

**Bhumi's fashion choices**  
Actor Bhumi Pednekar shares insights into her fashion evolution and how she stays updated with trends  
LEISURE | P2

**Ukraine deploys F-16s**  
Ukrainian pilots have started flying F-16s for operations within the nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says  
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**Curbs on ads**  
India, which bans direct advertising of liquor, is set to announce rules that will bar even surrogate ads and sponsoring of events  
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**Fight for bronze**  
Lakshya Sen went down to Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semi-final and will now fight for Bronze at 2024 Paris Olympics  
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# DAV Unit-8, AIIMS champs



**PRIZED MOMENT:** Winners of the Junior category of Mettle Meet 2024, students of DAV Public School Unit-8 (Left) and champions of the Senior category, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar students pose with their cheques and trophies along with Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy, Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy and quizmaster Ajay Poonia after the Grand Finale of the event Sunday  
PHOTOS: BIKASH NAYAK

**Bhubaneswar, August 4:** DAV Public School Unit-8 and AIIMS, Bhubaneswar emerged champions in the Junior and Senior categories, respectively, in the sixth edition of Mettle Meet which witnessed fierce battle of wits and a fantastic finish at Hotel Crystal Crown here, Sunday.  
In the Senior category, SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack and NIT, Rourkela earned the first runners-up and second runners-up status respectively. Last year's winner AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, who led in

the finals till the last round, retained the crown. Earlier, they had achieved the first runner-up and second runner-up status in 2017 and 2019.  
Similarly, DAV Public School, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar emerged victorious with a big lead over first runners-up KIIT International School while DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar stood third in the Junior category.  
After an intense screening in the prelims, 16 finalists - eight each from the Junior and Senior groups - qualified for the finals. Altogether, as many as 82 teams from schools and colleges across

the state participated in the quiz competition.  
"We love Mettle Meet as another child that we have and how it has grown bigger every year. We have seen increasing number of students in this competition every passing year. It started in 2016 with the motive of reviving the dimming art of quizzing and giving a platform to the bright minds to bring back the joy of quizzing," said Adyasha Satpathy, Chief

Executive, Orissa POST. She said both the prelims and finals were exciting and all the teams, which participated in the event, deserved to win. "In my eyes, all are winners," she added.  
Tathagata Satpathy, Editor, Orissa POST said, "I hope that quizzing will remain as a part of your life because it is not just knowing general knowledge or being able to answer questions. It also makes you think laterally and

out of box. It teaches you not to go in the obvious rot. In today's world, those who can blaze a path of their own, they are the ones who will stand out. There will of course be millions of plodders, but you will be the trailblazers."  
Quizmaster Ajay Poonia said the standard in the competition was quite high in the finals of both the categories.  
The event was watched live by many on social media platforms of the newspaper's digital ventures. The winners received Rs 1,00,000 as prize money while first and second runners-up got Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000, respectively, in both Senior and Junior categories.

Pratyush Dhal of DAV, Unit 8 said, "We had prepared for the finals for the last six months after we missed the finals last year. We started with negative but took that as a challenge and tried to fight back. Quizmaster Ajay Poonia's questions were very tricky. We tried to count the competitors' points and then tried to maintain the lead."  
Bighnesh Das of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar said, "We became the champions of Mettle Meet for the second time this year. Mettle Meet is a great platform for quiz talents."

**HP CLOUDBURST TOLL TOUCHES 13**  
Shimla: The death toll due to flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh has increased to 13 with the recovery of four bodies from Mandi and Shimla districts Sunday. Over 40 people are still missing after a series of cloudbursts occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision on the night of July 31 and wreaked havoc.

**9 kids killed as wall caves in**  
Sagar (MP), August 4: Nine children were killed and two others injured after a wall of a dilapidated house collapsed in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district Sunday, a senior official said. The incident occurred between 8.30am and 9am near the campus of a temple during a religious programme in Shahpur village under the Rehli assembly seat, as per officials.  
Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has suspended the chief municipal officer (CMO) of Shahpur Nagar Panchayat and a sub-engineer.  
He also directed civil bodies across the state to identify the dilapidated buildings and take action. Nine children, aged 10 to 15 years, were killed and two injured in the wall collapse incident at a religious programme in Shahpur, Sagar Divisional Commissioner Virendra Singh Rawat told PTI over the phone.  
Senior officials, including the district collector, have reached the spot, he said. The chief minister expressed grief over the incident and announced assistance of Rs 4 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased.  
A programme of Parthiv Shivling Nirman (making Shivling out of clay) was going on under a tent near the dilapidated house, and a wall collapsed and fell on the tent, local BJP MLA and former minister Gopal Bhargava told reporters.  
The children got crushed under the tent and debris, he said.

## Fresh clashes claim 97 in Bangladesh

INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA SHUT DOWN; COUNTRYWIDE CURFEW IMPOSED

**Dhaka, August 4:** At least 97 people, including 14 policemen, were killed and hundreds injured Sunday in fierce clashes between protesters demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and the ruling party supporters in different parts of Bangladesh, forcing authorities to cut off mobile internet and enforce a nationwide curfew for an indefinite period.  
The clashes broke out Sunday morning when protesters attending the non-cooperation programme under the banner of the Students Against



Discrimination with the one-point demand of the government's resignation over a job quota system faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists.  
At least 97 people have been killed in clashes, shootings and counter-charges across the country surrounding the non-cooperation program, leading Bengali-language daily Prothom Alo reported.

According to police, 14 policemen have been killed across the country. Of them, 13 were killed in Sirajganj's Enayetpur police station. One person was killed in Comilla's Elliotganj, the paper said. More than 300 policemen were injured. The fresh round of clashes erupted days after over 200 people were killed in clashes between police and mostly student protesters demanding an end to the controversial quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971.



**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.0°C	33.5°C
Min Temp	27.4°C	26.0°C
Humidity	92%	88%
Rainfall	Nil	4.2mm

**FORECAST**  
Light to moderate rain/thundershower very likely

## Medal hopes up as 10-man India beat GB, enter semis

Sunday's win was special in more ways than one because an average hockey fan in India is not used to seeing the team show such tenacity in a high-pressure situation

**Paris, August 4:** A battle-hardened PR Sreejesh gave a big filip to the Indian hockey team's aspirations of winning a second consecutive Olympic medal with his splendid shootout saves in a 4-2 victory over Great Britain that earned his side a place in the semifinals of the Paris Games here Sunday.  
Playing most of the match without key defender Amit Rohidas, who was shown a red card for hitting a rival player

with his stick, the team did extremely well to hold Great Britain to 1-1 in regulation time.  
Great Britain dominated possession and played with man-to-man marking, not allowing India to attack much. In the absence of Rohidas, Manpreet Singh, who plays in mid-field, was asked to man the defence.  
Reduced to 10 men on the pitch, India could not play scoop balls, a strategy that worked for the side in previous matches, but it managed to escape without getting hurt.



It all boiled down to how Sreejesh would perform and the veteran goalkeeper did not disappoint, blocking the third and

fourth attempts by Connor Williamson and Phillip Ropper after the score was tied 2-2 in the shootout.

## Opening Ceremony Row

### Vatican 'deplores offence' caused to Christians in Paris

**Rome, August 4:** The Vatican said Saturday it "deplored the offence" caused to Christians by the Olympic Games opening ceremony, a scene of which evoked Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" and featured drag queens.  
A week after a storm of criticism erupted around the event, the Holy See issued a statement in French that it was "saddened by certain scenes at the opening ceremony" and joined those who had been offended.  
"At a prestigious event where the whole world comes together to share common values, there should be no ridiculous allusions to religion," it said.  
To critics, the scene during the July 26 ceremony evoked Jesus and his apostles in Da Vinci's famous painting. It featured DJ and producer Barbara Butch - an LGBTQ+ icon - wearing a silver headdress that looked like a halo while flanked by drag artists and dancers. France's Catholic bishops said it made a mockery of Christianity.



The ceremony's artistic director Thomas Jolly has repeatedly denied he had been inspired by "The Last Supper", saying the scene was meant to celebrate diversity and pay tribute to feasting and French gastronomy. Paris Olympics organisers apologised to anyone who was offended by the tableau.  
The Vatican spokesman didn't immediately respond when asked why the Holy See was only responding now, a week after the event and after Catholic leaders around the world had expressed outrage at the scene.

