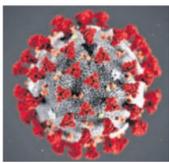




PROFESSIONAL HAZARD

Actor Nushratt Bharuccha, who played female lead in Dream Girl, says she was hurt after being omitted from the sequel

LEISURE P2



COVID THREAT

After EG.5 raised concerns for a new Covid outbreak, the WHO has now flagged another sub-variant of Omicron BA.2.86, dubbed as BA.X

INTERNATIONAL P10



JENA GETS HUNGARIAN VISA

Javelin thrower Kishore Jena receives his Hungarian visa, which allows him to compete at the World Athletics Championships

SPORTS P12

CHANDRAYAAN-3 LANDER MODULE HEALTH OKAY, GETS CLOSER TO MOON

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 18: Announcing that the health of Chandrayaan-3's Lander Module is normal, ISRO Friday said that the module has successfully undergone a deboosting (slowing down) operation taking it closer to the Moon.

The Lander Module, comprising the lander (Vikram) and the rover (Pragyan), will undergo its second deboosting operation August 20. This will lower the module to an orbit that takes it much closer to the Moon's surface.

The soft landing of the lander on the lunar south pole is scheduled August 23.

"The Lander Module (LM) health is normal. LM successfully underwent a deboosting operation that reduced its orbit to 113 km x 157 km. The second deboosting operation is scheduled for August 20, 2023, around 02:00 Hrs. IST," ISRO said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

The Lander Module of Chandrayaan-3 had successfully separated from the Propulsion Module Thursday, 35 days after the satellite was launched July 14.



TEMPLE MARCH: Devotees on way to a temple to offer ducks to Goddess Manasha as part of a ritual on 'Shravan Sankranti', in Birbhum district of West Bengal, Friday

MAJOR FIRE AT MAYURBHANJ HOSPITAL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, August 18: A major fire broke out at Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital here Friday afternoon.

There were no reports of any death or injury in the incident and all the patients as well as staff were stated to be safe.

As per reports, at around 2.20 pm, smoke was detected when a surgery was being conducted in an Operation Theatre (OT) in the gynaecology department on the third floor of the seven-storey hospital building. Some repair work in an adjacent OT was on at the time of the incident.

The floor consists of the paediatric department, female surgery ward, gynaecology department OT and ICU. Immediately the hospital staff shifted all the patients to another ward and made active the existing fire fighting systems.

CDMO Rupabhanu Mishra said though the exact reason



behind the fire is not clear, it is believed to have spread from a machine inside the OT.

Panic gripped the patients as well as hospital staff after smoke engulfed the floor. On being informed, the fire brigade dispatched as many as 15 fire tenders and the blaze was brought under control within 40 minutes.

Superintendent of Police (SP) B Gangadhar also reached the spot and started an inquiry.

An investigation is being carried out by the hospital authority and the Fire department into the incident. The exact losses incurred due to the fire have not been estimated as yet.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What is this new teacher trying to get? Promotion or a govt job?

No penal interest: RBI

Central bank asks banks, NBFCs to levy reasonable penalty charges on EMI default, issues fresh norms for individual borrowers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 18: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday asked banks to provide fixed interest rate option to individual borrowers and directed the lenders to levy only reasonable penalty charges in case of default in EMI payments.

The two decisions are expected to provide a relief to the borrowers amid rising interest rates and most of the retail loans being on floating rates now.

In a directive to banks and NBFCs, including housing finance companies, the RBI said several consumer grievances have been received in relation to elongation of loan tenor or increase in EMI amount with regard to EMI-based floating rate personal loans, without proper communication or consent of the borrowers. Interest rates have risen since May last year as the central bank hiked the repo rate to tame high inflation.

As a result of 250 basis points increase in the repo rate from May 2022 till February this year, a large number of borrowers are facing negative amortisation, wherein the Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) works out to be less than the interest obligation, resulting in persistent increase of the principal amount. "At the time of reset of interest rates, REs (Regulated Entities) shall



provide the option to the borrowers to switch over to a fixed rate as per their board approved policy," as per the notification on 'Reset of Floating Interest Rate on EMI based Personal Loans'. The policy, inter alia, should also specify the number of times a borrower will be allowed to switch the interest rate system during the tenor of the loan.

At the time of sanction, the central bank said REs should clearly communicate to the borrowers about the possible impact of change in benchmark interest rate on the loan leading to changes in EMI and/or tenor or both. "Subsequently, any increase in the EMI/ tenor or both on account of the above shall be communicated to the borrower immediately through appropriate channels," the RBI said.

Banks and NBFCs have been asked to ensure compliance of the instructions for the existing as well as new loans by December 31, 2023.

In a notification on 'Fair Lending Practice - Penal Charges in Loan Accounts', the RBI said it has been observed that many REs use penal rates of interest, over and above the applicable interest rates, in case of defaults/ non-compliance by the borrower with the terms on which credit facilities were sanctioned.

The intent of levying penal interest/charges is essentially to inculcate a sense of credit discipline and such charges are not meant to be used as a revenue enhancement tool over and above the contracted rate of interest, the central bank noted. The instructions on 'Fair Lending Practice - Penal Charges in Loan Accounts' will come into effect from January 1, 2024.

However, supervisory reviews have indicated divergent practices amongst the REs with regard to levy of penal interest/charges leading to customer grievances and disputes, the RBI said. "Penalty, if charged, for non-compliance of material terms and conditions of loan contract by the borrower shall be treated as 'penal charges' and shall not be levied in the form of 'penal interest' that is added to the rate of interest charged on the advances," it said.

Also, the RBI said there should be no capitalisation of penal charges, which means that no further interest can be computed on such charges.

SHORT TAKES

2 bodies recovered from buffalo farm

Bhubaneswar: Bodies of two persons were found under mysterious circumstances in a house on the premises of a buffalo farm at Ramchandrapur under Baliana police limits here, Friday. The deceased were identified as Sushanta Das, 45, and Jagabandhu Behera, 23, of Niali area in Cuttack. Sources said that the duo was engaged by one Antaryami Das of Unit-IX area to look after animals in his farm on the outskirts of the City.

Odia University gets first Vice-Chancellor

Bhubaneswar: Governor and Chancellor of Odisha universities Ganeshi Lal has appointed Sabita Pradhan as the first Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Odia University at Satyabadi in Puri, Pradhan, currently working as a professor of Odia at Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan, has been appointed as the VC of the university for a period of two years.



MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	64948.66 ↓ 202.36
NIFTY	19310.15 ↓ 55.10
DOLLAR	83.23 ↓ ₹0.06
EURO	90.38 ↑ ₹0.00
GOLD	₹58,464 ↑ ₹174
SILVER	₹70,250 ↑ ₹232

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	41.2°C	40.2°C
TEMP MIN	28.6°C	28.4°C
Humidity	77%	75%
Rainfall	6.3	Nil
		Forecast: PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

Saliva test could spot early heart disease risk

SCIENTISTS HAVE IDENTIFIED A LINK BETWEEN HIGH WHITE BLOOD CELLS IN THE SALIVA OF HEALTHY YOUNG ADULTS AND AN EARLY CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE WARNING SIGN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: A simple saliva test could help identify the earliest warning signs of cardiovascular disease, according to a study.

Scientists have identified a link between high white blood cells in the saliva of healthy young adults and an early cardiovascular disease warning sign.

They used a simple oral rinse to see if levels of white blood cells — an indicator of gum inflammation — in the saliva of healthy adults could be linked to warning signs for cardiovascular disease.

The study, published recently in the journal Frontiers in Oral Health, found that high levels of white blood cells correlated with compromised

Periodontitis is a common infection of the gums which has previously been linked to the development of cardiovascular disease

flow-mediated dilation, an early indicator of poor arterial health.

"Even in young healthy adults, low levels of oral inflammatory load may have an impact on cardiovascular health — one of the leading causes of death in North America," said the corresponding author of the study, Trevor King from the Mount Royal University in Canada.

Periodontitis is a common infection of the gums which has previously been linked to the development of cardiovascular disease. Scientists suspect that inflammatory factors may enter the bloodstream through the



gums and damage the vascular system.

The researchers studied currently healthy young people without diagnosed periodontal issues to determine whether lower levels of oral inflammation can be clinically relevant to cardiovascular health.

"We are starting to see more relationships between oral health and risk of cardiovascular disease,"

said the first author of the study, Ker-Yung Hong, who now studies dentistry at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

"If we are seeing that oral health may have an impact on the risk of developing cardiovascular disease even in young healthy individuals, this holistic approach can be implemented earlier on," Hong said.

The team chose pulse-wave velocity, which can measure the stiffness of arteries, and flow-mediated dilation, a measure of how well arteries can dilate to allow for higher blood flow, as key indicators of cardiovascular risk.

These measure arterial health directly: stiff and poorly functioning arteries raise patients' risk of cardiovascular disease.



Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)
Deemed to be University
(Declared U/S 3 of UGC Act, 1956) Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India



19th Annual CONVOCATION

19th August 2023



Chief Guest
Professor Ganeshi Lal
Hon'ble Governor of Odisha

* Conferment of D.Sc./D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) to: *

Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) & Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) Govt. of India

Mr. Jitendra Kumar Mohanty
Chairman & Managing Director Swosti Group of Hotels, Bhubaneswar

Mr. Chander Prakash Gurnani
CEO & Managing Director Tech Mahindra

🕒 10:00 a.m.

📍 Biju Patnaik Indoor Stadium Campus - 13, KIIT-DU

Website: www.kiit.ac.in | Email: kiit@kiit.ac.in

leisure



SANDRA HEARTBROKEN AFTER THE BLIND SIDE CONTROVERSY

Actress Sandra Bullock feels heartbroken after the controversy regarding the film *The Blind Side* is now being claimed that her Oscar winning role in the film is tainted by a lie.

DRAKE GIFTS \$30K BIRKIN BAG TO LUCKY FAN AT HIS CONCERT

Rapper Drake was performing at the Kia Forum venue when he studded the crowd by walking on stage holding a pink Hermes Birkin bag - which sell for around \$30,000 - and handed it over to a female fan.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You feel lost and thoroughly depressed today. This will make you turn towards spirituality, says Ganesh. You will devote more time to meditation and will pray a lot. Despite the adverse circumstances, Ganesh says you will make a good deal of material headway.

TAURUS
Feel your imagination run wild as you star-gaze throughout the day wondering about the existence of the extra terrestrial. You will paint the workplace in your flavour of innovation, combined with a drive to work equally hard. Add some smooth talk to the equation and you will find a lot of people in awe of your charm, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
A long and hectic day awaits you. You will be in the mood to finish off long-pending projects at work or at home. There is a chance that your personal life may get affected due to the extra attention you pay towards work.

CANCER
Ganesh advises you to be careful before signing any document. A hard time for share brokers and traders. So be on the guard during deals and transactions. Average time for business. Ganesh tells you to be self-confidence.

LEO
You will pay serious attention to your work. You will feel that you have no option but to work hard. You will not be in the mood for socialising. This is only a temporary phase, hence there is no need to worry. You will be back to your usual gregarious self in no time at all, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Matters of religion and spirituality rise to the fore today. Throw yourself into a single-minded pursuit to be successful in your chosen field, and make the most of your skills and natural talent, says Ganesh. Matters of relationships will see you more critical and analytical than emotional.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that today you shall be very careful in money matters. It is nothing to do with miserliness at all. When buying things you will be careful while spending money and will stick to your budget. On the other hand when you are out with your loved ones you will not think about holding back and will spend lavishly. Ganesh says to take the balanced approach in everything in life and things will go well for you.

SCORPIO
It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life today. Remember that spite and envy beget enemies. Ganesh advises you to display some errors so as to make you seem more human and approachable.

SAGITTARIUS
You wake up with a smile today. According to Ganesh, you have a knack of solving problems, which you may use it to the optimum. Be cautious of people around you, as their envious nature may affect your work. Ignore them and keep the optimism alive.

CAPRICORN
Whether you're an artist, performer, professional or an entrepreneur, career issues will take the foreground today, while personal matters will wait in queue for your attention, says Ganesh. Your performance will be at its all-time high, and your efforts will be duly rewarded, but credit for this must go to your loved ones who will lend their unceasing support for all your endeavours.

AQUARIUS
Listen to your inner voice, follow what your heart says and you will not need anyone else guiding you on your path. At work, you will have a smooth sailing today, as superiors will be supportive of your actions and decisions.

PISCES
While you will need loads of moral support to keep your spirits up, you are also likely to be blessed with the company of a person who is equipped to provide just that. Positive results will come your way as long as you do not give up.

Dhumrapan triggers laugh riot

People suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder also have the right to live freely and this fundraising event will help in supporting them, said Gargi Bhattacharya, Chief Trustee of Zain Foundation



A scene from the Hindi play *Dhumrapan* staged at Rabindra Mandap, Friday. OP PHOTO

BHUBANESWAR: Theatre fans of the City enjoyed a terrific evening Friday here at Rabindra Mandap as the multiple awards winning Hindi/English drama *Dhumrapan* left them in stitches. Headlined by versatile theatre and film actor Kumud Mishra, the event was a fundraiser by Bhubaneswar-

based charitable organiser Zain Foundation to support the people suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder. Written by Adhir Bhatt and directed by Akarsh Khurana and set in the smoking area of a corporate building over the period of a week, the comedy play highlighted how office

workers discuss family problems, workplace issues, employee firings, corporate pressure, and workplace competition. Needless to say, the viewers stuck to their seats till the curtains were down enjoying every moment of the famous play.

Kumud, also a known face in theatre circle for over 25 years, played the role of a boss who slams his subordinates and penalizes them for anything.

The cast also includes Shubhrajyoti Barat, Ghanshyam Lalsa, Siddharth Kumar, Tarruk Raina, Sarthak Kakkar, Abhishek Saha and Ashmita Meghrajani.

Talking about the organiser, Zain Foundation, since its inception in 2015, has initiated plenty of advocacy and awareness exercises, successfully both in the state and nationally, through workshops, rallies, sporting events and art exhibitions.

Gargi Bhattacharya, Chief Trustee of the Foundation said that there is a still lot of denial among people for autism in the country. "They also have right to live freely and we have organised this play to raise funds to support the people suffering from autism."

English daily **Orissa POST** and Odia daily **Dharitri** were the print media partners of the event. PNN

'Would love to team up with local troupes'



Arindam Ganguly, OP plays in Bhubaneswar and team up with local troupes if get a chance.

You have played a wide range of characters in movies. How do you prepare yourself for the challenges?

■ There are many emotions within human beings; we simply need to discover them and bring them outside. We attempt to bring out the positive and negative traits of people via acting.

■ **The most challenging character you have played so far.**

■ Picking up any particular role is difficult as each has a unique hue and leaves you with an impression.

■ **How different is acting on stage and in a movie?**

■ There is not much difference, you have to adapt to these different mediums. Both forms have their distinct flavours.

■ **Finally, your thoughts on Odisha?**

■ Many years ago, I worked in Odisha with Jhelum Paranjape, an Odissi exponent, for ballet *Lilavati*. That was my first work in Odisha. I enjoyed the local cuisines at that time. Acclaimed theatre artiste Robin Das, who is from Odisha, is one of my Gurus. There's plan in place to work with him. This time I am getting very less time but I am planning to do bike tours of the state, the interior parts in particular.

■ **What message does Dhumrapan, a play which has been staged over 60 times across India and has bagged multiple awards at festivals, aim to convey?**

■ It's a corporate comedy that shows how staff members at corporate workplaces express their emotions in smoking areas about things like evaluations, politics, relationships, stress, and job insecurities. We have attempted to showcase people's inner feelings on the backdrop of smoking.

■ **There is a thriving theatre community in Bhubaneswar. Have you ever considered collaborating with local troupes or artistes?**

■ Oh, yes. I would like to be part of more

Nushratt miffed over Dream Girl 2 exclusion

Mumbai: Actress Nushratt Bharucha garnered praise for her acting skills when she acted alongside Ayushmann Khurrana in *Dream Girl*. Nevertheless, in the sequel, she was substituted with Ananya Panday.

In response, Nushratt has expressed that there is no reasoning or explanation for this change.

Speaking to media, the *Pyaar ka Punchnama* actress said, "I was a part of *Dream Girl* and I love that whole team. I terribly miss working with them. But why they didn't cast me in *Dream Girl 2*, I think only they can answer. I don't know, there is no logic and there is no answer to it. But why didn't they cast me? I am a human being, so of course it

hurts. And of course it feels unfair. But I get it, it is their decision. Cool, no problem."

She also revealed, "I didn't know my film was also going to be released on the same day as *Dream Girl 2*. But for some reason it got delayed. However, Raj sir (*Dream Girl 2* director) wished me, 'All the best'. And I responded to him saying, 'Sir, something is connected in our universe. I wasn't in your film, but my second film is releasing on the same day'. So we have come to a place where we can smile about it."

