



## DONNING DIRECTOR'S HAT

Actor Disha Patani has made her directorial debut with upcoming musical video Kyun Karu Fikar

LEISURE P2



## PAK CHURCHES UNDER ATTACK

Mob vandalises five churches in Punjab province of Pakistan over allegations of desecration of Islam's holy book, Wednesday

INTERNATIONAL P10



## NEYMAR MOVES TO SAUDI

Brazilian superstar Neymar leaves PSG after six years and joins Saudi Pro League club Al Hilal

SPORTS P12

### SHORT TAKES

#### 8 killed, many hurt in lightning strikes

**Bhubaneswar:** At least eight people were killed and many others injured in lightning strikes in different parts of the state Wednesday, officials said. Four people were killed and around three others suffered critical injuries when lightning struck Jaleswar and Basta areas in Balasore. A report from Mayurbhanj said that a woman died and her daughter was injured in a lightning strike when they were in a forest near Singiti village, they said. Three persons died after being struck by lightning in Kherang panchayat in Bhadrak, the officials said.

#### Metro rail DPR ready

**Bhubaneswar:** Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has prepared the detailed project report (DPR) for the first phase of Odisha's first metro rail project and submitted it to the state government, Wednesday. CM Naveen Patnaik had April 1, 2023 sanctioned the metro rail project under the 5T mandate. Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has been notified August 3, 2023 and its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and General Manager (Administration) have been appointed.

#### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



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MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	65539.42 ↑ 137.50
NIFTY	19465.00 ↑ 30.45
DOLLAR	83.15 ↓ ₹0.34
EURO	90.70 ↓ ₹0.23
GOLD	₹58,802 ↓ ₹172
SILVER	₹70,046 ↑ ₹92

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.2°C	33.6°C
TEMP MIN	26.3°C	26.0°C
Humidity	81%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	



## HIMACHAL RAIN TOLL CLIMBS TO 71

Buildings are seen at Krishnanagar area where houses collapsed after a landslide, in Shimla, Wednesday. At least 71 people have died in the past three days in Himachal Pradesh after devastating rains pounded the state

# SC no to misogynistic terms

In its handbook on gender unjust terms, apex court proposes alternatives to stereotypical words

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** Words like eve-teasing, prostitute, and housewife may soon be out of the legal lexicon and will be replaced by terms like street sexual harassment, sex worker and homemaker, respectively.

The Supreme Court Wednesday launched a handbook that contains a glossary of gender unjust terms and suggests alternative words and phrases which may be used. As soon as a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud assembled to hear arguments on a batch of pleas challenging the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which accorded special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, the CJI announced the unveiling of the handbook.

"This is to assist judges and the legal community to identify, understand ... stereotypes about women in legal discourse," he

said. In a press release, the apex court said the 'Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes' seeks to empower judges and members of the legal community to identify, understand and counteract harmful stereotypes about women.

"The handbook features a glossary of gender-unjust terms and proposes alternative words and phrases for use in legal documents, including pleadings, orders, and judgments. The compilation identifies common stereotypes about women and demonstrates the inaccuracies of these stereotypes and how they can impact the application of the law," the release said.

It said the handbook also encapsulates the prevailing legal doctrine on crucial issues, particularly those involving sexual violence.

"In its entirety, the handbook aims to equip judges with the knowledge and tools to critically



evaluate their own reasoning, writing and to ensure that justice is served fairly and equitably," the release said, adding it is a significant step towards a gender-just legal order. It said the launch of the hand-

book marks a significant milestone in the journey towards a more just and equitable society.

By equipping judges and the legal community with the tools to identify, understand, and reject stereotypes, it is aimed to pave the way for a more inclusive, impartial, and gender-just legal system, the release said.

The groundbreaking initiative under the directions of the Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud is aimed at fulfilling the Indian judiciary's goal of eradicating pre-conceived gender stereotypes from judicial discourse, especially those concerning women," it said.

In the 30-page handbook, the top court has given a list of stereotypical words and suggested alternative terms for being used in legal discourses and judicial pronouncements.

The handbook says that instead of using words like 'seductress', 'whore' or 'woman of loose morals', the word 'woman'

has to be used.

It also prohibits use of words like 'hooker' and 'prostitute' and said the term 'sex worker' be used instead.

The handbook said that instead of using words such as 'concubine or keep', the expression 'woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage' has to be used.

The word 'eve-teasing' will now be termed as 'street sexual harassment', the handbook said, adding that instead of word 'faggot', the term accurately describing the individual's sexual orientation be used.

'Housewife' will now become 'homemaker' for judicial discourses, it said, adding that word 'mistress' be now described as 'woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage'.

It said instead of word 'bastard', the word 'non-marital child or a child whose parents were not married' should be used.

were being conducted by ISRO to gradually reduce Chandrayaan-3's orbit and position it over the lunar poles.

After separation, the lander is expected to undergo a "deboost" (the process of slowing down) to place it in an orbit, where the Perilune (closest point to the Moon) is 30 kilometres and Apolune (farthest point from the Moon) is 100 km, from where the soft landing on the south polar region of the Moon will be attempted August 23, ISRO said.

ISRO Chairman S Somanath recently said the most critical part of the landing is the process of bringing the velocity of the lander from 30 km height to the final landing, and that the ability to transfer the spacecraft from horizontal to vertical direction is the 'trick we have to play' here.

"The velocity at the starting of the landing process is almost 1.68 km per second, but this speed is horizontal to the surface of the moon. The Chandrayaan-3 here is tilted almost 90 degrees, it has to become vertical. So, this whole process of turning from horizontal to vertical is a very interesting calculation mathematically. We have done a lot of simulations. It's here where we had the problem last time (Chandrayaan-2)," he explained.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, August 16:** India's ambitious Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft Wednesday successfully underwent a fifth and final lunar-bound orbit manoeuvre, bringing it even closer to the surface of the Moon.

With this, the spacecraft has completed all of its Moon-bound manoeuvres, and it will now prepare for separation of the lander module -- comprising the lander and rover -- from the propulsion module.

"Today's successful firing, needed for a short duration, has put Chandrayaan-3 into an orbit of 153 km x 163 km, as intended. With this, the lunar bound manoeuvres are completed. It's time for preparations as the Propulsion Module and the Lander Module gear up for their separate journeys," ISRO said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

Separation of the lander module from the propulsion module is planned for August 17, it said.

Post its launch July 14, India's third Moon mission Chandrayaan-3 entered into the lunar orbit August 5, following which orbit reduction manoeuvres were carried out August 6, 9 and 14. As the mission progressed, a series of manoeuvres

Spacecraft prepares for separation of the lander module -- comprising the lander and rover -- from propulsion module

## CABINET NOD

₹13K cr for artisans

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 16:** The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme with an outlay of ₹13,000 crore for five years that will benefit about 30 lakh families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, including weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, and barbers.

## 7 railway projects

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Wednesday approved seven projects of Indian Railways at a cost of around ₹32,500 crore covering 35 districts in nine states, including Odisha. The projects include laying of third line between Nergundi-Barang and Khurda Road-Vizianagaram in Bhadrak-Vizianagaram section. The third line will be of total 385 km involving a project cost of ₹4,962.87 crore.

## 10K e-buses in 169 cities

The Union Cabinet approved the 'PM-eBus Sewa' scheme under which 10,000 electric buses will be provided to 169 cities under the PPP model.

## WOMAN AMONG 3 HELD WITH 29 COBRAS

# Snake venom racket busted in Balasore

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, August 16:** State's Forest officials Wednesday claimed to have busted an interstate snake venom smuggling racket, with the arrest of three persons, including a woman, and rescue of 29 cobras from their possession here.

Preliminary inquiries indicated that the syndicate used to extract venom from snakes and smuggle it to places outside Odisha, said Chandipur Forest ranger Ganesh Prasad Lenka.

The accused were identified as Kamal Lochan Panda, 36, of Bhograi, Gourang Giri, 35, of Bhelora and Mamata Mahana,

27, of Gambharia in Balasore, added Lenka.

Acting on a tip-off, Forest officials carried out a raid at Panchupalli village in Langaleswar Forest range under Baliaipolice limits in Balasore forest division, Wednesday and arrested the trio with 29 cobras.

Tools used to extract venom from snakes were also recovered from their possession, Lenka said.

"When asked about possession of snakes, the accused said they were using the reptiles for amusement in fairs in the village," the official said.

A case (32/2023) was registered in this regard, the official pointed out.

## Tomatoes on 'vacation' in India, says Burger King

The burger chain, one of India's biggest with nearly 400 outlets, joins many McDonald's and Subway stores that have removed tomatoes from menus as country's food inflation this week hits its highest since January 2020

REUTERS

**New Delhi/Chennai, August 16:** Burger King has scrapped tomatoes from its wraps and burgers in many Indian outlets after prices more than quadrupled, the latest symptom of surging food inflation that is hitting consumers hard across the world's most populous nation.

"Even tomatoes need a vacation ... we are unable to add tomatoes to our food," read notices pasted at two Burger King India outlets. The chain has cited quality issues in explaining the shortfall.

The burger chain, one of India's biggest with nearly 400 outlets, joins many McDonald's and Subway stores that have removed tomatoes from menus as



India's food inflation this week hit its highest since January 2020. The US sandwich chain even cancelled the free cheese slices it offered for years. Rival Domino's, meanwhile, has tried bringing down prices to appeal to struggling consumers with a \$0.60 pizza - its cheapest in the world. The tomato supply crisis has coincided with a surge in prices by as much as 450 per cent to record highs as monsoon rains

disrupted crop and supply chains - although they have since eased.

"Why are there no tomatoes in my burgers?" reads a question on the support page of Burger King India's website. The answer states its Indian franchisee follows "very high standards of quality" and tomatoes will be back soon.

"We request your patience and understanding," it says.

Restaurant Brands Asia, which operates Burger King in India, did not respond to requests for comment.

The pain is spreading with July retail inflation data released this week showing prices of vegetables rose 37 per cent over a year. The costs of staples from onions and peas to garlic and ginger have all risen.

"If the prices remain high, then eventually restaurants will have to take price increases," said Amnish Aggarwal, head of research at India's Prabhudas Lilladher. "There is no other alternative."

As well as placing pressure on the margins of foreign chains operating in India's nearly \$5 billion market for fast-food restaurants, the price shocks pose a challenge for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government ahead of a national election next year.

To manage the supply crisis, India has started tomato imports from Nepal, and has organised vans to distribute the staple at cheaper rates across the nation, with social media posts showing huge queues.



# leisure



## ALEC BALDWIN MAY FACE MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES

Actor Alec Baldwin could once again be facing charges of manslaughter for shooting his DoP back in 2021 on set with live rounds during filming. A new report has found that his Colt .45 revolver would only fire if the trigger was pulled.

## NICK FALLS THROUGH HOLE ON STAGE WHILE PERFORMING

Singer-songwriter Nick Jonas has been caught on camera falling through a hole on stage while performing in Boston. The singer is currently touring the US alongside his brothers, but he took a bit of a stumble, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You will want to catch up with old friends that you have been neglecting for some time. The stars suggest that you will enjoy yourself. Your excitement will brighten up your activities. Your frankness and honesty are what set you apart from others, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
You will be very sensitive about the image you project socially and professionally. Ganesh sees you treating this very seriously and doing everything you can to make this right impression. Today, you will remain decent, dignified and focussed in all that you do. Do not be too eager to please others.

**GEMINI**  
A hectic and busy day awaits you, which will probably leave you feeling bored and listless. Find creative ways to beat the boredom, or take a break and do things which appeal to you today, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright future. You will resolutely implement plans that you have made thoughtfully. Such methodical decisions will save you a lot of time in the future. Ganesh says that you will succeed in every endeavour today.

**LEO**  
Your decisions today will be not only correct, but also resolute and steadfast. Your health will be fine. At the work-place, things ought to proceed as usual. However, you will concentrate more on work today. In personal relationships, some minor arguments could crop up.

**VIRGO**  
Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies as well as your goals shall be the key today. And, why not, urges Ganesh. Your intimate relations should be built on trust and mutual compatibility. Your energy levels will hit the sky. Make the most of this spurt by finishing in leftover mundane chores.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that you shall soon be able to travel or plan a trip, not for family or business matters, but for getting away from the mundane life. You will pay more importance to your professional matters as opposed to your personal matters. Today you will be able to attain success in every thing you do with the blessings of Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Today, you are like a balloon that may burst any time. You may vent out all the sweet and bitter experiences and feel much lighter. Or it may have adverse effects on your health, says Ganesh. You prefer to stay in your cocoon, in the warmth of your near and dear ones.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Determined and dedicated, that's what you are when it comes to work. Well, this may even find you amidst heaps of files and loads of work. No wonder you become a workaholic. You are likely to enjoy during the latter half of the day. Have a fun-filled evening!

**CAPRICORN**  
Your interests are guarded by the Almighty, so don't worry about them. Not that you are not ambitious, but you are satisfied with what you have and gained. You have set some realistic goals for yourself and you are making sincere efforts to achieve them. You are a simple person and you like your life to be uncomplicated.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are close to your family, and now is the time to enjoy the company of your loved ones at home. You will take them out for shopping, go with them on picnics and pamper them in every possible way, says Ganesh. Not that you made them feel special with a selfish motive, but your show of affection will work wonders for you.

**PISCES**  
Ganesh feels that you will sympathize with people today. This will help you get people's good wishes. You can prove to be a good boss, co worker, husband or wife and son or daughter. Ganesh advises you to carry on with these virtues.

## 'DECADE-LONG STRUGGLE SEEMS TO HAVE ENDED'

ACTOR PREM PARIJAA FROM BHUBANESWAR WAS SELECTED FROM 11,000 ASPIRANTS NATIONWIDE TO PLAY THE LEAD IN THE NOW-STREAMING HINDI WEB SERIES *COMMANDO*

A decade after the theatrical release of *Commando* featuring Vidyut Jammwal as the protagonist, the franchise has resurfaced, this time as a web series, with a fresh face at the forefront – Prem Parrija. The Bhubaneswar boy, after assuming the role of an Assistant Director for several Hindi movies, was selected by eminent filmmaker Vipul Shah to play the lead. Prem, who got selected from 11,000 aspirants, was recently at his hometown to promote *Commando*. On the sidelines of the event, *Orissa POST* caught up with him for a brief interaction. Here're the excerpts:

through difficulties had finally come to a conclusion.

■ **What made you decide to switch from direction to acting?**

■ I started out by performing in plays. But for some reasons, I had to assume the role of an assistant director. My involvement in projects like *Batla House* and *Satyameva Jayate* was the turning point in my growth as an actor. I diligently documented insights, tips, and attributes of actors. This made me easier to embrace the medium and I took the plunge.

■ **How did you prepare yourself before making the leap?**

■ I began my preparation after August 2022, when I was roped in as the lead. Over a period of three and a half months leading up to the filming, I engaged in intense training to condition myself for the action sequences. Additionally, I had the privilege of getting guided by the action choreographer of Jackie



Chan. While Vipul sir made me the *Commando* Virat, I would like to thank trainers Rakesh and Abhisekh, for my physical transformation.

■ **Which actors in the business do you admire or look up to?**

■ I'm an SRK fanboy. His dedication to his profession and strong work ethic had a significant impact on me. Besides, my parents have always advised me to strive for excellence in everything I do.

■ **And finally, you are destined to be compared**

MADHUSMITA SAHNI, OP

## Kumud's *Dhumrapaan* to regale City viewers

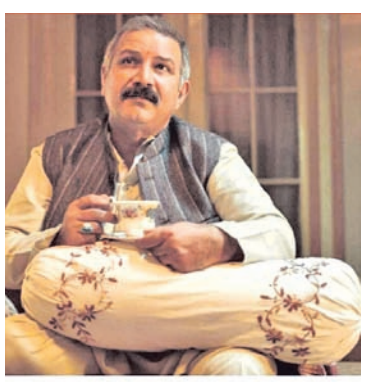
■ The play is part of Zain Foundation Trust's annual fundraiser to support people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**BHUBANESWAR:** Noted charitable organisation Zain Foundation Trust (ZFT) will present the Hindi/English play *Dhumrapaan* here at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

The event is part of ZFT's annual fundraiser to support people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Written by Adhir Bhatt, directed by Akarsh Khurana and headlined by famous Hindi film and theatre actor Kumud Mishra, the play is a hilarious take on the rat race at corporate offices. The cast also includes Shubrahoyti Barat, Ghanshyam Lalsa, Siddharth Kumar Tarruk Raina, Sarthal Kakkar and Ashmita Meghrajani.

Kumud has won millions of hearts for his poignant portrayals in movies such as *Rockstar*, *Raanjhana*, *Sriram Badlapur*, *Sultan*, *Airlift*, *Rustom*, *Article 15* and most recently *Lust Stories 2* opposite Kajol.

For the uninitiated, autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder, occurring in the alarming ratio of 1:36, the world over. A person with autism experiences a handicap in areas of communication, socialisation and imagination, while battling with severe sensory discrepancies. Unconditional love and support, social acceptance of the condition, remedial cognitive/behavioural therapies



and appropriate training are the only ways to integrate this growing community into our social fabric, in a dignified and respectful manner. Ever since its formation in 2015, ZFT has initiated plenty of advocacy and awareness exercises, successfully both in the state and nationally, through workshops, rallies, sporting events, art exhibitions and specially curated inclusive events, as it moves towards its mission of raising eastern India's very first residential facility for the autism community.

