



ALIA'S PERSPECTIVE

Actor Alia Bhatt discusses playing a villain, emphasising the importance of commitment to the character's perspective

LEISURE P2



CHINA'S RHETORIC

China has released a new documentary about the People's Liberation Army's preparation to attack Taiwan

INTERNATIONAL P10



THIRD T20I TODAY

Staring at a rare series defeat in the Caribbean, India batters need to step up in the third T20I against West Indies

SPORTS P12

Army guns down 2 terrorists, foils infiltration bid

AGENCIES

Poonch/Jammu, August 7: A self-styled divisional commander of Hizbul Mujahideen was killed along with his bodyguard as security forces foiled an infiltration attempt and a conspiracy by the proscribed outfit to revive its activities in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district early Monday, officials said.

While the body of Hizbul commander Muneser Hussain was retrieved, his bodyguard's body was still lying near the Line of Control (LoC) in Degwar sector, the officials said.

Troops in the Degwar sector noticed the movement of some terrorists attempting to sneak into this side under the cover of darkness in the early hours of the day and engaged them in an encounter, the officials said.

Jammu-based defence PRO Lt Col Sumeel Bartwal said the two infiltrating terrorists were engaged by the joint team of Army and police in Garhi Battalion area around 2am. "One terrorist fell down immediately while the second tried to run back to LoC, engaged and hit and was seen falling down on the ground," the officer said.

The movement of the terrorists was picked up in the general area Degwar Terva, he said. Lt Col Bartwal said the body of one of the slain terrorists was retrieved and has been identified on the basis of police records as Hussain - a resident of Bagyladra village of Poonch who was a self-styled Divisional Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen.



REINSTATED: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Parliament House complex during Monsoon Session, in New Delhi, Monday PTI PHOTO

NO-TRUST MOTION TODAY

Rahul back in House

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 7: Over four months after he was disqualified, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi returned to Lok Sabha Monday with his membership of the Lower House restored in the wake of the Supreme Court staying his conviction in a defamation case.

His return as an MP comes as a boost to the opposition ranks ahead of the no-trust motion against the Modi government which is likely to be taken up in Lok Sabha, Tuesday.

Gandhi is set to be one of the key speakers of the Opposition bloc INDIA that would look to send a message to the people through the motion even as its outcome is a foregone conclusion with the numbers heavily stacked in favour of the ruling NDA.

Announcing the reinstatement of Gandhi as an MP, a Lok

Lok Sabha is set to witness a fierce debate today with Rahul Gandhi likely to be the lead speaker of the opposition bloc INDIA

The SC Friday stayed his conviction, paving the way for the restoration of his LS membership. The stay will also enable Gandhi to contest the 2024 LS elections

Sabha notification said in the wake of the SC order Friday, the disqualification has ceased to operate subject to further judicial pronouncements.

Soon after the Lok Sabha secretariat communication, Gandhi reached the Parliament House and offered floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi's statue before entering the House to attend proceedings around noon. But the House was adjourned within minutes.

Inside the Parliament premises, Gandhi was also seen spending time with his mother and Lok Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi. He also went to the Central Hall

of Parliament where he briefly interacted with NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) leader Sanjay Raut.

Gandhi also paid respects to former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi on his death anniversary in the DMK party office in Parliament.

He was accorded a warm welcome by the Congress and other Opposition MPs on his arrival in Parliament which saw festive scenes at the main gate and the first floor of Parliament with sweets being distributed and slogans being raised in favour of the former AICC chief.

Later, at the party office where he attended a meeting of Haryana leaders for Lok Sabha poll preparations in the state, Gandhi told reporters that "It is a strange thing, even you people look happy". He was asked about his reinstatement.

Gandhi also posted a video of his first day after returning as an MP with a Hindi caption "returned to Parliament today after paying obeisance to Babu (Mahatma Gandhi)".

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said the notification was a "welcome step" and it brings relief to the people of India, and especially to Wayanad.

"Whatever time is left of their tenure, BJP and Modi government should utilise that by concentrating on actual governance rather than denigrating Democracy by targeting opposition leaders," Kharge said on Twitter.

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

SC forms all-women ex-HC judges' panel

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 7: As Manipur sank deeper into ethnic violence, the Supreme Court Monday ordered setting up of a committee of three former women high court judges to oversee relief and rehabilitation of victims and compensation to them besides asking former Maharashtra police chief Dattatray Padsalgikar to monitor the probe in criminal cases.

Observing that its effort is to restore people's faith in the rule of law in the strife-torn state, the top court also decided to monitor the overall situation there.

The court said the three-member panel will be submitting reports to it directly.

A bench chaired by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the committee will be headed by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal and include Justices (retired) Shalini P Joshi, a former judge of the Bombay High Court, and Asha Menon, an ex-judge of the Delhi High Court.

Cognizant of reports about the border state descending deeper into chaos, with more and more people getting killed and arson and mayhem prevailing, the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, which had termed as deeply disturbing the video of women being paraded naked, said it will appoint a com-

- On the investigation of cases, the court said 11 FIRs will be transferred to the CBI
- About 42 state SITs will be looking at the cases which will not be transferred to the CBI
- These 42 SITs would be supervised by 6 DIG rank officers from outside the state of Manipur

mittee of three former high court judges to oversee relief and rehabilitation of those affected.

"We will appoint a committee of three former high court judges," the bench said, adding the panel will be looking at issues including relief, remedial measures, rehabilitation, compensation and also restoration of homes and places of worship.

The bench said the committee of judges will visit the relief camps and assess the conditions there. On the investigation of cases, the court said 11 FIRs will be transferred to the CBI.

"We are not going to supplant the CBI because you (the state government) have the investigating agency which will be looking after the investigation," the bench said.

The top court said to ensure there is a sense of faith, it will direct that at least five officers, not below the rank of deputy superintendents of police, be brought into the CBI on deputation from various states to oversee the probe.



PROTESTS GALORE: Meitei community women block a road during a demonstration against the Assam Rifles in Imphal, Monday PTI PHOTO

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It's not true that the PM doesn't speak in Parliament. A few weeks ago, he spoke... in the US Parliament

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	65953.48	↑ 232.23
NIFTY	19597.30	↑ 80.30
DOLLAR	82.77	↑ ₹0.18
EURO	91.07	↑ ₹0.45
GOLD	₹59,372	↓ ₹155
SILVER	₹71,287	↓ ₹1,191

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	32.1°C	32.2°C
TEMP MIN	24.6°C	26.4°C
Humidity	83%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

EOW busts ₹1K-cr Crypto-Ponzi scam

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 7: The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police Monday claimed to have unearthed a Crypto Ponzi scam worth ₹1,000 crore.

The EOW has arrested the head of 'STA Crypto Token' namely Gurtej Singh Sidhu (40), from Sri-Ganganagar, Rajasthan and its Odisha unit head Nirod Das. Sidhu is a native of Faridkot, Punjab and Nirod belongs to Bhadrak district of Odisha.

Gurtej was produced before a court in Sri Ganganagar and the court granted seven days transit remand. He was brought to Odisha Monday and will be produced before a court in Cuttack. Stating that he was frequently changing his location in Goa,



Lonavala, Mumbai, Delhi, Faridkot, Bhatinda, Hanumangadh and Sri Ganganagar, the EOW said that a team led by DSP Sasmita Sahoo tracked his location before arresting him.

After getting intelligence from various sources that a cryptocurrency-based ponzi scam is being run in Odisha, especially in Bhubaneswar, Bhadrak,

Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Keonjhar districts, an enquiry was conducted.

During the enquiry it was found that STA through some upline members are very active in these districts and they have been using various propaganda tools to persuade people to join in this scheme and earn huge money in a very short time, the EOW said.

It was found that members have started using the STA token as a legal tender in their day-to-day business. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people from Odisha have already been members of this scheme. This scam has more than two lakh members (pan-India) mainly in states like Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Assam.

Man murders metering staff over electricity bill

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, August 7: In a shocking incident, a metering staff employed by TPSODL was allegedly hacked to death by an irate consumer over inflated electricity bill in Kupati village under Tarasingha police limits in Bhanjanagar area of Ganjam district, Monday.

While the identity of the accused could not be ascertained, the deceased has been identified as Laxminarayan Tripathy (52) of Gallery village under Tarasingha police limits.

After the incident, some villagers tried to capture the accused. However, the accused attacked them and injured a

person named Rinku Naik who is currently undergoing treatment at Gallery CHC. Later, the villagers managed to capture the accused and handed him over to police.

Sources said there was an ongoing dispute between the two over electricity bill and a heated argument broke out Monday when Tripathy came to collect the same. Suddenly, the consumer got furious and attacked Tripathy with an axe leading to his death.

Informed, police reached the spot, seized the body and sent the body to Bhanjanagar hospital for post-mortem. The exact cause of Tripathy's death will be ascertained after the post-mortem report arrives, police said.

SHORT TAKES

MBPY ADDS OVER 4L BENEFICIARIES

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government Monday announced extension of its social security scheme for the elderly, widows and other vulnerable sections, adding over 4 lakh more beneficiaries, officials said. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik sanctioned the 'Madhu Babu Pension Yojana' benefits for additional 4.13 applicants, the official said. The decision was based on the feedback received from people during the CMO's outreach programme, he said. The reach of the scheme has been enhanced to 32.75 lakh beneficiaries from 28.61 lakh beneficiaries.

PARLIAMENT PASSES DELHI SERVICES BILL

New Delhi: The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed by the Parliament Monday, with the Rajya Sabha clearing the law with 131 votes in favour and 102 votes against. The Bill was passed after voting was done through slips after a technical glitch in automated voting machine. Implementation of the Delhi Services Bill is likely to halt for the time being the frequent skirmishes between the AAP dispensation and the L-G over governance issues as the legislation puts a stamp on the Centre's control over the city government's bureaucracy. However, the matter is still hanging fire as the Supreme Court last month formed a constitution bench to examine the power of Parliament over governance in Delhi, which is yet to pronounce its judgment.

IN RACE WITH CHANDRAYAAN-3

Russia to launch first moon lander in nearly 50 years

Residents of a village in Russia's far east will be evacuated Friday because of a 'one in a million chance' that one of the rocket stages that launches Luna-25 could fall to earth there

REUTERS

Moscow, August 7: Russia will launch its first lunar landing spacecraft in 47 years Friday in a race with India to the south pole of the moon, a potential source of water to support a future human presence there.

The launch from the Vostochny cosmodrome, 5,550 km east of Moscow, will take place four weeks after India sent up its Chandrayaan-3 lunar lander, due to touch down at the pole August 23.

Rough terrain makes a landing there difficult, but the south

pole is a prized destination because scientists believe it may hold significant quantities of ice that could be used to extract fuel and oxygen, as well as for drinking water.

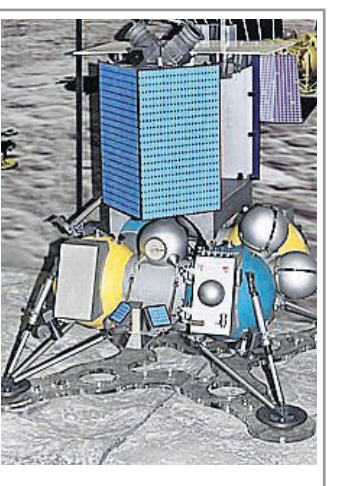
Russian space agency Roscosmos said in reply to questions from Reuters that its Luna-25 spacecraft would take five days to fly to the moon and then spend five to seven days in lunar orbit before descending on one of three possible landing sites near the pole - a timetable that implies it could match or narrowly beat its Indian rival to the moon's surface.

'SPACE FOR EVERYONE'

Roscosmos said the two missions would not get in each other's way because they have different landing areas planned.

"There is no danger that they interfere with each other or collide. There is enough space for everyone on the moon," it said.

Chandrayaan-3 is due to run experiments for two weeks, while Luna-25 will work on the moon for a year. In April, Japan's ispace failed in an attempt to make the first moon landing by a private space company.



leisure



WILL REGRETS PUSHING HIS KIDS TO FAME AT YOUNG AGE

Actor Will Smith admitted that he regrets pushing Willow Smith and Jaden Smith to fame at such a young age because "nobody in (his) family was happy." The 54-year-old made the honest confession when appearing on Kevin Hart's Peacock talk show *Hart to Hart*, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

BELLA SHARES HEALTH UPDATE AS SHE BATTLES LYME DISEASE

Supermodel Bella Hadid after getting diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease in 2012, has posted on social media to reveal that she's recovering after "almost 15 years of invisible suffering." "The little me that suffered would be so proud of grown me for not giving up on myself," Bella wrote on Instagram.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Go with the flow. At least that's what Ganesh suggests where relationships are concerned. You can be your assertive self some other time. Today, you can be large-hearted and fulfill your beloved's wishes, maybe even propose. What say?

TAURUS
You are likely to get into arguments today, predicts Ganesh. You should avoid any open confrontation. Legal disputes may bother you as well. Try your hand at meditation or resort to music of your preference to relax and unwind. It is best if you delay the start of any important activity today, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, your house gets a facelift — a new rug, matching cushion covers, or a brand new kitchen. This will take up most of your time. First, you will be busy furnishing and setting up your home, and then you will spend your time flaunting it to your friends, relatives, neighbours, bosses, colleagues, acquaintances.

CANCER
You will take on new responsibilities, says Ganesh. So you will be busy in your task. You may feel exhausted due to hectic work. So it entails mental tension.

LEO
Guides help other people choose the right path in life and to select the correct alternatives. It is a good day for those who are in the teaching or coaching professions. It is also a progressive day for those working in MNC's. Ganesh's blessings are with you.

VIRGO
All the work done in the past will reap rich rewards today, says Ganesh. You'll direct things your own way, and in no way would you take orders from anyone. But don't go overboard with all the authority and keep a cool, calm head.

LIBRA
Nothing overshadows your love for your children today. And love is precisely what drives you incessantly to give them the best possible of everything. Be it special classes for that extra edge in education, or a visit to a holy place to seek divine blessing, you will do it all today. And spending time with children isn't all — you may end up taking a small but sweet trip in the evening, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Yet another mundane day in your life, as nothing exciting is on the cards. However, be cheerful and keep trying hard to bring in some spice in life. You never know when the planets change their mood and make an exciting future. Keep the hope alive, says Ganesh.

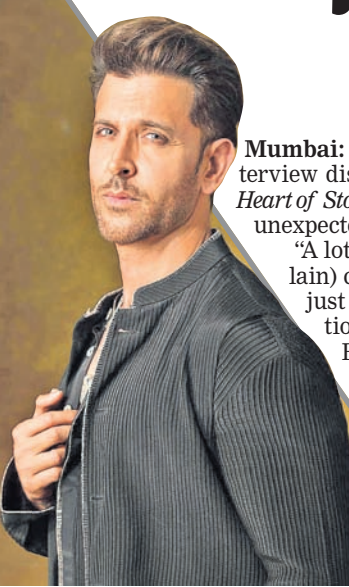
SAGITTARIUS
Remember that actions always speak louder than words. You will, in all probability, finish your work that has been seeking your attention for long now. You shall also successfully bring continuing disputes to the table and resolve them logically.

CAPRICORN
Some people do backbreaking work throughout their life, and still don't taste the sweet taste of success. While in your case, success will be easy as pie. You are already loaded with work and some new projects — assignments will be added to that, today. But, you are not complaining as some recreational activities will refresh your mood and energy.

AQUARIUS
It's an uphill struggle today! But the heavens are on your side, and you will be saved from being swindled. Otherwise, it's an eventful day at work. You may initiate big business deals and new projects as well.

PISCES
For those in the creative fields of marketing or advertising, today is an extraordinary opportunity to tweak your marketing mix into bringing in maximum profits with bare minimum efforts. Your health interests will also take priority now, and you will find yourself spending more time in the gym, says Ganesh.

'Playing a bad guy needs dedication'



Mumbai: Actress Alia Bhatt in an interview discusses playing a villain in *Heart of Stone*, and presenting women in unexpected shades.

"A lot of that (how to play the villain) comes with the writing. You just have to commit to the direction, whatever the direction is. But I think there's a lot of purpose and dedication in being the bad guy because to me, I'm not the bad guy. To me, I'm the right guy. Keya's passion, her requirement, need or want for the Heart has reason, it has purpose. And she believes in that."

Hrithik on playing mentally challenged in *Koi Mil Gaya*

Mumbai: Actor Hrithik Roshan in an exclusive interview revealed how he prepared to play the mentally impaired character Rohit in the film.

To celebrate 20 years of the release and on being asked about his approach to the character, Hrithik said, "Academically speaking of course there was a DNA match and I took a lot of it from my life. I had experienced bullying when I was in school and I had a stutter. So, life had already given me the vulnerability that the character needed. This is something that I think is a great lesson in our life. Whatever we have either good or bad, it can all be used if you just keep your eyes open and wait, the time will come."

"This was a learning experience because when I came to the set, I found centering and honesty. The mask of a star and an actor would vanish. It's just me being me and I learnt a lot from that. I found my calling through this film. I needed to be expressed and the script was everything," he said.

He said, "It took me some 6 to 7 hours to read the script because after every 2-3 pages, I used to sit and cry. I felt a lot for the film. Then I called up my dad and said 'papa the script is mind blowing, it's fantastic, I cried throughout the script.'"

Talking about how he prepared for the first day of shoot, Hrithik mentioned, "I was

very nervous. I thought papa should see what I am doing with everything like my hair and my clothes. But he didn't see anything until I landed on the first day of the shoot. It was a strange kind of faith that he had in me and I thought that I should just follow my instinct and that's what I did." He funnily added, "My process for every character is to start with the hair. Once I get that right, then I start doing other things. So once I got the hair right for Rohit then I was set."

Koi Mil Gaya has been re-released in cinemas on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. AGENCIES

For her, she's not the bad guy. I think it's about displaying both her sides with clarity and focus," the *Brahmastra* actress adds.