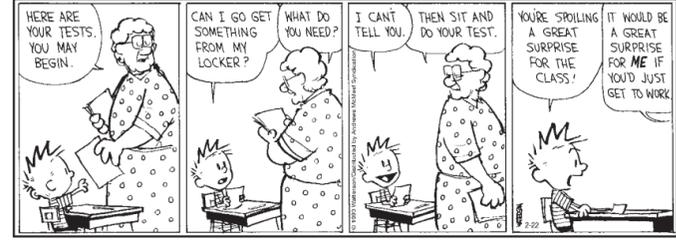
However, she praised the trailer of *Dream Girl 2*, and said that she hopes the film does well for everyone, from Ayushmann Khurrana to Ananya Panday. AGENCIES



PEANUTS



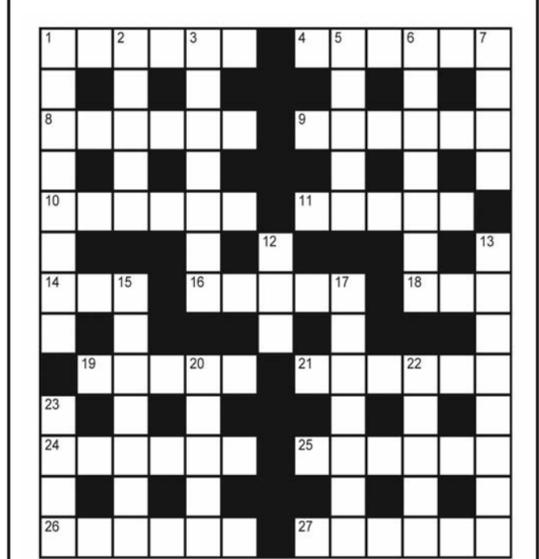
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



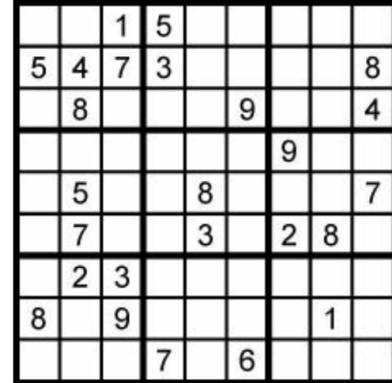
FUN post CROSSWORD



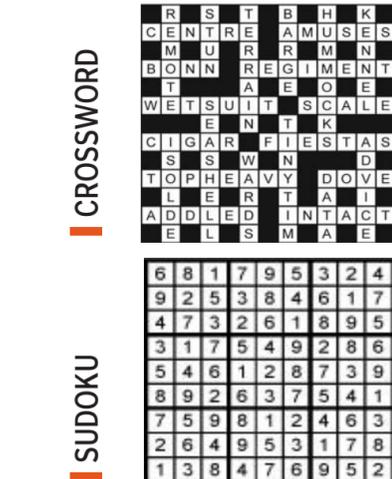
- Across**
- 1 Defy
 - 4 Jubilant
 - 8 Captured
 - 9 Fishing spot
 - 10 Apprentice
 - 11 Hard stuff
 - 14 Behavioral quirk
 - 16 Lustrous fabric
 - 18 Greek consonant
 - 19 Deadly
 - 21 Vast Arctic region
 - 24 Puzzle type
 - 25 Atoll in the Marshall Islands
 - 26 Aura
 - 27 Asian principality
 - 5 Surpass
 - 6 Food storage appliance
 - 7 Tibetan monk
 - 12 Utmost degree
 - 13 Career
 - 15 Skull part
 - 17 Feed
 - 20 French farewell
 - 22 Ramble
 - 23 Egyptian solar deity
- Down**
- 1 Revenue
 - 2 Crouch
 - 3 Globes

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

SADBHAVANA DIWAS

Officials and employees of East Coast Railway headed by General Manager Manoj Sharma took pledge of *Sadbhavana Diwas* to work for the emotional oneness and harmony of the people of India regardless of caste, region, religion or language and to resolve all differences through dialogue and constitutional means without resorting to violence



Fake RTI activist held in Koraput

STF RECOVERS A BOGUS I&PR DEPARTMENT IDENTITY CARD FROM THE POSSESSION OF ACCUSED KISHORE KUMAR MISHRA

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police has arrested a man from Koraput for allegedly posing as an RTI activist and duping people by promising them to help get various government licences in exchange of money, an official said Friday.

The accused, Kishore Kumar Mishra, who hails from Berhampur in Ganjam district, has been residing in Koraput for many years now, said the official. Mishra was initially arrested in connection with a case (122/23) registered at Koraput Town police station under Sections 419, 420, 465, 468, 470, 471 and 34 of the IPC April 25, 2023. Later, he was released. Following mounting complaints, the case was taken over by the STF that arrested him Thursday.

A fake identity card of the state's Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department



was recovered from his possession, the official pointed out.

Mishra, a Political Science graduate, used to dupe people by posing as an RTI activist and claiming to have proximity with senior officers. He has also promised them to help get various licences for trades, including liquor business, in exchange of money, said an official, adding that the accused has been defrauding people for the last two-three years. "Bank accounts of the arrested person show that several cash deposits worth over ₹2 crore were made in the last two-three years, the STF officer said.

"Initial investigation suggests that the accused is a member of a larger group indulging in cheating/impersonation," a statement from the STF said.

"It was also noticed that this group uses some mule bank accounts, including that of some dead persons," the police said, adding that the fraudsters hoodwink people in believing them as government officials by saving their phone numbers on "Truecaller" as some senior officers.

State's 1st gas-based crematorium in City

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday inaugurated Odisha's first natural gas-based crematorium in the state capital.

The project, undertaken by Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, is aimed at reducing air pollution.

Pradhan dedicated the crematorium to the people of the City in the presence of Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha MP Aparajita Sarangi, GAIL Director (Human Resources) Ayush Gupta and others.

GAIL will establish two more state-of-the-art natural gas-based crematoriums at Alugadi-Aiginia in Bhubaneswar and Khannagar in Cuttack

The natural gas-based crematorium at Dharma Vihar in Bhubaneswar is a testament to GAIL's commitment to sustainable development and environmentally-friendly practices, an official of the PSU said.

GAIL will establish two more state-of-the-art natural gas-based crematoriums at Alugadi-Aiginia in Bhubaneswar and Khannagar in Cuttack, the official said, adding that the estimated budget for all the three crematoriums is ₹16 crore.



BUMPY RIDE: A pothole-ridden service road near the under-construction flyover at Sikharpur in Cuttack poses threat to commuters. PIC: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

OSCW chief: Elopement cases among teens high

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The Odisha State Commission for Women (OSCW) Friday said elopement cases among adolescents has increased and that the commission has planned to launch college-level workshops to sensitise adolescents about the vulnerabilities of human trafficking.

Speaking at a workshop on 'Emerging Trends in Human Trafficking' organised by the Odisha Women in Media, commission's chairperson Minati Behera said elopement cases among adolescents had increased, especially in the post-COVID period.

"The commission has already been sensitising communities by holding workshops in all districts, and college-level programmes will also be conducted to sensitise adolescents about the vulnerabilities related to human trafficking," she said.

Access to mobile phones has made children as young as 14 years vulnerable to such crimes, Behera said. Several cases have been registered in which girls get into relationships and later elope at a tender age without thinking of the consequences, the OSCW chairperson said, adding that these relationships between two individuals often end with a breakup.

"These girls become easy targets for traffickers, who lure them to the business of sex trafficking," Behera said.

ADGP CID-Crime Branch Arun Bothra described human trafficking as a 'complex' problem.

As per National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), Odisha reported the highest number of human trafficking cases in 2021. Of 1,475 victims, trafficked from Odisha, 735 were women and among them, 497 were below 18 years of age. Odisha Childline director Benudhar Senapati said 16 cases of child trafficking were registered in the last two months.

Kamaleswar temple makeover on cards

5T Secretary VK Pandian visits Kamaleswar temple at Krushnaprasad and asks the Puri district administration to prepare a master plan for overall development of the shrine and provision of tourist amenities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Acting on the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Secretary to CM (5T) VK Pandian visited Puri district to review the progress of various developmental projects in the district and redress public grievances. He visited Kamaleswar temple in Krushnaprasad where he interacted with the servitors, trustee members and general public for development of the shrine along with better facilities for devotees. He also took suggestions on various aspects of transformation of the temple and related pilgrim/tourist amenities. The 5T Secretary directed the district administration to prepare a master plan for development of the shrine.

Pandian reviewed the progress of ongoing mega piped water supply schemes being undertaken at a cost of ₹1,075 crore in Krushnaprasad, Brahmagiri, Pipli, Delang, Puri, Gop and Satyabadi blocks. The projects will be operationalised in phases from December 2023 onwards.

In Pipli, Pandian discussed with the district administration regarding livelihood of appliqué (Chandua) workers and directed them to prepare a development plan.



5T Secretary reviews the progress of ongoing mega piped water supply schemes being undertaken at a cost of ₹1,075 crore in Krushnaprasad, Brahmagiri, Pipli, Delang, Puri, Gop and Satyabadi blocks. The projects will be operationalised in phases from December 2023 onwards

Development plan to be prepared for livelihood of the appliqué workers of Pipli

Pandian interacts with college students and informed them regarding Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's approval for inclusion of 48 higher secondary schools and 35 degree colleges of the district under 5T transformation programme at a cost of ₹51.75 crore

He interacted with the college students in Puri and informed them regarding Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's approval for inclusion of 48 higher secondary schools and 35 degree colleges of the district under 5T transformation programme at a cost of ₹51.75 crore. He motivated the students to study well and work hard to achieve their dreams.

During the day, he participated in the public grievance meetings at Pipli,

Krushnaprasad, Brahmagiri and Puri. He interacted with the public regarding their grievances and emphasised that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik gives top priority to citizens' grievances and assured early resolution of the petitions submitted. Special Secretary to CM R Vineel Krishna, IG Ashish Kumar Singh, Collector Samarth Verma, SP Kanwar Vishal Singh and other district level officials accompanied him.

City to host NCSCDA assessment camp for differently-abled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The National Career Service Centre for Differently-Abled (NCSCDA), Bhubaneswar, DGE, Ministry of Labour and Employment in collaboration with Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), headquarters in Kanpur will organise an assessment camp for visually impaired (VI) and locomotor disability (LD) PwDs of the state from August 21 to 25 at NCSCDA office in Pokhariput area of the Capital city here, an official said Friday.

As per the officials of ALIMCO, interested persons with disabilities (PwDs) may come to NCSCDA office between 10am and 4pm with their photo, disability certificate, income certificate, BPL card/ration card, pension card and Aadhaar card (all original and two copy of photocopy) for their assessment.

These differently-abled people in the age bracket of 15 to 45 years would receive white cane, smart cane, smartphone tricycle, wheelchair, crutches and motorised tricycle based on their eligibility and availability of these devices within 30 days from the date of assessment.

These aids and appliances would be provided to these PwDs under ADIP scheme by ALIMCO.

AI model that can estimate age from chest X-ray

A newly-developed artificial intelligence (AI) model could estimate one's age from chest X-ray, new research published in *The Lancet Healthy Longevity* journal said.

The model can also signal chronic diseases such as hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease from the difference between estimated and chronological age, the research from Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan, said.

The findings marked a leap in medical imaging and paved way for improved early disease detection and intervention, the researchers said in their study.

As the global population ages, aging and longevity research is gaining importance.

Aging, a complex change associated with several diseases, has varied effects across individuals, they said.

"Chronological age is one of the most critical factors in medicine. Our results suggest that

chest radiography-based apparent age may accurately reflect health conditions beyond chronological age," said lead researcher Yasuhito Mitsuyama.

For age estimation, the AI model was trained using around 67,100 chest radiographs of 36,051 healthy individuals who underwent health check-ups between 2008 and 2021.

The model showed a strong correlation between the AI-estimated age and the chronological age of the individuals, the researchers found.

It was then trained to analyse the link between the AI-estimated age and each disease on additional 34,197 chest radiographs compiled from as many patients with known diseases.

In all, the model was trained on roughly 1,01,300 chest X-rays obtained from 70,248 participants across five institutions in Japan.

The difference between the individual's AI-estimated age and their chronological age was found



to be strongly associated with chronic diseases such as hypertension, hyperuricemia (high uric acid levels in blood), and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This meant, the researchers said, that higher the age the AI estimated, higher the likelihood of

these individuals to have the aforementioned diseases. Chest X-rays could thus be useful as a biomarker of aging and longevity, they said, because they can show not only the shape of features within the body, but also details of internal organs

■ For age estimation, the AI model was trained using around 67,100 chest radiographs of 36,051 healthy individuals who underwent health check-ups between 2008 and 2021

■ The model showed a strong correlation between the AI-estimated age and the chronological age of the individuals, the researchers found

■ The difference between the individual's AI-estimated age and his/her chronological age was found to be strongly associated with chronic diseases such as hypertension, hyperuricemia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

and bones. "We aim to further develop this research and apply it to estimate the severity of chronic diseases, to predict life expectancy, and to forecast possible surgical complications," said Mitsuyama.

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ECoR detection system to prevent jumbo deaths

As per sources, ECoR has obtained a sanctioned amount of ₹79.12 crores to install the detection systems at sensitive locations of elephant passing zone and elephant corridors

Six railway sections consisting of 200 kms stretch under Sambalpur and Khurda Road Railway Divisions have been taken into hand in the first phase



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to install Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) in elephant movement areas to prevent wild elephant deaths on railway tracks under its jurisdiction. "This step has been taken to check elephant deaths on the Rail Lines, especially in sensitive locations of elephant movements in Khurda Road and Sambalpur Railway Divisions," said an official. As per sources, ECoR has obtained a sanction of ₹79.12 crores to install the systems at sensitive locations of elephant passing zone and elephant corridors. Six

railway sections consisting of 200 kms stretch under Sambalpur and Khurda Road Railway Divisions have been taken into hand in the first phase. The six sections include: Maneswar-Bamur, Turekela-Lakhna, Arand-Arang Mahanadi, Norla-Theruvani in Sambalpur Division and Kapilas Road-Rajathgarh-Angul, Rambhaganjam and Nayagarh-Porjanpur Railway Section under Khurda Road Railway Division of ECoR. The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) had first taken this project on an experimental basis in the Chalsa-Hasimara Railway Section of the Dooars area under Alipurduar Division and between Lanka-Hawaiipur

Railway Section under Lumding Division.

After success of the pilot project, NFR has now installed (AI)-based Intrusion Detection System (IDS) in all its elephant corridors in Assam and North Bengal in order to prevent the death of wild elephants due to train hits.

"The IDS will help detect wild elephants approaching the railway tracks and alert railway officials to help avert deaths. The existing optical fibres will be used as sensors to identify movements of wild animals at locations and alert control offices, station masters, gateman and loco pilots," said the official. IDS will also help in detecting rail fracture, trespassing on railway track and alert about disaster mitigation due to unauthorised digging near railway tracks, landslides near tracks, added the official.

"The project aims at developing an affordable solution for large-scale monitoring and early warning of elephant intrusion. After analysing the signal processing methods, the most suitable technique for real-time detection of elephants is chosen and simulated," explained the official.



UP IN ARMS: Members of Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association (OSTA) protest seeking equal pay and fulfillment of their 10-point charter of demands near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

IMD yellow warning for 18 dists of state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Several parts of the state received heavy rainfall in the last 24 hours under influence of a low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal, an official said Friday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning of light to moderate rain with thundershowers and lightning in 18 districts of Odisha, including the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Friday.

The local weather office said that extremely heavy rainfall was recorded in at least six places - Telkoi in Keonjhar (182.6 mm), Banki in Cuttack (182 mm), Gudvella in Bolangir (139.8 mm), Pipili in Puri (122 mm), Champua in Keonjhar (120.6 mm) and Deogaon in Bolangir (107 mm), in descending order. Khurda received 88 mm rain-



The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) at one or two places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Bolangir, and Nuapada in the next 24 hours

The Met office said that low pressure area is active over the Northwest Bay of Bengal adjoining Odisha and West Bengal coasts. The system is likely to move in the west-north-west direction for the next two to three days towards North Odisha-North Chhattisgarh.

very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) at one or two places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Bolangir, and Nuapada in the next 24 hours.

It also said heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) may also occur at one or two places in Gajapati, Ganjam, Rayagada, Khurda, Puri, Nayagarh, Boudh, Sonepur, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh.

Meanwhile, Odisha's Special Relief Commissioner has asked all district administrations to be on alert and have warned of temporary water logging in low-lying areas, poor visibility during intense spells of rain, and traffic congestion in urban areas.

The SRC has also said landslides are also likely in vulnerable hilly areas in Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, and Kandhamal.

fall followed by Hirakud(87.8), Nabarangpur(81), Keonjhar(70.6), Puri(69.6), Bhubaneswar(63.8), and Titlagarh(60.8) till 8.30 am Friday.