Other plays organised by ZFT in previous years include *Kaifi Aur Mein* (Shabana Azmi & Javed Akhtar) in 2015, *Einstein* (Naseeruddin Shah) in 2016, *Siddhus of Upper Juhu* (Rajit Kapoor, Shishir Sharma & Shenaz Patel) in 2017, *Two Adorable Losers* (Darsheel Safary & Abhishek Patnaik) in 2018, *King Lear* (Vinay Pathak) in 2021 and *One on One* (Rajit Kapoor, Vrajesh Hirji, Sumeet Vyas) in 2022.



## Disha dons director's hat

**Mumbai:** Actor Disha Patani is the latest celebrity to don the director's hat. She is all set to step into the world of directing with her debut music video, *Kyun Karu Fikar*. Announcing the same on Instagram, Disha dropped the teaser for the music video, which stars her. She also revealed that the full video will release August 21.

Going by the teaser of *Kyun Karu Fikar*, the single music video talks about being carefree. It's sung by Nikhita Gandhi. The music has been composed and produced by Vaibhav Pani while Vayu

penned the lyrics. It also comes with a voiceover of Disha who directed the music video.

Sharing the teaser, Disha wrote, "Within life's mystery, where the future is unknown, could self-love be the magic we've always known? Tune out the noise around you and say #KyunKaruFikar Full video out on 21st August on @playdmofficial YouTube channel." Responding to Disha's new milestone, her rumoured ex boyfriend Tiger Shroff's mother Ayesha Shroff commented, "Wowwww! Congratulations deeshu!" Her best friend Mouni Roy too cheered for her. Among others was Disha's rumoured boyfriend Aleksandar Alex Ilic who wrote to her, "Congratulations Chiksi."



**Mumbai:** The internet is calling Ranbir Kapoor a red flag once again after wife Alia Bhatt's latest revelation about their equation. In a new video for a magazine, she showed how she applies lipstick and tries to keep it faded and minimal because her husband 'doesn't like it'.

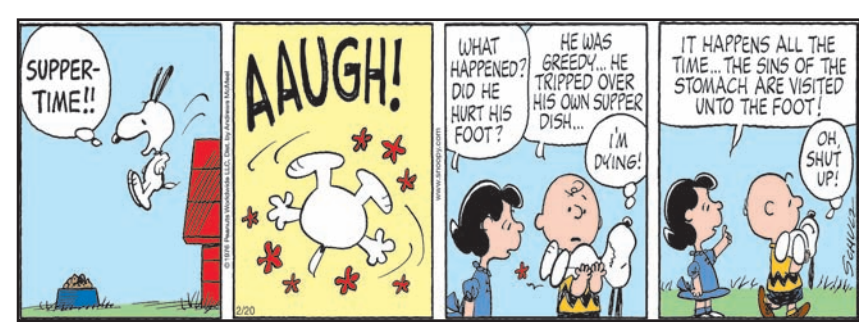
**Internet calls Ranbir a 'red flag'**

She ex-claimed, "Because one thing my husband... when he wasn't my husband but when he was my boyfriend as well... he would be like 'wipe that off, wipe that off' because he loves the natural colour of my lips."

While Alia thought she was sharing a cute detail about her relationship with Ranbir, many did not think so. More than a few people called him a 'red flag', that's what internet calls people who might not bring you the healthiest relationships. "If your bf/husband is telling you to wipe your lipstick that the biggest sign for you to run! It is not cute or funny at all," wrote one person in a comment.

"I would never allow a guy who asks me to wipe off my lipstick anywhere close to me," wrote another. "I can't believe a top actress rubs off her expensive lipstick because her bf/husband commented another."

### PEANUTS



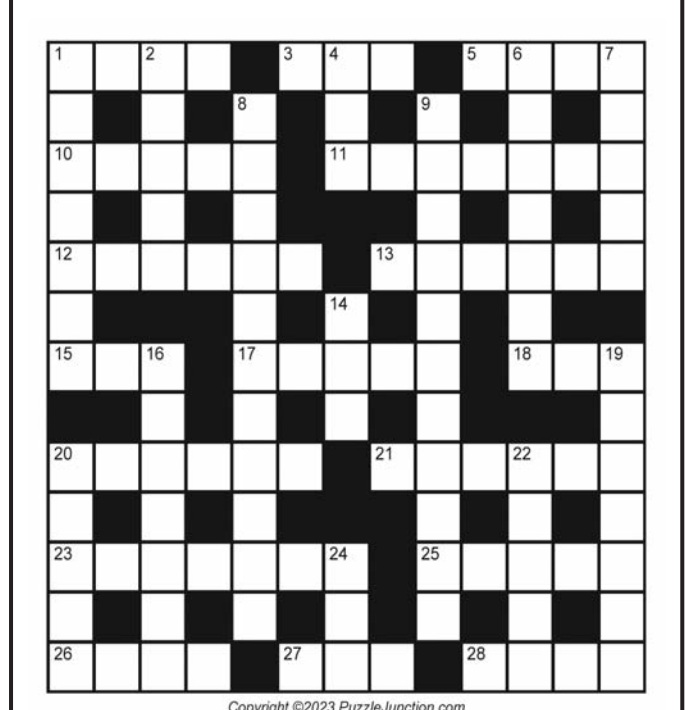
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



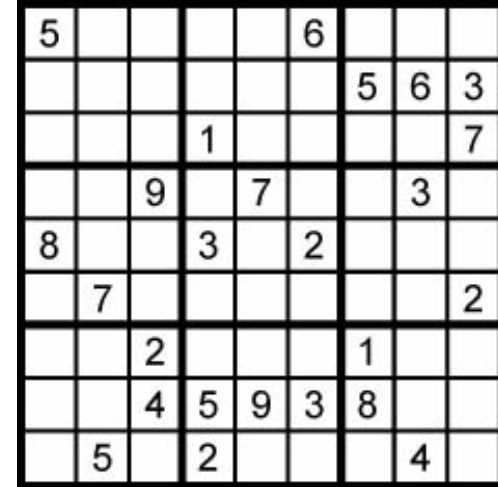
### FUN post CROSSWORD



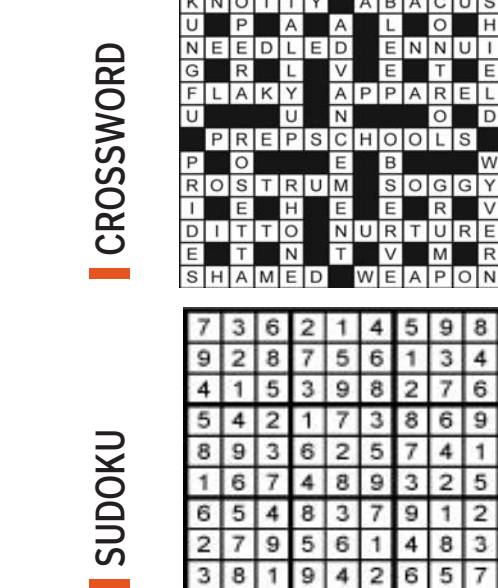
- Across**
- 1 Water under the bridge
  - 3 Defective
  - 5 Slightly open
  - 10 Gumption
  - 11 Copse
  - 12 Bird in a cage
  - 13 Trick-taking card game
  - 15 Test site
  - 17 Time of life
  - 18 Affirmative vote
  - 20 French brandy
  - 21 Hold fast
  - 23 Upland
  - 25 Hot spot
  - 26 Wild goat
  - 27 Gusto
  - 28 Scheme
  - Down**
  - 1 Film genre
  - 2 Unearthly
  - 4 Behave
  - 6 Indonesian capital
  - 7 Hotel posting
  - 8 Heaven's front door (6,5)
  - 9 Kick the bucket (4,3,4)
  - 14 Razor-billed bird
  - 16 Past history, possibly
  - 19 Deluxe
  - 20 Bay of Naples isle
  - 22 Identical
  - 24 Bring into play

### 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

## MUSIC FOR SOUL

An artiste recites a patriotic song during a programme organised by Odia Language, Literature and Culture department on the occasion of 77th Independence Day celebration at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



# New rly line to cover 5 dists EOW nabs techie in crypto scam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, August 16:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday approved seven projects under Ministry of Railways with an estimated cost of around ₹32,500 crore. The projects included laying of third line between Nergundi - Barang and Khurda Road - Vizianagaram in Bhubaneswar.



■ The length of the new line passing through Odisha will be 184 km at a projected cost of ₹2,685.09 crore

■ Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the route is crucial as it connects the eastern parts with southern India

According to the Railway ministry, the third line will be of total 385 km involving a project cost of ₹4,962.87 crore. At least five districts - Bhadrak, Jajpur, Khurda, Cuttack and Ganjam - will be covered under the project. The length of the new line passing through Odisha will be 184 km and the project cost to be ₹2,685.09 crore.

Addressing the media here, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said this route is very important as it connects the eastern parts with the southern India. He also said that there

has been a lot of demand for expansion of third line as a lot of students, labourers and people for healthcare facilities travel to Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai from states like Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.

"This is a trunk route of transportation," he said, adding that the work for the third line from Kolkata to Bhadrak is about to complete. The minister further said that the detailed project report for third line between Vizag

and Chennai is under process and the expansion would be approved soon.

Vaishnaw said that the third line will ease transportation of domestic coal to south India through all rail routes from Talcher, coal from Paradip and Gopalpur ports to steel plants and raw materials (clinker, pet coke etc) for cement plants from Paradip port. This will also benefit in export of steel from various steel plants and faster movement of iron ore from mines in

Keonjhar district to various ports.

"The proposals of multi-tracking will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways," Vaishnaw stated.

The Rail Minister further said the projects, covering 35 districts in nine states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal - will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by 2,339 km and create 7.06 crore man-days for the people of these states.

"These are essential routes for transportation of varied basket of commodities such as food-grains, fertilizers, coal, cement, fly-ash, iron & finished steel, clinkers, crude oil, lime stone, edible oil and other goods. The capacity augmentation work will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 200 MTPA (million tonne per annum)," he said.

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police arrested a man from Bhubaneswar in connection with the ₹1,000-crore STA crypto-ponzi scam, an official statement said.

Ratnakar Palai was arrested Tuesday and produced before the Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Act, 2011 (OPIED) Court in Cuttack Wednesday.

The EOW statement said Ratnakar, 45, is an important up-line member of STA having a huge number of members below him (known as down-line members) in pyramid-based schemes. He is very close to Gurtej Singh and Nirod Das, the India and Odisha chief of the ponzi company.

The Solar Techno Alliance (STA) has more than 2 lakh members (pan India) mainly in the states like Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Assam.



## IN A NUTSHELL

ACCUSED RATNAKAR PALAI IS AN M TECH IN IT FROM KARNATAKA UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE AND CLAIMS TO BE AN INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER, ENTREPRENEUR AND INVESTMENT GURU

HE IS AN IMPORTANT UP-LINE MEMBER OF STA HAVING A HUGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS BELOW HIM IN PYRAMID-BASED SCHEMES

THE SOLAR TECHNO ALLIANCE HAS MORE THAN 2 LAKH MEMBERS ACROSS INDIA

STA was launched in September 2021.

Palai is an M Tech in IT from Karnataka University, Bangalore and claims to be an international speaker, entrepreneur and investment guru.

He is also the propaganda head and media influencer of STA in Odisha. He used to run a YouTube channel for wider publicity of this scheme. He is

a member of some other such dubious scams too which is under scrutiny.

He also runs an institute namely 'Learn to Earn'. However, after the arrest of Gurtej and Nirod, he either deleted or deactivated his social media accounts. He had also visited Goa along with Nirod to participate in the STA celebration, the EOW said.

## SITHARAMAN BEGINS 2-DAY ODISHA VISIT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman arrived here Wednesday on a two-day visit to the state during which she will participate in a series of events, Thursday, officials said.

Sitharaman, who was accompanied by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, went to the BJP state headquarters from the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) airport to join a memorial meeting in honour of former party leader and the first Mayor of Cuttack, Nibedita Pradhan.

Nibedita Pradhan passed away August 10. The Union ministers also paid tribute to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary.

Thursday, they will visit the Lord Jagannath Temple in Puri in the morning, and take part in a sand art session on 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' by sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik.

They will also participate in a plantation drive at Puri and visit the birthplace of noted freedom fighter Saheed Jayee Rajguru. Later, the finance minister will attend the inauguration of the 20th National CA Conference in the state Capital, the officials added.

## KANDHAMAL NUN RAPE CASE

### Victim appears in Cuttack court to record evidence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, August 16:** Nine years after the conviction in the sensational Kandhamal nun rape case, the survivor appeared before the district and sessions judge court here Wednesday to present evidence against 18 other accused in the case.

The nun's evidence could not, however, be recorded as the Odisha government has not yet appointed a lawyer for her.

Sources in the court said another date for recording her statements will be fixed soon after the appointment of her lawyer by the state government.

The nun, who was 25-year old at the time of the crime, had alleged that she was gangraped August 25, 2008, after a mob ransacked and attacked the local pastoral centre after the murder of religious leader Laxmanananda Saraswati in Kandhamal August 23. The state Crime

Branch police had arrested and chargesheeted nine people in the gangrape of the nun on the basis of an FIR registered at K Nuagaon police station of Kandhamal district. It had filed three chargesheets separately accusing total 30 people in the case.

After a nearly six-year-long trial of the nine who were chargesheeted, the sessions court here convicted three of them, including the prime accused, Mitu Patnaik in March 2014. Six others were acquitted.

The case is being heard in Cuttack after an appeal by the nun.

While Patnaik alone was convicted for the rape and sentenced to 11 years rigorous imprisonment, two others - Gajendra Digal and Saroj Badhei - were found guilty of outraging the victim's modesty, obscene act and criminal intimidation and were sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment.

## Konark wheel at Times Square



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New York, August 16:** Celebrity chef Vikas Khanna unveiled a replica of Odisha's famous Konark Sun Temple wheel at the iconic Times Square in New York City on the occasion of India's Independence Day.

He was joined by Randhir Jaiswal, the Consul General of India in New York, Indo-American Arts Council and Indian-Americans who turned up in huge num-

bers to witness the flag hoisting ceremony Tuesday.

Several artists from Odisha's Lalitgiri village have worked for months on the hand-crafted replication, which is made of sandstone and weighs approximately 4,000 pounds.

"While I have been dreaming and conceptualising about this moment for almost five years, the brilliant artists at work in India have toiled day and night for many, many

months to make this come alive! This will be a magical moment," Khanna had tweeted earlier.

The art replica will also be displayed as a symbol of unity between the Indian diaspora and America in Khanna's upcoming New York City restaurant in 2024.

Khanna had said he was inspired by the sand Konark wheel sculpted by Odisha's renowned sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik.

Responding to a video of the unveiling, Patnaik wrote on X (formerly Twitter): "You have created history by unveiling the replica of world heritage monument Konark wheel in Times Square on the occasion of Indian Independence Day. This is a proud moment for all of us. Thank you again for contributions in promoting Indian art and culture."

It took 12 years and 12,000 artisans to build the 13th century Konark Sun Temple, a monumental representation of the chariot of the Sun god, which is a Unesco-designated World Heritage Site.

The 24 wheels of the chariot are decorated with symbolic designs and led by seven horses symbolising time.

Ministry of Finance  
Government of India

# Amnesty Schemes under GST

- For Non-Filers of GSTR-4 | GSTR-9 | GSTR-10 | Returns
- For Revocation of Cancellation of Registration
- For deemed withdrawal of Best Judgement Assessment order

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### Avail the Benefits and become a Compliant Taxpayer

GST Amnesty Scheme	For more details, please refer
Late fee for filing of FORM GSTR-4 returns for the quarters from July 2017 to March 2019 or for the F.Ys. from 2019-20 to 2021-22 has been reduced to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil for Nil returns</li> <li>• ₹ 500/- (₹ 250/- CGST + ₹ 250/- SGST) for other than Nil returns</li> </ul> if returns are filed on or before 31.08.2023	Notification No. 22/2023-Central Tax dated 17.07.2023 read with Notification No.02/2023 -Central Tax dated 31.03.2023 and Principal Notification No. 73/2017-Central Tax dated 29.12.2017
Maximum late fee is restricted to ₹ 20,000/- (₹ 10,000/- CGST + ₹ 10,000/- SGST) for filing of Annual Return in FORM GSTR-9 for any, of the F.Ys. from 2017-18 to 2021-22, if filed on or before 31.08.2023	Notification No. 25/2023-Central Tax dated 17.07.2023 read with Notification No. 07/2023-Central Tax dated 31.03.2023
Late fee for filing of Final Return in FORM GSTR-10 has been reduced to ₹ 1,000/- (₹ 500/- CGST + ₹ 500/- SGST), if filed on or before 31.08.2023	Notification No. 26/2023-Central Tax dated 17.07.2023 read with Notification No. 08/2023-Central Tax dated 31.03.2023
Registered persons whose registration was cancelled on or before 31.12.2022 due to non-filing of returns, may file application for revocation of cancellation of registration after filing of all returns pending upto the effective date of cancellation of registration alongwith payment of due tax, interest, penalty and late fee thereon on or before 31.08.2023	Notification No. 23/2023-Central Tax dated 17.07.2023 read with Notification No. 03/2023-Central Tax dated 31.03.2023
Best Judgement Assessment orders issued on or before 28.02.2023 for non-furnishing of valid FORM GSTR-3B returns will be deemed to be withdrawn if such returns are filed on or before 31.08.2023 alongwith payment of due tax, interest and late fee thereon	Notification No. 24/2023-Central Tax dated 17.07.2023 read with Notification No. 06/2023-Central Tax dated 31.03.2023

For more details, please scan





## Naveen inaugurates docu film on Hockey

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** The Sports and Youth Services department, in partnership with Hockey India, premiered the documentary film 'India's Game - a compelling account of a sports team that united the nation and ignited the flame of national pride.'