"Of course, I for one want to tell stories of women backing each other. But I also want to tell stories of men backing each other. I want to tell stories of people being there for each other. It should not be limited to one gender. It should just be different people, their personal journeys and their coming together. We want to tell a truly equal-footing kind of cinema. So I don't think it should be skewed to one side in particular," Alia adds.

The 30 year old actress concludes, "I definitely feel there's merit in showing women in unexpected shades. Its way more entertaining to see two women fight and outsmart each other. Of course, those dynamics are way more interesting than to see them sitting and gossiping at lunchtime. Those things are interesting to play with. But I think it should be a balance of both." AGENCIES



Celina's struggle against cyberbullying

Mumbai: Actress Celina Jaitley opened up about her ordeal after a self-proclaimed Pakistani journalist shared derogatory tweets about her and how she has been coping with it.

Celina told media that she filed an official complaint with NCW, adding, "This person created the fake viral content maligning me, thousands of peo-

Shreya doesn't want her songs to be recreated



Mumbai: Versatile playback singer Shreya Ghoshal, who is known for countless hit tracks like *Bairi Piya*, *Silsila Ye Chahat Ka*, among numerous others, says she doesn't want any of her

songs to be recreated, as she has strong memories attached to them.

Talking about the trend where original compositions often clash with recreations and remixes, Shreya told IANS, "I cannot see a lot of recreations happening off late. It was happening a lot 3-4 years ago. I was the same person who was upset with that a few years ago. But now I don't see that much happening."

"People have also become quite bored because of the repetition of the same song. The moment you see the song is not good or not done well, people immediately reject it," said Ghoshal.

The 39-year-old singer said, "I don't want any of my songs to be recreated, none of my songs. Even if it is asked to me to recreate, I would probably say no. There are so many of my songs which I have very strong memories with. Those are sentimental."

"I may have those certain sentiments, but other audience members may not have. But, I do have a personal memory of that song, the process that song was made. So, probably it would be hard for me to say okay for the recreation of my own song," she shared.

Shreya's last hit track is *Tum Kya Mile* from *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*. IANS

ple, including myself, lodged a complaint with Twitter to ban his account. Twitter's auto-generated responses claimed no issues with all his tweets, encouraging him to go on a horrifying spree of baseless, untrue, character assassination via his tweets. The height of stupidity is that some of the most reputable and credible media outlets report on the lies spread by a Pakistani imposter..."

Celina said in the same interview, "I am very grateful that MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) has responded with full support. We need to understand that all processes have their protocols and even my complaint must go through its due process. I will wait for the process to take its due course. I do not know what the laws in Pakistan are, but

I am sure the laws for protection of women against cyberbullying, verbal and mental abuse, character assassination are stringent and the Pakistan High Commission will act in accordance with their country's laws against such crimes."

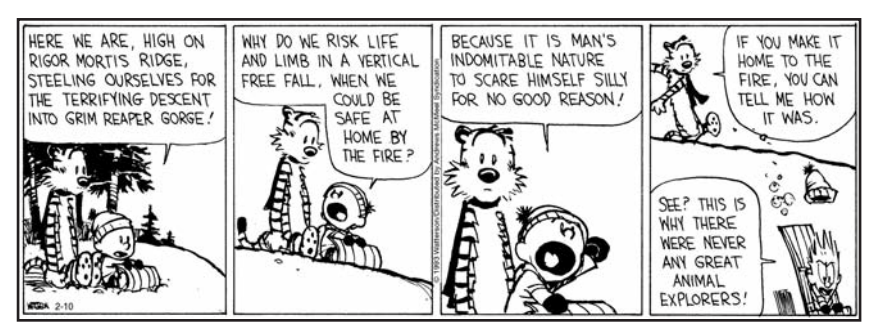
Earlier this year, Umair Sandhu wrote in a tweet, "Celina Jaitley is the only actress in Bollywood who slept with both Feroz Khan and Fardeen Khan many times."

Celina responded with, "A few months ago, a self-proclaimed Hindi film critic and journalist from Pakistan named Umair Sandhu took to Twitter to make viral untrue horrific claims about me which included bizarre allegations like my relations with both my mentor Feroz Khan and his son Fardeen. My response to his harassment and fake claims from Pakistan went viral and garnered support from millions of Twitterati including Pakistani nationals who were appalled at his behaviour" AGENCIES

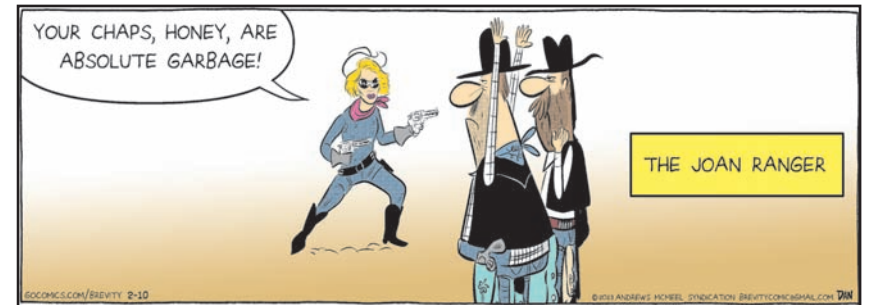
PEANUTS



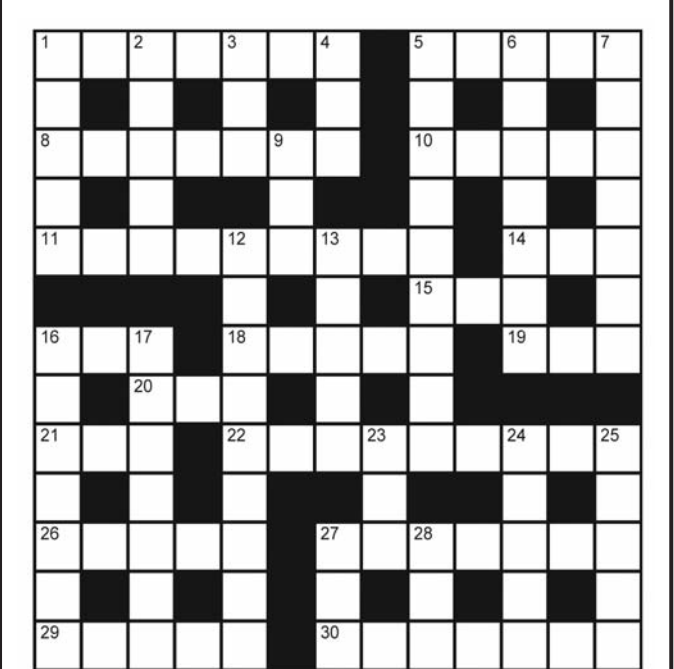
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



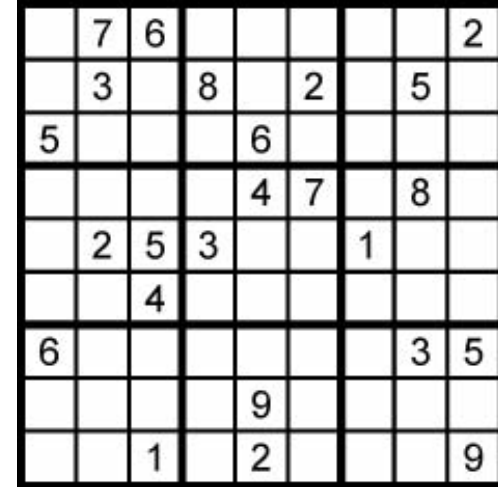
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 The sound of music?
 - 5 Capital of East Flanders
 - 8 Hanging Gardens site
 - 10 Lay to rest
 - 11 Method
 - 14 Female sheep
 - 15 High spirits
 - 16 Open carriage
 - 18 Forest clearing
 - 19 German resort
 - 20 Arena shout
 - 21 Bearded antelope
 - 22 Vacation destination (5,4)
 - 26 Leg bone
 - 27 Faux pas
 - 29 Narrow ridge
 - 30 Venice transport
 - 4 Strong desire
 - 5 King Arthur's bride
 - 6 Radical
 - 7 Objectives
 - 9 Sapporo sash
 - 12 Sleep interrupter
 - 13 Earth tremor
 - 16 Sports meeting
 - 17 Complain
 - 23 Bag thickness
 - 24 Part of a TV feed
 - 25 Destiny
 - 27 Annoy
 - 28 Samovar
- Down**
- 1 Something to kick
 - 2 Renaissance fiddle
 - 3 Furnace fuel

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

RAZING DOWN

An excavator engaged by BDA pulls down an encroachment in Jagamara area of Bhubaneswar, Monday



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, NOT A DROP TO DRINK

Potable water crisis hits flood-affected villages



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 7: People in the flood-hit areas of the state are facing an acute shortage of potable water at present.

As per reports, while many are forced to drink floodwater after boiling it, others are averse to consume it fearing contamination of water-borne diseases.

The government, on the other hand, said it was sending water tankers to the flood-hit areas, but those affected said the vehicles were not able to reach them as roads have been inundated in the deluge.

Though the water levels in major rivers have come down, 75 villages still remained under the grip of the deluge till Sunday night.

A total of 6.24 lakh people have been affected in 11 districts, according to an official report Sunday.

The affected people have taken shelter in nearby schools which are surrounded by floodwaters.

"My house and tube wells in our area remain submerged in floodwaters. We do not have access to potable drinking water. We are boiling floodwater and drinking it," said 68-year-old Kalandi Barik of Santhapada village in Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district.

Like Barik, many affected people are facing similar woes in

My house and tube wells in our area remain submerged in floodwaters. We do not have access to potable drinking water. We are boiling floodwater and drinking it

KALANDI BARIK | RESIDENT OF SANTHAPADA IN KENDRAPARA

As the volume of inflow of water has reduced, we hope to maintain our target level. There has been no heavy rain in the upstream of Mahanadi. Therefore, the flood situation is stable and there is no threat for the next three days

BHAKTA RANJAN MOHANTY | WR DEPARTMENT ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF

the Mahanadi delta region comprising Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Khurda districts.

Senior Congress leader Ganeswar Behera, who visited several areas in the flood-hit region, said the affected population is facing many problems, and shortage of drinking water was among the biggest of those.

"They are afraid of consuming floodwater fearing outbreak of water-borne diseases following the deluge," he said.

Meanwhile, a senior health

official here said that the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department has been instructed to supply medicines to the flood affected people.

Kendrapara sub-collector Niranjana Behera said water tankers are being sent to the affected areas.

However, the affected people said the tankers are not able to reach them as they are surrounded by floodwaters.

Meanwhile, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) office stated that 75 more villages have been inundated by floodwaters, taking the total number of affected villages to 1,973 Sunday. The number of urban areas hit by the flood remained unchanged at 26.

The SRC office said in a report that the number of people reeling under the deluge has gone up from 5.73 lakh Saturday to 6.24 lakh Sunday.

The government has opened seven more free kitchens to feed 912 more people who were evacuated since Saturday, an official said.

Hirakud Dam authorities, meanwhile, have released excess water downstream of Mahanadi by opening 20 sluice gates.

The water level at the Hirakud Dam's reservoir remained at 621 feet Monday against the full reservoir level of 630 feet.

"As the volume of inflow of water has reduced, we hope to maintain our target level. There has been no heavy rain in the upstream of Mahanadi. Therefore, the flood situation is stable and there is no threat for the next three days," said engineer-in-chief of the Water Resources department, Bhakta Ranjan Mohanty.

Around 3 lakh cusecs of water is now flowing at Mundali near Cuttack.



ALL EARS: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik interacts with 'Kalia' beneficiaries at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

Utkela airport gets DGCA nod for commercial ops

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 7: Commercial flight operations to Utkela airport in Kalahandi district will commence soon as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted license in this regard.

Taking to Twitter, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wrote, "Glad to share that #UtkelaAirport in #Kalahandi district has received DGCA license to start flight operations. Soon flight operations will commence to #Bhubaneswar. It will boost connectivity, commerce & tourism, fulfilling aspirations of people of the region."

Initially, Utkela will connect with Bhubaneswar, followed by Raipur. The airport is being developed under RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme)-UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagarik). The state government has spent Rs 162 crore for land acquisition, construction of runway and buildings for the airport.

The Commerce and Transport



department has thanked the DGCA for licensing Utkela airstrip (2B-VFR) under UDAN scheme.

A team led by DGCA's regional deputy director, chief aviation security officer (CASO), nodal authorities of Airports Authority of India (AAI) and CISF had visited the airstrip last month to assess the facilities and other safety benchmarks in presence of officials of the state Works department.

The airstrips at Amarda, Jeypore, Jharsuguda, Rangelunda, Rourkela and Utkela of the state have been identified for development under

UDAN scheme. Of these, flight operations have commenced from Jharsuguda, Jeypore and Rourkela airports after the revival of these airports.

The AAI has completed expansion/upgradation works at its Jharsuguda and Rourkela airports, Union MoS for Civil Aviation, VK Singh told in Rajya Sabha, Monday.

In a written reply to a question of BJD MP Sasmit Patra, Singh said AAI has made a total expenditure of Rs 196.97 crore for development of Bhubaneswar airport and the projected expenditure in the year 2023-24 is Rs 139 crore.

On the proposed international airport at Puri, he said the state government has submitted an application under GFA Policy, 2008 to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) for grant of 'site-clearance' for development of the greenfield airport at Puri.

As per GFA Policy, proposal has been sent to the concerned stakeholders including AAI, DGCA and Ministry of Defence (MoD) for their comments.

After completion of this consultation with stakeholders, the proposal is required to be placed before the Steering Committee on greenfield airports for their recommendation, with respect to award of site clearance, he said.

As per the GFA Policy, 2008, the responsibility of implementation of airport projects including funding of the project, land acquisition and R&R rests with the concerned airport developer including the respective state government (in case the state government is the project proponent), Singh informed the Upper House.

HC LAUNCHES E-INITIATIVES

AGENCIES

Cuttack, August 7: Orissa High Court's outgoing Chief Justice S Muralidhar Monday dedicated two new e-initiatives — Warrant Management System and PIL portal — for the benefit of all stakeholders, including the police.

Warrant Management System is a portal of the High Court developed in coordination with State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) to ensure expeditious transmission and tracking of warrants.

The portal has the facility of issuing warrants to the police, tracking the status of execution and acknowledgment of execution. While this facility was available for the Cuttack district, the



WINNERS ALL: Students of DAV Public School, CDA pose for a photograph with teachers, Monday, a day after winning the coveted Orissa POST Mettle Meet 2023 in the Junior category, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Outgoing Chief Justice S Muralidhar expresses concern over the pendency of a huge number of unexecuted warrants

same was on the day extended to seven other districts.

While dedicating the facility, the Chief Justice expressed concern over the pendency of a huge number of unexecuted warrants and said, "It is not in the interest of the rule of law if the executing arms of the court are unable to submit a compliance report in respect of the warrants forwarded to them."

He said that as many as 61,000 non-bailable and 57,000 bailable and 3,700 distress warrants, and 600 recommitment are now pending.

Similarly, the PIL portal is a tool through which the public can know about the important PILs in the High Court, its relevant orders, and reports that will also be beneficial to researchers and students. The Chief Justice is retiring on the day. Justice Subhasis Talapatra will be sworn in as the new Chief Justice, Tuesday.

World's largest Ferris wheel mysteriously stops turning

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Dubai, August 7: Two years ago, Dubai's skyscraper-studded skyline welcomed a Ferris wheel touted as the world's largest, but it mysteriously stopped turning just months after opening.

The much-touted Ain Dubai (Dubai Eye) was designed as a tourist-luring landmark in the United Arab Emirates' glam-hub, which is home to the world's tallest building.

But now it stands idle for undisclosed reasons, its extravagant light fixtures the only parts seemingly still working.

"Ain Dubai remains closed until further notice," says an official website for the attraction. "We continue to rigorously work on completing the enhancement works that have been taking place over the past months."

The wheel was supposed to close for just a month but its re-opening has since been postponed indefinitely.

Those behind the project inaugurated in 2021 have failed to reply to enquiries.

At restaurants, shops and cafes built around the attraction, employees remain sceptical that the structure, which took around six years to build, will ever turn again.

"Last year they promised us that in winter it will be open, even now, they are saying that in (the coming) winter it will be open again," said one employee at a nearby shop.

"But we're not sure... it will," said the man who asked to remain anonymous due to fear of reprisal.

'Too slow'

The Dubai Eye, built by a consortium of international companies, is located in Bluewaters — a man-made island designed as a retail, residential and entertainment hub.

For more than a year, the main entrance to the attraction has remained closed and ticket booths abandoned. Only a slow trickle of tourists visit the site, snapping



pictures of LED lights mounted on its exterior.

"I asked a security guard here about it and he told me that it doesn't work," said Marwan Mohammad, an Egyptian tourist. "I asked him for the reason but he did not give me an answer," said the 33-year-old business consultant.

In a city filled with record-breaking landmarks, the Dubai Eye stands at a height of 250 me-

SPECIAL DRIVE TO CURB CYBERCRIMES

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 7: Odisha Police is all set to launch a special drive to sensitise people on ways to avoid falling in the trap of cyber-stalkers and fraudsters.

Inaugurating a three-day training programme titled, 'Tools & Techniques for Investigating Cyber Crimes against Children', for cyber cell sleuths at the Crime Branch office here, Monday, DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal said awareness on cybercrimes is need of the hour.

"We find many people sharing OTPs and falling prey to cyber frauds. Hence, we have planned to hold a massive awareness drive soon in this regard," said the police chief.

Police officials from various districts and Crime Branch will

take part in the two-phase training programme being organised by the Odisha Police in collaboration with UNICEF, Odisha.

