

BRAVE DECISION
Actor Sushmita Sen reveals how she changed the adopted norms of the film industry 30 years ago

ZELENSKYY THANKS DENMARK
President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanks Danish lawmakers for helping Ukraine resist Russia's invasion

RAHUL, IYER INCLUDED
KL Rahul, albeit with a rider, and Shreyas Iyer named in India's squad for the Asia Cup beginning August 31

17 INDIANS RESCUED FROM LIBYA

New Delhi, August 21: 17 Indian nationals, who were held captive by an armed group in Libya, have been rescued and brought back to India following sustained efforts by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), people familiar with the matter said Monday.

The Indian nationals, hailing from Punjab and Haryana, reached Delhi Sunday evening, they said. The Indian embassy in Tunis played a key role in evacuation of the Indians, the people said.

The case was brought to the attention of the Indian embassy in Tunis May 26 by the family members of the stranded Indian nationals.

The Indians were being held captive by an armed group in Zwara City in Libya after they were trafficked to that country, the people cited above said.

The Indian embassy in Tunis regularly pursued the matter with Libyan authorities throughout May and June, as well as through informal channels, they said.

Terror activities surge in Jammu post 370 repeal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 21: Post Article 370 abrogation in August 2019, the Jammu region has witnessed an increase in terror activities with certain security indicators, including recruitment of terrorists, showing an upward trend over the past nearly four years, official data revealed.

The arrest of 231 terrorists and their over-ground workers (OGWs) between August 5, 2019 and June 16, 2023 in the stepped up counter-insurgency operations in the Jammu division was 71 per cent more than such arrests recorded between October 27, 2015 and August 4, 2019, according to the data.

The Central government abrogated Article 370 granting special status to Jammu and Kashmir August 5, 2019, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

According to the official data, eight grenade and 13 improvised explosive device (IED) attacks were recorded in the Jammu region post the abrogation of Article 370.

Four grenade and seven IED attacks were recorded from October 27, 2015 to August 4, 2019.

The casualties in IED blasts increased in the region by 73 per cent from three in 2015-19 to 11 in 2019-2023.

On comparing the pre-and-post-abrogation period of nearly four years, the incidents of terrorist initiated stand-off fire and hit and run cases witnessed an increase of 43 per cent from four to seven, while the incidence of terror recruitment has gone up by 39 per cent from eight to 13, it stated.

However, there has been an

- ABROGATION AFTERMATH**
- Arrests of terrorists, over-ground workers rose **71%**
 - Terrorist initiated stand-off fire, hit and run cases up **43%**
 - Terror recruitment sees an increase of **39%**
 - Casualties from IED blast in the region increased by **73%**
 - Decline in casualties of civilians **63%** and that of police and security forces **13%**

appreciable decline in the casualties of civilians and security forces in the terror attacks in the past nearly four years.

Against 11 civilian killings from October 27, 2015 to August 4, 2019, there was a 63 per cent decrease with seven civilian killings reported post the abrogation of Article 370.

The casualties among the police and the security forces in terror attacks marked a decrease of 13 per cent.

While 29 personnel lost their lives and 32 others were injured in various attacks post the abrogation Article 370, the figures stood at 33 deaths and 42 injuries from October 27, 2015 to August 4, 2019, stated the data.

There has been only one weapon snatching, 19 stone-pelting and 16 hartal and bandh calls -- showing 80 per cent, 62 per cent and 42 per cent decline, respectively, compared to the period of nearly four years prior to the abrogation of Article 370, it revealed.

Security officials said the terror-related incidents mostly remained restricted to the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, where over 65 terrorists were neutralised in various encounters over the past four years since August 5, 2019.



MOON MANIA: School students gather at an exhibition on Chandrayaan-3 at Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Pratishthanam (SGVP), in Ahmedabad of Gujarat, Monday

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Take over this one! Its defaulters either have no political link or belong to the opposition. Recovery will be easy

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	65216.09	↑ 267.43
NIFTY	19393.60	↑ 83.45
DOLLAR	83.11	↓ ₹0.12
EURO	90.49	↑ ₹0.10
GOLD	₹58,308	↓ ₹67
SILVER	₹70,884	↑ ₹649

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	32.8°C	33.5°C
TEMP MIN	26.6°C	26.5°C
Humidity	89%	85%
Rainfall	20.4mm	4mm

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

Cong questions BoB U-turn

Bank of Baroda says actor Sunny Deol has offered to settle outstanding dues worth ₹56 crore related to his Mumbai bungalow

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: The Congress Monday raised questions about the Bank of Baroda withdrawing the e-auction notice for the Juhu bungalow of BJP MP Sunny Deol, asking who triggered the "technical reasons" for the withdrawal.

Facing prospects of his bungalow in Mumbai being auctioned to recover unpaid loans, Deol has offered to settle all outstanding dues, prompting the state-owned lender to drop auction proceedings for the property.

The lender issued a statement Monday, saying that Deol has offered to settle the dues, hours after it withdrew the public notice to auction the villa owned by the actor and sitting BJP MP



from Punjab's Gurdaspur, citing technical reasons.

The Congress took a swipe at the move with AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh, saying that undoubtedly, the public outcry and the media coverage has led the Bank of Baroda to issue a "clarification" on the so-called "technical reasons" behind its withdrawal of its notice. "There will be no auction. Hopefully, there will be action in recovering the ₹56 crore owed to it by the BJP MP," Ramesh said on X.

Ex-BDO held after 8 years on the run

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 21: A wanted former block development officer (BDO) of Narayanpatna block under Koraput district was arrested Monday by the sleuths of Odisha Vigilance Directorate for his alleged involvement in multiple cases of misappropriation of government funds to the tune of ₹34 lakh.

Accused Ramesh Chandra Sahoo was arrested from New Delhi by the Vigilance Directorate and was produced before Metropolitan Magistrate here for transit remand. He will be brought to Odisha on transit remand for production before Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore.

The Vigilance Directorate said that at least seven cases have been registered against Sahoo and others on the ground of misappropriation of government funds meant for different developmental works in Narayanpatna block by not executing the works. He is accused of misappropriating funds for the construction of anganwadi centres at Tovapadar, Mankid and Dumsil. In another case, he allegedly embezzled funds meant for the construction of a road at Pachgingi, officials said.

Sahoo was absconding since 2015 and kept changing his locations in the last eight years. He was residing in rental accommodations in Delhi and neighboring areas. The Vigilance further said that he had also stayed in Jorhat of Assam to evade arrest.

The accused, recently, returned to Delhi from Assam. After receiving inputs about his whereabouts, a team was stationed to pinpoint his location, the Vigilance officials said.

STF seizes brown sugar worth ₹1cr; 4 held

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The Odisha Police STF seized 1,100 gm of brown sugar worth ₹1 crore from Balasore town and arrested four persons in connection with it, police said Monday.

The accused persons identified as Sk Faiyaz, Sk Shamshad alias Sonu, Sk Mehmood and Sandeep Nayak are the natives of Balasore district.

A raid was conducted by the special task force (STF) Sunday evening near Balasore railway station based on intelligence

input and seized the contraband, besides a motor cycle and other materials from the four accused, a police official said.

The accused persons could not produce any valid document for possessing the brown sugar and were arrested, an STF release said.

The accused Sk Shamshad told STF team that he used to procure brown sugar regularly in huge quantity from one Sk Jamshed who purchased the same from dealers in West Bengal.

The STF has launched a manhunt to nab Jamshed, the kingpin of the racket.

A case was registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and investigation into the incident is on, it said.

The STF has since 2020 seized more than 71 kg of brown sugar and heroin, 202 gm of cocaine and more than 116 quintals of marijuana and 750 gm of opium from across the state and arrested more than 176 drug peddlers, the police official official said.

This apart, it destroyed more than 62 kg of seized brown sugar and 136 quintals of ganja in the past one year, he added.

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SHORT TAKES

9 members of Rajya Sabha take oath

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was among nine MPs who took the oath as members of the Rajya Sabha Monday. The oath was administered by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar in the Rajya Sabha chamber in Parliament House. The other BJP members who took the oath are Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai (Gujarat), Kesridevsinh Digvijaysinh Jhala (Gujarat), and Nagendra Ray (West Bengal). Five TMC MPs -- Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Prakash Chik Baraik and Samirul Islam -- also took the oath.

Infiltration attempt foiled; 2 ultras killed

Jammu: Two Pakistani intruders were killed with the Army scuttling an infiltration bid along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district Monday, an official said. The bodies of the slain terrorists could not be retrieved as they managed to flee across the Line of Control (LoC) before succumbing to their injuries, suffered during a gunfight with the Army, according to an Indian Army spokesperson. One AK-47 rifle, two magazines, 30 rounds, two hand grenades and some medicines of Pakistani origin were recovered.

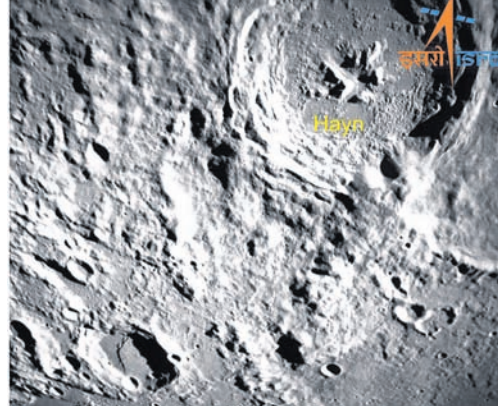
Welcome, buddy! Chandrayaan-2 orbiter texts Vikram

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 21: Days before Chandrayaan-3's lander 'Vikram' attempts a soft landing on the surface of the Lunar South Pole, ISRO Monday said it has established a two-way communication with the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter 'PRADAN'.

ISRO said that the orbiter sent a welcome message to lander Vikram, which is attempting to land on the far side of the Moon. "Welcome, buddy!" Ch-2 orbiter formally welcomed Ch-3 LM. Two-way communication between the two is established. MOX has now more routes to reach the LM, the national space agency said in a post on X.

ISRO said Sunday the lander module of Chandrayaan-3,



Images of Lunar far side area captured by Lander camera

The ISRO Monday released images of Lunar far side area captured by the Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera (LHDAC). This camera that assists in locating a safe landing area -- without boulders or deep trenches -- during the descent is developed by Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre (SAC), a major research and development centre of ISRO. According to the space agency, to achieve the mission objectives of Chandrayaan-3, several advanced technologies are present in the Lander such as LHDAC. Chandrayaan-3, launched July 14, is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

the third lunar mission of India carrying a rover in its belly, is expected to touch down on the surface of the Moon around 6.04pm August 23. The MOX (Mission Operations Complex) is located at ISRO Telemetry,

Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) here.

ISRO also said, in an update, that the live telecast of the landing event will begin at 5.20pm August 23. The landing will be covered live on the ISRO website,

Moon's surface, failing in its mission to achieve a soft-landing.

ISRO said in 2019 that due to the precise launch and orbital manoeuvres, the mission life of the orbiter is increased to seven years. Meanwhile, top Indian space scientists have assured that the failure of Russia's Luna-25 moon mission will have no impact on ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 lunar venture. The Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the Moon after it spun into an uncontrolled orbit, Russia's Roscosmos space agency said Sunday.

"It does not have any impact," K Sivan, who was heading ISRO when the Chandrayaan-2 mission was launched in 2019, told PTI Monday when asked if ISRO would be under additional pressure ahead of the soft landing, following the Russian setback.

Trump rakes up India tax

AGENCIES

Washington, August 21: Former US president Donald Trump, who is seeking his second term, has once again raised the issue of high tax by India on certain American products in particular the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and has threatened to slap with reciprocal tax if voted to power in the 2024 presidential elections.

During his first term as the US president, Trump described India as a "tariff king" and in May 2019, terminated India's preferential market access -- Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) -- to the United States alleging India has not given the United States "equitable and reasonable access to its markets."

If India is charging us too, so what I want to have is a -- call it retribution. You could call it whatever you want, if they are charging us, we charge them

DONALD TRUMP | EX-US PRESIDENT

In an interview to Larry Kudlow of Fox Business News, Trump said came down heavily on India tax rates, which he alleged was quite high.

"The other thing I want to have is a matching tax where, if India charges us -- India is very big with tariffs. I mean, I saw it with Harley-Davidson. I was saying, how do you do in a place like India. Oh, no good sir? Why? They have 100 per cent and 150 per cent and 200 per cent tariffs," said the former president.

leisure



TRAVIS SURPRISES 9-YR-OLD BLIND DRUMMER AT LEMONADE STAND

Drummer Travis Barker of Blink-182 made a surprise visit to 9-year-old blind drummer Grayson Roberts' lemonade stand in Los Angeles. The video went viral after social media star Charlie Rocket shared that the boy had no customers at his lemonade stand earlier this week, reports *etonline*.

NICK JONAS REVEALS HIS FAVOURITE INDIAN FOOD

American popstar Nick Jonas, who is married to actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, has revealed his favourite Indian cuisine. Discussing about it with content creator Rebecca Tandon Nick said: "I like paneer, lamb biryani and you know dosa. I like dosa."



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

A romantic link is about to be presented to you as a surprise, shining and smiling. Ganesha advises you to be prepared in your best dress and to practice some romantic talking. You never know what the evening has in store for you. Only Ganesha does, and he is sporting a knowing smile.

TAURUS

Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesha, as trouble might be headed your way. Make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today. Prevention is better than cure, reminds Ganesha.

GEMINI

You will be in the mood to pursue your heart's many desires today. You will want to spend more time with your family and your children. You need to translate desires into action by better balancing your schedule, says Ganesha.

CANCER

You will have enthusiasm for swift action. Variety adds spice to life. So you may change job or trade. Ties with superiors will be good. Ganesha says this is the time for challenges.

LEO

You will spend the day with your family and friends today and feel closer to them. You will try to help others, as always. You will like to guide someone if your own situation is comfortable today. You will be able to fulfill the expectations placed upon you by someone and will garner a lot of well-wishes, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

You are born with a talent for business. Your organisational skills too are flawless. Ganesha advises you to use all your creativity, innovative ideas and ability to motivate others to make progress in your business. Ganesha says you may freely express yourself and make full use of your sharp judgement.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that today will be a day where you will want to look good and feel good too. You will be able to attract people with your speech and your impressive personality today at social gatherings. Your social stature will also rise today. Romantic liaisons may take a serious turn today. Ganesha's blessings are forever with you.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesha, your family and friends top your priority list today. Life looks hunky dory on personal as well as professional front. Apart from business developments, romantic relations are on the bloom. And this is evident from your blushing cheeks.

SAGITTARIUS

You feel like going back to carefree, childhood days. You even practice that by taking an impromptu pleasure trip, in the outskirts of the city. And bumping into an old pal, reliving your past is like an icing on the cake. As Ganesha says, golden moments are best undescribed and you too, by the end of the day, are speechless for this wonderful day!

CAPRICORN

You will walk down the memory lane, cherish those lost moments and later on feel an urge to meet or contact old friends, says Ganesha. Expectations of your near and dear ones, however, may seem burdensome. You will still see the brighter side of everything, and spending quality time with your sweetheart will certainly re-energise your powers to deal with difficulties.

AQUARIUS

You will finally end today and you will enjoy the fruits of your hard-work. You are very good at considering all the pros and cons of every situation/project, drawing a plan on paper and distribution of responsibilities, however, execution of those plans is a problem area for you.

PISCES

You will come up trumps against your competition today. This will make you enthusiastic about your future prospects. You shy away from the spotlight usually, but today you will find yourself thrust into the role of a leader, as you take on new assignments.

Disha's funda to express herself

Mumbai: Actress Disha Patani, who stepped into the director's shoes with her newly dropped music video *Kyun Karu Fikar*, said that it has helped her express herself and that it was an exciting challenge to shift the perspective.



"I am feeling an extreme sense of satisfaction and happiness to have finally put out a part of me, with *Kyun Karu Fikar*. It has helped me express myself, in a very different way by taking on the role of a director also, this time," the *Malang* actress said. She added, "It was an exciting challenge to shift the perspective from being in front of the camera to being the one behind it as well. I am so grateful to the entire team who was a part of it and believed in my vision. I hope people relate to the message of being free from the perception of the world and focus on self love." On the work front, Disha will be seen in two pan-Indian films, *Kalki 2898 AD* and *Kanguwa* and is also a part of *Yodha*.

