



Rakul's secrets

Actor Rakul Preet Singh, during an 'Ask Me Anything' session, reveals about her mantra of energy and good looks

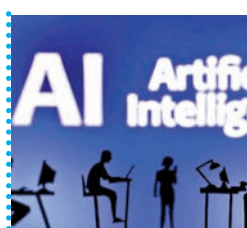
LEISURE | P2



PM mocks Rahul

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mounts a stinging counterattack on Rahul Gandhi as he mocks the latter as 'balak buddhi' (childish mind)

NATIONAL | P8



Another bubble

US stock rally supercharged by AI draws comparisons with the dotcom bubble two decades ago, raising questions on valuations

BUSINESS | P11



Most important call

Rahul Dravid says that a call from Rohit Sharma prompted him to continue as coach after the loss in the ODI World Cup final

SPORTS | P12

116 killed in UP stampede

Overcrowding at religious events without adequate crowd control measures and contingency rescue plans once again caused mayhem when as many as 116 people, including scores of women and children, lost their lives in a stampede during a 'satsang' at Pulrai village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, Tuesday. The incident is a crude reminder of death of several pilgrims during the recent Chhota Char Dham Yatra, or the 1997 tragedy at Baripada where 178 persons perished during the annual conference of devotees of a guru. The latest tragedy nevertheless, a wakeup call for authorities to tighten norms for visitors' safety than leaving the besotted public to the mercy of greedy organisers

AGENCIES

Hathras (UP), July 2: A stampede at a religious congregation Tuesday killed 116 people, most of them women, as devotees suffocated to their deaths and bodies piled atop each other in the worst such tragedy in recent years.

The stampede took place as the 'satsang' here ended. Some accounts said people slipped in the slush as they ran after the preacher's car, triggering the stampede. Tens of thousands of devotees had gathered in the Hathras district's Phulrai village for the 'satsang', conducted by Baba Narayan Hari who is also known as Saakar Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba.

Twenty-seven bodies were brought to a hospital in neighbouring Etah district, and 89 lay dead in Hathras itself.

UP Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh put the death toll at 116. Barring seven children and a man, the dead are all women. Singh said 72 have been identified so far. Victims, dead or unconscious, were brought to the Sikandara Rau Trauma Centre in trucks and 'tempo's. The bodies lay scattered outside this Hathras health centre as people milled around them. A video clip showed a woman crying as she sat in a



MASSIVE TRAGEDY: Relatives outside a hospital where victims of the Hathras' stampede are admitted, in Etah, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

truck, amid five or six bodies. Another showed a man and a woman lifeless in another vehicle. Clips before the stampede showed people in a large 'shami-ana', listening to Bhole Baba. The 'baba' sat before them on a throne-like chair.

The preacher was a policeman in the 1990s when he left the force, and started holding satsangs, according to one account. Politicians are said to be among his followers.

District Magistrate Ashish Kumar said the 'satsang' was a private event for which the sub-divisional magistrate had granted permission. The local administration provided security outside the venue while the arrangements inside were made by the

IN THE PAST

- MARCH 31, 2023:** At least 36 people were killed on the occasion of Ram Navami at a temple in Indore city.
- JANUARY 1, 2022:** At least 12 people died and over a dozen were injured in a stampede at the famous Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir
- JULY 14, 2015:** Twenty-seven pilgrims died and 20 others were injured in a stampede at a major bathing spot on the banks of the Godavari river in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh
- OCTOBER 3, 2014:** Thirty-two people were killed and 26 injured in a stampede at Gandhi Maidan in Patna after the Dussehra celebrations
- OCTOBER 13, 2013:** 115 people were killed and over 100 injured in a stampede during the Navratri festivities near Ratangarh temple in Madhya Pradesh

organisers, he added.

According to the chief secretary, the application letter seeking permission for the event put the number of expected participants at 80,000. "But it was much

more than that," he said.

"Satsang" participant Sonu Kumar blamed the slippery ground for the stampede.

"When Guru ji left the place after almost one and half hours,

all of a sudden devotees ran behind him to touch his feet," he said. When they turned back, some slipped. Amid his reply to a two-day debate in Parliament on the motion of thanks on the President's address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the deaths.

President Droupadi Murmu said the news was heart-rending. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge expressed sadness.

The PMO announced an ex-gratia compensation of ₹2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each person killed in the stampede. The injured will be given ₹50,000. UP CM Yogi Adityanath made a similar announcement. **MORE: P3&8**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Forget infra projects, what worries me is the crumbling of factories of lies

2-day holiday for Rath Yatra

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday announced a two-day holiday for the upcoming Rath Yatra, July 7 and 8, marking a special occasion after 53 years.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review preparations for the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and his siblings in Puri, Majhi highlighted the significance of this rare two-day festival, last observed in 1971.

He emphasised the blessings and auspicious timing of this event coinciding with the tenure of the new BJP government. "As the Rath Yatra will span two days, I direct the officers concerned to declare public holidays on these days," Majhi said, urging all officials to ensure the



festival's smooth execution to uphold the pride of Puri and Odisha. The Chief Minister said President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to participate in the Rath Yatra celebrations. She is likely to arrive in Puri July 6 evening and participate in the festival and chariot pulling July 7.

Given the convergence of key rituals like 'Nabajaubana Darshan', 'Netra Utsav', and the 'Gundicha Yatra' July 7th, Majhi called for collective cooperation from stakeholders to facilitate timely rituals and the successful culmination of the festival. **P3**

CJI bench to hear NEET pleas July 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear July 8 a batch of pleas related to the controversy-ridden NEET-UG, including those alleging irregularities in the examination held May 5 and seeking a direction that it be held afresh.

According to the cause list for July 8 uploaded on the apex court's website, the batch of 26 petitions would come up for hearing before a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country.

The NEET-UG, 2024 was held

RAHUL URGES PM FOR DEBATE IN LS

New Delhi: Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting his government to facilitate a debate on the medical entrance exam NEET issue in the Lok Sabha, Wednesday. He said the Opposition's request to discuss NEET was denied in both Houses of Parliament June 28 as well as Monday, and added that the Lok Sabha Speaker had assured the Opposition that he would discuss the matter with the government. **P9**

across 4,750 centres May 5 and around 24 lakh candidates appeared in it. Initially expected June 14, the results were announced June 4 due to an early completion of answer-sheet evaluation. Allegations of irregular-

ities, including paper leaks, have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties.

On June 11, hearing a plea seeking that the exam be held afresh on the grounds of alleged question paper leak and other malpractices, the top court observed that the sanctity of the NEET-UG has been affected and sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on the petition.

It, however, refused to stay the counselling of the successful candidates for admissions to MBBS, BDS and other courses.

On June 20, the top court sought the responses of the Centre, the NTA and others on a slew of petitions, including those seeking the scrapping of the NEET-UG and a court-monitored probe.

Selective expunction defies logic: Rahul



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 2: Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi Tuesday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla over portions of his speech in the House having been expunged, saying "selective expunction" defies logic and that the remarks be restored.

In his first speech as the LoP in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing the leaders of the ruling party of dividing people on communal lines. Certain remarks he made during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Lok Sabha Monday were later expunged.

In his letter to Birla, Gandhi said while the Chair derives powers to expunge certain remarks from the proceedings of the House but the stipulation is only those kinds of words, the nature of which have been specified in Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. "I am, however, shocked to note the manner in which considerable portions of my speech have been simply taken off from the proceedings under the garb of expunction," the former Congress chief said.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	SENSEX	NIIFTY	DOLLAR	EURO	GOLD	SILVER
INDEX	79441.45	24,123.85	83.55	89.65	₹71,301	₹88,016
VARIATION	↓ 34.74	↓ 18.10	↑ ₹0.40	↓ ₹0.18	↓ ₹28	↑ ₹494

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.5°C	31.4°C
Min Temp	26.4°C	25.6°C
Humidity	87%	81%
Rainfall	12.1mm	Nil

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain

New horned frog species found in Arunachal

AGENCIES

Shillong, July 2: A team of researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has discovered a new species of forest-dwelling horned frog in Arunachal Pradesh, sources said Tuesday.

The new-to-science *Xenophrys apatani*, found from the Talle Wildlife Sanctuary in the Lower Subansiri district, has been named after the dominant Apatani community in recognition of their ingenuity in the conservation of wild flora and fauna, they said.