## 100 new PACS soon

**Berhampur:** The state government has decided to open 82 new Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS), 21 Primary Milk Cooperative Societies and to make five PACS as multi-purpose societies in Ganjam district, an official said Sunday. This was decided at the Ganjam District Cooperative Development Committee meeting, held under the chairmanship of Collector Dibyajyoti Parida at Chhatrapur recently. The Collector has directed the cooperative officials to prepare the feasibility reports for opening up of the new PACS in panchayats, where there is no PACS, the official said. P3

# leisure

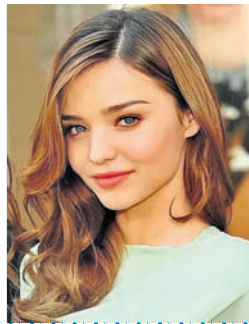


## NICOLE KIDMAN: MARRIAGE REQUIRES COMPROMISE

Hollywood actress Nicole Kidman has shared the key to a happy marriage. *The Others* actress, who is married to music star Keith Urban since 2006, told Victoria Beckham for *Vogue Australia* that marriage requires compromise, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

## KERR'S GROWING UP CRUSH WAS PRINCE WILLIAM

Model-actress Miranda Kerr has admitted to being obsessed with the British royal Prince William during her younger years. Kerr, who was previously married to actor Orlando Bloom, told *Us Weekly*, "My celebrity crush growing up was Prince William."



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
 You will be a compassionate and caring person. Today you are feeling very generous and will give freely of your treasures, which, Ganesha says, will be adequately compensated in future. You have the exceptional ability to combine work and fun, and will treat peers and juniors as your family.

**TAURUS**  
 Your efficiency and resourcefulness will, today, be functioning on overdrive. You will manage difficult problems and sort out complex issues with any sweat. You make have to take instant decisions on vital and central issues, without any forewarning, or time to think things out. The day being a favourable one, you will not go wrong, assures Ganesha. You will gradually become calm and relaxed as the evening approaches. Later, you will most probably be hanging out with friends.

**GEMINI**  
 You will be in a nostalgic frame of mind and will likely revisit old memories from the past. The post noon sessions should see some occurrences that will leave you feeling sentimental. You will take decisions guided by your heart rather than your mind.

**CANCER**  
 Ganesha warns you of minor ailments. Don't eat very cold items. You will help others in tackling their problems. Ganesha says that you must begin by yourself any auspicious task.

**LEO**  
 You will come into some money by accident today. There is a good chance of making a huge gain in the share market today. You will be filled with a lot of self-confidence. Nobody will be able to influence your opinion today. However, your strongly expressed views may end up hurting someone, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
 What you wish to do today is to overhaul the looks of your living space. You might want to add some pieces of furniture or some items of decoration that define your personality. Ganesha advises you to be ready in the evening to be a great performer or probably to lend some valuable help.

**LIBRA**  
 Ganesha says you will use your creative and artistic skills in decorating and renovating your home. You will experience a feeling of pride when all will appreciate your home décor. You will want to spend the evening all alone as you may feel uneasy in the company of your friends and not particularly in the mood to socialise. Ganesha says you should try to be calm and cool.

**SCORPIO**  
 You shall be bursting with self-confidence today, says Ganesha. On the professional front, your herculean efforts will bear fruit. Domestic affairs will remain harmonious, predicts Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Ganesha advises you to flock with birds of the same feather today. The perfection in your ideas may not materialise on paper today. And, it shall be evasive even when you get to the job of executing ideas. But keep working, advises Ganesha, and remain practical later in the day.

**CAPRICORN**  
 It's all true and not too hard to digest either: your family will be your ladder to success and will bless you with all the luck you need, says Ganesha. You will make a good head-start today, right from your home, and will continue to maintain the same tempo at work too. Only at the fag end of the day will you realise that you are richer, not in terms of the amount of money you have, but by the number of hearts you will have won with your million dollar smile.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Cleaning up the clutter, either at your home or office, will be priority number one. Grab this chance to impress your boss or spouse and make your personal space squeaky clean. A dinner by candlelight with your beloved will ease your tired muscles, says Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
 Your powers of concentration and focus come to the fore. Your lucidity and eye for detail will save you from many a hassle that could have developed later on. The time that this will save your bosses and peers will bring you many accolades, says Ganesha.

## Bhumi's fashion choices

**MUMBAI:** Actress Bhumi Pednekar, in an exclusive interview, shared insights into her fashion evolution, how she stays updated with trends, and her wardrobe essentials.

"My fashion choices are as unconventional as my film roles," said Pednekar while shooting for HT City Showstoppers. She emphasised that her personal style evolves with her self-perception and often aligns with the characters she portrays. Pednekar, known for films like *Thank You for Coming* and *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, prioritised on what suits her and what she enjoys over following trends. She stated, "Trends come and go; I prefer a classic approach, which may seem unconventional." On staying updated with fashion trends, she explained, "Fashion has no hard and fast rules. It's inclusive, and owning your style with confidence makes any fashion choice valid."

The lockdown period significantly influenced her fashion sensibilities. Previously tied to her rural and traditional film roles, she embraced her authentic self during this time. This transition, though challenging, was supported by her

laborators. She noted, "Accepting and loving myself fully and working with creative professionals has nurtured my love for fashion and beauty." The actress shared that not every style suits everyone and stressed the importance of embracing one's unique style. "Fashion will always elicit mixed reactions, but its beauty lies in sparking conversations. Embrace what you enjoy," she concluded.



**Mumbai:** Sunidhi Chauhan, one of India's most renowned singers, is known for her numerous hit songs and is one of the highest-paid vocalists in the Indian film industry. Recently, she opened up about the Bollywood music mafia and payment issues in the industry, a topic that Sonu Nigam has also commented on. During her recent podcast, Sunidhi was asked if the Bollywood mafia controls things in the industry.

## Sunidhi opens up on music mafia

She said, "It's everywhere. Lobbying is present in awards shows, music, films, and reality shows. It's something you can't escape. Do your work, and if you want to be a part of it, make changes to fix things." Sunidhi was also asked about situations where multiple singers record a song, but only one is chosen, and the others don't get paid. She responded, "I haven't been paid for many films. Even today, they don't pay me. They ask, and I don't take money because I feel I don't need it for that song. Sometimes, I want to help, so I mention my price and sing." She added, "You don't want to hurt anyone's ego because not everyone thinks like you. They might not understand how you feel."



## SUSHMITA CALLS HERSELF A STORM

**Mumbai:** Sushmita Sen inspires her admirers not only via her acting, but also by living her life on her own terms. Recently, she took to Instagram and shared a stunning photo of herself staring out at the sea. While the image is undeniably catchy, her text elevates the post to new heights. While posting the photo on Instagram, Sushmita included a famous quote of Jake Remington.

The post captioned, "Fate whispers to the warrior; 'You cannot withstand the storm.' The warrior whispers back, 'I am the storm.'" Further expressing her love for the fans, she added, "I love you guys," along with hashtags #embraceth #itsallhappeningforyou #goodmorning #duggadugga

Sushmita's admirers reacted positively to her tweet, leaving positive comments. "My calm my peace, standing alone within calm and peace," an admirer wrote. Another wrote, "She is my hope, and she needs to know that. (white heart emoji)" "You are the most beautiful warrior (red heart emojis)," wrote one admirer of the actress. An admirer who was inspired by the quote wrote, "Just the lines I wanted this morning @sushmitasen47."

A fan wrote a touching remark that read, "Love you too, Sush (red heart emoji), you are and will be my motivation and inspiration (love emojis), heaps and heaps of affection for you. Maa dugga bless you with plenty of happiness and prosperity."

## Medha: Struggle is an overused term

**Mumbai:** Medha Shankr, who debuted with Gurinder Chadha's British series *Beecham House* (2019), came into the spotlight with Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *12th Fail*. Her path to recognition spanned six years and now she looks forward to pushing boundaries and exploring new horizons with every film.

She says, "Times have changed; the audience now prioritises quality content, storytelling, and acting above anything else. Of course, stars play a massive role in drawing footfalls to the theatres, but ultimately, the story is the real hero."

Talking about life before and after the success of *12th Fail*, Medha adds, "People usually associate this achievement with the film's success, but for me, just landing this part was massive because I knew many big actors were considered and newcomers were auditioned for it. After bagging *12th Fail*, I realised someone had finally recognised my potential. Life has taken a 180-degree turn. Big filmmakers I only dreamt of working with are showing faith in me, and no one is asking me to audition. Access to these wonderful opportunities was unthinkable. I have been in Mumbai for almost six years now, I bagged *12th Fail* in the fifth year of my journey here. It wasn't easy, but I don't like to call it a struggle. It's an overused term."