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the premiere at the Convention Centre of Lok Seva Bhawan in Bhubaneswar this evening. He also felicitated the hockey legends and hockey historians for their contribution to Hockey.

Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik reiterated the significance of the documentary. He said, "On the august occasion of the Independence Day, we dedicate this documentary to all the freedom fighters who fought for the dream of Independent India and to all the hockey players who won Olympic gold medals bringing glory to the nation. This film is a tribute to the spirit of hockey and Indian nationalism."

The film was made based on the original idea of 5T Secretary VK Pandian to document the role of Hockey in Indian nationalism. He was inspired by the life experience of Biju Patnaik,



Legendary freedom fighter and father of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The documentary, created by Level Films UK, chronicles the extraordinary journey of the Indian team that soared to victory against formidable adversaries including Hitler's Germany, Great Britain, and Pakistan, securing back-to-back Olympic gold medals.

The premiere was attended by hockey legends Gurbux Singh, Harbinder Singh and also current Indian hockey stars Rani Rampal, Manpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas as well as Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey among several other international hockey players from the state.

## METRO RAIL PROJECT DPR

# First phase: 26km length, 20 stations

WORK FOR METRO RAIL PROJECT IS LIKELY TO START BY THE END OF DECEMBER



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has prepared the detailed project report (DPR) for first phase of state's first metro rail project and submitted it to the state government Wednesday.

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has submitted the DPR to Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena here.

April 1 2023, Utkal Dibasa, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had sanctioned the metro rail project under 5T mandate connecting Bhubaneswar Airport -Trishulia, Cuttack, which will be subsequently extended to cover Khurda, Puri and other areas of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack city.

In the meanwhile, Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has been notified August 3, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) & General Manager (Administration) have been appointed.

DMRC after conducting traffic survey, geo-technical investigation, topo-graphic survey, environmental & social impact assessments, completed the detailed project report preparation and submitted it to the Chief Secretary Wednesday in the meeting held by Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Corporation.

According to the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the Phase-I of Bhubaneswar Metro Rail will cover Biju Patnaik Airport, Capital Hospital, Sishu Bhawan, Bapuji Nagar, Bhubaneswar railway station, Ram Mandir Square, Vani Vihar, Acharya Vihar Square, Jaydev Vihar Square, Xavier Square, Rail Sadan, District Centre, Damana Square, Patia Square, KIIT Square, Nandan Vihar, Raghunathpur, Nandankanan, Phulapokhari and Trisulia Square, Cuttack covering a total length of 26 km with 20 stations.

Work for the much-highlighted metro rail project in Capital regions is likely to start by the end of December 2023.

## Capital city celebrates 77th Independence Day

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** Capital City Bhubaneswar celebrated the 77th Independence Day Tuesday with all patriotism, gusto and fervour.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik hoisted the Tricolour at the Exhibition Ground in the state Capital and took the salute of five regiments, including a regiment from Chhattisgarh Police.

In his address to people on the occasion, the Chief Minister paid glowing tributes to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and several illustrious freedom fighters from Odisha. He reminded people of the contributions of these great freedom fighters saying that their sacrifices to the freedom struggle have enabled all countrymen to live in a free country.

Talking about the progress made by Odisha in the recent years, Patnaik said, "Odisha has made rapid progress in various fields, especially education, farming, healthcare, infrastructure and disaster management. The economy of the state also grew by leaps and bounds and we have been able to eradicate poverty to a great extent."



**MARCHING ON:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik taking the salute from various police regiments at the Republic Day parade held Tuesday at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar

The Chief Minister called on everyone to contribute towards the progress and development of Odisha and make it the best state in the country.

### I-Day at AIIMS Bhubaneswar

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, celebrated the 77th Independence Day with enthusiasm and patriotic zeal. Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas hoisted the national flag as the chief guest. In his address, Biswas highlighted the remarkable achievements of AIIMS Bhubaneswar in the field of healthcare, medical educa-

tion and research. The institute has consistently played a pivotal role in providing high-quality healthcare services to the people of Eastern India, further establishing itself as a beacon of medical excellence, added Biswas.

### Schools celebrate I-Day

BJEM School, Bhubaneswar celebrates the 77th Independence Day, observed as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with reverence and patriotic fervour. The occasion this year was truly special as the school is celebrating the 50th year (Golden Jubilee Year) of its existence. Chief guest Lt. Col. Prasun Kumar Panda, administrative officer, 6BN NCC, Puri, hoisted the Tricolour in the presence of Raghunath Mishra, chairman, SMC, Sandhya Jena, principal, Pallabi Mohapatra, vice principal, Lion's Club members, members of the SMC, administrative supervisors, supervisors, staff members, students and parents. The National Anthem was recited with deep feelings of patriotism and respect to all freedom fighters.

Similarly, the campus of DAV Unit VIII surged with pride during the celebration of 77th Independence Day. The day was marked by the hoisting of Tricolour by the chief guest and

the reverberating note of Jana Gana Mana overflowing in the spectrum. Colonel Dinesh Kumar Dash of Army Air Defence joined the event as the chief guest and called upon students to be a part of 'Meri Mati Mera Desh'.

Chairman Santosh Upadhyay and principal Ipsita Das greeted the students urging them to extend their helping hands to the poor and downtrodden of the society.

### At Unmukt Foundation

Bhubaneswar-based Unmukt Foundation's 77th Independence Day celebrations painted a vivid tableau of culture, camaraderie, and patriotism. Retired Indian Navy Captain Saroj Kumar Pradhan, co-founder Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYS) Jagadananda DSP Crime Against Women & Children Wing, CID-CB, Bhubaneswar Iman Kalyan, were among the important dignitaries on the occasion.

### Vaccination drive for street dogs

On the occasion of Independence Day, Animal Welfare Trust Ekamra organised an Anti Rabies vaccination drive for street dogs at Salia Sahi slum in City. The trust members also celebrated Independence Day at the slum with flag hoisting followed by distribution of sweets to the kids.



**PATRIOTIC FERVOUR:** Kids perform during a cultural programme organised Tuesday to celebrate Independence Day at BJEM School in Bhubaneswar



**UP IN ARMS:** Members of Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association (OSTA) hold a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar seeking fulfillment of their various demands, Wednesday

## 3 bridges to be constructed in Bargarh; ₹39cr approved

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday sanctioned ₹39 crore for construction of three bridges in Bargarh district which will benefit over 7.25 lakh people.

The projects which aimed at meeting the communication requirements of the people and help boost the socio-economic development of the area were sanctioned based on the feedback from the local people, a release from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

Among the three sanctioned bridges, there is a major bridge at Barpali which will be constructed over the Zealot canal of Barpali. An expenditure of ₹15 crore will be incurred on this 120-metre-long bridge. It will connect Bargarh and Barpali block headquarters and provide a communication facility to the district headquarters. This will



benefit about 2.25 lakh people, the release said.

The second bridge over the Aagan canal in Bargarh municipal area will be constructed at an expenditure of ₹12 crore. It will be a 60-metre-long bridge to connect Parpali and Bheden block headquarters with Bargarh district headquarters. This will benefit 2.50 lakh people.

Similarly, another bridge will be built on a Sarala canal. A sum of ₹12 crore has been sanctioned for this 150-metre-long bridge. It will connect Bhatli with Bargarh and Attabira block headquarters. This will benefit another 2.50 lakh people, the release said.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Through Affidavit No.221-Vol-1 Dt.14.8.2023 before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I, Sandeep Kumar Sharma, R/o Flat No.-402, Ahalya Enclave, Rangamatia, Near Mancheswar Railway Station, Mancheswar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751017 has changed my name to Sandeep Kumar Sharma for all purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit before the Notary, Talcher, I, Prashanta Kumar Sahoo, S/o Pravakar Sahoo, R/o At- Station Road, Sikhyakapada, P.O./P.S./Dist.- Angul, Odisha- 759122, declare by this Affidavit No.-5898 dated 16.08.2023 that now onwards I shall be known as Prasanta Kumar Sahoo for all future purpose.

I, Shaikh Firoj Ali, S/o Sk. Sonallah, At-Hoseni Mohalla Sayedpur, P.O./P.S.: Binjharpur, Dist.: Jajpur, 755004, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.15690 Dated 16.08.2023 that now onwards I shall be known as Sk. Firoj Ali for all future purposes.

## Reduced grey matter in brain linked to teen smoking

**L**evels of grey matter in two parts of the brain may be linked to a desire to start smoking during adolescence and the strengthening of nicotine addiction, a new study has revealed.

A team of scientists, led by the universities of Cambridge and Warwick in the UK and Fudan University in China, analysed brain imaging and behavioural data of over 800 young people at the ages of 14, 19 and 23.

They found that, on average, teenagers who started smoking by 14 years of age had markedly less grey matter in a section of the left frontal lobe linked to decision-making and rule-breaking.

Low grey matter volume in

the left side of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex may be an "inherited biomarker" for nicotine addiction.

In addition, the scientists found that the opposite, right part of the same brain region also had less grey matter in smokers.

Importantly, loss of grey matter in the right prefrontal cortex appears to speed up only after someone has started smoking. This region is linked to the seeking of sensations, according to the study that appeared in Nature Communications.

The team argued that less grey matter in the left forebrain could lower cognitive function and lead to "disinhibition" -- impulsive, rule-breaking behaviour arising from a limited ability to



consider consequences. This may increase the chances of smoking at a young age.

"The initiation of a smoking habit is most likely to occur during adolescence. Any way of detecting an increased chance of

this, so we can target interventions, could help save millions of lives," said Professor Trevor Robbins, co-senior author from Cambridge's Department of Psychology.

Annual deaths from cigarettes

are expected to reach eight million worldwide by the end of the decade.

"In our study, reduced grey matter in the left prefrontal cortex is associated with increased rule-breaking behaviour as well as early smoking experiences. It could be that this rule-breaking leads to the violation of anti-smoking norms," said Robbins.

Professor Barbara Sahakian from Cambridge's Department of Psychiatry said, "The ventromedial prefrontal cortex is a key region for dopamine, the brain's pleasure chemical. As well as a role in rewarding experiences, dopamine has long been believed to affect self-control".

"Less grey matter across this

brain region may limit cognitive function, leading to lower self-control and a propensity for risky behaviour, such as smoking."

The scientists also looked at the right ventromedial prefrontal cortex. Grey matter loss occurs in everyone as they age.

However, those who smoked from age 14 as well as those smoking from age 19 both ended up with excessive grey matter loss in the right frontal lobe.

Data at age 23 showed that grey matter volume in the right prefrontal cortex shrank at a faster pace in those who continued to smoke, suggesting an influence of smoking itself on prefrontal function, the findings showed.

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'MO GHARA' SCHEME

# Loans denied to SC/STs as rules play spoilsport

Sections 4 and 5 of Odisha Schedule Area Transfer of Immovable Property Act 2/1956 have proved an impediment in sanctioning loans under 'Mo Ghara' to the scheduled community members

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nandapur, August 16:** Members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities residing in the state are soon going to be deprived of loan under 'Mo Ghara' housing scheme implemented by the state government, a report said Wednesday.

They are a worried lot nowadays as banks are strictly denying loan to the members of SC and ST communities for house building under the scheme.

This has happened as Sections 4 and 5 of Odisha Schedule Area Transfer of Immovable Property Act 2/1956 have proved an impediment in sanctioning loans under 'Mo Ghara' to the scheduled community members.

As a result, the SC and ST communities residing in Nandapur block are likely to be deprived of loan under state government sponsored 'Mo Ghara' yojana.

The SC community comprises 10 per cent of the total population while the ST members are 36 per cent of the total population in Nandapur block.

The SC community is 14.2 per cent of the population while the ST members are 50.6 per cent of



the population in Koraput district. Similarly, 39.98 per cent of SC and ST communities in the state will not be able to benefit from this scheme.

It is alleged that the scheme is only meant to serve the members of the general caste and backward caste communities and not the members of SC and ST communities.

Reports said that the state government announced loan facilities under 'Mo Ghara' scheme to facilitate construction of new houses for the families deprived of Centre-sponsored housing scheme Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Accordingly, the beneficiaries applied for loan at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) for their inclusion in the scheme.

Later, the concerned banks called the applicants and declined to sign any contract with them for loan under Sections 4 and 5 of Odisha Schedule Area Transfer of Immovable Property Act 2/1956.

Feeling let down, the beneficiaries met the Nandapur block development officer (BDO) Sujit Mishra and drew his attention

towards their problem. The BDO also expressed his inability to help them on the pretext of the same rules. Left with no other option, the beneficiaries drew the attention of Pottangi MLA Pitam Padhi. He listened to their problem and has urged the state government to change the rules.

It is learnt the deliberations are going on at the government level but nothing has come out yet. The MLA said that a change in rule will be approved in the next Cabinet meeting and a motion will be moved in the Assembly.

Notably, the state government has imposed the above restrictions and rules to safeguard the landed properties of SC and ST communities from being usurped up by the influential and mighty. This rule has remained unchanged till now.

As a result, members of SC and ST communities are unable to mortgage their land properties in banks in lieu of business, housing or educational loans. The same problem has come to haunt them while applying for loans for house building under 'Mo Ghara' scheme sponsored by the state government.

## Labourer killed, 5 critical in blast at stone quarry

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Soro, August 16:** A labourer was killed while five others sustained critical injuries during blasting of explosives at an illegal stone quarry at Mahumuhan Khanjamahal hill under this block in Balasore district, Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Tiri Singh of Mitrapur village under Nilagiri block in Balasore district. Six of them came under a huge rock during the blast.

On being informed, fire personnel rushed to the spot and rescued the workers from under the rock. While one of them died on the spot, the rest five were admitted to Soro hospital. The local tehsildar, police and fire personnel assisted in rescue operation. Police are yet to recover the body as the quarry owner is stated to have concealed the body.



Reports said quarry number-73 is owned by one Pradip Dhar but it is lying closed due to expiry of the lease term. The local administration has clamped prohibitory orders under Section-144 at the quarry site. Locals, however, said that a man from nearby Gobindpur village is blasting explosives to extract stones despite imposition of curbs.

## Croc drags woman into deep water, devours her

THIS IS THE FIFTH INCIDENT OF CROCODILES KILLING PEOPLE IN ODISHA IN 3 MONTHS



PNN & AGENCIES

**Jajpur, August 16:** Residents of a village in Jajpur district were witness to the terrible sight of a crocodile devouring a woman in Birupa river Wednesday.

The 35-year-old woman identified as Jyotsna Jena was dragged into the deep waters of the river by the crocodile when she was bathing after washing clothes in it at Palatpur village in Bari block of the district, police said. The woman tried to free herself from the jaws of the reptile, but failed, the police said.

Locals present at the river bank saw the crocodile dragging away the woman and rushed to inform her family.

They watched helplessly as the reptile devoured the woman on the other side of the river, eyewitnesses said. Some of them even shot videos of the ghastly incident, which went viral.



The fire brigade personnel reached the spot on being informed and recovered a mutilated portion of the woman's body as the crocodile had eaten the major portion of it, officials said. Forest department workers too arrived at the spot and launched an awareness campaign in the surrounding villages over the public address system to stop people from going near the bank of the river till the crocodile is trapped, forest officials said.

The incident has triggered panic among the people of the area as most of them have to depend on the river in the absence of other sources of water.

This is the fifth incident of crocodiles killing people in Odisha in three months. In June-July four people were dragged away and killed by crocodiles in the neighbouring Kendrapara district, officials said.

## Bhadrak CDPO, supervisor in Vig net over bribery

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, August 16:** Vigilance sleuths have arrested Bhadrak block CDPO Sunanda Das and supervisor Sulochana Behera for taking ₹10,000 bribe from an Anganwadi worker, Wednesday.

As per sources, the recruitment of an Anganwadi worker at Saragadia mini Anganwadi centre under Bania panchayat in this block was done July 7, 2020. Itishree Sethi, daughter of Prasanta Kumar Sethi of the village, was recruited there.

However, at the time of her recruitment, CDPO had demanded ₹50,000 as bribe for the post. But Itishree did not pay the bribe amount at that time. Later the CDPO threatened Itishree again and again that if she does not pay a minimum of ₹10,000 as bribe then she will have to face various problems in her job. In this regard, Prasanta complained at the Balasore Vigilance office Tuesday.



As per the instruction of CDPO Sunanda Das, Prashanta was handing over ₹10,000 bribe to Sulochana at the district social welfare office when the Vigilance officials caught Sulochana red-handed and arrested both Sulochana and Sunanda. A case (21/23) was registered against the duo by the Vigilance department.