"The research, published in the



current edition of the Zoological Survey of India, overturns an earlier erroneous report of the

Maoson horned frog (*Xenophrys maosonensis*) in India, which was reported by ZSI researchers

in Shillong in 2019," said Bhaskar Saikia, one of the scientists.

"The discovery of *Xenophrys apatani* underscores India's rich biodiversity and highlights the importance of rigorous taxonomic studies in understanding our natural heritage. It is a significant addition to the country's herpetofaunal diversity," he said.

The researchers also provided insights into the biogeographic distribution of the *Xenophrys* species in India, distributed along the Eastern Himalayan and the Indo-Burma biodiversity hot spots of the country. "The findings are expected to

guide future conservation efforts and enhance understanding of amphibian evolution in the region," Saikia said.

He explained that the revised conclusion regarding the species' identity came after further analysis revealed substantial genetic disparities between the Indian specimen and *X. maosonensis* from Vietnam and China, prompting a reevaluation.

Saikia, along with his colleague Bikramjit Sinha, also from ZSI Shillong, led the research. The team included KP Dinesh and A. Shabnam from ZSI Pune, and Ilna Jacinta Kharkongor from ZSI Itanagar.

leisure

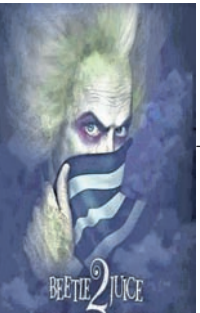


CAMILA CABELLO IS 'COMPLETELY SINGLE'

Pop star Camila Cabello has declared she is 'completely single' at the moment but she just doesn't have time for romance right now. The 27-year-old pop star previously dated relationship coach Matthew Hussey, singer Shawn Mendes and businessman Austin Kevitch and was recently linked to her collaborator Drake.

BURTON'S BEETLEJUICE 2 TO OPEN VENICE FILM FEST

Filmmaker Tim Burton's film *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*, starring Michael Keaton, Jenna Ortega, and Willem Dafoe, is set to open the upcoming Venice Film Festival. The film also stars Catherine O'Hara, Winona Ryder, Justin Theroux, and Monica Bellucci.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today the stars advocate that you concentrate on money matters and how to save some, and in this purpose you will remain engrossed. However, Ganesh advises you not to neglect domestic duties lest you encounter a morose spouse. So carry on and make a dash for that movie as planned. Don't cancel it.

TAURUS
You are likely to turn excessively self centred today, says Ganesh. This could cause you to be very insecure. You will have a tendency to control and dominate others. There is a likelihood that you may, thereby, jeopardize important relationships.

GEMINI
Ganesh opines that today you might feel a little blue and under the weather. You may harbour feelings of loneliness today. Your repressed emotions and yearnings as well as your intellectual leanings will likely come to the fore today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Your ideas today are source of your energy. A situation may arise, which will force you to take hard decisions later. A new business or venture may prove beneficial. Your magical touch will bestow success in every endeavour. Ganesh is with you.

LEO
You might be the man of the house, but to make that house a home, you need a family. So keep that in mind, says Ganesh, and remember that your family is the foundation of your success. Make every possible effort to make your family's roots stronger.

VIRGO
Today might just bring those emotions to the fore that have been lying in the closet of your heart since long. You will even develop a bonding - a sentimental attachment - with your belongings. But, if and when you don't find the surroundings to your liking, you shall be like a fish out of the water.

LIBRA
Unleash the artist in you today! Don't be surprised if you happen to discover a love for the fine arts. The stars bestow on you refined aesthetic sense. As a result, your penchant for interior decoration is sure to get a boost. There is also the possibility of you capitalising on the commercial aspect of your newly acquired hobby, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Family matters have been screaming for long for your attention now. Your estranged spouse may deal the final blow to sever all ties, foretells Ganesh. But keep calm, and hold that tongue, advises Ganesh. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

SAGITTARIUS
Family matters have been screaming for long for your attention now. Your estranged spouse may deal the final blow to sever all ties, foretells Ganesh. But keep calm, and hold that tongue, advises Ganesh. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

CAPRICORN
The chances of you meeting financial success are few, but they are there nonetheless, says Ganesh. If you really want to improve your account balance and settle all the burgeoning debts, focus on what all needs to be done, and get it done without delay. You will make merry later in the day and will enjoy the company of your loved ones.

AQUARIUS
The day is taxing. You may find that others have dumped their share of work on you. But you are not one to admit defeat, and will deal with the challenge squarely, says Ganesh. You will outwit your opponents, and toast your success by starlight!

PISCES
While your day is unlikely to be very satisfactory, keeping your expectations low will help lessen your disappointment, says Ganesh. However, the evening is likely to be as refreshing as your day was depressing, with all the socialising in store for you.

Sharvari ecstatic being known as '100 crore girl'

Mumbai: The horror-comedy movie *Munhya* has entered the Rs 100 crore club, grossing Rs 112 crore at the domestic box office. Actress Sharvari is ecstatic with the overwhelming response the film has received.

The actress said it's quite an overwhelming moment for her as it's her first film breaching the Rs 100 crore mark.

The film also features Abhay Verma, Mona Singh, and Sathyaraj.

Talking about the response to the film, Sharvari said: "I have been awed by the big stars who have huge Rs 100 crore and above hits to their credit. To think that so many people have come to the theatres to see you, to shower their love and appreciation on your film and your work is quite an overwhelming moment for me. *Munhya* is only the second release of my career. So, to taste this kind of success so early in my career is hugely motivating."

The actress further mentioned that, as an actor, one always wishes that their films become hits.

"Being known as the '100 crore girl' definitely

has a nice ring to it, and this will get me to work harder every single time I face the camera. I have huge ambitions as an actor. I needed the right stepping stone to dash towards my goal, and *Munhya* has done that for me," she added.

Recently, Sharvari was voted the Most Popular Actor in India by IMDb. IANS



Rakul's mantra for energy, looks



Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh, who is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming Tamil vigilante action film *Indian 2*, Tuesday conducted an *Ask Me Anything* (AMA) session with her fans on social media, and revealed about her mantra of energy, good looks, her favourite holiday spot in India, and her favourite cricket players.

Taking to Instagram Stories, Rakul answered the fun questions of the fans. During the session, a fan asked the diva about her mantra of energy and good looks. Replying to the same, Rakul said: "The mantra of my energy is to keep myself away from all the negativity. I just focus on my job, my people, my life, and I am really not worried about who is thinking what, and I try to keep my karma clean."

"And I think that what keeps me positive and kind of reflects on your skin. So, I think for each one of us, if we have a clear conscience, if we are happy from within, I think that's what is going to reflect on your face," she shared.

Speaking about her favourite cricket players, Rakul said: "It has to be Virat Kohli. I think he is amazing. And also Rohit Sharma."

Rakul also revealed her favourite holiday spot in India, saying, "Goa. I just love Goa." Rakul married actor-filmmaker Jockey Bhagnani February 21, 2024, in Goa. IANS



SRK to be honoured at Locarno Film Festival

Mumbai: Top star Shah Rukh Khan will be honoured with the prestigious Pardo alla Carriera, or career leopard, which pays tribute to his work in Indian cinema, at the 77th edition of the Locarno Film Festival.

The 58-year-old star, who has a career spanning over three decades in Hindi cinema, will be feted with the honour at Locarno's iconic Piazza Grande August 10, according to a statement.

Along with the honour, as a tribute to the star, Shah Rukh's iconic 2022 film *Devdas* by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, will be screened August 11, and SRK will appear at the Forum @Spazio Cinema for a conversation open to the public. Giona A Nazzaro, artistic director, expressed his excitement, stating, "To welcome a living legend like Shah Rukh Khan to Locarno is a dream come true! The wealth and breadth of his contribution to Indian cinema are unparalleled."

"Khan is a king who has never lost touch with the audience that crowned him. This brave and daring artist has always been willing to challenge himself while remaining true to what his fans all over the world eagerly expect from his films," Nazzaro said in a statement. The artistic director also tagged SRK as a 'people's hero', describing him as sophisticated yet grounded. "Shah Rukh Khan is a legend of our times," Nazzaro concluded. IANS

Sushmita's insights on friendship with exes

Mumbai: Actress Sushmita Sen has always been candid about her views on marriage, relationships, and maintaining friendships with former partners. The former Miss Universe, known for her honest and fearless approach to life, shared insights into her personal journey.