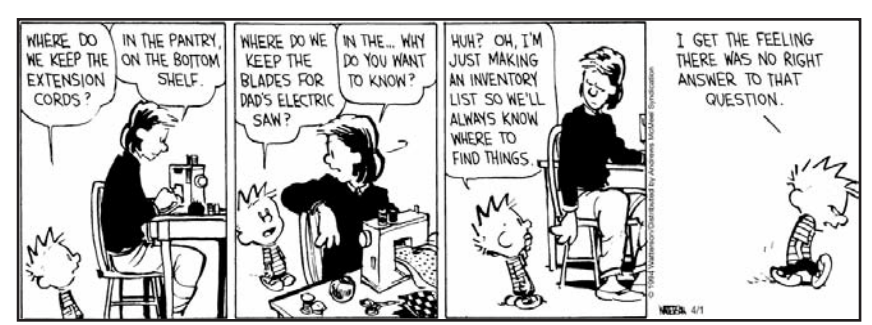


### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



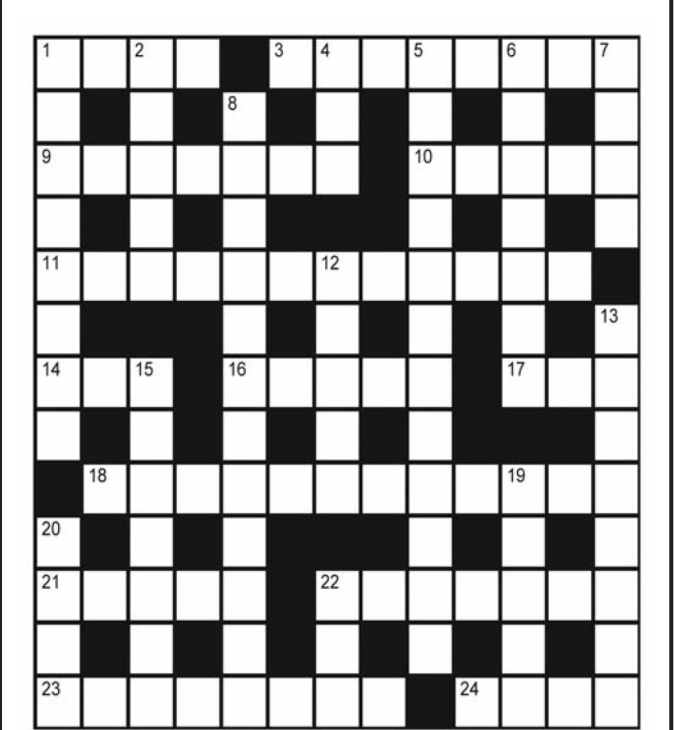
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



#### CROSSWORD



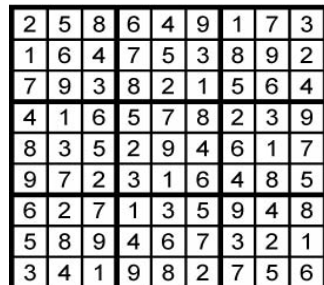
- Across**
- 1 Eat like a bird
  - 3 Mercantile battle (5,3)
  - 9 Daydreaming
  - 10 Eye socket
  - 11 Type of doctrine or history
  - 14 Check for accuracy
  - 16 Ham it up
  - 17 Historic period (4,8)
  - 18 Group frenzy (4,8)
  - 21 Bitter
  - 22 Streetcar
  - 23 Meet
  - 24 Vesicle
  - 5 Profile sample (5-7)
  - 6 Spot on the net
  - 7 Grade
  - 8 Permanent
  - 12 Satire
  - 13 Accelerator
  - 15 Used car, at times (5-2)
  - 19 Track event
  - 20 Soft mineral
  - 22 Harbor craft
- Down**
- 1 Comprehend
  - 2 Kind of duty
  - 4 Cereal grain

#### 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



Leaders and members of various organisations paying their tributes to former Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy on the occasion of her 18th death anniversary after garlanding her statue at LIC Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

# downtown/state

## Govt to open over 100 new co-op societies in Ganjam



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, August 4:** The state government has decided to open 82 new primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS), 21 primary milk cooperative societies and to make five PACS as multi-purpose societies in Ganjam district, an official said Sunday.

This was decided at the Ganjam district cooperative development committee meeting, held under the chairmanship of district collector Dibyajyoti Parida at Chhatrapur recently.

The collector has directed the cooperative officials to prepare the feasibility reports for open-

ing up of the new PACS in panchayats, where there are no PACS, the official said.

Out of 503 panchayats in the district, the PACS are functioning in 421 panchayats at present. In the last year, 21 new PACS were opened, said Biswaranjan Das, deputy registrar of the cooperative societies (DRCS), Ganjam.

Similarly, at present, 55 primary milk cooperative societies are functioning under the Greater Ganjam-Gajapati Milk Cooperative Union.

As per the decision of the Central government, each uncovered gram panchayat will have a PACS or a primary dairy or fish-

ery cooperative to generate employment opportunities. This will enable farmers to realise better prices for their products, and expand their markets, he said.

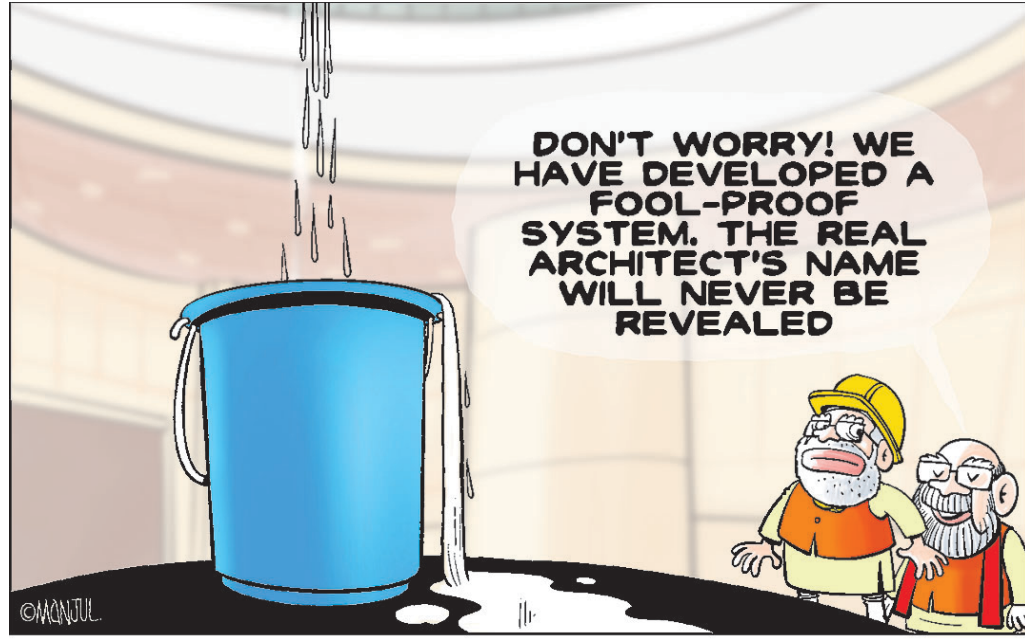
The DRCS said they have already identified five PACS in the district to develop as multi-purpose cooperative societies. The main purpose of the multi-purpose cooperative societies is to diversify the business activities of the PACS and to make them vibrant economic entities at the panchayat level.

"We will further study their potential before recommending the government to upgrade them as multi-purpose societies," said Das.

He said the PACS at Dakhinapur, Kukudakhandi Bipulingi, Bada Baranga and Dharakote will be upgraded as multi-purpose societies.

The PACS will undertake business activities including dairy, fishery, setting up of godowns, procurement of food grains, sale of fertilisers, seeds, LPG, petrol and diesel. The societies will also set up common service centres and fair-price shops.

### POLITICKLE by MANJUL



### 'Pledge to win every ST-reserved seat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 4:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday urged BJP workers to focus on winning all the 33 ST-reserved MLA and five Lok Sabha seats in the next elections.

Majhi said this during a meeting organised here by the BJP's ST Morcha to felicitate newly-elected tribal MLAs and MPs of the party. In the recent elections, the BJP secured 18 of the 33 ST-reserved MLA seats and four of the five Lok Sabha seats reserved for tribals in the state.

Majhi said, "On this day, we need to pledge towards winning all the 35 Vidhan Sabha and five Lok Sabha seats in coming elections so that the ST Morcha can take the lead of the party in Odisha."

The CM reflected on his early days with the BJP and high-



ly was allegedly functioning under the control of VK Pandian, a close aide of Naveen Patnaik.

"Priority should be given to the party's elected public representatives like MLAs and MPs, which did not happen during the previous BJD government," he said. Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik announced plans to implement the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act) in the state.

"We have been fighting for implementation of the PESA Act in the state. I want to assure you all that the law will be implemented in a year," Naik said.

Naik assured that the Bill for PESA Act implementation would be presented in the upcoming Assembly session, after persistent advocacy for the law's enactment.

### Sniffer dog 'Storm' heads to Waynad for rescue operation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, August 4:** A sniffer dog 'Storm' along with a 5-member police team of Berhampur left for landslide-hit Waynad in Kerala Sunday morning to join the search and rescue operation in landslide-hit Chooralmala and Mundakkai.

According to sources, the K9 squad proceeded to Kerala on the direction of DGP Arun Sarangi. The team with the German Shepherd is expected to reach Palakkad Monday and will then be taken to the landslide sites.