Balasore Vigilance additional SP SK Majhi, DSP Dakshin Charan Murmu, Inspectors Dushmanta Nayak, Uluki Behera, Jasmini Poi and Bhadrak DSP Santosh Kumar Samantaray along with other staff were involved in the joint raid conducted by Balasore and Bhadrak Vigilance teams.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
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Advised Value (₹) : 87,07,072.30, EMD (₹) : 1,74,200.00, Period of Completion: 180 Days.  
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**Rail Wheel Plant/Bela**  
(Distt: Saron, Bihar-841221)  
E-Open Tender Notice No.: S/RWP/E/15/2023-24, dated : 14.08.2023. Principal Chief Materials Manager /Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the President of India invites online "e-Open Tender", through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in), for supply of following Stores Item at RWP/Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs. SN 1, Tender No. : 01231100, Short Description of item : Steel Shots, Quantity : 100MT, Date of Tender Closing / Opening : 11.09.2023 at 14:00 Hrs. 1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). 2. The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in the all concerned newspapers.  
PCMM, Rail Wheel Plant, Bela RWP/CPRO/Advt/2023-24/46

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. 27/E/SP/ENGG/2023-24 Dated : 09.08.2023  
1) e-Tender No. 14-eT-SDENS-SBP-23  
NAME OF WORK : REPAIRS TO BACHELOR ACCOMMODATION AT TITLAGARH STATION FOR UTILISATION AS RUNNING ROOM IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION.  
Approx. Cost of the Work (₹): 34,47,293.68, EMD(₹): 69,000/-  
2) e-Tender No. 15-eT-SDENS-SBP-23  
NAME OF WORK : RENOVATION OF RAILWAY INSTITUTE AND IMPROVEMENT TO BAMDINTON COURT IN RAILWAY INSTITUTE AT TITLAGARH OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.  
Approx. Cost of the Work (₹): 28,24,763.18, EMD (₹): 56,500/-  
Completion Period for the work : 06 (Six) Months (for both the tenders).  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. on 31.08.2023 (for both the tenders).  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : <https://www.reps.gov.in>  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / Corrigenda issued for this tender.  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / Sambalpur

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
SUPPLY OF MATERIALS  
E-Tender Notice No. Sr. DMM/SBP/Stores/ Tender Publication/08/2023, Date : 11.08.2023  
1) Tender No. 40235549 :  
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM : 132 KV OUTDOOR, SINGLE PHASE OIL FILLED TYPE POTENTIAL TRANSFORMER OF RATIO (132 / ROOT 3) KV / (110 / ROOT 3) V CLASS 0.2 BURDEN 50 VA AND SECONDARY 03 CORE WINDING AS PER LATEST GRID CODE/ METERING REGULATION/AMENDMENT TO REGULATION OF CONCERNED AUTHORITY (FOR ABT METERING PURPOSE).  
Tender Value (₹) : 28,87,979.20, EMD @ 2% (₹) : 57,760.00.  
Tender Closing Time and Date : 1500 Hrs. of 07.09.2023.  
2) Tender No. 40235549 :  
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM : SUPPLY OF 132KV SINGLE PHASE OIL FILLED OUT DOOR TYPE CURRENT TRANSFORMER OF RATIO 400-200/1-1A, CLASS 0.2S, 10VA AS PER LATEST GRID CODE / METERING REGULATIONS / AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS OF CONCERN AUTHORITY.  
Earnest Money (INR) : ₹60,970.00  
Tender Closing Time and Date : 1500 Hrs. of 08.09.2023.  
Complete information including tender documents is available in website : <https://www.reps.gov.in>  
Senior Divisional Materials Manager / Sambalpur

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
1) e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-34-23  
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : MODIFICATION OF 33 KV POWER LINE CROSSING AT 21 NOS. LOCATIONS IN MAIN LINE OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.  
Approx Cost of the work (₹): 3,67,27,163.18, EMD (₹): 3,33,600.00  
2) e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-35-23  
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION OF 11 NOS. OF PATHWAY OF 700 M X 1.5 M SIZE WITH LIGHTING & WELDING FACILITIES AT TALCHER (TLHR).  
Approx Cost of the work (₹): 66,30,880.29, EMD (₹): 1,26,600.00  
3) e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-36-23  
DESCRIPTION OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH REDEVELOPMENT OF PURI STATION TEMPORARY PASSAGE.  
Approx Cost of the work (₹): 95,31,390.24, EMD (₹): 1,90,600.00  
Completion period : 6 Months (for SI. No. 1 & 2), 3 Months (for SI. No. 3).  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 24.08.2023 (for all the tenders).  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.reps.gov.in>  
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigendum issued for this tender.  
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), Khurda Road

## GACR CELEBRATES FOUNDATION DAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, August 16:** The Government Autonomous College Rourkela (GACR), one of the largest colleges in the state as far as students' capacity is concerned, celebrated its 63rd Foundation Day Wednesday on its campus at Panposh here.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Labour and ESI Sarada Nayak, who is also an alumni of this prestigious institution, said, "It is indeed a moment of great satisfaction and pride for me that once a student, I am here today as the chief guest. This is one of the best moments of my life."

In his brief speech, he urged both the teachers and the students to fulfil the responsibilities in their own and the country's interests. "I must tell the teachers to go beyond their classroom teaching and create new opportunities for the students. Prepare your own course plan and execute that accordingly but at the same time make the classes more interesting and give more space for creative thinking."

The journey of 63 years has been very arduous and memorable for the college. It began with just 53 students and three teachers and one principal at Sector-4, in a building that was allotted by Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). The purpose was to facilitate higher education for the children of its employees.

"From there to today, when we have over 8,000 students including those of IGNOU and OSOU, the journey has really been tough and also encouraging," said Principal Dr. Bijaya Behera in his short speech. He urged the long list of alumnus to come forward in the greater interest of the college.

The earlier avatar of GACR was Rourkela Science College when it was set up in 1961. Three years later, it was fully taken over by the government and in 1967 it offered courses in humanities also. "To date over 80,000 graduates have passed out from here, and today there are many sitting in very high positions at different places," said the principal.

## 2 KIDS DROWN IN KUDARSAHI DAM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, August 16:** In a tragic incident, two children drowned in Kudarsahi dam near Gandalpada village under Rugudi police limits in Keonjhar district, Wednesday.

The deceased children were identified as Madan Munda (9), son of Raghu Munda and Budhuni Munda (10), daughter of Rensa Munda of the village.

As per reports, the two children had gone to Kudarsahi dam for taking bath. But when the duo did not return home for long, their family members started a frantic search for them.

Later, their bodies were fished out of the dam and sent to Barbil Community Health Centre for post-mortem, said Rugudi PS IIC Rabintra Mundari.

**WATCH HIM LIVE**  
AT RABINDRA MANDAP ON 18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2023 AT 7.00PM.  
ZAIN FOUNDATION TRUST PRESENTS  
**KUMUD MISHRA IN DHUMRAPAN**  
directed by akarsh khurana | written by adhir bhat | music rajat tiwari | set design vivek jadhav | CAST-kumud mishra | shubhrajyoti barat | ghanshyam lalsa | siddharth kumar | sarthak kakar | abhishek saha | taaruk raina | ashmita meghrajani.  
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FOCUS NATION

# CONTOURS OF CONFLICT



**Come September, and we have India presiding over the G20 Summit. Against the disturbances from several parts of the country, communal or ethnic, fomented or otherwise, it is indeed doubtful whether India could play its leadership role without blemish**

Meities and the minority tribal Kukis, a situation which perhaps finds no parallel in recent times. But it also brings into relief the callousness and indifference of the administrations at the state and Centre almost to a point of no-return.

A determined Opposition alliance demanding a statement from the PM on Manipur drew the Parliament to an impasse. The no confidence motion brought by the Opposition demanding a fuller discussion on Manipur brought the PM to the House no doubt but the way the discussions were conducted led one to believe that all was not well in the "mother of democracy." Haranguing opponents, jeering and hooting, calling names, remarks expunged, the Leader of the Opposition suspended, while the PM in his two and a half hour speech speaking on Manipur for hardly 10 minutes, that too after more than an hour and a half of his meandering address critiquing the Congress, INDIA alliance, and Rahul Gandhi in particular and the combined Opposition walking out of the House were the order of the day.

Come September, and we have India presiding over the G20 Summit (7-8 Sept). Against the disturbances from several parts of the country, communal or ethnic, fomented or otherwise, it is indeed doubtful whether India could play its leadership role without blemish. Dark clouds on the Indian horizon in the form of inequality and inequity, social injustice, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, inflation, unemployment and its attendant evils in the form of increasing lumpenisation in the society could threaten to darken the sky above Pragati Maidan where the Summit would be held. India's projecting itself as the spokesman for the Global South could be irretrievably damaged if the problems of the developing and poor countries were to be appropriated by India instead of its mobilising the developed world's support for addressing them.

*The writer is a retired diplomat. Views are personal.*

Indian media as a balancing act of playing to the gallery on the Muslim question. His visits to the Al Hakim mosque and the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Al Issa as also receiving the Order of the Nile, burnished his credentials as a compassionate leader, reaffirming the narrative that all religious communities lived well together in India.

The high-level visits were successful in garnering a high level of sophisticated defence, scientific and commercial agreements and technology partnerships drawing India even closer to the Western orbit, though observers in India and the US sounded sceptical if India would ever join the Western alliance or side with the US in a future conflict with China. India will still guard its "strategic autonomy" and do business with both the US and China-led blocs in a largely multipolar world. With the tag of the most populous country and the 5th largest economy, Modi's wooing investors and Indian-American CEOs to look at India for investments fitted well into Washington's "friend-shoring" policy in building up global supply chain resilience, with India as a key partner. However, this needs to be contrasted at home with dismal socio-economic indicators such as slide in exports and FDIs and flight of billion-

aire Indians in droves out of India while the RBI protected them under the government's pro-corporate policies. The problems of rampant unemployment and price rise remain as they are, only that they have become more acute and have started biting the common masses, not to speak of the poor whose conservative estimate still stands above 20% of the total population.

Now comes the larger question, does India's external image of a determined democracy on the march square up with the domestic scenario of a democracy in regression. There seems to be a mismatch, and a substantial one at that. While all the above visits were adding heft to the PM's global profile, a small state of 3.2 million people was literally burning in chaos and conflict. Conflicts at several levels, between two warring communities, between the police and one community, between the paramilitary and local police, between the state and its people, and between the ruling party and the opposition taking the battle to the portals of the Parliament, have benumbed the nation. Various civil society accounts as well as those of visiting groups to the trouble-infested state, have attested to the brutal and dreadful enmity between the majority Hindu



Malay Mishra

**INDIA WILL STILL GUARD ITS 'STRATEGIC AUTONOMY' AND DO BUSINESS WITH BOTH THE US AND CHINA-LED BLOCS IN A LARGELY MULTIPOLAR WORLD**

In an earlier article published in this newspaper I had put forth my reservations about the domestic scenario post the Modi visit to the US (June 20-23). The state visit was expectedly touted by Indian media as an all-time success, a ground-breaking visit, while the foreign media, both print and electronic, were either unfriendly or ambivalent to the visit. The US visit was followed by several other foreign visits. The Opposition INDIA alliance alleged in its no confidence motion that the PM was travelling to seven countries while Manipur was burning. The PM's brush with a journalist (her Muslim identity could have been coincidental) on the minorities question at his first-ever press conference (in 9 years of holding office) in Washington DC with his feigned ignorance and nonchalant observation that "democracy is in India's DNA," and that all minority communities lived together and were treated equally, was cruelly contrasted with what happened in Nuh, Gurugram and outlying areas of Haryana on July 31.

Modi's visit to Paris where he was feted by the Macron establishment as Chief Guest at France's Bastille Day celebrations coincided with the European Parliament moving a near-unanimous resolution against the Modi government for its inaction on Manipur, synchronised by statements both in UK and US foreign offices critiquing the government's handling of the Manipur carnage. Incidents of rape, looting, arson, murder and destruction of religious structures were noted by media reports (belatedly on account of a prolonged internet ban) as well as those of visiting political and humanitarian delegations. Though the attention of Christian nations of the West was drawn to the wanton destruction, burning and arson of Christian Kuki houses and churches in Manipur, the allegations were promptly rebutted by GOI under the specious plea of "internal affairs."

Both the visits plus the PM's stopovers in between in Egypt and UAE were played out by



Gordon Brown

**The spirit of the Afghan people is withstanding even the harshest punishments that the Taliban can mete out. Afghanistan's women and girls continue to fight for their rights despite the reality of near-certain retribution. The world must stand with them**

## Gender Apartheid

Gender persecution is a grievous crime against humanity. Having established gender apartheid by denying girls and women access to education, many members of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan can and should be held accountable under the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute.

On the second anniversary of the Taliban's reconquest, the ICC's chief prosecutor should take legal action against the individuals responsible for what are the most egregious, heinous, and vindictive abuses of human rights systematically and viciously imposed on girls today. If allowed to continue without sustained international opposition, these abuses will set a terrifying precedent for other regimes where discrimination against women remains endemic.

The time is right to do so: after two years of ever-intensifying repression, there appears to be division within the regime in Kabul, which has far too casually implemented a series of edicts from religious clerics based in Kandahar. To complement the independent actions of the ICC, the international community can take several initiatives now that could add pressure for policy changes.

Leaders from Muslim-majority countries should form a delegation and visit Afghanistan to meet not only with the Taliban but also with the country's religious elders. But even before that happens, these leaders and their Western counterparts must step up their efforts.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and other global powers should follow the European Union's lead in sanctioning those directly responsible for denying girls education. They should make resources available to online platforms to provide remote education and do more to finance underground schools for all of Afghanistan's children, male and female, so that schooling can proceed even in the face of the current ban. Such initiatives could also help Afghan girls access education beyond the country's borders in Pakistan and help sustain at least some of the progress made in the two decades before August 2021. At the same time, if the Taliban does reverse course and agrees to grant girls consistent and unrestricted access to education, the world must be ready to offer financial support.

The legal recommendations stem from an exhaustive review spearheaded by scholars detailing the grim situation facing Afghan girls and the Taliban's violation of international human-rights treaties. Their efforts painstakingly document just how far the regime has gone in excluding women and girls from secondary and tertiary education, and just how far Afghanistan has fallen short of upholding the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Taliban regime has also disregarded its responsibilities under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Its discriminatory practices against women and girls blatantly breach these conventions and have rightly drawn widespread condemnation. The CEDAW Committee, the CRC Committee, and other notable figures have all denounced the Taliban's regressive policies. Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, told the UN Human Rights Council that "grave, systematic, and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid."

Of course, Afghanistan has not ratified the instruments essential to implementing the CEDAW, the ICESCR, or the CRC. Nonetheless, the international community could pursue accountability through other means, including the reporting requirements and monitoring mechanisms that were established under these treaties. These allow bodies like the CEDAW Committee to enlist rapporteurs whose investigations would maintain continuous scrutiny of the Taliban's actions.

International criminal law offers an even larger window through which to sanction the Taliban. The United Nations has acknowledged education as an "enabling right" that is crucial for realising other human rights, and the Taliban's educational prohibitions clearly constitute gender-based persecution. According to the ICC's December 2022 Policy on the Crime of Gender Persecution, actions that deprive individuals of their fundamental rights – including education – fall under this category.

Many countries could also leverage their domestic legal frameworks to condemn and respond to the Taliban's suppression of women and girls' rights, including, potentially, through targeted sanctions.

All of these options should be on the table, because the need to assist Afghan girls has become more urgent than ever. Of the 80 edicts issued by the Taliban between August 2021 and last January, 54 target women and dismantle their rights. Recently, the regime issued additional bans on women and girls' participation in university medical exams, visits to cemeteries, and other activities. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has become the feared Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission has been dissolved, while legislation guaranteeing gender equality has been invalidated.

Even under intensifying repression by the Taliban, many Afghan women and girls remain defiant, attending covert schools and seeking university-level education online. Tragically, however, global support for their cause has been underwhelming.

To be sure, many governments, including in other Muslim-majority countries, have voiced objections to the Taliban's policies, citing religious scripture that disapproves of such discrimination. Their condemnations should be applauded, but protecting Afghan women and girls' rights also demands a greater international mobilisation.

As we in the international community respond to these issues, we must urge the ICC to use the anniversary of the Taliban's return to power to open an investigation into its grave rights violations. The regime's blatant disregard for international treaties, and especially its exclusion of women and girls from education, must no longer be ignored.

The spirit of the Afghan people is withstanding even the harshest punishments that the Taliban can mete out. Afghanistan's women and girls continue to fight for their rights despite the reality of near-certain retribution. The world must stand with them.

*The writer, a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is UN Special Envoy for Global Education. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE*

### WISDOM CORNER

- Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. **OSCAR WILDE**
- You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough. **MAE WEST**
- In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on. **ROBERT FROST**

### IN JEST THIS

## AirTags can help you find almost anything



Melvin Durai

**IF YOU WANT TO DETERMINE WHY YOUR HUSBAND COMES HOME LATE AFTER WORK AND IS NEVER HUNGRY, AN AIRTAG PLACED IN HIS CAR MAY GIVE YOU ANSWERS**

I don't know about you, but I am very slow to adopt new technology. For example, I do not own a smartwatch. I am quite happy wearing a dumbwatch. I mostly need a watch to tell me the date and time. I don't need it to tell me how many steps I walked, whether it's going to rain today or if my wife needs me to pick up eggs at the grocery store.

Perhaps the biggest reason I don't adopt new technology quickly is the price. When a gadget or device is introduced to the market, the price is usually too high for my budget – or the budget of anyone who buys me birthday gifts. Another reason is that I want other people to enjoy the product first. I don't want to selfishly deprive other people of the opportunity to be exposed to any potential side-effects. Once they've determined that the product is safe to use, then it's my turn to give it a try.

Of course, products are usually tested thoroughly before

they're introduced to the market. But manufacturers cannot predict every outcome, every potential use or misuse of a product. This is the case with the AirTag, a tracking device that Apple introduced in 2021. The AirTag, as small as a two-rupee coin, was designed to use Bluetooth signals to help people find missing objects, such as keys, bags, electronic devices and even vehicles.