When asked about her marriage plans, Sen recently expressed an open-minded attitude, stating, "It has never been a 'never' situation. Be it the biological clock or the right time provided by social conditioning, neither is the right reason to get married. But if the person is right and ticks all the boxes as far as I am concerned, of course, I will get married."

Regarding the possibility of being friends with ex-partners, Sen acknowledged the complexities involved, but also expressed her own experiences. "Definitely. But I think it's hard and confusing. Many people can be friends with their exes and not know where to draw the line or have boundaries.

But it's possible because I have seen it happen, and I am blessed to have it in my life as well." The personal life of the *Main Hoon Na* actress has often been a topic of discussion, with her relationships with notable figures such as actor Randeep Hooda, model Rohman Shawl, and businessman Lalit Modi making headlines. IANS



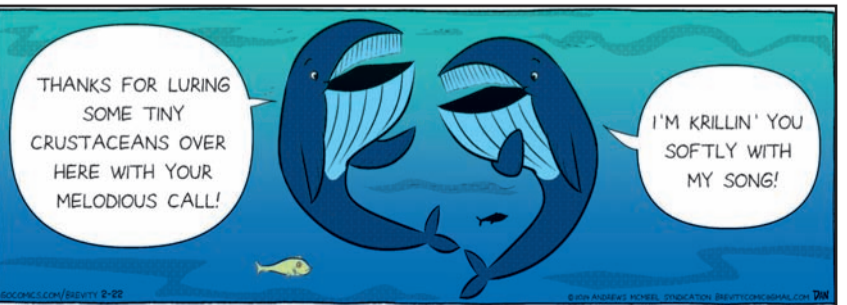
PEANUTS



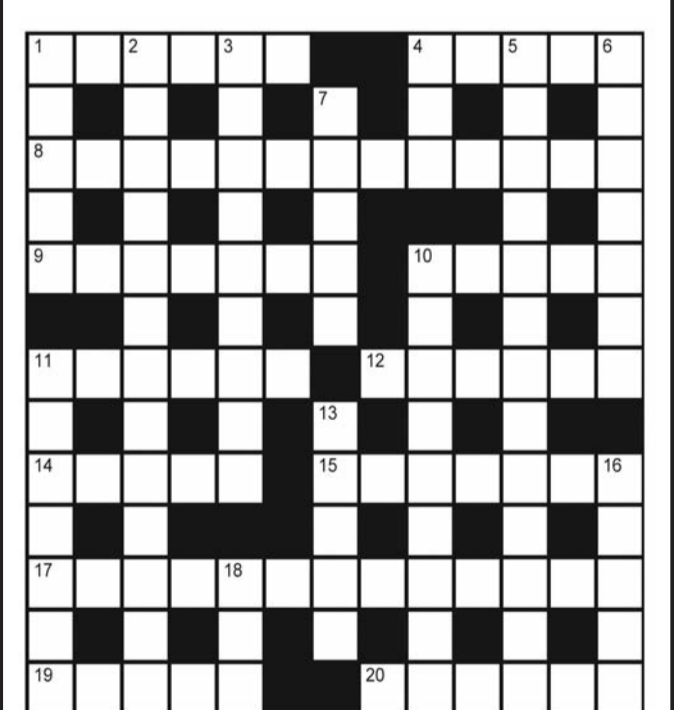
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



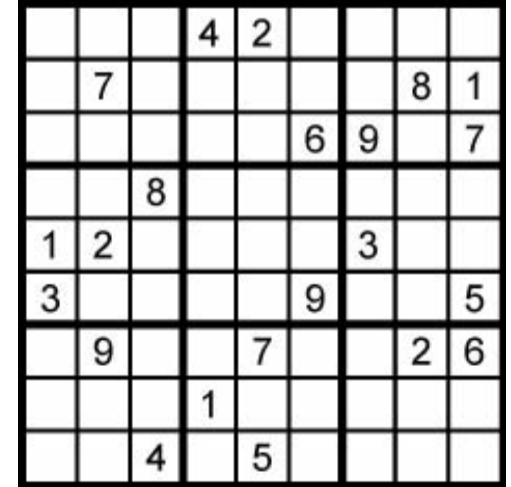
FUN post CROSSWORD



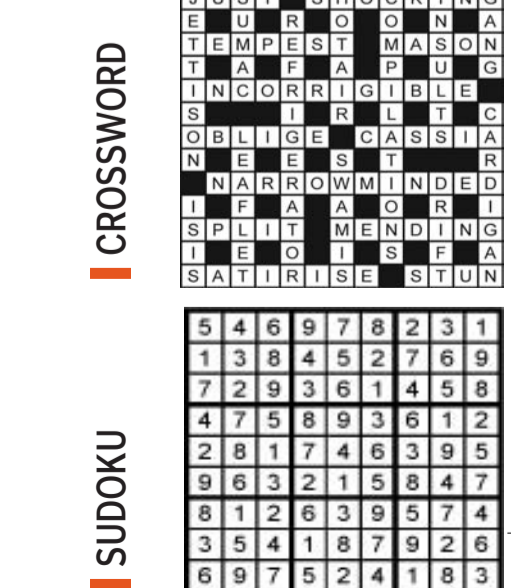
- Across**
- 1 Depression (7,6)
 - 4 Wooden shoe
 - 8 Ignominious
 - 9 Eliminate (4,3)
 - 10 Kind of column
 - 11 Turkish authorities
 - 12 Winter hanger
 - 14 Motif
 - 15 Cherubic
 - 17 It can be itchy (7,6)
 - 19 Heathen
 - 20 Slapstick
- Down**
- 1 House style (4,9)
 - 2 Music genre (4,9)
 - 3 Ice cream flavour
 - 4 Military address
 - 5 Black Death (7,6)
 - 6 Molasses
 - 7 River in Ghana
 - 10 Disguised
 - 11 Pause that refreshes (3,4)
 - 13 Mother-of-pearl
 - 16 Lamb seasoning
 - 18 Martini ingredient

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

CBI nabs 4 including FCI GM over bribery

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested four persons, including the general manager (GM) of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) posted in the City here, in connection with a bribery case of ₹1 lakh, the Central agency sources said, Tuesday.

FCI (Bhubaneswar) GM Prem Singh Bhanot, FCI manager (Accounts) Sanjoy Dey, M/s SP Traders and Suppliers Pvt Ltd proprietor Malina Dey and middleman Syed Hasnain Ahmed have been taken into custody, they said.

According to the CBI, Bhanot aided and favoured M/s SP Traders and Suppliers Pvt Ltd, a Kolkata-based company who had participated in the tender and was declared L-1, in securing a tender pertaining to transportation of rice grain.

"An accused middleman contacted and informed the FCI GM that M/s SP Traders and Suppliers Pvt Ltd proprietor would like to offer him a bribe for having facilitated her in the allotment of work order in tender. The accused GM asked him (middleman) to inform the pro-



rietor to give ₹5 lakh as bribe in lieu of this favour rendered to her," said a CBI spokesperson.

The CBI registered a case against five persons—FCI GM, manager, the Kolkata-based company and two middlemen—June 28, 2024 and launched a probe.

"It was alleged that the FCI GM, manager, middlemen and the private company were indulged in corrupt activities causing wrongful gain to themselves and loss to the exchequer by processing the tender for rice grain transportation," the CBI said.

The Central investigating agency carried out a trap oper-

ation in which Bhanot, Ahmed and Malina Dey were arrested while exchange of ₹1 lakh bribe was taking place, they said, adding that Sanjoy Dey was arrested later.

"All the arrested accused persons were produced before the Competent Court at Bhubaneswar and have been remanded to police custody till July 6, 2024," the spokesperson said.

The CBI seized ₹5 lakh cash, locker keys, mobile phones, laptops and incriminating documents during searches in Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar, the spokesperson said.

Man arrested for raping child in City

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The Commissionerate Police here, Tuesday, claimed to have arrested a 23-year-old man on charges of raping a two-and-half-year-old girl under Airfield police limits a couple of days back.