Storm has been serving in the police force for the last seven years and has been trained to trace people trapped under debris and slush following natural calamities like earthquake and landslides.

The massive landslide that occurred in Waynad district in Kerala has left over 350 dead while the number of death tolls is increasing with each passing day with hundreds still missing.



The team will stay with 'Storm' till the completion of the rescue and search operations.

"The sniffer dog has been taken to landslide hit Waynad due to its skill in rescue operations," DIG Sarthak Sarangi, who is also in-charge as Berhampur SP said.

### Inter-state dacoits' gang busted; 4 arrested

**Patana:** Police in Keonjhar district Sunday busted an inter-state dacoit gang by arresting four members and seizing gold and silver ornaments along with cash and four mobile phones from their possession. The three arrested accused, who are from Majhigaon village in Jharkhand, were identified as Md Rahat, 23, Md Sahil, 21 and Md Nassiruddin, 21. The fourth accused Tapan Behera, 35, is from Jayantigarh village under Jagannathpur police limits in Keonjhar. According to Ghatagon SDPO, Prabhat Kumar Tripathi and Patana IIC, Bibhas Pradhan, Tapan runs a jewellery shop and used to purchase stolen ornaments from these accused in throwaway prices. He then sold those items at higher prices to customers. Except Tapan, all the accused were involved in burglary from many houses at Patana, Turumunga, Ghatagon, Jhumpura and Harichandarpur areas in Keonjhar district. The police forwarded them to court Sunday.



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THE MOTHER

# Killer Development

Wayanad, a hilly district in north Kerala, came face to face with the wrath of nature in the early hours of 30 July as massive landslides of unprecedented scale buried hundreds in their sleep. Experts are of the view that it was a disaster in the waiting as a fatal cocktail of massive deforestation, relentless mining and climate change had already endangered this district located in the Western Ghats.

A landslide atlas published last year by the Indian Space Research Organisation's National Remote Sensing Centre has pointed out that Kerala is home to 10 out of the country's 30 most landslide-prone districts, with Wayanad positioned at 13th. The atlas further revealed that about 0.09 million sq.km in the Western Ghats and the Konkan hills—spanning Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra—are susceptible to landslides.

Another study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in 2022 on the declining forest cover in Wayanad revealed that 62 per cent of the district's forests vanished between 1950 and 2018. Scientists have indicated that climate change is likely to heighten the risk of landslides in the Western Ghats, recognised as one of the world's eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity.

The landslides also highlight how warnings from the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel led by renowned ecologist Madhav Gadgil were routinely ignored by the authorities. In 2011, the panel submitted its findings to the Centre, suggesting that the entire mountain range be classified as an ecologically sensitive area, divided into zones based on their ecological vulnerability. Among its recommendations was a blanket ban on mining, quarrying, new thermal power plants, hydropower projects, and large-scale wind energy development in the most sensitive area, referred to as zone 1. However, none of these recommendations made 14 years ago were implemented in the face of stiff resistance from successive state governments and other stakeholders.

Wayanad-like tragedies have become all too common in the eco-fragile regions in north, northeast and south India. Come monsoon, and we are flooded with news of landslides, cloudbursts and flash floods claiming lives and properties in the states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim and other mountainous regions across the country.

In the light of monsoon rains becoming all the more unpredictable, experts have called for a reliable early warning system along with a structured evacuation plan in vulnerable hilly regions to save precious lives from such recurring tragedies.

Forget heeding to such sensible advice, the governments, Centre and states, most often act in ways that are detrimental to the environment. In Uttarakhand, the government went ahead with the Char Dham Project connecting the Himalayan shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri despite experts flagging the risks of building a highway in the fragile land. And the results are for everyone to see -- land subsidence in Joshimath, frequent landslides in various parts of the state, the Uttarkashi tunnel collapse incident, and the list goes on.

Unconcerned governments in connivance with greedy corporates have damaged our natural environment beyond redemption, all in the name of development.

## WISDOM CORNER

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance. **KAHLIL GIBRAN**

When you encourage others, you in the process are encouraged because you're making a commitment and difference in that person's life. Encouragement really does make a difference. **ZIG ZIGLAR**

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be. **ANNE FRANK**

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1772: Russia, Prussia, and Austria signed a treaty creating the First Partition of Poland, depriving that country of approximately half of its population and almost one-third of its land.
- 1914: In Cleveland, Ohio, the first electric traffic light was installed; it featured red and green lights.
- 1930: U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the Moon, was born in Wapakoneta, Ohio.
- 1960: Burkina Faso gains its Independence. The landlocked West African country, known as Upper Volta until 1984, became a French protectorate in the late 19th century. In 1958, the Republic of Upper Volta was created as a self-governing French colony. After independence, Maurice Yaméogo became the first president of the country, whose name was changed to Burkina Faso in 1984.
- 1962: Nelson Mandela is arrested. The South African anti-apartheid activist and adherent of nonviolence was arrested by the government at Rivonia, a suburb of Johannesburg. After a year-long trial, Mandela was imprisoned at the infamous Robben Island prison where he spent the next 18 years. He was released from prison in 1990 after spending 28 years as a political prisoner. In the early 1990s, after intense international and domestic pressure, in part from the efforts of Mandela, the South African government started taking steps to end apartheid - a government policy of racial segregation and discrimination. As a result, Mandela was elected the country's first black president in 1994.
- 1963: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom signed the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty in Moscow. The treaty, which came as a response to the heightening tensions due to the frequent testing of nuclear weapons by the these 3 countries during the Cold War, banned the testing of nuclear weapons anywhere on land, over water or in space. Underground testing was still allowed under the treaty, until it was also banned in 1996 after the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty came into force.

## LOL

### TIME FOR WEDDING

A police officer stopped a motorist who was speeding down Main Street. "But officer," the man began, "I can explain." "Just be quiet," snapped the officer. "I'm going to let you cool your heels in jail until the chief gets back." "But, officer, I just wanted to say,"




"And I said to you 'keep quiet! You're going to jail!'"

A few hours later the officer looked in on his prisoner and said, "Lucky for you that the chief's at his daughter's wedding... He'll be in a good mood when he gets back." "Don't count on it," answered the fellow in the cell. "I'm the groom."

FOCUS DEVELOPMENT

# IS GEOGRAPHY DESTINY?




ography is given by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson through their book 'Why Nations Fail'. Through examples of Mexico and the United States, North and South Korea, East and West Germany, the authors argue that geography does not determine social advancement. Instead, it is good and efficient institutions that determine the prosperity of a country. Reliance on a single natural resource can lead to civil wars and grave political instability, argue Acemoglu and Robinson, through the example of the diamond boom in Sierra Leone. Many relatively rich temperate countries such as Argentina, Egypt and Libya have had institutions while countries like Costa Rica and Tanzania have often had stable governments. The reasons for the poverty of tropical countries in contrast to temperate countries are environmental and geographical. Tropical areas are more prone to parasitic disease while being agriculturally less productive. Soil fertility is higher in temperate countries than tropical ones. While Acemoglu and Robinson are correct in emphasising the detrimental role of bad institutions to development, they are incorrect in dismissing geographical factors almost entirely.

Geography plays a crucial role in impacting social and technological development. It is true that our shape of history remains complete if we only consider geography. Evolutionary biology and environmental factors, for instance, contribute much to our historical trajectory. Nevertheless, the massive effect of geography is indispensable if we seek to understand the rise and fall of civilizations, nations and prosperity.

*The writer is a columnist and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs.*

**One of the ways of evaluating the importance of geography is to trace the trajectory and reasons for technological and socio-economic advancements of the West in comparison to the East**



**THE REASONS FOR THE POVERTY OF TROPICAL COUNTRIES IN CONTRAST TO TEMPERATE COUNTRIES ARE ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL**

**T**he question of geography's role in socio-economic and technological development has been much contested. Given the contentious nature of the debate, it is important to first review the arguments put forth by both proponents and critics of the thesis concerning the effects of geography on development.

One of the ways of evaluating the importance of geography is to trace the trajectory and reasons for technological and socio-economic advancements of the West in comparison to the East. There are two primary hypotheses that attempt to explain the rise of the West i.e. long-term lock in and short term accident. Long-term lock in the orlists believe that there was always certain inexorable factors which laid the pathway for the industrial revolution to occur in the West. There is great disagreement among long-termers on the exact nature of these factors. Jared Diamond, for instance, places great emphasis on geography and environment. European conquests over other countries made them believe in inherent cultural superiority. The white race was argued to be the most superior as well as civilized. Other explanations included the belief in a superior Western culture inherited from the Greeks against the stagnant and superstitious culture of the East. These ideas provided further justification for colonialism. Karl Marx, meanwhile, argued that the centralisation of Oriental nations was what stopped the flow of progress and history while the Western world marched from feudalism to capitalism to the eventual proletariat revolution. Marx's ideas would later be moulded by the likes of Lenin and Stalin to justify totalitarian tyranny. The short-termers, as Ian Morris terms them, believe that the rise of the West is a simple accident. The economic historian

Andre Gunder Frank argues that the rise of the West was simply an accident of history due to the shrinking of the silver supply. This led to political crisis in Asia and discouragement of innovation while Europe started the mechanising of industries.