"As many as 34 officials in the rank of sub-inspector and above from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Odisha, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Berhampur, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Boudh, Angul, Deogarh and Dhenkanal police districts will be attending the training from August 10 to 12," Bansal said.

Issues like the evolving nature of cybercrimes, technical skills, digital forensic, legal issues, collaboration and infor-

mation sharing with other agencies, victim support and empathy will be covered during the training period.

Bansal advised the participants to be fully attentive while listening to the resource persons with vast and pragmatic knowledge to resolve critical cybercrimes.

"Officers attending these trainings, in due course, can lead cyber teams in their respective districts," he said.

"We have picked cops, having prior education in cyber or internet related fields, from Crime Branch and other police units and posted them in the cyber cell of Crime Branch," he said.

However, the newly-posted officials from different districts required training in latest crime scenario.

THE MUCH-TOUTED AIN DUBAI (DUBAI EYE) WAS DESIGNED AS A TOURIST-LURING LANDMARK IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' GLAM-HUB, WHICH IS HOME TO THE WORLD'S TALLEST BUILDING

AT RESTAURANTS, SHOPS AND CAFES BUILT AROUND THE ATTRACTION, EMPLOYEES REMAIN SCEPTICAL THAT THE STRUCTURE, WHICH TOOK AROUND SIX YEARS TO BUILD, WILL EVER TURN AGAIN

dirhams (about \$1,280), with luxury passes and private cabins on offer.

"The view was very beautiful from above," said Mohammad who experienced the 38-minute ride before it closed, adding however, that it moved "too slowly".

"Heavier than island" With no official explanation, rumours are rife on the Ferris wheel's apparent technical issues, especially among employees at Bluewaters.

They all spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing repercus-

sions from authorities or their employers.

"This is a man-made island. I heard that (the wheel) is heavier than the island itself, that's why it is very dangerous," said a waiter at a nearby restaurant, adding that it had been noisy during its few months of operation.

"Now... it's only for show, just for the lighting and that's it". The giant wheel, made of more steel than the Eiffel Tower, features prominently on the list of Dubai's top tourist attractions.

They include the Dubai Frame monument and Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building.

Patrick Clawson, research director at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said official silence on the Ferris wheel suggested a complicated problem.

UAE authorities are generally "quick to provide information if they" have a solution, he said.

But with the Dubai Eye, "whatever the problem, the authorities are not confident they have a solution," he told AFP.

Odisha has a vibrant heritage of exquisite handloom: CM

NATIONAL HANDLOOM DAY



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 7: Odisha has a very rich and vibrant heritage of exquisite handloom and finest weaves, honed over generations of artists and crafts-

men said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on National Handloom Day Monday.

Taking to social media account, he said, "Let's celebrate the rich legacy of weaving tradition which has created a niche for Odisha handloom across the world.

Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Minister Rita Sahu inaugurated a function on this occasion at Sookhana Bhawan here in presence of Boyanika President Prakash Chandra Meher, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, Handlooms, Textiles &

Handicrafts Special Secretary Saroj Kumar Patel Textiles Director Shoven Krishna Sahu and Boyanika MD Pranati Chhotray.

Speaking on this occasion, the Minister said the 9th National Handloom Day is being celebrated throughout the state from August 7 to 15. This is an opportunity for each and every citizen to celebrate our age-old weaving culture and tradition and supporting the weaver artisans, who have carried the profession with their exceptional skill and creative ability.

Handloom products of our state represent an inseparable art of our rich culture and tradition and act as a source of livelihood for millions of weavers engaged in this activity, she added.

August 7 has been chosen for

its special significance in India's freedom struggle. On this day in 1905, the Swadeshi Movement was formally launched at a meeting in Calcutta Town Hall. To commemorate the beginning of Swadeshi Movement, the day is celebrated as National Handloom Day all over the country with the objective to generate awareness on the importance of Handloom Industry.

Sahu felicitated three Primary Weavers Cooperative Societies namely Ratnamanipur WCS Ltd, Berhampur; Ganjam, Netaji WCS Ltd, Jagatsinghpur and Alanahat WCS Ltd, Jagatsinghpur for successful completion of 75 years of service, each with a memento and a cash award of ₹1 lakh.

Apart from this, Gopinath Das of Vill-Routpada, Dist-Khurda was also felicitated for

NABARD ORGANISES FASHION SHOW IN CITY

NABARD, Odisha regional office celebrated National Handloom Day Monday in DN Regalia Mall in the City. As part of the celebrations, exclusive handloom stalls were sponsored in DN Regalia Mall for a period of 3 days. A fashion show was also organised to showcase the handloom tradition of the state. Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena graced the inaugural ceremony of the National Handloom Day celebrations as the chief guest. He also inaugurated the stalls

of OFPOs promoted by Nabard. The event was attended by Shovan Krishna Sahu, Director-Textile & special secretary Industry, and Sudhanshu KK Mishra, CGM, Nabard, Odisha Regional Office. Weavers of the Nabard promoted handloom OFPOs were invited to participate in the stalls. For these weavers, it will be a rare opportunity to showcase their products in a commercial mall and also reap the benefits of better sales directly and through orders.



his significant contribution in weaving of Angabastra using

Ahinsa Silk for Lord Shree Jagannath Temple.

Mega trommel machine inaugurated by BMC



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 7: In a significant stride towards sustainable waste management, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das inaugurated the state-of-the-art mega trommel machine Monday at the TTS, Sainik School.

Those present on the occasion were BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, Additional Commissioner -I Laxmikanta Sethi, Additional Commissioner -II Subhendu Sahu, City engineer Arun Nayak, Deputy Commissioner of Sanitation Manoranjan Sahu and standing committee Chairman of ZDC North Purandar Nanda.

Kulange expressed optimism about the future of waste management in the City and highlighted the ongoing efforts to strengthen waste segregation projects. "The inauguration of the mega trommel machine marks a significant milestone, paving the way for a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable

city," he said. The machine is designed to screen an impressive 40 tons of waste per hour and segregate waste measuring 100 mm or more in size. To enhance the waste segregation process further, the facility will also house three additional machines for the segregation of smaller waste sizes, such as 40 mm, 20 mm, and 4 mm, focusing on hard waste materials.

The machine is equipped to efficiently recover items such as bottles, plastics, cloth, and more, with dimensions exceeding 100 mm, sending them for further processing at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF).

Meanwhile, the waste that remains post-screening, primarily consisting of biodegradable material and items smaller than 100 mm, will be arranged in rows using the windrows method at a designated site. To accelerate composting, the windrow piles will be periodically turned, with a total composting cycle of 28 days.

Livelihood training for Jajpur's SHG members

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar/Jajpur, August 7: In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Mission Shakti Bhawan at Jajpur through livelihood training and enterprise support has given a massive push to women empowerment in the district.

Developed as an integrated facility, supporting activities of the Self Help Groups, the centre now acts as a catalyst to augment capacity building programmes as well as enterprise development activities for the women of the district.

The facility was built at Jajpur with financial support of Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC). And so far, it has given women SHGs training in computer skills, financial literacy and smartphone use for communication and digital transactions. As a result, the women



are better equipped now to manage their micro and small business needs.

"I had an interest to learn computer usage. The Mission Shakti Bhawan at Jajpur has fulfilled my needs. Now I'm able to operate the computer and do different tasks online. It has helped me develop my digital skills," says Ananya Sau, a SHG member.

SHG Women are being given various livelihood training like stitching and apparel making



at the centre. 50 sewing machines have been installed while instructors are engaged to train the women. After completing

the 45-day training, these women are provided one sewing machine each free of cost through the 'district level federation' to support a sustainable stream of income for their families.

There are more than 25,000 women SHGs in the 10 blocks and 2 urban local bodies of Jajpur. Majority of these make unique handicrafts, terracotta, decorative and various food items. A special outlet has been provided at the Bhawan for the exhibition and sale of all such products round the year.

"Here, we have been able to train over 10 thousand women in various programmes along with giving computer literacy to enhance their skills. Now, these women are able to use smartphone and do various tasks like banking, e-commerce", says chief development officer and executive officer of Zilla Parishad Jajpur Ashok Kumar Behuria.

5T Secretary reviews devpt works during Bolangir visit

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 7: As per the instructions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, 5T Secretary VK Pandian paid a two-day visit to Bolangir.

On the second day of his visit Monday, he visited the Samalei temple at Bolangir, Jogeswar temple at Loisingha and Ranipur jharial group of temples at Bangomunda and interacted with shrines' officials including Sebaysats and locals.

During his discussion, he sought suggestions for development of temples including better facilities and tourist amenities. He directed the district administration to prepare a master plan for development of these temples.

He also visited koshal kala mandal ground and instructed the officials to make a detailed project report (DPR) for development of the ground and other facilities.

Pandian reviewed the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project including its spillway, and Scada controlled UGPL irrigation works which will irrigate around 1,00,000 acres of Bolangir and Sonapur districts besides providing drinking water. The spillway is nearing completion and the impounding of water in the reservoir has started this season. The irri-



gation will be provided in phases starting from 2024.

He participated in the public grievances meetings at Loisingha and Gurunda play ground in Muribahal. In the meetings, he conveyed that Chief Minister's emphasis on grievance redressal as a priority task for the administration.

Later, Pandian reviewed mega piped water supply projects for Agalpur, Loisingha, Puntala, Turekela, Bongamunda and Muribahal blocks. The projects will be completed at an estimated cost of ₹482 crore and

will be operationalised from year 2025.

He also visited Jogisarda high school and interacted with teachers, students, SMC members. The school which was transformed under 5T HST program in first phase.

He interacted with Mission Shakti groups and assured them support from the government for their activities. He emphasised on Chief Minister's priority for women empowerment. He directed the Collector to ensure that loan melas are organised in the panchayat level.

CLASSIFIED LOST

I, Bharati Kumari Pradhan (28), W/o. Subrat Kumar Nayak, Vill.: Tilisingh, P.S.: Tarasing, A/pre Vill: Baunsalundi, P.S.: Bhanjanagar, Dist.: Ganjam reported at PS that Regd. Sale Deed vide No. 10591803747 on dated 05.11.2018 at Sub Registrar, Bhanjanagar, landed property vide Plot No. 1438/3395 reporting in writing along with an Bhanjanagar General Dairy No. 014 on Dt.27.05.2023, Misfortune on Dt.26.05.2023 at 10.00 A.M., While I was coming from Baunsalundi towards SBI Main Branch, Bhanjanagar with keeping original Regd. Sale Deed. I searched the same but could not traced out. If anybody find the same please contact nearest Police Station or mentioned above address. Sd./- Bharati Kumari Pradhan

Mahtab miffed over passage of bills amidst uproar

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, August 7: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Bhartruhari Mahtab Monday expressed displeasure over passage of bills in Lok Sabha amidst uproar by the opposition parties over Manipur violence and lack of order in house.

During discussion on the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, the Cuttack MP accused the

Chair of making mockery of the system, expressing anguish over passing of the bill amidst lack of order in lower house.

Mahtab was heard saying this was not the appropriate way to pass bills given the house was not in order. He was even heard accusing the chair for allowing this procedure amidst uproar. He was supported by BSP MP Danish Ali and other MPs.

Speaking on the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, Mahtab also stated that this bill is not about data protection but about data processing. He asked the government about provisions for an independent regulator.

However, Union Electronics and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnavi replied that all these issues have been addressed before.

Climate change could reduce India's credit rating: Study

India's sovereign credit rating could be downgraded due to the impact of climate change and the rise in temperature volatility by as early as the 2030s, according to a study.

The team, led by researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the University of Cambridge, UK, found that deferring green investments will increase costs of borrowing for nations, which will translate into higher costs of corporate debt.

The study, published Monday in the journal Management Science, is the first to anchor climate science within "real world" financial indicators. It suggests that 59 nations will experience a drop in sovereign

credit rating in the next decade without emissions reduction.

Sovereign ratings assess the creditworthiness of countries and are a key gauge for investors. Covering more than USD 66 trillion in sovereign debt, the ratings - and agencies behind them - act as gatekeepers to global capital.

The researchers used artificial intelligence (AI) to simulate the economic effects of climate change on Standard and Poor's (S&P) ratings for 108 countries over the next 10, 30 and 50 years, and by the end of the century.

"This research contributes to bridging the gap between climate science and real-world financial indicators," said Patrycja



Klusak, from UEA's Norwich Business School, and an affiliated researcher at Cambridge's Bennett Institute for Public Policy. "We find material impacts of climate change as early as 2030, with significantly deeper downgrades across more countries as climate warms and temper-

ature volatility rises," Klusak said.

From a policy perspective, the findings support the idea that deferring green investments will increase costs of borrowing for nations, which will translate into higher costs of corporate debt, the researchers said.

"Ratings agencies took a reputational hit for failing to anticipate the 2008 financial crisis. It is imperative that they are proactive in reflecting the much larger consequences of climate change now," Klusak added.

The researchers say the current mix of green finance indicators such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) ratings and unregulated, ad hoc corporate disclosures are detached from the science - and this latest study shows they do not have to be.

"The ESG ratings market is expected to top a billion dollars this year, yet it desperately lacks climate science underpinnings," said Matthew Agarwala, a co-

author from Cambridge's Bennett Institute for Public Policy.

"As climate change batters national economies, debts will become harder and more expensive to service. Markets need credible, digestible information on how climate change translates into material risk," Agarwala said.

The team, including former S&P chief sovereign ratings officer Dr Moritz Kraemer, found that if nothing is done to curb greenhouse gases, 59 nations could be downgraded by over a notch on average by 2030.

Chile, Indonesia, China and India would all drop two notches, with the US and Canada falling by two and the UK by one, the researchers said.

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USE OF HEAVY MACHINE, ENVIRONMENTAL NORMS VIOLATION

NGT slaps penalty on Baitarani sand ghat leaseholder in Jajpur



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 7: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed to collect penalty from a leaseholder of Dhanatri sand ghat in Baitarani river after convicting him on charges of using earthmover for sand mining in violation of lease norms and environmental clearance, under Korei block in the district.

As per reports, the tribunal passed the order in connection with a case filed before it by Krushna Chandra Khatua of Gobindpur village, Kishore Chandra Pal of Ranapal village and Sarat Chandra Jena of Dhanatri village, under the block. The tribunal passed the order after the charges leveled by the complainants was proved during the hearing of the case.

The leaseholder was identified as Bikash Swain, a resident of Sailashree Vihar in Bhubaneswar.

The tribunal also directed the state environment impact as-

essment authority (SEIAA) to take necessary steps in assistance with the district Collector and fix the penalty amount.

The leaseholder will have to be served with a notice and the penalty should be collected within three months of the notice. Moreover, immediate steps should be taken to revoke the environmental clearance sanctioned to the leaseholder, the order stated.

Meanwhile, the order has been welcomed by the residents of the riparian villages. However, observers appeared skeptic over the implementation of the order.

They alleged that sand mining continues unabated at Dhanatri and other ghats of Baitarani river with the use of earthmovers in alleged violation of norms. The tribunal has directed time and again to seize those heavy equipment but the authorities have failed to implement the order.

Residents alleged that illegal sand mining is taking a heavy toll on human habitats and envi-

ronment in the riparian villages. The sand laden trucks regularly pass through the villages resulting in environmental damage in these areas.

The residents drew the attention of the sand miners but they allegedly refused to listen and continued with their wrongdoing. Irked, the residents under the aegis of Korei Sangram Samiti had staged several agitations in past but to no avail.

The rural works department had even sought the intervention of the regional transport officer (RTO) to end the impasse over illegal plying of sand laden trucks through the villages but in vain.

Left with no option, the residents lodged a complaint with the National Green Tribunal in connection with the regular plying of sand laden trucks from Dhanatri sand ghat through their villages which they alleged has impacted the rural forests, reserve forests, village roads and village cremation grounds.

The district Collector had previously directed the Vyasagar tehsildar to not allow plying of sand laden trucks via reserve forest lands in Gobindpur village. However, the leaseholder continues to ply his sand laden trucks. The regular plying of trucks has allegedly destroyed more than 120 trees and caused serious damage to the area and its environment.



HANDLOOM FOR FASHION: Models walk the ramp wearing Sambalpuri handloom clothes at a fashion show titled 'Sambalpur Fashionova' held at a city hotel on the eve of National Handloom Day, Sunday

Warring heavyweights' uneasy solidarity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 7: Among the many strange things that are happening to the Congress in Rourkela these days, a show of solidarity by two warring heavyweights, who exchanged blows before full media glare sometime back, has sparked speculations among party workers and observers as well.

On May 13 this year, the two veterans of Rourkela Congress - PCC elected member Sabir Hussein, a former Ranji player, and Umesh Saran, who claims to be a co-opted member of AICC - threw punches at each other and got into a wrestling match before pinned each other down in full presence of media.

Following this, Saran was suspended from the party while Hussein was issued a show cause notice. Though the incident was one of the darkest episodes in the annals of the party which at present stands divided, none of the leaders opened their mouths afterwards.

Matters took a curious turn recently on the sidelines of a function to felicitate a newly elected



Youth Congress leader. The two warring strongmen stood close to each other in solidarity with garlands around their neck. They even shook hands and hugged each other before the media. Reportedly, the programme was organised by Saran.

The Congress leadership present at the function owed their allegiance to the current PCC Chief Sarat Pattnaik. However, the notable absentees were former DCC Biren Senapaty, the last Congress MLA from Rourkela Prabhat

Mohapatra who was insulted by party cadres during a demonstration in front of the newly built hockey stadium, Rabi Ray and others.

One of the dissidents said, "I think Umesh must have invited them. But they didn't show up since they must be feeling ashamed of their actions against the party. However, as you saw it today, it will not affect party unity. With Saran and Hussein burying their hatchet, we are going to be stronger now."