Meanwhile, the condition of the rape survivor who was admitted to Capital Hospital is stated to be stable. "She would be discharged from the hospital soon," said the hospital sources.

Addressing the media, Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said the accused has been identified as Santosh Khuntia alias Kanha. The victim, along with her grandfather, had gone to play outside near Sundarpada, Sunday evening. However, the girl left for a grocery shop nearby to buy some essentials and asked his grandfather to wait for her. Meanwhile, Santosh lured the victim with a chocolate and took her to his house where he raped her.

When the girl did not turn up, her grandfather and parents started searching for her. When they reached Santosh's house, they saw the minor girl lying on a bed and bleeding. However, by then, Santosh had fled the scene.

Singh added that her parents lodged a complaint with Airfield police that formed a team and began a probe. The cops traced Santosh to a place near Pipli and arrested him, Tuesday.

SAFETY FIRST

Steel barricades were installed near Gadagadia Ghat of Mahanadi in Cuttack, Tuesday, to prevent drowning incidents



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Rahul remark: 10 hurt as BJP, Cong workers clash

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 2: At least 10 people were injured here, Tuesday, when a scuffle broke out between Congress and BJP workers during a demonstration over Rahul Gandhi's speech in Parliament recently.

According to sources, the incident happened outside the state Congress headquarters where the BJP was holding a demonstration over Gandhi's remarks in Lok Sabha, Monday.

"When we were staging a peaceful protest outside the Congress Bhawan, stones were pelted at our workers. Some police personnel and journalists were also attacked," alleged state Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) president Abhilash Panda.

"We demand unconditional apology from Rahul Gandhi for insulting and hurting Hindus," he said.

A complaint has been lodged at Capital police station against the Congress workers for the violence, another BJP leader said.

Besides stones, the two sides also threw cow dung at each other. Cow dung was also thrown at a hoarding of Gandhi, which was later washed by Congress workers



Nawaz said, "Every individual has the right to protest. But we have never seen a violent protest like the one organised by the BJP today. The people who have voted for the BJP will give them a befitting reply."

In his first speech as the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Monday, Gandhi had launched a no-holds-barred attack on the BJP, accusing the leaders of the ruling party of dividing people on communal lines.

His remarks drew massive protests from the treasury benches, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi slamming the Congress leader for calling the entire Hindu community violent. Gandhi, however, clarified that he was speaking about the BJP.

Police had a tough time to bring the situation under control. NSUI state president Yashir



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CMS Pravati Parida & KV Singh Deo, and Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan among others during the meeting in Puri, Tuesday

CM seeks cooperation for car fest success

AGENCIES

Puri, July 2: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday sought cooperation from servants, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration, the district administration, and devotees to make the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings a grand success.

Majhi, who chaired a final review meeting for the annual Rath Yatra scheduled for July 7, said there would be little time left for pulling the chariots July 7 as the day will also have Netra Utsav, Nabajouban Darshan apart from Rath Yatra.

Temple sources said one of the chariots would be pulled a short distance July 7, as per tradition, and the pulling of the chariots would resume Monday to their final destination, the Gundicha Temple.

The CM said Lord Jagannath is considered a deity of the Adivasis, adding that as a member of the

Adivasi community, he feels blessed to be a part of this festival. He stated that this rare opportunity came after the new government took power and appealed to everyone to observe it grandly.

The CM informed the meeting that President Droupadi Murmu and some other VVIPs are likely to visit Puri to participate in the opening day of the festival. Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan emphasised the need to perform all rituals of the deities according to the prescribed timetable. He sought the cooperation of all to make this grand festival of Lord Jagannath a success.

Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain said that almost all the required preparations for the festival have been completed. He informed that 100 beds have been reserved in the district headquarters hospital for heat-stroke victims, and 179 additional doctors have been posted for the event.

Swain said that 60 ambulances, including 30 provided by NGOs, will be deployed. Additionally, 300 units of blood will be kept in the blood bank for emergencies, and seven food inspectors with their staff have been pressed into service to ensure the quality of food.

The Public Health department will deploy 42 additional water tankers at various spots to provide drinking water to pilgrims, and 165 drink-from-tap fountains will be made operational.

"30 hand-held water sprinkling units will be used to cool the temperature on the Grand Road. About 400 lifeguards will be posted at various stretches along the beach to prevent drowning in the sea. TPCODL has been directed to ensure an uninterrupted power supply to the entire town during the festival," Swain said.

State Transport Authority has been asked to ensure the operation of more buses to Puri from

different areas, display rate charts, and deploy four interceptors and seven cranes on various routes to Puri.

The railways will run 315 special trains to Puri during the festival in addition to all regular trains. A railway information counter will operate near the Gundicha Temple to cater to the needs of passengers, while 35 ticket booking counters and six ticket vending units will operate for the Rath Yatra, the District Collector said.

Srimandir Chief Administrator Vir Vikram Yadav said all the required timber has been provided by the Nayagarh Forest division, and the construction of the three chariots has reached the final stage.

In his brief speech, newly-appointed Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja sought the cooperation of all to make the festival a grand success. Almost all Cabinet ministers along with MLAs were present at the meeting.

State govt plans ₹3,000 social security pension

POST NEW NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The state government is planning to increase pensions and allowances for eligible beneficiaries across various schemes in the state. Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Minister Nityananda Gond told reporters, Tuesday, that efforts are underway to raise pensions for elderly widows and persons with disabilities (PwDs).

The department has proposed an increase of ₹3,000 in monthly pension for the above three categories which is pending for approval of the Finance department.

The minister emphasised that discussions regarding budgetary allocations are in progress with the Finance department to facilitate the proposed adjustments.

The BJP, in its 2024 poll man-

ifesto, had promised to raise the allowance upto ₹3,000.

Earlier, the BJD government under the chief ministership of Naveen Patnaik had hiked the monthly pension by ₹500 each for the distressed people covered under various social security schemes. As many as 36.75 lakh beneficiaries have received the revised amount.

Under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY), beneficiaries up to 79 years of age were eligible for a monthly pension of ₹500, while those beyond 80 years of age are eligible for ₹700 per month. Similarly, beneficiaries with 60 per cent or more disability and above 80 years of age were eligible for a monthly pension of ₹900.

After the hike by the previous government, they were getting ₹1,000, ₹1,200 and ₹1,400 per month, respectively.

5 cybercriminals held for ₹36.34 lakh fraud

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The Commissionerate Police here Tuesday claimed that five persons of a gang were arrested in connection with a cyber fraud of ₹36.34 lakh, nearly two months after the incident came to the fore.

The police seized 80 bank accounts, 60 ATM cards, 30 SIM cards, 23 mobile phones, two laptops and a four-wheeler from the possession of the accused. ACP Anjana Tudu said the accused were identified as Sheik Tajuddin, 38, Muchumari Chitti Babu, 34, Laleng Zauva Kaipeng, 28, Jiten Kaipeng, 21 and Elvish Tara, 36.

Tudu said the fraudsters contacted the victim, a government official, and introduced themselves as Mumbai Cyber Branch officials. They said his Aadhaar data is being used by a few miscreants to illegally ship a parcel from Taiwan to Mumbai. In addition, they claimed that four new bank accounts have been opened using his Aadhaar data for illegal transactions.

Later, they coerced the victim to transfer ₹36.34 lakh to escape police action. Panicked, the victim transferred the money to the bank account of the miscreants, May 7. Following this, the miscreants again transferred the entire amount to another bank account.

Cyber police have booked the five accused under relevant Sections of IPC along with Section 66 (C) and 66 (D) of IT Act.

HATHRAS TRAGEDY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 2: The deadly stampede in Hathras Tuesday that claimed over 100 lives occurred at a congregation of Baba Narayan Hari alias Saakar Vishwa Hari 'Bhole Baba', a former policeman who turned into a religious preacher and gained a following, especially in western Uttar Pradesh.

The real name of Bhole Baba is Surajpal. He is a native of

Cop-turned-preacher Bhole Baba attracted lakhs

Bahadur Nagar in Kasganj district, a retired IPS officer said.

Circle Officer (CO) of Patiyali Vijay Kumar Rana told PTI that Surajpal left his job as a policeman in the late 1990s and turned to spirituality. He started conducting 'satsang' (religious sermons).