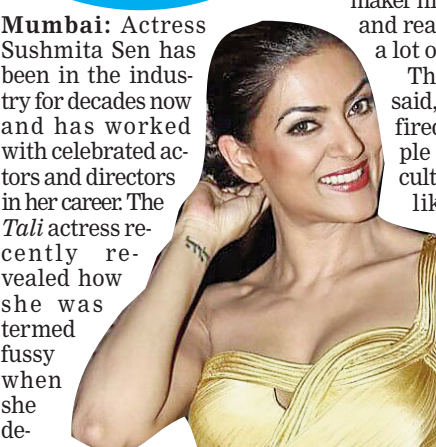
CBFC'S 'A' CERTIFICATE TO *OMG 2*

Denied entry into theatres, child actor fumes



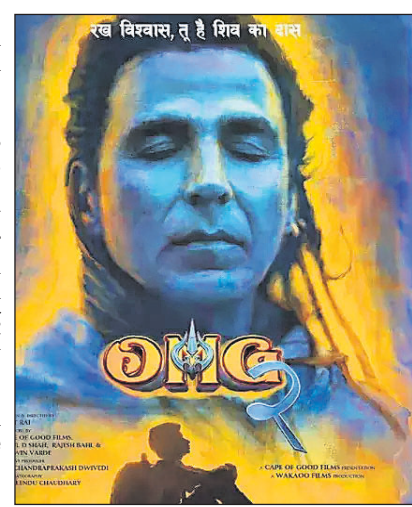
Aarush Sharma

How Sushmita changed norms of the industry



Mumbai: Actress Sushmita Sen has been in the industry for decades now and has worked with celebrated actors and directors in her career. The *Tail* actress recently revealed how she was termed fussy when she demanded fixed shoot timing. In an interview, she said, "Upon entering the industry, discussing shoot logistics for films featuring Khans or A-list actors were uncommon. However, I changed this norm by requesting adequate work hours for makeup and hair, committing to punctuality and timely exits." When she asked for a fixed schedule, she was called fussy as she said, "So first, everyone had a problem with that attitude, they had so much to say, 'Attitude de rahi hai, samajhti kya hai apne aap ko'." Things changed when a filmmaker hired her with those terms and realised that he had saved a lot of production money. The *Aarya* actress further said, "That might have backfired then, and a lot of people were like, 'She's difficult to work with'. But I was like even if the actor is late by six hours, I am ready to wait. I'll put on full hair and makeup, sit down and wait. But when it's six o'clock, it's my pack-up time, I leave." She concluded how it took her 30 years to make people realise the importance of time.

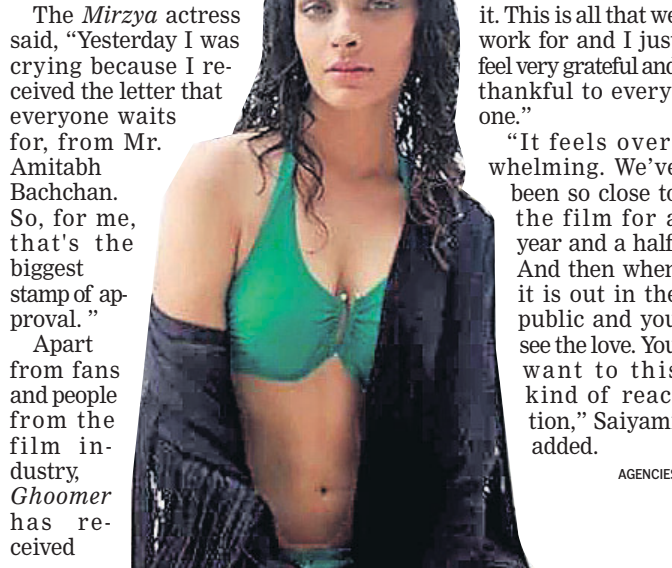
Mumbai: *OMG 2* starring Akshay Kumar, Pankaj Tripathi and Yami Gautam, revolves around a middle-class father raising awareness about a sensitive yet crucial topic. *OMG 2* calls out current misconceptions, while highlighting the significance of sex education. In an interview with, Aarush Varma who played the character of Vivek in the movie, told that is too old to witness his own movie, and makes a petition.



The movie was finally released on August 11 after the Central Board of Film Certification awarded it an 'A' certificate. Speaking about it, Aarush said, "I will regret not being able to see my first film in the theatre, I feel a little angry and bad. I just want that if the CBFC takes any decision, then it should be such a decision which will be beneficial for us. Because I want everyone to enjoy the film with my age group friends, and the target audience of this film, for whom it was made, should also be able to understand this film and learn something." He went on to add, "There is nothing in the film that children should not watch." "In fact this film has been made for children to watch. Instead of teaching children, we are showing that film to adults, so what was the point of making that film?" he asked.

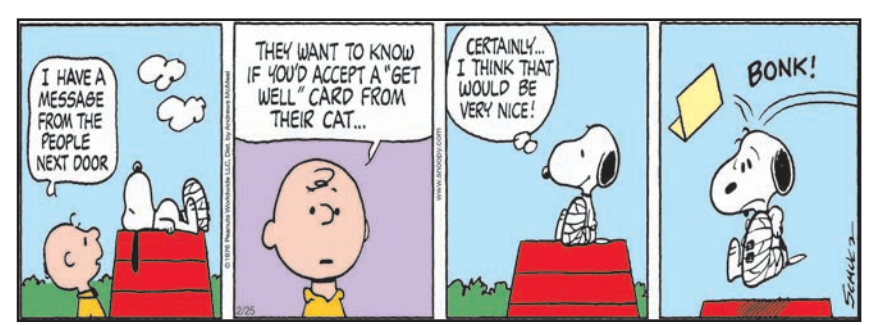
Saiyami basking in *Ghoomer's* success

Mumbai: Actress Saiyami Kher's just-released sports drama, *Ghoomer* is garnering immense love and praise from the audiences. The actress has revealed that she received a letter from the legendary actor, Amitabh Bachchan for her performance in the film.



The *Mirzya* actress said, "Yesterday I was crying because I received the letter that everyone waits for, from Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. So, for me, that's the biggest stamp of approval." Apart from fans and people from the film industry, *Ghoomer* has received adulation and applause from several cricket legends as well, she said, "Be it from Harsha Bhogle or (Virender) Sehwag who cried, Yuvi (Yuvraj Singh) who was crying throughout the film, the cricketers, Mr Bachchan and a whole lot of filmmakers who saw it. This is all that we work for and I just feel very grateful and thankful to everyone." "It feels overwhelming. We've been so close to the film for a year and a half. And then when it is out in the public and you see the love. You want to this kind of reaction," Saiyami added.

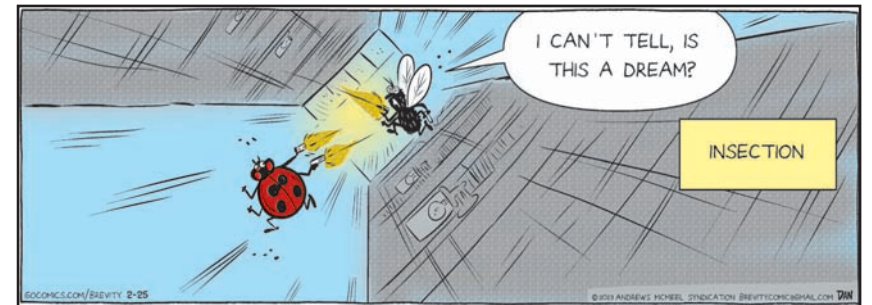
PEANUTS



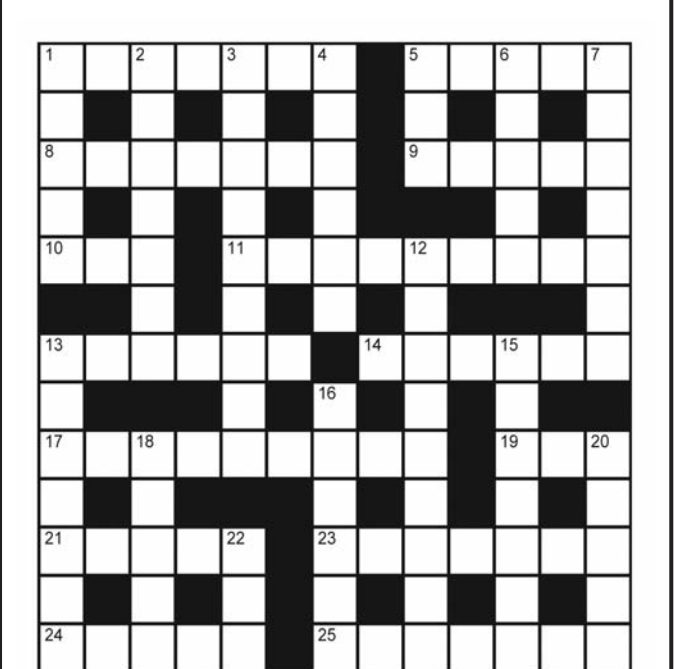
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Fishgig
 - 5 Karma
 - 8 Camera part
 - 9 Small terrestrial lizard
 - 10 Vote of support
 - 11 Mammoths of today
 - 13 Thief
 - 14 Consternation
 - 17 Timetables
 - 19 Joke
 - 21 For your listening pleasure
 - 23 Hot pepper
 - 24 City north of Cologne
 - 25 Maternity info (3,4)
 - 4 Jim-jams
 - 5 Roman road, ___ Appia
 - 6 Muscle
 - 7 Former chess master
 - 12 Coiffure
 - 13 Hold back
 - 15 Purplish red
 - 16 Unruffled
 - 18 River Styx locale
 - 20 Skein formers
 - 22 Hold title to
- Down**
- 1 Rash
 - 2 Pastry filler
 - 3 Getting better (2,3,4)

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.

9	6							7
					5			
3			8					4
7	2			1				6
					7		1	9
							3	
		8			9	6		
6					3			8
	5			2			4	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

R	O	A	D	M	A	P	C	L	A	S	P				
A	I	A	I	H	N	E									
C	A	R	B	U	N	C	L	E	D	O	T				
E			D	T	E	R	U								
S	H	O	A	L			U	N	K	N	O	W	N		
I	N	I					M	I							
V	A	T					N	E	E	D					
C	H	I	A	N	T	I	A	W	A	S	H				
T	I	N					A	N	N						
O	B	I					I	N	D	I	C	A	T	O	R
S	U	E					O	E	E	A	O				
S	U	E					W	I	S	E	M	A	N		

SUDOKU

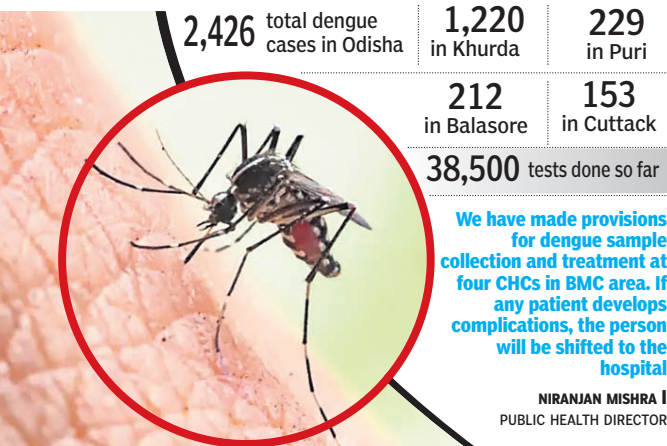
4	6	3	7	9	1	2	8	5
7	8	2	5	6	3	9	4	1
1	5	9	4	2	8	7	3	6
9	3	6	2	5	4	1	7	8
8	2	4	1	3	7	6	5	9
5	7	1	9	8	6	4	2	3
3	1	5	6	4	2	8	9	7
2	9	7	8	1	5	3	6	4
6	4	8	3	7	9	5	1	2

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

DENGUE CAPITAL

With 1,164 cases, Bhubaneswar accounts for almost half of the reported cases in Odisha



Bhubaneswar, August 21: With more than 60 fresh cases of dengue detected in Odisha on an average daily for about a month now, the situation in the state is turning alarming, while the Capital City has emerged as the hotspot for the vector borne disease.

Of the 2,426 dengue cases detected in Odisha so far, Khurda district alone accounts for 1,220 patients. In Bhubaneswar, which is part of Khurda district, 1,164 dengue cases were detected, including 300 last week, officials said. Director, Public Health Niranjana Mishra, however, claimed that the situation in the state was not any worse in comparison to other states and its position in respect of dengue incidences will be 14th or 15th in the country's list.

He said dengue cases in Odisha went up this year as the state has extended surveillance and testing. So far, 38,500 tests have been done as against 18,700 during the same period last year, he said.

"There is nothing to panic over the situation," Mishra said adding that despite the rising dengue cases the complication rate is less than five per cent and the fatality rate is less than one per cent.

Mishra said patients can be treated even at home. "We have made provisions for dengue sample collection and treatment at

At Capital Hospital

500 samples are being tested daily and 60-70 of them are showing positive results. Around 15 patients are being admitted to the hospital daily

Though we won't be able to further increase the number of beds in Capital Hospital, treatment can be provided in the 20 PHCs in Bhubaneswar

LAXMIDHAR SAHOO | CAPITAL HOSPITAL DIRECTOR

four community health centers (CHCs) in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) area. If any patient develops complications, the person will be shifted to the hospital," he said.

Laxmidhar Sahoo, the director of state-run Capital Hospital, said though there has been increase in number dengue cases this time, the situation is well under control.

"We are testing around 500 samples daily and only 60-70 of them are showing positive results," he said.

Sahoo said that around 15 patients are being admitted to the hospital daily. At present 62 diagnosed with dengue are undergoing treatment at the hospital, which is using folding beds to accommodate the patients.

Asked about special dengue wards, Sahoo said that the hospital authorities have made space in some of the rooms which re-

main closed. He said to deal with the rising dengue cases, a special testing centre will be opened for the patients at Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar from Tuesday. The decision has been taken to avoid crowding.

In order to reduce load on the Capital Hospital, patients are also being admitted to four up-graded PHCs in the peripheral area of BMC since Sunday. Testing facilities are also available there, he said.

"Though we won't be able to further increase the number of beds in Capital Hospital, treatment can be provided in the 20 PHCs in Bhubaneswar," he said, adding that it will augment the accommodating capacity to 70 beds.

Meanwhile, opposition parties have criticised Odisha government and accused it of failing to contain the spread of dengue across the state, particularly in BMC area.

BJP leader and spokesperson Dilip Mohanty claimed that over 20 dengue-positive patients have died in various hospitals of the state and alleged that the Odisha government's 'callous attitude and inefficiency' have led to rise in cases of the disease in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

"BMC and Cuttack Municipal Corporation's local self-governance has been waylaid and the government failed to address the situation. The Odisha government is hiding the death numbers," alleged BJP.

BJP district president of Bhubaneswar, Babu Singh, alleged that the BMC Mayor and commissioner have not worked for improving drainage and sanitation in the city.

Asked, BMC Mayor, Sulochana Das said that the dengue situation is of concern for everybody and sanitation drive has been intensified with other measures.

Urging all to undergo dengue test if they have fever, she stressed on their need to be cautious and keep their surroundings clean and ensure that there is no accumulation of water.

NEW SESSION

Plus III first year Commerce students at Rama Devi Women's University in Bhubaneswar attending their first lecture of the new academic session, Monday



DEFT HANDS: An artisan shapes clay idols of Lord Ganesh in Kumbhar Sahi area of Cuttack, Monday

PIC: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

ED files chargesheet against infra firm MD, directors

Central agency urges court to seize properties worth ₹21.19 crore of ARSS Infra

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet in a special court against the chief managing director and other directors of ARSS Infrastructure Projects Limited and its subsidiary companies, seeking their conviction in connection with a case registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, an official said, Monday.

The Central agency has requested the court to confiscate

₹21.19 crore worth properties of the infrastructure firms attached by it January 31 this year.

"ED has filed prosecution complaint under PMLA on August 5, 2023 against M/s. ARSS Damoh-Hirapur Tolls Pvt Ltd, M/s. ARSS Infrastructure Projects Ltd, M/s. Anil Contractors Pvt Ltd and its CMD, directors including Directors Subash Agarwal, Anil Agarwal, Soumendra Keshari Pattanaik, and Shiv Kumar Singla," an ED official said, Monday.

The ED launched an investigation under PMLA following

the registration of a bank fraud case and submission of chargesheet by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against ARSS Damoh-Hirapur Tolls Private Limited and others for cheating Central Bank of India here.

ARSS had reportedly availed a term loan of ₹56.29 crore from the local branch of Central Bank of India in Bhubaneswar to execute the contract for construction of Damoh-Hirapur road in Madhya Pradesh in 2011-2012. However, the firm failed to complete the work on time, prompt-

ing Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation Limited to terminate the agreement.

The authorities of the ARSS allegedly diverted the loan amount to other bank accounts of the firm including the cash credit loan account of ARSS Infrastructure in State Bank of India's commercial branch here.

"The said acts of M/s. ARSS-DHTPL, M/s. ARSSIPL and its Directors caused a wrongful loss of ₹22.42 crore to the bank after payment of ₹40 crore as OTS to the bank," added the ED official.

