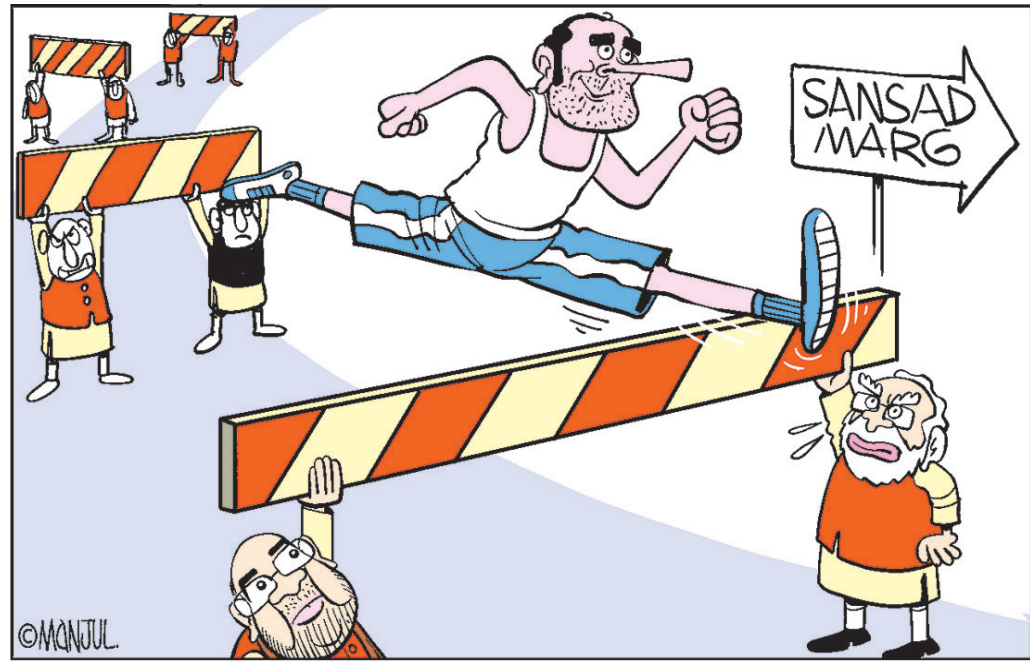
Under NDD, the children aged 1-19 and women of reproductive age 20-24 (non-pregnant and non-lactating) will be provided with Albendazole (suspension or tablet) at respective schools and AWCs by teachers & AWWs.

In the remaining 11 districts including Angul, Bargarh, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sonapur, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj, 1-2 year age group children will be provided with Albendazole suspension in routine immunisation sessions, the secretaries told Collectors.

"All government, government aided and private schools are included in the programme. Special drives should be undertaken to include private schools in urban and rural areas," said the secretaries.

The Collectors were asked to give concerted efforts across all departments at the district and block levels to ensure effective implementation and increased coverage of the programme.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



MAYURBHANJ'S TRIBAL YOUTH CRACKS OCS

Baripada: The adage "consistency and hardworking are non-negotiable" goes well with Kiran Soren, rank 361, a tribal youth from Khunta area of Mayurbhanj district who excelled in the Odisha Civil Service (OCS) examination. After cracking the exam, Kiran said, "One should remember that consistency and hardworking are non-negotiable. During my preparation, I used to study for 6-7 hours a day and read articles and editorials on relevant subjects to enhance my depth of knowledge." "I attribute my success to my parents, teachers and those who have been a part of my journey. I can't express my feelings in words. It's a dream come true moment for me," he added. Born in Simagadia village of Bahanada panchayat under Khunta block of Mayurbhanj district to a police constable Narendranath Soren and homemaker Purnima Soren, Kiran had dreamt of becoming a civil servant during his school days. After completing his schooling in Kendrapara's Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, he went to Ravenshaw University, Cuttack for graduation in Political Science. Similarly, he pursued his post-graduation in Political Science in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.



3-day int'l seminar at City BJB College



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 6: Buxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar (BJB) autonomous college is hosting a three-day international seminar-cum-workshop on the topic 'People, culture and living heritage'.

The inauguration ceremony of the event held Sunday was graced by chief guest Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda. The guest of honour on this occasion was Brent Horning, a senior research scholar of University of California, USA.

Those present on this occasion were the Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Higher Education department Aravind Agrawal, Nalco Chief Managing Director Sridhar Patra and Emeritus Professor from University of California, USA Triloki Nath Pandey.

The key note address by Annapurna Pandey from University of California was followed by floor discussion on diversified culture, heritage and the varieties of people.

Phiringia station IIC transferred

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, August 6: Day after a mob ransacked the Phiringia police station alleging the cops' involvement in illegal ganja trade, the station IIC (inspector-in-charge) Tapan Kumar Nahak was transferred Sunday with the removal of two home guards from duty.

Kandhamal district Superintendent of Police Suwendu Kumar Patra said that in the ransacking matter cases have been registered against more than 30 persons and 15 people have been detained so far.

Notably, an irate mob in Kandhamal Saturday set a police station on fire during a protest against the alleged involvement of policemen in ganja smuggling, a senior officer said.

Some police personnel were injured in the incident that took place at the Phiringia police station when the local people marched there, accusing some inspectors of 'being involved in smuggling' of contraband, and later torched the station.

Locals also blocked the Phulbani-Phiringia-Baliguda road for hours, demanding action against the inspector-in-charge of the police station. Some police personnel, who went to the road blockade site to talk to the agitators, were chased away, said Southern Range IG Satyabrata Bhoi.

The allegation against the local inspector-in-charge and two other policemen will be properly probed, he said.

A large contingent of police has been sent to control the law and order situation with the Kandhamal SP himself looking over, he said.

"Though some ganja peddlers are suspected to have been involved in the violence, the situation is now under control," Bhoi said.

LAND REGULARISED IN FAVOUR OF RCCI

Dept of Revenue waives ₹8.5cr



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 6: There is good news for the Rourkela Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) as an old land dispute concerning its current official building here has finally come to a logical settlement. Besides, the Revenue department has waived off Rs 8.50 crore to the business body, which it demanded for the new plot.

This has brought a sense of relief for the RCCI. Reacting to the news, incumbent president of this prestigious body Sunil Kayal said, "On behalf of the RCCI, I am extremely thankful to our state government for having shown such magnanimity while settling all our issues."

"The RCCI will definitely remember this for years to come. Also the role of our local MLA and Labour

Minister Sarada bhai cannot be forgotten. He helped us at all levels in settling this issue," Kayal said. He was also thankful to the past presidents "as they also contributed during their tenures for working to resolve this issue."

The land dispute, which was bothering the RCCI, was finally settled by the state government as the high-level committee took the decision in favour of this business body. In 1989 the RCCI applied to the land allotment committee (LAC) for land to set up its office building. Till that date, it was functioning in a rented house near Udit Nagar.

The LAC allotted 50 decimals on the Civil Township Bypass Road from the land from 'khata no 24' of Town Unit 44, vide letter no. 483, dt 25/02.1992. The RCCI made the payment on an installment basis between 1993 and 2006.

The problem came when the piece of land which was allotted to RCCI was given away from another 'khata'. And RCCI has been functioning on that land for the last 30 years. This came to the fore when the first-floor construction started and the plan was sent to RDA for approval. Subsequent investigation also revealed the land issue.

RCCI was charged of encroaching on valuable government land. It was found that land was not given to RCCI and it was another plot. Plot 24, on which the building presently exists, actually belonged to the government.

Soon the Revenue department demanded an amount of Rs 8.50 crore from RCCI. While the RCCI appealed to the government to waive the amount it also pleaded that it had also paid the amount in different installments over a period of 13 years.

"We appealed to the government that when we have already paid the land price, this piece of land should get regularised in RCCI's favour," said Kayal. And he further added, "It is our good luck and our sincere effort in convincing the government that finally paid up in our favour."

e-Invoice

Doing Business with Ease

Are you generating e-Invoices for your B2B Supplies?

From 01st August, 2023 generating e-Invoice has been made mandatory for all B2B supply of Goods or Services or both, or for exports, for taxpayers* whose Aggregate Annual Turnover exceeds Rs. 5 Cr in any of the preceding financial year.

e-Invoices bear Unique Invoice Reference Number generated through Invoice Registration Portal

Advantages of e-Invoicing

Uniform & Standardized Invoice

Lesser compliance burden

Auto populated GST Return

Auto reporting to GST portal

Reduction in transcriptional errors

Auto sharing with buyers for reconciliation

Auto generation of e-Way Bill

Seamless transmission of invoice

Lesser paperwork

*Except certain notified categories of taxpayers (Please scan for details)

For more details, please refer to the Notification No. 10/2023-Central Tax dated 10.05.2023 read with Principal Notification No. 13/2020-Central Tax dated 21.03.2020

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs

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MOMENTS TO CHERISH

Mettle Meet-2023, a two-day rendezvous of the brightest young minds of Odisha which concluded Sunday evening at Hotel Swosti Premium, Bhubaneswar, served as a major celebration of the quizzing culture in the region. Students from as many as 69 premier educational institutions of the state took part in the nerve-wracking competition and made their presence felt in a big way. Here're a few highlights from the event...



CONJUNCTIVITIS CASES RISE IN DELHI

Docs warn against irrational use of steroid eye drops



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: Amid a surge in conjunctivitis and eye flu cases in the national capital, doctors have warned against the irrational use of steroid eye drops, saying it may bring temporary relief but can do more harm in the long run.

Early detection and use of appropriate therapies are key to expeditious resolution of the disease and can help minimise potential harmful effects or transmission of untreated conjunctivitis, Dr J S Bhalla, a senior consultant eye surgeon at the DDU hospital said.

Conjunctivitis in the present epidemic is a self-limiting disease and does not require antibiotic treatment in all cases, he said, adding that hand and facial hygiene are very important to prevent its spread. There is no appropriate treatment but topical corticosteroids may be helpful in a subgroup of patients with adenoviral conjunctivitis and may prevent scarring in severe cases.