The incident was one of the darkest episodes in the annals of the party which at present stands divided, none of the leaders opened their mouths afterwards

Nevertheless, despite the show of solidarity before cameras, the body language of the warring leaders spoke volumes about their simmering disdain. However, both Saran and Hussein, the latter being an aspirant for a MLA ticket, tried to downplay issues between them.

As Hussein said: "Please don't read much too much into that incident."

Another senior leader said, "Saran should be back in the party because he is a strong and dedicated cadre and he will return soon."

Meanwhile, observers said things would be interesting to watch once the long-delayed and much awaited DCC is declared in the coming days.

Two Kanwariyas swept away

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, August 7: Two Kanwariyas were swept away in the swirling floodwaters of Salandi river while taking a dip on their way to Sindhukeswara Shiv temple at Anija, under Khaira block in Balasore district, in the holy month of Shrawan, Monday.

A search operation is underway to trace the two missing devotees who were identified as Rajendra Sahu (22) and Kathia Mahakud (21), both from Sanajayipur under Khaira block in Balasore district.

As per reports, the two Kanwariyas were on their way to a Shiv temple in Barada panchayat under the block. On their way, stopped to take a dip in the Salandi river which was flooded due to heavy rainfall. Sources said a total of three persons were swept away by the strong water current in the flooded river. However, an ODRAF team rescued one of them while two others went missing.

Youth gets life for murdering widow

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 7: The additional district and sessions judge-1 Indu Sharma here Monday sentenced a youth to life imprisonment after convicting him for the murder of a widow.

The judge also slapped a fine of Rs. 10,000 on him, apart from the punishment. In case the penalty amount is not deposited by the convict then he will have to serve an additional six months in jail, the judge stated in her order.

As per the case diary, the convict Simala Adhikari (33) of Bajraguma village under K Nuagaon police limits in Ganjam district had taken Rs. 18,000 from Sumitra Sethi (35) wife of late Alekha Sethi to provide an almshouse. However, neither he provided her the almshouse nor was he returning her the amount and kept on dilly-dallying on the issue. In this regard, an argument broke out between Sumitra

and Simala. Left with no option, Sumitra lodged a complaint at Nuapada police station against Simala. Enraged, Simala planned to get rid of Sumitra permanently and purchased a knife from market to kill her.

The incident occurred when Sumitra had gone outside on some work May 18, 2016. She was returning home when Simala followed her on his bike and killed her by slitting her throat at a deserted place.

K Nuagaon police recovered the body the next day and launched an investigation. Police arrested Simala May 18, 2016 but he got bail December 10, 2018.

The judge pronounced the order after examining the statements recorded by 26 eye witnesses including the 12 year old son of the victim and the investigation report. Additional public prosecutor Gyanendranath Jena pleaded the matter on behalf of the state government.

Amrit Yuva Kalotsav kicks off

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 7: Amrit Yuva Kalotsav, a cultural extravaganza of the country, commenced in the Steel City Monday. The Kendriya Sangeet Natak Akademi in association with RSP is organising the event as part of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations.

More than 8 teams from different states are participating in the programme to showcase the rich cultural heritage of their respective areas.

Moreover, three workshops: Kala Srijan-a workshop on playwriting, Kala Sameeksha-for literary critics, and Kala Dharohar-a workshop for school children by eminent artists, has

been slated during the occasion. Persons below 40 years can participate in the playwriting workshop which will be held at Adarsha Pathagar, Bhanja Bhawan. Anyone can attend the literary critics workshop to be held at Ispat English Medium School. A maximum of 30 persons are allowed at the Kala Srijan, informed by Raju Das, secretary of KSNA.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-AUCTION OF PARKING STAND

STATION & LOCATION:

1) Balugoon - (2 wheeler) (adjacent to Circulating Area), 2) Sompeta - MIX - (2-cum-4 wheeler) (Station Building side).

Auction Start Date & Time: 16.08.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 & 02).

Auction End Date: 16.08.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 & 02) & End Time: at 11:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 11:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02).

E-AUCTION OF PAY AND USE CLOAK ROOM

STATION & LOCATION:

1) Khurda Road - Cloak Room (in new Station Building), 2) Jajpur Keonjhar Road - Cloak Room (adjacent to Parcel Office), 3) Brahmapur - Cloak Room (behind reserved lounge Platform-1), 4) Bhadrak - Cloak Room (adjacent to Parcel Office).

Auction Start Date & Time: 17.08.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 to 04).

Auction End Date: 17.08.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 to 04) & End Time: at 11:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 11:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02), 11:50 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 03), 12:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 04).

E-AUCTION OF PAY & USE TOILETS

STATION & LOCATION:

1) Khallikot (in Circulating Area), 2) Bhubaneswar (on Platform-6 at Khurda Road End).

Auction Start Date & Time: 18.08.2023 at 11:00 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01 & 02).

Auction End Date: 18.08.2023 (for Sl. No. 01 & 02) & End Time: at 11:30 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 01), 11:40 Hrs. (for Sl. No. 02).

Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website: <https://www.irps.gov.in> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager / Khurda Road
PR-425/O/23-24

Pre-eclampsia disease can lead to maternal, foetal mortality

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 7: A five member team of doctors from the VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla in Sambalpur district has found pre-eclampsia as a serious pregnancy-specific hypertensive disorder that can lead to maternal and foetal morbidity and mortality.

The in-house case-control study was conducted at VIMSAR by Satish Pradhan, Sanjeeb Mishra, Subrat Pradhan, Pranati Pradhan and Bharati Panda.

The study aimed to identify risk factors associated with pre-eclampsia in a tertiary care hospital in the state. It included 200 cases and 200 controls, and data were collected through face-to-face interviews and medical records.

The researchers found that several factors were significantly associated with pre-eclampsia, including maternal age, education, family type, husband's education and occupation, and socio-economic status.

The study used descriptive analysis, crude odds ratio, chi-square test, univariate logistic regression, and multivariable logistic regression to analyze the data. The interview included socio-demographic factors, medical history, and gestational factors to collect data from each study

PREECLAMPSIA SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

If you are pregnant or within 6 weeks postpartum and experience:

- HEADACHES THAT WILL NOT GO AWAY
- CHANGES IN VISION
- SUDDENLY DO NOT FEEL WELL
- TROUBLE BREATHING
- SWELLING IN THE LEGS, HANDS AND FEET
- PAIN IN THE UPPER BELLY OR SHOULDER
- SUDDEN WEIGHT GAIN
- NAUSEA

Get your blood pressure checked. If it is elevated, visit your nearest health care provider.

The study found pregnant women under 30 years of age, with education up to primary standard, belonging to nuclear families, husbands educated up to primary standard, working as labourers, and belonging to lower middle socio-economic status were at higher risk of developing pre-eclampsia

However, the study also has some limitations, including its hospital-based design, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to the broader population. Additionally, the study did not collect data on some potential risk factors for pre-eclampsia, such as body mass index and family history of hypertension.

Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the risk factors associated with pre-eclampsia in the context of a developing country. The findings suggest that targeted interventions aimed at improving maternal education and socio-economic status could help reduce the incidence of pre-eclampsia in high-risk populations.

participant.

Specifically, the study found pregnant women under 30 years of age, with education up to primary standard, belonging to nuclear families, husbands educated up to primary standard, working as

labourers, and belonging to lower middle socio-economic status were at higher risk of developing pre-eclampsia. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have identified similar risk factors for pre-eclampsia.

labourers, and belonging to lower middle socio-economic status were at higher risk of developing pre-eclampsia. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have identified similar risk factors for pre-eclampsia.

MUTUAL FUND INVESTOR AWARENESS PROGRAM

Do join us to learn more about Mutual Funds.

Date and Venue:

Wednesday, 9th August, 2023; 6:30 pm onwards, at Hotel Radhika Regency, Bisra Road, Rourkela - 769 001, Odisha. For registration, please contact: Ranjit Mallik, Mobile: 99370 88035.

Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm. It is mandatory to follow the COVID safety guidelines during the event. No walk-ins will be allowed.

7 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav **HDFC MUTUAL FUND** **SHRADDHA ANNO KA**

An Investor Education by HDFC Mutual Fund

Visit <https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how> to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds. Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.htm or <http://www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.htm>). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and/or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints on <https://scores.gov.in> if they are unsatisfied with the resolutions given by AMC's. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status.

MUTUAL FUND INVESTMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO MARKET RISKS, READ ALL SCHEME RELATED DOCUMENTS CAREFULLY.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, GANJAM

No.2140/NAC, Dtd.05.08.2023

GENERAL NOTICE

No.C-992: Whereas it was earlier decided by the council of N.A.C., Ganjam in their meeting held on dtd.28.10.2022 and dtd.23.03.2023 to distribute the cabins located at newly constructed vending zones at Bada Bazar/ Sana Bazar/ Fish Market on lottery basis among the street vendors who were earlier evicted from the said places at the time of extension of NH-16. And whereas, advertisement was published accordingly vide this Office L.No.1438/NAC, dtd.02.06.2023 asking all concerned to submit their willingness/application in the prescribed format latest by 15th June 2023. And whereas, the following persons of N.A.C., Ganjam have now submitted their application forms within the stipulated time period claiming themselves as the street vendors who had their shops & later on evicted during extension of NH-16.

Sl.No.	Name of the Applicants alongwith description of shop (Bada Bazar)	Sl.No.	Name of the Applicants alongwith description of shop (Bada Bazar)
1	Santosh Kumar Pady (Tiffin Shop)	7	Sujit Kumar Panda (Mobile Repairing Shop)
2	K.Madhab Rao (Garments shop)	8	Pradeep Kumar Panda (Seasonal Store)
3	Gadadhar Behera (Laundry Shop)	9	Suryamani Das (Fruit Shop)
4	Dandapani Barik (Saloon)	10	Narayan Mohanty (Tiffin Shop)
5	Suraj Rao (Shoe Shop)	11	Ganesh Bariki (Tea Stall)
6	K.Krishna Dora (Fruit Shop)	12	Sukanta Sahu (Tiffin Shop)

Sl.No. Name of the Applicants alongwith description of shop (Fish Market)

1 Jagannath Behera (Fish Shop)

Now, therefore, the above is bring to the notice of all the general public of N.A.C., Ganjam for their information and filing of objection, if any as regards to eligibility of applicants i.e. as to whether the above persons had their cabins at Bada Bazar / Sana Bazar / opening a shop selling fish etc., latest by 15th August, 2023 at 05.30 PM. The hearing of all those petition, if files by anyone will be held on dtd. 17th August, 2023 at 11.00 AM in the Office chamber of the undersigned and accordingly, the petitioner(s) is/are instructed to remain present during the course of hearing/ disposal of objection petition(s).

Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Ganjam

OIPR-13164/11/0009/2324

“Yoga is a generic name for any discipline by which one attempts to pass out of the limits of one's ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness.”



SRI AUROBINDO

America's Dilemma

The US is experiencing an unprecedented situation in the form of the third indictment of former President Donald Trump for actions he committed when he was in office. A fourth indictment is also on the cards. The irony is each time he has been indicted, he has emerged stronger, at least, in the eyes of his Republican Party supporters. This is most crucial so far as Trump's future is concerned as he is the frontrunner Republican presidential candidate in the upcoming elections a few months away. For, no matter how the wheel of law in the country moves to chastise him for his acts of omissions and commissions, it will prove futile once he gets enough votes to return to the White House. This will give him powers to undo the assiduous work being done by the country's legal apparatus to punish him.

Some may claim, this is happening in the US because of Trump's brand of politics. However, any impartial observer will understand that in many aspects, the present situation in India resembles that of the US. Long standing hatred and anger seems to be oozing out from the common people. Therefore, it is not Trump's politics but the acceptance of that brand of politics by the common voter that seems to be the cause of all the malaise.

The former President's third indictment in four months early this week is by far the most serious since it brings against him a charge for "conspiring to defraud the United States." That is how Special Counsel Jack Smith sought to describe Trump's attempt to cling to power with the argument, not backed by an iota of evidence, that Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election was due to massive voting fraud. The attempt to subvert the US constitution that guarantees peaceful transfer of power through elections culminated in the assault January 6, 2021 by die-hard Trump supporters on the Capitol, where the final election results were to be certified.

The latest indictment, however, will put the survival instinct of Trump under the severest test as it signals the beginning of a legal accountability that is needed so desperately for safeguarding American democracy itself. Trump already faces several criminal charges, including retention of classified national security documents and the payment of hush money to a porn star. But this time the charge framed by the special counsel is of a different order of magnitude altogether. The former President stands accused of willfully conspiring, while in office, to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election. The indictment states Trump "knowingly" used false claims of electoral fraud in an attempt "to subvert the legitimate election results." A bipartisan congressional committee report last year came to the same conclusions. But, this is the first major legal attempt to hold Trump accountable for events leading to the storming of the Capitol.

The testimony given to Congress suggests Trump used his authority to try to bully federal and state officials into supporting his claims that the election had been "stolen" from him. He was repeatedly told that his assertions were baseless. But this failed to dissuade him from going ahead with his abhorrent methods of overturning the results by mobilising a hostile crowd to intimidate lawmakers charged with ratifying Biden's victory. The prosecutors' case will depend on their ability to prove that Trump knew his claims of a stolen election were bogus.

But, the all-important question is whether Trump will be able to turn even this situation to his own political advantage. He is adept in the art of playing the victim card and winning the sympathy of the majority of Republican supporters. Two previous criminal indictments resulted in his poll ratings going up helping him to establish a huge lead in the race for the Republican presidential nomination for 2024. Call it his charisma or pugnacious policies with strong emotive appeal to white supremacists, but this has helped swell his vote bank. Added to this is the fact that public sentiment invariably goes in favour of a so-called underdog. Trump definitely is not an underdog but his play-acting has succeeded in portraying him as a man cornered and alone, standing against fierce enemies out to eliminate not only Trump but all that he stands for.

WISDOM CORNER

- “To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.” **OSCAR WILDE**
- “Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths.” **ETTY HILLESUM**
- “Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” **ANNE LAMOTT**

WORDSWORTH

Metagrobolise

If this word puzzles you, your response is appropriate. That's what the word means – to puzzle, mystify, baffle or confound. It and its relatives are notable by their extreme rarity. A diligent search is required to find any instances of it. *Your broker is a real dipstick and slick as one too. You don't need to have your brains metagrobolized by his inscrutable statements to know that something's amiss* (Sunday Star-News (Wilmington, North Carolina), 20 Jan. 1991). A previous generation might well have found metagrobolise in this once-famous school story: "It's the olive branch," was Stalky's comment. "It's the giddy white flag, by gum! Come to think of it, we have metagrobolized 'em" (Stalky & Co, by Rudyard Kipling, 1899). Some students of puzzles have adopted metagrobology to describe their pursuit, which makes them metagrobologists. Wikipedia says that the word was first applied to puzzlers in the early 1970s by Rick Irby, a well-known designer and constructor of wire puzzles. It's originally French, invented in the form matagroboliser in 1534 by the humorist and satirist François Rabelais in one of his tales about the giant Gargantua. To create it, Rabelais turned to ancient Latin and Greek, finding the first part in a Greek word that meant vain or frivolous and the rest in cribulum, the Latin for a sieve, which arrived much changed in French via Arabic and Italian as grabelero, to sift (and later into English as garble, to sift the rubbish from spices, which later became our verb meaning to confuse or distort). By Rabelais's time, grabelero had taken on a broader sense of examining something closely. Peter Motteux introduced the English to the word metagrobolise in 1693 when he published his revised version of Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation of the works of Rabelais: "I have been these eighteen days in metagrobolising this brave speech". A footnote says that it was "a word forged at pleasure, which signifies the studying and writing of vain things". However, one French edition suggested it was a burlesque word meaning "to give a lot of trouble for nothing, to bore and annoy others". How appropriate that it should confuse writers as to what it means.

LOL

Where's the igloo?

An Eskimo brings his friend to his home for a visit. When they arrive, his friend asks, puzzled – "So where's your igloo?"



"Oh no, I must've left the iron on...." says the Eskimo.

REGRESSIVE POLICY RETURNS

FOCUS PROTECTIONISM

The biggest reform of 1991 was the dismantling of the license permit raj. In one swoop the industries minister, announced at noon on July 24, 1991, a new industrial policy which abolished industrial licensing for all but 18 industries. Later that evening the finance minister gave a historic speech ushering in an era of economic reforms, which had everything from foreign direct investment, banking deregulation, tariff reduction and market-oriented pricing. But the biggest bang was that decision announced at noon time by the minister holding the industries portfolio. That person was none other than Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao. This one reform was the most important one and paved the way for the spectacular success of many industries such as automobiles, steel, chemicals including petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and telecom.

By delicensing the reform took away the power of the bureaucrat to decide who would produce how much and where. There are many horror stories of the ills of the license raj from those pre-reform days, about which the less said the better. Suffice to say that during the licensing days, many companies and large conglomerates specialised in simply obtaining and hoarding licenses. So, the road to high profit was not in being cost efficient, or catering to market demand, but simply obtaining the scarce license and producing what was allowed as per the license. No wonder, black markets were not uncommon.

More than three decades later, when memories of the license raj are fading, comes an announcement that the government now requires you to have a license to import a laptop, or computer or a tablet. No wonder all hell broke loose after this announcement. So, within 24 hours of the announcement, the Directorate General of



Import licensing alone is not going to be enough to stimulate local production

Foreign Trade (DGFT) clarified that the license (permit) would be given very quickly, even within minutes. And that there was no limit to how many units you were allowed to import. And the government bowing to pressure, extended the date by three months.

Considering that the festive season is around the corner when a bulk of the sales of computers, laptops, etc. will happen, don't be surprised if there is a huge spike in demand for imported stuff in the next three-month window.