As per the forecast, districts likely to be affected by the heavy rainfall include Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Balasore, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Angul, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Khurda, Cuttack, Puri,

Ganjam, Gajapati, Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi and Kandhamal. The Met office said that low pressure area is active over the Northwest Bay of Bengal adjoining Odisha and West Bengal coasts. The system is likely to move in the west-north-west direction in the next two to three days towards North Odisha-North Chhattisgarh. The IMD has forecast heavy to

Jay Triranga Lit Fest organised in Cuttack

Cuttack: On the 77th Independence Day, the Kaibalya Sahitya Sansad organised here at the Sri Ramachandra Bhawan state-level Jay Triranga Literary Mega Festival. On the occasion, patriotic poems were recited by several participating poets and a seminar was organised in two separate sessions. The guests present deliberated on the subject: Social voices in pre and post independent India. Kumar B Das, ex-vice chancellor of Fakir Mohan University, inaugurated the festival and spoke on how immortal works of literature are created that reflect the social systems of their time. Retired district judge Laxmikanta Mohapatra joined as the chief guest. Keynote speaker Basanti Mohanty, invited speaker Bidyut Prava Mishra, guest of honour Dipiyani Pattanaik, Bipin Bihari Barik, Lalitendu Palauri, Satyaprakash Kar, Gitanjali Prusty, Bijaya Khuntia, Sampad Kumar Ratha, Sanhita Mohanty, Sarojini Ratha, Nilakantha Rout and Kamalakat Das were among others who participated in the literary festival. Jayashree Pattanaik and Surabhi Dwibedi were anchors for the event.

Youth dies in road mishap

Bhubaneswar: A 27-year-old youth died after his bike collided head on with Mo Bus at Birabandha under Airfield police limits here Friday. The deceased was identified as Rakhal Patra, a resident of Andharua in Chandaka area. "Rakhal, who worked in a private company, was returning from Jatni on his motorcycle Friday afternoon when he lost his control over the bike at a turning and hit the Mo Bus (OD 33U7368) coming from opposite direction. "The locals told us that Rakhal was riding at a high speed. The head-on collision was so severe that he died on the spot," said an official of Airfield police station.



RAISING VOICE: Congress and BJP corporators caused ruckus in a Cuttack Municipal Corporation meeting pressing their grievances before Mayor Subhash Singh and Commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

Ruins of ancient monument from 15th century discovered

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The ruined remains of an ancient temple dating back to 15th CE in the bank of Bhargavi River near Anandpur village in Puri has been documented by heritage exploration team of Bhubaneswar INTACH chapter.

According to INTACH Convenor Anil Dhir the upper section of a carved door jamb, Amalaka Shila and a number of detached stone blocks are seen scattered in the vicinity.

During a preliminary survey of the area, the team found an upper section of a detached door jamb carved in the classical Kalingan style along with the Lalatabimba containing a beautifully carved image of Goddess

Gajalaxmi. The stone panel has a tri-dhara design, a common style of Kalingan Temple door-jamb of Somavamsi and Eastern Ganga period. While the upper end the first Dhara has a Jalapatra design, the middle one is a combination of flying Bidyadhara and Gandharvas and the lower one is a Daali Dhara.

The mid-sized temple may have crumbled down due to floods, as the site is in the flood-plain of the Bhargavi, Dhir said.

According to the locals, the region was referred to as Sasan Badi in ancient times.

There are many legends about the existence of a temple of Gopinath Krishna which lay on the bank of the Bhargavi. The INTACH team, during its survey of the Ratnachira Valley has

earlier discovered a large number to temple-stone blocks scattered in different villages.

In the nearby Sankha village, many such temples exist. The Amalaka Shila of an ancient temple has converted to a Brundabati Chaura and is placed at the Dasa sahi of the village. Dhir said River Valleys of Odisha are representatives of great cultural, social and religious aspects of the land.

There are thousands archaeological sites and monuments which remains in a state of negligence and unnoticed, the INTACH Convenor remarked.

He said the State Archaeology Department and the Archaeological Survey of India must conduct proper surveys of several monuments lying in utter neglect.

Chikungunya virus's 'invisibility shield' can lead us to vaccines

Researchers have found that the virus responsible for chikungunya fever can spread directly from cell to cell, an advance that could help in developing effective vaccines or treatments for the debilitating and increasingly common mosquito-borne disease.

Over the past 15 years, the chikungunya virus has become an important and increasingly widespread human pathogen. Multiple outbreaks have caused millions of human infections in numerous areas including the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Microbiology, likely solve the longstanding mystery of how the virus, now

emerging as a major health threat, can manage to escape antibodies circulating in the bloodstream.

"Previously, chikungunya virus was thought to spread in the body by infecting a cell, replicating within that cell, and then sending new copies of the virus into the bloodstream that then infect new cells," said study leader Margaret Kielian, a professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, US.

"However, we've found that the virus can also hijack a host cell's cytoskeleton—the proteins that support cells and maintain their shape. The virus causes the infected cell to send out long thin extensions that make contact with uninfected neigh-



bouring cells, enabling the virus to safely and efficiently travel from one cell to another," Kielian said.

The researchers have named these virus-induced structures intercellular long extensions, or ILEs. "This mode of viral trans-

mission may not only shield some copies of the virus from the host's immune response, but it may also explain why symptoms of chikungunya infection can persist for many months or years," added first author Peiqi Yin, a postdoctoral fellow in Kielian's lab.

Previously, chikungunya virus was thought to spread in the body by infecting a cell, replicating within that cell, and then sending new copies of the virus into the bloodstream that then infect new cells.

However, the virus causes the infected cell to send out long thin extensions that make contact with uninfected neighbouring cells, enabling it to safely and efficiently travel from one cell to another.

The chikungunya virus is spread to humans by the bite of infected mosquitoes, which become infected by feeding on people who already have the virus. In addition to fever, infections often lead to chronic and debilitating arthritis.

The first part of the study involved the use of cultured mouse cells. The researchers exposed the cells to the chikungunya virus that expressed a fluorescent reporter protein, allowing them to observe that infectious virus particles were indeed being transmitted from cell to cell via ILEs.

Cell-to-cell transmission occurred even in the presence of high quantities of neutralising antibodies that were added to the culture medium, they said.

To confirm this mode of cell-to-cell transmission in living animals, the researchers studied chikungunya infection in mice. Mice that were first inoculated with neutralising antibodies and were then directly injected with the chikungunya virus did not become infected.

However, antibody-treated mice that were then injected with virus-infected cells, rather than just the virus, did develop chikungunya infections that were resistant to the neutralising antibodies.

"Together, these studies show that ILEs shield the chikungunya virus from neutralising antibodies and promote intercellular virus transmission, both in vitro and in vivo," said Yin.

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Shortage of water in Indravati dam rattles Kalahandi farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, August 18: Power production and irrigation facilities may get seriously affected as Indravati reservoir situated in Kalahandi district has not witnessed a rise in water level even after the end of July. Apprehensions remain among the farming community in the area that shortage of water in the dam will hit them hard.

The western district witnessed heavy rainfall triggered by a low pressure area in Bay of Bengal at the start of this month but that has failed to increase the water level in the reservoir.

The water level in the reservoir is three metres less than the previous year which has caused serious concern. Currently, the water level in the reservoir stands at 630.68 metres while it was 633.11 metres at this time last year.

The reservoir receives water from Indravati, Kapur, Muran and Podagad rivers. The water level has failed to rise in the reservoir due to inadequate rainfall on the upstream of the rivers, departmental sources said.

which was once known for its abject hunger, into a rice bowl making the district's farmers self-reliant.

Later, four turbines were installed in the reservoir which produced 600 MW of power. Power generated from the reservoir was later supplied to people and it is now helping meet the state's energy demand.

On the other hand, water discharged from the reservoir was collected and supplied through the left, right dykes of Mangalpur barrage and lift irrigation points to provide water to the farmlands.

Water supplied through left, right dykes of Mangalpur barrage and lift irrigation points is now being used to irrigate 1,12,866.04 hectare of farmlands in 429 villages under the eight blocks of Lanjigarh, Dharmagarh, Junagarh and Bhawanipatna Assembly segments in the district.

The irrigation facility from the reservoir is now benefitting around 99,172 farmer families in the district.

Environmentalists alleged that the lack of adequate rainfall in forest cover in order to make way for a host of mining activities being taken up in the district. As a result, rainfall in the area is gradually declining year by year.

This development has pushed the farmers in the region into distress. If urgent measures are not taken immediately then the water level in the reservoir may decline further in the coming days which will simultaneously affect power production and irrigation facilities in the district.

SCANTY RAIN

- Water level in the reservoir is three metres less at present compared to the previous year causing serious concern
- Insufficient rainfall on the upstream of Indravati, Kapur, Muran and Podagad rivers has led to water shortage in the reservoir
- Environmentalists alleged that the lack of adequate rainfall is due to rampant depletion in forest cover in order to make way for a host of mining activities

Sources said that Indravati reservoir is spread over 2,600 sq km area while its maximum water retaining capacity is 642 metre. Power production from the reservoir started in 1999 on an experimental basis.

The Indravati project is construed as one of the important multi-purpose projects of the country. The reservoir of the project is located on the fringes of Kalahandi and Nabarangpur districts. Establishment of this project has turned Kalahandi,



RISKY GAME: Unmindful of the risk involved, two youths fish while sitting on a mound in the middle of Mahanadi river in Sambalpur, Friday

OP PHOTO

All SAIL steel for INS Vindhyagiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 18: The entirety of 4,000 tonnes of special steel used for manufacturing India's sixth indigenously built stealth frigate INS Vindhyagiri has been supplied by Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL). This also includes special rolled plates from the new plate mill (NPM) of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) here.

Notably, President Droupadi Murmu launched the frigate Thursday at the GRSE facility on the banks of Hooghly river in Kolkata. The steel supplied by SAIL for its manufacture comprises DMR 249 A grade HR



sheets and plates. A Nilgiri-class frigate, INS

Vindhyagiri is constructed by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders

and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) as part of the Project-17 Alpha frigates (P-17A), an initiative undertaken by the Indian Navy that envisions the launch of seven ships.

SAIL's involvement in this ambitious project further exemplifies the company's steadfast dedication to fostering indigenous growth and innovation in India's defence sector. This significant milestone comes close on the heels of SAIL's remarkable contribution to the commissioning of INS Vikrant. SAIL provided the entire 30,000 tonnes of specialty steel for the construction of the first indigenously built aircraft carrier.

4 teachers dismissed over fake certificates

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, August 18: Cracking the whip against fraudulent activities in the education sector, the Bolangir district education department has dismissed four government teachers from service who had reportedly grabbed the jobs by furnishing fake educational certificates.

The accused teachers were identified as Mrinmayee Panda, Hindi teacher at Randa High School under Puntala block, Sanjit Pani Mahananda, TGT (Arts) teacher at Gandapatralpi High School under Sainatala block, Bir Prasad Naik, TGT (PCM) teacher at Dharam Singh High School at Sulekela under Belpada block and Alma Toppo, TGT (Arts) teacher at Bangomunda Girls' High School in the district.

During certificate verification it was found that these four teachers had provided fake certificates for getting the teaching jobs. After the scam was detected, the DEO had issued show-cause notices to the four accused teachers but only Panda was apprehended while the others managed to abscond.

A written complaint was lodged at the town police station by the district education department. Acting upon the complaint, town police registered a case and first arrested Hindi teacher Mrinmayee Panda of Randa High School, August 10 and forwarded her to court. After



Complaints filed against four teachers earlier
A Hindi teacher already arrested and jailed
Certificates of more than 200 teachers sent for verification

her bail application was rejected she was sent to judicial custody. The accused Hindi teacher has been in job since 2013 by providing fake certificate and was drawing salary of a regular teacher since 2019.

At first, the fake certificate racket exposed during the certificate verification for the recruitment of some posts in Postal department at Bolangir in March. Initially police arrested 19 accused and after interrogation police found that the chain of fake certificate racket was spread across various departments. After getting information that many persons have got job by providing fake certificates of out of state education boards in Bolangir education department, certificates of around 200 employees have been sent for verification by the district education department.

Youth gets 20-yr RI in POCSO court

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasure, August 18: Special POCSO judge Ranjan Kumar Sutar Thursday convicted an accused involved in kidnapping and rape of a minor girl and awarded 20 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) along with ₹5,000 penalty.

In default of fine the convict would further undergo another 2 years jail term, the judge ordered.

The convict identified as Arun Kumar Barik of Manikpura village was arrested by Singla police in June, 2022 after a complaint was lodged by the parents of the victim alleging that their minor daughter was kidnapped and raped by him.

Barik was tried under different sections of IPC including rape and kidnapping and POCSO Act. He was convicted under Section 6 of POCSO Act to undergo 20 years RI along with a penalty of ₹5,000.

The judge pronounced the verdict after examining as many as 15 witnesses and 14 exhibits.

The court further directed that a sum of ₹4 lakh compensation be paid to the victim through the district legal services authorities (DLSA). Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Panda said.



NHRC seeks complete report on death of girl in Kanyashram school

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, August 18: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a final reminder to the Superintendent of Police of Balasore to submit the progress report within four weeks positively on the death of a girl student in Purubai Kanyashram school due to food poisoning.

The apex rights body has asked the SP to send the additional or complete report by September 24 next for further consideration by the commission.

Acting on the petition filed by rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC issued the direction Thursday.

According to the petitioner, 27 minor girl students fell sick at Soro-based Purubai Kanyashram school at Balasore due to food poisoning February 17, 2023.

He alleged that the Gandhi Sevashram-run Kanyashram served low quality food to the inmates as mid-day-meal (MDM). The inmates reportedly developed fever, cold, cough and bodyache for five days and complained of uneasiness and vomiting after taking the MDM.

About 27 inmates of the Kanyashram school were admitted to Soro CHC and three of them were shifted to FM Medical College and Hospital where Class IX student Bini Singh died dur-



ing treatment.

Tripathy quoting the locals alleged that contaminated water and poor quality food were being served to the inmates of the kanyashram.

He said the failure of the Welfare, Education department in regularly checking the quality of food, water, education and health of the poor minor girls who were studying at the Kanyashram amounts to serious violation of human rights.

The apathy and negligence of the district administration in registering FIR and in taking legal and preventive measures also amounts to violation of human rights, he stated.

The commission earlier June 30 had directed the concerned authority for submission of a progress report.

Since an official correspondence from authorities was received in the matter, the commission issued the reminder to the concerned authority for submission of progress report within four weeks positively.

MARTYR'S AILING MOTHER DIES

Anandapur: A week after the martyrdom of CRPF jawan Sushant Kumar Khuntia in Maoist attack in neighbouring Jharkhand, his mother Sundari Khuntia succumbed to her ailment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack Friday. Notably, a crestfallen Sundari had received the honour for the martyred CRPF jawan on Independence Day at Anandapur. She was diagnosed with cholelithiasis and advised to undergo removal of gall stones. However, the surgery was postponed owing to the untimely death of Sushant. She had given up taking food since her son died. She passed away following a cardiac arrest at SCB.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that Shyamsundar Sethi, S/o. Late Batakushna Sethi, resident of Village: Kirnilo Jirailo, P.O.: Jirailo, P.S.: Erasama, District: Jagatsinghpur at present Plot No. 487/1940, Qtr. No. D-17, Maruti Residency, Raghunathpur, P.O.: Raghunathpur, P.S.: Nandanakanan, District: Khurda has lost (1) Original Khata No. 403/1563 in the name of Pravat Kumar Pradhan & another, (2) Regd. Sale Deed No. 11832101841 Dtd. 04.08.2021 executed by Khulana Sahoo & others in favour of Pravat Kumar Pradhan & another and (3) Regd. Sale Deed No. 11832102188 Dtd. 03.09.2021 executed by Prafulla Sahoo through Power of attorney holder Suchitra Sahoo in favour of Pravat Kumar Pradhan & another, pertaining to Plot No. 369/2805 area Ac. 0.095 decimals under Khata No. 403/1563 of Mouza: Madhuban, Tahasil: Baranga, Cuttack. Shyamsundar Sethi of the above address has applied for a housing loan to the LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Cuttack by offering mortgage of the said property title document in the name of his wife Smt. Jhariana Sethi. All concerned therefore having any claim over the property purchased under the said documents, i.e. Original Regd. Sale Deed No. (1) Original Khata No. 403/1563, (2) Regd. Sale Deed No. 11832101841 Dtd. 04.08.2021, (3) Regd. Sale Deed No. 11832102188 Dtd. 03.09.2021 are required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that the property having link with the said document is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as a mortgagor and the company as the mortgagor shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 (fifteen) days of publication of this notice.

Cuttack Dtd. 18.08.2023 Sd/- (U.K. Mishra), Advocate, Phone: 9437314816 LIC Housing Finance Ltd. Cuttack Area Office, Link Road, Cuttack

WORKS DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA
No.B-707: E-Mail id - eepwdrkl@gmail.com
Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.:43/ 2023-2024 Dated:14.08.2023

- Number of works : 2(Two) number of Works
- Estimated cost : Rs. 10.89 Lakhs to 24.61 Lakhs
- Period of completion : 3 (Three) calendar months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: Dt. 18.08.2023 at 11.00A.M.
- Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt 28.08.2023 up to 05.00 P.M.
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt. 29.08.2023 at 11.00A.M.
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, (R & B) Division, Rourkela, UditNagar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tendersorissa.gov.in"

Sd./-Superintending Engineer Rourkela (R&B) Division, Rourkela OIPR-34068/11/0016/2324

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, RAYAGADA

No. 3084 "e" - TENDER NOTICE Dtd.16.08.2023
Bid Identification No. RGDA-MUN-06/2023-24
No. C-1088: Bid documents consisting of 38 (Thirty Eight) Nos. of Civil Work with their Estimated Cost (Work Value) Cost of Tender Paper, E.M.D., Time of Completion, Class of Contractors, Additional Performance Security Deposit and the set of Terms and Conditions applicable for the contract and other required necessary documents can be seen in the Government Website (i.e. http://tendersodisha.gov.in).