One of Surajpal's three brothers died and he set up a Trust and appointed a caretaker for his property in Bahadurgarh where his ashram is located, the

CO said. He has no children and takes his wife along with him to 'satsang'. Surajpal belongs to the Scheduled Caste (SC) community. After he established his ashram in Bahadur Nagar, Bhole Baba's fame grew rapidly among the poor and deprived sections and lakhs of people became his followers, according to locals.

A person from Hathras said, "Baba conducts sermons and



keeps his own volunteers for security who take care of the arrangements of his satsang."

The stampede, which occurred as people headed home after a 'satsang' in the district's Phulrai village conducted by Bhole Baba, killed 116 people Tuesday, in the worst such tragedy in recent years.

According to Sikandra Rao sub-divisional magistrate Ravendra Kumar, the tragedy occurred when devotees tried

to get a glimpse of Bhole Baba as the event ended. They also wanted to collect some soil from around the Baba's feet.

District Magistrate Ashish Kumar said the satsang was a private function for which the sub-divisional magistrate had granted permission.

The local administration provided security outside the venue, while the arrangements inside were made by organisers, he added.

Merged schools to reopen: S&ME Min



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Several schools in the state which were either permanently closed or merged with others during the BJD regime will be reopened based on necessity and official reports on the ground reality, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Nityananada Gond said Tuesday.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, SK AZARUDDIN, S/O - SEKH SAMSURDDIN, AT/P.O.-Kerang, P.S. - Khurda, Dist. - Khurda declare by this Affidavit No. - 620, Dtd. - 29.05.2024 that both names SK AZARUDDIN and SEKH AZARUDDIN refer to the same person identified as SK AZARUDDIN for all Purpose.

I Apun Kumar Mahapatra aged about 47 years, S/o. Amarendra Mahapatra, resident of D-10, Maitri Vihar, Chandrasekharpur, S.E. Rly. Proj. Complex, Bhubaneswar, PIN - 751023, Dist.: Khordha, Odisha hereby declare that I have changed my name from Apun Kumar Mahapatra to Venkates Kumar Mahapatra by an affidavit before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dt.01.07.2024. Hence I shall be known as Venkates Kumar Mahapatra for all purposes.

LOST

I Prafulla Kumar Dash, S/o. Late Padmalochan Dash, R/o. Plot No. GL/03, VSS Nagar Housing Society, Bhubaneswar, have lost somewhere my Original Lease-Deed of OSHB No. 3093 of 1999. If anybody find it, then kindly contact: Prafulla Kumar Dash, Mobile No. 9568007858.

64 deer to be shifted from Taptapani park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, July 2: State forest department has decided to translocate 64 deer from the Taptapani deer park, designated as the mini zoo, to Lakhari Valley in Ganjam and Chandaka wildlife sanctuary, an official said.

The decision to shift the animals has been taken due to overpopulation in the deer park, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Ganjam Sudarshan S said. Of the total 64 animals to be shifted, 32 are spotted deer, while 32 are sambar deer.

The sprawling 1.86 hectare park is one of the major attractions for visitors to Taptapani which is situated on the border of Ganjam and Gajapati districts.

H&UD Min Mahapatra visits key parks in City

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP



Bhubaneswar, July 2: Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra visited several parks and gardens in Bhubaneswar Tuesday.

Accompanied by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) vice chairman Balwant Singh and other officials, the minister's early morning tour included Anandabana, the State Silviculture Garden at Ghatikia, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Park at Kalinga Nagar, and the Waste to Art Park at K-7, Kalinga Nagar.



RAISING VOICE: Members of All India Save Education Committee stage a protest near Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, Monday, against the centralisation of education system and irregularities by National Testing Agency

MANGROVE PATHA UTSAV

'Collaborative efforts key to save coastal ecosystems'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Collaborative efforts and innovation are keys to save the coastal ecosystems, claimed the stakeholders who participated on the concluding day of the Mangrove Patha Utsav organised by Socratus Foundation and Nature's Club here, Tuesday.



The three-day event, held at Odisha State Museum, was organised with support from Rainmatter Foundation, State Museum and Bakul Foundation.

used on potential opportunities for collaboration to advance the pathways identified. Climate Champions, who have been instrumental in implementation of ECRICC's project objectives, were recognised during the event for their relentless efforts.

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WATERFALL TRAGEDY

Pune administration comes up with safety measures for tourists

The notification says that agencies should deploy divers, rescue boats, lifeguards, life jackets at water bodies frequented by tourists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, July 2: The Pune administration has outlined a series of safety measures for hazardous tourist locations in the district which includes identification and demarcation of dangerous areas, the presence of lifeguards and rescue teams, and the installation of warning boards.



- Entry to tourist spots, especially those inside forests, is banned after 6 pm
- Popular tourist areas with potential safety threats are to be shut down for visitors.
- Tourists won't be allowed to enter the water bodies of Lonavala, Mulshi, Maval and Pavana
- Govt to install more warning signs at tourist spots, in addition to the existing ones. Actions will be taken against local authorities too if this is not followed

The move comes after the incident Sunday when a woman and four children were swept away at a waterfall near the Bhushi Dam, a well-known picnic spot in the picturesque Lonavala hill station of Maharashtra's Pune district.

The incident has sent shockwaves through the community, highlighting the urgent need for improved safety protocols at popular tourist destinations. Furthermore, the tranquil setting of the Pavana Dam in Lonavala has also been marred by a series of tragic drownings, underscoring the critical importance of implementing enhanced safety measures in the region.

ensure necessary measures for the safety of visitors. "Identify the dangerous spots at various tourist places, such as dams, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, cliffs, and mark them as prohibited areas by installing perimeter lines and warning boards, so that tourists do not venture beyond them," Divase said in a notification. "Places which are disaster-prone and where safety measures cannot be taken must be

shut for tourists," he said. Agencies such as Revenue, Forest, Railways, Municipal Corporations, and the Public Works Department should deploy divers, rescue boats, lifeguards, life jackets at water bodies frequented by tourists. "They should rope in NGOs, rescue foundations, trekkers, NDRF and locals for disaster management work at these places. Ambulances with first aid facilities should also be deployed," the collector said. Also, visitors will not be allowed to enter tourist spots located in forest areas after 6 pm, he said in the notification. "The Forest Department should take action against encroachments at tourist spots in forest areas, and the local administration should decide the timings for visitors and ensure they do not stop there after sunset," he said. "If required, take action against those who violate the rules and regulations," Divase stated.

POST HIJAB CONTROVERSY

Mumbai college bans T-shirts, torn jeans

The directive came after the Bombay High Court June 26 refused to interfere in a decision taken by the college to impose a ban on hijab, burka and naqab on its premises, observing that such rules do not violate students' fundamental rights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 2: A city-based college, which has been in news for imposing a ban on hijab, has now also barred students from wearing torn jeans, T-shirts, "revealing" dresses and jerseys, or a dress that reveals religion or shows "cultural disparity". The Chembur Trombay Education Society's NG Acharya and DK Marathe College, in the notice issued June 27, also said students should wear a formal and decent dress while on campus. Students can wear a half or full shirt and trousers. Girls can wear any Indian or western outfit, it said.

located in Chembur. The notice also states that 75 per cent attendance is compulsory. "Discipline is the key to success," it added. Subodh Acharya, General Secretary of the college governing council, said no notice with new directives has been issued by the college, referring to a circular issued by the institute earlier this year. "The notice is not new. We are only asking students to follow the dress code which states not to wear revealing clothes. We are also not asking students to wear sarees or attire of any particular colour," he said. "Students can come to college wearing a hijab or burka, change it in the college common room and then do their work," college principal Vidyagauri Lele said.

Last month, the students moved the high court, challenging a directive issued by the college imposing a dress code under which they cannot wear hijab, naqab, burka, stoles, caps and badges inside the premises. The HC June 26 said a dress code is meant to maintain discipline which is part of the college's fundamental right to "establish and administer an educational institution". The dress code was applicable to all students irrespective of religion or caste, the high court said, dismissing a petition filed against the ban by nine girl students.

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Probe officers to be given 1 case per month to ensure quality

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 2: An investigation officer will be assigned only one major case in a month for quality probe, Nav Mumbai Police Commissioner Milind Bharambe has said, asserting his force is geared up for an effective implementation of the new criminal laws. The Navi Mumbai Police have been imparted training to maintain quality of investigation in cases, which are expected to increase with the facility to file an e-complaint under the new criminal laws, Bharambe told reporters in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai township Monday.