Let's examine this issue of introducing import licensing. Firstly, it is reversing an important reform that we have rolled out in 1991 and have tasted its success. We also are signatories and founder members of the World Trade Organisation which prohibits such import licensing restrictions. We abolished all quantitative restrictions (QR's) for imports more than 23 years ago. We can of course resort to raising import duties. In 2014 India's average import tariff was 13.5%, which went up to 17.6% in 2019. After that it dropped to 15%. But generally, in the case of many imported items, the tariffs have gone up.

So, India has shown a tendency to become more protectionist. Which brings us to the second point. The import licensing for laptops is presumably to prop up domestic manufacturing. The same sentiment (of protectionism) has been

manifest in the Make in India thrust, and more specifically in those sectors identified for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. It is one thing to say that India should become a global hub for manufacturing, able to cater to domestic and international demand both in terms of quality and cost. But it is quite another to become protectionist, and indirectly encourage higher costs and inefficiency.

Is not exposure to global competition the best way to spur quality and scale here in India? Import licensing alone is not going to be enough to stimulate local production. What if 95% of the laptop is imported and only 5% is domestic value added? This is the case of Apple's iconic iPhone production in India, from where it is also exporting to the rest of the world. But Apple gets subsidy under PLI for top line (i.e., total revenue) not for value added in India.

The third issue is that of the Chinese connection. India's imports from China have been increasing for the past several years, of which electronics including computers is a big part. The past year saw imports of computers worth \$5.3 billion, most of these being of Chinese origin. But even China-based manufacturers source components from the rest of Asia, including Taiwan. The Intel chip alone is a big cost item in the laptop. It is manufactured in the US as well as other parts of Asia.

There is very little chance of high-end chip being manufactured in India in the near future. So how is the Chinese influx to be stopped? This cannot be done overnight, and suddenly imposing import licensing will not stop Chinese imports. They will simply get rerouted, with some small tweaks in value addition across the value chain which straddles several countries. A fourth aspect is that of national security. This popped up, after the furore. Almost as an afterthought to justify import licensing. Surely there are other ways to check for trojans, trojan horses or other cyber hacks that compromise security of laptops and computers.

Finally, for India's digital push, it does not make sense to hurt ourselves and deny high-end computers which necessarily have to be imported. Remember India's super success in becoming a software and outsourcing powerhouse was because imports of computers were liberalised long before the 1991 reforms. It was the vision of civil servants like N. Vittal who pushed for the import liberalisation of computers in the late 1980's and early 1990's which has led to the \$250 billion industry that it is today. Vittal passed away on August 4, the day the import licensing was announced.

India's destiny as a pre-eminent economy power is predicated on maintaining openness in trade, commerce, investment and technology. We also have to think about maintaining a strategic autonomy in terms of our capabilities. This is easier said than done. Even then, imposing a license to import high-end computers and laptops is not the way to go forward, especially in a world where value chains crisscross national borders, and the value added in each geography is a small fraction.

The writer is a noted economist.
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SPECTRUM ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Bottom line is not the only finish line

In the past year, a cacophony of conversations about artificial intelligence has erupted. Depending on whom you listen to, AI is either carrying us into a shiny new world of endless possibilities or propelling us toward a grim dystopia. Call them the Barbie and Oppenheimer scenarios – as attention-grabbing and different as the Hollywood blockbusters of the summer. But one conversation is getting far too little attention: the one about corporate responsibility.

I joined Nike as its first Vice President of Corporate Responsibility in 1998, landing right in the middle of the hyper-globalisation era's biggest corporate crisis: the iconic sports and fitness company had become the face of labour exploitation in developing countries. In dealing with that crisis and setting up corporate responsibility for Nike, we learned hard-earned lessons, which can now help guide our efforts to navigate the AI revolution.

There is a key difference today. Taking place in the late 1990s, the Nike drama played out relatively slowly. When it comes to AI, however, we don't have the luxury of time. This time last year, most

people had not heard about generative AI. The technology entered our collective awareness like a lightning strike in late 2022, and we have been trying to make sense of it ever since.

As it stands, generative AI companies have no externally imposed guardrails. That makes guinea pigs of all of us. There is nothing normal about this. If Boeing or Airbus introduced an airplane that promised to be cheaper and faster, but was potentially very dangerous, we would not accept the risk. A pharmaceutical company that launched an untested product, while warning that it might be toxic, would be found criminally liable for the sickness or death they caused. Why, then, is it okay for technology companies to bring to market AI products that they themselves warn pose the risk of extinction?

Even before generative AI burst onto the scene, Big Tech and the attention economy were facing growing criticism for their harmful effects. Products like Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok are designed to trigger dopamine surges in the brain, making them as addictive as cigarettes.

AI has turbocharged the attention economy and unleashed

a new set of risks, the scope of which are far from clear. And while calls for regulation are growing louder, when they come from the very people behind the technology, they come across largely as public-relations campaigns and corporate stall tactics.

It is a company's responsibility to ensure that it does not knowingly cause harm, and to fix any problems it creates. It is the government's job to hold companies accountable. But accountability tends to come after the fact – too late for a technology like AI.

At Nike, it was a combination of outside pressure and an internal commitment to do the right thing that led to a fundamental overhaul of its business model. The nascent AI industry is clearly feeling external pressure: on July 21, the White House secured voluntary commitments from seven top AI companies to develop safe and trustworthy products, in line with the Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights that was introduced last year. But vague voluntary guidelines leave far too much wiggle room.

Our collective future now hinges on whether companies – in the privacy of their board rooms, executive meetings, and

closed-door strategy sessions – decide to do what is right. Companies need a clear North Star to which they can always refer as they pursue innovation. Google had it right in its early days, when its corporate credo was, "Don't Be Evil." No corporation should knowingly harm people in the pursuit of profit.

It will not be enough for companies simply to say that they have hired former regulators and propose possible solutions. Companies must devise credible and effective AI action plans that answer five key questions:

The AI challenge needs to be treated like any other corporate sprint. Requiring companies to commit to an action plan in 90 days is reasonable and realistic. No excuses. Missed deadlines should result in painful fines. The plan doesn't have to be perfect – and it will likely need to be adapted as we continue to learn – but committing to it is essential.

Big Tech must be as committed to protecting humans as it is to maximising profits. If the only finish line is the bottom line, we are all in trouble.

The writer is founder of the Nike Foundation and Girl Effect.
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Maria Eitel

AS IT STANDS, GENERATIVE AI COMPANIES HAVE NO EXTERNALLY IMPOSED GUARDRAILS. THAT MAKES GUINEA PIGS OF ALL OF US

Chess prodigy

Sir, 17-year-old D. Gukesh becoming India's No. 1 chess player, surpassing the legendary Viswanathan Anand, is a significant milestone and a remarkable feat. His achievement is a sign of a bright future for Indian chess, as younger talents like Nihal Sarin, D. Harika and R. Vaishali from the country are emerging on the global stage. Being only the third Indian to enter the top 10 in world rankings after Anand and Pentala Harikrishna, Gukesh's accomplishment underscores the rise of a new generation in the sport. His achievement serves as a beacon of inspiration for aspiring chess players from the country and cements India's position as a rising powerhouse in global chess. As he continues to make strides in his fantastic career, the chess world eagerly awaits to witness the further rise of this young prodigy from India. Gukesh's accomplishments stand a testament to his resilience, passion and perseverance.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Walking tracks

Sir, The old adage, "health is wealth" is getting truer by the day as people are working on their bodies to look more presentable. But working out in the open is more beneficial than working out in closed enclosures like gyms. Many European and American cities have walking and cycling tracks where people can sweat it out. The north-eastern state of Assam has taken cue from such cities and many cycling and walking tracks are in the making now. If seen from a different angle, the government by building these tracks is investing in a healthy voting population who would take good voting decisions. Even though this is a very good step, one of the few things that the government should consider is avoiding the paver blocks in these tracks as the paver blocks are meant for pavements as the name suggests, and not for roads. Paver blocks also decrease the tire age so cycling in paver blocks is not a good decision. As the cities are losing their green cover, the government should compensate for this and plant trees alongside these tracks.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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



HC halts bulldozer action in Nuh

162 PERMANENT AND 591 RAW STRUCTURES HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED IN THE DISTRICT TILL MONDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram/Chandigarh, August 7: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Monday halted the demolition drive in Nuh where authorities were bulldozing 'illegally-constructed' buildings following communal clashes last week, while unidentified men allegedly started a fire in a mazar in adjoining Gurugram.

The court of Justice GS Sandhawalia took suo motu cognisance of the exercise in Nuh and directed the Haryana government not to carry out any further demolition.

Officials had said some of the buildings were used by rioters when a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession was targeted by a stone-pelting mob July 31. It led to communal clashes that spread to Gurugram.

Six people, including two home guards and a cleric, were killed in the violence.

In the early hours of Monday, some prayer material at a mazar, visited both by Muslims and



Hindus in Gurugram's Khandasa village, was set afire, said the shrine's caretaker Ghasite Ram. According to a complaint filed by Ram at the Sector 37 police station, he received a phone call around 1.30 am about a fire in the shrine.

He said the fire was brought under control with the help of people. But the prayer material kept inside the mazar was burnt, he added. Ram said he learnt that a group of five-six young boys gathered there and started the fire.

Police have lodged an FIR in the case against unidentified persons under sections 34 (acts

done by several persons in furtherance of common intention), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 188 (disobedience of an order duly promulgated by a public servant), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house) of the IPC.

A senior police officer said they are trying to identify the accused and arrest them.

As authorities in Nuh district Sunday razed some illegal structures including a hotel from where stones were allegedly pelted on the religious procession, the high court took suo motu cognisance of the exercise and

directed the state government not to carry out any further demolition.

Deputy Commissioner, Nuh, Dhirender Khargata said the demolition drive in the district has been stopped following the orders of the court.

"I have ordered the officials to stop the drive against the illegal construction," he said.

In the last three days, illegal constructions have been removed from 57.5 acres of land at 37 places in the district.

As many as 162 permanent and 591 raw structures have been demolished in the district till Monday, officials said.

I think of leaving CM's post, but post not leaving me: Gehlot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 7: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Monday said he thinks of leaving the CM's post, but "this post is not leaving me." And it takes "courage" to state this, the Congress leader added.

Gehlot, who has been in a tussle with his former deputy Sachin Pilot over the top post since the Congress won the Assembly polls in 2018, appeared to be projecting himself as his party's CM candidate when elections are held in a few months.

He however made clear that he will abide by the decision of the party's central leadership.

This is the second time in recent days that Gehlot has made the post-not-leaving-me statement. Last week, he made the remark when a woman told him that she wanted to see him continue as the chief minister.

At an event here to mark the foundation of new Rajasthan districts, Gehlot referred to that incident and stressed that when he says something it is after thinking it out.

"It comes to my mind that I should quit the post -- why I should quit is a mystery -- but this post is not leaving me," he said.

"Whatever decision the high command takes is acceptable to me. It takes courage to say that



I want to leave but this position is not allowing me to leave," he continued. Gehlot said he has been made the chief minister thrice by Sonia Gandhi, which is not a small thing. As the elections near, the party high command brokered a truce between Pilot and Gehlot some weeks ago. But Gehlot, in his address at the Jaipur event, appeared to pitch for another term as CM if the party wins, and recalled his "vision" for the state in 2030. He said a new, stronger Rajasthan has emerged due to his work and the reforms he has introduced. "Why am I talking about 2030? I have worked in the fields of education, health, electricity, water and roads, so it comes to mind why shouldn't I move forward?" he said. Last September, the party high command had tried to get him to contest the organisational elections for the Congress president's post. The high command called a meeting of Congress Legislature Party in Jaipur, amid speculation that it would be a step towards replacing Gehlot with Pilot as the Congress-run state's chief minister.

Gehlot, who has been in a tussle with his former deputy Sachin Pilot over the top post, appeared to be projecting himself as his party's CM candidate when elections are held in a few months

Cow vigilantes drive cattle traders to forsake profession

Illegal penalties, manhandling and harassment by vigilante groups have created an atmosphere of fear in the entire Mewat region, which extends from Haryana to Rajasthan

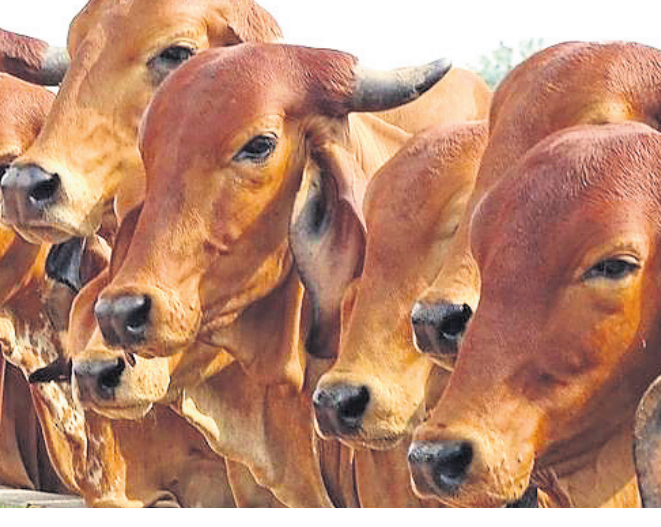
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rojka Meo (Mewat), August 7: Two hundred cattle traders of Rojka Meo, a village in Mewat, Haryana, are on the verge of giving up their traditional livelihood of sale and purchase of buffaloes which they claim may become way more dangerous from now onwards following the severe communal clashes that rocked Nuh district just a few days ago.

"It has become too dangerous

love cows. "We feel it is discrimination against us. The GRD attacks feel as if they are targeting us," said Afsar Khan.

Cattle traders take loans to buy cattle, and sell them for a profit. The loans are not to be paid back, but are carried forward over generations, and bear no or very low interest. For the traders buffaloes are their only saleable asset that can fetch Rs 35,000 to Rs 50,000 depending on the animal's health.



due to beatings, extortion bids and cattle 'rescue' staged by the Gau Raksha Dals (GRDs) against us," a cattle trader told IANS on the condition of anonymity.

All transporters here say that legitimately taking cattle from and to buyers or sellers in other states has become much more expensive since the extortion bids started a couple of years ago.

They say that policemen take Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 as bribes, while vigilante groups demand Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per vehicle carrying cattle. This raises the costs for each trip by Rs 6,000 to Rs 7,000. On top of this, transporting cattle now even poses a risk to their lives.

Illegal penalties, manhandling and harassment by vigilante groups have created an atmosphere of fear in the entire Mewat region, which extends from Haryana to Rajasthan. The GRDs say they wish to save cows from slaughter, as Hindus revere cows. Ironically, in Rojka Meo, most cattle trade is in buffaloes.

Residents here are mostly Mewati Muslims, and they feel the GRDs target them due to their identity, not because they

Mired in poverty, Nuh is Gurugram's polar opposite

THE ABSENCE OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN MEWAT IS PROPELLING YOUTH TOWARD ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 7: Not very far from the national capital brews a communal cauldron in a district mired in economic backwardness and crime. And ironically, it is next door to 'Millennium City' Gurgaon, or Gurugram.

Communal violence erupted in Nuh district of Haryana, just 57 km from the bustling Millennium City July 31, during a procession led by the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal. By evening, more such incidents came to light from neighbouring Gurugram and Sohna, another middle class haven.

The communal clashes claimed five lives, injured dozens, and property worth crores has been destroyed by the mobs. Consequently, security around mosques and temples has been beefed up.

The trigger for the violence is said to be a video featuring an infamous cow vigilante, Monu Manesar, who is wanted for murder and is an anti-Muslim violence monger.

Just as Manesar's video went viral, some Mewati Muslim youth posted their own videos, warning the administration to disal-



low him in Mewat and demanding his arrest. Some even called for a protest against Manesar.

As expected, administrative anomalies were pointed out and comments of political leaders were highlighted.

Earlier this year, in February, the nation was shocked when charred skeletons of two men were discovered near Loharu police station in Haryana's Bhiwani district. The dead were identified as Nasir and Junaid. Manesar's gang was accused of killing them.

Few days prior to this twin murder, Manesar was linked to the mysterious death of a mechanic named Waris Khan.

In April 2022, at least four videos of mobs "attacking and torturing Muslim men" in Haryana had gone viral. They were shared on social media by Manesar.

The Muslim-dominated Mewat region loosely extends from

Rising student suicides in Kota raises concern

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota, August 7: The growing number of suicides by students taking classes at this coaching hub has once again raised a question about the several mechanisms put in place to prevent aspirants from taking such a step.

A 17-year-old JEE aspirant hanged himself here Friday, taking the number of suspected suicide deaths by coaching students to 18 so far this year and ringing an alarm bell among parents, teachers, hostel owners, and authorities.

The situation has pitched the need to strengthen the mechanism to curb the rising rate of suicides by young aspirants as the efforts already in place for the last 8 years, including deployment of psychologists at coaching institutes, regular recreational activities, weekly offs, fee refund policy, setting up of students' helpline desk and helpline number seemed to have failed to address the issue.

Social and peer pressure, parental expectations, new study environment, homesickness, and failure to cope with the hectic routine are some of the major causes driving teens to suicide in Kota, said ASP Chandrashekhar Thakur, in-charge of the students' helpdesk here. Besides, coaching

institutes, eager to earn money, tend to enroll an average or weak student letting them and the parents know of the aspirant's genuine potential, the ASP added.

"The preparation for cracking entrance exams like IIT-JEE, and NEET-UG is not a child's play even for sharp aspirants, it requires burning the midnight oil with dedication and commitment," pointed out Dr Chandrashekhar Sushil, senior professor in the psychiatry department at Kota Government Medical College. Pointing out that coaching institutes are not responsible for the rising suicides, Sushil said, "The coaching system has been designed to prepare aspirants to work hard enthusiastically to crack the exam and charge fees for the same purpose. But those who can't work hard or are not prepared yet should avoid joining the course."

A total of 113 suicide cases by coaching students were reported since 2015, except for 2020-21 when students returned home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data collected from media reports and police.