Many people use AirTags to keep track of their luggage when they travel. For example, if you are flying from Mumbai to London and your suitcase goes missing, Apple's crowdsourced 'Find My' network will give you peace of mind by showing you that your suitcase is in Nairobi, Kenya. How do you get it back? Well, you look through Facebook to see if you can befriend someone in Kenya. You tell your new friend the exact location of the AirTag hidden in your suitcase, and he tracks it down and sends you a report: "I found it! I found

your AirTag! No sign of your suitcase though."

Okay, that's a worst-case scenario. In many cases, travellers have used AirTags to locate their missing luggage and then convinced airlines to retrieve them. They've also used it to locate vehicles that were stolen, using technology to outwit criminals.

But criminals and others have also used AirTags for illegal purposes. Some car thieves have placed AirTags on expensive vehicles in shopping malls and parking lots, so they can track them to homes and steal them at night.

People have also used AirTags to stalk other people or track them without their permission. If you want to determine why your husband comes home late after work and is never hungry, an AirTag placed in his car may give you answers. Is he stopping at someone's house every day? With the help of the AirTag, you'll be able to confront him: "You do not like my cooking? Is

that why you are stopping at your mother's house every night?"

Some people are also using AirTags to keep track of their dogs and cats. An AirTag can be attached to a pet's collar. If the pet goes missing, you can track it down. But if your pet has been stolen, you'd better hope that the thief isn't smart enough to remove the AirTag and place it under someone's car.

AirTags are also being used to keep track of children. But Apple does not approve of this. If you want to keep track of your kids, the company advises you to buy each of them an Apple Watch. They won't get lost, you'll be able to track the number of steps they take, and Apple will be more profitable.

As you can guess, I haven't yet used an AirTag. But if you're wondering if there's anything I'd like to track, the answer is 'yes.' I'd like to track my privacy. If I ever lose it, I hope it doesn't end up in Nairobi.

### Toilet man of India

Sir, It is sad that Bineshwar Pathak, the founder of Sulabh International, and who was popularly known as the "Toilet man of India," has passed away on the day when the nation was celebrating its 77th Independence Day. Pathak, who was pivotal for the advent of Swachh Bharat Mission, laid the foundation for Sulabh International that would go on to become one of the most influential social organisations in the world. The most ground-breaking initiative under Sulabh's banner was the introduction of the "Sulabh Shauchalaya" (Sulabh toilet) that were tech-friendly, socio-culturally acceptable and economically affordable. These toilets not only provided a hygienic alternative to the then-prevalent unsanitary practices, but also played a pivotal role in putting an end to the demeaning practice of manual scavenging. In 2016, the Indian Railways joined hands with Sulabh International and appointed Bineshwar Pathak as its brand ambassador for its Swachh Rail Mission, stepping up its efforts to keep railway premises clean. For his pioneering work, Pathak was conferred with the Padma Bhushan.

**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

### Piecemeal changes

Sir, Last year, on Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need to modernise the outdated British-era criminal laws. The process began based on recommendations from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, favouring a comprehensive approach. Recently the Union Home Minister introduced revised versions of the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act, now known as Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill respectively. Notably, the term 'Penal' has been replaced with 'Nyaya,' reflecting a shift from punishment-focused to justice-centered principles. However, critics argue that these changes primarily hold symbolic value, lacking substantial impact. Key concerns remain, particularly in vague provisions that could be misused by future governments. To achieve a meaningful transformation, experts stress the importance of comprehensive consultation with stakeholders and addressing the underlying issues. Piecemeal changes and surface-level alterations may not suffice.

**Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD**

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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



# 'Mountain-like challenge before Himachal'

STATE NEEDS A YEAR TO REBUILD INFRASTRUCTURE: CM SUKHU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla, August 16:** Himachal Pradesh will take a year to rebuild the infrastructure wrecked by the heavy rains this monsoon but the state is up to the "mountain-like challenge", Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said Wednesday.

In an interview with PTI, he said the estimated damage in the two devastating spells of heavy rain - this week and in July - is about Rs 10,000 crore.

Rains this week triggered landslides across the state, blocking roads and bringing down houses. About 60 people are dead, and more feared buried under the rubble.

The chief minister said it takes time to rebuild roads and water projects. But the government is speeding up the process. "We have to get the infrastructure fully restored within a year. I am working with this in mind."

"It's a big challenge, a mountain-like challenge. But we are not going to back away," he said.

The state government will continue with its vision to make Himachal Pradesh "self-reliant" in four years and the country's "most prosperous" state in 10 years. "But it will take a year for



Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu conducts an aerial survey to take stock of flood situation, in Kangra district, Wednesday

## Subdued I-Day in HP

**SHIMLA:** The 77th Independence Day Tuesday was a low-key affair in Himachal Pradesh with the traditional cultural programmes missing from official and district-level functions as the state mourns the deaths and destruction caused by incessant rains. The official state function was shifted from Manali to Shimla and it was presided over by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who hoisted the tricolour and inspected the parade. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla hoisted the national flag at the Raj Bhawan campus. Heavy rains have battered Himachal Pradesh over the past three days, triggering landslides and cloudbursts that blocked several roads and led to house collapse incidents. At least 53 people have died in the incidents. Police and State Disaster Response Force which are engaged in rescue operations did not take part in the parade.

us to rise from this tragedy," Sukhu, whose Congress govern

**Pegging the estimated damage in the two devastating spells of heavy rain - this week and in July - at about ₹10K-cr, Sukhu says the Himalayan state needs a year to rebuild infrastructure**

for the massive damage on the intensity of the rains since Sunday - saying this was the "first time" about 50 people died in a single day - and on the lack of "structural designing" in the state.

Buildings obstruct the natural course of water flow at places, and there is little attention paid to designing structures. "The river didn't enter homes, the homes entered the river," he said. He stopped short of identifying the widening of roads by the National Highways Authority of India as a significant cause, saying most of the landslides weren't at the edge of these roads.

The CM said climate change could have played a part. It never rained like this before in Lahaul-

Spiti, he said, giving an example.

During the interview, he indicated there would be new guidelines and tougher implementation of building rules. He cited issues like proper drainage, studying the soil on which buildings are being constructed and a consideration of weight-bearing capacity of floors.

He also called for change in Central government norms for helping states that face natural calamities. The hill states and those in the Northeast should get more, he said.

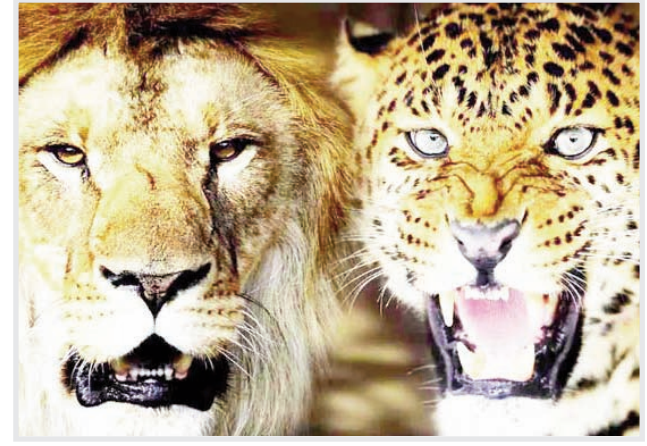
The Centre gives Rs 1.5 lakh for repairing one kilometre of damaged road, he said. "That's nothing."

Sukhu said Himachal Pradesh gets ignored because it has small representation in Parliament, but the state should be given a special package by the Centre as it is the "lungs of northern India".

He urged tourists to continue visiting Himachal Pradesh, saying the broken roads to Shimla and Kangra Valley will be restored.

"And after the monsoons, come anytime," he said, asking tourists to celebrate Diwali and the New Year in his state.

# Analysing upsurge in wildlife attacks on humans in Gir



**WITHIN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, AT LEAST SIX PEOPLE HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO LEOPARD ATTACKS IN THE AREA**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Gir, August 16:** Gir Somnath district in Gujarat has recorded a surge in wildlife attacks on humans, and the latest man-animal conflict was reported when a two-year-old boy lost his life in a leopard attack.

The incident occurred August 14 in Matana village, situated within the Veraval range forest, which is known to be home to several leopards.

The infant was playing near his house when the leopard pounced, dragging him away. The villagers recounted how the leopard had swiftly snatched the child and vanished into the wilderness.

In response to this devastating occurrence and the presence of leopards in the vicinity, authorities installed three traps to capture the elusive feline, and plans to set up three more soon.

It has been disclosed that within the past six months, at least six people have fallen victim to leopard attacks in the area.

This unsettling pattern of human-wildlife conflict is not

unique to leopards. The region has also seen a considerable number of lion attacks resulting in fatalities and injuries. The statistics reveal that, on average, one human death per 100 lions and two deaths per 100 leopards have occurred over the past two years.

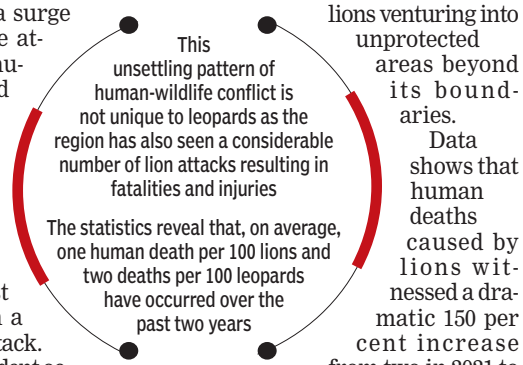
The alarming surge in lion attacks is concerning given the saturated population within the sanctuary and the increasing number of lions venturing into unprotected areas beyond its boundaries.

Data shows that human deaths caused by lions witnessed a dramatic 150 per cent increase from two in 2021 to five in 2022. However, the number of injuries slightly decreased by 9.5 per cent, going from 21 in 2021 to 19 in 2022.

Leopard-related human deaths, on the other hand, experienced a decline of 20 per cent, dropping from 15 in 2021 to 12 in 2022.

Similarly, injuries from leopard attacks also decreased by 20 per cent, with 105 injuries in 2021 compared to 84 in 2022.

Earlier, the government responded to these tragedies with financial compensation for the victims and their families. Compensation of Rs 33 lakh was provided for lion-related deaths and Rs 2.27 lakh for injuries. In the case of leopards, the state government allocated Rs 1.20 crore for compensation and Rs 12.33 lakh for the injured.



# Ex Guj CM launches 'non-political' platform

AGENCIES

**Ahmedabad, August 16:** Former Gujarat chief minister Suresh Mehta Wednesday announced the launch of a "non-political" platform as an attempt to present an alternative narrative and spread awareness among voters about different issues.

As part of the initiative, named as 'Jan Abhiyan - Badle Gujarat', a research and training institute will also be opened to train elected representatives on various aspects related to their roles, responsibilities and powers, said 87-year-old Mehta, who was the CM of Gujarat between 1995-1996.

Addressing a press conference here, Mehta, a strong critic of the ruling BJP, accused the Gujarat government of violating the constitutional provisions related to keeping and publishing accounts.

As per the Article 150 of the Constitution, the accounts shall be kept in a prescribed format approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), he said.

However, the CAG, in its reports tabled in the last assembly session, noted that the Gujarat government was not keeping its



accounts as per the prescribed format, which is a violation of Article 150. Moreover, the CAG also took serious note of various sub-heads created in the accounts to manage the expenses incurred by the state to welcome VVIPs, claimed Mehta.

Gujarat is facing many burning issues, such as shortage of teachers, corruption, atrocities on people, malnutrition among children, inflation and rising tensions among people of different faiths, he further claimed.

"To make people aware about such issues and bring about a change in this situation, concerned citizens like me are launching this initiative," Mehta said.

To discuss the roadmap of the non-political initiative led by

him, Mehta has called a meeting of all like-minded people at the Tagore Hall here Thursday.

"To create an organised structure of this initiative, we will open an office in the city and also start a research and training institute to train common citizens as well as elected representatives on their roles, responsibilities and powers. This platform is being created to make people aware so that they do not get misled by false promises," Mehta said.

Social activist Mallika Sarabhai, who was also present at the press conference, extended support to the initiative, claiming that despite witnessing misery and hardships all around them, the voters of Gujarat are either scared or not interested in bringing about a change.

"When I was in the United States recently, people asked me why Gujarat is in deep slumber. I did not have any answer," she said. Every section of the society is suffering in Gujarat, but no one is raising the voice, Sarabhai claimed.

Voters do not understand their own powers. So, this is an attempt to educate the voters. This is a first step to spread awareness among the masses, she said.



**RESCUE ACT:** Indian Air Force personnel conduct rescue operation to save stranded residents in flood-affected areas of Himachal Pradesh

# BSF SEIZES CHARAS, HEROIN FROM ISLANDS OFF GUJ COAST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ahmedabad, August 16:** The Border Security Force (BSF) Tuesday recovered 32 packets containing charas and heroin from three different islands off the Jakhau coast in Gujarat's Kutch district, an official said.

This was the third consecutive day when unclaimed packets of charas (cannabis) and heroin, each weighing one kilogram, were recovered from different uninhabited islands in the Arabian Sea off the Gujarat coast, said a BSF release.

In the last three days, the paramilitary force has recovered more than 50 packets of charas and heroin from isolated islands in the coastal district, which shares sea boundary with Pakistan.

During a special search operation launched Tuesday, the BSF found 10 packets of charas lying on the shore of Sekhran Pir Bet island, nearly 9 kilometers from the Jakhau port, said the release.

Later during the day, the BSF's search party recovered one packet of heroin from Luna Bet and 21 more packets of charas from Bakal Bet islands (total 32), nearly 6 km from the state coast, it said.

Since mid-April, the border guarding force has recovered 81 packets of charas and 10 of



heroin from different locations along the coastline off Jakhau, said the release.

In view of Independence Day, the BSF's Gujarat frontier has been kept on high alert and an extensive search operation covering uninhabited small islands off the Jakhau coast has been launched by the force, it said.

In the past, investigations by the BSF and other authorities had established that such packets, found at regular intervals, had washed ashore after they were dumped in the sea by smugglers to avoid getting caught.

# DELUGE, DEBRIS, DILEMMA - Himachal farmers struggle to rebuild after flood

ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT ESTIMATES, AROUND 9.4 LAKH FARMERS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED IN THE STATE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mandi, August 16:** "The flood triggered by rains July 9 not only destroyed our hard work for the year but also destroyed our land in a way we have never seen before. The deluge brought an overwhelming amount of sand, debris and stones, damaging the crops grown on our 12 bighas. A thick layer of almost one-foot high debris now covers our once fertile land," says Rishabh Saklani, a farmer from Sidhpur panchayat in Dharampur block of Mandi district in Himachal Pradesh.

This year, parts of north India have witnessed incessant rainfall, disrupting normal life and causing devastation in its wake. Several roads were blocked and many people were stranded because of the landslides triggered due to heavy rains.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has sought about Rs 8,000 crore from the Centre to rebuild the state after the devastation due to floods.

Saklani, one of the many farmers of the state who are deal-

ing with the aftermath of the floods, says, "My family of 12 depends on the crops for livelihood and sustenance. Usually, the yearly production of food grain and vegetable is at least enough for us to survive. But I have lost all my crops due to the rain and I have suffered a loss of around Rs 1.5 lakh, not to mention the money spent on cultivating the crop."

"To make the land arable again I will have to clear this debris. This is not a task that can be managed with human strength alone. We will have to hire machines, and it is going to cost me an additional Rs 2.5 lakh, I am concerned about how will I get the money," he adds.

Saklani explains that excavators will be needed to remove the coating of silt, debris and stone, which can be rented for Rs 2,000-2,500 per hour. "It will take around a week to clear the land. We also have to reconstruct the concrete retaining walls and repair the fence around the farm which is put in place to protect the land from stray animals. This is all added expense," he says.



Rishabh Saklani, a farmer from Sidhpur panchayat from Mandi

Saklani cultivates maize, paddy, ragi, potato and seasonal vegetables on his land.

According to government estimates, around 9.4 lakh farmers have been affected in the state. Agricultural expert and farmer Padma Shri Nekram Sharma says, "The accumulation of debris in the fields following the river inundation will detrimentally impact the soil's fertility. The longer farmers wait to remove the debris the more the nutrient quality of soil will be affected, further increasing the cost of cultivation in the next crop cycle."

Nisha Kumari, a farmer from Syoh village in Mandi district - which is situated on the banks

of Beas rivers - shares a similar story.

"My four bigha land is filled with debris, there is sand, plastic, wood and construction material. There are places where chunks of the top layer of soil have been washed away due to the powerful current of the flood water. Whatever is left behind has depleted the soil's fertility. The land's productivity will not be the same even after we remove the debris. We have never witnessed floods of this magnitude before..." she says.

Kumari says that she is uncertain how she will recover from the devastating impact of the floods.

According to the India Meteorological Department data,

Himachal Pradesh received 249.6mm of average rainfall between July 1 and July 12 - almost a 70 per cent hike from the normal average of 76.6mm, officials say.

According to data compiled by Himachal Pradesh Agriculture Department, at least 1,571 hectares of arable land in Mandi district have been affected due to the floods. Expanding the perspective to the entire state, the downturn in the state has caused damage to an extensive area of 1,30,518 hectares. When accounting for the additional impact on crops, the agricultural sector of the state has incurred a loss of Rs 167 crore during the monsoon season.