Dr J S Titiyal, chief of the RP Centre at AIIMS, said the condition is usually caused by viruses, which are highly contagious and spread quickly. He said the RP Centre found adenovirus to be the causative agent in all cases tested.

Among these, nearly 20-30 per cent of cases have a positive bacterial culture as well, pointing towards superadded bacterial infection, Titiyal added.

"The viral infection of the eyes is self-limiting and one can recover in one to two weeks. However, secondary bacterial infection may rarely occur and delay recovery," he said. However, Bhalla said primary or urgent

care physicians may prescribe antibiotics without making an informed differential diagnosis, adding that misdiagnosis of viral etiologies as bacterial conjunctivitis and the resulting inappropriate use of antibiotics can occur in as much as 50 per cent of cases.

This can lead to inappropriate antibiotic prescriptions and the risk of antibiotic resistance, the doctor added. Both Bhalla and Titiyal warned against the indiscriminate use of steroid eye drops, saying over-the-counter steroids should not be used unless advised by an ophthalmologist for specific indications.

Titiyal said two of the major symptoms experienced are itching and grittiness. Lubricating drops are soothing to the eyes and provide symptomatic relief, and cold compresses also decrease ocular irritation and itching, he said, adding people with active conjunctivitis can use of dark goggles to help reduce photophobia and prevent frequent touching of eyes.

Bhalla, a member of the Scientific Committee of All India Ophthalmological Society, further said topical steroids increase eye pressure more frequently, severely and rapidly among children as compared to adults.

Corticosteroids are a predisposing factor for bacterial conjunctivitis and can lead to suppression of the immune response, with the consequent risk of secondary ocular infections, he said.

Adenoviral conjunctivitis is a major cause of acute infectious conjunctivitis cases among adults, Bhalla said, adding bacterial conjunctivitis is responsible for the majority of cases among children.

Aligarh artisan makes 400 kg lock for Ram Mandir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aligarh (UP), August 6: An elderly artisan from Aligarh, famous for its handmade locks, has made a 400 kg lock for the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya which is expected to open for devotees in January next year.

An ardent devotee of Lord Ram, Satya Prakash Sharma toiled for months to prepare the "world's largest handmade lock" which he plans to gift to the Ram temple authorities later this year. Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust officials said they are receiving offerings from scores of devotees and they will have to see where the lock can be used. Sharma said his family has been engaged in making hand-

made locks for more than a century while he has been hammering, grinding, and shining locks in Aligarh, also known as 'taala nagri' or the land of locks, for over 45 years.

He made the giant lock, which is 10 feet high, 4.5 feet wide, and 9.5 inches thick with a four feet key, keeping the Ram Temple in mind, Sharma said.

The lock was displayed at the annual Aligarh exhibition earlier this year and Sharma, who is busy making minor modifications and adding embellishments to his creation, said he wants it to be perfect.

It was a "labour of love" for me while my wife, Rukmani, too helped me in this arduous venture, Sharma said. "Earlier we had



Satya Prakash Sharma, an elderly artisan from Aligarh, operates a 400 kg lock which he has made for the Ayodhya's Ram Mandir in Aligarh

made a 6 feet tall and 3 feet wide lock but some people suggested making a bigger lock so we started working on it," Rukmani said,

adding that final touches are being given to the lock.

According to Sharma, it cost him about Rs 2 lakh to make the lock and he has willingly poured his life's savings in turning his dream project into a reality.

"As I've been in the lock-making business for decades, I thought of making a giant lock for the temple as our city is known for locks and no one has done anything like this before," he said. Meanwhile, the temple trust will hold the consecration ceremony at Ram Mandir January 21, 22, and 23 next year for which an invitation will be sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ram Mandir Trust General Secretary Champat Rai said Friday.

Income certificate for EWS category to be issued online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The Delhi government has rolled out a facility for people from the EWS category to get their income and asset certificates online, according to a notification.

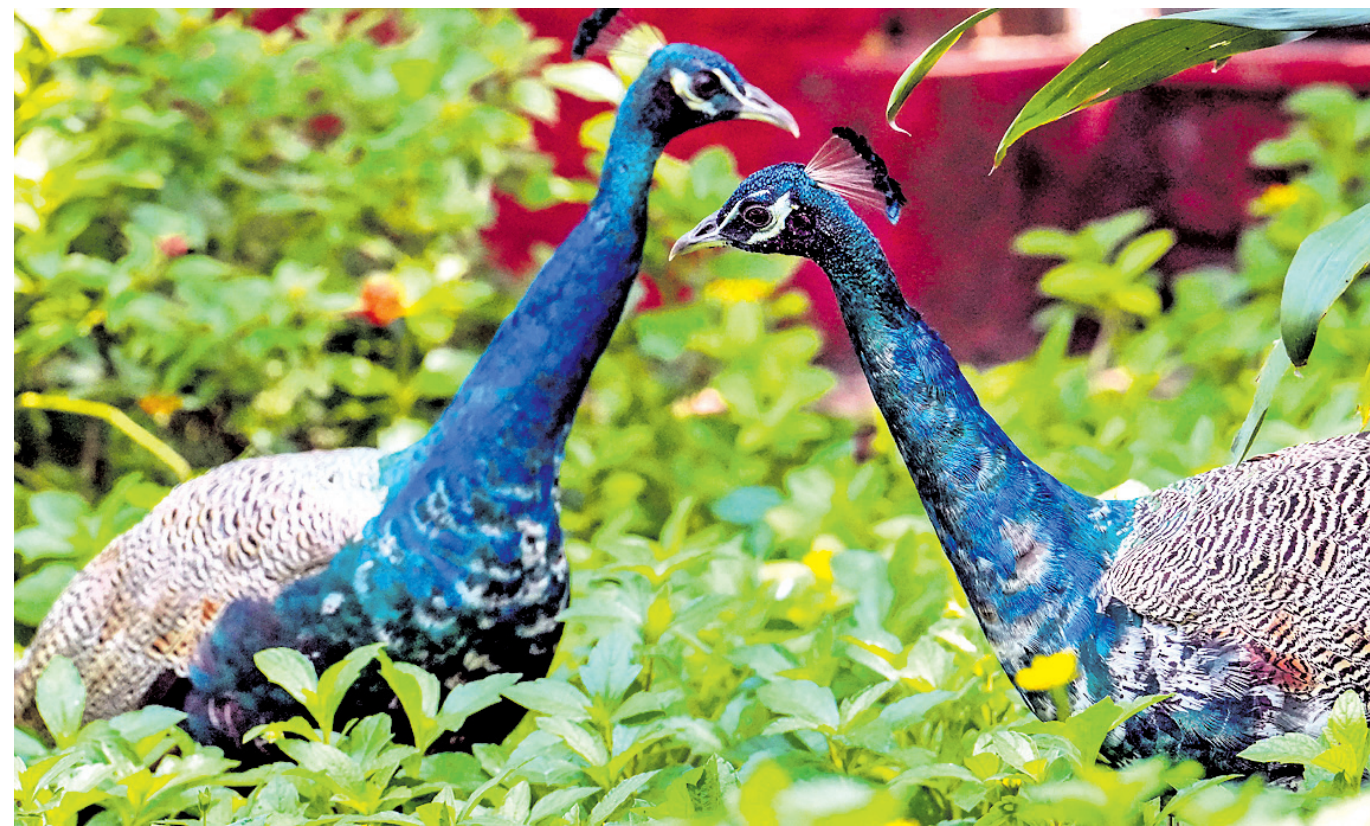
Income and asset certificates are key documents for people from the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) to get admission in schools, universities and for other purposes.

According to an official notification issued on August 1, the certificates will now be issued only through the online mode, cutting out the need to visit the subdivisional magistrate's office.

According to the official notification, "All concerned subdivisional magistrates (ie issuing authority) are hereby informed that the service 'Income and Assets Certificate for Economically Weaker Section' has been launched on the e-district portal with immediate effect and the aforesaid certificate will be issued through online mode only henceforth with."

The notification also underlined that applications received prior to the launch of the online service will be disposed off manually.

"Further, it is clarified that the manual applications received for the aforesaid certificate prior to the launch of the said online service and still pending on the date of go-live shall be disposed off manually by the certificate issuing authority, as per the prescribed timeline," it added.



Peacocks inside a garden in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Gyanvapi survey resumes on day 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), August 6: The Archaeological Survey of India resumed the survey of the Gyanvapi mosque here on the third day Sunday to determine if the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure, even as the Muslim side warned they would boycott the entire exercise if "rumours" are spread that Hindu religious symbols and objects have been found.

Government counsel Rajesh Mishra said that Sunday the survey work began at around 8.00 am and will continue till 5.00 pm.

Sudhir Tripathi, one of the advocates representing the Hindu side, said Saturday that Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) and other techniques and machines were used



Tight security arrangements as a team of ASI conducts scientific survey

for the survey work Saturday. The Hindu side is satisfied with the survey work so far, he said.

Syed Mohammad Yasin, the Joint Secretary of the Anjuman Intezamia Committee, which manages the mosque, said on Sunday the Muslim side and its advocates participated in the survey Sunday for second day.

The Muslim side did not participate in the survey Friday. He alleged that a section of media Saturday spread "rumours" that during the survey of the 'takhhaanaa' (basement) on that day, idols, 'trishul' and 'kalash' were found. "If such acts are not contained, the Muslim side will once again boycott the survey work," he said. The Supreme Court Friday refused to stay the Allahabad High

The bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, asked the ASI not to carry out any invasive act during the survey

Court order on the ASI survey of the Gyanvapi mosque, an exercise that the Muslim side says will "reopen wounds of the past".

The bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, asked the ASI not to carry out any invasive act during the survey.