ABVP tries to lay siege to TGSPSC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 2: Tension prevailed at the office of Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGSPSC) here Tuesday as ABVP workers tried to lay siege in support of their demands. On a call given by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a large number of protestors gathered at

TGSPSC in Nampally. They were demanding an increase in the number of posts under Group II and Group III and to allow 100 candidates for every post under Group I main exam. The ABVP leaders demanded that the Congress government fulfil its election promise of two lakh jobs in the first year. They also wanted the government to issue a District Selection Committee (DSC) notification for the posts of 25,000 teachers. Raising slogans against the government, the protestors sat on the road in front of the Commission premises, leading to traffic jam in the busy area. Police personnel swung into action to clear the road. ABVP leaders resisted the attempts by the police personnel to arrest them. Finally, the policemen physically lifted the protestors and whisked them away in vehicles. ABVP State Secretary Chinthakayala Jhansi said they would continue the protest till the government increases the number of posts as promised by the Congress party during Assembly elections. She alleged that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy betrayed students and the unemployed after promising to fill the vacancies.



Police personnel detain an ABVP activist protesting against the Telangana government demanding release of a job calendar for recruitment to different posts in the government departments, in Hyderabad, Tuesday

those who make videos on social problems should be provided required facilities. He said giving back to society was the responsibility of film personalities. Stating that the drug menace and cybersecurity are destroying society, he said saving the society is the responsibility of the cine industry. He thanked megastar Chiranjeevi for voluntarily coming forward to make a video for drug control to participate in a campaign to create awareness in society. The Chief Minister also directed the management of all cinema theatres in the state to compulsorily screen videos on drug control and cybercrimes for free before screening of the movie

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 2: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Tuesday said the state government will give permissions for film shootings and enhance cinema ticket rates only if the filmmakers produce videos to create awareness on drug abuse and cybercrime as part of their social responsibility. The Chief Minister said such videos of 1.5 minutes to 2 minutes duration should feature stars of the movies, for which the filmmakers seek permissions for shooting or approach the government to enhance cinema ticket rates. He made the announcement after flagging off new vehicles of the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau and Telangana Cyber Security Bureau. The Chief Minister lamented that the film personalities are not discharging their social responsibility. "When your new films are released, you come to the government for GOs to increase ticket

He asked Information & Public Relations and Police Departments to call a meeting of film personalities and management of theatres to present the government proposal before them. He said he would subsequently hold a meeting with them to explain the government's thinking and its policy. Revanth Reddy assured all support to the Police Department for the effective discharge of its duties. He was all praise for the Cybercrime team for checking the crimes. He voiced concern over the growing menace of drugs and said this was ruining families and society. He said Drug addicts are committing crimes under the influence of Ganja (Cannabis). Narcotic drugs are the main reason for increasing violence against children. The Chief Minister said the government would give promotion to those officers working effectively for drug control. A Bill in this regard will be passed after a debate in the Assembly. He appealed to the youth to not become drug addicts and to be strong enough to deal with the problems and challenges.



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T'gana govt to expand enforcement wing

In view of the expansion of the geographical area of Hyderabad, the CM A Revanth Reddy directed expanding the purview of the disaster management wing up to the city's Outer Ring Road (ORR)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, July 2: The Telangana government has decided to expand the disaster management wing of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to offer various services, including protecting government assets like water bodies against the threat of encroachments. A preliminary decision has

been taken at a meeting held by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to name the expanded wing as Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection (HYDRA), an official release said Monday night. In view of the expansion of the geographical area of Hyderabad, the CM directed expanding the purview of the disaster management wing up to the city's Outer Ring Road (ORR). The wing would serve the GHMC and also the 27 municipal bodies, 33 Gram Panchayats neighbouring the city. CM Revanth Reddy directed Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari to prepare a draft on the reorganization, requirement of personnel, duties, allocation of funds and responsibilities of the wing. The CM decided that the disaster management wing would take up key responsibilities of



protecting the lakes and ponds within the GHMC area of about two thousand kilometers, 'nalas' (drainages) in the city and the government properties from the threat of encroachment. Apart from this, the disaster management wing will also pro-

vide services like controlling hoardings, drinking water pipelines, power supply lines, drainages, flood management and traffic control, the release said. The Chief Minister instructed officials to speed up the works of Musi Riverfront Development project and said it should work in tune with the government's goal to promote Hyderabad as the 'best international city'. Officials were also asked to take appropriate measures to restore the buildings of historical importance in Hyderabad. The GHMC officials made a powerpoint presentation on various historic places, including City Library, ayurvedic hospital near Charminar, Nizamia Observatory, Gudimalkapur lake. The Chief Minister suggested exploring ways to develop them as tourist spots, the release added.



Police personnel detain an ABVP activist protesting against the Telangana government demanding release of a job calendar for recruitment to different posts in the government departments, in Hyderabad, Tuesday

Chief Minister lamented that the film personalities are not discharging their social responsibility

of the day quote

The International Quizzing Association (IQA) has chosen Kerala as the launchpad for its Asian chapter, marking a significant milestone. The Government of Kerala has appointed the IT Secretary as this initiative's guardian and goodwill ambassador

This (delimitation) is a subject that I hope will benefit from common sense and wisdom of those in power, who can certainly create a huge mess if they think in short term political gains

None of the staff has been paid salary for the last six months, the budget has been reduced by 28.5 per cent, 181 helpline has been withdrawn and no work has been done to fill the posts of chairman and two members

X POST OF THE DAY

BNS I'll conceive I'll thought out If police custody can be spread out for 2months Then No bail for 2months will be the norm Getting rid of colonial era provisions or making it worse!

SHORT TAKES

Couple hurt after shed collapses at hotel

New Delhi: A couple suffered minor injuries when a portion of a shed near a swimming pool at a five-star hotel in southwest Delhi collapsed and fell on them, police said Tuesday.

30 villages cut off as rains submerge roads

Junagadh: Around 30 villages in Junagadh district of Gujarat were cut off as roads leading to them got submerged following heavy rains, with Vanthali in the district recording 361 mm rains in the 24-hour period ending Tuesday morning, officials said.

'NEET-PG likely to be held mid-Aug'

New Delhi: The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Post Graduate (NEET-PG) 2024 is likely to be held mid-August, sources said Tuesday.



The milk production in Karnataka was 90 lakh litres a day in May last year. Now, the KMF is getting one crore litres of milk a day. This is a milestone in the history of KMF

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

OVER 6.71 LAKH HIT BY FLOODS IN ASSAM

Assam's flood situation remained critical Tuesday with over 6.71 lakh people affected in 20 districts in the second wave of flooding this year, as the Indian Air Force (IAF) rescued 13 stranded fishermen from the severely-hit Dibrugarh district, an official said



Monsoon covers entire India 6 days ahead of schedule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: The southwest monsoon has covered the entire country six days ahead of the normal date despite making sluggish progress during mid-June, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Tuesday.

- The Indian monsoon is characterised by inherent fluctuations and changes that occur over time due to various natural factors
This is called natural variability. However, research shows climate change is making the monsoon more variable
Increased variability means more extreme weather and dry spells

consecutive year that the monsoon has covered the entire country ahead of schedule. Monsoon rains covered all of the country July 2 in both 2022 and 2021. Since 2011, the monsoon has covered the country earlier than the usual date seven times.

Last year, the monsoon rolled into Kerala June 8, which was seven days behind the normal date, and covered the entire country by July 2, six days early. Monsoon withdrawal began in west Rajasthan September 25, with an eight-day delay.

The IMD Tuesday said the monsoon will remain active over northwest, east, and northeast India during the next four to five days. Isolated very heavy rainfall is expected over Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura during July 2-6.

Typically, the southwest monsoon makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17, withdrawing entirely by October 15. IMD data shows this is the third



One-horned rhinos at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon district, Assam

PTI PHOTO

RAHUL WRITES TO PM FOR DEBATE ON NEET IN PARL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 2: Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to facilitate a debate on the NEET issue in the Lok Sabha Wednesday.