The razed houses near Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura. The Supreme Court Wednesday ordered status quo with regard to the demolition drive being carried out by railway authorities to clear alleged illegal constructions



Devotees dry their clothes after taking bath in the Ganga at Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee meets the students of Sainik School, Purulia, one of the winners of the Independence Day parade-2023, during an event of Mohammedan Sporting Club, at the football club ground in Kolkata



Artistes work on statues ahead of the festival of Onam in Kochi, Kerala



A Parsi community woman with her child during a visit to a fire temple on the occasion of 'Navroz', the Parsi New Year in Ahmedabad, Gujarat



A panda shaped robot is prepared for a demonstration at the annual World Robot Conference at the Beijing Etrong International Exhibition and Convention Center in Beijing, China



Labourers load sacks of compost for agricultural use, at a warehouse in Jalandhar, Punjab



# national

## of the day quote

I join the 140 crore people of India in paying homage to the remarkable Atal Ji on his Punya Tithi

**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

The work of Delhi residents should continue without disruption, and services to them by the government should not come to a halt

**ATISHI MARLENA** | DELHI SERVICES AND VIGILANCE MINISTER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has misled the nation from the Red Fort as there can be no peace without reconciliation and rehabilitation of 60,000 people, who are still living in the relief camps, and till the 6,000 weapons are recovered

**GAURAV GOGOI** | DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CONG IN LS

## SHORT TAKES

### Cong discusses poll preparedness in Delhi

**New Delhi:** Congress leaders from Delhi Wednesday held a meeting with party's top leadership to review its preparedness for the Lok Sabha elections and discussed ways and means to strengthen the organisation in all seven Lok Sabha constituencies. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi, who were present at the meeting, asked the party leaders to remain united and connected with people, sources said. Congress leaders from Delhi Wednesday held a meeting with party's top leadership to review its preparedness for the Lok Sabha elections and discussed ways and means to strengthen the organisation in all seven Lok Sabha constituencies.

### 6 more held in JU student death case

**Kolkata:** The Kolkata Police arrested six more people in connection with its probe into the death of a first-year undergraduate student of Jadavpur University, taking the total number apprehended persons in this case to nine, a police officer said Wednesday. A city court remanded the six - three current students and three former ones - to police custody till August 28. They were suspected to be involved in the alleged ragging and sexual molestation of the 17-year-old boy leading to his death after falling from a second-floor balcony of a hostel last week.

### Ashoka row: Another faculty member quits

**New Delhi:** Days after Sabyasachi Das, an assistant professor at Ashoka University, resigned following a controversy over his research paper, Pulapre Balakrishnan, another professor in the economics department, has put in his papers. Das' colleagues have written to the Governing Body threatening a faculty exodus if he is not offered reinstatement. The English and Creative Writing departments have also extended their support to the demand.

### Relief for Jacqueline

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court has modified the bail conditions for Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who is one of the accused in the ₹200 crore money laundering case in which jailed 'conman' Sukesh Chandrasekhar is the prime accused. The court has allowed her to leave the country without prior permission, as long as she informs the court and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) three days prior to her departure.



**19 round of talks with China fail, talks fail every time for last 3 Years. When will the Modi Government travel beyond the rhetoric to protect BHARAT MATA**  
**RANDEEP SURJEWALA** | CONG GENERAL SECRETARY

## KHELA HOBE DIWAS OBSERVED IN BENGAL

The ruling TMC Wednesday observed Khela Hobe Diwas across the state with party leaders organising football matches to promote sports. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who participated at a programme in Mohammedan Sporting Club here, said the day is being observed to promote sports



## NEHRU MUSEUM RENAMING ROW

### Cong, BJP in war of words



The interior of Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya in New Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** The Congress and the BJP crossed swords Wednesday over the renaming of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library with the opposition party accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "distorting and destroying" the Nehruvian legacy and the ruling party dismissing the criticism as a "lament of courtiers".

The Congress said despite the "relentless assault", India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's legacy will live on for the world to see and he will continue to inspire the generations to come. History is created, it is never changed or converted, the opposition party asserted.

In a post on X, Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "From today, an iconic institution gets a new name. The world-renowned Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NML) becomes PMML - Prime Ministers' Memorial Museum and Library."

"Mr Modi possesses a huge bundle of fears, complexes and insecurities, especially when it comes to our first and longest-serving Prime Minister. He has had a single-point agenda of denying, distorting, defaming and destroying Nehru and the Nehruvian legacy," Ramesh said. "He (Modi) has erased N and put P instead. That P is really for pettiness and peeve," the Congress leader said.

But he can never take away Nehru's gigantic contributions to the freedom movement and his towering achievements in building the democratic, secular, scientific and liberal foundations of the Indian nation-state "all of which are now under assault by Mr Modi and his drum beaters", Ramesh said.

The BJP hit back at the Congress for its criticism of the change of the name, saying the opposition party's thought process revolves around the Nehru-Gandhi family alone.

Reacting to the Congress' criticism, BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Congress is centred around promoting the Nehru-Gandhi family while Modi has ensured that all prime ministers are given a respectful place. No other prime minister was given a space in the museum earlier, he added.

Congress leaders' criticism is nothing but a "lament of courtiers", he alleged.



President Droupadi Murmu pays tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary at his memorial Sadaiva Atal in New Delhi

## CBI forms 53-member team to investigate Manipur violence cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** In a major mobilisation, the CBI Wednesday deputed 53 officers, including 29 women, drawn from its units across the country to probe Manipur violence cases, officials said.

The team which includes three DIGs - Lovely Katiyar, Nirmala Devi and Mohit Gupta - and Superintendent of Police Rajveer will report to Joint Director Ghanshyam Upadhyay who will supervise the overall probe, they said.

It is understood to be first of its kind mobilisation where such a large number of women officers have been simultaneously pressed into service, they said. Sources said that several of these cases being probed by the CBI may attract provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which can be probed by a Deputy Superintendent of Police rank officer. Two Additional Superintendents of Police and six Deputy Superintendents of Police - all women - are also part of the 53-member force, they said.

Since the Deputy Superintendents of Police cannot be supervisory officers in such cases, the agency has sent three DIGs and one SP to supervise and monitor the investigations, they said.

# Cabinet okays 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, IN HIS INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS TO THE NATION ANNOUNCED SCHEMES FOR ARTISANS TO HELP SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 16:** The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved the 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme with a financial outlay of ₹13,000 crore for a period of five years that will benefit about 30 lakh families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, including weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, and barbers.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On Tuesday, the Prime Minister announced that the scheme will be launched on Vishwakarma Jayanti September 17.

Under the scheme, artisans and craftsmen will be provided recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card. They will be provided credit support of up to ₹1 lakh (first tranche) and ₹2 lakh (second tranche) with a concessional interest rate of 5 per cent.

Artisans and craftsmen will also be provided skill upgradation, tool kit incentive, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support, an official statement said.

"Under the scheme, there will



be two types of skilling programmes - Basic and Advanced and a stipend of ₹500 per day will also be provided to beneficiaries while undergoing skills training." Communication Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said while briefing the media on Cabinet decisions here.

They will also get a support of up to ₹15,000 to buy modern tools, he added.

He said in the first year, five lakh families will be covered and a total of 30 lakh families will be covered over five years from FY24 to FY28. "The scheme aims to strengthen and nurture the 'Guru-Shishya parampara' or family-based

practice of traditional skills by artisans and craftsmen working with their hands and tools,"

## CABINET APPROVES EXPANSION OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

Union Cabinet Wednesday approved extension of the Digital India programme with an outlay of ₹14,903 crore to boost digital initiatives in skilling, cyber security, high performance computing and simplifying technology for masses, among other areas. Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the outlay has been approved for a five-year period between 2021-22 to 2025-26. The extended Digital India programme will add on to the work done under the previous version of the scheme. "The budget was allocated from time to time as per requirement. We have made changes in the schemes for which approval was required," Vaishnaw said, adding the Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the extension of the programme with the outlay of ₹14,903 crore.

## Will not go with BJP: Pawar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aurangabad, August 16:** NCP president Sharad Pawar Wednesday asserted he will not align with the BJP and instead work towards bringing about a change in 2024 when the Lok Sabha polls will be held as he sought to downplay his meeting with politically estranged nephew Ajit Pawar, saying it was about a family issue.

He sought to nix speculation that the Congress and the Shiv Sena (UBT) were working on a 'Plan B' to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls without his faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The Congress, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) are constituents of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). "The news of a 'Plan B' (by Congress and Sena-UBT to together contest polls) is wrong. No such plan is being made. There is a need for change in 2024 and therefore were are

preparing for it," Sharad Pawar told reporters in Aurangabad ahead of his public rally in Maharashtra's Beed district Thursday. Asked about his hush hush meeting with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who has aligned with the BJP, in Pune last week, the senior Pawar said, "He is my family member. If any ceremony is planned in our family, naturally I will be consulted at that time."

Meanwhile, the Election Commission Wednesday granted a three-week extension to the warring factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to respond its notice related to the party's name and official symbol.

Both the factions - one led by Sharad Pawar and another by his nephew Ajit Pawar - had sought a four-week extension to submit their responses to the Election Commission notices on the claim to the party name and official symbol.

# FLOOD-LIKE SITUATION IN PUNJAB, HIMACHAL

Hundreds of villages in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh located along the swollen Satluj and Beas rivers were inundated with the opening of floodgates of the dams as the inflow in their reservoirs has alarmingly increased owing to torrential rains in its catchment, mainly in the hill state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chandigarh, August 16:** All floodgates of the Bhakra and Pong dams will remain open for the next four-five days as heavy rains in catchment areas this week have alarmingly increased the water level in the reservoirs, a senior official of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) that regulates both dams said Wednesday.

Hundreds of villages in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh located along the swollen Satluj and Beas rivers were inundated with the opening of floodgates of the dams as the inflow in their reservoirs has alarmingly increased owing to torrential

rains in its catchment, mainly in the hill state.

"For the next four-five days the controlled release of water from the floodgates of both Bhakra and Pong dams would continue to keep the water in the reservoirs at the safe level," BBMB Secretary Satish Singla told the media here.

He said that the board is continuously monitoring the situation. "With the heavy rainfall from August 12 to 14, the water inflow in the both dams was alarmingly high. Thereafter the management decided to release excess water through the floodgates to ensure the safety of the dams," he said.

"Now the inflow in the reser-



voirs has reduced with the decline in the rainfall activity, but the water level is still high. We will release the water in a phased manner in the coming days as the Met Department predicted no major rainfall activity in the region," said Singla, adding, "We are releasing the water after intimation the partner states."

The board is currently releasing 80,000 cusecs of water everyday from Bhakra and nearly 1 lakh from the Pong dam. Both dams serve the irrigation requirements of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

With the opening of the floodgates, flood-like situation prevailed mainly in Punjab's Ropar,

Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur districts and Himachal's Kangra district.

In Punjab, the inundation of villages has been reported second time within a month, severely impacting the standing crops.

Currently, the water level in the Bhakra dam's Gobind Sagar reservoir and the Pong dam reservoir stood at 1,677 feet and 1,398 feet, respectively.

The BBMB didn't release the floodgates when the region saw torrential rains July 8 and 9. For the first time the floodgates were opened August 15.

The Pong dam reservoir is spread over an area of 41 km with a maximum width of 19 km in Himachal Pradesh. It came into existence after the construction of the dam on the Beas river in 1975. The Bhakra project is a marvel in engineering.

The 225.55 metre high dam is of concrete straight gravity type having a gross storage capacity of 9,621 million cubic metre.

## NUH VIOLENCE Key accused Bittu Bajranghi held

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Gurugram, August 16:** The police have arrested one Rajkumar a.k.a. Bittu Bajranghi for his alleged role in instigating the mob during the communal clashes that took place in Haryana's Nuh during a procession organised by the Hindu groups July 31, an official said Wednesday.

Bittu Bajranghi has been accused of obstructing the work of the government, snatching weapons, and misbehaving with the police.

Ahead of the Brajmandal Yatra in Nuh, Bittu Bajranghi had allegedly put out provocative videos on social media which fueled communal clashes in Nuh.

While Mohit Yadav a.k.a. Monu Manesar had also posted a video that he will join the procession, he did not turn up for the event on VHP's suggestion as it was feared that his presence would create tension.



# international



It is clear that climate change is very visible and is really causing enormous changes to our planet  
JOSEF ASCHBACHER | DIRECTOR GENERAL, EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY

## NEW BIRTHS DROP IN CHINA

China's fertility rate is estimated to have dropped to a record low of 1.09 in 2022, the National Business Daily said, a figure likely to rattle authorities as they try to boost the country's declining number of new births. China's fertility rate is already one of the world's lowest alongside South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore



## of the day quote

Taliban rulers are responsible for the most egregious, vicious and indefensible violation of women's rights and girls' rights in the world today  
GORDON BROWN | SPECIAL ENVOY FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION, UN

The Group of 20 is the premier forum for the world to create inclusive growth and India's presidency this year has helped give voice to the Global South and create a truly unusual G20  
VIKRAM DORASWAMI | INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE UK

We are now entering a political year, the situation has mildly escalated. To that end, I have reiterated that future leadership should set a path forward for Indonesia's future  
JOKO WIDODO | PRESIDENT, INDONESIA

## HAWAII WILDFIRES Death toll tops 106

DEADLIEST US WILDFIRE IN MORE THAN A CENTURY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Kahului, August 16:** The number of people known to have died in the horrific wildfire that levelled a Hawaiian town reached 106 Tuesday, authorities said, as a makeshift morgue was expanded to deal with the tragedy.

State governor Josh Green has repeatedly warned that the final count from last week's inferno in Lahaina - already the deadliest US wildfire in over a century - would grow significantly, urging Hawaiians to gird for a number that could be two or three times its present level.

Refrigerated containers were being pressed into use as makeshift morgues at the Maui Police Forensic Facility Tuesday, an AFP journalist observed, as the largely rural island struggled to cope with the sheer number of dead.

The difficult process of identifying the dead inched forwards Tuesday, with officials saying they had collected DNA samples from 41 people whose relatives were missing.

The island's police chief has said

that many of the bodies are so badly charred that they are unrecognizable, such as the ferocity of the blaze.

Stories of horrifying escapes continued to emerge, as did more testimony about the lack of official warning of the fast-moving blaze.

"We saw smoke billowing and the blue sky had turned a dark shade of brown and the wind was whipping at 80-plus miles an hour. It was very, very fast; shocking to see," the 30-year-old said.

"We saw flames, and we realized it was coming right for us," she said, adding no evacuation order had been issued.

After trying to flee by car only to find her way blocked by vehicles abandoned by their terrified drivers, she decided the ocean offered her only escape.

As Maui embarks on a long, painful recovery from the fires, officials are wrestling with how to balance residents' immediate needs for housing and resources against the island's long-term financial health.



Fire damage is shown in the Wahikuli Terrace neighborhood in the fire ravaged town of Lahaina on the island of Maui in Hawaii

REUTERS

## SHORT TAKES

### Nepal seeks food help from India

**Kathmandu:** The Nepal government has requested India to facilitate the supply of paddy, rice and sugar, a senior official said here Wednesday, as a precautionary measure to mitigate any possible food scarcity in the upcoming festive season. The request was made through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Indian authorities last week. Commerce and Supplies Ministry Joint Secretary Ram Chandra Tiwari said. "Nepal has requested India to provide one million tonne of paddy, 100,000 tonne of rice, and 50,000 tonnes of sugar," he said.

### Libya clashes kill 27

**Cairo:** Deadly clashes between rival militias in Libya's capital killed at least 27 people and left residents trapped in their homes, unable to escape the violence, medical authorities said. The fighting appears to be the most intense to shake Tripoli this year. There were at least four people dead but it was not immediately clear if they were militiamen or civilians, an official said Tuesday.

### UK inflation falls

**London:** The rate of inflation in the UK fell sharply in July to a 17-month low largely on the back of lower energy prices, official figures showed Wednesday, a welcome development for hard-pressed households struggling during the cost of living crisis. The Office for National Statistics said the annual rate of inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, was 6.8 per cent in July, its lowest level since February 2022, the month Russia invaded Ukraine and sent energy prices surging.

## Cargo ship leaves Ukraine despite Russia's warning

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Kyiv, August 16:** Kyiv announced Wednesday a cargo vessel had exited its southern port of Odesa along a new maritime corridor, despite an earlier warning from Russia it could target vessels using Ukrainian ports.

The announcement, which raises the spectre of an intervention by Russian warships, came hours after Ukraine said it had liberated a village as part of a grinding push to wrest Moscow's forces along the southern front.

Russia issued its maritime threat after scuppering a key deal last month - brokered by the UN and Turkey - that guaranteed safe passage for grain exports from three Ukrainian ports.

"The first vessel is moving along the temporary corridors



established for civilian vessels to and from Black Sea ports," Ukraine's Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a statement.

Since Russia's exit, it has stepped up attacks on Ukraine's Black Sea port infrastructure and facilities Kyiv uses to export grain through the Danube river.

In the latest attack, the governor of the Odesa region said Wednesday that Russian attack drones had damaged grain facilities at a river port near its western border.

## BLASPHEMY ALLEGATIONS

# Pak churches burning

THE VANDALISM WAS TRIGGERED BY A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS ACCUSING A LOCAL CHRISTIAN FAMILY OF DESECRATING THE QURAN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lahore, August 16:** At least five churches were vandalised and ransacked by an angry mob in Pakistan's Punjab province Wednesday over allegations of desecration of Islam's holy book, forcing authorities to deploy paramilitary forces to protect the minority Christian community who were besieged.

The incidents took place after a Christian man and his sister allegedly desecrated the Quran and made objectionable comments, police said.

The incident took place in the Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad district of Punjab, some 130 km from the provincial capital Lahore.

The Pakistan Rangers have been called in to control the situation and protect the Christian community living in Chamra Mandi Jaranwala. The situation in the area is currently very tense as the Christian community has reportedly been besieged by the mob.