1	Name of the Work	Civil Works as mentioned in the website
2	No. of the Work	38 (Thirty-eight) Nos.
3	Estimated Costs	As mentioned in the DTCN
4	Periods of the Completion	As mentioned against the work in the NIT/DTCN
5	Date & time of availability of Bid documents on the portal	From dated 17.08.2023, 11.30 A.M. Hrs. to dated 28.08.2023, 05.30 P.M. Hrs.
6	Bids received online to be opened on	Dated 29.08.2023, 11.30 P.M. Hrs.
7	Name and address of the Officer Inviting the Bid	The Executive Officer, Rayagada Municipality, Rayagada

Further details can be seen from the Procurement Portal http://tendersorissa.gov.in.

OIPR-13150/11/0015/2324 Sd./- Executive Officer Rayagada Municipality

Red resurgence ruled out as explosives recovered in Koira

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 18: The discovery of explosives near Topadihi forest range nearly five kilometre away from Koira railway siding track Thursday brought back the memory of Maoist menace and panic among residents of this area. However, police have allayed all such fears ruling out Maoist activity in the area.

A joint team of CRPF and state security forces undertook a routine search operation Thursday, which is a common practice, an official said. Search operations are intensified during this time of the year because the surviving Red cadres come back home for farming.



forces was undertaking one such search operation Thursday which began from Koira area. Gradually,



the team entered Topadihi jungle, which was once a hotbed of Maoist activity. There have been

instances of encounters between security forces and the Maoists, resulting in the seizure of arms, explosives and other materials.

During the operation, the security forces found explosives. The development created panic among the local residents. However, the police have dispelled the threat of revival of Maoist activity in the area. Bonai SDPO Swaraj Debata said, "What we have found is not a bomb or IED as reported. That is actually an explosive in raw form, kept hidden sometimes back, probably during the peak time of Maoist activity for future use." This kind of discovery is nothing new for the security forces because Maoists used to keep hidden arms and explosives for future use. And on several occasions, secu-

rity forces have stumbled upon or discovered those elsewhere. Topadihi jungle was a safe haven for them and there they had left such items."

Sundargarh once was the hotbed of Maoist activity and was part of the Chhotanagpur Division, which was being commanded by Samarji and others. But, with the passage of time, when action against the Maoists was intensified, the district became almost free of Maoists and their sympathisers. Because of its proximity to Saranda and the porous border with Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, the district became a safe haven and passage for the Maoist. There have been several instances when Maoists escaping force dragnets were caught in Rourkela.

FOCUS IDEOLOGY

PARETO & POLITICS



The fundamental nature of politics is that somebody rules and many more obey – and not even democracy can change that

Many political disputes in recent years have been framed as battles between economic rationality and eruptions of irrationality that we label populism. But cognitive psychologists and economists would point out that political irrationality is hardly confined to populist insurgents. As a general matter, most political leaders are focused on practical matters and do not necessarily think deeply about the ideas they expound. Among the early modern cartographers of political irrationality was Vilfredo Pareto, who died one hundred years ago, on August 19, 1923. Born in 1848, that year of liberal hope (and revolution) across Europe, Pareto died after witnessing the liberal order's demise and the tragedy of World War I. Nowadays, his name pops up most often in references to "Pareto optimality" (when no further action can be taken to benefit someone without harming someone else) or the "Pareto principle" (the idea that around 80% of outcomes stem from only 20% of causes).

It is hard to imagine Pareto betting that he would be remembered for these ideas. His father, an engineer, had bequeathed him a scientific and mathematical education, and he had applied that to a managerial career that kept him busy into his 40s. Among his many correspondents, the most frequent was Maffeo Pantaleoni, a career academic ten years his junior but far more accomplished when the two of them started to exchange letters. Pareto expressed appreciation for an essay by Pantaleoni, but he had spotted a few flaws in it. Instead of reacting grudgingly, Pantaleoni quickly discerned that his pen pal was a genius. He duly kept all his letters and was instrumental in Pareto's move to academia. In 1893, Pareto succeeded Léon Walras, a founder of neoclassical economics, in his chair at the University of Lausanne. There, Pareto embraced teaching vigorously, but his enthusiasm for economics faded. He wanted to move to sociology, because he had come to see human life as dominated by illogical actions. Having already played a considerable role in formalising modern economics, he would soon also end up at the fountainhead of twentieth-century political science and sociology.

As a young man, Pareto saw free trade as obviously beneficial to all, and military spending as detrimental to many. Yet his own country, Italy, moved away from free trade and embarked on extravagant, brutal colonial expansions. While Pareto was quick to diagnose this behaviour as the result of influence by special interests, he wondered why so many other people went along with it. The function of political ideologies, as Pareto saw it, was to put lipstick on a pig. The fundamental nature of politics is that somebody rules and many more obey – and not even democracy can change that.

But the fact that somebody must rule does not mean that the same people rule forever. On the contrary, history is a cemetery of defunct ruling classes. When a ruling class becomes too self-referential and incapable of integrating new elements, its time is up. Pareto did not think history and politics could be understood from the self-serving narratives of the protagonists. Rather, developments should be subjected to a scientific inquiry that goes beyond the surface of "derivations," not stopping at the reasons people provide to explain their own behaviour. Pareto understood that people's actions stem from deep-rooted motives – what he called "residues" – which they then must rationalise. We are all constantly inventing justifications to make the non-rational appear rational.

Pareto saw "rationalism" as just another "intellectual religion," and intellectuals as no less susceptible to pseudo-scientific creeds than anybody else. The next time you scroll through your social-media feed, consider whether all those advocating "right" causes have actually thought deeply about them. How many have actually read all the literature they cite, or engaged with opposing views? Often, what we think is contingent on our need to belong.

In politics, two "residues" (triggers of action) are of paramount importance. On the one hand, there are "rentiers" who value stability, oppose change and newcomers, and tend to live on land rent or fixed income. Pareto characterises their "residue" as the "persistence of aggregates" – such as customs, traditions, social classes, and so forth.

On the other hand, there are "speculators" who thrive on change and the pursuit of innovation, but who also tend to manipulate government for their own ends. Pareto describes their "residue" as the "instinct for combination," which suggests an ability to invent ever-new things. Both rentiers and speculators are necessary for a country to thrive, but Pareto saw the second category as more likely to gain control of society, particularly when government is expanding. They are at home in large-scale, ambitious "schemes" – regardless of whether the aim is to win a war, reduce inequality, or make bureaucracy more efficient.

Pareto's sketches of the world before WWI resemble the world we live in now. He saw financial engineering at the service of government as basically fraudulent; he ridiculed those who believed that taxes were a fee we pay for services; and he regarded inflation and public debt as instruments for "plundering" specific segments of the population. In the long run, governments do not pay their debts, and they will tax people as much as they can. Speculators are better at surfing the wave and profiting from these tendencies, whereas rentiers (or pensioners and others on fixed incomes) are more likely to end up paying the bill. Today more than ever, politics is about believing and belonging. Polarisation has made the right and the left into ardent champions of their respective causes. Both believe that if they don't win, the world will go to the dogs. Public intellectuals today are fully invested in this rhetoric.

Of course, Pareto himself was a man of passions, who ardently believed in liberty and tolerance. Yet he somehow forced his political realism on himself, not in the service of some fetish for neutrality, but because he saw lucidity as his ultimate duty. *The writer is Director-General of the Istituto Bruno Leoni in Milan.* ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Alberto Mingardi

WHEN A RULING CLASS BECOMES TOO SELF-REFERENTIAL AND INCAPABLE OF INTEGRATING NEW ELEMENTS, ITS TIME IS UP

Delayed Promotions

Disparity in promotions has cast a shadow over the careers of IPS officers in Haryana, sparking concern among the ranks. The recent plea by two Inspector General of Police (IGP) rank officers, Amitabh Dhillon and Sanjay Kumar, from the 1997 batch, highlights the growing frustration within the state's police service.

Sources have informed DKB that Dhillon and Kumar reportedly wrote to state DGP PK Agarwal, highlighting the issue of lagging promotions within the Haryana cadre when compared to counterparts in other states. Their call for "expeditious examination" of the matter underlines the urgency they attach to this concern. Surprisingly, despite recommendations for their promotion to the rank of Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), a meeting of the departmental promotion committee is still to be convened. They became eligible for ADGP promotions last year. The discrepancy intensifies even as 1998 batch IPS officers, a year junior to these two, have secured promotions in other states. Despite the rules requiring central government concurrence for promotions in selection grade and above, the provision is not implemented, leading to undesired delays in promotions. Dhillon and Kumar assert that their careers shouldn't be adversely impacted by administrative delays beyond their control.

This imbroglia serves to remind us that while rules and regulations guide bureaucracy, their effective implementation and interpretation are equally important to shaping the careers of the officers.

Intriguing chess moves in UP babudom

In a significant development, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently transferred Ritu Maheshwari, CEO of Noida Authority, to Agra as a commissioner.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Maheshwari was known for her transformative initiatives during her four-year tenure in Noida. Her impact is undeniable. Her track record speaks volumes – securing investment proposals worth ₹1 lakh crore for Noida ahead of the UP Global Investors Summit 2023 and orchestrating a fiscal coup with record revenue receipts of ₹7,000 crore in the fiscal year 2022-2023, which is the highest revenue collection in 12 years. Moreover, Maheshwari revealed that ₹55,000 crore worth of investment proposals are pending and are expected to be realised in the next six months.

Her transfer has been met with mixed reactions from residents and businesses in Noida. And some have expressed concerns about her abrupt departure from the key position. While the Yogi sarkar stated that it is a routine transfer, sources have informed DKB that the move reportedly came two weeks after ₹3.9 crore was fraudulently transferred by an alleged conman using fake documents from the authority's account.

Whether there's a connection between this and Maheshwari's transfer is hard to tell, though. Yet, it's impossible to ignore the strategic undercurrents that might have propelled this seemingly routine move. Maheshwari is also known to be close to Union Home Minister Amit Shah. This connection, though unconfirmed, has set political and babu circles abuzz, and likely also disturbed a lot of equations between the Centre and the UP government.

Punjab Governor's austerity drive hits babus

In a series of unconventional directives, Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit seems to be setting a unique tone for governance. Days after making headlines by temporarily banning tomatoes from Raj Bhawan's kitchen in a show of solidarity with citizens facing food price inflation, Purohit has now taken a bold step by prohibiting Chandigarh Administration officers from air travel to Delhi and staying in five-star hotels for official work. The prohibition on air travel and the mandate to use Shatabdi and Vande Bharat trains instead hopefully sends a message of frugality in government spending.

Not surprisingly, the austerity drive has raised eyebrows in political and babu circles in the UT. Purohit's unusual style is reminiscent of his tomato ban, which while symbolically aligned with the citizens' concerns, did make some wonder about the practicality of such moves.

Also, the timing of Purohit's decision, coupled with his history of conflict with political leaders, particularly Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, adds another layer of complexity. Mann has repeatedly accused governors of leading extravagant lifestyles and his own record of using state aircraft has added political overtones to Purohit's directives on frugal spending. Clearly, striking a balance between cost-saving measures and ensuring officials' effectiveness is key.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness. **RALPH WALDO EMERSON**
- You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life. **ALBERT CAMUS**
- Count your age by friends, not years. Count your life by smiles, not tears. **JOHN LENNON**

WORDSWORTH

Mithridate

A mithridate is an antidote to poison. A recipe for a mithridate in Nicholas Culpeper's English Physician Enlarged of 1653 begins: "Take of Myrrh, Saffron, Agarick, Ginger, Cinnamon, Spikenard, Frankincense, Treacle, Mustard seeds, of each ten drams". It goes on to specify schenanth, stoechas, galbanum, costus, turpentine, pepper, castorium, cubeb, troch, cypheos, bdellium, gum arabic, macedonian parsley seeds, opium, cardamoms, fennel seed, gentian, dittany, annis seeds, asarabacca, orris acorus, valerian, sagapen, and several other ingredients. It then says they should all be compounded with wine and honey. By this time preparation is completed, your patient has probably expired, of old age if not of the poison or infectious disease that was the original reason for creating this extraordinary mixture. Many of Culpeper's herbs remain widely known, but some others are a mystery or uncommon (such as cubeb, once a popular substitute for black pepper). Culpeper's comments on the efficacy of the remedy remind one of snake-oil salesmen at their most exuberant: "It is good against poison and such as have done themselves wrong by taking filthy medicines, it provokes sweat, it helps continual waterings of the stomach, ulcers in the body, consumptions, weakness of the limbs, rids the body of cold humours, and diseases coming of cold, it remedies cold infirmities of the brain, and stopping of the passage of the senses, by cold, it expels wind, helps the colic, provokes appetite to one's victuals, it helps ulcers in the bladder, as also difficulty of urine, it casts out the dead child, and helps such women as cannot conceive by reason of cold, it is an admirable remedy for melancholy, and all diseases of the body coming through cold, it would fill a whole sheet of paper to reckon them all up particularly." The antidote was named after Mithridates VI, the king of Pontus, a small kingdom on the southern shore of the Black Sea. He fought four wars with Rome, finally being defeated by Pompey in 65 BC.

SPECTRUM CRICKET

An Indian jamboree

The word "jamboree" seems to be an ideal way to describe Indian cricket at present. The schedules and commitments have created confusion and chaos, not only among the cricketers but more so among the millions of fans following Indian cricket.

One has lost one's bearing as to who is the Indian captain, who is playing where and in which of the Indian teams. India seems to have captains coming out of the woodwork. The senior most and officially the man at the helm is Rohit Sharma. However, with the Indian teams being sent to Ireland, the Asia Cup and the Asian Games we have had and appointed in the last two years of international cricket, Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Rituraj Gaikwad, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant and Shikhar Dhawan as captains.

Similarly, one is at sea identifying players as to which team a specific player is playing in. I can imagine the plight of a young Indian player, who may be happy to get into one of the sides, however, he must be confused as to whether his performance will merit a selection into the Indian senior side. The sword that seems to hang over a youngster's head

is the return of the trusted older players from rest or injuries. These days the latter is more relevant than the rest part of it.

India needs to ensure that only one Indian team is in operation at all times. Yes, players can be rested, however, it has to be only a single side that represents the country in an international fixture. The reason is that one is representing one's country and not a club or a state side. There is India's pride at stake and diffusing it is definitely not acceptable.

Furthermore, an Indian cap needs to be earned and dishing it out in such a frivolous way, does not augment well for the sport. Between the three upcoming tournaments and a series against Australia before the World Cup '23, one may see well over 10 new debutants, some of whom would never have ever deserved it.

The India 'A' tours are a wonderful way to assess players and give them a platform to showcase their talent. Presently, a good season in the Indian Premier League (IPL) has become the benchmark for a player to get recognised and catapulted into the reckoning for an Indian cap. A few

of them have barely played first-class domestic cricket but have been successful in the IPL, where they have very little to lose but plenty to gain without immense pressure or fame to live up to. This brings me to a wonderful article written by Michael Gervais. He has researched the experience and performance anxiety of professional and amateur sportsmen. He calls it "FOPO" – the fear of people's opinion. This is relevant to Indian cricket as it seems to target both the younger and the experienced ones.

The Indian cricket stars have a name and reputation to live up to, which one has seen, seems to affect their performance on the world stage when most needed. The fear of failure is what brings about anxiety which makes them more cautious, watchful and tentative. Whereas, a youngster, who may have done brilliantly to achieve his place in the side, did it without the pressure and responsibility that the established cricketer faces.

FOPO is an anticipatory mechanism that involves psychological, physiological and physical activation to avoid rejection as Michael Gervais puts it. He said that when challenged, one pro-

jects one's ego and surrenders one's viewpoint. Unfortunately, with the gigantic fan following an Indian cricketer faces he needs to learn how to deal with it.

This is where Rahul Dravid and the selectors need to play their part. Brendon McCullum along with Ben Stokes has done this quite remarkably. The English side seems a completely transformed unit that looks to play without fear and inhibitions. One can see that each of their players seems to have gone past it and is not concerned about what the critics and people think. They have decided to play and approach the game according to their plan. The Indian cricket team needs to get over the FOPO syndrome. They need to play with pride as one unit and on their terms. The Indian team is brimming with talented players, they just need to believe in themselves. The jamboree that exists needs to be put to rest, and very soon. After all, it's a golden opportunity for India, at home, to win the World Cup 2023. They need to change their approach quickly and radically.