He said the Opposition's request to discuss the issue related to the medical entrance exam NEET was denied in both Houses of Parliament June 28 as well as Monday, and added that the Lok Sabha speaker had assured the Opposition that he would discuss the matter with the government.

Student bodies of INDIA bloc parties slam Centre

New Delhi: Student outfits of INDIA bloc parties slammed the BJP-led Centre Tuesday over alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG and reiterated their demand that the medical entrance test be held again for all the 24 lakh candidates who had appeared in it.

"I am writing to request for a debate in Parliament on NEET," Gandhi said in his letter to the

prime minister Tuesday. "Our aim is to engage constructively to find a way forward. At this moment, our only concern is the welfare of nearly 24 lakh NEET aspirants across India," he said.

"The NEET examination deserves immediate attention because it has exposed the deep rot in our higher education system. The past seven years have seen over 70 paper leaks, affecting over two crore students," the Congress leader said.

Rashid granted two-hour parole to take oath as MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: A court here Tuesday granted two-hour custody parole to Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid to take oath as a Lok Sabha MP July 5, subject to some conditions.

Rashid, also known as Engineer Rashid, was elected from Baramulla seat as an independent candidate defeating National Conference leader Omar Abdullah in the recent Lok Sabha polls. He was arrested in a 2017 Jammu and Kashmir terror funding case.

Rashid had moved the court seeking interim bail, or custody parole in the alternative, to take oath and perform his parliamentary functions. Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh allowed custody parole for two hours July 5 to enable him to take oath, subject to a few conditions.

It said Rashid's wife and children were allowed to be present, on production of identity cards, during the making and subscribing of the oath and that he was not allowed access to a phone and internet.

After joining AAP, Surjit makes U-turn; back to Akali fold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 2: In an embarrassment to the AAP in Punjab, SAD's Surjit Kaur was back to the Akali fold Tuesday evening, within hours after she had joined the ruling outfit in the presence of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Days after the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) withdrew support and disowned its candidate Surjit Kaur, who was fielded for Jalandhar West bypoll, she had joined the ruling AAP in Jalandhar in the presence of the Chief Minister.

However, taking a U-turn by evening, Kaur, who had joined the AAP along with some of her family members, was back to the SAD fold led by the rebel group.

Rebel Akali leader Bibi Jagir Kaur welcomed her back while interacting with reporters in Jalandhar.

Sukhbir Singh Badal-led SAD had last week said the party will support the BSP nominee for the July 10 bypoll to the Jalandhar West Assembly seat instead of the officially fielded candidate Surjit Kaur who was picked by a panel, two of whose members have now rebelled against the party chief.

Aditya-L1 completes first halo orbit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 2: India's first solar mission Aditya-L1 spacecraft completed its first halo orbit around the Sun-Earth L1 point Tuesday, ISRO said.

The space agency said its station-keeping manoeuvre Tuesday ensured its seamless transition into the second halo orbit.

The Aditya-L1 mission, which is an Indian solar observatory at Lagrangian point L1, was launched September 2, 2023 and was inserted in its targeted halo orbit January 6, 2024.

According to ISRO, Aditya-L1 spacecraft in the halo orbit takes 178 days to complete a revolution around the L1 point.



During its travel in the halo orbit, Aditya-L1 spacecraft will be subjected to various perturbing forces that will cause it to depart from the targeted orbit, the space agency said.

"Aditya-L1 underwent two station-keeping manoeuvres February 22 and June 7, re-

spectively, to maintain this orbit. Today's third station-keeping manoeuvre has ensured that its travel continued in the second halo orbit path around L1," ISRO said.

The agency explained that Aditya-L1's journey around Sun-Earth L1 Lagrangian point involves modeling of complex dynamics.

The understanding of various perturbing forces acting on the spacecraft helped in determining the trajectory accurately and planning precise orbit manoeuvres, it added.

"With today's manoeuvre, the state-of-the-art flight dynamics software developed in-house at URSC-ISRO for the Aditya-L1 missions stands fully validated," ISRO said.

Quota row: Bihar govt moves SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: The Bihar government has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Patna High Court verdict that has set aside the amended reservation laws in the state, which enabled the Nitish Kumar government to increase the quotas for Dalits, tribals and backward classes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent.

In its June 20 verdict, the high court declared that the amendments, passed unanimously by the state's bicameral legislature in November last year, were "ultra vires" of the Constitution, "bad in law" and "violative of the equality clause".

A division bench of the high court had allowed a bunch of pe-



titions challenging the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the Bihar (In Admission in Educational Institutions) Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023, while "leaving the parties to suffer their respective costs".

Climate change cannot be ignored: CJI

This year, Delhi experienced the hottest-recorded weather. We have experienced two heatwaves followed by record-breaking rain in a single day. Our infrastructure must reflect the reality we live in -- climate change can no longer be ignored

D Y CHANDRACHUD

New Delhi, July 2: Flagging recent heatwaves followed by heavy rainfall in Delhi, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud Tuesday said climate change cannot be ignored and stressed the need to adopt a "green lifestyle" to reduce carbon emissions.

The CJI was speaking at a foundation stone-laying ceremony at Karkardooma, Shastri Park and Rohini here for trial court buildings in the capital. "This year, Delhi experienced the hottest-recorded weather.

We have experienced two heatwaves followed by record-breaking rain in a single day. Our infrastructure must reflect the reality we live in -- climate change can no longer be ignored."

"One crucial step is to incorporate a green lifestyle into our daily lives, which includes reducing carbon emissions. I was delighted to know that the new buildings will focus on heat-island mitigation and reduce environmental footprint," he said.

The CJI referred to an 18th-century case, in which one Rama Kamati's servant was subjected to custodial torture to confess his



employer's criminality. Even Kamati was convicted in the case and he later died in prison. "Our legal and constitutional system is fundamentally premised on the virtues of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Courts are the guardian of these foundational virtues.

We uphold them by enforcing rights-based substantive laws and fairness-based procedural laws," Justice Chandrachud said, adding that in that case, it later came to light that the evidence against the convict was fabricated.

Laying down the foundation stone, he said, "Court premises,

like all buildings, are not just made of bricks and concrete. They are made up of hope. Courts are made to realise the virtues of justice and the rule of law. Every case that is being filed before us is with that hope for justice. When we invest in the safety, accessibility and comfort of our judges, lawyers and litigants, we build more than just an efficient system -- we make a just and inclusive system."

Paddy variety Pusa 44 cultivation continues in Punjab

NEW DELHI: Farmers in Punjab's districts with the highest stubble-burning incidents continue to cultivate the long-duration and water-intensive paddy variety Pusa 44, according to a new survey released Tuesday. The survey, conducted by researchers from the Delhi-based independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), also found that nearly half of Punjab farmers using in-situ crop residue management (CRM) machines still burn some loose paddy straw to ensure the machines' efficient operation and for pest control.



The release of the director of Shifa Hospital is a serious mistake and a moral failure. The place of this man, under whose responsibility our abductees were murdered and held, is in prison
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PM, ISRAEL

LONGEST CYCLONE EVER
The UN weather agency said Tuesday that Tropical Cyclone Freddy, a deadly Indian Ocean storm that lashed eastern Africa last year, was confirmed to be the longest-lasting cyclone ever recorded at 36 days



of the day **QUOTE**

Authorities will not sit across the table with Afghan civil society in this format, but they have heard very clearly the need to include women and civil society in all aspects of public life



ROSEMARY DICARLO | UN UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL

India is a country in which we are deepening our relations within a number of keyspaces, especially as it relates to deepening our economic ties, deepening our security cooperation



VEDANT PATEL | STATE DEPARTMENT DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON, US

China is committed to developing friendly cooperation with Pacific Island countries, including Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands



MAO NING | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN, CHINA

SHORT TAKES

China, Philippines hold crucial talks

Manila: China and the Philippines held a crucial meeting Tuesday to try to ease escalating tensions following their worst confrontation in the disputed South China Sea that sparked fears of a wider conflict that could involve Manila's ally the United States. The Chinese and Philippine delegations "affirmed their commitment to de-escalate tensions without prejudice to their respective positions," the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said. An agreement was signed to improve communications during emergencies at sea and both sides agreed to continue talks on enhancing ties between their coast guards but no details were provided.