Suicides by coaching students had gone unnoticed by the media until the NCRB in its report in May 2015 mentioned that Kota had witnessed a rise in such cases by 61.3 per cent.



Once known for droughts, Raj now awash with rain

THIS SEASON THE DESERT STATE HAS RECEIVED 80 PER CENT MORE RAIN THAN THE NORMAL RAINFALL SO FAR. THIS IS THE HIGHEST IN THE COUNTRY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 7: Rajasthan, once known for droughts, is not that dry now. The desert state has now joined the select few states where it is raining more than normal. Within a month of monsoon, almost every area of Rajasthan has



become waterlogged.

This season it has received 80 per cent more rain than the normal rainfall so far. This is the highest in the whole country. Till now it has been believed that Rajasthan receives the least

Rajasthan has received less rainfall than normal. Rajasthan was supposed to receive 206 mm of rain by now but in July itself this figure has crossed 370 mm.

Talking about this season, Rajasthan has already received about 400 mm of rain before the end of July.

In such a situation, it is believed that if there is normal rainfall in August and September, then this time a new record will be created. This could be the highest rainfall ever in Rajasthan in a season.

Rajasthan is among the states where the rain trend has changed the most and the fastest.

Radheshyam Sharma, director of the Meteorological Department, Rajasthan, says that there has been an increase in rain in the areas of Rajasthan

and western India and a decrease has been seen in the areas of eastern India. This is in a way the effect of climate change. Talking about the whole country, it is a bi-polar shift. That is, there is less rain in eastern India and more rain in western India.

Another feature observed in monsoon rainfall is called inter-seasonal variability. There is decadal variability - a change in the trend of rainfall every 10 years - which too has been observed.

It is not necessary that the rainfall which is increasing in Rajasthan at present will continue to increase in the coming 10 to 50 years as well. But it has come out that there has been a change in the rainfall pattern. Apart from this, the events of heavy rains are also increasing.



DMK leaders and supporters take part in a peace march to Karunanidhi Memorial on his 5th death anniversary in Chennai



Special Operation Group (SOG) of J&K Police and Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of CRPF personnel patrol during a search operation ahead of Independence Day, at Lal Chowk in Srinagar



People click pictures of a sand art on 'Chandrayaan' installed at a mall in Thane



Boats anchored at ghat as water level of Ganga continues to increase in Varanasi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits an exhibition organised on the occasion of National Handloom Day at the Bharat Mandapam in the Pragati Maidan complex in New Delhi



Lawyers, who support Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan, hold a protest against Khan's imprisonment in Lahore



PAC personnel take part in an efficiency race competition in Moradabad

PTI PHOTOS

of the day quote

It is truly disheartening to behold the presence of inept and incompetent individuals within the ranks of the ED, who possess an unparalleled talent for disseminating concocted tales to the media on a bi-weekly basis - all in the service of their political benefactors

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC LEADER

I have instructed the collectors to dole out basic essentials and Rs 2,000 cash to all the families affected by flood waters entering their houses

Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

Celebrations for the forthcoming Independence Day will begin from August 8 with village-level programmes

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

Fire breaks out

New Delhi: A fire broke out in the endoscopy room on the second floor of the old OPD building of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Monday. All patients were safely evacuated, officials said. No casualties were reported in the fire, the cause of which is still to be ascertained. Hospital sources said the fire forced the suspension of endoscopy, emergency and diagnostics services in the old OPD building. However, in the evening they said "emergency services are in the process of being restored". Visuals from the spot showed black smoke billowing out of the windows at noon.

Man kills wife

Niwari: A 35-year-old man allegedly hacked his wife and neighbour to death with an axe, suspecting them of having an affair, in Madhya Pradesh's Niwari district Monday, police said. The incident took place at Kaina village, around 4 km from the district headquarters, an official said. The accused Ramgopal Kushwaha allegedly found his wife Anita (30) and their neighbour Ghanshayam Raikwar (35) in an objectionable position and attacked them with an axe at his house, Niwari Superintendent of Police Ankit Jaiswal said.

Five Naxals held

Khunti: Five Naxals were arrested in Jharkhand's Khunti district, police said Monday. Acting on a tip-off that PLFI's 'area commander' Tira Bodra was extorting traders at a market, a team from the Murhu police station reached the place, they said. Bodra managed to flee but police arrested his five aides, they added.



The Prime Minister is under the illusion that he is the prime minister of the BJP. His behaviour, speech and body language are as if he is the prime minister of a party, he is the Prime Minister of Hindus only

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

POLICE CUSTODY EXTENDED

A Mumbai magistrate Monday extended, till August 11, the police custody of a Railway Protection Force Constable Chetan Singh who had killed his supervisor and three passengers on a running train on July 31



Delhi services bill passed in RS 'AAP, Congress to jointly contest LS polls in Gujarat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: Implementation of the Delhi services bill, passed in Rajya Sabha Monday, is likely to halt for the time being the frequent skirmishes between the AAP dispensation and the Lt Governor over governance issues as the legislation puts the seal on the Centre's primacy on the control of the city government's bureaucracy.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was passed with the Upper House of Parliament approving it with 131 votes in favour and 102 against. Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the contentious bill in the House and said that the proposed legislation is aimed at providing effective and corruption-free governance in the national capital.

The bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last week, replaces an ordinance promulgated by the Centre for handling the transfers and postings of officials in the Delhi government. However, the matter is still hanging fire as the Supreme Court last month formed a constitution bench to examine the power of Parliament over governance in Delhi, which is yet to pronounce its judgment.



At the core of the power tussle between the Centre and the Lt Governor on one hand, and the elected AAP dispensation in Delhi on the other, is a home ministry notification issued on May 21, 2015, that empowered the Lt Governor to have jurisdiction over "services" matters of Delhi government involving transfer and postings of bureaucrats.

The notification also provided that the Lt Governor at his "discretion" may consult the chief minister whenever he deemed fit on issues of services. The notification which came nearly two

months after Arvind Kejriwal took oath as the chief minister of Delhi on February 14, 2015, was challenged by the AAP government in the high court.

In the last eight years since the notification, a long-drawn battle between the Lt Governor's office and the AAP government followed over a range of issues, including teachers' training, running of free yoga classes, the appointment of DERC chairman, foreign visits of the CM and ministers, removal of over 400 experts hired by the government, and funding of mohalla clinics,

among others.

Experts said prior to the home ministry's notification, the control over the "services" department of Delhi was "vague". "There was an understanding between the Lt Governor and the chief minister over the transfer and posting of officers. The transfer and posting of officers of the commissioner and the higher level was solely dealt by the Lt Governor, while the CM exercised a say in matters of other officers," former chief secretary of Delhi P K Tripathi said. "Differences, if any used to be settled through discussions between the two sides," he added.

A section of officers in the Delhi government believes that the new legislation will bring an end to the running feud between the elected government in Delhi and the Centre, bringing clarity to the jurisdiction of the constitutional authorities. "We need clarity regarding policy matters and administration for smooth functioning that is hit if such a situation with two constitutional functionaries at loggerheads, exists," said a senior officer.

The Lt Governor's office and the Delhi government have locked horns on numerous occasions since 2015 while a legal battle is also going on between the two sides.

'AAP, Congress to jointly contest LS polls in Gujarat'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 7: Aam Aadmi Party's Gujarat unit chief Isudan Gadhvi Monday caused a flutter by saying the AAP and the Congress will fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat under a seat-sharing formula as both the parties are members of the opposition INDIA alliance.

Responding to Gadhvi's statement, the Congress said the party will abide by the directions of Central leadership. The Bharatiya Janata Party said the likely tie-up between AAP and Congress will not affect the ruling party's poll prospects and dubbed AAP the "B team" of Congress.

"Both AAP and Congress are part of the INDIA alliance. This poll alliance will also be implemented in Gujarat. Though the talks of a tie-up are still at the primary level, it is sure that both AAP and Congress will fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat under a seat-sharing formula.

"If everything goes as planned, I guarantee that BJP will not be able to win all 26 seats in Gujarat this time," Gadhvi told reporters here. He said the Arvind Kejriwal-led party has joined the INDIA bloc to defeat BJP in the Lok Sabha polls.

"AAP's Gujarat unit has already started doing research

about seats on which the party can field candidates," Gadhvi said. Responding to the sudden announcement by the Gujarat AAP chief, the Congress said the final call will be taken by the Central leadership.

"I have just learned about his announcement. Seat-sharing agreements with other parties are finalised by the central leadership. It is their prerogative to decide post-poll tie-ups. State leadership will discuss this issue when it is raised by the central leadership."

"Gujarat Congress will follow the directions of our national leaders in this regard," Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi told media persons. The BJP has downplayed Gadhvi's announcement.

"We have been winning all the 26 LS seats in Gujarat for the last two terms. This time, we target to win all the seats with a margin of 5 lakh votes. The Central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not scared of any such alliance. We are confident of winning the polls." "With this announcement, it has now come to the fore that AAP is a B team of Congress," said Gujarat BJP spokesperson Rtvij Patel.

Notably, in the 2022 Gujarat Assembly elections, the Congress and the AAP fought against each other. While Congress secured 17 seats, AAP managed to win five seats in the 182-member House.

LS clears Digital Personal Data Protection Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: The Lok Sabha Monday cleared the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill by a voice vote amid slogan shouting by opposition members over the Manipur issue.

Some amendments moved by opposition members seeking changes in the bill were defeated by a voice vote. The bill seeks to protect the privacy of Indian citizens while proposing a penalty of up to Rs 250 crore on entities for misusing or failing to protect the digital data of individuals. The bill which comes after six years of the Supreme Court declaring "Right to Privacy" as a fundamental right has provisions to curb the misuse of individuals' data by online platforms. Moving the bill for consideration and passage, Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "It would have been good had the opposition discussed the bill today (in the House). But no opposition leader or member is concerned over the right of the citizens." He said the bill has been brought after extensive public consultation. Referring to the salient features of the bill, the minister said its language is very simple so that even a common person can understand it.

Referring to certain principles on which the bill is based, Vaishnaw said that according to the principle of legality, data of a person has to be taken based on prevailing laws. He also said as per the principle of purpose limitation, data should be used for the purpose it was taken for.



A worker shows tricoloured badges at a shop ahead of Independence Day celebrations in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

SC bins pleas challenging Balaji's arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: The Supreme Court dismissed Monday the petitions filed by Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji and his wife challenging a Madras High Court order upholding his arrest in a money laundering case, holding a remand order passed by a judicial officer cannot be contested under the guise of a habeas corpus plea.

It said a habeas corpus plea can be filed only in case of illegal detention. A habeas corpus petition is filed to ensure a person under arrest is brought before a



court which determines whether the detention is legal.

Balaji, who continues to be a minister without portfolio in the Tamil Nadu government

even after his arrest on June 14, and his wife had contested a Madras High Court order upholding his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case arising out of an alleged cash-for-jobs scam in the state's transport department.

"A writ of habeas corpus shall only be issued when the detention is illegal. As a matter of rule, an order of remand by a judicial officer, culminating into a judicial function cannot be challenged by way of a writ of habeas corpus, while it is open to the person aggrieved to seek other statutory remedies." When

there is a non-compliance of the mandatory provisions along with a total non-application of mind, there may be a case for entertaining a writ of Habeas Corpus and that too by way of a challenge," a bench of Justices A S Bopanna and M M Sundresh said.

Noting that the 15-day custody of Balaji, which the Principal Sessions Judge granted to ED, expires on August 12, the top court permitted the anti-money laundering agency to interrogate him for five days. Balaji was hospitalised for a heart surgery during the remand period.

THE RING FENCING AND ITS FALLOUT

The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Condemned to be crucified, the legally garbed political strategizing, has only ended up resurrecting Rahul Gandhi and injecting another dose of adrenaline into the Congress. In the process it has also perked up the fledgling Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), a grouping of 26 key Opposition parties, bracing to take on Narendra Modi and his BJP.

The timeline of a process that began from Gujarat, and was enlarged through court proceedings, is important to read to gauge intent. A BJP leader files a defamation case against Rahul in BJP-ruled Gujarat for a 2019 election speech made in Karnataka alleging defamation of the Modi community. Subsequently the leader, who has been a BJP minister, in March 2022 brings

a stay from the High Court in his own case and later moves to get it vacated through an order dated February 16, 2023. On March 23, 2023, the Surat court convicts the Congress leader meeting out the maximum admissible sentence of two years which is required to disqualify the Member of Parliament. The plea for a stay of the judgment winds its way through the session court and the High Court without any success until it comes up before a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court which stays the conviction on August 4, 2023.

The proceedings in the apex court and its judgement is insightful. An extract from it goes thus particularly when the offence was non-cognizable, bailable and compoundable; the least which was expected from the learned trial judge was to give reasons for im-



posing the maximum punishment. Though the learned appellate court and the High Court have spent voluminous pages in rejecting the application, these aspects are not seen considered.

There is lot to introspect about for the subordinate judiciary in the remarks of the Bench during the proceedings though it refrained from making any observations on the merits of the matter considering the pendency of the appeal. It observed that the utterances of Rahul Gandhi were

not in good taste and a person in public life ought to have been more careful while making public speeches.

What emerges out of this legally attired but politically scripted screenplay is a move to bury one of the most trenchant and hard-hitting critic of the Narendra Modi government in a poll-barred pit that would take at least eight years clambering out. Senior advocate and former Congress leader Kapil Sibal in fact hit the nail on the head when he expressed sadness at the unhealthy practice of using court trials for political agendas. However, as pointed out earlier, the best laid plans of master strategists are prone to go haywire. The BJP strategy of buttonholing Gandhi has bombed as did its planning in the Karnataka elections.

Narendra Modi had won hands down

in 2014 to become Prime Minister only because he had the foresight to harness technology and social media to spell out his dreams. The Congress has since caught up by going back to the drawing board and reconfiguring its priorities. The BJP's best bet is still polarization as is evident from its line in Haryana as well as in the poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The 'new' Congress, on the other hand, has positioned itself at the opposite end of the spectrum providing a clear contrast with inclusive politics. Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo' yatra has substantially changed the complexion of the game. Rahul comes through as affable, approachable and willing to listen. The BJP's latest move to target him has only ended up raising his political stature.

BIHAR CASTE SURVEY

SC defers hearing till August 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: The Supreme Court Monday refused to stay the Patna High Court's August 1 order giving the go-ahead for a caste survey in Bihar, and deferred the hearing on petitions challenging it to August 14.

As soon as a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti took up the plea filed by NGO 'Ek Soch Ek Paryas' against the high court verdict, senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan, appearing for the appellant sought adjournment of the matter, saying other petitions filed on the same issue are not listed for hearing.

He requested the bench to take up the matter on August 11 or August 14. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, also appearing for the appellant, requested the bench to take up the matter on August 14, to which it agreed.

Another counsel appearing for one of the appellants urged the court to order status quo ante (as things previous stood before the high court order). "What status quo? We have not even issued notice in the matter. We have not even heard you on the issue. You are actually jumping the gun. There is no question of status quo in the matter at present," Justice Khanna said.

The bench noted even the high court has said in its judgement that 80 per cent of the work related to the survey has been completed.

international

of the day quote

There is no way I can get a fair trial with the judge assigned
DONALD TRUMP | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

We discussed the upcoming Strategic Dialogue in Beijing in preparation of the EU-China Summit
JOSEP BORRELL | FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF, EU

The meeting (Jeddah talks) was a reflection of the West's attempt to continue futile, doomed efforts to mobilise the Global South behind Zelenskiy's position
SERGEI RYABKOV | DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

SHORT TAKES

Niger's junta shuts airspace

Niamey: Niger's mutinous soldiers closed the country's airspace and accused foreign powers of preparing an attack, as the junta defied a deadline to reinstate the ousted president. State television announced the move Sunday night, hours before the deadline set by West African regional bloc ECOWAS, which has warned of using military force if the democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum isn't returned to power. A spokesman for the coup leaders, Col Maj Amadou Abdramane, noted "the threat of intervention being prepared in a neighbouring country," and said Niger's airspace will be closed until further notice. The junta also claimed that two central African countries are preparing for an invasion.

Typhoon alert in North Korea

Seoul: North Korea Monday issued an alert against Typhoon Khanun and called for efforts to prevent possible damage as the typhoon was forecast to hit the Korean Peninsula later this week. After passing through the northeast of Japan's Okinawa, the typhoon was expected to head further north toward the southeastern coast of the Korean Peninsula Thursday, according to South Korea's national weather agency. "In all areas of the economy, the smallest areas of risk should be detected in a timely manner and thorough preventive measures should be established so that no damage from the typhoon will occur," reports said.

China shows documentary attacking Taiwan

CHINA CLAIMS TAIWAN, A SELF-RULED DEMOCRACY, AS ITS OWN TERRITORY, TO BE CONQUERED BY FORCE IF NECESSARY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, August 7: China has released a new documentary about the army's preparation to attack Taiwan and showcasing soldiers pledging to give up their lives if needed as Beijing continues to ramp up its rhetoric against the self-ruled island. "Chasing Dreams," an eight-part docuseries aired by state broadcaster CCTV earlier this

week to mark the People Liberation Army's 96th anniversary, features military drills and testimonials by dozens of soldiers, of which several express their willingness to die in a potential attack against Taiwan. State media and the PLA frequently release propaganda materials promoting the army's modernization as well as sleek videos of military drills. The materials serve to fan rising Chinese nationalism and display military confidence against Taiwan and, implicitly, its ties with the United States. While the US doesn't recognize Taiwan as a sovereign country, it has pledged to help the island defend itself in case of an invasion. Last month, the White House announced a \$345 million mili-



tary aid package for Taiwan. The move, which experts said drew on lessons from the US military assistance to Ukraine, was criticized by Beijing. The "Chasing Dreams" documentary showcased, among other things, the PLA's "Joint Sword" drills, which simulated precision strikes against Taiwan. The exercises were undertaken around the self-governed island in April

after a visit by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen to the US. Among the more dramatic parts of the program are pledges by PLA soldiers from various divisions to relinquish life in a potential attack on Taiwan. "If war broke out and the conditions were too difficult to safely remove the naval mines in actual combat, we would use our own bodies to clear a safe pathway for

our (landing) forces," Zuo Feng, a frogman with the PLA Navy's minesweeper unit, said in a testimonial. Li Peng, a pilot from Wang Hai Squadron under the PLA Air Force, echoed his statement, saying his "fighter jet would be the last missile rushing towards the enemy if in a real battle, I had used up all my ammunition." Fan Lizhong, a special tactics unit commander, said in the docuseries that while losing comrades is painful, he has to remain calm to respond to emergencies and always be ready to fight. The documentary also features Shandong, one of China's three aircraft carriers, sailing in formation with several other warships.