Teacher sets up 'pad bank' at Bareilly village school

Rakhi Gangwar's 'pad bank' which began at the government primary school in Boria village of the district's Bhadpura block, is now attracting more women every passing day



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 6: A primary teacher in the Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh has taken up the initiative of spreading awareness about menstrual hygiene and set up a "pad bank" at her school for the adolescent girls and women of the village.

Rakhi Gangwar's efforts have started bearing fruit. Her "pad bank, which began at the government primary school in Boria village of the district's Bhadpura block, is now attracting more women every passing day."

"The pad bank was started on the occasion of Mother's Day May 15. During a survey of the village, I found women were unaware of the hygiene and clean-

liness necessary during menstruation. They were using dirty clothes. None were using sanitary pads. Many were not even aware it (pads) exists," Gangwar told PTI.

So she took it upon herself to convince the women of the village to visit her school, where she educated them on the importance of health and hygiene with the tagline "Hamari Kishori, Hamari Shakti (Our teenage girls are our strength)".

"More and more people are joining the campaign. If women coming to me have some health problems, I also arrange video consultation with doctors for them," she said, stressing that male teachers of some schools have also joined her campaign.

"I used to send my videos to them (teachers) to show to village women and girls and the campaign is getting a good response. This month, a sanitary pad company has offered free cost pads to the bank," Gangwar said. She said there are 78 families in the village and she personally contacts each of them. "Some elderly women of the village also come to me and appreciate the initiative and encourage me. They even help in convincing other women to use the pad bank and spread the word," the teacher added.

Sushma Devi, whose daughter studies in the same school, said it is a great initiative and has helped them understand the importance of hygiene.

Delhi govt eases process for issuing excise licences to clubs, restaurants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The Delhi government has simplified the process for issuing hotel, club, and restaurant (HCR) category licences by its Excise department with a view to give boost to the city's hospitality industry.

According to an officer, the application for an HCR licence that earlier used to get processed in four steps will be now be completed in just two steps, saving time by cutting paperwork.

"This four time back and forth movement of files was found to be not only consuming valuable time but also a hassle to the applicants. Now, a simplified process put in place will ensure speedier disposal of HCR licence applications," said the officer. Under the new procedure, the application for an HCR licence, complete with necessary documents, would be placed before the licensing authority - the deputy commissioner (excise) - for approval to depute a team to inspect suitability of the proposed HCR premises and issuing a notice if report of the team okayed it.

Kejriwal approves 29 shops to operate 24x7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday approved round-the-clock operations of 29 more shops and commercial establishments in the national capital.

The main objective behind allowing these shops and business establishments to operate 24 hours is to create more employment opportunities along with strengthening the economy of Delhi, said a statement from the chief minister's office.

This decision will also go a long way in providing a boost to the night life in the city, it added. These 29 establishments that have been allowed to operate 24 hours by the chief minister are shops, restaurants, retail trade or business and commercial category establishments. After the approval of the chief minister, the proposal will now be sent to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi for further action.



Department of Labour.

Among the 35 applications, three were incomplete, and incorrect information was provided during the investigation. Consequently, these three applications were put on hold. Similarly, within the 35 applications, three duplicates were identified, indicating that a single applicant had submitted two applications. After the investigation, one of the applications was cancelled.

Kejriwal has already granted permission for 552 shops to operate 24 hours. In June this year alone, he approved 155 shops and commercial establishments for 24-hour operation. On the other hand, from 1954 to 2022, over the past 68 years, only 269 shops and establishments were granted permission for 24-hour operation.

Mexican state Nuevo Leon inks pact with UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 6: Mexican state Nuevo Leon and the Uttar Pradesh government Saturday signed an agreement for investment in several sectors, including tourism, infrastructure, pharmaceutical and agriculture.

The agreement was signed between UP Industrial Development Commissioner (IIDC) Manoj Kumar and Nuevo Leon's Minister of Economics Ivan Rivas Rodriguez in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Nuevo Leon Governor Samuel Garcia, said an official statement issued here.

In a statement, Adityanath welcomed the Governor of Mexico as well as the delegation accompanying him and said that strong industrial relations are being established between UP and Nuevo Leon with friendship, trust and harmony. The Chief Minister said that it is very important that the governor of Nuevo Leon along with his team is exploring possibilities of industrial investment in Uttar Pradesh.

According to the statement, Nuevo Leon governor said Uttar Pradesh and Nuevo Leon are very close to each other.

national

of the day quote

Dialogue and diplomacy is the only way forward for a peaceful and enduring solution to the Ukraine conflict

AJIT DOVAL | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

The report unanimously said the state government can frame laws on polygamy. The only point they said is that the final assent on the Bill has to be done by the President instead of the Governor, who does the final signature on other state laws

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

If Parliament does not engage in dialogue and discussion and is plagued by disruption, the space will not remain vacant and will be occupied by forces that are not accountable to the Constitution

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

CLASSIFIED

LOST

I, Himanshu Bhusan Sahoo going to purchase a property from R.D. Commercial (P) Ltd. who have purchased this property from Sasanka Sekhar Das vide Regd. Sale Deed No.11573, Dtd.18.12.2009 and his name is recorded in mutation RoR in respect of Khata No. 1133/3006, Plot No. 1690, Area Ac 0.040 Dec under Mouza Jagamara. After getting advance R.D. Commercial (P) Ltd., handed over his original Sale Deed No. 11573, Dtd. 18.12.2009 and his RoR in respect of Khata No. 1133/ 3006. While I was travelling from SBI Bank to Unit-I market, on the way I lost these two documents. I have not mortgaged and not availed loan from any Bank by mortgaging these two original documents. If anyone get, please contact to SBI, RACPC, Bhubaneswar.

I, Sambit Das, S/o- Late Saroj Kumar Das has acquired Flat No.M-I/401 on 4th Floor by purchasing from Akshaya Kumar Parija. Mr. Akshaya Kumar Parija was purchased this property from SBI Staff Association Co-operative Ltd. represented through its President Mr. Jyoti Bhusan Mohapatra and Ganga Prasad Patnaik vide Regd. Sale Deed Application No. 1081015772, Dtd.01.07.2010. Mr. Akshaya Kumar Parija handed over the said deed to me in original. While I was coming from Jharapada to SBI Colony somewhere I have lost it. In spite of my best effort, I could not traceout the same. I have not created any Charge, Mortgage lien with any financial Institutions. If anyone get it, request to contact 8895715254.

May 4 Manipur incident: 5 policemen suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, August 6: Manipur Police has suspended five police personnel including the station in-charge of the area where the incident of two women being stripped and paraded by a mob had taken place on May 4, officials said Sunday.

The officials said immediately after the video of the incident surfaced on July 19, Manipur police decided to suspend the station in-charge of Nongpok Sekmai police station in Thoubal district and four other police personnel.

The action was taken promptly and has not been reversed despite daily protests by some sections of people from the majority community for their reinstatement, they said.

The state police has also ordered a time-bound inquiry under an Inspector General of Police to probe events leading to the looting of an armoury on August 3 in Bishnupur, they said.

The officials in the know of developments said that every effort was being made by the Manipur Police to end the cycle of violence in the state which began on May 3 between the majority Meitei and tribal Kuki community.

They said that the police had been working relentlessly to ensure that the breakdown in law and order was addressed on an urgent basis.

"Now for example, with the help of other agencies including the Army and Assam Rifles, we have managed to keep the essential supplies in surplus quantity." This is the season of farming and we can't wait for complete peace to return. So we have to manage it and that means an additional diversion of police force to the foothills where farming is done for the famous black rice," said one of the officials.

Around 300 people have been arrested so far in various cases. There have been many zero FIRs registered during the ethnic clashes and every claim has to be cross-checked, they said.

NUH VIOLENCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram/Nuh, August 6: Authorities in Nuh district Sunday razed some illegal structures including a hotel from where stones were allegedly pelted on a religious procession last week, even as a mahapan-chayat was held in support of four men arrested over arson at a mosque and the death of its junior imam.

Sunday was the fourth day of demolition drive after the communal flare-up in the district, with Deputy Commissioner Dhirender Khadgata saying a total of 162 illegally built permanent and 591 makeshift structures were razed and 57.5 acre land across 37 sites made en-

Modi govt acts tough

The Modi government is not buckling under the popular pressure to bring back the 'Old Pension Scheme' for retired government employees. The expenditure on central government pensioners stood at over Rs 2.54 lakh crores in 2021-22 which rose to more than three lakh crores in 2022-23. The new pension scheme was made compulsory by the Vajpayee government in 2004 which has continued since then. However, many state governments have resorted to popular pressure and reverted to old pension schemes and are facing acute financial



NDRF and SDRF personnel conducting a search operation following a landslide due to rains at Gaurikund in Rudraprayag

PTI PHOTO

TWO UP BOYS FORCED TO DRINK URINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Siddharthanagar (UP), August 6: A group of people here allegedly forced two boys to drink urine, gave them petrol injections, and inserted chillis in their private parts, over suspicion of stealing Rs 2,000, police said Sunday.

According to police, the incident took place at around 2 pm Friday at Pathra Bazar in eastern UP's Siddharthanagar district.

The accused also made a video of the entire episode and posted it on social media, which went viral on Saturday and drew the attention of Superintendent of Police Abhishek Kumar Agarwal, who ordered action in the matter.

Additional Superintendent of Police Siddhartha said that six



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

of the eight accused have been detained in connection with the incident. Based on the complaint lodged by Mohammad Hussain, father of one of the minor boys, Afzal, a case has been registered against eight persons at Pathra Police Station under various sections of the IPC.

The incident happened at a

chicken shop at Konkati crossing in Pathra Bazar. According to police, the accused tied the hands of the two boys - Afzal and Vijay Sahni - after acquiring them of stealing Rs 2,000 from a chicken farm. They then

administered to them petrol injections and inserted green chilli in their anuses.