PIO pleads guilty to healthcare fraud

Washington: A 51-year-old Indian American physician from the Chicago area has pleaded guilty to a federal healthcare fraud by billing Medicaid and private insurers for nonexistent services. Mona Ghosh, who owns and operates Progressive Women's Healthcare, specialising in obstetrics and gynaecology services, pleaded guilty to two counts of health care fraud. Each count is punishable by up to ten years in federal prison. US District Judge Franklin U Valderrama has set sentencing for October 22. Federal prosecutors allege that Ghosh is accountable for at least \$2.4 million in fraudulently obtained reimbursements.

'INTERNAL ISSUE'
UN group demands release of Khan

The group says Khan's conviction in the graft case was 'part of a much larger campaign of repression targeting the PTT'

Islamabad, July 2: A UN group has demanded the immediate release of Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, saying at least two cases slapped on him were politically motivated and aimed to exclude him from the country's political scene. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted its opinion on the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder's detention in its 99th session from March 18-27 in Geneva.



The UN body said that Khan's detention and prosecution in the first Toshakhana corruption case and cipher cases were politically motivated to exclude him from competing in the political arena. The UN group also said that it was "without legal basis".

Reacting to the development, the Pakistan government Tuesday dismissed the plea, saying the jailed former Prime Minister's arrest and the pending cases against him were "internal matters."

Khan getting relief in many cases is "a manifestation of a transparent and fair trial and judicial system. Any demand beyond the constitution, law and international norms will be called discriminatory, biased and against justice," Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar said in a statement reacting to the UN agency's report.

He also said that Pakistan as an independent state enforces the constitution and prevailing laws through the courts. "Imran Khan has all the rights according to the country's constitution and law and international norms, he is in jail as a convicted prisoner," Tarar said.

PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari, in his reaction to the Law Minister's remarks, said that the issue of Khan's arrest is no longer an 'internal matter' of Pakistan. "The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, based in Geneva, after months of work, has given their official opinion. This is huge and reveals that Imran Khan's detention is illegal and should be released immediately," Bukhari said in a statement on X.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the UN body based its opinion on its source's detailed and unrebutted submissions regarding the ultra vires nature of the prosecution in the first Toshakhana case, as well as the context of the political repression of Khan and his party in which that prosecution occurred.

It further added that how Khan was convicted in the first Toshakhana case (namely, a summary judgment delivered in absentia) and his subsequent arrest by law enforcement personnel who broke into his residence and assaulted him and his staff were concerning and compounded the illegality.

The working group further said that Khan's prosecution in the cipher case "lacks a grounding in law, as his actions do not appear to have violated the Official Secrets Act, as was apparently corroborated by the intelligence services, according to the source's unrebutted submissions."

A Pakistani anti-corruption court Tuesday granted pre-arrest bail to jailed ex-PM Imran Khan's wife and former first lady Bushra Bibi in a case of alleged corruption

Nepal PM in soup

Kathmandu, July 2: In a dramatic development, politically fragile Nepal's two largest parties have inked a midnight power-sharing deal to form a new government to replace the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister

on a rotation basis for the rest of the term of the Parliament, said ex-foreign minister Narayan Prakash Saud, who is a Nepali Congress central member.

Nepali Congress, the largest party in the 275-member House of Representatives, has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is sufficient for a majority of 138 seats in the lower house. Prachanda's party has 32 seats.

Meanwhile, embattled Prime Minister Prachanda refused to step down despite the agreement between the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML.

In a meeting of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) office-bearers held in Baluwatar, Prachanda said he would rather face a vote of confidence in Parliament than resign from the post, the party Secretary Ganesh Shah told PTI.

The two leaders tentatively agreed to form a new government, amend the Constitution, and work out a power-sharing formula, which they reportedly shared with a few confidants, media reports said, quoting multiple senior leaders from both parties.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who Tuesday refused to resign and asserted that he would rather face a confidence vote. The agreement, finalised between Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman K P Sharma Oli Monday night, outlines the ministerial division, provincial leadership roles and a rotation for the Prime Ministerial position. Deuba, 78, and Oli, 72, both former premiers, agreed to share the Prime Ministerial position

Local Jamaican fishermen help each other prepare by bringing boats inland as Hurricane Beryl approaches, in Kingston, Jamaica



STORM CHURNS TOWARDS JAMAICA

Hurricane Beryl barreled towards Jamaica as a powerful Category 5 storm Tuesday after making landfall on smaller islands in the Caribbean, downing power lines, bringing floods and reportedly killing two people. The storm made landfall Monday on Carriacou Island, part of Grenada, where one person was killed, the BBC reported, and power was cut island-wide. Another person was reportedly killed in St Vincent, though Reuters could not immediately verify either fatality. Beryl is expected to bring 4 to 12 inches of rainfall to Jamaica Wednesday, possibly triggering flash floods, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said. As of 1200 GMT, Beryl, packing winds of up to 165 miles per hour, was about 1,006 km east-south east of Kingston, Jamaica's capital, it said. The unusually early timing and rapid intensification of the storm, the first in this year's Atlantic hurricane season, is partly due to warmer ocean temperatures, scientists say. Jamaica issued a hurricane warning Monday, while tropical storm warnings were in effect for parts of the southern coasts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. While it has picked up to a 5 on a five-point scale, it was expected to become less intense later in the day, NHC said.

UK election gives hope to first time immigrant voters

IMMIGRATION IS AN ELECTORAL BATTLEGROUND IN BRITAIN, WITH SUNAK PROMISING TO CUT NET MIGRATION LEVELS IF THE CONSERVATIVES WIN

London, July 2: Voting for the first time in a British election, Prathesh Panjak and other immigrant voters are excited to take part in the July 4 ballot, hoping they can influence change in the country that they have chosen to call home.

The Opposition Labour Party is widely expected to win by a landslide, replacing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party which has been in power for 14 years.

Refugees and immigrants from Commonwealth countries, mainly former territories of the British Empire such as Nigeria, India, and Malaysia, are eligible to vote in British elections.

Panjak, 27, who came to Britain in February last year, said he was excited to cast his vote after missing the election in his native India.

"In my country, they don't allow people from other countries to vote. I came here on a student visa, but they are giving us an opportunity, like British citizens," said Panjak who works part-



time as an ambassador at his university in Manchester, northwest England.

Teh Wen Sun, a 33-year-old Malaysian student from Salford, not far from Manchester, said she did not see much difference between the two main parties, but she was keen to vote for a party

that is more receptive to immigrants.

Immigration is an electoral battleground in Britain, with Sunak promising to cut net migration levels if the Conservatives win, amid concern from many British voters that it was too high and put ex-

cessive pressure on the state-run National Health Service, housing and education.

Sunak has since tightened visa rules and made international headlines for a policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Oyinkansola Dirisu, 31, a support worker from Manchester who came to Britain in 2022, said she was looking forward to voting for Labour, and said she wanted whoever won power to make it easier for people like her to move to Britain.

Others, like Esther Offem, 26, who came from Nigeria last September, are still undecided. "None (of the parties) have done much in the areas that I'm most interested in. But at the moment, I would probably go for the Conservatives. I'm not sure yet."

Turkey shuts Syria border amid violence

Amman, July 2: Turkey closed its main border crossings into northwest Syria Tuesday after Turkish troops came under fire from Syrians angered by violence against their compatriots in Turkey, a Syrian opposition source and residents said.

In Turkey, police detained 474 people involved in attacks targeting the Syrian community across the country overnight, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said, in spreading unrest that began late Sunday.

Properties and vehicles owned by Syrians were vandalised and set on fire in the central city of Kayseri, stoked by social media reports that a Syrian man had sexually abused a female child relative. Yerlikaya said the incident was being investigated.

The violence spread to the

provinces of Hatay, Gaziantep, Konya, Bursa and an Istanbul district, Turkey's MIT intelligence agency said in a statement. There were social media reports of some injuries among Syrians.

Subsequently, hundreds of angry Syrians took to the streets in several towns in the rebel-held northwest Syria, an area where Turkey maintains thousands of troops and has carved out a sphere of influence that has stopped Syrian President Bashar al-Assad from regaining control.

Late Monday, Turkey responded to the unrest by closing until further notice the Bab al-Hawa border crossing, a main trade and passenger conduit for more than 3 million inhabitants, along with Bab al-Salam and other smaller crossings, a border official told Reuters.