Imran Bhatti, the pastor of

I am gutted by the visuals coming out of Jaranwala, Faisalabad. Stern action would be taken against those who violate the law and target minorities. All law enforcement has been asked to apprehend culprits & bring them to justice. Rest assured that the government of Pakistan stands with our citizenry on an equal basis  
ANWAAR UL HAQ KAKAR | INTERIM PM, PAKISTAN

the Jaranwala told Dawn.Com that the mob had "torched" five churches so far in Jaranwala. They include the Salvation Army Church, United Presbyterian Church, Allied Foundation Church and two churches at Shehroonwala located in the Isa Nagri area in the Jaranwala.

Bhatti added that the house of a Christian cleaner, who was accused of blasphemy, was also demolished.

"Heavy contingent of police reached the spot after an en-

raged mob ransacked at least five churches and set fire furniture, copies of the Bible, Cross etc," a Christian resident of the area told PTI, requesting anonymity.

He said a large number of people attacked the churches following the announcement from mosques that a Christian man had desecrated the Quran.

"Seeing the enraged mob heading towards the Christian community in Chamra Mandi, the Christians ran for their lives, some succeeded in leaving the area while others locked themselves up in their houses," he said.

President Bishop of the Church of Pakistan Azad Marshall said that "Bibles have been desecrated and Christians have been tortured and harassed having been falsely accused of violating the Holy Quran".

"We cry out for justice and action from law enforcement and those who dispense justice and the safety of all citizens to intervene immediately and assure us that our lives are valuable in our own homeland that has just celebrated independence and freedom," he said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Minorities including Christians and Hindus in Pakistan have frequently been subjected to blasphemy allegations and some were tried and even sentenced under the tough blasphemy.

According to a report by the Centre for Peace and Justice Pakistan in June last year, based on data collected from National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Pakistan is home to 22,10,566 people from the minority Hindu community followed by Christians 18,73,348.

# NK says US soldier bolted because of racism in military

For decades Pyongyang has highlighted racial discrimination in US as what it says is an example of Washington's hypocrisy

PEUTERS

**Seoul, August 16:** North Korea has concluded that US soldier Travis King wants refuge there or elsewhere because of "inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination" in the US and the military, state media said Wednesday.

It was the North's first public acknowledgement of the army private's crossing from South Korea July 18 while on a civilian tour of the Joint Security Area (JSA) on the heavily fortified border between the neighbours.

US officials have said they believe King crossed the border intentionally and have declined so far to classify him as a prisoner of war.

North Korean investigators have also concluded that King crossed deliberately and illegally, with the intent to stay in the North or in a third country, state news agency KCNA said.

"During the investigation, Travis King confessed that he had decided to come over to the DPRK as he harbored ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the US Army," KCNA said, using the North's official name. "He also expressed his willingness to seek refuge in the DPRK or a third country, saying that he was disillusioned at the unequal American society." King was "kept under control



by soldiers of the Korean People's Army" after his crossing and the investigation was still active, the agency added.

In August, King's uncle, Myron Gates, told ABC News that his nephew, who is Black, was experiencing racism during his military deployment, and that after he spent time in a South Korean jail, he did not sound like himself.

The KCNA report comes as North Korean officials cite racism and other social problems in America to push back against US criticism, including a United Nations Security Council meeting to discuss human rights in North Korea Thursday.

US officials have said the North had not provided substantive responses to requests for information on King.

The Pentagon said it could not verify King's comments as reported by KCNA, and remains focused on his safe return. It did not address whether it had heard more details from North Korea.

King's mother is concerned about his safety and appealed to North Korea to treat him humanely, a spokesperson for his family said.

# Germany legalises cannabis use, cultivation

UN narcotics watchdog said in March that moves by governments to legalise the recreational use of marijuana has led to increased consumption and cannabis-related health problems



With the current procedures we could not seriously protect children and young people, the topic has been made a taboo. We have rising, problematic consumption, we couldn't simply allow this to go on. So this is an important turning point in our drug policy  
KARL LAUTERBACH | HEALTH MINISTER, GERMANY

has to pass parliament, would allow adults to possess up to 25 grams of the drug, grow a maximum of three plants, or acquire weed at cannabis clubs.

The centre-left government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz hopes the law will curb the black market, protect consumers against contaminated marijuana and reduce drug-related crime.

A key pillar of the plan, which removes the taboo around cannabis use, is also a campaign to raise awareness about the risks, which should ultimately curb consumption, said Health Minister Karl Lauterbach.

However, opposition is fierce, with conservative policymakers in particular warning that it will encourage marijuana use

and that the new legislation will create even more work for authorities. "This law will be linked to a complete loss of control," Armin Schuster, conservative interior minister for the state of Saxony said.

Many countries in Europe have already legalised cannabis for limited medicinal purposes, including Germany since 2017. Others have decriminalized its general use.

The legislation presented Wednesday includes strict rules for growing weed - cannabis clubs of up to 500 associates must have burglar-proof doors and windows, with greenhouses fenced off. Associates will not be allowed to smoke weed at the clubs or in the vicinity of schools, nurseries, playgrounds or sports grounds.

# China making airstrip on SCS Island

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea as its own, denying the claims of others and defying an international ruling invalidating its assertion



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Beijing, August 16:** China appears to be constructing an airstrip on a disputed South China Sea island that is also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan, according to satellite photos analysed by The Associated Press.

The work on Triton island in the Paracel group mirrors construction on seven human-made islands in the Spratly group to the east which have been

equipped with airstrips, docks and military systems, although it currently appears to be somewhat more modest in scale.

Satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analysed by the AP show construction on the airstrip first visible in early August. The runway, as currently laid out, would be more than 600 metres (2,000 feet) in length, long enough

to accommodate turboprop aircraft and drones, but not fighter jets or bombers.

Also visible are large numbers of vehicle tracks running across much of the island, along with what appear to be containers and construction equipment.

Triton is one of the major islands in the Paracel group, which is roughly equidistant from the coast of Vietnam and China's island province of Hainan.

The US takes no stance on the sovereignty claims, but regularly sends Navy ships on "freedom of navigation operations" near the Chinese-held islands. Triton was the focus of one of those missions in 2018.

China has had a small harbour and buildings on the island for years, along with a helipad and radar arrays.



## of the day quote

Discussions are ongoing with Singapore for grid connectivity, and similar discussions are taking place with UAE for grid interconnection



RK SINGH | UNION POWER MINISTER

The launch of the startup cells is a major milestone in Indian Bank's journey to support the growth of the startup ecosystem in India



SL JAIN | MD & CEO, INDIAN BANK

The US and EU markets present an exhilarating opportunity, and we firmly believe that the Muvi will capture the hearts of consumers in these regions



IRFAN KHAN | CEO, EBIKEGO

## SHORT TAKES

### Banks' lending to NBFCs jumps

**Mumbai:** Banks' lending to non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) rose by 35.1 per cent to Rs 14.2 lakh crore in June, a report said. Credit exposure of banks to NBFCs rose by a robust 35.1 per cent on-year to Rs 14.2 lakh crore in June, indicating non-banking finance firms' decreased reliance on international borrowings. This also pushed up NBFCs' share in overall credit from 8.5 per cent in June 2022 to 9.9 per cent in the reporting month, according to Sanjay Agarwal, a senior director with Care Ratings.

### Coal India capex spending grows

**New Delhi:** Coal India Ltd's capital expenditure rose 8.5 per cent during April-July this fiscal to Rs 4,700 crore as it continued to invest heavily in evacuation infrastructure, land, and mining machinery, officials said. The capex spend during the first four months of the current fiscal year that started in April, was almost 100 per cent of the target of Rs 4,754 crore and 28.3 per cent of the annual target of Rs 16,600 crore (for 2023-24 fiscal), they said.

### Shiny debut for SBFC Finance

**Mumbai:** Shares of non-banking finance company SBFC Finance Ltd made a remarkable stock market debut Wednesday and ended with a premium of over 62 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 57. The stock listed at Rs 81.99, up 43.84 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 67.19 per cent to Rs 95.30. Shares of the company ended at Rs 92.21, up 61.77 per cent. At the NSE, it began the trade at Rs 82, recording a jump of 43.85 per cent. The stock ended at Rs 92.65, up 62.54 per cent. The company commanded a market valuation of Rs 9,813.09 crore.

### GQG picks up 8.1% in Adani Power

**New Delhi:** US-based boutique investment firm GQG Partners has invested \$1.1 billion in Adani Power for an 8.1 per cent stake, sources with knowledge of the matter said Wednesday. GQG Partners bought 31 crore shares of Adani Power in the largest ever secondary market equity deal, they said, adding that promoter Adani family sold the stake for over Rs 9,000 crore (\$1.1 billion).



**“If there is a good AI system, then there is so much one can look at in terms of transactions. AI will report back to you in terms of any deviations, red flags and will play a huge role in assisting chartered accountants to deliver high quality audit”**

ANIKET SUNIL TALATI | PRESIDENT, ICAI

## GOVT MULLS IRFC SHARES SALE

The government is planning to sell a part of its holding in state-owned Indian Railway Finance Corp (IRFC) through an offer for sale (OFS) in the current fiscal, an official said Wednesday. The government currently holds an 86.36 per cent stake in the financing arm of the Indian Railways



# Big push to e-mobility

## CABINET OKAYS PM E-BUS SEWA; 10K E-BUSES TO BE DEPLOYED IN 169 CITIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** Seeking to enhance green mobility, the Union Cabinet Wednesday approved the 'PM-eBus Sewa' scheme under which 10,000 electric buses will be provided to 169 cities under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

The scheme would have an estimated cost of Rs 57,613 crore out of which Rs 20,000 crore will be provided by the central government and the remaining will be borne by states, Union Minister Anurag Thakur told a press conference.

He said priority will be given to those cities which do not have an organised bus service. The scheme would continue till 2037, the information and broadcasting minister said.

Ten thousand e-buses will be deployed under the PPP model, he said and added that infrastructure will also be upgraded in 181 cities under green urban mobility initiatives.

The scheme has two segments -- augmenting city bus services in 169 cities and green urban mobility initiatives in 181 cities.

The Union Cabinet met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and approved the 'PM-eBus Sewa' scheme with a total outlay of Rs 57,613 crore, the minister said.

The e-buses would be made available in cities with a population between 5 lakh and 40 lakh, he said and added that the scheme will support bus operations for 10 years.

Thakur said while 50 buses



### PM-eBus Sewa

ESTIMATED COST OF THE SCHEME ₹57,613CR

₹20,000CR FROM CENTRE & REST FROM STATES

**The cities will be selected through a challenge (for the scheme). Non-motorised transport would also be provided to help public transport in these cities**

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

would be provided in cities with less than 5 lakh population, 100 buses would be provided in those with a population of 5 lakh to 20 lakh, and 150 buses in cities with a population of 20 to 40 lakh.

More buses would be provided to those cities which will scrap old buses. The buses would be procured, operated and maintained under the PPP model and central assistance would be provided under the scheme, he said.

"Of the total Rs 20,000 crore to be given by the Government of India, Rs 15,930 crore will be given for buses, Rs 2,264 crore for infrastructure development and in providing back-end facilities, besides Rs 1,506 crore for green urban mobility," he said.

In a statement, the Union housing and urban affairs ministry

said under the scheme, cities will be responsible for running bus services and making payments to bus operators.

The central government will support these bus operations by providing subsidies to the extent specified in the proposed scheme, it said, adding that priority will be given to those cities that have no organised bus service.

While presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced a Rs 18,000 crore scheme to augment public transport in urban areas.

"The (bus) scheme will promote e-mobility and provide full support for behind-the-meter power infrastructure. The support to bus priority infrastruc-

## BIZ BUZZ

### Patriotic look drapes PPL

**PARADEEP:** Paradeep Phosphates Limited Township and plant site wore a very patriotic look from August 13th-15th. The employees, their family members, workers, security force and vendors everybody put their effort in rising to the occasion of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme and left no stone unturned to make this a grand event. PPL this year also distributed 4000 free flags to different section of the Society. On August 15, 77th Independence Day was celebrated with fervour and enthusiasm. Pranab Bhattacharyya, Chief Manufacturing Officer & Unit Head, hoisted the National Flag and addressed the crowd. He distributed prizes to employees, security members and meritorious students of DAV Public School on their various achievements.



### Yamaha unveils new showroom Torque Motors

**BHUBANESWAR:** Yamaha has inaugurated its brand new showroom named Torque Motors, a unit of Manor Enterprises Pvt Ltd, at Pahala. The two directors of Manor Enterprises Reena Biswal and Shreetej Biswal announced that the Yamaha Torque Motors is the largest showroom in eastern zone. It is spread across 13,000 square feet with all modern amenities and a dedicated staff for both sales and service center. The showroom has a wide range of modern bikes and scooters and all accessories within reasonable prices. The chief guest for the grand opening Reena Biswal and Shreetej Biswal lit the lamp in the presence of Group GM Srimanta Samanta, Torque Motors GM Sujit Dhal, Corporate Purchase Head Bikash Mishra and Finance Head Rabintra Nath Mallick. The MD has set a target of 30 crore in the coming year and has announced that there will be good discounts in sales, spare parts and also in services.



### OHPC celebrates Independence Day

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd, a gold rate state PSU, celebrated the 77th Independence Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at its Corporate office, Training Centre & Units August 15. At the Corporate Office, the National Flag was hoisted by Amresh Kumar, Managing Director in presence of Ashish Kumar Mohanty, Director (Operation), Subash Chandra Jena, Director (HR) I/C, Debalok Mohanty, Director (Finance) I/C, officers & staff. On this occasion, National Flags and Tri-colour badges were distributed among the employees. Ashish Kumar Mohanty, Director (Operation), hoisted the National Flag at the OHPC Training Centre, Chandaka. Further, as an initiative to highlight women empowerment, a special shift was arranged with women employees only at all power houses of OHPC. All the women employees of the units wore tri-colour suits/sarees to mark the special day.



# Urban poor worst hit by July inflation surge

**THE EXTENT OF THE SHARP RISE IN JULY CAME AS A SURPRISE, CRISIL SAID, ADDING THAT EARLY SIGNS ARE POINTING TO A MINIMUM RELIEF IN AUGUST**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, August 16:** Urban poor have been the most impacted by 15-month high consumer price inflation (CPI) in July, a domestic rating agency's arm said Wednesday.

The high-income segment in urban areas faced the lowest inflation burden, as food has a relatively low share in their con-

sumption basket, Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics said in a note.

"Poorest segment in urban areas faced highest inflation rate in July," said the note, released days after official data said that the headline inflation accelerated to 7.44 per cent for July.

"The poorest segment in both urban and rural areas faced a higher inflation burden than their high-income counterparts, as food inflation accelerated sharply," the Crisil note added.

Crisil said it used data from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and mapped the expenditure baskets of three broad income groups -- the bottom 20 per cent, middle 60 per cent and upper 20 per cent of the population -- with July inflation.

The overall CPI inflation for the bottom 20 per cent income



earners in urban areas came at 8.5 per cent in July against 7.9 per cent for their rural counterparts, the note said, adding that the same numbers had stood at 4.9 per cent and 4.7 per cent, respectively, in June.

As compared to this, the degree of change for the top 20 per cent income earners between July and June was more subdued, the note showed.

The CPI for the top 20 per cent

## RBI REPO RIPPLES

# Surge in home loan rate dents affordability in H1

*Ahmedabad most affordable, Mumbai unaffordable in top eight cities*

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 16:** The increase in interest rates on home loans have affected the affordability of residential properties across all eight major cities during the first six months of this year, according to Knight Frank India.

On Wednesday, real estate consultant Knight Frank India released its 'Affordability Index' for the top eight cities for the first six months of 2023 calendar year.

The index tracks the EMI (Equated Monthly Installment)-to-income ratio for an average household.

It indicates the proportion of income that a household requires, to fund the EMI of a housing unit in a particular city.

The index showed that higher home loan rates have reduced affordability across all markets so far in 2023.



Ahmedabad is the most affordable housing market amongst the top eight cities, with a ratio of 23 per cent followed by Pune and Kolkata at 26 per cent each; Bangalore and Chennai at 28 per cent each; Delhi-NCR at 30 per cent; Hyderabad 31 per cent; and Mumbai 55 per cent.

A Knight Frank Affordability index level of 40 per cent for a city implies that on an average, households in that city need to spend 40 per cent of their income to fund the EMI of housing loan for that unit.

An EMI/Income ratio over 50 per cent is considered unaffordable as it is the limit beyond which banks rarely underwrite a mortgage, it said.

rural counterparts as both food (12.3 per cent in urban against 11 per cent in rural) and fuel inflation (4.4 per cent versus 3.3 per cent) were higher in the former than the latter, the agency said.

Meanwhile, the rating agency also upped its FY24 overall CPI estimate to 5.5 per cent from the earlier 5 per cent following the release of the July data.

"The higher-than-expected inflation reading and continued food price pressure, despite a softening core, put monetary policy in a dilemma," the note said, admitting that typically the rate-setting panel overlooks supply-side shocks like the current one.

It expects the monetary policy committee to hold rates at its next meeting in October and cut rates only in the early part of next fiscal.

# Hyundai to buy GM India plant

*After more than two decades of operations in India, General Motors stopped selling cars in the country from 2017-end, as part of its global restructuring actions*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** Hyundai Motor India Wednesday said it has signed an asset purchase agreement to acquire and assign identified assets related to General Motors India's Talegaon plant in Maharashtra.

The company, which had in March this year inked a term sheet to potentially acquire land, buildings and certain manufacturing equipment at General Motors India's (GMI) Talegaon manufacturing plant, said it plans to commence manufacturing operations at the unit in 2025.