The boys were also made to eat salty snacks and made to drink urine. Both boys cried for help, but no one came forward to their rescue. On Sunday, BJP MP from Domariyaganj Jagdambika Pal went to the district hospital, where the boys are undergoing treatment.

He spoke with their family members and assured them of stringent action in the matter. The lawmaker told reporters the incident left even "Taliban's cruelty" behind and instructed the SP to trace the other two accused who are still at large.

ACCORDING TO POLICE, THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT AROUND 2 PM FRIDAY AT PATHRA BAZAR IN EASTERN UP'S SIDDHARTHANAGAR DISTRICT. THE ACCUSED MADE A VIDEO OF THE ENTIRE EPISODE AND POSTED IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA, WHICH WENT VIRAL SATURDAY AND DREW THE ATTENTION OF SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE ABHISHEK KUMAR AGARWAL, WHO ORDERED ACTION IN THE MATTER.

DRUNK MAN KILLS WOMAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 6: An inebriated man claiming to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva allegedly thrashed an 85-year-old woman to death in Rajasthan's Udaipur district, police said Sunday.

A purported video of the incident that happened in Tarpal village falling under Saira police station area on Saturday also surfaced on social media, they said.

In the video, accused Pratap Singh (70) can be seen beating up the woman with an umbrella, kicking her and pulling her hair near the Mahadev temple, while

The elderly woman in the video is seen pleading for mercy

claiming to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

According to police, four people, including Pratap, Nathu Singh and two juveniles who were present there and filmed the incident, have been detained for interrogation.

The elderly woman, in the video, is seen pleading for mercy. Meanwhile, another person standing near him kept telling the accused not to do so. Two minors who shot the video also tried to stop the accused but to no avail.

"During questioning, the man told police that in his drunken state, he thought that he was an incarnation of Lord Shiva and beat the woman to death," Udaipur SP Bhuwan Bhusan Yadav said.

The accused also claimed that he could bring the woman back to life, he said. "Four people, including the prime accused, have been detained," he said.

Structures used for attack bulldozed



Authorities demolish the Sahara Family restaurant from where stones were allegedly pelted on a religious procession on July 31 which led to violence in Nuh

croachment-free.

TMC leader and Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale and some others, however, questioned the demolition drive alleging it tar-

geted only a particular community. "For the last 2 days, the Nuh District Administration has been demolishing houses and shops belonging to Muslims

who they claim are 'illegal immigrants & Rohingyas encroaching on govt land'," Gokhale alleged.

He also said on Twitter he has written to Nuh Sub-divisional Magistrate Ashwani Kumar seeking an explanation. A four-member Communist Party of India (CPI) tried to visit the violence-affected villages near Nuh but was stopped by police citing prohibitory orders. "We have decided to go back because we don't want any confrontation. Hooligans, goons and miscreants can go freely, but democratic people who have come here for peacemaking are stopped," CPI Rajya Sabha MP Binoy Viswam said.

SDM Kumar said the 16 struc-

tures, including the Sahara Family restaurant-cum-hotel, that were identified for demolition Sunday were built illegally and were used by "hooligans" to throw stones during the clashes that began in Nuh last Monday and spread to neighbouring Gurugram.

Six people, including two home guards and a cleric, died in the communal clashes that erupted when the Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was attacked by mobs on Monday in Nuh. On Tuesday, Anjuman Masjid was set ablaze in the Sector 57 area of Gurugram and its 26-year-old junior imam was killed. Police have arrested four people -- Ankit, Rahul, Ravinder and Rakesh -- from the nearby Tigra village in connection with the incident.

crises. Lakhs of retired central government employees have been demanding that the Centre should also revert to the 'Old Pension Scheme'. But the Union Government emphatically has said that there is no question of reverting to the 'Old Pension Scheme'.

Priyanka helping Rahul

If Rahul Gandhi is busy fixing nuts and bolts to strengthen the 26-parties alliance named INDIA, his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is busy helping him politically as well. Priyanka spoke to YSR Telangana party chief YS Sharmila Reddy who

is set to contest the Assembly polls in 2023. She is the estranged sister of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and had conducted padyatra of the entire state to take on the BRS leader and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. The Congress has been desperately looking for a foothold in Telangana and a tie-up with Sharmila may help both to take on the BRS and BJP.

Bullet train project going haywire

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project may be delayed further. The Centre blamed the

Maharashtra government for delay in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) "Bullet Train" Project for failure in land acquisition. Consequently, it also led to the delay in awarding in finalization of contracts that have impacted the project implementation. Of the seven bullet trains projects, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project is the only sanctioned High Speed Rail project in the country. Out of total land requirement of approx. 1389.5 hectare about 1381.9 ha. land has been acquired. As many as 1612 out of 1651 utilities have been shifted to pave the way for the project. All the civil contracts of the project have been awarded. But of the 28

contract packages, 23 packages have been awarded.

India's trade deficit with China doubled

It may sound strange but true. India may have adopted a tough posture against China saying unless peace and tranquility is maintained on the borders, trade, cultural and other relations cannot be normal. But India's imports from China have been rising rapidly year after year ever since border clashes erupted in 2020. India's trade deficit with China in 2020-21 was low at Rs 3.25 lakh crores. Those watching Indo-China trade were

shocked to see that the trade deficit sky-rocketed to a new high of Rs 5.46 lakh crores in 2021-22. As if this was not enough, the 2022-23 saw a historic figure as the trade deficit touched Rs 6.68 lakh crores mark. Within a span of two years the balance of trade more than doubled in favour of China.



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Today I can promise all of you - and all Australians - there will be no delaying or deferring this referendum
ANTHONY ALBANESE | AUSTRALIAN PM

DROUGHT HITS 90K LANKANS

About 90,000 people in four provinces of Sri Lanka have been affected by droughts with Jaffna being the worst hit district, the Disaster Management Center (DMC) said Sunday



of the day quote

New Zealand and the European Union have signed a ground-breaking Free Trade Agreement that will provide significant new trade access to the country's fourth-largest trading partner
CHRIS HIPKINS | NEW ZEALAND PM

A hostile drone was destroyed by air defences as it approached the city Sunday
SERGEI SOBRYANIN | MOSCOW MAYOR

Sri Lanka has proposed the establishment of a Climate Justice Forum (CJF) with the aim of accelerating the financing of losses and damages and providing an alternative and non-traditional approach
NASEER AHAMED | SL ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Morocco bus accident kills 24

Rabat (Morocco): At least 24 people died in a bus crash Sunday in the province of Azilal in central Morocco, marking one of the deadliest such accidents in recent years in the country. According to local authorities, cited by Morocco's official news agency MAP, the accident happened when a minibus carrying passengers overturned at a curve while en route to the weekly market in the small town of Demnate, in central Morocco. Authorities, along with the Royal Gendarmerie and Civil Protection, mobilized to the scene to begin rescue operations.

Prachanda to visit China

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' will visit China in September end, Foreign Minister N P Saud said Sunday, a trip aimed at maintaining a balance in ties with both the neighbours - China and India. This will be Prachanda's second foreign trip after assuming the office in December last year. The 68-year-old Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC) leader visited India in June as his first foreign trip after assuming office for the third time. Foreign Minister Saud said the Prime Minister would pay an official visit to the northern neighbour towards the third or fourth week of September.

Eight killed as boat capsizes in B'desh

Dhaka: At least eight people, including three children, were killed after a trawler carrying 46 passengers collided with a sand-laden vessel and capsized in a branch of Padma River in Bangladesh, according to media reports.

NIGER COUP

Niamey, August 6: The deadline has arrived Sunday for Niger's military junta to reinstate the country's ousted president, but the West Africa regional bloc that has threatened a military intervention faces prominent appeals to pursue more peaceful means.

Neighbouring Nigeria's Senate Saturday pushed back against the plan by the regional bloc known as ECOWAS, urging Nigeria's president, the bloc's current chair, to explore options other than the use of force. ECOWAS can still move ahead, as final decisions are taken by consensus by member states, but the warning on the eve of Sunday's deadline raised questions about the intervention's fate.

Russia's massive attack rocks Ukraine

AGENCIES

Kyiv, August 6: Moscow unleashed a massive missile and drone barrage on western Ukraine Sunday, following through on its promise to retaliate for a Ukrainian attack on a Russian tanker.

Russian and Ukrainian shelling across the country overnight killed in at least six people, officials said.

Separately, Moscow's second-largest airport briefly suspended flights early Sunday following a foiled drone attack near the Russian capital.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 70 attack drones and missiles, including cruise missiles from aircraft over the Caspian Sea and Iranian-made, Shahed-136/131 strike UAVs.

Serhiy Tyurin, deputy head of Ukraine's Khmelnytsky region military administration, said three waves of missiles hit the Starokostiantyniv area, damaging several buildings and igniting a fire at a warehouse. The strike may have been intended for the city's airfield, officials said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the facilities of aircraft engine manufacturer Motor Sich in the Zaporizhzhia region had also come under attack.

The Russian barrage came after a Ukrainian drone attack on a Russian tanker in the Black Sea near Crimea late Friday. Ukraine also struck a major Russian port with drones ear-

Philippines condemns China's 'dangerous' water cannon firing in South China Sea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manila, August 6: The Philippine military Sunday condemned a Chinese coast guard ship's "excessive and offensive" use of a water cannon to block a Filipino supply boat from delivering new troops, food, water and fuel to a Philippine-occupied shoal in the disputed South China Sea.

The tense confrontation Saturday at the Second Thomas Shoal was the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei. The disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, have long been regarded as an Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the rivalry between the United States and China in the region.

China claims ownership over virtually the entire strategic waterway despite international rulings that invalidated Beijing's vast territorial claims, such as that of 2016 by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, an international body based in The Hague; China rejects that ruling. Philippine navy personnel on board two chartered supply boats were cruising toward Second Thomas, escorted by Philippine coast guard ships, when a Chinese coast guard ship approached and used a powerful water cannon to block the Filipinos from the shoal that China also claims, according to Philippine military and coast guard officials.