The writer is a former India cricketer. ©IANS



Yajurvindra Singh

AN INDIAN CAP NEEDS TO BE EARNED AND DISHING IT OUT IN SUCH A FRIVOLOUS WAY DOES NOT AUGMENT WELL FOR THE SPORT

Obdurate China

Sir, Senior military commanders of India and China met to address the protracted standoff on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) this week. Given China's obstinacy in insisting on separating the border issue from the rest of the ties with India, it came as no surprise that the talks ended in a stalemate. Any chance of disengagement in points along the LAC at places like Depsang and Demchok will remain frozen so long as China stays stubborn about not giving an inch on the negotiations to go back to the pre-May 2020 positions. The status quo is advantageous to China after having convinced India into surrendering a sliver of benefit in having captured some heights in mountainous terrain overlooking the Pangong Lake. Things have come to such a pass now that even routine Indian patrolling on the strategic Depsang plains is not being allowed to resume by China. There is little that India can do now except to pursue its strengthening the infrastructure along the border and pouring troops into the contentious sectors. The insincerity behind the comments that the Chinese President Xi Jinping purportedly made in a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bali last year stands starkly exposed. It may be futile to place even residual hope in possible one-on-one meetings on the sidelines of other global forums like the BRICS and the G20 in the remainder of the year between Xi and Modi. China will not budge, and India has to resolve to toughen up.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Prodigious talent

Sir, R Praggnanandhaa showcased his prodigious talent to advance to Baku's FIDE World Cup Chess semifinals. In a battle of nerves, Praggnanandhaa prevailed over compatriot Arjun Erigaisi, who went down fighting 4-5 in the sudden death tie-break. The victory gives Praggnanandhaa the distinction of becoming the first Indian after legend Viswanathan Anand to reach the semifinals of the FIDE World Cup. Besides, the win virtually assures him of a spot in the 2024 Candidates tournament. Way to go!

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

UP GOVT TO PROBE 'NEGATIVE NEWS' IN NEWSPAPERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 18: The Uttar Pradesh government has directed the Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates to conduct an inquiry into "negative news" being published in daily newspapers in their regions and upload the details of such items on the on-line integrated grievance redressal system (IGRS) for monitoring.

A letter in this regard was issued by Sanjay Prasad, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister.

In the letter, Prasad said that it is necessary to investigate the facts in the "negative news" immediately as these items malign the government's image. The letter said that if it comes to the knowledge that a specific incident was presented with "twisted or misleading facts" to defame the image of the government or the district administration, the concerned district magistrate should write to the management of the media group in question to clarify the situation while marking a copy to the information department.

This is the first time that such instructions have been issued by the government.

Rahul will contest from Amethi: UP Cong chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 18: Rahul Gandhi will contest the coming Lok Sabha election from Amethi, newly appointed Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai said Friday.

"Rahul Gandhi will definitely contest the Lok Sabha election from Amethi, the people of Amethi are here," Rai, who was made the president of the state unit of the party in the latest reshuffle, told reporters in Varanasi.

Amethi was a long held bastion of the Gandhi family till Rahul Gandhi, who had been an MP from the seat since 2004, was ousted in 2019 general election by BJP's Smriti Irani.

Surrounded by party workers and leaders, who gathered at the airport as he arrived from Delhi, Rai said that if party national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi desires, she can contest from Varanasi or any other place.

"If Priyanka Gandhi has the desire to fight from Varanasi, every single worker will work



wholeheartedly for her," he said. Rai, an upper caste Bhumihar who had unsuccessfully contested against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls, was made the UP Congress chief, replacing Dalit leader Brijlal Khabri.

2024 LS POLLS

Amethi was a long held bastion of the Gandhi family till Rahul, who had been an MP from the seat since 2004, was ousted in 2019 general election by BJP's Smriti Irani

Asked if his appointment was a reward for contesting against Narendra Modi twice, he said, "this is the result of my continued struggle, someone who went to jail, who has been continuously expos-

Bhutanese temple for Buddha in Varanasi soon

Pilgrims from Bhutan visit Varanasi frequently. Even members of the ruling royal family have paid a visit to the place on more than two occasions in the past few years

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi, August 18: The city where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon and rolled the wheel of dharma is all set to also get a Bhutanese temple dedicated to him.

A proposal to this effect was submitted by the Bhutanese government to the Union Tourism and Culture Ministry several years ago.

As per the arrangement, Uttar Pradesh government will provide land to the Bhutanese government on behalf of India while the latter will build the temple and guest house.

Pilgrims from Bhutan visit Varanasi frequently. Even members of the ruling royal family



have paid a visit to the place on more than two occasions in the past few years.

Buddhism is the official religion of Bhutan with more than 85 per cent people following it. Their school of Buddhist thought is related to the Tibetan course.

"Initially, they wanted a piece of land in Sarnath - one of the world's most revered Buddhist pilgrimage spots. However, the place is already saturated. Therefore, the project was stuck

in limbo," official sources said.

Expressing unhappiness over the matter, the Union Ministry asked the local administration to suggest an alternative place.

The local administration suggested two acres of land in Pindra tehsil. The said spot is very close to the Babatpur Airport in Varanasi and the Bhutanese representatives have also agreed to it.

Allocation of the said land was approved by the state cabinet in November 2021. However, subsequent procedures were delayed because of the state elections.

The project picked up pace recently and now the procedure of the land's transfer has begun. State tourism department officials said that the land would be provided on a lease of 30 years at a token amount of ₹10 and an annual rent of one rupee.

"Relevant orders have been issued and paperwork for transfer of land on the lease is underway," said officials, adding that the work of hand-over of the land would be finalised in a few weeks.

When tomatoes are owner's pride, neighbours' envy



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 18: His house has been an owner's pride and neighbours' envy for the past one month.

When tomatoes were being sold at ₹250 per kg, VK Pandey was not only eating his tomatoes but having them too.

His kitchen garden in his three-storey house in Gomti Nagar has been brimming with tomatoes and Pandey has been generously sharing the crop with his neighbours.

"I have grown around 250 kgs of tomatoes since November and I have shared them with my friends and neighbours," he says with pride.

Pandey, who works in a pesticide firm, began hobby-farming with 25 pots in 1992.

In 31 years since, his terrace garden has expanded to the neighbour's terrace and even further crawled to a neighbourhood park where he grows an array of fruit-bearing plants, including lemons,

grapes, pomegranates, oranges, apples, bananas, and a significant number of mango trees. He also grows bottle gourd, eggplant, papaya, aloe vera, banyan, pipal, and more.

He nurtures a range of nearly 1,000 plants, including varieties of fruits, vegetables, and medicinal species in grow bags, empty drums, and flowerpots.

Though he works at a pesticide firm, his plants are grown organically. Pandey prepares specific soil by mixing pond and field soils with cow dung, watering it twice a day in summer and once in winter.

The maintenance costs him ₹12,000 a month from his own pocket. He has hired a hand to water the plants regularly.

His garden attracts a lot of birds which adds life to the mornings. There are some pesky monkeys too. But nobody grudges this because they await the basket of farm fresh veggies that come to their doorstep every morning.

Disruptions caused by rains temporary: Hoteliers' body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, August 18: A Himachal Pradesh tourism and hoteliers association Friday said disruptions caused by rains is a temporary phase, welcoming tourists to the state.

Road connectivity between Shimla and Chandigarh has been restored and added that tourism in the state would soon recover. The Shimla Hotel and Tourism Stakeholders Association told reporters at a press conference.

President of the association M K Seth called for an increase in air connectivity to tourists places in the state to increase tourist inflow.

"Lack of proper drainage system has resulted in damage to roads and even landslides. We have urged the state government to ensure proper drainage system, felling of dangerous trees posing risk and strengthening of weak retaining walls," he said.

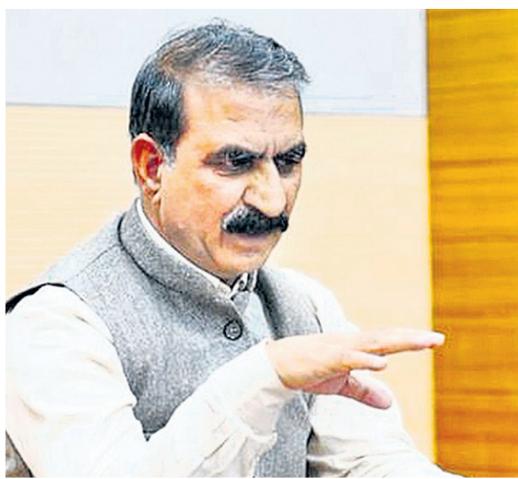
There has been near-zero business in the capital city in the last 45 days and hoteliers are giving heavy discounts to tourists planning a trip to Shimla, said Prince Kukreja, vice president of the association.

Heavy rains have lashed the hill state since Sunday, triggering landslides in Shimla and several other districts. The total number of deaths in rain-related incidents in the state since Sunday night has increased to 75 with Shimla alone accounting for 22 fatalities.

Since the onset of the monsoon on June 24, 217 persons have died in rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh and 11,301 houses have been partially or completely damaged, according to the state emergency operation centre.

A total of 506 roads are still closed in the state and 408 transformers and 149 water supply schemes have been disrupted.

Himachal Pradesh declares heavy rains as state calamity



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, August 18: The Himachal Pradesh government Friday declared the massive damage caused by heavy rains as a state calamity.

The entire hill state has been declared as a "natural calamity affected area" in view of the damage caused to human life and property due to heavy rains, a notification issued here Friday said.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had told PTI that the Himachal Pradesh government has decided to declare the massive damage caused by heavy rains as a state calamity.

The state is also awaiting a response from the Centre to declare the disaster in Himachal Pradesh as a national calamity, Sukhu said.

Speaking to PTI, Principal Secretary (Revenue) Onkar Chand Sharma said that after the weather becomes normal and accessibility is improved, a complete assessment of the losses incurred by the hill state would be conducted and the report will be submitted to the Centre for recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Meanwhile, with the recovery of three more bodies from the rubble of a Shiv temple in Summer Hill on Friday, the death toll in rain-battered Himachal Pradesh has risen to 77 and 23 of these deaths were in the three major landslides in Shimla alone - at the Shiva temple in Summer Hill and in Fagli and Krishnanagar, Shimla SP Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi said.

About four persons are still feared buried in the temple debris, the SP said.

Heavy rains have lashed the hill state since Sunday, triggering landslides in several districts, including Shimla.

The chief minister said rescue operations are going on in full swing and the state government is making efforts to help the affected families especially those whose houses have been damaged in the flash floods and landslides with its own resources.

"Central teams have inspected the affected areas for loss assessment and we need timely help from the Centre," Sukhu said, adding that Himachal Pradesh has suffered an estimated loss of ₹10,000 crore.

Since the onset of the monsoon in the hill state on June 24, 220 persons have died in rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh and 11,637 houses have been partially or completely damaged, according to the state emergency operation centre.

Over 600 roads are still closed in the state, out of which 550 would be opened in the next three days, said Public Works department (PWD) Minister Vikramaditya Singh. About 408 transformers and 149 water supply schemes have been disrupted.

Over the last three days, 2,074 people have been evacuated from the flooded areas of Kangra district.

Sukhu earlier said the state would need a year to rebuild the infrastructure damaged by the heavy rains this monsoon.

The state government Thursday relaxed conditions for spending the MLA local area development fund.

The MLAs would now be able to use their fund of ₹2.10 crore per year for projects like construction of retaining walls and channelisation of drains.

Unscientific constructions causing landslides: Experts

THERE ARE 17,120 LANDSLIDE-PRONE SITES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH OUT OF WHICH 675 ARE NEAR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HABITATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, August 18: Unscientific constructions in the ecologically fragile Himalayas, depleting forest cover and structures near streams blocking the flow of water are causing frequent landslides in Himachal Pradesh, say experts.

Extensive cutting of hill slopes for construction and widening of roads, blasting for tunnels, and hydro projects are the main reasons behind increase in slides, said geological expert Prof Virender Singh Dhar.

Dhar further said that vertical cutting of mountains for road construction has been witnessed in Himachal with just 5-10 feet retaining walls.

According to experts, slopes in Himachal have become highly vulnerable to landslides due to cutting of rocks at the foothills and the lack of proper drainage system, and high intensity rainfall is making the things worse for the state.



The rain intensity has increased and high temperatures coupled with heavy rains lead to landslides due to loosening of the strata in places which have undergone cutting downstream on the foothills, Scientist (climate change) Suresh Attre had earlier said.

Himachal Pradesh receives about 730 mm of rains on an average during the whole monsoon season from June to September, but according to the Met department the state has received 742 mm rainfall this year till date.

As per the state emergency operation centre, Himachal witnessed 113 landslides in 55 days since the onset of monsoon. The Public Works

Department (PWD) has suffered a loss of ₹2,491 crore and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) about 1,000 crore, officials told PTI. According to data compiled by the disaster management department, an alarming six-time increase had been witnessed in incidents of major landslides in 2022 which saw 117 major landslides as compared to 16 in 2020.

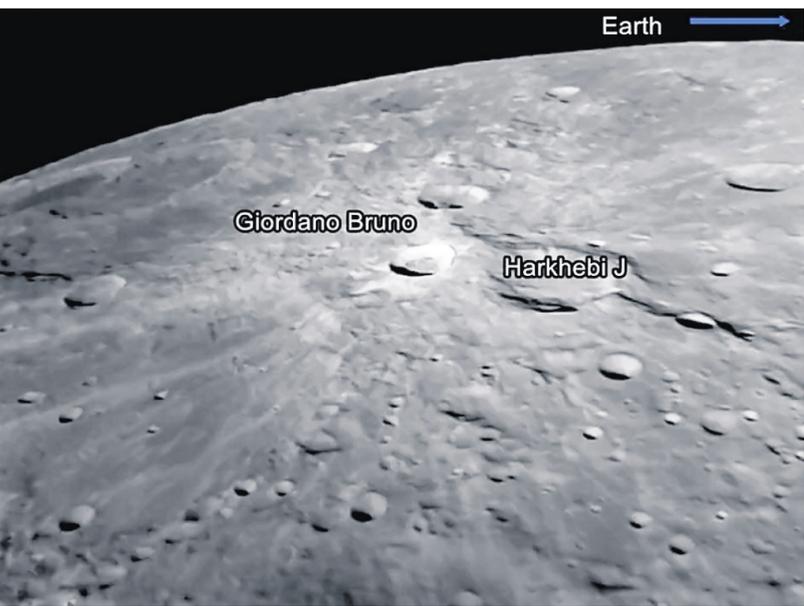
There are 17,120 landslide-prone sites in the state out of which 675 are near critical infrastructure and habitations, according to the data.

The maximum of such prioritized sites are in Chamba (133) followed by Mandi (110), Kangra (102), Lahaul and Spiti (91), Una

(63), Kullu (55), Shimla (50), Solan (44), Bilaspur (37), Sirmour (21) and Kinnaur (15).

The increased human activity and exploitation of natural resources for development pose a serious threat to ecology which is on the threshold of peril, said a former bureaucrat.

The major active landslides/sinking sites in the state included Jhandota and Kakroti villages, and Sapdath Panchayat in Chamba; Mcleodganj Hill and Bariara village in Kangra; Baridhar to Kalyan Ghati Road; Mansar near Salogra; Jabalpatwar village in Solan; and Kotrupi, Doada Hanogi, and Mile 5, 6 and 7 near Pandoh and Nagani village in Mandi district. The other sites include Urni



The moon as seen by the Chandrayaan-3 Lander Imager (LI) Camera-1 just after the separation of the Lander Module (LM) from the Propulsion Module (PM) on Thursday



The Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship, Joseph Schulte, crosses the Bosphorus in Istanbul, Turkey. The cargo ship safely reached the coast of Istanbul Friday, after sailing down a temporary corridor that was established by Ukraine for merchant shipping



Women celebrate on the eve of the festival of 'Teej' in Moradabad



India's first 3D-printed post office is seen after its inauguration at the residential Cambridge Layout in Bangalore. The 3D-printed post office was built with a robotic printer using 3D printing technology that deposits concrete layer-by-layer in accordance with computerised 3D model drawing input



A man collects fresh pears from trees during its harvesting season at a pear orchard in Srinagar



An Indian Air Force personnel during a media orientation programme organised by the IAF in Agra to enhance media outreach, mutual understanding and to strengthen future collaborations



Students stand under the sun casting negligible shadows on the 'Zero Shadow Day' at Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bangalore



Residents with their livestock shift to a safer place from a flood-affected area as the swollen Beas river inundates nearby regions following heavy monsoon rains near Jalandhar

national

of the day quote

BJP and JSU Party only love power and they do not have any concern for the people of the state

HEMANT SOREN
JHARKHAND CM

Proper drainage and cross-drainage system would be made mandatory for all roads in the state

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU
HIMACHAL CM

There are court orders, there are orders regarding how the distress formula works. Protecting our farmers' interests is a big responsibility for me. Legislators from Mandya may protest against the release of water (to TN)...Also, we can't give everything to Tamil Nadu, the government will have to do a balancing act

DK SHIVAKUMAR
KARNATAKA DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Three killed in Manipur violence

Imphal: In a fresh round of violence in ethnic strife-torn Manipur, mutilated bodies of three youths were found following heavy gunfire at Kuki Thowai village in Ukhrul district on Friday, officials said. This is the first time that an attack in the recent bout of violence has occurred in Ukhrul district, which is dominated by Tangkhul Nagas. Sounds of heavy gunfire were heard from the village, which falls in Litan police station area, early in the morning, they said. Officials said the bodies of the three youths aged between 24 years and 35 years were found after police carried out a thorough search in the surrounding villages and forest areas. Bodies of the three persons bore injury marks apparently made using sharp knives and their limbs were also chopped off, officials said.