"As we reinforce our commitment to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', we intend to create an advanced manufacturing center for Made-in-India cars in Talegaon, Maharashtra. Our manufacturing operations are scheduled to begin in Talegaon, Maharashtra, in 2025," Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) Managing Director and CEO Unsoo Kim said in a statement.

Earlier this year, he said HMIL had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to invest Rs 20,000 crore in Tamil Nadu for expanding capacity and estab-

lishing an electric vehicle ecosystem. With the Sriperumbudur (Chennai) and Talegaon plants, the company aims to cumulatively achieve a production capacity of 10 lakh units a year, the statement said.

GMI's Talegaon plant currently has an annual production capacity of 1.3 lakh units.

"Upon completion of the agreement, HMIL plans to expand the annual production capacity to achieve its strategic goal in the market. Since HMIL already has enhanced its production capacity from 7.5 lakh units to 8.2 lakh units in the first half of this year, the capacity augmentation of the GMI plant will lay the foundation for HMIL to produce around 1 million units a year," the company said.

HMIL further said it will review plans to launch additional electric vehicle models into the Indian market, manufactured at its Sriperumbudur plant.

The completion of the acquisition and assignment of the Talegaon plant is subject to fulfilment of certain conditions precedent and receipt of regulatory approvals from relevant government authorities and relevant stakeholders, it added.

## IndiGo promoter sells 2.9% shares worth ₹2,801cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** InterGlobe Aviation's promoter Shobha Gangwal Wednesday sold a nearly 2.9 per cent stake in the company for a little over Rs 2,800 crore through open market transactions.

Shobha Gangwal is the wife of Rakesh Gangwal, the co-founder of the company, which is the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo. The shares were sold in three bulk deal transactions.

As many as 3,841,121 shares were sold at a price of Rs 2,426.21 apiece, while 3,841,120 shares were offloaded twice at prices of Rs 2,440.92 and Rs 2,427.09, respectively, as per data available on the BSE.



Together, the shares are worth Rs 2,801.79 crore. The total number of shares offloaded translates to around 2.9 per cent stake. The shares were sold at a discount compared to Wednesday's closing price of Rs 2,457.60 apiece on the BSE.

At the end of the June quarter, Rakesh Gangwal and his wife Shobha Gangwal had 13.23 per cent and 2.99 per cent stakes, respectively, in the company.

The Chinkerpoo Family Trust, whose trustee is Shobha Gangwal and JP Morgan Trust Company of Delaware, owned 13.50 per cent shareholding.

This is the third time in less than one year that Rakesh Gangwal and related entities have offloaded shares of InterGlobe Aviation.

In February this year, Shobha Gangwal divested a 4 per cent stake in the company for Rs 2,944 crore. Prior to that, in September last year, Rakesh Gangwal and Shobha Gangwal sold a 2.74 per cent shareholding for Rs 2,005 crore.

Amid differences with co-founder Rahul Bhatia, Rakesh Gangwal, in February 2022, resigned from the board of directors of InterGlobe Aviation and also said that he will gradually reduce his equity stake in the airline over the next five years.





**Brazilian superstar latest to follow in the footsteps of Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema**

**DONE DEAL:** Neymar poses with the jersey of Al Hilal along with club president after finalising his transfer to the Gulf club, Tuesday  
AP PHOTO



# Neymar joins Saudi bandwagon

**Riyadh, August 16:** Neymar has become the latest superstar soccer player to take the riches on offer from the Saudi Pro League. The Brazilian great completed a move Tuesday to Al Hilal after six seasons at Paris Saint-Germain (PSG). The clubs reached an agreement on the transfer of the Brazil forward for a reported 90 million euros (USD 98 million), a record for a league that is now financially backed by the oil-rich state. The 31-year-old Neymar signed a two-year contract with Al Hilal, who are a record 18-time national champions. The deal is expected to earn him an annual salary of about USD 100 million. That would be around half of the reported salary being taken home by Cristiano Ronaldo, who plays for Al Nassr and whose

## NO LET UP IN 'MESSIMAGIC'

**Chester (US):** Lionel Messi keeps scoring goals, and Inter Miami keeps winning games. Messi ripped a shot from 30 yards past three Philadelphia defenders in the 20th minute as Inter Miami emerged victorious here Tuesday evening 4-1 in a League Cup semifinal match. The goal was Messi's ninth in six games and Major League Soccer (MLS) is already being called 'Messi League Soccer'. Tickets for the game were sold for USD 1,000, a record in the US. Jordi Alba and Josef Martinez also scored in the first half for Miami while David Ruiz scored in the second.

move to Saudi in January sparked a slew of transfers to the kingdom by players like Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kante, Riyad Mahrez and Jordan Henderson. "I have achieved a lot in Europe

and enjoyed special times, but I have always wanted to be a global player and test myself with new challenges and opportunities in new places," Neymar said in the club's announcement. "I want to write new sporting history, and the Saudi Pro League has tremendous energy and quality players at the moment," he added. PSG confirmed the departure of Neymar in a statement, with president Nasser Al-Khelaifi describing him as 'one of the best players in the world'. "I will never forget the day he (Neymar) arrived at Paris Saint-Germain, and what he has contributed to our club and our project over the last six years," Al-Khelaifi said. "We have had great moments and Neymar will always be a big part of our history," he added. Despite his brilliance Neymar never won the Champions

League with PSG after his move from Barcelona for 222 million euros (now USD 244 million), which remains a world-record transfer fee in soccer. Neymar reportedly wanted to rejoin Barcelona but the Spanish club couldn't afford the financial package required for the transfer. No other top European club was willing - or wealthy enough - to sign Neymar, who has struggled with injuries in recent years. Neymar was an undoubtedly talented yet often a frustrating figure at PSG, that put together a star-studded forward line of Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Lionel Messi and now only have one of them left. Messi joined Inter Miami this off-season and Mbappe has one year left on his deal, after which he is likely to seal a move to Spain's Real Madrid.

## Vinesh pulls out of Asian Games

**New Delhi:** Wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who was given direct entry to the Asian Games, has announced that she won't be able to compete at the quadrennial extravaganza in Hangzhou because of a knee injury, clearing the way for reserve Antim Panghal's inclusion in the squad. Vinesh, who won a gold medal in the 2018 edition of the Games, said Tuesday on 'X', formerly Twitter, that she suffered the injury August 13 and will undergo a surgery August 17 in Mumbai. "I wanted to share an extremely sad piece of news. A couple of days ago on 13th August 2023, I injured my left knee in training. Surgery is the only option for me to recover and I will undergo one August 17," Vinesh said on 'X'.

## Gukesh, Gujrathi bow out tamely

**Baku (Azerbaijan):** Grandmasters D Gukesh and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi bowed out of the FIDE World Cup chess tournament after losing to Norwegian Magnus Carlsen and Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov respectively here Wednesday. The 17-year-old Gukesh, who had lost the first game Tuesday, faced an uphill task against World No.1 Carlsen with black pieces. He managed to secure a draw in 59 moves but that was not enough as the Norwegian moved ahead with a 1.5-0.5 margin. In another quarterfinal, Gujrathi, who had drawn the first game, lost the second to Abasov in 44 moves.

## Stokes comes out of ODI retirement

**London:** Ben Stokes is coming out of retirement from ODIs to play in England's defence of the cricket World Cup. Stokes quit ODIs last year and had said playing in all three formats was unsustainable. The all-rounder is England's Test captain and starred for the T20 team in their run to the World Cup title last year in the game's shortest format. Now he'll be playing in the 50-over format again, too, with England selecting him Wednesday initially for the upcoming four-match ODI series against New Zealand at home in September.

## RANI TIPS FOR BUDDING ODIA HOCKEY PLAYERS



Rani Rampal during a training session with promising youngsters

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** With an aim to nurture promising players, former Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal is holding a camp specifically for strikers at the Kalinga Stadium here. The camp is being organised by the Odisha government's Sports and Youth Services Department jointly with the Odisha Naval Tata Hockey High Performance Centre and Hockey Association of Odisha.

The camp which started August 14 and will continue till August 19. A total of 25 players will be part of this camp. It will benefit players from Tata Hockey High Performance Centre, Sports Hostel, Panposh, SAI STC Sundargarh and SAI NCOE Bhopal.

Rani is very positive that the camp will unearth some good players. "This camp is a great initiative. It is a chance for me to share my knowledge, skills and experience with these young players in Odisha. During the camp, my main focus will be on the technical, physical and mental aspect of the game and intense training sessions," Rani said. "With so many initiatives and development over the past few years, Odisha is on the sports map of the world. The facilities over here are very modern and are of world class level. The hockey programme in Odisha is very extensive with a great focus on sports science, nutrition and psychology. I am looking forward to my time here," the former Indian star added.

## 3 NEW RECORDS ON OPENING DAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** Three national records were created in the 39th Sub-Junior and 49th Junior National Aquatic Championships which got underway at the Aquatic Centre here Wednesday. A plethora of talented youngsters entertained the gathering with some exhilarating performances.

In the 100m butterfly for Group I boys' event, Jananjoy J Hazarika of Assam clocked 55.99 seconds to win the gold ahead of Karnataka's Kartikeyan Nair (56.66s). Earlier in the day, Hazarika smashed the national record in the prelims where he



eclipsed Maharashtra's Mihir Ambre's record of 55.65 seconds created in 2017. Karnataka girls dominated day one, with Manavi Varma opening the medal tally with a gold in the 200m individual medley (IM) for Group I. She touched the pads at 2:22.86 seconds to beat Raghvi Ramanujam of Maharashtra who clocked 2:30.56s to take home the silver. Adding to Karnataka's tally, Tanishi Gupta not only won the 200 IM

# LIONESSES SEAL MAIDEN WORLD CUP FINAL SPOT

Both England and Spain will eye to win their first title when they clash in the summit clash Sunday

AGENCIES

**Sydney, August 16:** England moved on to their first Women's World Cup Championships final with a 3-1 victory Wednesday over co-hosts Australia, ending the Matildas captivating run through the tournament.

Australian superstar Sam Kerr started her first match of the tournament and scored for the Matildas but it wasn't enough to hold off European champions, England.

Ella Toone scored in the 36th minute to put England up 1-0 and the Lionesses dominated possession in the first half. Kerr's equaliser in the 63rd gave the 75,000-plus crowd some hope, but England sealed the match with goals from Lauren Hemp (71st) and Alessia Russo (86th).

England and Spain will now vie for the title Sunday. It will be the first summit clash for both the teams. In the first semifinal played Tuesday, Spain had defeated Sweden 2-1 in an exciting encounter. The goals for Spain were scored by Salma Paralluelo (81st) and Olga Carmona (90th) while Sweden's Rebecka Blomqvist (89th) had



LETHAL TOUCH: England's Lauren Hemp (left) is all set to score the second goal for her side in the semifinal against Australia, Wednesday  
AP PHOTO

restored parity in the game. In the England-Australia game attacking midfielder Toone gave England a first half lead, but a stunning strike from captain Kerr squared things up after half time. However, England playing aggressive soccer were not to be denied on the day. Hemp restored England's lead before Russo put the result beyond doubt shortly before the end. Sarina Wiegman's side clearly had a game plan to impose themselves physically on Australia, committing nine fouls in the first half as they nullified their opponents' attacking options. England opened the scoring when Russo worked her way to the byline before cutting the ball

back and Toone smashed it into the top right corner for her first goal of the tournament. Australia started the second half much brighter and began pressing England higher up the pitch, searching for a historic moment that would match Cathy Freeman's incredible 400 metres victory in the same venue at the 2000 Olympics. They got it in the 63rd minute when Kerr received the ball in her own half, ran towards the goal and fired an unstoppable rocket into the top left corner from 25 yards out beyond the diving Mary Earps. However, that was as far as the hosts could get to and then the Lionesses dashed their dreams.

## Wrestler Mohit bags Jr world title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amman (Jordan), August 16:** Mohit Kumar became Wednesday the first Indian wrestler to win the junior World Championship title since 2019 after edging out Russia's Eldar Akhmaduninov in the 61kg final while Priya lined herself up to be country's only second woman grappler to grab the title.

Mohit was trailing 0-6 in the final but the Russian, who is competing as an individual athlete, lost steam as the bout pro-

gressed and the Indian took full advantage to reel off nine straight points. Deepak Punia, who has now made a transition to the senior circuit, was the last Indian to win a World Junior Championship in 2019. Before that, Palwinder Cheema (2001) and Ramesh Kumar (2001) had grabbed the world junior title. So Mohit is only the fourth Indian wrestler to win the coveted crown. In another bout, Jaideep won the 74kg bronze with a win over Kyrgyzstan's Zhakshylyk

Ruslanovich Baitashov. The Indian men's freestyle team has so far won five medals. Sagar Jaglan (79kg) had won a silver, while Deepak Chahal (97kg) and Sagar (57kg) had won bronze Tuesday. Meanwhile, in the women's competition, Priya reached the 76kg final with a commanding technical superiority win over American Kennedy Alexis Blades in the semifinals. She will be up against Germany's Laura Celine Kuehen in the title round, Thursday.

## Bumrah back in business

PACEMAN RETURNS TO BOWL AT FULL TILT DURING NET SESSIONS IN IRELAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dublin, August 16:** After a hiatus of 11 months, top pacer Jasprit Bumrah returned to the India nets Wednesday and bowled with intensity and skill that had made him a fearsome opponent for batsmen.

The 29-year-old last played for India against Australia in a T20I match at Hyderabad, September 25, 2022. Since then he was sidelined with a back injury that required him to undergo a surgery.

However, Bumrah made his much-awaited return to India colours when he was named captain of the national side July 31 for the away T20I series against Ireland starting Friday here.

The Indian team touched down Tuesday in Ireland and wasted little time in hitting the ground a day later. In a video shared by BCCI on 'X', formerly Twitter, Bumrah was seen bowling at full tilt, a comforting sight ahead of the upcoming Asia Cup and the ODI World Cup.

Bumrah rattled a right-hand batter with a whizzing bouncer, forcing him to duck under the ball. He zoomed in on the toes of a left-handed batsman with a spot-on yorker, eliciting some



Jasprit Bumrah along with support staff and players of the Indian team in Ireland

appreciative nods from others at India nets.

The net session could be viewed as a sum total of his recovery process at the NCA, where he gradually increased the workload and followed a designer fitness regime.

**Samson under scanner** Meanwhile sources informed that the national selection committee's patience with the profigate Sanju Samson could soon end. The presence of Jitesh Sharma in the 15-member Indian squad here is an indication of things to come and it certainly puts the Rajasthan Royals skipper's place in the side under scanner.

With scores of 12, 7 and 13 in the three games that he batted in the five-match T20 series against

West Indies, Samson has himself invited trouble and one shouldn't be surprised if Jitesh dons the big gloves and plays as a designated finisher during the Ireland series beginning Friday.

The 29-year-old Amrawati-born cricketer is likely to be India's first-choice keeper ahead of Prabhsimran Singh in the upcoming Asian Games and before an important event, it is only fair that he gets to play a few international games to settle his nerves.

Jitesh performs the tough role of a finisher for Punjab Kings at No. 5 or 6 in the IPL and it is not an easy job to mentally condition yourself to play only 15 to 20 balls per game. So Jitesh should be groomed accordingly, an official stated.

## Jena may miss Budapest meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 16:** Indian javelin thrower Kishore Kumar Jena's participation in the World Championships in Budapest was Wednesday rendered doubtful after his one-month visa was cancelled by the Hungarian Embassy here. Jena, who won gold July 30 in the Sri Lankan National Championships with a personal best of 84.38m, had made the cut for the prestigious tournament through the world ranking quota.

"Setback for #javelin thrower Kishore Kumar Jena as Embassy of #Hungary in Delhi has cancelled his one month #visa for reasons unknown. He is doubtful for World Championships," Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said in a post on social media platform 'X' Wednesday. "Odisha javelin thrower Kishore Kumar Jena was issued 1 month Schengen visa last month. He was to leave for Budapest August 20. If visa cancelled, he can't compete," the AFI added.

An AFI source, however, said that the AFI has requested the Hungarian Embassy to look into the matter so that Jena can travel to Budapest. Jena had qualified for the event after being placed 36th in the 'Road to Budapest' list.

## Swetapadma, Jigyanshu shine

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 16:** Swetapadma Dalai of Acharya Harihar Higher Secondary School emerged star of the show with the triple crown in the 28th YGTTA State Ranking table tennis tournament which concluded Wednesday at the JN Indoor Stadium in Cuttack. Swetapadma won the girls' under-17, under-19 and the women's singles titles defeating her respective opponents in the three finals quite comfortably. Jigyanshu Sahu of Cuttack also won a triple crown by annexing the boys' under-15, under-17 and under-19 titles. In the women's final, Swetapadma beat Mayuri

Chatterjee of Bhadrak 4-2 (11-9, 7-11, 15-17, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8). She won the girls' under-17 title defeating Urja Verma of Cuttack 3-1 and the under-19 crown with a convincing 3-0 win over Sushree Pattanayak.

In the men's singles final Tushar Chouhan (AG Odisha) beat Tausif Haque (ESIC) 4-2 (9-11, 11-9, 11-9, 7-11, 12-10, 11-8) to win the title. In the boys' singles under-17 final Jigyanshu trounced Aditya Anupam Das 3-0 while in the under-19 final he thrashed Dwarikanath Swain of Khurda by an identical margin.

The under-11 girls' and boys' finals were won by Aradhya Sahoo of Cuttack and Reetam Bhuyan of Rourkela