A firefighter works at a site of the attack

REUTERS

- ZELENSKYY SAYS HIT ON BLOOD TRANSFUSION POINT IS 'WAR CRIME'
- NO DETAILS OF DEAD OR WOUNDED FROM INCIDENT
- RUSSIA SAYS IT TARGETS MILITARY AIR FIELDS IN OVERNIGHT ATTACKS
- TWO BRIDGES TO RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED CRIMEA REPORTED HIT

lier the same day.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova condemned what she called a Ukrainian "terrorist attack" on a civilian vessel in the Kerch Strait. "There can be no justification for such barbaric actions, they will not go unanswered and their authors and perpetrators will inevitably be punished," Zakharova posted on the Telegram messaging app.

An official with Ukraine's Security Service confirmed to

The Associated Press that a Ukrainian drone packed with 450 kg (992 pounds) of explosive the service struck the tanker that as transporting fuel for Russian forces. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak publicly.

Russia's Federal Agency for Marine and River Transport posted on Telegram that although the drone blasted a hole in the tanker's engine room, there were no casualties among the 11 crew members.

Two of the six fatalities overnight Sunday occurred during a Russian air strike in Ukraine's Kharkiv region, according to the head of the local regional military administration, Oleh Syniehubov. Another four people were injured.

Zelenskyy said that a guided bomb had hit a blood transfusion centre in the area's Kupyansk district late August 5.

Heavy shelling continued along

This war crime alone says everything about Russian aggression. Defeating terrorists is a matter of honour for everyone who values life
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

the frontline in Eastern Ukraine as Kyiv continues to push forward with its ongoing counteroffensive. Elsewhere in the Kharkiv region, a 58-year-old woman was killed and a 66-year-old man was hospitalized after Russian shelling of the village of Podoly, an official said.

Moscow's Vnukovo airport, located 15 km (9 miles) southwest of the Russian capital, briefly suspended flights Sunday morning after a drone was shot down in the airspace around the city.

The attack was one of four strikes on the Russian capital in the space of a month, spotlighting Moscow's vulnerability as Russia's war in Ukraine drags into its second year. The drone was destroyed by air defence systems in the Podolsk region of the Moscow suburbs, the Russian defence ministry said.

The Russian defence ministry said no one was injured from the abortive drone attack, although Russian media outlet Baza later reported that a 77-year-old man suffered a shrapnel wound to his hand. The reports could not be independently verified.



A floatplane taxis near docked cruise ships as it prepares to take off July 6, 2023, in the Gastineau Channel, along the downtown waterfront in Juneau, Alaska. As the Mendenhall Glacier continues to recede, tourists are flooding into Juneau. A record number of cruise ship passengers are expected this year in the city of about 30,000 people AP/PTI/PHOTO

Pence has 'no plans to testify' against Trump

AGENCIES

Washington, August 6: Former vice-president and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Mike Pence said that he has "no plans to testify" against Donald Trump but vowed to "obey the law".

"But people can be confident we'll obey the law. We'll respond to the call of law, if it comes, and we'll just tell the truth," said Pence, who is running against Trump in the 2024 Republican presidential nominating contest. Trump's lawyer, John Lauro, said he will welcome Pence's testimony if the former vice pres-

ident decided to do so. Lauro argued in a series of TV interviews on Sunday any actions Trump took after the 2020 election were "aspirational asks," protected by free speech.

"Mike Pence will be one of our best witnesses at trial," Lauro said on Sunday in an interview on ABC's "This Week."

"I cannot wait until I have the opportunity to cross-examine Mr. Pence, because what he will do is completely eliminate any doubt that Mr. Trump, President Trump, firmly believed that the election irregularities had led to inappropriate results," Lauro said. Pence became a central figure in



Trump's latest criminal charges on Aug. 1 when a four-count, 45-page Justice Department indictment charged the former president with illegally trying to cling on to power after he lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe

30 killed, 80 injured in Pak train accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, August 6: At least 30 people were killed and 80 others injured Sunday when several compartments of an express train derailed in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, in the latest rail disaster to hit the country.

The Hazara Express train travelling from Karachi to Rawalpindi derailed in Nawabshah district near the Sarhari Railway Station, 275 kilometres from the provincial capital Karachi. Railways Minister Saad Rafiq told the media that 30 people died and 80 others were injured in the accident. The minister said the top priority for Railway authorities was to complete the rescue and clearance operations. He said an inquiry would be conducted to find out the cause of the accident.

Commissioner Benazirabad division Abbas Baloch also said that 30 people died in the accident while some passengers are still trapped in a bogie. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who spoke to the media at People's Medical College Hospital in Benazirabad - the district home to Nawabshah, confirmed the death toll.

He added that the injured could be shifted to Karachi if needed and directed the local administration and health officials to expedite relief and rescue efforts. He said around 1,000 passengers were travelling in the Hazara Express.

The driver of the Hazara Express told Geo News that the



speed of the train was around 50 kilometres per hour when 10 out of 19 compartments went off the track one after the another. "The maximum speed limit on the line is 105 KM per hour so we were well within the speed limit. I have no idea what happened," he said. Pakistan Railways Sukkur Divisional Commercial Officer (DCO) Mohsin Syial said 15 bodies were retrieved from the wreckage and the rescue work aided by the Pakistan Army was continuing. Television channels showed the crash site with train compartments badly damaged near the station.

They showed rescue workers and police trying to pull out people from the derailed compartments along with civilians who also joined the rescue work. "Right now, the focus is on rescue work and recovering people from the derailed compartments," an official said. He said that the cause of the accident is being investigated. The state-run Radio Pakistan reported that the Pakistan Army and Rangers were involved in relief and rescue activities at the accident site. The rescue operation has been started on the special directives of Army Chief General Asim Munir, it added.

Imran's party accuses authorities of denying access to him

Islamabad: Imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party Sunday accused authorities of denying his legal team access to the leader to get his signatures on essential documents for court purposes. Khan, 70, was arrested from his home in Lahore on Saturday shortly after an Islamabad trial court found him guilty of "corrupt practices" in the Toshakhana corruption case and sentenced him to three-year imprisonment. Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, is lodged in the Attock Jail after being sentenced for concealing the sale of state gifts. The case was adjudicated by a sessions court in Islamabad. The PTI in a statement shared on a WhatsApp group termed Khan's arrest as an "abduction". "Chairman's legal team is not being given access to him for getting legal documents signed, as per the prerequisite, despite appeals made to Superintending Attock Prison & Additional Home Secretary Punjab," it said. "This doesn't sound like an arrest at all, it sounds like an abduction." After his arrest, Khan was taken by road to Attock City, the last major town of Punjab on the boundary with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. Initially, it was expected that he would be kept in the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, but, for security reasons, he was taken to Attock.

Kim tells N Korea arms factories to boost capacity

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, August 6: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured the country's key weapons factories, including those producing artillery systems and launch vehicles for nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, and pledged to speed up efforts to advance his military's arms and war readiness, state media said Sunday.

Kim's three-day inspections through Saturday came as the United States and South Korea prepared for their next round of combined military exercises planned for later this month to cope with the growing North Korean threat.



Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest level in years as the pace of North Korea's missile tests and the joint US-South Korea military drills, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, have both intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle. Some experts say Kim's tour of the weapons factories could also be related to possible military cooperation with Moscow that may involve North Korean supplies of artillery and other ammunition as Russian President Vladimir Putin reaches out to other countries for support in the war in Ukraine.

Deadline has arrived for Junta to reinstate Prez

Algeria and Chad, non-ECOWAS neighbours with strong militaries in the region, both have said they oppose the use of force or won't intervene militarily, and neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso - both run by juntas - have said an intervention would be a "declaration of war" against them, too.

Niger's ousted President Mohamed Bazoum said he is held "hostage" by the mutinous soldiers. An ECOWAS delegation was unable to meet with Tchiani, who analysts have asserted led the coup to avoid being fired. Now the junta has reached out to Wagner for assistance while severing security ties with former coloniser France.

Hours before Sunday's deadline, hundreds of youth joined security forces in the darkened



THE COUP ADDS ANOTHER LAYER OF COMPLEXITY TO THE WEST AFRICA REGION THAT'S STRUGGLING WITH MILITARY TAKEOVERS, ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

streets in Niger's capital, Niamey to stand guard at a dozen roundabouts until morning, checking cars for weapons and heeding the junta's call to watch out for foreign intervention and spies.

"I'm here to support the military. We are against (the regional bloc). We will fight to the end. We do not agree with what France is doing against us. We are done with colonization," said

Ibrahim Ndiriro, one of the residents on patrol.

Some passing cars honked in support. Some people called for solidarity among African nations. It was not immediately

clear on Sunday what ECOWAS will do next.

The regional bloc shouldn't have given the junta a one-week deadline to reinstate Bazoum but rather only up to 48 hours, said Peter Pham, former US special envoy for West Africa's Sahel region and a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council. "Now it's dragged out, which gives the junta time to entrench itself," he said.

The coup is a major blow to the United States and allies who saw Niger as the last major counterterrorism partner in the Sahel, a vast area south of the Sahara Desert where jihadists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have been expanding their range and beginning to threaten coastal states like Benin, Ghana and Togo.

of the day quote

India has become a major centre of gravity as we expand globally. We started with North America and Europe as our centre of gravity. This region is our centre of gravity, and we're steaming ahead aggressively by expansion plans on both product and manufacturing

BILLY HAYES | HEAD OF SALES (MARKETING AND REGIONAL OPERATIONS), STELLANTIS

With the bias now moving to other parts of the country. That's a good sign in terms of how the EV sales will grow from here

SHAILESH CHANDRA | MD, TATA MOTORS PASSENGER VEHICLES

The market will have an eye on the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, which will be announced on August 10, 2023

PRAVESH GOUR | SENIOR TECHNICAL ANALYST, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

SHORT TAKES

India-EU FTA talks intensify

New Delhi: High-level meetings between India and the European Union (EU) will be held this month to take stock of the progress of talks on the proposed free trade agreement, according to an official. "The EU officials are coming for the G20 trade ministers meeting this month in Jaipur. There is a high-level meeting at the minister level on August 26 in the national capital between India and the EU. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal is also likely to meet EU Director General for Trade Sabine Weyand in Jaipur," the official added. These meetings would give an impetus to the ongoing negotiations between the two sides on the free trade agreement (FTA).