Morris argues that both these approaches are flawed. Using social development as comparative measures, Morris shows that the astonishing surge in social development occurred only around 1800 CE. Eastern regions had scored higher than the West for around a thousand years. Thus, neither the long term approach nor the short termers can adequately explain the shape of history. A combination of both, however, helps us explain a lot.

The root of technological as well as socio-economic development lies in the agricultural revolution. That pre-agricultural hunter-gatherer societies were extremely violent has been shown repeatedly by the likes of Steven Pinker. The emergence of agriculture led to stable societies, created surplus and necessitated the domestication of animals. All of these developments were dependent on geography. The hab-

itable and warm regions i.e. the cores, were the ones where agriculture, domestication and innovation occurred. The Hilly Flank region in Western Eurasia, for instance, had unique concentration of domesticated plants and animals. It marks as one of the earliest sites showing the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to more sustainable and permanent agricultural societies. Diamond shows that the majority of domesticated animals were concentrated in either Europe or Asia. While Africa had tamed elephants, it was of little use in terms of agriculture, which Africa's uneven geography and climate did not favour. As a consequence of living among domesticated animals, Eurasian societies developed immunity to diseases that originated from these animals. The societies in the Americas, on the other hand, had no exposure or immunity to these diseases. As a result, the interaction of both these societies resulted in widespread deaths. The importance of geography in technological innovation, in this instance, is quite clear.

The most influential and exhaustive critique of the thesis concerning the importance of ge-

## SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

# Generative AI's hallucinations

**I**n May, Google rolled out a long-awaited update that incorporated generative AI into its dominant search engine. Users searching for information in the US are now sometimes shown an AI-generated overview that summarises the results, followed by the usual list of websites ranked by relevance.

Within days, people were reporting bizarre, inaccurate, and downright dangerous answers from the new AI Overviews feature. The model suggested using glue to help cheese stick to pizza, touted the cardiovascular benefits of running with scissors, and claimed that former US President Barack Obama is a Muslim. Google rushed to fix these errors, but many experts argue that they are intrinsic to the technology. Google CEO Sundar Pichai himself described such "hallucinations" as an "unsolved problem" and an "inherent feature" of the technology. Tacitly admitting failure, Google appears to have shrunk the proportion of users who are shown the overviews.

Google was widely - and rightly - panned for launching a technology that is clearly unfit for use and could harm users. But few have considered why the tech behemoth was able to act so brazenly in the first place. The

answer is simple: it is, in the words of Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan, "too big to care." Google controls around 90% of the global market for web search and faces little competitive pressure. It can release an unreliable or unsafe product without fear of losing customers to rivals.

Similarly, Google's market power gives it no incentive to maintain quality. Its search engine has been rapidly deteriorating over the past few years, with organic results being increasingly crowded out by ads and spam content. Cory Doctorow coined the term "enshittification" to describe tech companies' practice of providing consumers with helpful and affordable (or free) services and then hiking prices and reducing quality once they corner the market. Examples abound: Amazon has gradually increased seller fees while inundating buyers with more sponsored results, while Meta-owned Instagram and Facebook increasingly push ads, videos, and other clickbait instead of trustworthy news and updates from friends and family.

The same logic applies to "upgrades," such as Google's AI Overviews. These intentional and sometimes drastic product changes are sold under the pro-

gressive-sounding banner of "innovation" but often make the user experience much worse.

The rivalry between tech companies, especially the scramble over generative AI, is sometimes cited as evidence of competitive forces in the industry. But this argument fails to distinguish between competition "for the market" and competition "in the market." Tech giants might appear to compete with one another, but it is almost always a mirage. In fact, each firm is trying to deepen the moat around its own sphere of influence, resulting in a tense but largely static coexistence. And in those rare instances of direct competition, such as between Microsoft and Google in web search, market share remains largely unchanged.

More worryingly, today's AI ecosystem is rife with collusive behaviour: tech giants are increasingly forming partnerships akin to the lucrative agreements that Google made to maintain its search dominance. These include Microsoft's cloud-computing deal with Meta, a recently announced partnership between Apple and OpenAI, and Google's plans to embed its AI technologies in Samsung phones, several of which are already facing scrutiny from antitrust authorities.

Tech giants are competing in one realm: each wants to win investors' approval and avoid giving the impression that it is falling behind in the AI arms race. But the toxic combination of recklessly vying for growth and suppressing competition is fueling the dangerous and wasteful deployment of untested technologies.

Encouraging marginally more competition between tech monopolists, in the hopes that they will be forced to focus more on safety and reliability, will not be enough. Binding regulation, such as the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, is a necessary first step toward holding these companies to account.

Equally important, it is time to stop treating innovation as an end in itself, regardless of what purpose it achieves or whose interests it advances. Instead, we must develop a far more nuanced understanding of how narratives about innovation are shaped and steered by investors, dominant firms, and other powerful actors. Only then can we have a meaningful conversation about the role of AI in our societies.

*The writer is Director of Europe and Transatlantic Partnerships at the Open Markets Institute.*  
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# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

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

## Preserving monuments

**Sir,** In an odd incident last week, Hyderabad's 135-year-old iconic Charminar clock was damaged by pigeons, with an 'L' shaped hole noticed on the white background of the clock near the '25 minute' mark. The impairment highlights the challenges faced in preserving historical monuments. Pigeon infestation is a common issue in many ancient structures, often leading to significant damage over time. The hole in the clock's dial board, although seemingly minor, represents a broader issue of maintaining the integrity of heritage sites. The Charminar clock is more than a timepiece; it is a part of Hyderabad's rich history. Ensuring its preservation therefore is essential to maintaining the cultural heritage of the city and preserving the clock for future generations.  
**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

## Broader conflict

**Sir,** The assassination of Hamas' political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran—following Israel's strike on a senior Hezbollah commander in response to a rocket attack on Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, which killed a dozen children—has escalated tensions in West Asia. This development increases the risk of the conflict expanding from Israel to Lebanon and Syria, potentially involving Iran due to its support for Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis in Yemen. Israel now faces potential retaliation from Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as from Iran. Hamas' armed wing has stated that Haniyeh's assassination will intensify the conflict and have significant consequences. Haniyeh, who was the diplomatic representative of Hamas and played a key role in negotiating a Gaza ceasefire with the US, Egyptian, and Qatari mediation, was seen as a moderate compared to the group's more militant members. His death disrupts ongoing ceasefire talks. Qatar's Prime Minister has criticized the killing, questioning how mediation can succeed if one side eliminates the negotiator from the other. The assassination undermines efforts to prevent further escalation and could impact the global economy. This development is particularly concerning for the US, which has been advocating for a ceasefire to end the 10-month Gaza conflict. Israel's targeting of Hamas and Hezbollah leadership may lead to a broader regional conflict.  
**Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH**



Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy hands over a cheque of ₹50,000 and winners' trophy to KIIT International School, Bhubaneswar, the first runners-up in Junior category of Mettle Meet 2024, at Hotel Crystal Crown, Bhubaneswar, Sunday as the daily's Editor Tathagata Satpathy and quizmaster Ajay Poonia look on.



Quizzers of DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar, the second runners-up in Junior category, receiving the a cheque of ₹25,000 and the trophy

## RAISING THE BAR

Mettle Meet's juggernaut continued to march ahead with élan as the sixth edition of eastern India's biggest quizzing extravaganza, hosted by Odisha's only home grown English daily **Orissa POST**, witnessed a record participation of contestants from over 80 top educational institutions of the state. The two-day-long battle of brains witnessed many anxious moments as the bright young minds, split into Senior and Junior categories, cracked volleys of tricky questions put by eminent quizmaster Ajay Poonia with wit and presence of mind. Sunday's Grand Finale saw eight top teams from each category, which emerged successful from the preliminary rounds on the previous day, vie for the summit clashes before a packed audience of parents, teachers, students and dignitaries. As curtains came down on the mega event, some walked away with the coveted trophies while those who missed out by a whisker romped home with an experience of lifetime

**Bhubaneswar, August 4:** With over 80 top educational institutions from across the state registering their active participation in the sixth edition of **Orissa POST** Mettle Meet 2024, the biggest quizzing extravaganza of eastern India was a grand success not just in terms of scale of arrangements, but also by the enthusiasm it evoked among thousands of stakeholders for the marquee event.

Excitement ran high among the participants as well as their parents and teachers who streamed into the venue at Hotel Crystal Crown in Patia for the preliminary rounds Saturday, and the Grand Finale Sunday. During the proceedings, while the participants got engrossed in finding the right answers, their mentors wished the bright minds with bated breath to hit the bulls' eye.