Brahmani bridge named after former Deputy Chief Minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday approved naming of the bridge constructed over Brahmani River at Kaniha after freedom fighter and former Deputy Chief Minister Pabitra Mohan Pradhan.

The bridge will be called 'Pabitra Mohan Setu'.

It is worth mentioning that during the visit of 5T Secretary VK Pandian to Angul, locals proposed to name the bridge after the former Deputy Chief Minister to preserve the memory of the great freedom fighter, late Pradhan.

The Chief Minister took this decision respecting the wishes of the people.

The bridge has been constructed at a cost of ₹45.79 crore.

Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, born February 8, 1908 in Poipal village, was a freedom fighter and was at the forefront of the Praja Mandal Movement in the princely states of Dhenkanal and Talcher. He organized the peasants in order to assert their land rights. He participated in the Quit India Movement (1942) and was arrested.

He fled from Talcher Jail and established a parallel government. A prize of ₹10,000 was announced by the colonial regime to catch him either dead or alive. He remained underground for five years till independence. He wrote an autobiography titled Mukti Pathe Sainika (A soldier on the path of liberation).

Pabitra Mohan Pradhan was an Executive Councillor for the princely state of Orissa, a member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly (1950-1970), four times a Minister in Orissa Cabinet and Deputy Chief Minister (1967-1970).



RAIN RAIN...: Motorists caught in a sudden downpour on a City road, Monday

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

One held for smuggling mangrove forest species

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, August 21: Kanika forest range officials arrested one person for his involvement in smuggling mangrove species.

A source said Monday that the forest personnel seized as many as 27,728 packets of Batera Lata (salacia prinoides) root and Garani (ceriops decandra) roots along with the pick up van, used for transporting the smuggled species. The weight of the root would be approximately 6 quintals, Ranger of Kanika forest range Manas Kumar Das said.

The arrested person, identified as Shankarsan Mandal of Krushnanagar village under Talachua Marine police station, has confessed before the forest personnel that he used to smuggle the mangrove species root from the Bhitarkanika national



park area. He used to collect these mangrove species roots from one Akabar Malla, of Vekta in Rangani GP under Talachua Marine police limit. Forest officials said Batera Lata root has medicinal values and it is used to make medicine for diabetes, asthma, joint pain, weight loss, and other ailments, but there is no good scientific evidence to support these claims.

Early research shows that drinking salacia tea with each meal might lower glycated hemoglobin (HbA1C) levels in people with type 2 diabetes. Other

research indicates that taking salacia with food for 6 weeks might reduce blood sugar and HbA1C levels in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Garani is a mangrove tree species, reputed for its folkloric uses in the treatment of gastrointestinal disorders, infection, snakebites, inflammation and cancer. The whole plant of Garani is traditionally used for treating wounds, hemorrhage, angina and diabetes. The barks are used for viral infection, the leaves and fruits for ulcer, hepatitis and the roots for pain.

Garani roots are also smuggled for selling it as sandalwood, after spraying sandal scents, Das said. Mandal was booked under the offences of smuggling forestry products and destroying the biodiversity of Bhitarkanika National Park.

Covid vaccines effective against severe cases in children

Vaccines are effective against severe cases of COVID-19 in children and adolescents, according to a review of studies.

However, the study published in the journal BMJ Paediatrics Open shows that with most children already infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus and building up a natural immunity, the additional benefit of vaccination in healthy children is minimal.

The team, led by researchers at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute in Australia, explored the challenges and considerations of COVID-19 vaccination, especially in low- and middle-income countries with high levels of community transmission and infection-derived immunity.

The review found that any roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries should also complement routine childhood vaccine programmes that have a greater impact on illness and death, including for measles, pneumonia and diarrhoeal disease.

The study shows that despite most children having been infected and severe infection could occur, deaths were extremely rare in children.

Globally, 16,100 COVID-19 deaths have been reported in those up to 19 years old, according to the researchers.

They highlight that although COVID-19 vaccinations in children were effective at the time they were tested, the benefits were lower in the current context



GLOBALLY, 16,100 COVID-19 DEATHS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THOSE UP TO 19 YEARS OLD

of high infection-derived immunity.

The study found that the extra gain was also much lower compared to other life-saving vaccines in low- and middle-income countries, where childhood deaths from other vaccine pre-

ventable diseases were considerably higher.

The review noted many countries have still not introduced proven lifesaving vaccines, including pneumococcal, rotavirus and human papillomavirus, into their immunisation schedules.

The resources required for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out in these countries posed a considerable challenge, it stated.

John Hart from Murdoch Children's Research Institute said although there was not strong evidence to support routine vaccination of all healthy children, it was a different for high-risk children, especially those with disabilities and certain underlying conditions.

"Given the very high prevalence of risk factors for severe COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries, vaccination against COVID-19 is an important consideration in all age groups, including children," he said.

However, decisions should be made considering the direct benefits to the individual child, not

broader benefits to the household or community related to transmission, particularly as the effectiveness of the vaccines against infection is temporary, the researchers said.

Professor Fiona Russell from Murdoch Children's said there was also a lack of public health data in low- and middle-income countries, which underscored the importance of ensuring equitable access to safe and effective vaccines for future epidemics before exposure to infection.

"In low- and middle-income countries, most people were infected by the time vaccines became available, highlighting the profound inequity in global vaccine distribution," she added.

Nod to 9 projects worth ₹873.57cr



POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, August 21: The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA), chaired by Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena, Monday approved nine projects worth ₹873.57 crore that would create employment opportunities for 2,516 persons in Odisha.

SNM Hotel and Resorts Private Limited's proposal to set up a hotel and resort in Chikiti area of Ganjam district got the SLSWCA approval. With an initial investment of ₹214.40 crore, the project would provide employment to at least 227 people. The SLSWCA approved the proposal of Vikram Private Limited to set up a 0.12 MTPA SMS and 0.1 MTPA TMT plant at Lahunipada in Sundargarh district with an investment of ₹100 crore. The steel-making unit, if grounded, would provide employment to at least 819 individuals, it was learnt.

In steel industry's ancillary sector, TRL Krosaki Refractories Limited's proposal for a 57,000 MT basic raw material grinding unit, 11,700 MT monolithic raw material grinding unit, 8,900 MT high alumina raw material grinding unit and 14,400 MT grog processing unit in Jharsuguda district with an initial investment of ₹100 crore also got the govern-

energy sector, Petronet LNG Limited's proposal to set up a compressed biogas and fermented organic manure plant with an annual capacity of 33,065 MT in Deogarh district got the SLSWCA go-ahead. With an initial investment of ₹85 crore, the unit would create employment opportunities for 53 persons.

In plastic sector, Indopet Polyplast Private Limited's proposal to set up a high-capacity manufacturing unit for food grade pet bottles, jars and pre-forms, with an annual capacity of 8,000 MT got the

Major projects

Companies	Projects	Investment in crore	Employment potential
SNM Hotel and Resorts Private Limited	Hotel and resort in Chikiti, Ganjam	₹214.40	2,516
Vikram Private Ltd	SMS and TMT plant at Lahunipada in Sundargarh	₹100	819
TRL Krosaki Refractories Ltd	Raw material and grinding units in Jharsuguda	₹100	150

ment's nod. The comprehensive project would provide jobs to around 150 persons. The SLSWCA approved Pearl Precision Products Private Limited's proposal for setting up a manufacturing unit for plastic faucet, water tank, pipes and fittings at Paradip Plastic Park in Jagatsinghpur district. With an investment of ₹100.74 crore, the unit would create employment opportunities for over 700 persons.

In the steel downstream domain, Saizar Enterprise Private Limited has got the state government's approval to set up a steel processing unit for HR and CR coil at Kalinga Nagar in Jajpur district. The unit that would come up with an investment of ₹89.90 crore would provide jobs to 250 people.

In chemical and renewable

state's nod. The unit that would come up in Khurda with an investment of ₹80 crore would provide jobs to 150 individuals.

In agro and food processing sector, Coastal Biotech Private Limited would set up a corn processing and corn starch manufacturing unit at Bamuni Industrial Estate in Nabarangpur district. The initiative that would come up with an initial investment of ₹53.08 crore will leverage the district's maize production capacity and create employment opportunities for 82 individuals. The SLSWCA approved Chosun Sarvesh Refractories Private Limited's proposal for a 14,400 MT Tap Hole Clay unit at Kuarmunda in Sundargarh. With an initial investment of ₹50.35 crore, the unit would create 85 jobs.



SCINTILLATING SHOW: Artists perform Odissi during a cultural programme organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Infosys Foundation in Bhubaneswar, Monday

5T Secy interacts with Khurda college students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: As per the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Secretary to CM (5T) VK Pandian interacted with the college students of Khurda district Monday. He informed them about Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's approval for inclusion of 70 higher secondary schools and 38 degree colleges of the district in 5T transformation programme at a cost of ₹66.75 crore.

He conveyed the vision of Chief Minister for creating a new Odisha and efforts towards



transformation of the state. He emphasised that the students will be the main force behind

creation of a "Nua Odisha". The 5T Secretary motivated the students to aim high and work hard

to achieve the desired goals. He assured the students of all kinds of government support for their studies. He encouraged them to focus on personality development. Stating that physical fitness and mental strength are key parameters of success, Pandian asked them to do exercise for at least 30 min a day and meditation for 15 min every day. Students from all government and aided colleges in Khurda attended the programme. They were quite motivated by the speech and promised Pandian that they will study well and make Odisha proud with their achievements.

Odisha EMRS students to meet Prez Murmu

New Delhi: Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) students of six states, including Odisha, will visit the Rashtrapati Bhavan and meet President Droupadi Murmu as part of an educational tour organized by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs & NESTS, Tuesday. According to Ministry of Tribal Affairs, around 500 Eklavya Model Residential School students from Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh shall also participate in a conference at Dr Ambedkar International Centre here. The Ministry informed that the objective of the conference is to provide students a platform for meaningful interaction to exchange ideas, insights and experiences on matters related to education, career, and scholarship schemes.

23.5L farmers enrolled under PMFBY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Enrolment under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in the state has gone up from about 11 lakh in the previous year to 23.50 lakh in the current Kharif season.

The crop insurance scheme, which is in operation in the state since 2016 Kharif season, is being implemented through insurance companies (ICs) selected once in every three years on the basis of competitive bidding on the rate of premium being quoted by them. Under PMFBY, a farmer has to pay a premium for getting enrolled and the excess of



premium over and above the farmers' premium is subsidised on 50:50 basis between the Union and state governments.

For Kharif season, farmers' share of premium for food grains (cereals, pulses and oilseeds) is fixed at 2 per cent of the sum insured (SI) and for other commercial crops it is fixed at 5 per

cent of SI. For Rabi season, the farmers' share of premium for food grain crops is fixed at 1.5 per cent of SI and for other commercial crops it is 5 per cent of SI.

One of the major drawbacks of the scheme, however, is the low coverage of farmers. In Odisha out of the 50 lakh agricultural households, only about 10 lakh

farmers usually get enrolled and the area of coverage has also not been encouraging. Out of the 45 lakh hectares of cultivated land, only about 10 lakh hectares were being insured.

From 2023 Kharif season, however, the state Cooperation department, under the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, took a crucial decision to bear the farmers' share of premium up to 2 hectares making enrolment under the scheme free. The rationale behind this decision is small and marginal farmers who form a considerable percentage of the total farming community were unable to bear the burden of the premium.

Inwec women's business delegation to visit UK



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: A delegation of seven women entrepreneurs from Odisha led by Inwec National Chairperson Sukirti Patnaik will travel to the United Kingdom to explore business opportunities in UK through market access and linkages for goods and services produced in Odisha.

The delegation will meet British entrepreneurs and investors interested in opportunities in Odisha. The members of the delegation will reach UK August 25 and will be there for a period of 7 to 14 days.

The team will also attend the 44th annual convention of Odisha Society of UK (OSUK) at Harrow August 26 and 27 and connect with entrepreneurs from the Odia diaspora.

The women's delegation will also pitch the various governmental programs, the transformative landscape through the

new industrial policy and skill programs, and opportunities for investment in various fields across Odisha.

In a press conference, Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare (OB & OCWW) Board chairperson Shreemayee Mishra shared the government's vision for transforming Odisha and the importance of women entrepreneurs and women led businesses.

Industries Department Additional Secretary Subhendra Kumar Nayak said the delegation will inspire and set a precedent for many more women entrepreneurs to follow.

OSUK General Secretary Siba Ranjan Biswal shared OSUK's journey and the various social engagements undertaken by the organisation.

"This will open a new chapter in the development of the state and inspire many women to pursue their dreams," said Sukirti Patnaik.

Odisha Cong leaders miffed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 21: With resentment brewing among Odisha Congress leaders as only one person from the state has been included in the newly constituted Congress Working Committee (CWC), OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak Monday said he would draw the attention of the AICC in this regard.

Pattanayak said, "It would have been better if two to three leaders from Odisha would have been included in the CWC. They may extend the CWC and I will urge the party high command to include more members from Odisha."

The OPCC president, however, said only one leader Bhakta Das, who is an AICC general secretary in-charge of Mizoram, Manipur and Bihar, has been included in the CWC list. "We have con-



gratulated Das for his inclusion in the CWC," Pattanayak said.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge Sunday constituted the new Congress Working Committee taking a total of 39 leaders. However, there was "none" from Odisha, alleged senior Congress MLA Suresh Routray.

Stating that it was an "injustice" meted out to the Congress leaders in Odisha, Routray said

he would write a letter to Kharge and Sonia Gandhi with a request to include some leaders from the state.

Former OPCC president Niranjana Patnaik said that the AICC has picked up the leaders, keeping in view the importance of the state and the individual persons.

"They might have not considered anyone from Odisha suitable for the CWC," he said.

Charges framed against Panigrahy, Akash Pathak

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 21: A local court here Monday framed charges against Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, former IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak's son Akash Pathak and Panigrahy's close aide V Sarveswar Rao in connection with a case related to the duping of job aspirants through impersonation and forgery.

Based on the complaint filed by Trilochan Mohanty, deputy general manager (Ethics) of Tata Motors Ltd, Jamshedpur, the Crime Branch has registered a case (26/20) against Akash for allegedly committing forgery impersonating himself as the MD (I/c), Passenger Division of Tata Motors Ltd and collecting money

from job aspirants.

"The accused trio entered into a criminal conspiracy and created forged electronic records & documents in the form of e-mails and visiting cards projecting accused Akash Kumar Pathak as MD (I/c) Tata Motors. They collected huge amount of money from innocent job aspirants on the pretext of providing job in TATA Motors and have committed the offence under Sections 419, 420, 467, 468, 469, 471, 120-B of the IPC, and Section 66-C and 66-D of Information Technology Act-2000," a CB statement said.

Panigrahy was arrested December 3, 2020 while CB arrested his associate V Sarveswar Rao December 17 a few days later.

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Man sacrifices wife for 'special' powers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, August 21: In a shocking incident, a man has killed his wife as human sacrifice while allegedly performing rituals to attain special powers in witchcraft at Chamarapada village under this police limits in Bolangir district.

call his wife into the room during the rituals.

When neighbours did not see Janaki for the last few days and found a foul smell coming from the house they suspected something amiss. The locals then informed other members of Makaru's family living in the same village.

Later on, information was sent to Janaki's family. When they arrived they found Janaki's body being taken to the crematorium. A bitter argument broke out between the members of the two families after which two of Janaki's brothers lodged a police complaint.



PERILOUS RIDE: People travel perilously in a boat loaded with two-wheelers on Kharinasi river to reach Batighara panchayat in Kendrapara district due to delay in construction of a bridge

Fertilizer woes plague Jajpur farmers

RETAILERS HAVE A FIELD DAY AS PACS FAIL TO COME TO THE RESCUE OF FARMERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 21: Decline in supply of fertilizers and its rampant black marketing has hit the farmers hard in this district. This development comes at a time when farmers are preparing for cultivation of various crops after the receding of floodwaters.



However, 62 PACS in this district have lifted only 1829.38 MT of fertilizers between April 1 and August 18.

'Markfed' has supplied 820.30 MT of urea, the demand for which is the highest. Similarly, 750.05 MT of DAP fertilizer, 127.5 MT of MOP, 36 MT of NPKS, 90.5 MT of CIL 28-28 and five metric tonne of IFFCO fertilizers have been supplied.

Farmers pointed out that the PACS are not procuring the required amount of fertilizers as they do not have proper storage facilities. As a result they have to shell out additional money while buying fertilizer packets from retailers.

A probe revealed that sale of fertilizers from the PACS at Jakhpura, Ranipada,

Dudhujhari, Prathamakhandi, Singhpur, Nathuabara, Odisho, Brahmaparada, Mugupal, Samantapur, Pahanga, Anaka, Saudia, Charinangala and Raipur have been quite meagre.