ONGC maps out energy transition

New Delhi: India's top oil and gas producer ONGC is planning to set up two oil-to-chemical plants in India to convert crude oil directly into high-value chemical products as it prepares for energy transition that is shaking up the industry worldwide, chairman Arun Kumar Singh said. Crude oil, which companies like ONGC pump out from below seabed and from underground reservoirs, is a primary source of energy. It is processed in oil refineries to produce petrol, diesel and jet fuel. With the world looking to transition away from fossil fuel, companies around the globe are looking at new avenues to use crude oil. Petrochemicals are chemical products derived from crude oil and are used in the manufacturing of detergents, fibres (polyester, nylon, acrylic etc.), polythene and other man-made plastics.

AFTER RETAIL, TELECOM

Ambani casts eye on financial services, new energy biz

RELiance SUPREMO HAS A TRACK RECORD OF TRANSFORMING BUSINESSES. HE PIVOTED THE OIL-DEPENDENT CONGLOMERATE INTO CONSUMER FACING BUSINESS OF RETAIL STORES AND E-COMMERCE AS WELL AS ITS RE-ENTRY INTO TELECOM BUSINESS

New Delhi, August 6: After creating India's largest retailers and telecom operator in the shortest span of time, billionaire Mukesh Ambani has now set his sight on propelling newly-carved financial services business unit into country's largest non-banking lender while transitioning the conglomerate to net carbon zero by 2035. The recently demerged Jio Financial Services Ltd will leverage the prowess of digital and retail businesses, Ambani said in the latest annual report of Reliance Industries Ltd.

The unit, which "will leverage the technological capabilities of Reliance and digitally deliver financial services, democratising access to financial services offering for Indian citizens", is expected to be listed soon, he said. JFS's digital-first approach will help deliver distinctively simple, affordable, innovative and intuitive financial services products to all Indians, the annual report said without saying when the recently demerged firm would be listed. A guidance may be provided in the annual shareholders' meeting of Reliance August 28.



Looking at the overall situation, my guess is that the RBI would retain the repo rate at the present level. The interest rate is likely to be stable for the next 2-3 quarters if the global situation remains stable

SWARUP KUMAR SAHA | MD, PUNJAB & SIND BANK

MSI KICKS OFF MARUTI 3.0

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) is kicking off 'Maruti 3.0' targeting to add another 20 lakh units-production capacity in nine years with about 28 different models in the market by FY31, according to the company's Chairman R C Bhargava



PSBs' profit shines in Q1

PROFIT OF PSU BANKS MORE THAN DOUBLES TO ₹34,774 CRORE IN Q1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: Public sector banks (PSBs) have once again posted stellar performance by registering more than double profit of ₹34,774 crore for the first quarter ended June 2023.

During the April-June period of the previous fiscal, all 12 state-owned banks had recorded a total profit of ₹15,306 crore, according to quarterly numbers published by public sector lenders.

The high-interest regime helped banks to earn a good net interest margin (NIM) during the quarter. Most banks had recorded NIM of over 3 per cent.

Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra posted the highest NIM of 3.86 per cent, followed by Central Bank at 3.62 per cent and Indian Bank at 3.61 per cent during the quarter.

During the first quarter, four lenders logged a profit of over 100 per cent. The highest percentage growth was recorded by Punjab National Bank, which earned a



- Four lenders logged a profit of over 100%
- Highest percentage growth by PNB followed by SBI, BoI
- Highest NIM by BoM followed by Central Bank, Indian Bank
- Out of 12 PSBs only Punjab & Sind Bank registered loss

profit of ₹1,255 crore against ₹308 crore in the same quarter of the previous year, a growth of 307 per cent.

It was followed by the State Bank of India (SBI), which recorded a 178 per cent bottom line growth at ₹16,884 crore and the Bank of India with a 176 per cent surge, earned ₹1,551 crore profit.

SBI's highest-ever quarterly profit of ₹16,884 crore is about 50 per cent of the total profit earned by PSBs. During FY23 too, SBI's contribution was about 50 per cent, when the cumulative profit

of these banks was ₹1.05 lakh crore.

Another five PSBs posted growth between 50 and 100 per cent. This pack was led by Bank of Maharashtra, which clocked a 95 per cent rise in net profit at ₹882 crore. It was followed by Bank of Baroda recording a growth of 88 per cent to ₹4,070 crore and UCO Bank by 81 per cent to ₹581 crore.

The only bank out of 12 booked decline in net profit is Delhi-based Punjab & Sind Bank with a 25 per cent drop at ₹153 crore at the end of June 2023.

Govt likely to hike DA by 3%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The central government is likely to increase the dearness allowance (DA) for its over one crore employees and pensioners by three percentage points to 45 per cent from the existing 42 per cent as per the agreed formula for the purpose.

The dearness allowance for employees and pensioners is worked out on the basis of the latest Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) brought out by the Labour Bureau every month.

The Labour Bureau is a wing of the Labour Ministry. Talking to PTI, All India Railwaymen Federation General Secretary Shiva Gopal Mishra said, "The CPI-IW for June 2023 was released on July 31, 2023. We are demanding a four percentage point hike in dearness allowance. But the dearness allowance hike works out to be a little over three percentage points. The government does not factor in hiking DA beyond the decimal point. Thus DA is likely to be increased by three percentage points to 45 per cent".

He further explained that the expenditure department of the Finance Ministry will formulate a proposal to hike DA along with its revenue implication and will put up the proposal before the Union Cabinet for approval. The DA hike will be effective from July 1, 2023. Presently, over one crore central government employees and pensioners are getting a 42 per cent dearness allowance. The last revision in DA was done March 24, 2023, and was effective from January 1, 2023. The Centre had increased DA by four percentage points to 42 per cent based on the percentage increase in the 12 monthly average of the All India Consumer Price Index for the period ending December 2022.

FPIs take a breather

Foreign portfolio investors withdraw ₹2K-cr in first week of August

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: After five months of sustained buying, foreign investors have turned net sellers and pulled out over ₹2,000 crore from the Indian equities in the first week of August, mainly due to Fitch downgrading the credit rating for the US.

In addition, the rich and stretched valuations and minor profit booking could be the reasons for this outflow, Yes Securities Chief Investment Advisor Nitasha Shankar said.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew a net sum of ₹2,034 crore from Indian equities during August 1-5.



The net inflow was ₹46,618 crore in July, ₹47,148 crore in June and ₹43,838 crore in May

This came after unabated net inflow in the past five months - from March to July - following the resilience of the Indian economy amid an uncertain global macro backdrop.

Moreover, FPIs invested over ₹40,000 crore each in the last three months (May, June and July). The net inflow was ₹46,618 crore in July, ₹47,148 crore in June and ₹43,838 crore in May. Before March, overseas investors pulled out ₹34,626 crore in January and February.

However, overseas investors injected ₹1,151 crore into the Indian debt market during the period under review.

With this, inflow in the equity market reached ₹1.21 lakh crore, and while the same for debt stood at ₹21,600 crore so far this year, data with the depositories showed.

MF houses go slow on NFOs so far in 2023

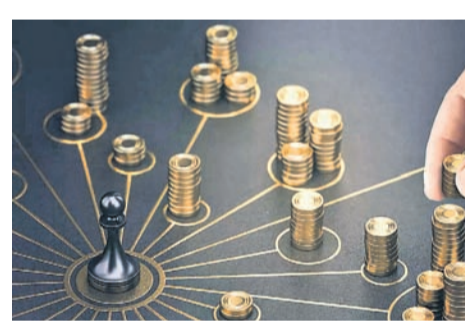
The reasons behind the decline in NFOs could be a combination of many global factors as the MF industry's dynamics are influenced by various internal and external components

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: With a wide array of existing mutual fund schemes, asset management companies are going slow on launching new ones in a highly competitive landscape as they filed draft documents for 59 new fund offerings (NFOs) in the first seven months of the year.

In comparison, draft papers for 70 NFOs were filed in the year-ago period. In 2022, a total of 228 new schemes were floated against 140 in 2021, industry data showed.

Moreover, the remaining



Draft papers filed for 59 new fund offerings in 2023 while 70 were filed in 2022

MFs' NFOs collection was at nearly 20K-cr in 2023 so far, while the same was ₹62,187 cr in 2022, ₹99,704 cr in 2021 and ₹53,703 cr in 2020

months of 2023 are not expected to see NFO numbers anywhere close to those of 2022 or 2021, SAS Online founder and CEO Shrey Jain said.

Also, the current market reaching an all-time high could be another reason for AMCs showing caution in launching NFOs. During such periods of elevated market levels, AMCs might anticipate the possibility of a market correction or downturn, he added.

According to data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), 59 draft scheme

information documents (SIDs) were filed in January-July this year. In August so far, two draft documents have been filed by fund houses Bajaj Finserv Mutual Fund and WhiteOak Mutual Fund.

In terms of fund mobilisation, mutual funds' NFOs collection was at nearly 20,000 crore in 2023 so far, while the same was ₹62,187 crore in 2022, ₹99,704 crore in 2021 and ₹53,703 crore in 2020.

The AMCs filed schemes in both active and passive categories this year. Besides, docu-

ments have been filed in the index and ETF categories to support passive and active investors.

In 2022, the maximum number of funds was launched in the index fund segment (84), followed by fixed maturity plans (49) and other ETFs (39). The year 2023 was relatively slow in the launch of active schemes.