The Church is open to everyone but there are laws that regulate life inside the church
POPE FRANCIS | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

WILDFIRES RAGE

A multinational force is helping Cyprus fight stubborn wildfires in the summer heat, with Lebanon joining Greece and Jordan in sending aircraft to fight a blaze that has scorched miles of mountainous terrain, officials said Monday



UKRAINE SOLDIERS RETURN IN PRISONER SWAP WITH RUSSIA



REUTERS

Kyiv, August 7: Russia and Ukraine carried out the latest in a series of prisoner exchanges Monday, with 22 Ukrainian soldiers returning home, a senior Ukrainian official said. Andriy Yermak, the head of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office, said the released servicemen included two officers, sergeants and privates who fought in different parts of the front. Some of them were wounded. A video posted on Telegram showed soldiers wrapped in blue and yellow Ukrainian flags posing for pictures and shouting "Glory to Ukraine".

"Today we have returned 22 Ukrainian fighters home from captivity," Yermak said, adding the oldest of them was 54 years old and the youngest 23. There was no immediate comment from Russia. Yermak gave no other details on the exchange. Russia and Ukraine have periodically exchanged groups of prisoners in the course of the war, now in its 18th month. Russia and Ukraine have repeatedly exchanged prisoners during the war, which Russia started in February 2022. Some 2,600 Ukrainians have already returned from captivity since the war's start, according to Kiev figures to date. In most cases, the warring parties hand over about the same number of fighters as the other side.

'Nawaz to be Pak PM'

NAWAZ SHARIF, THE BROTHER OF PAKISTAN PM SHEHBAZ SHARIF WILL RETURN AS NEXT PREMIER IF PML-N RETURNS TO POWER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, August 7: Nawaz Sharif will be Pakistan's next premier if the ruling PML-N returns to power after the country goes to polls in November, his brother and the country's current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said.

Shehbaz Sharif's remarks came at a public meeting in Kasur, some 50 kms from Lahore, Sunday evening. Nawaz Sharif, 73, has been living in self-imposed exile in the UK since November 2019. He was convicted in the Al-Azizia Mills and Avenfield corruption cases in 2018. He was serving a seven-year imprisonment at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in the Al-Azizia Mills reference before he was allowed to proceed to London on "medical grounds". "Nawaz Sharif will be the next prime minister of Pakistan. He will serve the people as he had done before," Shehbaz Sharif, 71, said.

He said Pakistan saw phenomenal progress in Nawaz Sharif's last tenure 2013-17 and improved relations with countries like China, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye while former premier Imran Khan had damaged Pakistan's relations with these countries. Shehbaz said he would dissolve the assemblies August 9, and the people of Pakistan would elect their government through a vote in November 2023. The Election Commission of Pakistan has not yet announced the date of the general election. Since Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan has been sentenced to three years in the Toshakhana (national treasury gifts) case, it is believed that the military establishment will now



Nawaz would be the prime minister of Pakistan for the fourth time and will change the country's destiny by boosting agriculture, industry, and infrastructure
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

manage to get 'desired results' in the upcoming general elections. Some ruling PML-N leaders, including Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, have linked Nawaz Sharif's return to the change of command in the apex court. "Nawaz Sharif will return to the country once he gets relief in cases he is convicted of," a senior leader of the Punjab chapter of PML-N told PTI Monday. He said no assurances had been given to the Sharifs on this by the establishment as yet, and the situation would be clear once the caretaker set-up is installed. "After Prime Minister Shehbaz's statement that the election will be held as per the digital census conducted earlier this year, it means the elder Sharif may get more time to settle his cases before booking a flight back to Pakistan," he said. PML-N's former federal minister Talal Chaudhry has linked

Khan's party files plea in apex court

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party Monday launched a legal battle to secure the release of its chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, with a petition in the Supreme Court seeking his retrial in the Toshakhana corruption case. Khan, 70, was sentenced to three years in jail Saturday by Additional and Sessions Judge (ADSI) Humayun Dilawar who found him guilty of not declaring the proceeds from the sale of state gifts. The party also petitioned the Islamabad High Court to shift the jailed former prime minister from the Attock jail in Punjab province to Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala prison, keeping in view his affluent family background, social and political status.

the holding of upcoming polls with the return of Nawaz Sharif. "The moment Nawaz Sharif boards a plane to Pakistan, it should be seen as a sign of elections taking place in the country," Chaudhry said and added that Nawaz Sharif would not only lead the election campaign but would also be the only party's candidate for prime minister.

Cambodian king appoints new PM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Phnom Penh, August 7: Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni appointed Hun Manet as the new Prime Minister Monday after the latter's father and outgoing premier Hun Sen announced to step down after serving in the post for more than 38 years.

The monarch signed a royal decree to designate Hun Manet, 45, as the new prime minister for a five-year term following a request from Hun Sen, the longest serving Prime Minister in the world, reports Xinhua news agency. "The designated prime minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia has duties to prepare the members of the government in order to ask for the adoption



of confidence from the National Assembly," Sihamoni said in the royal decree. "This royal decree takes effect from the day of signature," he added. Hun Manet, the eldest son of Hun Sen, thanked the king for appointing him as the new prime minister. "This is the greatest honor in my life, receiving a great opportunity to serve my most-loved motherland and people in this noble position," he said in a thank-you letter to the king.

ILLEGAL SMUGGLING

Sunak brings in tech to stop migrants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 7: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has unveiled a voluntary partnership between social media companies and the UK government to accelerate action to tackle people smuggling content online, such as criminals sharing information about illegal English Channel crossings.

In an announcement over the weekend, Sunak said the move would help meet his "stop the boats" target of clamping down on illegal migrants being charged large sums by human traffickers to make dangerous crossings across the high seas. The online content being targeted by the new partnership would cover discount offers for groups of people, free spaces for children, offers of false documents and false claims of safe passage - all of which the government says target vulnerable people for profit and put people's lives at risk through dangerous and illegal journeys. "To stop the boats, we have to tackle the business model of vile



Heartless people smugglers are using social media to promote their despicable services and charge people thousands of pounds to make the illegal journey into the UK in unsafe boats. They must not succeed
SUELLA BRAVERMAN | HOME SECRETARY, UK

people smugglers at source," said Sunak in a statement released by 10 Downing Street. "That means clamping down on their attempts to lure people into making these illegal crossings and profit from putting lives at risk. This new commitment

from tech firms will see us re-double our efforts to fight back against these criminals, working together to shut down their vile trade," he said. Figures from the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) claim that over 90 per cent of online content linked to people smuggling is taken down when social media companies are notified. The new partnership between tech firms and the UK government is aimed at driving forward efforts to further crackdown on the tactics being used by criminal gangs who abuse the internet to lure people into paying for crossings. Under the new initiative, social media companies will look to increase cooperation with the NCA to find and remove criminal content and step up the sharing of best practices both across the industry and with law enforcement. Alongside the partnership, the government will also set up a new centre led by the NCA and Home Office to increase the capacity and capability of law enforcement to identify this content on social media platforms.

Heat threat highest for South Asian kids

ABOUT 460MN KIDS ARE EXPOSED TO EXTREME HEAT IN SOUTH ASIA, OR 76%, COMPARED TO A THIRD OF CHILDREN GLOBALLY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, August 7: Three-quarters of children in South Asia are already facing dangerously high temperatures, the highest level worldwide, as the impact of climate change grows, the United Nations warned Monday. About 460 million children are exposed to extreme heat in South Asia, or 76 percent of children, compared to a third of children globally, the United Nations children's agency said. "With the world at global boiling, the data clearly show that the lives and well-being of millions of children across South Asia are increasingly threatened by heat waves and high temperatures," said Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF



Regional Director for South Asia. The UN warns children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan are at "extremely high risk" of the impacts of climate change, defining extreme high

temperatures as 83 or more days in a year over 35 degree Celsius (95 degree Fahrenheit). Children cannot adapt as quickly to temperature changes, and are not able to remove excess heat

UN warns children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change

Young children simply cannot handle the heat. Unless we act now, these children will continue to bear the brunt of more frequent and more severe heatwaves in the coming years
SANJAY WIJESEKERA | REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH ASIA, UNICEF

from their bodies. About 1.2 degrees Celsius of global warming since the late 1800s, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, has made heatwaves hotter, longer and more frequent, as well as intensifying other weather extremes such as storms and floods. July was the hottest month ever recorded globally, with searing heat intensified by global warming affecting tens of millions of people in parts of Europe, Asia and North America. Scientists say the world will need to adapt to the heat and other impacts already caused by emissions - and that carbon pollution must be slashed dramatically this decade to avoid worse in the future.

of the day **QUOTE**

We are committed to working closely with government authorities, local stakeholders, and the community to implement this tourism development plan effectively

RITESH AGARWAL | FOUNDER & CEO, OYO

This partnership further strengthens our roadmap to deliver sustainable and integrated growth in the future. We thank REC and PFC for placing their trust in our aspirations for a better world

RAJIV RANJAN MISHRA | MD, APRAAVA ENERGY

This strong performance in the quarter was driven by the successful execution of a significant part of the simulation export and domestic anti-drone orders

ASHOK ATLURI | CHAIRMAN AND MD, ZEN TECHNOLOGIES



The industry's (medical devices) growth potential could surpass that of the smartphone sector due to India's expanding health sector, projected to reach \$600 billion by 2030

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

PAYTM CEO TO BUY 10% FROM ANTFIN

Fintech firm One97 Communications Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma will acquire 10.30 per cent stake worth \$628 million in Paytm from Antfin (Netherlands) Holding BV through an off-market transfer in no cash deal. The deal will also make him Paytm's single largest shareholder. Shares of the firm jumped over 7% following the news



Banks write off ₹14.56L-cr NPAs in last nine yrs

Gross NPAs of PSBs have declined to ₹4.28L-cr as March 31, 2023 from ₹8.96L-cr as March 31, 2018



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: Banks have written off bad loans worth Rs 14.56 lakh crore in the last nine financial years starting 2014-15, Parliament was informed Monday.

Out of the total Rs 14,56,226 crore, written off loans of large industries and services stood at Rs 7,40,968 crore.

Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have recovered an aggregate amount of Rs 2,04,668 crore in written-off loans, including corporate loans, since April, 2014 and up to March, 2023, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

Loans written-off during the financial year, net of recovery in written-off loans during the financial year (net write-off) in public sector banks (PSBs) was Rs 1.18 lakh crore in the financial year (FY) 2017-18, which has declined to 0.91 lakh crore in FY 2021-22 and to Rs 0.84 lakh crore (RBI provisional data) in FY 2022-23, he said in another reply.

Net write-off loans by private sector banks stood at Rs 73,803 crore (RBI provisional data) in FY 2022-23, he said.

Net write-off as percentage of opening gross loans and advances in private sector banks was 1.25 per cent and 1.57 per cent in FY 2017-18 and FY 2022-23 respectively, and it was 2 per cent and 1.12 per cent for PSBs during the same period.

Comprehensive steps have been taken by the government and RBI to recover and to bring down Non Performing Assets (NPAs), enabled by which, gross NPAs of PSBs have declined to Rs 4.28 lakh crore as March 31, 2023 from Rs 8.96 lakh crore as March 31, 2018, he said.

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

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

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

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

Karad added the board of State Bank of India (SBI) in its meeting held June 9, 2023 had accorded approval for raising up to an amount of Rs 50,000 crore which constitutes base III compliant AT-1 bonds up to an amount of Rs 20,000 crore, Tier-2 bonds up to an amount of Rs 10,000 crore and infrastructure bonds up to an amount of Rs 20,000 crore by the bank during FY2023-24.

As per SBI, the purpose of raising capital bonds (AT-1 and Tier-2) is to replace the existing capital bonds which are due for call up during FY2023-24, further strengthen the capital base of the bank and support asset growth, he said.

Banks are exempted from maintaining Cash Reserve Ratio and Statutory Liquidity Ratio on long-term bonds for lending to infrastructure sector, he said, adding, the raising of long-term infrastructure bonds helps the bank in better asset liability management.

In a separate reply, he said, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) was launched on 8, 2015 and has been implemented across the country.

As June 30, 2023, he said, more than 42.20 crore loans amounting to Rs 24.34 lakh crore have been sanctioned to borrowers under the scheme.

Auto retail sales witness 10% growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: Auto mobile retail sales in India witnessed a 10 per cent annual growth in July driven by robust sales across passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and commercial vehicles, industry body FADA said Monday.

Total retail sales across segments rose to 17,70,181 units last month, as compared to 16,09,217 units in July 2022.

Passenger vehicle sales saw an increase of 4 per cent to 2,84,064 units last month, as compared to 2,73,055 units in the year-ago period, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement.

"The month saw a surge in orders and timely OEM supplies, especially with the introduction of new products. However, severe monsoons and flood-like situations especially in North India, impacted sales," FADA President Manish Raj Singhania said.

SUVs continued to remain a popular choice for buyers, he added.

Two-wheeler retail sales rose by 8 per cent to 12,28,139 in July, as against 11,35,566 units in the same period last year.



Singhania said despite challenges like heavy monsoons and a tilt towards EVs, the two-wheeler segment showed resilience with increased demand and trust in reputable brands.

Commercial vehicle retail sales saw a 2 per cent year-on-year jump in sales to 73,065 units, from 71,619 units in July 2022.

"The CV segment showed mixed dynamics. Despite robust stock availability and growth in areas like school buses, challenges from erratic weather and high vehicle costs affected demand," Singhania said.

Three-wheeler sales rose 74 per cent year-on-year, while tractor sales witnessed a healthy growth of 21 per cent last month.

FADA, which represents over

15,000 automobile dealers, said it remains cautious in terms of business outlook going ahead.

"While caution remains the operative word in the short term, FADA is hopeful about retail growth prospects, especially with the festive season on the horizon," it said.

The entry-level category in the two-wheeler segment continues to be a cause for concern, FADA said.

In the CV space, there are apprehensions regarding streamlined loan disbursements for buyers, it added.

Besides, inventory level in PV has breached the 50-days mark in anticipation of upcoming festival season and the slowdown in entry-level car vertical remains,

FADA said. "A larger concern is the IMD's projection of a below-average rainfall in August, potentially leading to lower crop yields. This could impact the purchasing power, especially in rural regions," it added.

Auto component industry reports highest turnover

The domestic auto component industry expects to log in double-digit sales growth in the current fiscal after having reported its highest-ever turnover in 2022-23, as demand is expected to remain robust. As per the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA), the sector reported a turnover of Rs 5.6 lakh crore last fiscal, registering a growth of 33 per cent over Rs 4.2 lakh crore in 2021-22. In 2022-23, exports grew by 5 per cent to Rs 1.61 lakh crore while imports grew by 11 per cent to Rs 1.63 lakh crore, it added. The aftermarket, estimated at Rs 85,333 crore also witnessed a steady growth of 15 per cent while component sales to OEMs in the domestic market grew by 39.5 per cent to Rs 4.76 lakh crore, ACMA said.

RESULTS CORNER

Meesho profitable

New Delhi: Softbank backed e-commerce firm Meesho has turned profitable on a consolidated basis in July, supported by significant uptick in order volumes and revenue, a senior company official said Monday. Meesho Founder and CEO Vidit Aatrey told PTI that a 43 per cent surge in order volumes and 54 per cent increase in revenue in the last 12 month contributed to the profitability of the company. He said that 85 per cent of the orders have come from returning users in the last 12 month which reflects the customer retention rate of the platform.

Meta's first drop

Washington: Meta Platforms Inc (META.O) issued a gloomy forecast after recording its first ever quarterly drop in revenue on Wednesday, with recession fears and competitive pressures weighing on its digital ads sales. Shares of the Menlo Park, California-based company were down about 4.6% in extended trading. The company said it expects third-quarter revenue to fall to \$26 billion and \$28.5 billion, which would make it a second year-over-year drop in a row. Analysts were expecting \$30.52 billion.

Aramco profit dips

Dubai: Saudi state-run oil giant Aramco said Monday that it made \$30 billion in profit in the second quarter, a nearly 40% decline from the same period the previous year that it attributed to lower oil prices. Total sales stood at just over 400 billion riyals (about \$106 billion), down from 562 billion riyals (\$150 billion) in the second quarter of 2022. The company reported net income of 112.8 billion Saudi riyals (\$30 billion) compared to 181.6 billion riyals (\$48 billion) in the second quarter of 2022, a decline of 37.8%.

GCPL net down 7%

New Delhi: FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd Monday reported a 7.62 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 318.82 crore in the June quarter due to expenses incurred on exceptional items. The company, which had posted a net profit of Rs 345.12 crore in the April-June period last year, said its board on Monday approved a capital expenditure of Rs 900 crore for setting up new manufacturing sites in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. However, revenue from the sale of products of Godrej group's FMCG arm was up 10.45 per cent at Rs 3,417.86 crore during the first quarter of the current fiscal against Rs 3,094.31 crore a year ago.