Over 200 Meiteis return to Manipur

Imphal: More than 200 Meiteis who crossed over to Myanmar to escape the violence in Manipur have safely returned to the state after more than three months, Chief Minister N Biren Singh said Friday and lauded the role of the Army in bringing them back. "Relief and gratitude as 212 fellow Indian citizens (all Meiteis) who sought safety across the Myanmar border post the May 3rd unrest in Moreh town of Manipur are now safely back on Indian soil," the Chief Minister wrote on X.

Take action on hate speech: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court asserted Friday action must be taken against all those making hate speeches "this side or that side". A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti made the remark during a brief hearing on a batch of petitions seeking directions to curb hate speeches across states, including a plea for action against Hindu outfits calling for social and economic boycott of Muslims following the recent communal violence in Nuh-Gurugram in the Delhi-NCR region.

3 killed, 11 injured

Srinagar: Three people were killed while 10 sustained injuries in an explosion inside a scrap dealer's shop in Kargil district of Ladakh Friday, officials said. A "suspicious" object exploded in the shop located in Kabadi Nallah area of Drass, they said. Three people, including a non-local, were killed, while the injured were taken to a hospital, they said.



Continued attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy shows the Union government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is weak

MK STALIN | TN CM

NATURE'S FURY

As many as 2,038 people lost their lives due to floods, lightning and landslides this monsoon, with Bihar reporting the highest casualty figure of 518 and Himachal Pradesh 330



Kota to go in for 'suicide-proof' ceiling fans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (Rajasthan) August 18: Worried by a spate of suicides by hanging, the authorities in this coaching hub have taken a desperate measure - ordering hostels to install a spring device on ceiling fans to stop students from taking their lives.

Twenty students preparing for competitive exams in Kota have died by suicide so far this year, authorities say. Last year, the figure was 15. The "anti-suicide measure" was discussed on August 12 at a meeting between Kota officials and other stakeholders. On Wednesday, Deputy

Commissioner O P Bunkar issued the directions, demanding strict compliance.

Action will be taken against hostel owners and their managements if the directions on fans are not followed, the administration said.

This is how the device works: If an object weighing more than 20 kilos is hung from the fan, the spring attached to it expands, making it impossible for someone to commit suicide by this method. Simultaneously, a siren goes off. Back in 2017, the Kota Hostels Association had discussed the measure. But it did not gain popular-



ity with the estimated 25,000 paying guest facilities in the city, where thousands of students from across the country enrol at coaching centres every year to prepare for competitive exams. Experts are unsure how far

a "suicide-proof" ceiling fan will help stressed students. This month, the district administration decided that periodic psychological tests will be conducted on students to determine if they are at risk.

Four Kota students have committed suicide this month alone, according to police. On Tuesday, an 18-year-old IIT-JEE aspirant from Bihar's Gaya allegedly hanged himself from an "iron angle" in his PG room.

Last year, after a spurt in suicides, experts contacted by PTT said parents should assess their children's aptitude through professional help be-

fore deciding whether to send them to Kota to prepare for the highly competitive JEE and NEET exams.

Dr Chandra Shekhar Sushil, who headed the Department of Psychiatry at New Medical College Hospital in Kota, had said instead of pushing children to become doctors and engineers, parents should make them take an aptitude test and then decide what's best for them. Most parents send their children for coaching in Kota with almost no preparation and the focus is only on arranging finances and logistics, experts said.

12% of sitting MPs of RS billionaires: ADR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: About 12 per cent of sitting MPs of Rajya Sabha are billionaires with Andhra Pradesh and Telangana having the highest percentage of such parliamentarians, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the National Election Watch (NEW) have analysed and updated the criminal, financial and other background details of 225 out of 233 Rajya Sabha MPs.

In the current Rajya Sabha, one seat is vacant. According to the report, 5 (45 per cent) out of 11 MPs from Andhra Pradesh, 3 (43 per cent) out of 7 MPs from Telangana, 3 (16 per cent) out of 19 MPs from Maharashtra, 1 (33 per cent) out of 3 MPs from Delhi, 2 (29 per cent) out of 7 MPs from Punjab, 1 (20 per cent) out of 5 MPs from Haryana and 2 (18 per cent) out of 11 MPs from Madhya Pradesh have declared assets worth more than Rs 100 crore.

The total assets of seven Members of Parliament (MPs) analysed from Telangana is Rs 5,596 crore, that of 11 MPs from Andhra Pradesh is Rs 3,823 crore, and 30 MPs analysed from Uttar Pradesh have total assets worth Rs 1,941 crore.

Out of the 225 Rajya Sabha sitting MPs analysed, 75 (33 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves. Also about 41 (18 per cent) Rajya Sabha sitting MPs have declared serious criminal cases and two members have declared cases related to murder (IPC section 302).

Four Rajya Sabha sitting MPs have declared cases related to crimes against women.

Any link in Dabholkar, others' killings, asks SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Friday asked the CBI whether there was any "common thread" in the murders of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar, CPI leader Govind Pansare, activist-journalist Gauri Lankesh and scholar M M Kalburgi.

Dabholkar, who fought against superstition, was shot dead by two motorcycle-borne assailants during his morning walk in Pune on August 20, 2013. Pansare was murdered on February 20, 2015, while Lankesh was killed on September 5, 2017. Kalburgi was shot dead on August 30, 2015.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia posed this query to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) while hearing a plea by Mukta Dabholkar, daughter of Narendra Dabholkar, challenging the April 18 this year order of the Bombay High Court refusing to continue monitoring the investigation in the killing of her father.

Senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for Mukta Dabholkar, told the bench there was a larger conspiracy behind the four killings. He said the available evidence indicated that these

cases may be connected and Mukta Dabholkar had raised this issue before the high court.

"The accused who are facing a trial (in Dabholkar case), according to you, there is no common thread in those four murders? Right? That is what you are saying?" Justice Dhulia asked Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati, who was appearing for the CBI.

"That is what we want to know," Justice Kaul said, and asked the CBI to "Please look into it". As soon as Grover began arguing about the issues involved in the matter, the bench told him the high court has said the trial in the Dabholkar murder case is going on and some witnesses have already been examined. "... so therefore we (high court) don't want to monitor it any further. What is wrong with such an observation?" the bench asked him.

Grover said though the trial is going on, two of the accused are absconding and have not been arrested yet. Giving the status of the Dabholkar murder case, Bhati told the bench that 20 witnesses have so far been examined during the trial.

The bench told Bhati the petitioner has also alleged a larger spread of the conspiracy.



A young girl being photographed with water lily during a local festival of 'Water Lily' at Malarikkal in Kottayam district of Kerala

JOURNALIST SHOT DEAD IN BIHAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Araria/Patna, August 18: A journalist was shot dead by unidentified people in Araria district of Bihar early on Friday, police said.

Vimal Kumar Yadav (35), who worked for a Hindi daily, was killed at his residence in Premnagar village. "The assailants knocked at the gates of Yadav's house around 5.30 am and opened fire as soon as he opened the gates," the Bihar Police tweeted.

Yadav died on the spot, where the district police chief and the SHO of Raniganj, the police station concerned, rushed upon hearing the news. "The body has been sent for post-mortem examination. An investigation is underway. Forensic experts and



Journalists under the banner of Bihar Shramjivi Patrakar Union protest after journalist Vimal Kumar Yadav was shot dead by unidentified people at his residence in Patna

the dog squad have been called in. The deceased was said to be involved in an old dispute with a neighbour. All angles are being probed into," said Ashok Kumar Singh, the Superintendent of Police for Araria. When jour-

nalists approached Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in Patna with queries about the incident, he said, "I felt really sad and immediately asked officials concerned to look into the incident". "The matter is being probed

and the culprits will be brought to book," asserted the CM.

However, the opposition lashed out at the government and claimed the incident showed "democracy is in danger in Bihar". "Criminals are roaming freely while innocent citizens, including journalists, and even police personnel are being killed in Bihar," alleged state BJP president Samrat Choudhary.

"What has happened in Araria is, indeed, tragic. But such incidents have become the norm since the 'ghamandia' (arrogant) Mahagathbandhan led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and RJD supreme Lalu Prasad formed the government in the state," said the BJP leader whose party shared power in the stage till a year ago.

MP man kills 2 after spat over pet dogs

The incident occurred late Thursday night, after which the accused security guard, his son and nephew were arrested, a police official said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, August 18: A man and his brother-in-law were killed and six others, including a pregnant woman, were injured when a person who works as a bank se-

curity guard opened fire on them from his double-barrel gun after an altercation over pet dogs in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh, police said Friday.

The incident occurred late Thursday night, after which the accused security guard, his son and nephew were arrested, a police official said. "Rajpal Singh Rajawat posted as a security guard at a local branch of Bank of Baroda, opened fire with his licensed gun in a colony located under Khajrana police station limits following an argument over pet dogs,"



Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Amrendra Singh said. Rahul Verma (28) and his brother-in-law Vimal Amcha (35) were killed in the firing, while six others who were injured in the incident are

undergoing treatment at a hospital, he said.

"The incident occurred after Rajawat took his pet dog out for a walk in Krishnabagh Colony. His dog started barking at the neighbour's pet dog. This triggered an argument between Rajawat and Amcha's family members," Singh said. Their argument escalated to such a level that Rajawat went to his house, took out his gun and fired two rounds in the air from the terrace. After that, he opened fire on the people standing on the road below, the official said.

Fodder scam: SC to hear CBI plea Aug 25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: In a fresh trouble for Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supreme Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Supreme Court Friday agreed to hear a plea moved by the CBI seeking cancellation of bail granted to him in the Doranda treasury case in which he has been sentenced to five years in prison.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of submissions of Additional Solicitor General S V Raju who mentioned the matter seeking

urgent hearing. The top court has posted the matter for hearing on August 25.

The High Court on April 22, 2022 had granted bail to Yadav, 75, in the Doranda treasury embezzlement case.

The former Bihar chief minister was sentenced to five years in prison and slapped with a fine of Rs 60 lakh by a special CBI court in Ranchi in connection with the fifth fodder scam case involving embezzlement of more than Rs 139 crore by the Doranda treasury. Yadav was convicted by the CBI court here on February 15.

Vistara flight delayed for 8 hrs as bomb scare found hoax

The bomb threat assessment committee declared the call, received at 7:38 am, non-specific or hoax at 2:15 pm. The airline was issued a security clearance for using the aircraft after extensive security checks, the sources said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: A Delhi-Pune Vistara airlines flight was delayed for around eight hours at the IGI Airport here after a bomb threat call which later turned out to be hoax, security sources and police said. The bomb threat assessment

committee declared the call, received at 7:38 am, non-specific or hoax at 2:15 pm. The airline was issued a security clearance for using the aircraft after extensive security checks, the sources said.

Flight UK971 was to depart at 8:30 am and finally left at 4:30 pm, according to police. The



sources said more than 100 passengers and five cabin crew were on board the Airbus A320 aircraft. Vistara said, in a statement, that flight UK971 was delayed due to "mandatory security checks". A senior Delhi Police officer

said a threat call received at the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) control room in Gurugram was transferred to them through the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Following the call, search and

combing operations were launched at the terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport.

"The passengers were de-boarded and we checked the aircraft from inside and outside, but nothing suspicious was found. A case is being registered and further investigation is underway," the officer said. Airport security sources said the caller said "three bombs have been kept in flight no UK971 parked at gate no 42 and they will explode in an hour". The call got disconnected immediately.

All passengers and crew of the flight were de-boarded and

anti-sabotage checks were conducted in an isolation bay at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, they said. The bomb threat assessment committee (BTAC) was convened soon after the call was received and bomb detection equipment and sniffer dogs were pressed into service by the CISF while passengers' luggage was sent for re-check, they added. The airlines said it was cooperating with the security agencies.

"We confirm that the flight UK971, scheduled to fly from Delhi to Pune on August 2023, is delayed due to mandatory security checks," it said.

international



Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend next week's summit of the BRICS nations in Johannesburg, to be followed by a state visit to South Africa
WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON OF CHINA

MAUI'S EMERGENCY SERVICES CHIEF QUILTS
The head of the Maui Emergency Management Agency resigned abruptly Thursday, a day after saying he had no regret about not using sirens to warn residents of wildfires that devastated the historic seaside community of Lahaina and killed at least 111 people



of the day quote

The minorities will stay protected in this country. There may be an attempt to harm them from a section of marginalised and peripheral groups of people, but that would be responded to sternly and strictly
ANWAARUL HAQ KAKAR | CARETAKER PM PAK

We will have to introduce new subjects. Our children will have to learn Chinese and Hindi in addition to English in order to fit into the changing world
RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | LANKAN PRESIDENT

Over the last two and half years, President Trump has continued to tell the American people things that just aren't so
MIKE PENCE | FORMER US VICE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Imran booked in cipher case

Islamabad: In yet another blow to Imran Khan, the jailed former prime minister of Pakistan has been booked under the Official Secrets Act for making the content of a confidential diplomatic cable from the country's embassy in the US public, it emerged Friday. Khan, 70, is currently serving a three-year jail term after he was sentenced by a court in a corruption case earlier this month.

Violence threatens hospitals in Sudan

Khartoum: Al Nao hospital, the last operating health facility in Omdurman city northwest of the Sudanese capital Khartoum, is threatened by the escalating violence, Doctors Without Border (MSF) said. "Violence is now escalating around Al Nao hospital, threatening patients and staff. Yesterday, shells landed to the north and southwest of the hospital," the organisation said.

US escalates trade dispute with Mexico

Mexico City: The US government said Thursday it is formally requesting a dispute settlement panel in its ongoing row with Mexico over its limits on genetically modified corn. Mexico's Economy Department said it had received the notification and would defend its position. It claimed in a statement that "the measures under debate had no effect on trade," and thus do not violate the United States-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement, known as the USMCA.

90 migrants rescued

Athens: Greek authorities say 90 migrants have been rescued from a stranded sailboat near the Aegean Sea island of Amorgos, amid an increase in arrivals in recent weeks. The migrants, rescued late Thursday, were taken to the eastern island of Leros and detained for identification and processing after patrol boats and three civilian vessels were involved in the rescue, the coast guard said Friday.

Quake hits Colombia

Bogota: At least one person was killed and several houses were damaged after an earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale struck central Colombia, authorities said. In capital Bogota, where the earthquake was strongly felt Thursday evening, Mayor Claudia Lopez said the city was spared serious damage but a woman died after jumping out the window of her 10th-floor apartment in the south of the city out of fear that the building would collapse, reports said.

After EG.5, WHO flags another Covid variant BA.2.86

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

United Nation/New Delhi, August 18: After EG.5 raised concerns for a new Covid outbreak, the World Health Organization (WHO) has now flagged another sub-variant of Omicron BA.2.86, dubbed as BA.X.

BA.2.86 is from Omicron's BA.2 lineage and was first detected in Israel. It has to date been detected in just five cases -- in Denmark (2), Israel (1), the US (1), the UK (1) -- and the variant has shown large mutations, increasing fears of fresh Covid cases.

After just three cases WHO

declared it a variant under monitoring (VUM), and also called for closer monitoring of the variant to understand its spread and severity.

"WHO has designated Covid-19 variant BA.2.86 as a 'variant under monitoring' today due to the large number of mutations it carries," the global health body wrote in a post on X (formerly known as Twitter), adding that "the number of mutations warrants attention".

"Very limited info available right now but large mutations, needs closer monitoring surveillance, sequencing & Covid19 reporting critical to track known/detect new variants,"



added Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 response at WHO, in a post Even as Covid virus continues

to circulate and evolve, the WHO also called for "better surveillance, sequencing, and reporting".

"It seems BA.2.86 is the real thing -- now detected from London, England also. The 5th case in total," Dr. Vipin M. Vashishtha, member of WHO's Vaccine Safety Net. "The seriousness of this issue can be gauged that WHO has already declared it a VUM, based on only 3 sequences," he said.

According to Israeli scientist Shay Fleishon, who was the first to flag BA.2.86, the sub-variant is "wild".

Fleishon from Weizmann Institute of Science said that BA.2.86 was detected "from a

patient which is not chronic nor infected by one (man able to transmit inter host)".

Similarly, the two cases detected in the country were not "immunocompromised" and had "no epidemiological link", Denmark's Statens Serum Institute said on X. There is also no indication that the new variant causes severe illness, it added.

In the US, the first case of BA.2.86 was reported by a lab at the University of Michigan during "baseline surveillance". The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Thursday announced it was tracking the strain.

US, Japan & SK agree on new security pledge

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Camp David, August 18: The United States, Japan and South Korea have agreed to a new security pledge committing the three countries to consult with each other in the event of a security crisis or threat in the Pacific, according to Biden administration officials.