Usually, NFOs come during a surging market when investor sentiment is high and optimistic. The NFOs were floated to capitalise on the mood of investors and attract their investment during that time.

Also, NFOs are launched when AMCs are looking to increase their existing product bouquet.

Retail investors' mutual fund holdings surged by 20.5 per cent year-on-year to nearly ₹25 lakh crore at present. This growth was fuelled by investments in equity schemes, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and Funds of Funds (FoFs) amid positive market sentiment.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: Bank credit growth to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has decelerated on a year-on-year basis in the first three months of the current fiscal, according to Reserve Bank data.

As per the latest Reserve Bank data, the credit to medium industries in June grew by 13.2 per cent against 47.8 per cent last year and micro and small industries by 13 per cent against 29.2 per cent a year ago.

In absolute terms, the gross bank credit outstanding to medium industries at June-end was ₹2,63,440 crore compared to ₹2,32,776 crore in June last year.

In the case of micro and small industries, the credit outstanding in June was ₹6,25,625 crore against ₹5,53,675 crore in the corresponding month of 2022.

In May, the credit to medium industries grew by 18.9 per cent (42.9 per cent last year) and micro and small industries by 9.5 per cent (32.7 per cent a year ago).

According to another set of RBI data for April, loan growth of medium industries was 19.1 per cent against 53.7 per cent last year. The growth in the case of micro and small industries was 9.7 per cent in April 2023 compared to 29.8 per cent in the year-ago month.

FISME Secretary General Anil Bhardwaj said while the RBI data showed double-digit growth in bank credit to MSMEs, which might indicate a free flow of institutional finance to MSMEs, the fact remains that getting

Bank credit growth to MSMEs declines

Players in the MSME sector, the backbone of domestic industry and largest employer, said risk averseness makes banks reluctant to provide loans to small units, leading to a deceleration in bank credit growth



The credit barriers for MSMEs are not limited by the processes and procedures. The real barrier is in the approach of the banking system, who consider any credit to MSME as a potentially bad loan and try to ring-fence the sanction procedure

ANIL BHARDWAJ | SECRETARY GENERAL, FISME

bank loans is an uphill task for individual MSMEs.

The Expert Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, constituted by the Reserve Bank of India in December 2018, has estimated the overall credit gap in the MSME sector to be in the range of ₹20 to ₹25 lakh crore.

The gross non-performing advance of MSMEs stood at ₹1,31,928 crore at March-end, down from ₹1,54,094 crore a year ago and ₹1,82,114 crore in March 2021.

The government has taken several measures to improve credit flow to the MSME sector. With effect from April 1, 2023, the credit limit for Guarantee Coverage under Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro & Small Enterprises has been enhanced from ₹2 crore to ₹5 crore and the annual guarantee fees have been reduced by 50 per cent.

Also, under the Atmanirbhar Bharat packages, the government has announced a Fund of Funds to infuse ₹50,000 crore equity in MSMEs, which have the potential and viability to grow.

Mcap of 7 of top-10 firms fall by ₹1L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 6: The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by ₹1,09,947.86 crore last week, with State Bank of India taking the biggest hit, in-tandem with weak trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark fell by 438.95 points or 0.66 per cent.

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance were the laggards while Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank and Infosys witnessed addition in their market valuation.

The valuation of State Bank of India tumbled ₹38,197.34 crore to ₹5,11,603.38 crore.

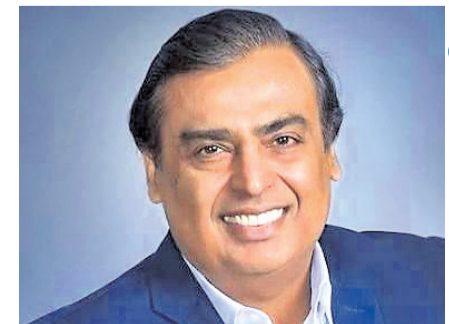
Shares of State Bank of India Friday fell by nearly 3 per cent after the company's first quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank eroded by ₹17,201.84 crore to ₹6,79,293.90 crore. ITC's valuation tanked ₹16,846.18 crore to ₹5,66,886.01 crore and that of Bajaj Finance fell by ₹14,366.34 crore to ₹4,32,932.18 crore.

The mcap of Reliance Industries went lower by ₹11,806 crore to ₹16,98,270.74 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever declined by ₹9,069.42 crore to ₹5,98,299.92 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation dipped by ₹2,460.74 crore to ₹4,97,908.56 crore. However, the mcap of TCS jumped ₹31,815.45 crore to ₹12,59,555.25 crore. Infosys added ₹15,791.49 crore taking its valuation to ₹5,72,062.52 crore. The mcap of HDFC Bank climbed ₹7,080.63 crore to ₹12,47,403.26 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm of the country, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance.



The demerger of the financial services business into JFS and planned listing on the stock exchanges promises to unlock value

MUKESH AMBANI | CHAIRMAN & MD, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES

The new firm, which has little revenue as of now but owns 6.1 per cent stake in Reliance, last month announced partnership with BlackRock to set up a mutual funds business.

"Jio Financial Services aims to provide simple, affordable and innovative digital first solutions," Ambani said. "Jio Financial Services Limited is positioned uniquely to capture

GOING GREEN

Reliance is building world-scale

assets to produce new-age material, green energy, green chemicals, transforming its oil-to-chemical (O2C) business into a more sustainable model targeting circularity and net carbon zero.

"We, at Reliance, have a deep-rooted belief that sustainability is an integral part of enterprise growth," Ambani said. "Our goal is to become net carbon zero by 2035."

Reliance is investing ₹75,000 crore spanning renewables, storage and hydrogen, including what it claims will be the world's largest green energy equipment 'giga-complex' and a 100-gigawatt capacity goal.

POORAN SPOILS TILAK PARTY India inch closer to semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Providence (Guyana), August 6: Nicholas Pooran smashed his way to a scintillating half century (67, 40b, 6x4, 4x6) before West Indies overcame some anxious moments to hand India a two-wicket defeat in the second T20I here Sunday.

Opting to bat, the fearless Tilak Varma continued his good run in the shortest format and produced a well-calculated fifty (51, 41b, 5x4, 1x6) to take India to 152/7.

Pooran then put his side on course for what seemed like a comfortable win. But Yuzvendra Chahal (2/19) bowled a sensational 16th over and brought India back in the game and the hosts suddenly looked under tremendous pressure.

However, Akeal Hosein and Alzarri Joseph shared an unbeaten 26-run partnership to help the hosts complete the task with seven balls to spare and give them a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Indian captain Hardik Pandya may have missed a trick by not bowling Chahal in the crucial 19th over, with the West Indies needing 12 runs off as many balls.

Hosein (2/29) and Joseph (2/28) also starred with the ball along with Romario Shepherd (2/28), sharing six wickets amongst themselves.

For the visitors, the 20-year-old Varma scooped, swept and heaved the ball all around the ground to become the youngest Indian to score a fifty in T20Is.

Deciding to take the new ball, Pandya bowled a fiery first over that yielded India the wickets of opener Brandon King (0) and Johnson Charles (2). Hardik swung the ball outside off for King to hit a cover drive only for Suryakumar Yadav to complete a spectacular catch off the very first ball of the innings.

Charles then fell victim to another swinging delivery by Hardik as the hosts were dealt a double blow at the start of their innings. But star batter Pooran was unperturbed as he tonked Hardik for a six before slashing one for a boundary.

The big-hitting Kyle Mayers



(15) joined his partner as he hit a couple of boundaries and a six before Arshdeep Singh trapped him leg before.

Pooran continued with his counter-attacking ways as he collected 18 runs in the next over. The flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter got those runs off leggie Ravi Bishnoi, that included a massive six over long-on.

Earlier, coming out to bat with India in a spot of bother at 18/2, Varma put up a crucial 42-run partnership with Ishan Kishan (27) before joining forces with skipper Pandya (24) to stitch a 38-run stand. Hardik tried to inflate India's total by hitting two sixes but Joseph produced a cracking yorker to get rid of the Indian skipper.

Opting to bat, the script didn't go as per plan for the visitors

as they lost wickets at regular intervals. West Indies skipper Rovman Powell kept shuffling his bowlers, a move that paid dividends.

Kishan played a few shots in his 23-ball stay including a six off Hosein over deep square leg but couldn't convert his start into a meaningful innings as he was bowled by Romario Shepherd.

Shubman Gill's (7) stay in the middle was once again a brief one. With pressure building on him after successive dot balls, he showed his class by sending the ball for a maximum in the third over but perished in the very next ball off Joseph.

Suryakumar Yadav (1) didn't last long either, as Mayers at square leg effected the Indian vice-captain's run-out with a brilliant direct hit. Sanju Samson (7) moved way to early down the track in search of a big shot and was stumped by an attentive Nicholas Pooran.

BRIEF SCORES: India 152/7 (Tilak Varma 51, Ishan Kishan 27, Hardik Pandya 24; Alzarri Joseph 2/28, Romario Shepherd 2/28, Akeal Hosein 2/29) lost to West Indies 155/8 (Nicholas Pooran 67, Shimron Hetmyer 22, Rovman Powell 21; Hardik Pandya 3/35, Yuzvendra Chahal 2/19) by 2 wickets.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 6: A dominant India roared back to winning ways with a 5-0 mauling of Malaysia in a round-robin fixture of the Asian Champions Trophy (ACT) hockey here Sunday.

Local favourite Karthi Selvam (15th minute) and vice-captain Hardik Singh (32nd) were on target, along with skipper Harmanpreet Singh (42nd), Gurjant Singh (53rd) and Jugraj Singh (54th). The result took India to the top of the table, helping them inch closer to sealing a semifinals' berth.

India began the first quarter on an attacking note, coming close to penetrating the Malaysian box and creating some very clear scoring chances. Meanwhile, Malaysia's Fitri Saari was green-carded for a harsh interception in the eighth minute.