Sebi's refund to Sahara investors reaches ₹138cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: Sebi has made refunds of Rs 138.07 crore to investors of two Sahara companies in 11 years, while the amount deposited in specially-opened bank accounts for the repayment has surged to more than Rs 25,000 crore.

These disclosures have been made by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in its latest annual report.

In the absence of claims from a majority of the bondholders of the two Sahara companies, which were asked to return the money to nearly 3 crore investors along with interest in August 2012 through a Supreme Court order, the total amount refunded by Sebi inched up by just about Rs 7 lakh during the last fiscal, 2022-23, while the balance in Sebi-Sahara refund accounts rose by Rs 1,087 crore during the year.

Sebi said it received 19,650 applications involving 53,687 accounts as March 31. Of these, refunds have been made with respect to 17,526 applications involving 48,326 accounts for an aggregate amount of Rs 138.07 crore including the interest amount of Rs 67.98 crore.

The remaining applications were closed either due to their records not being traceable in the data provided by two Sahara Group firms - Sahara India Real Estate Corporation Ltd and Sahara Housing Investment Corporation Ltd.

BIZ BUZZ

Harshpriya Group's new project 'HP SQUARE'

Bhubaneswar: Harshpriya Group, an epitome of innovation, quality and solution-driven projects which has been shaping Odisha's skyline for 32 years has announced the launch of its new luxury segments residential - cum - commercial project "HP SQUARE" centrally located near forest park at Delta Square. Nesting in the heart of Bhubaneswar, it is just minutes away from all fundamental necessities and a stone's throw from the international airport. The locality houses a variety of restaurants, cafes and shopping malls, hospitals etc. Speaking on this occasion, Chetan Kumar Tekariwal, MD, Harshpriya Group said, "From 1991, Harshpriya Group has always focused on delivering the best to our customers. All our projects are built with utmost attention to details because customer's satisfaction is the biggest reward for us. As one of the pioneers in introducing multi-storied residential apartments to the region, we have successfully delivered over 50+ projects, serving more than 10,000 families. With a cumulative construction area of over 10 million square feet (approx), Harshpriya Group has earned the trust and recognition as one of the most reputable names in Odisha. We continue to deliver iconic projects through collaborations with our esteemed sister companies. "HP SQUARE" is one such iconic project of Odisha".



SBI starts state level plantation drive from Raj Bhawan under CSR

Bhubaneswar: State Bank of India, under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, with a target plantation of 50,000 saplings in Odisha, has started the activities from Raj Bhawan Odisha. SBI Bhubaneswar Circle CGM Chander Shekhar Sharma met Ganeshi Lal, Governor of Odisha at Raj Bhawan and gifted him a plant as a symbol of beginning of mass plantation Monday. During the discussions, Sharma highlighted the bank's efforts for environmental protection and successful plantation in Odisha. The Governor while praising efforts of SBI for sustainable improvement of Odisha as well as the nation, reciprocated good wishes for successful plantation drive to combat global warming. In the past years too, SBI has successfully carried out plantation activities around Odisha.



FLYING HIGH

Akasa Air eligible for int'l routes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 7: Akasa Air has flown 4.3 million passengers with over 900 flights per week, besides becoming eligible to fly internationally with a fleet of 20 aircraft in its first year of commercial operations, which it completed Monday, the airline said in a statement.

Owned by SNV Aviation Pvt Ltd and founded by former Jet Airways CEO, Vinay Dube along with others, Akasa Air commenced operations with its maiden flight taking off from Mumbai for Ahmedabad August 7, 2022.

In its first year of commercial operations, Akasa Air served 4.3 million passengers with a 4.9 per cent market share, and crossed the milestone of operating over 900 weekly flights with a published network of 35 unique routes across 16 destinations, the airline said in a statement Monday.

Also, the airline said, it has carried over 25,000 tonne of cargo across its network during this



time. Akasa has during the period also registered a passenger load factor of over 84 per cent since the start of operations, with a steadily growing record of close to 90 per cent in the current financial year, it said. "We feel extremely fulfilled to have successfully executed our ambitious and unprecedented scale-up over the last 12

months. Our first year has given us a strong operating and fi-

ancial platform to execute on our continued growth ambitions," said Dube.

Earlier this month, the added 20th aircraft—B 737-8-200, to the fleet, which made it qualified to start its flight services on international routes.

Akasa has already stated it plans to fly on international routes by December this year.

Akasa Air has placed a firm order of 76 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft-23 B737-8s and 53 high-capacity B737-8-200 aircraft-powered by CFM LEAP-1B engines.

In addition, the airline said, it remains fully committed to placing a three-digit aircraft order by the end of 2023.

Akasa Air also said it continues to invest in training and has set up several learning academies in key cities across the country. The airline also said it has also recently installed B737-8200 Max Mid Exit Door to ensure that the cabin crew is equipped to deal with emergencies in its newly-inducted aircraft, from the get-go.

EQUITIES EXTEND RALLY FOR 2ND DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 7: Benchmark equity indices ended with gains Monday, extending their previous day's rally, unfazed by a weak trend in global markets amid buying in Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries.

However, continuous foreign fund outflows prevented markets from registering a sharp rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 232.23 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 65,953.48. During the day, it jumped 346.65 points or 0.52 per cent to 66,067.90. The NSE Nifty advanced 80.30 points or 0.41 per cent to end at 19,597.30.

The rupee gained 6 paise to close at 82.75 against the US dollar Monday, tracking positive domestic equities and lower crude oil prices.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets Monday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,892.77 crore, according to exchange data.



Meanwhile, India's forex reserves dropped by \$3.165 billion to \$603.87 billion in the week ended July 28, the RBI said Friday. This is the second consecutive weekly drop in reserves after the \$1.987 billion decline to \$607.035 billion in the previous week.

After three days of decline, the BSE benchmark Friday climbed 480.57 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 65,721.25. The Nifty advanced 135.35 points or 0.70 per cent to end at 19,517.

Series on line for India

India's top order under pressure in must-win third T20I, while spinners need to stop Pooran juggernaut



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Providence (Guyana), August 7: Staring at a rare series defeat in the Caribbean, India will need to bat with the fearlessness required in the shortest format when they face the West Indies in the must-win third T20I here Tuesday.

The slow pitches on offer have not been the best for batting but as skipper Hardik Pandya pointed out after the loss Sunday, India should have found a way to score additional 10-20 runs. India, who last lost to the West Indies in a bilateral T20 series back in 2016, trail 0-2 in the five-match series.

The shortest format demands the batters to go hard from ball one and that is something India's top order, comprising Ishan Kishan, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav, have not been able to do.

The top order's failure has put extra pressure on the likes of Sanju Samson and rookie Tilak Varma, who has taken to international cricket like fish

THE SQUADS

INDIA: Ishan Kishan (wk), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Suryakumar Yadav (vc), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya (C), Axar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

WEST INDIES: Rovman Powell (C), Kyle Mayers (vc), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Obed McCoy, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shephard, Odean Smith, Osmane Thomas.

to water.

With focus on ODIs in a World Cup year, Gill, Kishan and Suryakumar would want to be amongst runs ahead of the Asia Cup beginning August 31.

"Batters need to take more responsibility," Hardik's message was clear to the batters following the two-wicket loss here Sunday.

India have been playing with a long tail with Axar Patel bat-

ting at seven to maintain the balance of the side and it is unlikely to change in the next game.

India's in-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav missed Sunday's game due to a sore thumb and it remains to be seen if he is available for selection.

The bowlers, especially the spinners, need to find a way to contain a rampaging Nicholas Pooran. The southpaw has been batting with disdain against the likes of Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravi Bishnoi. Left-arm spinner Axar was not even used in the last game.

Hardik and Arshdeep Singh were able to swing the new ball in the second game and would be looking to repeat that Tuesday. Chahal, playing after a gap of two months, has been impressive in the series. Bishnoi's frequent googlies were not able to put pressure on the opposition, forcing him to rethink about his plans.

Pacer Mukesh Kumar has leaked most runs for India and there is a possibility that he could be replaced with Avesh

Khan or Umran Malik.

West Indies are in an ideal position for their first series win over India since 2016. Like the opposition, West Indies' top order too has not been amongst runs with Pooran left to do the heavy lifting. The hosts would want to change that.

The likes of Pooran and Shimron Hetmyer will once again be looking to take the attack to the Indian spinners. The home team's bowlers have done well to keep India in check and will be keen to maintain that with series on the line.

"It's a very good position to be in. Since 2016 we haven't won T20 series (against India)," said West Indies skipper Rovman Powell.

MATCH SCHEDULE

India vs West Indies

3rd T20 International

Time: 8 pm

Telecast: DD Sports

Stream: Jio Cinema & Fan Code

India pip S Korea, enter semis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 7: Their semi-finals spot guaranteed, India prevailed over defending champions South Korea 3-2 in their fourth round-robin fixture of the Asian Champions Trophy (ACT) here Monday, maintaining their unbeaten run in the continental hockey tournament.

Even before the action got underway at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium, India had sealed their place in the semifinals, following Japan's loss to Malaysia earlier in the day.

Both teams began the match on a fast-paced note, playing mainly possession-based hockey. In the sixth minute, the deadlock was broken by the hosts, as Nilakanta Sharma tapped the ball in after Sukhjeet Singh dribbled the ball past a couple of defenders.

Unfazed by the goal, Korea came up with a couple of chances of their own but the Indian defence was up to the task. However, the Koreans did not take much time to equalise as Sunghyun Kim hammered it in after Manjae Jung's low pass, in the 12th minute.

In the second quarter, it was all about India as they came up with as many as four chances and scored their second goal in the 23rd minute through a penalty corner, which was converted by

Harmanpreet Singh.

After the restart, Korea squandered a PC earned through video referral, even as Amit Rohidas was green-carded. However, India came up with an attacking move and it resulted in a field goal by Mandeep Singh.

Korea received another PC

but skipper Jonghyun Jang's shot went wide. It was followed by three chances for India, with Karthi Selvam and Mandeep Singh coming close, as the game moved into the fourth quarter.

Just two minutes into the final quarter, India earned a PC, which ultimately resulted in a penalty stroke. But, Harmanpreet's attempt to go low towards the keeper's right saw his effort being denied.

A minute later, a video referral allowed Korea to gain a PC, which resulted in it earning three more straight PCs. However, Jang failed to convert either of them. India continued with their attacking intent, with a double save coming from the Korean goalie in the 50th minute off Mandeep and Sukhjeet's shots.

It was followed by another series of PCs for Korea, while they also opted for a review for a possible PC, only to lose it. Finally, in the 58th minute, Jihun Yang found the back of the net through a field goal, keeping the Indians on their toes. Even as the Koreans looked for the equaliser, the Indian defence managed to hold on to the one-goal lead.

India will be up against arch-rivals Pakistan Wednesday, while Korea, who remain in the top-four race, take on Malaysia.

PAK BEAT CHINA

CHENNAI: Goals from Muhammad Khan and Afraz helped Pakistan eke out a 2-1 victory over China to stay in the race for the semifinals in the ACT hockey tournament here Monday. Jiesheng Gao was on target from a penalty corner for China. However, the defeat meant that China were knocked out of contention for the last-four stage.

MALAYSIA IN SEMIS

CHENNAI: Malaysia fought off a late surge from Japan to secure a 3-1 win and advance to the semifinal of the ACT hockey tournament here Monday. Najmi Jazlan (13th minute, penalty corner), Ashran Hamsani (37th) and Shello Silverius (59th) struck for Malaysia. After a flurry of missed chances, Japan finally managed to strike through Niwa Takuma (59th). The win took Malaysia to nine points and sealed their last-four berth.

Bhagat-Kadam pair wins gold in England



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 7: World No.1 men's doubles pairing of Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam won a gold medal in SL3-SL4 category at the Four Nations Para-Badminton International in Sheffield, England.

Bhagat also secured a silver in the singles SL3 category as well as a silver in mixed doubles SL3-SU5 category with Manisha Ramdass. Kadam won a bronze in the singles SL4 category.

Bhagat and Kadam defeated the Indian pair of Deep Ranjan Bisoyee and Manoj Sarkar 21-17, 21-17 to secure gold in the men's doubles.

In singles, Bhagat went down to England's Daniel Bethell 8-21, 10-21. In the mixed doubles, Bhagat and Ramdass went down against Indonesia's Hikmat Randani and Leani Ratri Oktilla 17-21, 17-21.

"I am happy with the doubles result but at the same time not very pleased with my singles and mixed doubles result. Daniel Bethell has been a very challenging opponent for me this year and I need to make major improvements in order to beat him. I will head back into my

training immediately and start working on my weaknesses," Bhagat said.

Kadam, meanwhile, lost to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan 21-17, 15-21, 16-21 in the semifinals to secure a bronze in singles.

The other Indian winners include Krishna Nagar who secured gold in SH6 category, Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan (gold in the women's doubles SL3-SU5) and Parul Dalsukhbhai Parmar and Shanthy Viswanathan in the same category.

Nithya Sre secured a silver in women's SH6 category, Deep Ranjan Bisoyee and Manoj Sarkar won silver while Nitesh and Tarun bagged a bronze in men's SL3-SL4.

Kumar Nitesh secured a bronze in SL3 category, Manasi Joshi and Mandeep Kaur won a bronze in women's SL3 category and Chirag Baretha and Raj Kumar bagged a silver in mixed doubles SU5 category.

Ramdass secured bronze in women's SU5 category, Krishna Nagar and Nithya Sre won a bronze in mixed doubles SH6 category while Prem Kumar AE and Turkey's Emine Seckin bagged a bronze in mixed doubles WH1-WH2 event.

MESSI MAGIC LEADS INTER MIAMI INTO QUARTERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frisco (US), August 7: Lionel Messi scored on another mesmerising free-kick in his third consecutive two-goal game for Inter Miami, a tying tally that led to a 5-4 victory over FC Dallas on penalty kicks in a League Cup elimination game.

Messi's goal in the 85th minute Sunday night was reminiscent of the game-winner in his Inter Miami debut, both on free-kicks from just outside the penalty box in the waning moments and sneaking past the goalkeeper into the upper corner of the net.

This time, the left-footed superstar, was to the right of the net, and beat FC Dallas' Maarten Paes to the near post the same way he did from the left side in a 2-1 win over Mexican club Cruz Azul in his Inter Miami debut.

The victory in the round of 16 sent Inter Miami into the League Cup quarterfinals against the winner Monday night between Charlotte FC and Houston.

Messi's first goal outside of Florida for his new US Club was another left-footed strike outside the penalty area in the sixth minute, on a pass from former

FC Barcelona teammate Jordi Alba. It was initially disallowed on an offside call that was overturned on review.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and World Cup champion for Argentina has scored in all four matches for Inter Miami, with seven goals total.

FC Dallas had gone ahead 4-2 on Robert Taylor's own goal in the 68th minute, but Dallas gave an own goal right back in the 80th minute. Marco Farfan put a header into his own net on a cross from Messi on a free-kick from outside the left corner of the penalty box.

Messi had the first penalty kick with a slow-moving shot into the right corner, and the difference was FC Dallas' Paxton Pomykal missing over the crossbar on the second attempt.

Benjamin Cremaschi, who scored in the 65th minute, had the clincher as Miami finished with a 5-3 edge in the shootout.

Messi had several free-kicks in the second half, with each attempt bringing everyone in the sellout crowd of 19,096 to their feet, most of them recording with cell phones.

Facundo Quignonez and Bernard Kamungo scored in the first half for FC Dallas to erase

the 1-0 deficit from Messi's early goal. Alan Velasco, a native of Argentina who grew up idolising Messi, made it 3-1 with a bouncing free kick that eluded several defenders and keeper Drake Callender for a 3-1 lead in the 63rd minute.

Two minutes later, Cremaschi pulled Inter Miami within a goal to set up the wild finish. The second of Messi's three consecutive two-goal games came in the first League Cup elimination game, a 3-1 Miami victory over Orlando City that was delayed by an hour and a half because of a torrential rainstorm in Florida.

The fifth match in Texas in Messi's illustrious career had a kickoff temperature of 100 degrees (38 degrees Celsius) on the 14th consecutive day of triple-digit heat in the Dallas area. Because of the high temperatures, teams took a heat break near the halfway point of each half.

Facundo Quignonez and Bernard Kamungo scored in the first half for FC Dallas to erase



Layoff a blessing for Bumrah, feels McGrath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 7: Legendary Australian pacer Glenn McGrath Monday said the long injury layoff could be a blessing in disguise for India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, allowing him to return fresh to international cricket ahead of the ICC World Cup 2023.

Bumrah took nearly a year to recover from a lower back stress fracture, and his last appearance for India was in September 2022 in a T20I against Australia in Hyderabad. But now, the 29-year-old is set to lead India in a three-match T20I series against Ireland later this month.

"It depends on how the injury is and the sort of expectations he has. I think he will be fine since



he is a quality bowler," McGrath said in a media interaction during his visit to the MRF Pace Foundation academy here.

"The layoff will help him, I think. Fast bowlers need that layoff and time to get the strength back in their bodies. It depends on the work he has done off the field, how his back is and if he has done anything to his action. I think he has been there before and he has achieved it," said McGrath.

The New South Welshman, who has 949 international wickets, said he will be watching Bumrah closely once he returns to top-level cricket. "I haven't seen him bowl. So, time will tell. Only he knows where he is now. So, I will be watching him keenly to see him get back to where he was."

It takes a toll on the body. If he has put enough work on the field, I can't see a reason why he cannot go back to being where he previously was," he added.

McGrath said Bumrah should be able to maintain the same intensity and pace upon his return, considering his experience and quality.

"He's got enough experience. He has enough games before the World Cup to test himself. Eleven months is a long time out of the game, but if you are coming off an off-season and you want to get into it, hopefully, that only takes a few games," he noted.

India's death bowling has been quite shaky of late in the limited-overs, but McGrath asserted that every team faces a similar challenge.