Farmers alleged that the Agriculture department in the district has failed to come to their help. Farmers Gopinath Biswal of Madhapur village and Subhash Rout of Jaleswar village alleged that the government approved rate of a 50kg packet of Nagarjun fertilizer is ₹ 279 but they have to cough up more than ₹370 for the same.

When contacted, ARCS Sarat Chandra Mallick said they have failed to procure the required quota of fertiliser due to lack of storage facilities. However, efforts are being made to stop black marketing of fertilizers, he added.

Woman, son found hanging in house; suicide suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 21: A woman and her son were found dead in a house at Tangarpali village under Ainthapali police limits in this town, officials said Monday. The deceased persons were identified as Jyotshnarani Das, 55, and her son Sudhir Panda, 35, both residents of the same village.

Preliminary inquiries indicated that constant bickering among the family members is the main reason behind the unnatural death of the woman and her son. Since the death of her youngest son, Jyotshnarani was suffering from acute bouts of depression. The youngest son had died by suicide after the family members refused his proposal to marry a girl from a different caste.

The suicides came to the fore after the maid who had come to work in the house Monday, spotted the duo hanging from the ceiling and informed neighbours. They detected a foul smell emanating from the house and informed the police.

Sarpanch kills self

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rupsa, August 21: A sarpanch of Balasore district died by suicide, police said Monday. The deceased was identified as Niranjan Dhal, 48, sarpanch of Kuradiha panchayat under Sadar block.

Police said that Dhal was suffering from acute depression for quite some time now and may be that was the reason why he took the drastic step. A case of unnatural death has been registered and the body sent for post-mortem.

After the news of Dhal's demise spread, Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi, former MLA Jiban Pradip Dash, MLA Swarup Das, BJP leader Manas Dutta and people from various walks of life visited his residence and paid tributes to the departed soul.

Man held while smuggling ganja

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 21: Officials of the Excise department here arrested Monday a person while he was smuggling 'ganja' brought from Kandhamal. It should be stated here that the GRP had Sunday seized at Rajgangpur 33 kilograms of cannabis valued at over ₹3,00,000.



brought cannabis to Rourkela. We are aware that Kanhara knows the topography of this city very well."

Mohanty also said more than one person is involved in the illegal ganja trade. "It is not possible for a single person to bring such a huge amount of contraband. We are interrogating Kanhara to find out about the involvement of others," Mohanty stated.

Rourkela continues to be a hotbed of transition or selling point of cannabis. Earlier, on many occasions the police and the Excise department found the contraband being smuggled into this city before being sent to other states.

Demand for ILS at Rourkela airport grows

ODISHA GOVERNMENT READY TO BEAR INSTALLATION COST OF ₹6 CRORE

POST NEWS NETWORK



to take up this issue," said Koyal. Koyal's plea was supported by former president of RCCI, Binod Sharma. "The installation of ILS is a must for Rourkela airport to be viable and successful in the long run.

The demand gathered momentum once the airport at Jharsuguda started operations. Passenger response has been good since the airport here started functioning.

Professor SK Biswal, a teacher at a private business school here pointed out that this city must have connectivity to various parts of India. "Rourkela has the potential for multiple flight connectivity. It should be utilised," asserted Biswal.

Student dies as van rams bike

Jharabandha: A student of Jharabandha Junior College in Bargarh district was killed Monday in a road accident when he was returning home after appearing in an examination. The deceased was identified as Rohit, the only son of Khageswar Majhi of Durgurichadha village under this police limit.

Rourkela, August 17: The demand for upgrading the Rourkela airport with modern facilities is gaining momentum day by day. The stakeholders now want that the airport should have facilities like instrument landing system (ILS) to handle modern and bigger aircraft.

Sunil Koyal, the incumbent president of Rourkela Chamber of Commerce demanded that the airport must be modernised. "We need a modern airport for the city or else Rourkela will lag behind. I appeal to the Odisha Aviation Minister and also Union Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

General secretary of Paschimanchal Sanskritika Parishad (PSP), Bimal Bisi informed Monday that he has been pursuing the installation of an ILS for quite some time now. "I am continuously writing on this issue to the Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia. Hopefully things will happen soon," he said.

Sources said the ILS system will be installed either in October or November at a cost of rupees six crore. The cost of maintenance would be approximately rupees one crore per annum, they added. The sources also informed that the Odisha government has agreed to bear the entire installation cost.

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FOCUS HUMAN RIGHTS

CONSERVATIVES' CONTEMPT



Indeed, the UK's alignment with 'illiberal democracies' such as Poland, Hungary, and Turkey on any issue relating to human rights betrays its historical record and reputation

This wholesale Conservative attack on the ECHR reflects the view that UK sovereignty must be unlimited, unrestricted, and accountable to no one, especially not a European court. Even after Brexit, apparently, the UK does not enjoy enough "independence" to privilege the "us," who deserve basic rights, over the "them," who do not. It is a prejudice that is out of touch with any concept of human rights and unsuited to our interconnected world, in which each country's independence is qualified by all countries' interdependence, and where prosperity, to be sustained, must be shared.

For the time being, under Attorney General Victoria Prentis, the UK may refrain from choosing non-compliance with interim European Court judgments. But the mere fact that the UK statute book now includes a provision allowing for defiance of the Court's rulings undermines the entire ECHR system.

By weakening the Court's authority to interpret the Convention and turning its judgements into political footballs, the UK is setting a precedent that other countries will invariably follow. Indeed, the UK's alignment with "illiberal democracies" such as Poland, Hungary, and Turkey on any issue relating to human rights betrays its historical record and reputation. Should the UK leave the ECHR altogether, it would become an international outlier, alongside Russia and Belarus.

Anyone who stands for the advancement and protection of human rights must keep this in mind, knowing that rights are on the agenda when the next UK election comes. History and a sense of who we are should convince the British people not to empower leaders who show such contempt for human rights.

The writer is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Gordon Brown

SHOULD THE UK LEAVE THE ECHR ALTOGETHER, IT WOULD BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLIER, ALONGSIDE RUSSIA AND BELARUS

For centuries, Britain has prided itself on being a bastion of liberty and the rule of law. British leaders have talked in glowing terms of the "golden thread" that connects the Magna Carta of 1215 and the Bill of Rights of 1689 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of 1950 and the Human Rights Act of 1998. Thus, the UK's human-rights record has been central to successive governments' efforts to exercise soft power globally.

No one has boasted more about Britain's global leadership in human rights – and its rule-of-law credentials more broadly – than the five Conservative PMs who have held office since the 2016 Brexit vote. Yet, in practice, these very ministers have been systematically undermining the rule of law, and the "law and order" party is now contemplating abandoning the ECHR.

According to The Telegraph, a newspaper close to the Conservative Party, more than one-third of the cabinet – at least eight ministers – along with other senior Tories, are pushing PM Rishi Sunak to place a commitment to withdraw from the ECHR at the center of the coming election campaign. Their justification is that judges at the European Court of Human Rights are blocking the deportation of illegal migrants from the UK to Rwanda, which has agreed to accept them (for a hefty price).

Renouncing the Convention is no idle threat. Already, the government has positioned itself to defy the Court. With the just-passed Illegal Migration Act, the government has – for the first time since ECHR was concluded – claimed the power not to comply with the Court's "interim measures." In other words, the UK government can now ignore any European order to stop flights of migrants to Rwanda. This provision directly breaches the UK's obligations under ECHR. The Illegal Migration Act is

the latest development in a downward spiral that has undermined basic rights. The government now boasts it is housing asylum-seekers in inferior accommodation, including massive barges more reminiscent of the prison ships Britain used in the nineteenth century than modern amenities.

The Act also strips asylum-seekers of their right to remain in the UK while their application is considered, and provides for deportation of applicants before any effort is made to determine whether someone is, say, a victim of modern slavery. The UNHCR has condemned the legislation, stating that it "effectively extinguishes the right of refugees to be recognized and protected in the UK."

These actions follow prime ministerial rulings that renounced the government's explicit duty, enshrined in the ministerial code, to comply with international law. Government lawyers are now operating under unprecedented new guidance to proceed with drafting legislation that dismisses international conventions, even if there is a high chance of successful legal challenge.

SPECTRUM SELF-HELP

From nothing to reasonably good

Malcolm Gladwell in his book "Outliers" talks about 10,000 hours of deliberate practice which can take an individual to a level of mastery in a particular skill or craft. Simply put, this requires committed practice for 4 hours a day for almost 7 years! He cites the examples of the Beatles and Bill Gates. Other exponents of this type of intense and countless hours of practice are Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, AR Rahaman to name a few.

On the other hand, there can be situations where we have zero knowledge of something and we want to learn that skill fast to become reasonably good at it. Possessing some skills rather than none is always better. It is like owning another asset in your armoury. But the long arduous route might be daunting and can prevent us from picking up anything new to learn. There is a fear that we will not be able to take out so much time, say 3 to 4 hours a day for such a long duration, which acts as a deterrent. On the contrary, committing 40 minutes a day for a month seems doable and psychologically achievable.

Josh Kaufman suggests in his book "The First 20 Hours: How

to Learn Anything Fast" the approach to rapid skill acquisition. He talks of the "20 Hour Rule" which will elevate us to a level of becoming reasonably good from knowing nothing, that too at quick pace. It can be like learning a guitar, cooking, computer skills or practically anything.

He divides the first 20 hours into 5 parts.

Step One: Set specific goals with the end in mind. We will take an example of cooking to keep it relatable and simple. Start with what exactly you want to learn and where you want to reach after 20 hours of practice. Say, you want to be good at preparing three breakfast dishes - idli, dosa and omelette (I-DO). Rather than trying to learn several cuisines it is better to start small and set the right goals for the 20-hour practice. You should be able to visualise what should success look like after the end of 20 hours.

Step Two: Deconstruction. After you have set the specific goal, the next step is deconstructing it or breaking it down to manageable learning tasks. Just to bring back the cooking example, the first 5-6 sessions can be spent on how to make a good batter for idli or dosa. Chunking

the complex tasks into smaller activities makes it easy and less stressful. Deliberate practice of that specific skill at that moment will be the key stepping stone to the next level of accomplishment.

Step Three: Research. Once you have deconstructed the key sub-skill required to make good idlis, step back and check what could have been done better, how it compares to the idlis made by your mother. This is creative procrastination but Josh cautions not to get stuck on this step. Move on and continue to go to the next steps. Make early mistakes to improve quickly.

Step Four: Removing barriers to practice. The next step to remember is that you should have minimum barriers to practice or create high barriers for distractions. This means, if you want to practice cooking I-DO then keep utensils, ingredients ready and handy. The environment must be an enabler to practice at your own will, keeping distractions to the minimum. **Step Five:** Pre-commit to 20 hours practice. This brings to the last and the most important step – committing 20 hours of deliberate and focussed practice either

for 40 minutes for a month or 20 minutes for 2 months, depending upon the time we can spare. This step is critical as it prepares us psychologically to commit to a time schedule and be on top of it. The first few hours can be frustrating but when we know what success will look like post completion of 20 hours, it powers us to continue. Once we reach a level of proficiency, one can always build on that.

Josh warns that one of the most common mistakes to avoid is setting unrealistic expectations of where you want to reach after the 20-hour practice. One should be clear on what would be the acceptable level of performance after the end of that period. The basic difference between 10,000 hours and 20-hour rule is achieving mastery or being proficient in that skill. Having a skill rather than none is always good from a capability standpoint, but it depends on talent, resources, goals, time frame for each. When it comes to skill acquisition or mastery, one size does not fit all. Finally, the choice is (y)ours!

The writer is a business consultant & a certified NLP Practitioner.

“If you can always smile at life, life will always smile at you.”

THE MOTHER



Hope for Left

Like the rest of the free world, Ecuadorian voters too seem to be a confused lot. They seem to be clueless about how to deal with drug cartels wreaking havoc with the country gunning down their opponents, corruption by politicians and seemingly endless cycle of violence, robberies and kidnappings. The country's economy is in shambles compounded as it is by organised crimes and the COVID-19 pandemic. This is clear from the inconclusive results of the presidential election announced August 20. The elections were held in the backdrop of assassination in broad daylight of a presidential candidate and journalist-turned-politician Fernando Villavicencio on August 9 and a spate of killings of other politicians in the past few months.

The results showed Ecuador is once again ready to repose its trust in the Left rather than in conservatives, business tycoons or individuals pledging to root out corruption and mafia syndicates. Left-wing politician Luisa González is leading, securing 33 per cent votes against her close rival and businessman Daniel Noboa's tally of 24 per cent. The two have emerged winners of the first round beating six rivals. González is a camp follower of former Leftist President Rafael Correa. She has promised to revive her mentor's social programmes. It is interesting that though Ecuadorians have rallied behind González, they have demonstrated clear reservation for the Left candidate because of alleged corruption by former President Correa that had forced him to flee the country even after having implemented social welfare schemes. This has pitted González against the son of one of the country's richest men, Noboa, in a runoff presidential vote to be held in October. According to Ecuador's electoral rules, if no candidate gets more than 50 per cent of the vote, or 40 per cent with a 10-point lead, a runoff election will be held.

The voting pattern indicates that the people of Ecuador are not convinced any individual without solid organisational backing or huge monetary support can take on the drug cartels and their benefactors in the political establishments. This is why fellow investigative journalist Christian Zurita, replacing the crusading anti-corruption candidate Fernando Villavicencio, who had fallen to assassins' bullets, managed to secure only 16 per cent votes.

On the other hand, González, a virtual unknown before the election, is seen as the natural successor to Correa, the Leftist, populist President who governed the country from 2007 to 2017. As the candidate for the Revolución Ciudadana party, she had said Correa would be her adviser if she was elected. Correa lives in exile in Belgium and was sentenced to eight years in prison for corruption in 2020 in absentia. The election was necessitated by the decision of the current President Guillermo Lasso to dissolve the national assembly and call early elections so as to avoid impeachment for his own alleged corruption.

The extent to which the electoral process of Ecuador has been vitiated can be gauged from the fact that hackers were in operation from diverse countries to prevent electronic voting. Under Ecuador's laws exercising franchise is mandatory for all citizens who will face punishment for not voting. The president of the national electoral council, Diana Atamaint said cyber-attacks targeting the electronic voting system were engineered from countries such as Russia, Ukraine, China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. This geographical reach clearly indicates the power and influence of the drug cartels that have virtually taken over most of Central and South America. Indians participating in these hackings should ring an alarm bell for the government.

The unprecedented attacks also show to what extent drug cartels can go to manipulate the electoral outcome of Ecuador. The country was a haven of peace even till 2017, though geographically it is wedged between Colombia and Peru, two of the world's biggest producers of cocaine.

A deadly escalation of violence in recent years, fuelled by a cocaine boom in the region, has seen criminal gangs alter the landscape in Ecuador as they engage in high-level graft, extort businesses, overrun prisons, and murder anyone who gets in their way. The violence and lack of economic prospects have led to many Ecuadorians opting to leave the country – some to its neighbours, others to the United States. Over half of Ecuador's workforce is in the informal economy, meaning that millions of people do not have a contract and benefit packages to rely on in hard times.

Though the Left candidate has been able to capture the imagination of over one-third of the populace, the new voice of Noboa may spring surprises in the October runoff poll as he represents an electorate looking for a new political presence with a good academic background. Undoubtedly, education brings great advantages for those who wish to rule but that in itself may not complete the circle in strife torn countries like Ecuador or Syria.

WISDOM CORNER

“It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform.” ROY T. BENNETT

“Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a soul?” JOHN KEATS

“Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but - I hope - into a better shape.” CHARLES DICKENS

WORDSWORTH

Mooch

A mooch is similar to a freerider; a person who uses another's belongings or services without paying. However, that's a common American sense, as in Cab Calloway's famous song about Minnie the Moocher ("Folks, now here's the story 'bout Minnie the Moocher, She was a red-hot hootchie-cootcher"). There are several others. For example, the one that comes to mind at once for me, the most common British or Australian one, is the idea of loitering about in a bored or listless way: "He did nothing but mooch about the house, doing nothing and getting in the way". It's actually a most interesting word, one which has been around on the margins of the language since the fifteenth century with a set of meanings, none of them pleasant. In its earliest days, to mooch meant to pretend poverty or act the miser. That may come from an even earlier word, mitch, which by then had been in existence for a couple of centuries with a similar meaning. The latter is believed to derive from the Old French muchier or mucier, which meant to hide, or more pejoratively, to skulk or lurk. Both mitch and mooch survived in several senses in local dialects in Britain for centuries, with the latter becoming by far the better known. Mooch could variously mean to play truant (in particular to pick blackberries, for some unknown reason), to "loaf, skulk, sneak, or loiter" as the OED puts it, or to steal or pilfer. In the 1850s, it took on the sense you mention – to sponge on others, to borrow money or cadge things, or to slip away and let others pay for your entertainment. This is clearly where the modern American sense that you quote comes from. But it has had other senses in North America, among them to troll for fish, especially on the West Coast. In the 1920s, it was a slang term among gamblers or on fairgrounds for a sucker or easy mark. In the 1940s-50s, the noun could also refer to a drug addict, so to be on the mooch was to be addicted and a mooch pusher was a drug dealer.