With the first quarter coming to a close, Harmanpreet ran towards the Malaysian box unmarked and passed the ball inside to Selvam, who comfortably tapped it in to give the hosts the lead.

At the start of the subsequent quarter, India's Vivek Sagar saw a green card. However, India continued to come up with relentless attacks, including a couple of penalty corners.

The Men in Blue came close again on two instances before the break but failed to make the most of the chances, as the Malaysians displayed some rigid defensive skills to keep it 1-0 at

halftime. Following the restart, it did not take long for the Indians to extend their lead. Just a couple of minutes into the third quarter, it was a penalty corner that midfielder Hardik successfully converted off a rebound after the initial flick from Harmanpreet was parried away by the goalie.

While Nilakanta Sharma and Prasad were yellow-carded in 33rd and 37th minutes, in the 42nd, India received three consecutive penalties, and the third one was converted by Hardik.

As the action entered the final

quarter, both teams upped their ante, but it was India that was dominating possession.

After a couple of corner chances, Gurjant shot in the fourth for the Indians in the 53rd minute, thanks to Hardik's assist for Mandeep Singh, as the latter's shot was deflected for Gurjant to complete the formality.

Despite putting in four, the Men in Blue refused to slow down, as a minute later, Jugraj successfully converted yet another penalty corner to extend their lead. As the match approached its closing stages, India continued to play with intensity.

Entertaining draw

CHENNAI: Pakistan and Japan gave it their all in the Asian Champions Trophy round-robin match before settling for a thrilling 3-3 draw here Sunday. The result keeps both the teams in contention for semifinal berths, with Japan placed fourth on the points table followed by Pakistan on fifth. Pakistan opened their account in the ninth minute through Abdul Rana. Japan equalised four minutes later, courtesy Seren Tanaka's strike. Five minutes before half time, the Pakistan restored the lead through a penalty corner with Muhammad Khan finding the target. The Japanese struck in the 37th minute, thanks to Ryosei Kato. They went 3-2 up through skipper Masaki Ohashi's goal. Muhammad Khan successfully converted a PC in the 55th minute to draw level.

China hold S Korea

CHENNAI: China came up with a strong defensive show to hold reigning champions South Korea to a 1-1 draw in a round-robin match of the Asian Champions Trophy here Sunday. While Jonghyun Jung opened the scoring for Korea, Chongcong Chen pulled off the equaliser for China at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium. China will next face Pakistan, while South Korea will be up against hosts India Monday.

MATCH SCHEDULE

Japan vs Malaysia (4 pm)
Pakistan vs China (6:15 pm)
India vs S Korea (8:30 pm)

TELECAST
Star Sports channels

Bhagat storms into two finals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Sheffield (England), August 6: Ace shuttler Pramod Bhagat has made it to the finals in men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles categories of the ongoing Four Nations Para Badminton International tournament, here. Another Indian shuttler Sukant Kadam has reached the summit clash of men's doubles along with his partner Bhagat.

The Padma Shri awardee Bhagat was in full swing Saturday as he defeated compatriot Kumar Nitesh in straight sets. The Odisha lad had all the answers to Nitesh's questions and overcame him in 35 minutes. He will face England's Daniel Bethell in the finals.



In mixed doubles, Bhagat along with his partner Manisha Ramadass defeated India's Ruthick Ragupathi and Manasi Joshi in straight sets. The final score read 21-12, 21-19 and Indians will now face Indonesia's Hikmat Ramdani and Leani Ratri Oktila.

In men's doubles, the World No.1 pair of Bhagat and Kadam defeated the Indian pair of Kuma Nitesh and Tarun in straight sets. The match lasted 26 minutes and the final score read 21-19, 21-12 and the winners will now face India's Deep Ranjan Bisoyee and Manoj Sarkar.

On the other hand, Kadam went down fighting to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan in the men's singles semifinals. Kadam won the first game comfortably with a score of 21-7 but couldn't capitalise on it. Fredy came back strongly to win the next two sets with the scores of 21-15, 21-16.

Prannoy signs off with runner-up finish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, August 6: Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy capped off an impressive week with a runner-up finish at the Australian Open after his gallant fight ended in a heart-breaking loss to China's Weng Hong Yang in a thrilling men's singles final here Sunday. Following a marathon 90 minutes of play it was Prannoy who was left to bear the heartache as the 9-21, 23-21, 20-22 loss against World No.24 Weng robbed him of a chance to win his second BWF title of the season.

Eight times this year, Prannoy has recovered from an opening game loss and went on to claim the match six times like he did against World No.2 Anthony Ginting in the quarterfinals.

The script seemed to be going the same way before Weng staged a sensational comeback from 14-19 down in the decider.

The 31-year-old from Kerala bounced back from an opening game reversal but squandered a five-point lead in the decider and also a championship point to eventually finish second to Weng.

Prannoy was error-prone in the first game as Weng easily won the game. Weng opened up a 3-0 lead in the second game. Prannoy evened things at 7-7 with a smash and went into the lead. The Indian grabbed a three-point cushion with a forehand jump smash at the break.

Prannoy kept his nose ahead at 13-11. The Chinese kept breathing down his rival's neck clawing back at 15-15. Weng wrested

back the lead at 17-16 before a series of intense rallies locked the score at 19-19.

After missing two game points, Prannoy, at 21-21, got the advantage through a Weng error. And the Indian prevailed in a flat net exchange to take the match to the decider.

In the third game, Prannoy opened up a 6-3 lead with two precise returns on the backhand of his rival. But a few unforced



errors from the Indian helped Weng to narrow it to 6-7.

Prannoy moved to 10-7 with another straight smash before entering the interval with a three point cushion. The Indian continued to march ahead with Weng committing too many errors. He also send down a precise straight smash to make it 15-9.

Prannoy patiently waited for opportunities and soon moved to 17-14. The Indian then unleashed another booming straight smash before coming up with a cross winner to make it 19-14.

Weng won the next three points and then played an exhausting 71-shot rally as Prannoy sent the shuttle to the net before both the shuttlers collapsed to the court. Weng showed nerves of steel as a superb drop helped him to claw back at 19-19, his fifth straight point.

Prannoy then won a net duel to grab a championship point but Weng saved the point with a lucky net cord. The Chinese then gained a championship point with a smash that crammed the Indian, who send the shuttle long next to hand over the title to Weng.

Pak team get government clearance for WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, August 6: The Pakistan government Sunday gave clearance to the country's senior men's side to travel to India for the 2023 World Cup but said it has some concerns about the security of its team and would convey them to the ICC and BCCI.

The 50-over World Cup will be held in India from October 5 to November 19, with the highly-anticipated clash between the two arch rivals set to be played October 14 and not October 15 in Ahmedabad, with the International Cricket Council (ICC) yet to officially confirm it.

A press release from the foreign ministry informed that Pakistan has consistently maintained that sports should not be mixed with politics. It has, therefore, decided to send its team to India to compete in the upcoming World Cup.

"Pakistan believes that the state of bilateral relations with India should not stand in the way of fulfilling its international sports-related obligations," the release said.

The ministry said that Pakistan, however, has deep concerns about the security of its team and it would convey them to the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Indian authorities.

"Pakistan, however, has deep concerns about the security of its cricket team. We are conveying these concerns to the International Cricket Council and the Indian authorities.

"We expect that the full safety and security of the Pakistan cricket team will be ensured during its visit to India," the release said.

It also said that Pakistan's decision shows its "constructive and responsible approach vis-à-vis India's intransigent atti-



tude, as the latter had refused to send its cricket team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup."

The approval brings to an end the long period of uncertainty that has lingered over the national team's participation in the 50-over event.

It all began when its former player and PCB chief Ramiz Raja said they will not send their team for the World Cup in retaliation

to India not travelling to Pakistan for the Asia Cup 2023.

A few days ago, the PCB had written to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif seeking official clearance for travelling to India for the 50-over showpiece. The letter was also addressed to the interior and the foreign ministry.

The last time the Pakistan team travelled to India was in 2016 for the ICC World T20.

Chahal understands Kuldeep's selection



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Providence, August 6: Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal understands why Kuldeep Yadav is playing ahead of him in the ODI format and is not losing sleep over his place in the Asia Cup and World Cup squad.

Chahal did not make the playing eleven in the three ODIs against the West Indies. Featuring in his first game since the IPL, Chahal made his presence felt with a twin strike in his opening over but India lost the game by four runs.

"Team combination is our priority and it is not something new. At 7 we generally play Ravindra Jadeja or Axar Patel. Three spinners can only play if the wickets are spin-friendly," said Chahal ahead of the second T20.

"Kuldeep is bowling really well, he is in a great rhythm and that's why team is backing him. I keep working on nets so that whenever I get the chance I will grab it," the leg-spinner added.

The focus is on ODIs ahead of the World Cup at home in October-November but Chahal has not been able to get a game since January. However, the 33-year-old is happy as long he gets to be part of the squad.

"We are professional crick-

eters. I was playing after two months, last I played was in the IPL. It is all about the preparation. This is not an individual sport, you are playing here for your team. There are times when players has to sit out for two series, so it doesn't mean that they are not part of the team," said the former state-level chess player.

Chahal said that instead of thinking about missed chances, he considers himself lucky to be wearing the India Blues. "I am very happy that I am getting to wear the blue jersey everyday. I am not sitting at home. I am travelling with the team. I am part of the team. "I have played chess, it is an individual game but cricket is a team sport. Out of fifteen people in the squad only eleven can play," he added.

Having played under multiple captains since his debut under MS Dhoni in 2016, Chahal feels his equation with whoever is leading the team doesn't change much.

"It's like a family where you have four brothers. Mahi bhai was the eldest, then came Virat bhaiya, then Rohit bhaiya and now Hardik. Equations remain the same. At the ground, we all want to win. They (seniors) gave us freedom as a bowler and Hardik also gives that space to the bowlers," he said.