Details about the new "duty to consult" commitment emerged as President Joe Biden Friday welcomed South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for a summit at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland.

The agreement is one of several joint efforts that the leaders are expected to announce at the daylong summit, as the three countries look to tighten security and economic ties amid increasing concerns about North Korea's persistent nuclear threats and China's provocations in the Pacific. "Suffice it to say, this is a big deal," Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters Friday shortly before the start of the summit. "It is a historic event, and it



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol arrives at Camp David, the presidential retreat

sets the conditions for a more peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific, and a stronger and more secure United States of America."

Kishida, before departing Tokyo Thursday, told reporters the summit would be a "historic occasion to bolster trilateral strategic cooperation" with Seoul and Washington.

"The international community has its own judgment as to who is creating contradictions and increasing tensions," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters Friday.

Attacks on Pak churches intensify

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, August 18: At least 20 churches and 86 houses of Christians were burnt down by the mob in Pakistan's Punjab province and a total of 145 suspects have been taken into custody, police said in a preliminary report submitted to the government on Friday on the unprecedented attack on the minority community.

"At least 20 churches and 86 houses of Christians were burnt down by the mob in Jaranwala. Two Christians who were accused of desecrating the Quran have also been arrested. Besides, a cleric who made announcements from five mosques inciting people to attack Christian homes and churches is among 145 suspects arrested so far," says the Punjab Police report submitted to the government.

Earlier in the day, the police produced 127 suspects before an anti-terrorism court in Faisalabad and obtained their two-day physical remand.

Pakistani police have also arrested two prime suspects involved in the attacks, Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said. "Major breakthrough in the Jaranwala Incident -- both



The report also hinted at the presence of radical Islamist Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) elements that spearheaded the mob that unleashed the attack in Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad district
The mob was enraged over reports that two Christians had desecrated the Quran

main accused now in CTD Custody. Appreciation for Chief Secretary Punjab and IG Punjab for their relentless efforts..." Naqvi posted on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. Meanwhile, the Christian families started returning to their houses only to find their dwellings in ruin. They blamed the government for failing to provide security to their lives and properties in the face of radical Islamists' onslaught.

All educational institutions, markets and business establishments remained closed in Jaranwala on the second day Friday as well. Naqvi said Friday that the government would restore all churches in Jaranwala by next Tuesday and give compensation money to the Christian families whose homes had been

damaged. Currently, 3,500 policemen and 180 Rangers personnel are deployed at Christian areas in Jaranwala. Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, where anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty.

According to the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), till August 16 this year, around 198 persons have been accused of blasphemy, 85 per cent of them Muslims, 9 per cent Ahmadis and 4.4 per cent Christians. It said the Punjab province recorded over 75 per cent of the abuse of blasphemy laws cases in the past 36 years. Minorities, including Christians and Hindus, have been frequently subjected to blasphemy allegations and some tried and even sentenced under blasphemy in Pakistan.

Yasin Malik's wife included in Pak caretaker PM's cabinet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 18: Pakistan has appointed Mishal Hussain Malik, wife of the jailed Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik, as a special advisor to the country's newly appointed caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar.

Malik's name was included in the five Special Advisor to Prime Minister (SAPM) list unveiled late Thursday night after President Arif Alvi administered an oath to the 19-member caretaker Cabinet at Aiwani-e-Sadr, the presidential house.

Mishal, a Pakistani national married to Malik, was appointed special advisor to the



Malik's appointment drew a sharp reaction from India's ruling BJP, which said that the move vindicated India's charge that Pak harbours terrorists who attack India

caretaker Prime Minister Kakar on human rights and women

empowerment.

A special advisor has a lower status than a junior minister but provides assistance to the prime minister on key relevant issues. Among other four special advisors, Jawad Sohrab Maliik has been appointed SAPM for overseas Pakistanis, vice admiral (retired) Iftikhar Rao as an advisor on maritime affairs, TV anchor and writer Wasih Shah on tourism, and Syeda Arifa Zehra as an advisor on federal education and professional training. Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin married Pakistani artist Mishal in Rawalpindi in 2009. The two met while Yasin was on a tour of Pakistan in 2005.



In this picture released by an official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Revolutionary Guard commanders chant slogans during their meeting with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran, Iran PT/PHOTO

How climate change is driving wildfires, heatwaves in Europe

THE GLOBAL AVERAGE TEMPERATURE IS AROUND 1.2 C WARMER THAN IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL TIMES. THAT IS ALREADY DRIVING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

REUTERS

Brussels, August 18: Europe is once again battling scorching temperatures this summer, with wildfires blazing across the continent from the Mediterranean to Spain. Here's how climate change drives these events.

HOTTER, MORE FREQUENT HEATWAVES

Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities have heated the planet by about 1.2 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times.

That warmer baseline means higher temperatures can be reached during extreme heat events. Every heatwave being experienced today has been hotter and more frequent due to climate change, said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at

Imperial College London who co-leads the World Weather Attribution global research collaboration. But other conditions affect heatwaves too. In Europe, atmospheric circulation is an important factor.

HEATWAVES WILL STILL GET WORSE

The global average temperature is around 1.2 C warmer than in pre-industrial times. That is already driving extreme heat events.

On average on land, heat extremes that would have happened once every 10 years without human influence on the climate are now three times more frequent, according to ETH Zurich climate scientist Sonia Seneviratne.

Temperatures will only stop rising if humans stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Until then, heatwaves



are set to worsen. A failure to tackle climate change would see heat extremes escalate even

sions fast enough to limit global warming to 2 C and aim for 1.5 C, to avoid its most dangerous impacts. Current policies would not cut emissions fast enough to meet either goal. A heatwave that occurred once per decade in the pre-industrial era would happen 4.1 times a decade at 1.5 C of warming, and 5.6 times at 2 C, the IPCC says. Letting warming pass 1.5 C means that most years "will be affected by hot extremes in the future," Seneviratne said.

CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVES WILDFIRES

Climate change increases hot and dry conditions that help fires spread faster, burn longer and rage more intensely. In the Mediterranean, that has contributed to the fire season starting earlier and burning more land. Fires burning since mid-

July on the island of Rhodes forced the evacuation of some 20,000 people as an inferno reached resorts and coastal villages on the island's southeast. Hotter weather also saps moisture from vegetation, turning it into dry fuel that helps fires spread. Hotter, drier conditions make fires far more dangerous, according to Copernicus senior scientist Mark Parrington. Without human-induced climate change, the extreme weather experienced across the world this summer would have been extremely rare, according to a study by World Weather Attribution.

The study found that human-induced climate change played an absolutely overwhelming role in the extreme heatwaves that swept across North America, Europe and China in July.

of the day quote

This G20 ministerial meeting is useful for us to conduct some of the important bilaterals with respect to our FTAs. The UK is coming with their team. We will be having high-level meetings with the UK on FTA

SUNIL BARTHWAL | COMMERCE SECRETARY

There's an opportunity for like-minded partners like India and France to help countries who want to digitise their Government and economy through DPIS such as India Stack

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

It will enable rapid network reinstatement in the event of underground telecom infrastructure damage, expedite 5G roll out by utilizing the state's existing infrastructure, simplify application procedures for multiple small cell sites and allocate Central government areas for small cell deployment at no cost

SP KOCHHAR | DIRECTOR GENERAL, COAI

SHORT TAKES

Byju's lets go of more staffers

New Delhi: Troubled edtech major Byju's Thursday let go of about 495 staffers from its mentoring and product expert functions, sources said. The employees were placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP) from July 1 to 20, the sources added. "They were all highly salaried and were laid off yesterday. Within two hours of the HR's call, mail access was seized," one of the sources said. A Byju's spokesman confirmed that a PIP was in place last month, but added that the company let go of only 100 employees as a result of that.

Shiny debut for Concord Biotech

New Delhi: Shares of Concord Biotech ended with a premium of over 27 per cent against the issue price of ₹741 in its debut trade Friday. The stock began the trade at ₹900.05, registering a jump of 21.46 per cent against the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 33.20 per cent to ₹987.05. Shares of the company ended at ₹941.85, up 27.10 per cent. At the NSE, it listed at ₹900.05 and further rallied 33.29 per cent to ₹987.70. The stock ended at ₹943.50, a gain of 27.32 per cent. The company commanded a market valuation of ₹9,853.28 crore.

Adani, TAQA deny investment report

Bangalore: Abu Dhabi National Energy Company PJSC, also known as TAQA, is not in talks for any investment in the Adani Group's power businesses, the two entities said in separate statements Friday. Earlier in the day, the Economic Times newspaper reported, citing sources, that TAQA was evaluating investing up to \$2.5 billion, in single or multiple Adani Group businesses, including buying a near-20% stake in Adani Energy Solutions.

M&M gets ₹14.3L penalty notice

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd Friday said it has been imposed a penalty of over ₹14.3 lakh for incorrect input tax credit availed during the transition from the excise regime to the GST regime by erstwhile Mahindra Vehicle Manufacturers Ltd, which has since been merged into it. In a regulatory filing, the company said, based on its assessment, prevailing law and the advice of the counsel, it is hopeful of a favourable outcome at the appellate level.



Currently, we are facing the problem of fodder in the country. To address this problem, the industry should take serious steps in innovative ways and on a new scale

PARSHOTTAM RUPALA | UNION MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

JFSL TO LIST ON BOURSES AUGUST 21

Jio Financial Services, the demerged financial services unit of Reliance Industries, will be listed on bourses August 21, according to an exchange notification. Jio Financial Services Ltd demerged from Reliance last month and is currently listed under a dummy ticker after its price discovery at ₹261.85 but there is no trading happening in the scrip



Moody's affirms India rating

The ratings agency flags debt burden and curtailment of political dissent, populist policies

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: Moody's Investors Service Friday affirmed India's rating at the lowest investment grade of 'Baa3', with a stable outlook, saying high growth will support a gradual increase in income levels, but flagged risks of populist policies due to rise in political tensions.

Moody's said although India's potential growth has come down in the past 7-10 years, the growth would outpace all other G20 economies through at least the next two years, driven by domestic demand.

Moody's said the restoration of robust growth prospects post-pandemic, the effective commitment to inflation targeting and the rehabilitation of the financial system aided by reform supports its view of strengthening monetary and macro policy effectiveness.

"However, the curtailment of civil society and political dissent, compounded by rising



Sovereign rating at 'Baa3' with stable outlook

Baa3 is the lowest investment grade rating

Potential growth down in past 7-10 years

sectarian tensions, support a weaker assessment of political risk and the quality of institutions," Moody's said while affirming the Government of India's long-term local and foreign-currency issuer ratings and the local-currency senior unsecured rating at Baa3.

Baa3 is the lowest investment grade rating. All three global rating agencies, Fitch, S&P and Moody's, have the lowest investment grade rating on India, with a stable outlook. The ratings are looked at by investors as a barometer of

a country's creditworthiness and affect borrowing costs.

RISKS TO VIEW

The US-based rating agency said the eruption of unrest in the north-eastern state of Manipur one of the most impoverished states in India- has led to at least 150 deaths since May 2023.

"Although elevated political polarization is unlikely to lead to a material destabilization of government, rising domestic political tensions suggest an ongoing risk of populist policies—including at the regional and

Indices fall for 2nd straight session; Sensex below 65k



IT, METAL STOCKS WEIGH ON WEAK GLOBAL TREND

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 18: Equity benchmark index Sensex buckled under selling pressure for the second straight session to close below the 65k mark Friday, as investors offloaded IT, tech and metal stocks amid a bearish global trend.

Besides, fresh foreign fund outflows also hit investor sentiments, traders said.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 202.36 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 64,948.66. During the day, it fell by 396.3 points or 0.60 per cent to 64,754.72. The NSE Nifty dipped 55.10 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 19,310.15.

On a weekly basis, the BSE gauge fell 373.99 points or 0.57 per cent, and the Nifty declined 118.15 points or 0.60 per cent.

"It turned out to be a roller coaster ride on Friday as Nifty oscillated on both sides and ended lower. Meanwhile, majority of sectors felt the heat, wherein IT and realty were among the top losers. The broader indices too traded in sync and lost nearly half a per cent each. Fresh weakness in the US markets is largely weighing on the sentiment, however, the pace of decline is still capped," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Tata Consultancy Services was the biggest laggard in the Sensex list, falling 2.14 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Power Grid, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Finance.

Shares posted their longest weekly losing streak since May 2022

In contrast, Reliance Industries, Maruti, Nestle, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.41 per cent, and smallcap index dipped 0.23 per cent.

Among the indices, IT fell by 1.46 per cent, tech declined by 1.26 per cent, metal (0.88 per cent), realty (0.73 per cent), telecommunication (0.62 per cent) and consumer durables (0.57 per cent).

Power, FMCG and utilities were the gainers.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.46 per cent to \$83.73 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets as they offloaded shares worth ₹266.98 crore, according to exchange data.

RUPEE TOUCHES NEW LOW

The rupee edged lower by 1 paise to settle at an all-time low of 83.10 against the US dollar Friday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and foreign fund outflows.

Forex traders said the rupee is likely to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets and a rising US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.03 against the dollar and moved in a range of 83.02 to 83.13 in the day trade. It finally ended the day at 83.10, registering a fall of 1 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee settled lower by 1 paise at a record low of 83.09 against the US dollar.

Forex kitty rises after dipping for 3 weeks in a row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 18: India's foreign exchange reserves jumped \$708 million to \$602.161 billion for the week ended August 11, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Friday.

This is the first increase in the kitty after declining for three consecutive weeks. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined \$2.417 billion to \$601.453 billion.

In October 2021, the country's foreign exchange reserves touched an all-time high of \$645 billion.

The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.



For the week ended August 11, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased \$999 million to \$534.399 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were down USD 340 million to \$44.34 billion, the RBI said.

Govt to adhere to fiscal deficit aim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The government will stick to the fiscal deficit target of 5.9 per cent of the GDP as robust tax, non-tax collections will help meet the spending requirement and make up for any shortfall in disinvestment proceeds, Finance Secretary T V Somanathan said Friday.

Although there would be a shortfall with respect to disinvestment, he said, this shortfall would be met by non-tax revenue mobilisation.

"Disinvestment target is unlikely to be met. However, I would say in aggregate the collective amount between disinvestment and non-tax revenue is likely to be very close to the budget," he told PTI in an interview.

The total of disinvestment receipts, plus non-tax receipts are likely to be very close to the Budget Estimates, he said.

"We expect to adhere to our fiscal deficit target this year. None



of the events so far have caused anything for us to deviate from it," he said.

The government has already got a higher dividend from the Reserve Bank of India and expects higher dividends from public sector banks and other PSUs than estimated in the Budget.

The RBI in May approved a ₹87,416 crore-dividend payout to the central government for 2022-23, nearly triple of what it paid in the previous year.

The government was expecting ₹48,000 crore from the RBI, public sector banks and financial institutions in the current fiscal.

The dividend payout by the RBI was ₹30,307 crore for the ac-

counting year 2021-22. With public sector banks posting record profits of over ₹1 lakh crore in fiscal 2022-23, the government's earnings from them are likely to be higher.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sithartman in the Budget stated that the fiscal deficit is estimated to be 5.9 per cent of GDP in BE 2023-24.

To finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24, the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at ₹11.8 lakh crore. The balance financing is expected to come from small savings and other sources. The gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹15.4 lakh crore.

Jan Dhan accounts cross 50cr-mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The total number of Jan Dhan accounts in the country has crossed 50 crore-mark, with 56 per cent of the accounts belonging to women, the finance ministry said Friday. About 67 per cent of these accounts have been opened in rural and semi-urban areas, it said in a statement.

The total deposits in these accounts are above ₹2.03 lakh crore while around 34 crore RuPay cards have been issued with these accounts free of cost. The average balance in Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan

Yojana (PMJDY) accounts is ₹4,076 and more than 5.5 crore of these are receiving Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), it said.

The National Mission on Financial Inclusion - popularly known as PMJDY - which was launched on August 28, 2014, has been successful in changing the financial landscape of the country, it added.

PMJDY offers multiple advantages to account holders such as a bank account without the requirement of a minimum balance, free of cost RuPay debit cards with in-built accident insurance of ₹2 lakh, and an overdraft facility of up to ₹10,000.