Shivaji Mohinta

WHEN IT COMES TO SKILL ACQUISITION OR MASTERY, ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

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

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Reinforcing unity

Sir, This refers to "Kharge forms new CWC," **OrissaPOST**, August 21. AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge has the unenviable task of exercising his authority in the formation of CWC, while three members of the Gandhi family – Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka – remain active, but he appears to be up to it. The list reflects the party's keen attention to the upcoming Assembly elections in the heartland. Chhattisgarh Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, an influential OBC leader, is expected to play a crucial role. In Rajasthan, while Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is given a free hand to lead the charge, the induction of his challenger Sachin Pilot and tribal leader Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya to the CWC is expected to reinforce party unity. The party has tried to reassure discontented social groups and assuage rebellious leaders in various states, and the constitution of the new body is largely representative of the geographical and social expanse of India. Though some disenchantment might surface in the days ahead, the new CWC reflects both imagination and compromise.

N Sadasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Madras Day

Sir, August 22 is observed as "Madras Day" to commemorate the founding of the historic city. This year, the day marks the city's 384th birth anniversary. A stretch of no-man's land in 1639, the great city was rechristened as Chennai in 1998, and it is now a major industrial, business and cultural metropolis. The city has several "firsts" to its credit. It was in Madras that virtually everything in modern India began - the first municipality, the first engineering college - Guindy Engineering College, the first shopping mall - Spencer's, the first cricket club, the first big library - Connemara, and the first major book store - Higginbothams. American Magazine Forbes has credited Chennai as one of the top three Indian cities that have made it to the list of the world's fastest growing cities. In 2015, when floods ravaged Chennai, the people of the city showed to the rest of the world what humanity and solidarity are all about. Cutting across caste and creed, and rich and poor, they rallied around and helped each other in so many ways. Perhaps, Chennai is the only city in the entire world where everyone claims it as not "mine," but proudly "ours."

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Assam seeks views on law to ban polygamy Ties with Cong: Akhilesh ready to 'walk extra mile'

ACCORDING TO A STATE GOVERNMENT-FORMED PANEL, THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS COMPETENT TO ENACT A LAW TO BAN THE MARITAL PRACTICE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, August 21: The Assam government has sought public opinion on a proposed law to end polygamy in the state, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Monday.

Sharing a government public notice on 'X', formerly Twitter, Sarma appealed to the people to send their suggestions on the proposed law to ban polygamy in Assam.

The notice published by the Principal Secretary of the Home and Political Department requested the people to send their opinion by August 30 through email or by post.

It mentioned that the Assam government had formed an expert committee to study the legislative competence of the Assembly to enact a law banning polygamy, and the report stated that the state legislature is competent to enact a law to ban the marital practice.

Sharing the executive summary of the report, the public notice stated that marriage falls under the Concurrent List, enabling both the Centre and states to pass laws on it.

"The Doctrine of Repugnancy (Article 254) stipulates that if a state legislation contradicts a central legislation, the state law will be overridden unless it received the prior assent of the President of India," it added.

Quoting the report, the notice mentioned that freedom of conscience and the right to prac-



The Opposition parties have slammed the decision as diversionary and communal, especially at a time when suggestions on UCC are being received by the Law Commission

...tice religion under Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution are "not absolute and are subject to public order, morality, health and legislative provisions for social welfare and reform."

The courts have clarified that religious practices must be essential and integral to the religion to receive protection, it added.

"With respect to Islam, the

courts have held that having more than one wife is not an essential part of the religion. Legislation limiting the number of wives does not interfere with the right to practice religion and is within the scope of 'social welfare and reform'. Hence, laws favouring monogamy do not violate Article 25," said the notice, which referred to the expert committee's report.

"Considering these principles, the State of Assam would have the legislative competence to enact a state legislature to end polygamy," it added.

August 6, the expert committee formed by the Assam government to examine the legislative competence of the state legislature to enact a law to end polygamy had submitted its report to the Chief Minister, who immediately announced that a legislation on the subject will

be introduced within this financial year.

He had also claimed the committee unanimously agreed that the state can frame its own laws to end polygamy. Hoisting the National Flag on the occasion of 77th Independence Day August 15, Sarma in his official address said that a 'strict act' will be brought soon to end polygamy in Assam.

May 12, Sarma had announced the formation of the four-member expert committee headed by Justice (Retd) Rumi Kumari Phukan.

Besides Phukan, the other members of the committee are the state's Advocate General Devajit Saikia, Senior Additional Advocate General Nalin Kohli and senior Advocate Nekibur Zaman.

It was tasked to scrutinise the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, 1937 along with Article 25 of the Constitution in relation to the Directive Principles of State Policy for a Uniform Civil Code.

July 13, Sarma had said the Assam government conveyed to the authorities concerned that it was in support of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and wanted to ban polygamy immediately in the state.

July 6, Khabri had issued a statement in Lucknow saying that Congress workers in the state were open to alliance with any party but SP in the 2024 polls.

The SP leadership took exception to such a strong statement by the then UPCC chief and that, too, days before the Opposition alliance was to get together in Bangalore for their

The SP chief has so far been maintaining a studied silence on his association with the Congress, giving rise to speculations about the fate of INDIA alliance in Uttar Pradesh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 21: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has said that he is ready to walk an extra mile when it comes to seat sharing with the Congress because his main concern is to defeat the BJP.

Akhilesh, so far, has been maintaining a studied silence on his relationship with the Congress, giving rise to speculations about the fate of INDIA alliance in Uttar Pradesh.

Former UPCC chief Brijlal Khabri's statements that party cadres in the state were not in favour of alliance with SP, further strained the relationship.

July 6, Khabri had issued a statement in Lucknow saying that Congress workers in the state were open to alliance with any party but SP in the 2024 polls.

The SP leadership took exception to such a strong statement by the then UPCC chief and that, too, days before the Opposition alliance was to get together in Bangalore for their



second meeting July 19.

Thereafter the SP went silent on alliance with the Congress in UP for the 2024 polls. SP's displeasure over Khabri's statement was apparently noticed by the Congress leadership in Delhi.

Finally, August 17, Khabri was removed from the post of UPCC chief after a short stint of 10 months. He was replaced by party's regional president Ajay Rai.

The development comes days before the Opposition alliance is all set to meet again, this time in Mumbai August 31 where SP and Congress are expected to discuss the final seat-sharing formula in the state for the 2024 polls.

On his past experience of SP's alliance with the Congress in 2016 assembly polls and with the BSP in 2019 Lok Sabha elec-

tions, Akhilesh Yadav said that both the alliances were a great learning experience.

"I have always entered into an alliance to defeat the BJP as the prime objective. Samajwadi Party has always decided on the seat-sharing formula with a big heart," he said.

"The problem with the Congress is that most of its ticket seekers from UP, like Jitin Prasad (Dhaurahra), RPN Singh (Kushinagar), Imran Masood (Saharanpur), Ratna Singh (Pratapgarh) and Harendra Malik (Muzaffarnagar) are no longer with the Congress while its leaders in Kanpur and Unnao are no longer active in politics. In such a scenario, the Congress is not in a position to drive a hard bargain," said a party leader.

Taj City Metro project faces public protests



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, August 21: Even as the tunneling operation has picked up momentum in the vicinity of the Agra Fort, the Taj City Metro rail project has been hit by an unexpected controversy.

These last few weeks have seen a series of protests from interest groups that want the Metro to go underground on the lifeline of the city, the Mahatma Gandhi Road. The existing plan includes an overhead Metro line on pillars.

The owners of the commercial establishments, shops, and showrooms, have been agitating to demand change in the plan, as they fear that once work starts on the MG Road stretch, commercial activities would be badly affected and there would be permanent traffic jams.

At a public rally held two days ago at the Shaheed Smarak, the protesters voiced their concern and demanded urgent action to modify the plan suitably. A BJP legislator extended support to the movement, while nine other MLAs and two MPs have chosen not to join the public outcry.

The two-phased 29.6 km long Metro rail network project has picked up steam and is all set to become operational in early 2024, ahead of the target date, definitely before the Lok Sabha polls.

Three stations on the Taj Mahal Eastern Gate to Shah Jahan Park roundabout are ready. Tunneling work at two different sites is continuing at a brisk pace. The traction and electrical work for the six km priority corridor from Jama Masjid to Taj East Gate is progressing toward completion.

Officials said a number of new features have been added and the trial run on the three-kilometer stretch has been successfully completed. Friday, it

A BJP legislator has extended support to the movement, while nine other MLAs and two MPs have chosen not to join the public outcry

set a unique benchmark by installing the roof slab for its 132 kv receiving substation at ISBT through the precast method, which reduces the commissioning time by 30 days.

UPMRC officials said they were committed to giving the people of Agra a world-class metro rail system within the set timeline.

But the shopkeepers are fuming fire and brimstone and look hell-bent to stall the project if the Metro does not go underground.

Shishir Bhagat, one of the campaigners for the underground rail line, says: "Most schools are located on the MG Road, the government offices including the district headquarters plus the courts and hospitals are along the MG Road. Imagine the chaos there will be once work starts on the overhead line. For a year the whole city would be in a state of mess or paralysis because there is hardly any open space on the MG road."

Delegations of business leaders have met state ministers in Lucknow and also central ministers in Delhi, but so far there has been no indication of any review.

The local officials of the Metro rail deny any change in the plan. A review at this stage is not feasible. Costs could escalate and there would be avoidable delay and uncertainty, according to some social activists who wonder why the protesters woke up so late.

Midday meals in UP schools to now have a millet flavour

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 21: Students of government schools in Uttar Pradesh will now enjoy a millet dish in their midday meals.

Students will be served 'bajre ki khichdi' in the mid-day meals (MDM) on Fridays. The dish will be accompanied with seasonal vegetables and moong dal. The move is being planned to ensure better nutrition to school kids.

A government order issued by special secretary, basic education, Avadesh Tiwari to all district magistrates regarding changes in MDM menu, stated that pulses and vegetables will now be provided to children every day.

The year 2023 has been designated as the 'International Year of Millets' after a proposal for the same was brought forward by the government of India and endorsed by members of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) governing bodies, as well as by the 75th session of the UN General Assembly.

UP's Mid Day Meal Authority, responsible for providing mid-day meals in government and aided schools from class 1 to 8, has proposed to the Union government that over 1.9 crore students in 1.43 lakh schools across the



state be served a millet-based meal.

For this, the MDM Authority needs to procure an estimated 62,000 tonnes of millet. "We have already asked the Centre to provide millets. Till the procurement is done, students will be served wheat and rice-based dishes like earlier," said an official.

The MDM menu shared by Tiwari to all district magistrates mentions chapati, along with seasonal vegetables, including soybean and one seasonal fruit on Mondays, rice along with vegetable and dal on Tuesdays and

COMPARED TO STAPLE GRAINS LIKE RICE OR WHEAT, MILLET HAS BETTER NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Saturdays, rice accompanied by soybean and seasonal vegetables on Wednesdays and Fridays, chapatis, dal and vegetables on Thursdays. On Fridays, bajre ki khichdi including vegetables, and moong dal will be served.

Compared to staple grains like rice or wheat, millet has better nutritional value. "They are nutrient-dense and making them a part of regular meals can improve malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency among the masses, especially in children," said an MDM official.

Assam govt staff to protest against NPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, August 21: Assam government employees will stage a two-day protest from Tuesday demanding re-introduction of the old pension scheme (OPS) and threatened to intensify their agitation if their prayer is not heard, the apex body said Monday.

The staff under the aegis of All Assam Government NPS Employees' Association (AAG-NPSEA) will observe 'Karma Birati' (cessation of work) at their respective workplaces during the day across the state to protest against the National Pension System (NPS).

"We have been demanding the implementation of OPS for a long time, but the government has not paid any heed. Most of the people who have retired under the NPS are getting pensions of Rs 500, Rs 600 or Rs 1,000 or maximum Rs 3,000 a month," AAGNPSEA president Achyutananda Hazarika told news agency PTI. Assam has around five lakh government employees, out of which around 3.5 lakh are under the NPS.

"August 22 and 23, all the government employees, including NPS and OPS ones, will go to their respective offices and give

Assam has around five lakh government employees, out of which around 3.5 lakh are under the National Pension Scheme

the attendance. Then they will stage protests at their offices," Hazarika said.

Dozens of other associations of government employees of schools and colleges, including faculty and office staff, judicial services, district administrations, trade unions, railways union, health sector and treasury among others have extended their support to the two-day agitation.

"This is the beginning of a big agitational programme. If the government does not clear its stand, we will be compelled to launch more aggressive movements," Hazarika said.

He urged the government to take the demand seriously for the greater interest of the employees and the state as a whole.

The demand to restore OPS has been increasing in the country. Recently, a huge mobilisation was organised in New Delhi at Ram Lila Maidan.

Country's oldest domestic elephant dies at 89

The majestic jumbo, Bijuli Prasad, breathed his last at the Behali tea estate of The Williamson Magor Group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tezpur, August 21: India's oldest domestic Asiatic elephant died Monday at the age of 89 in Sonitpur district of Assam, officials said.

The majestic jumbo, named Bijuli Prasad, breathed his last at the Behali tea estate of The Williamson Magor Group around 3.30 am due to age-related issues, they said. Many people who have been associated with Bijuli Prasad such as animal lovers, tea garden workers as well as locals gathered to mourn the death of the pachyderm.

"Bijuli Prasad was a symbol of pride for The Williamson



Magor Group. It was first brought to the Bargang tea estate as a

calves, and later shifted here after the Bargang tea estate was sold

off by the company," an official of the tea garden said.

The elephant, whose age is estimated to be 89 years, was leading a royal life in the tea estate post-retirement, he said.

Padma Shri awardee and famous elephant surgeon Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma told PTI, "As far as my knowledge is concerned, Bijuli Prasad was the oldest recorded domestic elephant in India."

Usually, the wild Asiatic elephants live up to 62-65 years, while the domestic ones survive till around 80 years with proper care, he said. "After all its teeth fell off around 8-10 years ago, Bijuli Prasad could not eat anything and was about to die. Then I went there and treated him. I had changed all his regular food and started mostly boiled food like rice and soybean with high protein value. This increased his longevity," Sarma said.

An official of the Behali tea estate said that the elephant was offered around 25 kg of food every day.



A glimpse of the 27th edition of exercise 'Malabar 2023' which concluded on the coast off Sydney, Monday



President Droupadi Murmu accepts the credential from Capaya Rodriguez Gonzalez, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi



People visit an avenue where destroyed Russian military vehicles have been displayed ahead of the Independence Day in Kyiv, Ukraine. Ukraine marks the Independence Day on August 24



Students dressed in traditional attire prepare for their performance during Onam festivities at a school in Chennai



Devotees offer prayers at Lord Shiva temple on the occasion of 'Nag Panchami' in Thane



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a bike ride in Leh, Ladakh



Indian and Bahrain Navy personnel do yoga at Mina Salman Port, Bahrain



In this photo provided by South Korea Defence Ministry, a South Korean Air Force KF-16 fighter jet takes off during the Ulchi Freedom Shield military exercise between the US and South Korea at an undisclosed air base in South Korea

PTI PHOTOS

national

of the day **quote**

When India was battling the COVID-19 pandemic and helping other nations simultaneously, it was painful to find some 'irritating' voices raising concerns and not believing in the country's abilities



JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

Money is being spent to spur hatred among communities in the country... The BJP is funding some minority leaders to instigate communal tension ahead of the Lok Sabha polls



MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Ashok Gehlot keeps on giving statements in frustration of his son's defeat in Lok Sabha elections



GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

President to visit Goa

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Goa from August 22-24 to attend a host of events, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said Monday. The President will attend a civic reception, to be hosted by the Goa government in her honour at the Raj Bhavan, Tuesday. On the occasion, she will distribute 'Sanad' under the Forest Rights Act to select beneficiaries, the statement said. On Wednesday, Murmu will grace the 34th convocation of Goa University and interact with members of tribal groups of Goa at the Raj Bhavan. "On the same day, she will also address the Goa Legislative Assembly at Porvorim," the statement said.

Naxalite killed

Raipur: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with the security forces in the forests of Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district Monday, police said. The skirmish took place around 9 am in Bhatbede forest area under Orchha police station limits, where a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Bastar Fighters, both units of the police, was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, an official said.