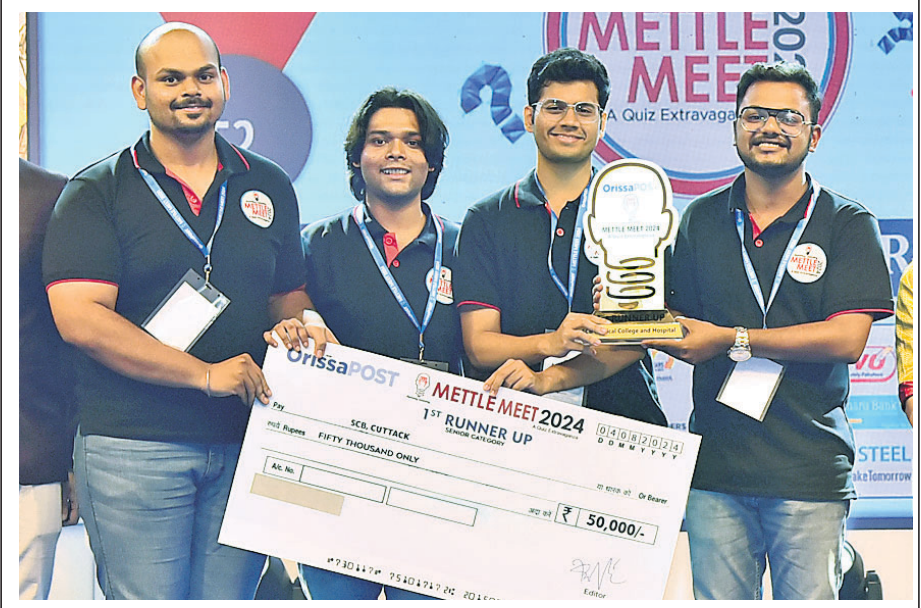
Nevertheless, they enjoyed every moment of the event, in as much as the participants, and were all praise for the initiative by Odisha's only homegrown English daily in not just keeping the tradition of quizzing alive in the state, but scaling up the level of participation and proportion with every passing year.

Shahid Khan, a teacher at DPS Kalinga, said Mettle Meet is a platform that gives a chance to young minds from all over the state. "They are not just from the twin city. As the event has grown now, participants are coming from as far as Burla or Dhenkanal to take part and test their knowledge with some of the best minds here."

### Friendship is all about trust

Call it a chance operation or a rendezvous set-up by divine intervention, the grand finale of **Orissa POST** Mettle Meet 2024 coincided with Friendship Day, validating the deep trust and bonding among the participants. Apart from the sparkling intelligence and creativity of participants, their shared camaraderie made them bag the desired results. Chirag Malik of DAV Public School, Unit-VIII, said prior to attending the event, they had entrusted each other with ample faith. Adweya Sarangi of KIIT International School said a strong friendship always acts as a crushing force in challenging times

Medhir Sarangi, from DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar, which made into the second runners-up this year, said being the youngest member in the group he gave his best efforts. "The electrifying atmosphere of Orissa POST Mettle Meet 2024 is a one-of-a-kind experience for students," he added. Divyajyoti Tripathy, from DAV Unit-VIII which bagged the winners crown in Junior category said the results reflect the dedicated team effort which each of the participants devoted since a year ago. "After DAV Unit-VIII ended up as runners-up last year, an intense preparation followed keeping in mind to win the title in the 2024 edition of Mettle Meet," he said. Quiz master Ajay Poonia kept the audience engaged with the proceedings and enthralled them with his trademark humour and flawless presentation.



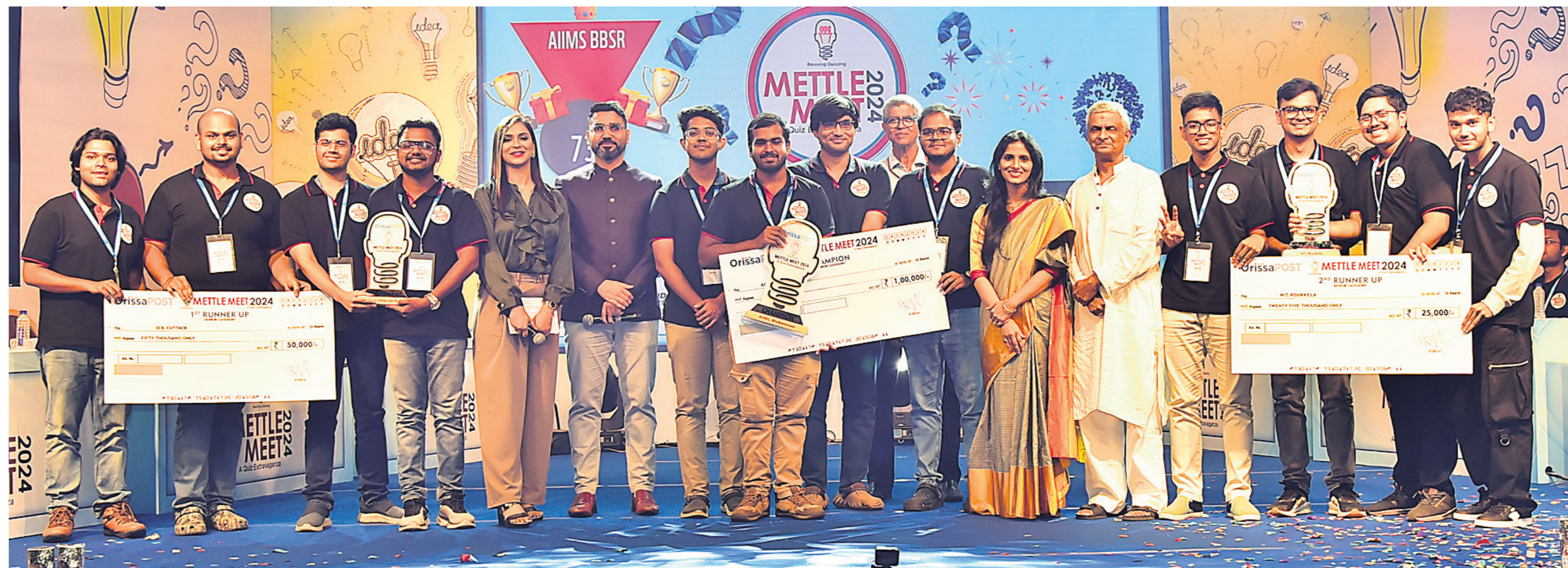
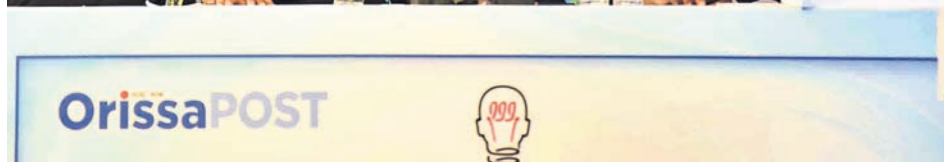
Participants from SCB Medical College, Cuttack, the first runners-up in Senior category, with their trophy and a cheque of ₹50,000



Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy hands over a cheque of ₹25,000 to NIT, Rourkela, the second runners-up in Senior category while Editor Tathagata Satpathy looks on.



# TRYST WITH TALENT



# national

## of the day quote

I appeal to the BJP and JD(S) workers to work together. Who should become chief minister is not important to me. With your blessings I have been the chief minister of the state twice. Welfare and development of the state and its people are important for me

H D KUMARASWAMY | UNION MINISTER

Political oppression is nothing compared to social oppression. Have the lives of millions of Dalits and Adivasis in the country become free from hatred and discrimination, with self-respect and dignity

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

People are talking about special status for Bihar. I ask why Nitish Kumar could not press for the restoration of 20 sugar mills that have been moribund for years? He has been in power for nearly 20 years which shall be remembered for wasted opportunities

PRASHANT KISHOR | POLITICAL STRATEGIST TURNED ACTIVIST

## X POST OF THE DAY

Two more 'small-small incidents' happened today. But don't question the Railway Minister. Because in big-big countries, small-small incidents keep happening.

@Pun\_Starr

## SHORT TAKES

### 7 killed, 25 injured in bus-car collision

**Etawah (UP):** Seven people were killed and 25 injured early Sunday when the bus they were on fell into a ditch after a collision on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway in the Usrahara area here, police said. Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar told reporters that a bus with Nagaland number plate was on its way to Delhi from Rae Bareilly, when at around 12.45 am it collided with a car coming from the wrong lane.

### 3 coaches of empty MEMU train derail

**Saharanpur (UP):** Three coaches of an empty local train derailed while it was taken to the washing shed from the Saharanpur railway station Sunday, officials said. Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Ambala division Mandeep Singh Bhatia told reporters that the MEMU train was empty and no one was injured.