Mercedes-Benz unveils new GLC in City

Bhubaneswar: India's most desirable luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz India launched the second generation of its much-awaited mid-size luxury SUV, the new GLC in Bhubaneswar Friday. The new GLC is Mercedes-Benz India's highest-selling luxury SUV, with more than 13,000 units on Indian roads since its debut. The premium is set to touch a very high benchmark in its segment, strengthening Mercedes-Benz India's formidable SUV portfolio, comprising the GLA, GLC, GLE, GLS, GLS Maybach, and the G-Class. With numerous feature enhancements now offered as standard, new efficient engines, latest generation NTG-7 telematics, and superior driving dynamics; the new GLC promises to continue its success story in India, making it both - a highly desirable and practical luxury SUV. It was launched by Santosh Iyer, Managing Director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India and Vidur Talwar, Chairman, T&T Motors. The luxury SUV will be offered with 2 powertrains: GLC 300 4MATIC (Petrol) and Diesel GLC 220d 4MATIC (Diesel). The GLC 300 is priced at ₹73.5 lakh and GLC 220d at ₹74.5 lakh (all-India ex-showroom). Bhubaneswar remains one of Mercedes-Benz's key emerging markets in India with a growth of 18% in H12023 (January-June) sales. The company expects strong double-digit growth for the remaining quarters of the year. "Today, we launch our bestselling SUV, the much-awaited new GLC in Bhubaneswar. The new GLC is the most advanced GLC ever with significant product enhancements which are now standard, making it a highly desirable product. We already received an overwhelming response to the GLC, and we are confident of its market success. Bhubaneswar is an emerging market for us with good demand for Mercedes-Benz vehicles. We are confident that the new GLC will build on this story," said Santosh Iyer, Managing Director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India.



Jio bundles Netflix subscription in pre-paid mobile plans

THE COMPANY SAID IT IS A GLOBAL FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PREPAID BUNDLE PARTNERSHIP FOR NETFLIX

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Jio Friday launched two prepaid mobile plans bundled with a Netflix subscription.

"We are committed to bringing world-class services to our users. The launch of Netflix bundles with our prepaid plan is yet another step to demonstrate our resolve. Our partnership with global partners like Netflix has grown in strength, and together we are creating use cases for the rest of

the world to follow," Jio Platforms CEO Kiran Thomas said in a statement.

A Netflix subscription is already available on select Jio Postpaid and Jio Fiber plans, but this is the first time that a Netflix subscription will be available on a prepaid plan.

With this launch, over 400 million Jio prepaid customers will get the option of availing a Netflix subscription through a Jio Prepaid bundled plan.

"Over the years, we have launched a variety of success-



ful local shows, documentaries and films, which have been loved by audiences across India. Our

Jio is offering two plans priced at ₹1,099 and 1,499 with 84 days validity with a Netflix subscription

collection of must-watch stories is growing and our new prepaid bundle partnership with Jio will give more customers access to this exciting line-up of Indian content as well as some incredible stories

from around the world," Netflix Vice President of APAC Partnerships Tony Zameczkowski said.

The company is offering two plans priced at ₹1,099 and 1,499 with 84 days validity with a Netflix subscription.

The plan costing ₹1,099 will offer Netflix mobile subscription, unlimited 5G data or 2 GB 4G data per day and unlimited voice calls.

The Netflix mobile separately costs ₹149 per month and it allows watching content on mobile

phones only.

The higher plan of ₹1,499 will offer Netflix's basic feature, which will allow users to watch on either mobile or television at one time. It will come with similar benefits as the lower-price version but will offer 3GB of 4G data per day.

The Netflix basic plan separately costs ₹199 per month.

The 2GB data plan with unlimited voice calls and 84 days validity cost ₹719, and the same plan with 3GB data starts at ₹999.

DUTEE LIVING, TRAINING IN FEAR

Bumrah shines as India win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: India's fastest woman runner Dutee Chand experienced the shock of her life when she was told by a doctor in November 2021 that level 1 cancer has attacked her body and she must quit the sport. That was after she failed to go past the preliminary round in the Tokyo Olympics women's 100m and 200m races.

Sports Medicine expert Dr Sudeep Satpathy, a professor at the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Bhubaneswar, diagnosed the onset of level 1 cancer in Dutee's body.

"I felt very scary, nervous, thinking what has happened to my life," Dutee told PTI from Bhubaneswar, recollecting the conversation she had with the doctor her after the MRI report. Doctor Satpathy was attached with the Indian hockey team at one point of time.

Sharing her ordeal, Dutee said her problems began with a groin injury in 2021. "While competing in the National Inter-State Championships before the Tokyo Olympics (2021), I felt a lot of pain in the groin area. I consulted some doctors but the pain did not go. I went to Olympics (July-August, 2021) and could not do well there," she said.

"After returning from the Olympics, the pain kept increasing. I did an ultrasound in November 2021. Nothing came in the ultrasound. Then I got an MRI scan done and the doctor (Sudeep Satpathy) told me that level 1 cancer attack has begun. He said I have to quit sport otherwise it will get worse."

Asked which parts of the body could have been affected by cancer, Dutee said she can think of only groin area. "I am having testosterone hormone imbalance, so it could be from there. The groin pain was increasing slowly. Everybody was saying it's groin pain but the doctor said cancer attack can happen if it (the pain) continues."

In 2015, Dutee had won a case at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against world athletics governing body's policy on hyperandrogenism, or high natural levels of testosterone in women.

Dutee, who has been handed four-year ban for failing dope test, is also the first Indian athlete to come out in the open to having same-sex relationship in 2019.



Asked specifically if she underwent some more tests for re-confirmation and the latest status, Dutee said, "At that time, the doctor (Satpathy) said it's level 1 cancer attack. There was a lot of pain at that time."

"But after taking medicine, the pain has subsided, there was recovery. I did not do any other medical test because I was feeling all right, not much of pain. Then, I gave this sample to NADA and came the dope positive result. That is the story," said the 27-year-old sprinter who won 100m and 200m silver medals in the 2018 Asian Games.

She said she took the medicine for the groin pain for just 15-20 days. She stopped it as the pain had reduced. "I spoke to my doctor who advised me to take rest otherwise it will keep on increasing and will become a serious problem. So I stopped (training) a bit and took the medicine for 15 to 20 days."

"I could not do much at the Commonwealth Games because of the pain. This is something like if you exert more, the pain get worse."

Surprisingly, Dutee has not done anymore test after the November 2021 MRI. "After this

dope positive result (in January this year), I am not in a position to do medical test (for the cancer diagnosis). I am completely in a harassed state of mind. I sent the (medical) report to an expert also who told me it has happened to two-three other athletes also."

At stage 1, the cancer is small without spread. At stage 2, the cancer grows but still does not spread. At stage 3, the cancer is larger and could spread to the surrounding tissues and/or the lymph nodes.

TO CHALLENGE BAN

Dutee will challenge the four-year ban imposed on the celebrated Indian athlete by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for failing two out-of-competition dope tests for a banned substance.

The 27-year-old 100m national record holder was Thursday served the ban after two samples taken in December last year were found to contain "other anabolic agents/SARMS", which is listed under "WADA's 2023 prohibited list of non-specified substances".

The samples were taken December 5 and 26 respectively and both returned positive for al-

most identical substances. SARMS, or selective androgen receptor modulators, are non-steroidal substances commonly used to treat osteoporosis, anaemia and wound healing in patients.

Dutee's ban will be effective from January 3 this year and all her competitive results will be scrapped from the date the first sample collection took place (December 5, 2022).

Dutee's counsel Parth Goswami told PTI Friday that the sprinter had been a "clean athlete" all her professional career and it was a case of "unintentional consumption". The athlete had won silver medals in 100 and 200m at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games and holds the national record of 11.17 sec in 100m (2021).

"For us, this is a clear case of unintentional consumption of a banned substance. We were clearly able to establish the source of the substance in the body, which is a substantial proof of lack of intent. The substance was never used to gain any sporting advantage," said Goswami.

"We are in process of filing an appeal. We are hopeful that we will be able to convince the appeal panel," he added. "Dutee is the pride of India and is a clean athlete. She has had an illustrious career of over a decade. She has undergone hundreds of dope tests internationally and nationally and has always been clean in her long career," added Goswami.

Dutee and her counsel had also claimed before NADA's Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) that it was a case of "unintentional consumption".

"The athlete and her counsel had without refuting the findings of the NDTL (National Dope Testing Laboratory) report stated that the consumption of the said substance was unintentional and the ingestion of the same had been advised by the physiotherapist who was being regularly consulted by the athlete," said the ADPP order.

"The athlete and her counsels submitted that the said physiotherapist had been attached with the athlete from the Pullela Gopichand Academy where the athlete was training under special permission."

Dutee's counsel had submitted that the sprinter was "hyperandrogenic" owing to which she was having "severe groin pain" because of which the treatment was recommended.

Dublin, August 18: Pace sensation Jasprit Bumrah ticked all the boxes on his much-anticipated return to lead India to a two-run win over Ireland by DLS Method in a rain-interrupted first T20I of the three-match series, here Friday.

Leading the side on his return after an 11-month injury layoff, Bumrah claimed 2/24 with nine dot balls and formed a formidable pair with T20I debutant Prasidh Krishna (2/32) to restrict Ireland to 139/7 after opting to bowl.

Things looked bleak for the hosts after they were down 59/6 in the 11th over but their No.8 Barry McCarthy produced an amazing recovery, blazing his way to a 33-ball 51 n o (4x4, 4x6) to give their total some respectability.

He stitched a seventh wicket 57-run partnership with Curtis

Campher (39) as Ireland reeled off 54 runs in the last five overs, losing just one wicket.

McCarthy was the stand out batter for the hosts as he reached his maiden half-century with a last-ball six off Arshdeep Singh (1/35) who leaked 22 runs in the last over.

Chasing the tricky target under overcast conditions, India were off to a fluent start with Yashasvi Jaiswal (24) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (19 n o) putting together 46 runs in 6.2 overs. But Craig Young (2/2) produced a double blow, taking the left-handed duo of Jaiswal and Tilak Varma who was out for a golden duck.

India vice-captain Gaikwad, however, showed maturity and watched through the tricky phased, well aware that they were ahead of the DLS par score. There was no stopping rain as umpires decided to call off the

game at 6.15pm local time with India taking a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

All eyes on Bumrah, the Indian pace sensation did not disappoint. He bowled with rhythm, accuracy and a lot of venom. His rhythm was a lot better, he ran fast in his run-up to generate momentum and slowly ramped up the speed gun and went on to clock 140kph in the penultimate over when he conceded just one run.

Bumrah bowled up front only to see Irish opener Andy Balbirnie nudging his fuller delivery for a boundary behind square boundary. Bumrah was quick to bounce back and knocked over Balbirnie's off-stump with a searing inswinger. He grabbed in-form wicketkeeper-batter Lorcan Tucker in his fifth delivery to get his campaign up and running.

After four overs, Prasidh was handed the ball and he ended the struggle of Harry Tector (9). The wily Bishnoi then bamboozled skipper Paul Stirling (11) with a googly as Ireland slumped to 27/4 in the powerplay.

Prasidh had George Dockrell (3). Bishnoi then removed Mark Adair after winning a video referral for an LBW decision. McCarthy and Campher helped the hosts reach close to 140.

BRIEF SCORES: Ireland 139/7 (Barry McCarthy 51 n o, Curtis Campher 39; Ravi Bishnoi 2/23, Jasprit Bumrah 2/24, Prasad Krishna 2/32) lost to India 47/2 in 6.5 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 24, Ruturaj Gaikwad 19 n o; Craig Young 2/2) by 2 runs via DLS method.



Rana Pratap bags gold at Aquatic Nationals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Rana Pratap helped Jharkhand bag their first individual gold medal at the 39th Sub Junior and 49th Junior National Aquatic Championships here with a sensational swim in the 200m breaststroke for group I boys. He clocked 2:21.88 to create the new national record. He erased Swadesh Mondal's record of 2:22.29 created in 2021. Rana finished ahead of Vidith S Shankar of Karnataka who was a no match in the race for gold. Vidith clocked 2:24.31 to settle for silver.

With two more days of action left at the swanky new Aquatic Centre here in the iconic Kalinga Sports Complex, Karnataka re-

mained poised to defend their overall championship title with as many as 32 gold medals, 28 silver and 17 bronze while Tamil Nadu have 7 gold, 5 silver and 10 bronze and Maharashtra have 6 gold, 15 silver and 13 bronze medals.

Hashika Ramachandra added another gold medal to her kitty, with a record time, in 400m individual medley. She rewrote Shakthi B's record of 5:11.77 by clocking 5:08.50. She was a couple of strokes ahead of state mate S Lakshya who finished second with a time of 5:12.75.

In another record-breaking performance of the day, Tanishi Gupta of Karnataka clocked 1:02.21 to beat state mate Dhinidhi Desinghu and create a new national record in 100m butterfly for

group II girls. The record 1:05.51 was previously held by Hashika created in 2021. Interestingly, Dhinidhi also improved the national record by clocking 1:04.03.

Ridhima Veerendra, although missed Maana Patel's record in 50m backstroke for group I girls, comfortable won the race. She timed 30.08, narrowly missing the record time of 30.03 created in 2015. Sagnika Roy of Bengal finished behind with a time of 31.25.

Ishaan Mehera of Karnataka also dominated in his age group with two gold medals. He won the 50m backstroke clocking 28.45, while state mate Idhant Shashwat bagged silver with time of 29.05. Ishaan also won the 100m freestyle for group II boys. He clocked 54.85.

Rani backs Indian teams to bag gold at Hangzhou Asiad

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Former Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal is 'optimistic' about Indian teams' - both men and women - chances of claiming gold medals at the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games, which will seal their 2024 Paris Olympics berths.

Despite not being included in the women's squad for the Asiad, Rani showed her full support towards the teams and wished them luck. "Asian Games is very important as teams winning gold medals will directly qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

"I am optimistic that both of our men and women teams would secure the Olympic ticket at Hangzhou," said Rani at the Dr Ashok Pattnaik Memorial Lecture on Asian Games at Kalinga Stadium Tennis Centre here, Friday.

Exhorting the budding hockey talents at the 25th Death Anniversary Programme of eminent sports journalist Dr Pattnaik, Rani, a Padmashree Awardee, emphasized that hardwork is the key to success. "Hardwork and the will to win against all odds have helped me come this far. Work with dedication and after 10 years you will be here where I am today," added Rani, who led India to silver medal in the 2018 Asiad and reached semifinals for the first time at the 2020 Tokyo Games.

Currently in Odisha as a mentor and coach of the newly constituted women's sub-junior core group for a national camp, Rani showered praise on the Odisha Government for promoting sports, especially hockey.

"The Odisha Government, led by sports-loving Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has set an example for other States to follow," said Rani, the chief guest of the programme, which was organized by Odisha Sports Journalists' Association (OSJA).

Jena gets visa, to compete at Worlds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Indian javelin thrower Kishore Jena Friday received his visa to travel to Hungary, paving the way for him to compete at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest from August 19 to 27.

"All of you might be aware that I faced an issue with my (Hungarian) visa for the World Athletics Championships. However, the problem has been resolved now," Jena said in a video posted by Sports Authority of India.

"Therefore, I would like to thank the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Sports Authority of India, Ministry of External Affairs and the Athletics Federation of India for getting my visa done. Thank you so much.

"I will give my best performance during the World Championships," he added ahead of his Sunday departure to the Hungarian capital.

Early Friday, an AFI source said that Jena's visa has been cleared after his interview/apointment in the morning, and he will get his travel documents later in the day.

Jena's visa application was



cancelled by the Hungarian embassy in India Wednesday for

unknown reasons, leading to Olympic gold-medallist Indian

javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra coming out in his support.

"Just heard that there are issues with Kishore Jena's VISA, preventing him from entering Hungary for the World C'ships. I hope the authorities are able to find a solution, as this is one of the biggest moments of his career. Let's do everything we can," he posted on X (formerly Twitter), tagging MEA and Jaishankar.

Jena, who won gold in the Sri Lankan National Championships July 30 with a personal best of 84.38m, had made the cut through the world ranking quota.

Jena qualified for the event after being placed 36th in the Road to Budapest list updated by World Athletics (WA) following the completion of the qualification period July 30.

The 27-year-old is one of the four Indian javelin throwers to have qualified for the World Championships. DP Manu and Rohit Yadav had also made the cut, but the latter pulled out after undergoing elbow surgery on his throwing arm.

Jena, who had won silver in the National Inter-State in June, and Manu are the only Indian athletes yet to reach Budapest out of the 28-member squad.

INDIAN MIXED TEAM CLINCH AIR PISTOL GOLD AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baku (Azerbaijan), August 18: Shooters Esha Singh and Shiva Narwal brought cheers to the India camp, clinching the 10m air pistol mixed team gold by defeating Turkey in the final of the ISSF World Championship here Friday.

The Indian duo defeated the Turkish pair of Ilayda Tarhan

and Yusuf Dikec 16-10 in the gold-medal match to take the country's medals tally to two.

India are currently placed second on the medals table with a gold and a bronze medal, while China is leading the tally with five gold and two bronze medals.

The Indians shot superbly in the qualification round with Esha notching up 290 and Narwal 293. Their aggregate score of 583 helped



them top the qualification round and push Turkey to second spot with an aggregate of 581.

China and Iran both aggregated 580 each but the former was third after the qualification round owing to better 'inner 10's'.

However, India's rifle shooters came up with below-par performances, failing to cross the qualification stage in the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

The women's skeet team too failed to make it to the medals bracket, finishing fourth. The rifle mixed team pair of Mehuli Ghosh (316.0) and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (314.2) aggregated 630.2 to finish ninth in the qualification round, while the second Indian pair of Ramita (313.7) and Divyansh Singh Panwar (314.6) aggregated 628.3 to end at 17th place among 77 teams.