Tigress dies

Patna: A 15-year-old tigress died of cardiac arrest while undergoing treatment at Patna zoo here, a Bihar government official said Monday. The ailing big cat was on August 1 brought to Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park, known as Patna zoo, from Valmiki Tiger Reserve, the only national park in Bihar's West Champaran district. "Medical reports of the tigress suggest that she died of cardiac arrest," Bihar's Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden PK Gupta said.



Disruptions, sloganeering and unparliamentary behaviour in legislatures can be curbed only when voters start questioning the conduct of their elected representatives

OM BIRLA |
LOK SABHA SPEAKER

BRS FIRST LIST OUT

Ruling BRS president and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu Monday stole a march on the opposition Congress and BJP, announcing 115 candidates for the total 119 seats in the upcoming Assembly polls, and choosing to contest in two seats himself -- Gajwel and Kamareddy



Over 6,800 corruption cases pending: CVC

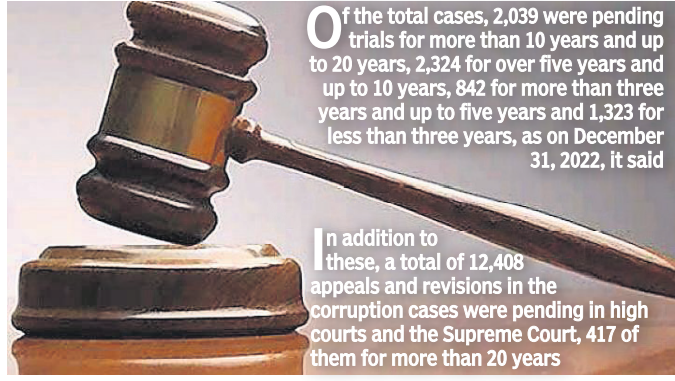
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: As many as 6,841 corruption cases probed by the CBI were pending trials in different courts, 313 of them for more than 20 years, according to the latest annual report of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Of the total cases, 2,039 were pending trials for more than 10 years and up to 20 years, 2,324 for over five years and up to 10 years, 842 for more than three years and up to five years and 1,323 for less than three years, as on December 31, 2022, it said. "The Commission took note of the large number of cases pending trial in different courts. It was observed that as on 31.12.2022, 6,841 number of cases were pending trial, out of which 313 number of cases were pending (trial) for more than 20 years," the report said.

In addition to these, a total of 12,408 appeals and revisions in the corruption cases were pending in high courts and the Supreme Court, 417 of them for more than 20 years.

As many as 688 such appeals



Of the total cases, 2,039 were pending trials for more than 10 years and up to 20 years, 2,324 for over five years and up to 10 years, 842 for more than three years and up to five years and 1,323 for less than three years, as on December 31, 2022, it said

In addition to these, a total of 12,408 appeals and revisions in the corruption cases were pending in high courts and the Supreme Court, 417 of them for more than 20 years

and revisions were pending for "more than 15 years but less than 20 years", 2,314 for "more than 10 but less than 15 years", 4,005 for "more than five but less than 10 years", 2,881 for "more than two but less than five years" and 2,103 for "less than two years", the report said.

It said 692 cases were pending probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), 42 for more than five years, as on December 31, 2022. Normally, it is required by the CBI to complete an investigation within one year of registration of a case.

A total of 60 cases were pending probe "more than three years but less than five years", 79 for "more than two years but less than three years", 138 for "more than one year but less than two years" and 373 for "less than one year", said the report released recently.

"Completion of investigation would imply filing of charge sheets in courts, wherever warranted, after receipt of sanction from the competent authority. The Commission has observed that there have been some delays in completing investigations in certain cases," it said.

Some of the reasons for the

delay include "delay in investigation due to excessive work", "inadequacy of manpower", "delay in obtaining responses to Letters Rogatory (LRs)" and "time taken in locating and examining witnesses living in distant places" among others, the report said.

There were also 52 cases of departmental action pending against 'Group A' officers of the CBI themselves, it said. Of these, 23 cases were pending for more than four years, five between three to four years, seven between two and three years, nine between one year to two years and eight for less than a year, according to the report.

There were 19 cases of departmental action pending against 'Group B and C' personnel of the federal agency. Of these, three were pending for more than four years, it added. The CBI had registered 946 cases in 2022 - 829 regular cases (RCs) and 117 preliminary inquiries (PEs).

Of these, 163 traps were laid for detection of bribery cases during 2022 while 46 cases for possession of disproportionate assets were registered during one year, the report said.

DELHI OFFICER, WIFE ARRESTED



Delhi Women and Child Department officer and his wife after being arrested by police on the charge of raping a girl under the POC SO Act, at a police station in New Delhi, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Police Monday arrested a Delhi government officer, who allegedly raped a minor several times and impregnated her, and his wife after questioning them and recording the statement of the victim, officials said.

Shortly before he was arrested in the case which was registered on August 13, Premoday Khakha was suspended from his post as deputy director in Women and Child Development (WCD) Department following a direction from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Khakha and his wife Seema Rani are residents of Shakti Enclave in the Burari area, the police said, adding the girl was staying at the residence of the accused, a family friend whom she calls 'mama', after her father passed away on October 1, 2020, the police said.

The accused, an ex-cadre officer, had allegedly raped the girl several times between November 2020 and January 2021. His wife has also been charged with giving the girl medicine to terminate her pregnancy, they said.

"Both Khakha and his wife have been arrested in connection with the case. The case was registered on August 13," Deputy Commissioner of Police (north) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

The couple was detained for questioning earlier in the day. They were arrested after the victim recorded her statement before a magistrate at a hospital. During the day, a police team visited the house of the accused.

Shortly before he was arrested in the case which was registered August 13, Premoday Khakha was suspended from his post as deputy director in Women and Child Development Department following a direction from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

While Seema Rani was produced in court after her arrest, Khakha will be produced on Tuesday, the police said. WCD Minister Atishi said that the charges against the officer were "worrisome and shocking" because he had the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of women and children. "I want to request the Delhi police and the judiciary to take the strictest action against the accused as soon as possible," she said.

The police said the case was registered under provisions of the POC SO Act and Indian Penal Code sections 376(2)(f) (being a relative, guardian or teacher of, or a person in a position of trust or authority towards the woman, commits rape on such woman) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to outrage the modesty of a woman). IPC sections 506 (criminal intimidation), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 313 (causing miscarriage without woman's consent) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) have also been invoked.

Prakash trolled for Chandrayaan-3 post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 21: Actor Prakash Raj was trolled Monday for a post on X, formerly Twitter, viewed by many as mocking India's Moon mission Chandrayaan-3 and responded by saying, "hate sees only hate" and he was referring to an old joke.

On Sunday, Raj shared a cartoon showing a man in a shirt and sarong pouring tea. He captioned the cartoon in Kannada, writing, "Latest news: First view just arrived from the Chandrayaan #VikramLander #justasking".

While the actor did not specify the man in the cartoon, many social media users slammed the actor for making fun of former ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) chief K Sivan. Among them was Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi. "I condemn Prakash Raj for this shameful tweet. Success of ISRO is success of India," he wrote. Chandrayaan-3, launched on July 14, is ready to touch down on the Moon's South Pole on August 23. It will be the first to land on the lunar South Pole. On Sunday, India's space agency specified it would do so at 6:04 pm. In a tweet on Monday, the actor said his earlier tweet was referring to an old joke from the era of Neil Armstrong, the American astronaut and the first person to walk on the Moon in 1969. "Hate sees only hate... I was referring to a joke of #Armstrong times.. Celebrating our Kerala Chaiwala.. Which Chaiwala did the TROLLS see??.. If you don't get a joke then the joke is on you.. Grow up #justasking(sic)," Raj tweeted.



Debris on a road after a landslide at Chamba in Tehri district

PTI PHOTO

SC allows rape survivor to terminate foetus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Observing that pregnancy in cases of sexual assault is a cause of stress and trauma to the victims, the Supreme Court Monday allowed a rape survivor to undergo medical termination of her over 27-week foetus after noting that she is clinically fit for the procedure which will not adversely affect her child bearing capacity.

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, the upper limit for termination of pregnancy is 24 weeks for married women, special categories including survivors of rape and other vulnerable women such as those differently-abled and minors.

Taking note of the survivor's medical report, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Gujarat High Court was not right in rejecting her prayer for MTP. The top court said in Indian society within the institution of marriage, pregnancy is a reason for joy and celebration not only for the couple but also for their family and friends.

"In contrast, pregnancy outside marriage is injurious, particularly in cases of sexual assault or abuse and is

a cause of stress and trauma affecting the physical and mental health of pregnant women. Sexual assault of a woman is itself distressing and sexual abuse resulting in pregnancy compounds the injury. This is because such a pregnancy is not voluntary or mindful.

"In view of the above discussion and the medical report, we permit the appellant to terminate her pregnancy. We direct her to be present in hospital tomorrow so that



procedure for termination of pregnancy can be carried out," the bench said.

The apex court said if the foetus is found to be alive, the hospital shall extend all necessary medical assistance, including incubation, to ensure the foetus survives. If it survives, the State shall take steps to ensure the child is adopted in accordance with the law, it said.

In a special sitting, the top court had on Saturday expressed displeasure over the Gujarat High Court adjourning the survivor's plea for medical termination of her pregnancy, and said "valuable time" has been lost during the pendency of the matter. Later on Saturday, the single bench of the high court rejected the plea for abortion.

Indefinite blockade reimposed in Kangpokpi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, August 21: A tribal body in Manipur Monday reimposed an indefinite blockade on two national highways in Kangpokpi district, demanding adequate supplies of essential commodities to Kuki Zo communities in hill areas of the state.

Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU) Sadar Hills Kangpokpi began the blockade on NH 2 which connects Imphal with Nagaland's Dimapur and NH 37 which links Imphal with Assam's Silchar. "Volunteers of the tribal body were seen coming out on the streets at a few places of Kangpokpi district to enforce the blockade and prevent movement of vehicles," an official said. COTU secretary Lamminlun Singht had on August 17 said, "Highway blockades would be reimposed on NH 2 (Imphal-Dimapur) and NH 37 (Imphal-Silchar) if the supplies of essential commodities to Kuki Zo communities in the hill areas of the state are not ensured."

"Strict security measures have been taken up in all vulnerable locations and security convoy is provided in sensitive stretches to ensure free and safe movement of the vehicles," the police said. Another tribal organisation Kuki Zo Defence Force also warned that it would impose blockades from August 26 onwards if supplies of essential goods and medicines to Kuki Zo inhabited areas are not ensured.

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

TOO MANY COOKS SPOIL THE BROTH

The froth in the broth is a clear sign of a 'cereal killer' in the kitchen! And there are many chefs on the loose in the BJP cookhouse in Gujarat to set off smoke alarms. Similar brews in the election-bound states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh besides Karnataka is symptomatic of a deeper malaise warning the national BJP leadership of pitfalls ahead.

If Jyotiraditya Scindia who switched sides to pull down the Kamal Nath-led Congress remains at the core of the internecine fights raging within the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, it is the ongoing sidelining of Vasundhara Raje that is muddying the waters in Rajasthan and the benching of former chief minister Raman Singh likewise in Chhattisgarh. Allegations levelled by a BJP MP of collusion politics between the ruling Congress and a sec-

tion of the vanquished BJP leadership is fuelling fires all its own in Karnataka, while the oblique targeting of Nitin Gadkari, the Maharashtra stalwart with a reputation for efficiency and candour provides a pointer to the shape of things to come.

For now, this is about Gujarat. A catfight of sorts involving high profile party leaders at a public function in Jammagar last week hogged headlines, bringing out the simmering disquiet in popular glare. Rivaba Jadeja who is a first time legislator of the BJP and whose claim to fame rests in the stardom of her husband cricketer Ravindra Jadeja was seen publicly upbraiding two-times party MP, Poonamben Maadam and the city mayor Binaben Kothari. The incident unfolded during a party function held to commemorate the 'mera desh, meri mitti' pro-



gramme on Thursday last.

A video clip of the unseemly scrap that went viral on social media only added fuel to the grist mill. Apparently Rivaba appeared enraged and told the mayor to 'stay within her limits'. Earlier she had an 'exchange' with the Member of Parliament. Rivaba's version was that the MP had called her 'over smart' after she took off her footwear to pay respect to the martyrs at the public event. Madaam sought

to play it down terming it a mere misunderstanding. However a visibly hurt mayor Binaben called a press conference next day to voice her anguish. The issue reached the city party chief and thereon to the state BJP president C.R. Patil.

This was one of many incidents of discontent within the Gujarat BJP which have been bubbling up to the surface with religious regularity in recent times. These acquire added importance because the state is the home turf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union Home Minister Amit Shah and thus constantly in their sharp sights.

Earlier this month three office-bearers of the BJP from South Gujarat were arrested on charges of defaming their own state party chief C.R. Patil who hails from the same region. The

Surat district BJP suspended the three. In another of the sequential events lining the road of dissent, BJP corporator Alpesh Limbachiya was arrested on charges of mailing copies of an anonymous letter to party leaders that accused the Vadodara mayor of corruption. His brother-in-law and some others were subsequently arrested and Limbachiya who was leader of the ruling party in the Vadodara Municipal Corporation resigned his post. There are numerous other examples, the list is long and the purge still continues. The top brass in Delhi has gone to work after matters were brought to the Prime Minister's notice. An overhaul of the party set-up in the state is on the cards. Those who want to live life with a spice, better remember, complaints to the cook can be hazardous to your health.

international



Recent political scandals will not delay leadership renewal
LEE HSIEN LOONG | SINGAPOREAN PM

SLPP PUSHES FOR EARLY ELECTIONS

Sri Lanka's ruling SLPP party Monday called for early conduct of local council elections, in an apparent act of defying President Ranil Wickremesinghe's stance



of the day quote

The Russian government has so far declined our request to access the areas under its temporary military control
DENISE BROWN | UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR UKRAINE

The United States is not seeking permanent basing on Papua New Guinea but would help the country expand its military capability, modernise its forces and increase their interoperability with the US military
LOYD AUSTIN | US DEFENCE SECRETARY

South Africa supports the expansion of the membership of BRICS. The value of BRICS extends beyond the interests of its current members
CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

SHORT TAKES

Kabaddi match in UK sparks 'gang violence'

London: Four men aged between 24 and 38 were arrested Monday on suspicion of possession of a firearm and violent disorder after four people were injured in a "large scale disturbance" at a kabaddi tournament, involving the British Punjabi community, in the East Midlands region of England. Derbyshire Police said police presence remains in the area of Elvaston Lane in Alvaston, Derby, where the clash occurred Sunday.

Pak court to take up Imran's appeal today

Islamabad: The Islamabad High Court will take up Tuesday a petition filed by Imran Khan against his conviction and sentence in the Toshakhana corruption case, a verdict that could be crucial for his political future as well for his party ahead of general elections. Judge Humayun Dilawar August 5 found Khan guilty of corrupt practices and sentenced him to three years in jail in the case.

Trudeau slams FB

Toronto: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused Facebook Monday of putting profits over people's safety during the emergencies created by Canada's record wildfire season. Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, announced earlier this summer it would keep its promise to block news content from Canada on its platforms because of a new law that requires tech giants to pay publishers for linking to or otherwise republishing their content online. Fires raging in Canada have pushed tens of thousands of people from their homes and threatened cities such as Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories.



This undated photo provided Monday, August 21, by the North Korean government, shows what it says the test-firing of strategic cruise missiles. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government. The content of this image is as provided and cannot be independently verified. Korean language watermark on image as provided by source reads: "KCNA" which is the abbreviation for Korean Central News Agency
AP/PTI PHOTO

Tropical storm Hilary slams Southwest US



AGENCIES

Los Angeles, August 21: Parts of Southern California and the US Southwest on Monday faced the threat of flash flooding along with landslides and mudslides after tropical storm Hilary unleashed record-breaking downpours overnight.

Some 17 million Americans were under flood and high-wind advisories, watches and warnings as remnants of the storm moved north dumping heavy rains from the California-Mexico border up through Las Vegas and into parts of the Northwest, the National Weather Service said.

One of the hardest hit communities has been Palm Springs, California, where video footage posted on social media showed flooded streets and debris flows. Mayor Grace Garner told CNN the city's 911 system was knocked out from the storm.

A steady rain fell on Monday morning in many parts of the region, where record-breaking downpours had already fallen. Hilary was downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone overnight.

Some mountain and desert areas could see rain accumulation totals reaching 5 to 10 inches (12 to 25 cm) from the storm, as much as the deserts typically see in a year, forecasters said.

As the rain was expected to slowly dissipate throughout the

Millions braced for more flooding and mudslides, even as the storm began to weaken

Forecasters warned of dangerous flash floods across Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, and fire officials rescued a dozen people from knee-deep water in a homeless encampment along the rising San Diego River

morning in Southern California, officials warned residents not to let their guard down as dangerous flooding could wash out roadways and inundating neighborhoods.