### SC to hear Sisodia's bail pleas today

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday pleas filed by AAP leader Manish Sisodia, seeking bail in corruption and money-laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan will take up for hearing both the pleas.

### Several RJD leaders join JD-U in Bihar

**Patna:** Several RJD leaders joined JD-U Sunday in the presence of Bihar ministers Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Ashok Chaudhary who welcomed them into the party. On the occasion, JD-U State President Umesh Singh Kushwahra said, "People are joining JD-U after being influenced by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar."



There was no talk of seat sharing in today's meeting. We are going to contest as the MVA alliance and bring about change. People favour the MVA and that was evident in the Lok Sabha polls

RAMESH CHENNITHALA | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

## FIRST-EVER SoPS ON TRANSPORTING ORGANS

The Union Health Ministry has come out with its first-ever SoPs for seamless transport of human organs through various modes of travel, which will allow airlines carrying them to request the Air Traffic Control for priority take-off and landing and also arrange front-row seats



# Rains lash western, central India

The India Meteorological Department has warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall in eastern, northeastern and northern parts of the country on Monday while isolated places in Bihar Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are likely to witness thunderstorms accompanied by lightning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 4:** Heavy rains lashed western and central parts of India Sunday while a cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir led to the closure of the arterial Srinagar-Leh national highway, cutting off the Kashmir Valley from Ladakh and rendering the Baltal base camp for the Amarnath Yatra inaccessible.

The death toll in last week's landslides in Kerala's Wayanad and Himachal Pradesh rose to 221 and 11, respectively, while more than 370 people, including pilgrims, stranded on the rain-ravaged trek route to Uttarakhand's Kedarnath, were evacuated.

So far, more than 10,000 people have been rescued from Kedarnath, Bhimbali and Gaurikund. The trek route to Kedarnath suffered extensive damage as a result of a cloudburst in Junglechatti near Lincholi last Wednesday.

Army personnel were deployed at an inundated residential area in Maharashtra's Pune amid heavy downpours and water discharge from the Khadakwasla dam, officials said. In view of the discharge of water from Khadakwasla, Mulshi, Pavana and other dams in the Pune region, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde directed authorities to be alert and shift people from dangerous zones to safer places with the assistance of NDRF, SDRF and the Army, if needed.

Officials of Maharashtra's irrigation department said 35,000 cusecs of water was discharged from the Khadakwasla dam following heavy rainfall in the catchment areas in the past fortnight. The ghat section in Pune district received heavy rainfall in the last two days.

In Jammu and Kashmir, some



## Kerala grapples with relief efforts

**Wayanad (Kerala):** As rescue operations in landslide-hit areas of Wayanad district continued for the sixth day Sunday, authorities intensified efforts to recover bodies and also prepared a mass grave for unidentified remains, amid discussions in the state on donations to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund and whether to classify the natural calamity as a 'national disaster'. More personnel and equipment were deployed Sunday in areas where the likelihood of finding bodies is high, and a drone-based Intelligent Buried Object Detection System was used to identify locations where bodies might be buried deep under huge boulders or logs.

buildings suffered damage while the Srinagar-Leh national highway was closed following a cloudburst in Ganderbal district that triggered a flash flood.

The highway's closure has cut off the Kashmir Valley from Ladakh while the Baltal base camp for Amarnath yatra has also been rendered inaccessible.

Heavy rainfall in Jharkhand has led to the swelling of a couple of rivers in the state, forcing the East Singhbhum district administration to issue an alert for people residing in the low-lying areas.

The water level in Kharkai and Swarnarekha rivers has been rising for the last couple of days due to incessant rains in the state. According to an official

release, the water level in the Swarnarekha river was at 116.58 metres at 9 am Sunday against the danger mark of 121.50 metres. The water level of the Kharkhai was flowing at 126.83 metres against the red mark of 129 metres, it added.

Around 3,500 cusecs of water was released into the Swarnarekha river from the Chandil Dam in the adjoining Seraikela-Kharswan district of Jharkhand. People residing in the catchment areas have been asked not to venture out near the rivers, and duly follow the directives issued by the administration.

In neighbouring West Bengal, rainfall occurred at most places in all the districts with a few places in Birbhum witnessing heavy showers. The Damodar

Valley Corporation (DVC) released 1.2 lakh cusecs of water from the Panchet and Maithon dams along the Jharkhand-West Bengal border Sunday morning after heavy discharge of water from Tenughat upstream. A total of 90,000 cusecs of water was released from Panchet and Maithon Saturday.

Several south Bengal districts, including Purba and Paschim Bardhaman, Birbhum, Paschim and Purba Medinipur, Bankura, Hooghly and Howrah have been impacted by the release of water by DVC. The death toll due to flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh increased to 11 with the recovery of two more bodies from the Mandi district.

Over 40 people are still missing after a series of cloudbursts occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision on the night of July 31 and wreaked havoc.

The rescue operations are still underway and sniffer dogs, drones and other equipment are also being used to locate the missing people.

According to officials, 410 rescuers from the Army, NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, CISE, Himachal Pradesh Police and home guards are involved in the hunt.

A total of 87 roads are still closed in the state. The local meteorological office has warned of heavy showers, thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places in Himachal Pradesh till August 8.

Intermittent rains lashed parts of Himachal Pradesh with Hamirpur receiving the highest rainfall at 54 mm since Friday evening, followed by Berthi and Dharamshala at 19 mm each, Neri 11 mm, Kangra 9.7 mm, Kukumseri 9.6 mm, Sundernagar 8.1 mm, Manali and Chamba 6 mm each and Bajaura 5 mm.

## Two Arunachal men missing near LAC, believed to be held by PLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 4:** Two men from Arunachal Pradesh, missing for nearly two years after they disappeared from a remote area along the India-China border, are believed to be in the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) custody but the Chinese military has not confirmed their presence.

Batelum Tikro, 35, and his cousin, Bainsi Manyu, 37, went missing August 19, 2022, while looking for medicinal herbs in a high-altitude region of the Chaglagam area in the state's Anjaw district. Extensive searches have yielded no information about their whereabouts. Families and local authorities continue to seek answers, raising concerns about the security and safety of individuals in border areas.

"I have come to know that they were detained by the Chinese army," Tikro's brother Dishanso Chikro told PTI over phone.

Chikro said he has approached local army authorities several times to seek information about his brothers. "I am told that the issue was raised by the Indian Army with their Chinese counterparts. But no response has come so far," he said. Anjaw MLA and State's Women and Child Development Minister Dasanglu Pul confirmed that the duo went missing along the border with China while looking for medicinal herbs. "The Chinese side has not yet acknowledged that the youths are in their custody. But I am told that they are still alive," she told PTI over phone.

After the two went missing, Chikro lodged two complaints of missing persons at Hayuliang police station (registration numbers: 0005/2022 and 0006/2022) October 9, 2022. It was mentioned in the complaints that "some fellow villagers might have last seen them at border areas August 24, 2022" but since then there has been no sign of the whereabouts of the duo."

# BSP doesn't agree at all: Mayawati

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, August 4:** BSP chief and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati Sunday said her party doesn't agree with the recent Supreme Court's verdict allowing sub-classification within Scheduled Castes.

"The sub-classification of people within Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) has been permitted, our party doesn't agree with it at all," Mayawati said while addressing a press conference here.

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court Thursday held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes, which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward. "Because the atrocities faced by the people of SCs and STs have been faced as

## SC'S QUOTA RULING



a group and this group is equal in which it would not be right to do any kind of sub-classification," she said.

The former Chief Minister said, "We have appealed to the honourable Supreme Court to reconsider its decision, otherwise if the reservation facility given by the most revered Baba Saheb to make crores of Dalits and tribals stand on their feet in this country is abolished, it will become very difficult." Mayawati said, "Those who say that SCs-STs have become economically

strong, then I think only 10 or 11 per cent of the people must have become strong, the condition of the rest 90 per cent is very bad."

Mayawati targeted the ruling party and the Congress saying, "The Centre and the BJP who say that they are the supporters of the SC-ST community, should advocate for them properly... which they did not. The Congress also adopted a vague attitude on the matter."

She said, "In such a situation, we have to tell the BJP government at the Centre that if your intention is clear then whatever decision has come, you people should amend the Constitution in Parliament and bring it in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution." Raising questions on the intentions of political parties, she said, "I do not accept the decision taken by the Supreme Court because Parliament also has the right to overturn it."



The birthday of Acharya Balkrishna ji, General Secretary of Patanjali Yogpeeth, was celebrated as Herb Day at the Yog Bhawan Auditorium of Patanjali Wellness, Patanjali Yogpeeth II, Saturday. On the occasion, over one lakh medicinal plants like neem, tulsi, aloe vera, clove, amla were distributed and planted for free by Ramdev ji and Acharya ji as well as Patanjali Yoga Committees established all over the country. Along with this, 887 units of blood were donated in Haridwar along with Acharya Balkrishna ji and over 1,000 units of blood were donated through Patanjali Yoga Committees across the country. Officials, teachers and students of all the projects and educational institutions associated with Patanjali Yogpeeth attended the programme.