The service downgraded Hurricane Hilary to a tropical depression, but not before California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for much of Southern California. US President Joe Biden also ordered federal agencies to move personnel and supplies into the region.

Before striking the US Southwest, the storm passed northward through Mexico's Baja California peninsula. It killed at least one person in Mexico, triggering flash flooding and sweeping away roads.

It crossed the border on Sunday afternoon, hitting San Diego county with its first tropical storm ever recorded and becoming the first to pelt Los Angeles county since 1939.

Russia will lose war: Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy said on Telegram that Ukraine would get 42 jets. Denmark pledged 19 F-16s, which could be delivered around the end of the year when pilot training lasting four to six months is completed

AGENCIES

Copenhagen, August 21: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told a crowd in Denmark Monday that promised deliveries of US-made F-16 fighter jets had made him confident Ukraine could end Russia's invasion.

Denmark and the Netherlands on Sunday announced they would supply the first F-16s to Ukraine, with the initial six due to be delivered around New Year. Washington had approved the delivery of the jets ahead of Zelenskyy's trip to Copenhagen.

"Today we are confident that Russia will lose this war," Zelenskyy told thousands of people who gathered outside the Danish parliament to hear his speech. Russia warned earlier that supplying the jets to Ukraine would only escalate the war, which has dragged on for almost 18 months. Russian forces are



- First delivery of US-made F-16 jets expected around New Year
- Russia warns decision will escalate the conflict
- Ukraine says F-16s will help deter air attacks on its troops

occupying almost a fifth of Ukraine's territory and Kyiv is battling hard to push them out. "The fact that Denmark has now decided to donate 19 F-16 aircraft to Ukraine leads to an escalation of the conflict," Russian ambassador Vladimir Barbin

said in a statement cited by the Ritzau news agency.

"By hiding behind a premise that Ukraine itself must determine the conditions for peace, Denmark seeks with its actions and words to leave Ukraine with no other choice but to continue the military confrontation with Russia," he said.

The Ukrainian military said the jet was vital to the success of its counteroffensive, which has proceeded slowly since its launch in early June, as it would prevent Russian fighter jets attacking

advancing forces. "Superiority in the air is key to success on the ground," air force spokesman Yuriy Ilnat was quoted as saying by Ukrainian media.

Danish Defence Minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen said Ukraine may only use the donated F-16s within its own territory.

"We donate weapons under the condition that they are used to drive the enemy out of the territory of Ukraine. And no further than that," Ellemann-Jensen said Monday.

"Those are the conditions, whether it's tanks, fighter planes or something else," he said. Denmark will deliver 19 jets in total. The Netherlands has 42 F-16s available in all but has yet to decide whether all of them will be donated.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called the decision a "breakthrough agreement".

Christian families get compensation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, August 21: Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar Monday visited the violence-hit Jaranwala town in Punjab province and handed out a compensation of Rs 2 million each to around 100 Christian families whose homes were burnt down along with 21 churches by a mob of radical Islamists last week.

The mob ransacked and torched 21 churches and several houses of Christians last week over blasphemy allega-

CHURCH ATTACKS



tions in Jaranwala town of Faisalabad district, 130 km from Punjab's provincial capital

Lahore. A Christian cemetery and the office of the local assistant commissioner were also vandalised. Kakar visited Jaranwala to express solidarity with the victims of the Christian community, where he distributed cheques worth two million rupees (\$6,800) each to the affected people. He assured all the minority communities in the country that the government is committed to protecting their lives and properties as he pledged to bring the perpetrators of heinous attacks against Christians to justice.

Ecuadorians reject oil drilling in the Amazon

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rio De Janeiro, August 21: Ecuadorians voted against drilling for oil in a protected area of the Amazon, an important decision that will require the state oil company to end its operations in a region that's home to two uncontacted tribes and is a hotspot of biodiversity.

Yasuni National Park is inhabited by the Tagera and Taromenani, who live in self-isolation. In 1989, it was designated a world biosphere reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, also known as UNESCO.



Encompassing a surface area of over 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres), it boasts 610 species of birds, 139 species of amphibians, and 121 species of reptiles. At least three species are endemic.

With over 90 per cent of the ballots counted by early Monday, around six in 10 Ecuadorians rejected the oil exploration in Block 43, situated within Yasuni.

The outcome represents a significant blow to Ecuadorian President Guillermo Lasso, who advocated for oil drilling, asserting that its revenues are crucial to the country's economy. State oil company Petroecuador will be required to dismantle its operations in the coming months.

Historic drought, hot seas slow Panama Canal shipping

REUTERS

Los Angeles/Houston, August 21: Before the Ever Max ship carrying lava lamps, sofas, Halloween costumes and artificial Christmas trees could make its inaugural Panama Canal voyage this month, a historic drought forced it to drop weight by offloading hundreds of containers.

The Panama Canal Authority has reduced maximum ship weights and daily ship crossings in a bid to conserve water. Maritime transportation experts fear such events could become the new normal as rainfall deficits in the world's fifth-wettest country spotlight climate risks affecting the ocean shipping industry that moves 80% of global trade. Ship owners have the options of carrying less cargo, shifting to al-

ternate routes that can add thousands of miles to the trip or grappling with queues that earlier this month backed up 160 vessels and delayed some ships by as much as 21 days.

The restrictions already are sending China-US spot shipping prices up as much as 36% amid soaring sea temperatures that climate scientists warn could supercharge extreme weather.

Canal operators are on a tightrope as they work to manage maritime trade disruption and prepare for what is shaping up to be an even drier period next year, said Peter Sand, chief analyst at air and ocean freight rate benchmarking platform Xeneta.

More than 14,000 ships crossed the canal in 2022. Container ships are the most common users of the Panama Canal and trans-



The Panama Canal Authority has reduced maximum ship weights and daily ship crossings in a bid to conserve water

Maritime transportation experts fear such events could become the new normal as rainfall deficits in the world's fifth-wettest country spotlight climate risks affecting the ocean shipping industry that moves 80% of global trade

port more than 40% of consumer goods traded between Northeast Asia and the US East Coast. US-bound vessels caught in

the bottlenecks have carried Barbie dolls, auto parts, BYD solar panels, water treatment equipment, diabetes testing kits

and other goods, according to data from Steve Ferreira, CEO of a company that audits ocean shipping bills.

Restrictions at the canal started earlier this year, affecting about 170 countries and virtually every type of good - including soybeans and liquefied natural gas from the United States, copper and fresh cherries from Chile, and beef from Brazil. Bulk carriers that transport commodities from corn to iron ore, as well as tankers that move oil, fuel, gas and chemicals also are affected.

Some energy companies are rerouting vessels laden with coal and liquefied natural gas to the Suez Canal.

WATER WATCH

A naturally occurring El Nino climate pattern associated with warmer-than-usual water in the central and eastern tropical

Pacific Ocean is contributing to Panama's drought.

The area around the canal is experiencing one of the two driest years in the country's 143 years of keeping records, data from the canal authority and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) showed. Rainfall measurements around the area are 30-50% below normal.

A potential early start to Panama's dry season and hotter-than-average temperatures typical of major El Nino events in the country could increase evaporation from Gatun Lake and result in near-record low water levels by March or April 2024, said STRI's Steven Paton.

Canal operators have lowered ship weight limits to accommodate lower water depth - posing a problem for large vessels like the Ever Max.

business



It is not a premature decision to impose export duty on onion. It is a timely decision taken to increase the domestic availability and check prices

G20 PANDEMIC FUND: INDIA GETS \$25MN

India will receive \$25 million from the G20 Pandemic Fund for strengthening animal health system of the country. The fund that was established under Indonesia's G20 Presidency is targeted at low-to middle-income countries to finance efforts like surveillance, research, and better access to vaccines, among others measures



of the day quote

At HCL, we are committed to help resolve this global crisis. In partnership with UpLink, we are all set to announce the second edition of our Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative moving towards zero water waste

ROSHNI NADAR MALHOTRA | CHAIRPERSON, HCLTECH

With 92 per cent of recruiters forecasting hiring activity, coupled with a return to normalcy in hiring practices anticipated by more than half of the recruiters surveyed, hiring outlook survey manifests an optimistic white-collar hiring landscape in the forthcoming half of 2023

PAWAN GOYAL | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, NAUKRI.COM

Our customers are keen on decarbonising supply chains rapidly, and we are stepping in to support them with our fleet of EVs in India

VIKASH AGARWAL | MD, MAERSK (SOUTH ASIA)

SHORT TAKES

Jolt to Byju's

New Delhi: Byju's Senior Vice President for international business Cherian Thomas has resigned from the company and will now helm US-based Impending Inc. As the CEO, Thomas will focus on building and scaling the product portfolio, while strengthening and growing a global talent pool, Impending Inc said in a statement. A mail sent to Byju's did not elicit any response. A source at Byju's confirmed Thomas' departure, but did not comment on his successor.

IREDA aims big

New Delhi: State-owned IREDA has set a target of achieving Rs 4,350 crore revenue from operations during the current financial year. In the next fiscal, it aims to touch a revenue of Rs 5,220 crore from operations, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) said in a statement Monday. In this regard, the company has also signed a performance-based memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). The MoU, in alignment with the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) guidelines, outlines strategic targets that IREDA aims to achieve during the fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

H1 OF 2023

Foreign trade crosses \$800bn

AMID WEAK WORLD TRADE OUTLOOK FOR 2023 DUE TO GLOBAL UNCERTAINTIES, INDIA'S OVERSEAS TRADE REGISTERS HEALTHY GROWTH IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: A healthy growth in India's services segments has helped the country's total exports and imports of goods and services to cross the \$800 billion mark during the first half of 2023, despite a slowdown in global demand, think tank GTRI said in a report Monday. According to the analysis of the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), exports of goods and services rose by 1.5 per cent to \$385.4 billion during January-June this year, as against \$379.5 billion in January-June 2022. Imports, however, dipped by 5.9 per cent to \$415.5 billion during the six months of this year, as against \$441.7 billion in January-June 2022.

"India's foreign trade (exports and imports of merchandise and services) reached \$800.9 billion during January-June 2023, exhibiting a decline of 2.5 per cent over the same period last year (January-June 2022)," the report said.

Standalone, goods exports dipped by 8.1 per cent to \$218.7 billion, while imports contracted by 8.3 per cent to \$325.7 billion.

On the other hand, services exports during the six months period grew by 17.7 per cent to \$166.7 billion, while imports rose by 3.7 per cent to \$89.8 billion.

"Data is showing modest decline due to weak global demand and losing competitiveness in labour intensive sectors. The decline in merchandise exports happened despite appreciating INR (Indian Rupee). INR/USD exchange rate appreciated from 76.16 in April 2022 to 82.18 in Apr 2023," GTRI Co-founder Ajay



India should continue to focus on increasing product quality and supply chain competitiveness. Since every big country is into inward mode, India should not surrender its policy space especially in new issues in FTAs (free trade agreements) and Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

Srivastava said.

He said the world trade outlook for 2023 is weak due to a number of factors, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, high inflation, tighter monetary policy, and financial uncertainty.

"But these factors will soon be overshadowed by a spate of new subsidies and protectionist measures by the EU and USA. For example, in the first seven months of 2023 alone, the EU has introduced five regulations on climate change and trade, each of these are essentially measures to curb imports," he said.

The report stated that 11 of 29 product categories contributing to 25 per cent of India's exports registered positive export growth during January-June 2023, over the same period last year.

Those sectors include Telecom, Computer and electronics items; Machinery, boilers, Turbines; Pharmaceuticals; ceramic prod-

ucts. Smartphone exports jumped to \$7.5 billion during January-June this year from \$2.5 billion in January-June 2022.

However, exports in 18 of 29 product categories contributing to 75 per cent of total merchandise exports declined during the period and that include cereals, vegetable, fruits, spices; fish, meat; dairy products; textiles; carpets, garments; footwear; and leather.

TRADE WITH NATIONS

Further, the report said that India exports goods to 240 countries and out of that, the country's outbound shipments declined in 134 destinations.

Major countries where exports declined include the USA, UAE, China, Bangladesh, and Germany. Countries where exports grew positively include Netherland, UK, Saudi Arabia. "India's exports exceed USD

FPIs' investment value surges 20% in June quarter

The growth could be attributed to good performance in the domestic equity markets as well as strong net inflows from foreign portfolio investors



- FPIs' INVESTMENT ROSE FROM \$523BN TO \$626BN YOY
- \$3.2BN PULLED OUT FROM EQUITIES IN MARCH QUARTER
- FOREIGN INVESTORS NET BUYERS FROM LAST 4 MONTHS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: The value of foreign portfolio investors' holdings in the domestic equities reached \$626 billion in the three months ended June 2023, which was 20 per cent higher from the year-ago period, according to a Morningstar report.

According to the report, the value of foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) investments in Indian equities rose from \$523 billion as of June 2022 to \$626 billion at the end of June 2023.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the value of such investment rose 15 per cent from \$542 billion recorded in the three months ended March this year.

This has helped in pushing FPIs' contribution to Indian equity market capitalisation marginally to 17.33 per cent for the quarter under review from 17.27 per cent for the March quarter.

After pulling out funds to the tune of \$3.2 billion from the Indian equities in the March quarter, FPIs took a sharp U-turn in the three months ended June and made a strong comeback with a net investment of \$12.5 billion.

"The flows were largely driven by the prospects of interest-rate

direction in the US, how the global inflation numbers were shaping up, and China's economic woes, along with domestic indicators. The sentiments broadly remained positive throughout the quarter," the report noted.

It was a positive start of the quarter with apprehensions about the banking crisis in the US and Europe fading. Also, there were expectations building that the US Federal Reserve will most likely slow its pace of rate hikes in future, which augured well for foreign money to flow into the Indian equity markets.

Additionally, Indian markets also witnessed some consolidation towards the end of the previous quarter, leading to some rationalisation in its valuations.

FPIs were net buyers in April, May, and June. Since then, there has been no stopping by FPIs as they continued to invest substantially into the Indian equity markets in July, as well as so far in August.

Sensex, Nifty rebound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 21: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher Monday after two days of decline, supported by buying in index majors Infosys, ITC and Bajaj Finance amid a mixed trend in global markets.



In a range-bound trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 267.43 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 65,216.09. During the day, it jumped 387.16 points or 0.59 per cent to 65,335.82. The NSE Nifty gained 83.45 points or 0.43 per cent to end at 19,393.60.

Bajaj Finance was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, ris-

ing 2.70 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, Nestle, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan and Axis Bank. Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti and State Bank of India were among the laggards.

₹ FALLS TO FRESH LOW The rupee depreciated by 3 paise and settled for the day at an all-time low of 83.13 against the US dollar Monday, weighed down by a surge in crude oil prices and selling pressure by foreign investors.

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

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,901.10 crore.

India sees over 120% growth in EVs

HYBRID VEHICLES SURGE 400%

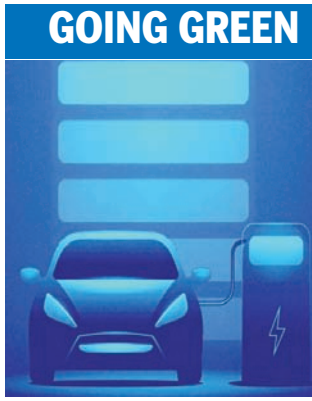
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 21: India saw 120 per cent growth in electric vehicles (EVs) in the second quarter of this year, driven by a 400 per cent surge in hybrid vehicles, a report showed Monday.

Assistance systems (ADAS) rapidly expanded by 350 per cent (year-on-year) and the adoption of connected and digital cockpit features continue to gain steady traction in passenger vehicles, surpassing 60 per cent, according to the report by CyberMedia Research (CMR).

The surge in EV adoption was driven by the introduction of new affordable models, including, for instance, MG Comet EV from MG Motors.

"Automotive original equip-



ment manufacturers (OEMs) are focused on introducing electric vehicles with Level 2 advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) that include helpful features like adaptive cruise control, lane centering, and automated lane changes," said John Martin, senior analyst-smart mobility practice, CMR.

Additionally, the use of intelligent and connected cockpits within vehicles is on the rise.

"These advancements are not only enhancing consumer safety but also promoting intelligent mobility and environmental sustainability," said Martin.

The remarkable growth in hybrid vehicle demand was driven by OEMs, including Toyota Kirloskar, Maruti Suzuki, and Honda Motors.

Over 90 per cent of EV sales in Q2 2023 were equipped with smart connected features, and digital cockpits adorned around 15 per cent of hybrid vehicles, the report noted.

By the end of this year, over 5 per cent of passenger vehicles are likely to be fully electric and equipped with ADAS features.

Advanced connectivity and digital cockpit functionalities are projected to capture a 40 per cent market share, the report noted.

Settle UAE trades in rupee, dirham: RBI nudges banks

India targets UAE trade to broaden rupee's global reach

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 21: India's central bank is nudging local banks to ask their clients to settle trade between the United Arab Emirates and India using the dirham (AED) or Indian rupee (Rs) to reduce US-dollar-based transactions, five sources told Reuters.

The move is part of the Reserve Bank of India's broader aim of promoting settlement in local currencies with countries with which India has a trade deficit, with the knock-on effect of boosting the rupee's global reach, three banking sources said. India's trade deficit with the UAE was \$21.62 billion in 2022/23, or 8.2% of its total deficit, government data shows. In July, the two countries agreed to facilitate



trade in rupees instead of dollars. The idea, a government source said, was to reduce the outflow of dollars on account of this trade deficit.

"The RBI has asked banks to encourage clients and corporates to initiate INR-AED trades gradually, instead of using the dollar," said a treasury official at a private bank.

An RBI official communicated this message verbally to foreign exchange dealers at a seminar this month, four sources said. This communication has not been previously reported.

The RBI may consider setting internal targets for the quantum of India-UAE trade it would like to see moved away from dollars, said the government source. The central bank is "keen that volumes of such trades go up" and "has assured the market that they will be ready to support banks with INR-AED trades," this banker said.

Lackluster mkt debut for JFSL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Shares of Jio Financial Services, the demerged financial services unit of Reliance Industries, listed on the bourses Monday, with the stock falling nearly 5 per cent to hit the lower circuit limit.

On the BSE, shares of the company began the trade at Rs 265, up 1.20 per cent against Rs 261.85, the price fixed at a special price discovery session held last month. However, the stock later fell by 3.85 per cent to hit Rs 251.75 -- its lower circuit limit -- against Rs 261.85.

Shares of the company listed at Rs 262 on the NSE but later de-



clined 4.94 per cent to Rs 248.90 -- its lower circuit limit.

The company commanded a market valuation of Rs 1,59,943.93 crore. The company is the 34th most valued firm in the pack of top 100 firms by market valuation.

In volume terms, 35.51 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 7.47 crore shares on the NSE.

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) demerged from Reliance last month. In a special price discovery session held on the record date last month, the stock's pre-listing price came out to be Rs 261.85.

With the company's listing, the BSE Sensex and the NSE Nifty added Jio Financial Services to their pack. This has been done to ensure price stability and limit volatility in shares of JFSL in view of the demerger as part of the revised methodology of the exchanges to treat demergers.

The BSE Sensex had Jio Financial as the 31st firm and the Nifty had the company as its 51st stock. The newly listed entity would be removed from the indices after the end of the day on the third day of its listing.

DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

China's Honor stages India return

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 21: Chinese smartphone brand Honor will relaunch in India through a licensing deal with a local company and is aiming to start domestic manufacturing by early next year, its country head said.

Honor had stopped selling its smartphones in India and reportedly retreated last year amid limited marketing budget and less prudent portfolio management.

"India was never a focus market for the Huawei Technologies-owned Honor until 2020 - when it was forced to spin-off the brand and reassess strategy," said Neil Shah, vice president at Counterpoint Research.

Honor's comeback is underpinned by a licensing deal with a newly formed Gurugram-based firm Honor Tech for an undisclosed "agreed-upon cost" tied to the transfer of technology and hardware.

It will launch three variants of Honor phones in India, with the mid-ranged Number series



HonorTech is a completely Indian entity. We are going to work under a licensing deal with Honor where they will license us and we will do everything from sales to manufacturing in India. No royalty will go to Honor

MADHAV SHETH | CEO, HONORTECH

expected by September.

The company, wholly owned by local shareholders, will make, sell and service Honor-branded smartphones in India.

"All the phones will be eventually manufactured in India," CEO Madhav Sheth said, with-

out disclosing further details. "The biggest challenge with the (Indian) government in the past was how can a (Chinese) brand be accountable in India?" said Sheth, a former executive at rival Realme who was credited for its India expansion.

Honor brand was launched and owned by Chinese telecom major Huawei which sold it to another Chinese firm Shenzhen Zhixin New Information Technology in November 2020

Of late, Chinese businesses have struggled in India with the government banning several apps and stepping up scrutiny on investments to stave off takeover moves from its neighbour.

Honor will compete with the likes of Samsung Electronics - the top seller in India with a near 20% market share - followed by Vivo, Xiaomi, Realme, and others, per Counterpoint Research.

Honor Tech aims to capture a 5% share of India's smartphone market by sales volumes in 2024, with a revenue of at least Rs 100 billion, Sheth said.

RAHUL, SHREYAS BACK FOR ASIA CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: KL Rahul, albeit with a rider, and Shreyas Iyer were Monday named in India's squad for the Asia Cup beginning August 31 while highly-rated young batter Tilak Varma earned a maiden call-up to the one-day format.

There were question marks over the fitness of Rahul and Iyer, who are making a comeback after undergoing thigh and back surgeries respectively. Iyer last played in March and Rahul in May. While Iyer was declared fully fit by chief selector Ajit Agarkar, questions remain over Rahul's fitness status.

Wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has been added to the squad as a backup for Rahul who has developed a niggle recently, informed Agarkar after announcing the squad here.

"It is not the original injury. There is a niggle. That is why Sanju is travelling (to Sri Lanka). We are expecting Rahul to be fit. If not the start of Asia cup may be by the second or the third game. Shreyas Iyer is fully fit," said Agarkar in his first media interaction since taking charge last month.

India will open their campaign against Pakistan September 2 and Rahul is likely to miss out due to his niggle.

Pacer Prasidh Krishna, who made a comeback from injury with the ongoing series in Ireland, has also been included in the Asia Cup squad. Varma has made the cut on the back of an impressive run in his maiden T20 series in the West Indies. The 20-year-old is currently with the T20 squad in Ireland.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was a notable omission from the squad, leaving India with only one wrist-spinner in Kuldeep Yadav. Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja are the other spin bowling options.

Hardik Pandya, who has been named vice-captain, and Shardul Thakur, are the two pace bowling all-rounders while Krishna, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammad Shami are the specialist fast bowlers.



X-factor batter Suryakumar Yadav has also found a place despite his underwhelming run in ODIs so far.

All of India's Asia Cup games will be played in Sri Lanka while tournament host Pakistan will get to host four games at home.

Asked about Varma's inclusion in the squad as he is yet to play ODI cricket, Agarkar added: "In West Indies, we saw some real

promise in terms of not just performances but the temperament. And it gives us an opportunity to take him with the team, give him some more exposure; a left-hander again, looks very promising.

"So fortunately we can take 17 here, it'll be 15 at the World Cup. So when the time comes we'll take that decision, but at the moment it, at least, gives the coach and captain an opportunity to have him with the squad."

Sitting alongside Agarkar, India skipper Rohit Sharma explained the rationale behind Chahal's exclusion leaving the team with no right hand off-spin option.

"We thought about an off-spinner as well, Ashwin and Washy (Washington Sundar), but right now you see Chahal had to miss out because we could only pick 17 players," said Rohit during the media interaction.

"The only way we could have picked him was if one of the seamers was missing. We can't do that because seamers are going to play a big role in the next two months. A few of them are coming back after a long time,

so we wanted to have a good look at them, get them in and see what they have to offer."

"We thought about off-spinner Ashwin and Washy (Washington Sundar) but right now you saw Chahal has to miss out and we can't get him in because we can take only 15 and only way we could have done that is by dropping a seamer."

"We cannot do that considering amount of games that is going to happen, some of them coming back after long time and we can have a good look at them. See what they have to offer."

But like any skipper would do, Rohit said that doors are not closed on anyone although it was more of a consolation statement.

The squad: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya (vc), Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Sanju Samson (back up to Rahul).

Rohit opens up on role allotments for players



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Indian captain Rohit Sharma wants his middle order batters to show flexibility as no one in the national team owns any particular batting position.

The Indian captain also said that each and every player who plays or misses out has received clear communication about what role is expected of them and where they stand in terms of their international career.

Asked how Ishan Kishan will be placed vis a vis his batting slot if KL Rahul misses out against Pakistan in the Asia Cup opener, Rohit explained the team's thought process.

"Ajit (Agarkar) is new to the picture and he didn't know what was happening before that. I have tried to keep him updated as much as possible," Rohit said while answering the PTI query.

"One thing I need in this team is everyone ready to bat anywhere. Cricket is moving in a different direction. You can step up at any position, no one should say 'I am good at this position and that position'. That is the message that has been conveyed to every individual, not now but that's happening for last two, three or four years," the skipper said.

"I know it's tough for you guys outside to understand that why is a guy who was batting at No.6 is suddenly batting at No.4. It hasn't happened overnight. He has been prepared for that role. This is international sport we are talking about. This is not club cricket."

"He should be able to bat anywhere that team requires him to. Not like we go off to sleep at night telling a batter a position and next morning we change that position. It doesn't happen like that," Rohit said in his inimitable style.

The Indian skipper seemed a trifle irritated when asked why India doesn't have a settled No.4. "We have got guys who can bat at No.4. It's not about No.4. It's about top three and there onwards, 4, 5, 6, 7 and there onwards and who can win us game. There have been challenges and guys have been put under pressure and that's a good thing."

"Unfortunately, we had injuries along the line and we had to try out different players and keep in mind workload management and see what combination suits us. We have 9 ODIs and 2 practice games and we have lot of games where these guys will get a chance to make the position their own," he added.

BARCA GET LATE GOALS TO OVERCOME CADIZ



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 21: Barcelona found a way to win late and guarantee a housewarming celebration at its temporary new home for the season.

With late goals from Pedri and Ferran Torres, Barcelona beat Cadiz 2-0 in the first official match at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Montjuic, where the team will play while the Camp Nou undergoes an extensive makeover. Pedri opened the scoring in the 82nd minute and Torres scored in stoppage time.

Barcelona secured their first win of the season despite the

absence of coach Xavi and forward Raphinha because of red cards in the 0-0 opening draw at Getafe last weekend. Xavi was handed a two-game suspension for excessively complaining to the referee and Raphinha was sent off for elbowing an opponent.

Barcelona, the defending champions, struggled in attack until Pedri found the net with a left-footed touch following a nice give-and-go play with midfielder Ilkay Gundogan, the team's main signing this season. Torres sealed the victory with a goal from inside the area after a late break-away. Robert Lewandowski had a goal disallowed for offside.

The win came before a crowd of 39,603 people at the Lluís Companys, which was the main stadium for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and can hold 49,000 people — compared to the 99,000-capacity Camp Nou, Europe's largest soccer stadium. The Camp Nou is undergoing a long-delayed overhaul to improve its facilities and add even more seats.

Atletico Madrid were held to a goalless draw at Real Betis in a match with few significant scoring opportunities in the heat of Seville.

Prannoy, Sen sail through at Worlds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Copenhagen, August 21: Star Indian shuttlers HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen progressed to the men's singles second round of the World Championships with straight-game wins over Finland's Kalle Koljonen and Mauritius' Georges Julien Paul respectively here Monday.

Prannoy, the World No.9, who reached the quarterfinals in the last two editions, saw off the left-handed Koljonen 24-22, 21-10 to extend his head-to-head count over the Finnish player to 3-0.

Sen, the reigning Commonwealth Games gold medalist, then steamrolled Paul 21-12, 21-7 in 25 minutes to follow Prannoy into the second round.

The Almora shuttler, who had won a bronze in the 2021 edition, is likely to meet Korea's Jeon Hyeok Jin, while the 31-year-old from Kerala is expected to face Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo next.

The match between Prannoy and Koljonen turned into a tight battle in the opening game with the Finnish player quick to open up an 8-4 lead. But Prannoy reeled off seven straight points

to grab an 11-8 lead at the break.

However, an exciting battle ensued after resumption with Koljonen eventually grabbing three game points after pushing one away from the forehand of his opponent.

A calm Prannoy, however,

saved all three game points before hitting wide to once again hand over the advantage to his rival. A backhand block at the net helped him save another game point but he sprayed into net next as it was 22-21 in favour of the Finnish player.



HS Prannoy

However, Koljonen couldn't capitalise as he hit long and lost a net duel to gift the lead to the Indian, who converted with a brutal cross-court smash.

The second game started on an equal footing with Prannoy marginally leading 6-5 at one stage. However, the Indian soon zoomed away to open up a six-point lead at the break with a straight smash.

The Indian kept moving ahead with Koljonen finding it hard to negotiate the angles and deceptions of Prannoy, who soon gained 12 match points after Koljonen hit wide. Prannoy missed one at the net and Koljonen saved another one before the Indian shut the door with a straight smash.

Sen, who had defeated Paul en route his CWG gold, had no issues in brushing aside his rival. He opened up an 11-3 lead and though Paul managed to make it 8-12, the Indian soon changed gears to seal the opening game.

Sen continued in the same vein after the change of sides as it turned out to be an extremely lop-sided contest with the Indian gaining 13-2 lead. Eventually, Paul hit out twice to hand over the match to Sen.

Djoko outlasts Alcaraz for title, Gauff triumphs



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mason, August 21: Novak Djokovic outlasted Carlos Alcaraz in a thrilling rematch of their Wimbledon final, winning 5-7, 7-6(9-7), 7-6(7-4) to take the Western & Southern Open.

In a match that lasted 3 hours, 49 minutes, the longest best-of-three sets final in ATP Tour history (since 1990), the No.2-seeded Djokovic avenged his loss last month to the top-ranked Alcaraz and earned his 95th career title, passing Ivan Lendl for third among men in the professional era, dating to 1968.

In the women's final, seventh-seeded Coco Gauff became the first teenager in more than 50 years to win the Western & Southern Open with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Karolina Muchova. Djokovic was playing his first tournament on US soil in two years because of COVID-19 restrictions. He secured his third Cincinnati championship in six years on his fifth match point when Alcaraz went wide with a forehand return.

The 36-year-old Serbian fell on his back, arms and legs spread, before heading to the net to shake hands with his Spanish opponent. He then strutted around the court and ripped his shirt apart from the buttons on down.

With temperatures hovering near 90 degrees, Djokovic survived the tournament's longest men's match since at least 1990 to become the oldest man to win the championship. Ken Rosewall was 35 when he won in 1970. The rematch of Alcaraz's five-set victory at Wimbledon broke the previous Cincinnati record of 2 hours, 49 minutes, set in 2010 as Roger Federer was beating Mardy Fish. It's the longest three-set match on the men's tour this season by three minutes.

Odisha girls claim Nat'I EZ U-11 Roll Ball C'ship crown

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Odisha roll ball teams had impressive outings in the 2nd National East Zone U-11 Roll Ball Championship (August 19-21) in Kolkata. The boys' team finished runners up while the girls claimed the title.

Both the state teams faced Assam in their summit clashes. The girls' team came out on top with a 5-3 scoreline, while the boys lost 2-8. Earlier, in the semifinals, the boys' team had defeated Jharkhand 2-1, while the girls crushed the hosts West Bengal 11-0. The girls' team captain Ashlesha Panda was adjudged 'Player of the tournament', having scored 21 goals in the competition, most in the event.

Praggu stuns Caruana, to face Carlsen for title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baku (Azerbaijan), August 21: Continuing his dream run, Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa Monday stunned World No.3 Fabiano Caruana 3.5-2.5 via the tie-break in the semifinals to set up a summit clash with World No.1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway at the FIDE World Cup chess tournament here.

After the two-game classical series ended 1-1, the 18-year-old Indian prodigy outlasted the highly-rated American GM in a battle of wits in a nerve-wracking tie-breaker.

In the final beginning Tuesday, Praggnanandhaa will take on



five-time title winner Carlsen, who beat Azerbaijan's Nijat

Abasov 1.5-0.5 in his semifinal. Praggnanandhaa becomes the

"I didn't expect to play Magnus in this tournament at all because the only way I could play him was in the final, and I didn't expect to be in the final. I will just try to give my best and see how it goes!"

R PRAGGNANANDHAA

third youngest player after the legendary Bobby Fischer and Carlsen to qualify for the Candidates tournament.

"Prag goes through to the final! He beats Fabiano Caruana in the tiebreak and will face Magnus Carlsen now. What a performance!" chess legend Viswanathan Anand posted on

social networking site 'X', formerly Twitter.

Praggnanandhaa has been in a rich vein of form in the World Cup and his biggest scalp before Caruana was another American Hikaru Nakamura, the World No.2 and second-seed, following which he stopped compatriot Arjun Erigaisi.

By becoming only the second Indian after Anand to reach the World Cup semifinals, Praggnanandhaa secured a spot in the Candidates event in 2024 to determine the challenger to Ding Liren. The top three finishers in the tournament qualify for the Candidates event in 2024 to determine the challenger to current World Champion Liren of China.