# Dharavi redevelopment plan gets shot in the arm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, August 4:** In a shot in the arm for redevelopment of Asia's biggest slum, a newly formed association of residents of Dharavi and its vicinity has lent its support to ongoing state government-led survey of informal tenements, a precursor to the \$ 3-billion project by the Adani group that promises to transform lives of an estimated one million residents.

"We request the survey be conducted at the earliest possible time to ensure that the redevelopment can move forward without further delays," Citizen and Society Development Welfare body of Dharavi residents wrote to S V R Srinivas, CEO Dharavi Redevelopment Project/Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP/SRA), of government of Maharashtra, July 30.

Representatives of Citizen and Society Development Welfare, who have given the slo-



gan of Dharavi Banao Andolan, met Srinivas and submitted a memorandum seeking expedition of the survey being conducted in Dharavi.

Mapping of the roughly 600 acres of densely populated Dharavi is crucial for the redevelopment that is likely to take seven years to complete. Eligible residents will get a 350 square foot flat in the area once the project is completed, while ineligible residents will be rehoused elsewhere in Mumbai. 3-D mapping expert Genesys International Ltd will map the area while UK consultancy Buro Happold Ltd will outline the physical infra-

structure needs and Boston-based Sasaki Associates Inc is in charge of overall re-design.

Dharavi residents, known as Dharavikars, have also asked Srinivas to take legal action against those who are opposing the survey process.

The delegation stressed to Srinivas that obstructing the survey process was not only detrimental to the redevelopment efforts but also constituted a violation of the law.

Deepak Kaitke of the association in the letter said the residents of Dharavi "emphasise the urgent need for the commencement of the survey for the

Dharavi redevelopment project."

Later talking to PTI, he said the association has told Srinivas that they want the master plan for the development to be disclosed first. "What we told Srinivas is that the Master Development Plan has to be disclosed first. We want to know who will be relocated, where and when the flats will be ready. The details and timelines need to be disclosed." Last week, several residents took to the streets opposing the disruption of the survey by some. They wanted Srinivas to recognize Dharavi Banao Andolan as the right representative of the people of Dharavi, who are actively opposing the survey and the overall redevelopment efforts.

Around 30 to 40 DRP survey teams are visiting each and every tenement, despite heavy rains and knee-deep water logged small by-lanes of Dharavi, to ensure that no tenement is left behind.

## SNIPPETS

### Provide security to rape survivor: Akhilesh

**Lucknow:** Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Sunday urged the court to order protection for the Ayodhya rape survivor considering the "sensitivity" of the case. He also said people trying to "politicise" the case must not be allowed to succeed. "The government should make the best possible medical arrangements for the rape survivor. It is the government's responsibility to protect the girl's life," Yadav said in a post on X.

### Nipah virus detected in bat samples

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The presence of the Nipah virus has been detected in bat samples collected from Pandikkad in Kerala's Malappuram district, where the death of a 14-year-old boy due to the infection was reported June 21. According to Health Minister Veena George, antibodies were found in six out of 27 fruit bat samples collected within a five-kilometre radius. The minister said that all tests of those on the contact list of the infected individual conducted as per Nipah protocol have been negative for the virus so far. A total of 472 people are on the contact list, and 261 individuals who have completed the mandatory 21-day isolation period have been removed from the list, she added.

### Tharoor criticised for Wayanad post

**New Delhi:** Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has put out the definition of "memorable" to hit back at those criticising him for using the word in a social media post on the Wayanad landslide relief works he participated in. It started with Tharoor sharing on X a video montage of the relief works he was a part of for victims of the landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district. "Some memories of a memorable day in Wayanad," he captioned his post Friday. Several people slammed him for using the word "memorable" in the post.





## of the day quote

From the first cement unit that we commissioned in the early 1980s with one MTPA capacity to now the world's third largest cement company, outside of China, UltraTech's journey has been marked by scorching growth, ambitious bets and flawless execution

**KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA** | CHAIRMAN ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

F&O (future and options) kind of things are being discouraged for the retail (investor) by the regulator. Those who are resorting to such kind of an instrument, they might come back to the banking system

**DINESH KUMAR KHARA** | SBI CHAIRMAN

Today, a new consumer class has emerged, needing to be serviced with low-priced packs, encouraged to make the use of Emami brands an extension of their daily lives and gradually move them to the premium. The combination of this entry-level approach and a premium positioning represents the Emami of the future

**HARSHA V AGARWAL** | EMAMI VICE CHAIRMAN AND MD

## SHORT TAKES

### Amara Raja profit up 26%

**New Delhi:** Amara Raja Energy & Mobility (ARE&M) has posted about 26 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹249.12 crore for June quarter FY25. It had reported a net profit of ₹198.31 crore for April-June period of 2023-24, the company said in an exchange filing Saturday. Revenue from operations rose to ₹3,263.05 crore from ₹2,796.27 crore in the year-ago quarter. Revenue growth was aided by year-on-year healthy volumes registered in the automotive aftermarket, OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), and export markets, the company said in a statement.

### Zomato collects ₹83cr platform fee

**New Delhi:** Food delivery aggregator Zomato, which began charging platform fee on orders from last August, collected ₹83 crore through the new levy till March, the company's annual report has revealed. Platform fee has been cited as one of the three key factors driving Zomato's Adjusted Revenue, which grew 27 per cent year-on-year to ₹7,792 crore in FY24. "Adjusted Revenue as a percentage of GOV (gross order value), continued to increase primarily due to increase in restaurant commission take-rates, improvement in ad monetization and introduction of platform fee from Q2FY24 onwards," the report stated.

### Startups raise record funding

**New Delhi:** In a robust funding week, at least 32 Indian startups secured more than \$341 million in funding. The Indian startup ecosystem saw six growth-stage funding deals and 22 early-stage deals last week. Six startups raised more than \$216 million, led by mobility startup Rapido which secured \$120 million. Among other Indian startups that raised a substantial amount of funding, like fintech firms Navi and BharatPe, and sports tech company KheloMore. Among other startups that secured funding last week were renewable energy firm BluPine and EV startups Simple Energy and Kinetic Green.



Some believe that your company has been slow to manufacture electric vehicles. We decided to adopt a more diversified approach to meeting national objectives and did not want to put all our eggs in one basket

**RC BHARGAVA** | MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA CHAIRMAN

### EV REGISTRATION UP OVER 43% IN FY24

The number of electric vehicles (EVs) registered in FY24 increased significantly by 42.06 per cent as compared to FY23, the Parliament was told. In FY24, 16,81,127 EVs were registered on the e-Vahan portal, against 11,83,341 such vehicles in FY23, Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Steel, Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma, told the Rajya Sabha.



# Fuel retailers see profit slump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 4:** After reporting record profits, state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), BPCL and HPCL posted up to 90 per cent slump in their June quarter earnings as margins fell and they booked under-recovery on the sale of domestic cooking gas LPG at government-controlled rates.

IOC, the nation's largest oil firm, reported 81 per cent drop in stand-alone net profit in April-June - the first quarter of current 2024-25 fiscal year - to ₹2,643.18 crore as opposed to a profit of ₹13,750.44 crore a year back, according to a company filing. Net profit also declined sequentially, when compared to an earning of ₹11,570.82 crore in March quarter.

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) posted 90 per cent drop in profit to ₹633.94 crore as compared to an earning of ₹6,765.50 crore in April-June 2023 and ₹2,709.31 crore in the preceding March quarter.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) net profit dropped to ₹2,841.55 crore in April-June from ₹10,644.30 crore a year back and ₹ 4,789.57 crore in January-March, its filing showed.



The three fuel retailers made extraordinary gains from holding petrol and diesel prices despite a drop in cost. The price freeze was justified in the name of recovering losses they had suffered in the previous year when they did not raise retail prices despite a surge in cost.

The gains arising from the price freeze were eroded with petrol and diesel prices being cut by ₹2 per litre each just before general elections and a fall in refining margins.

Also, the three had uncompensated LPG subsidy - IOC book-

ing under-recovery of ₹5,156.23 crore in April-June, BPCL ₹2,015.10 crore and HPCL ₹2,443.71 crore, according to the filings.

As per an order of the oil ministry, when market determined price (MDP) of LPG cylinders is less than its effective cost to customer (ECC), oil marketing companies (OMCs) have to retain the difference in a separate buffer account for future adjustment.

However, as on June 30, 2024, the three firms had a net negative buffer as the retail selling price was less than MDP.

# Mcap of eight most valued firms slumps ₹1.28L-cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 4:** (PTI) Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost ₹1,28,913.5 crore in market valuation last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards, amid weak trend in equities.

The valuation of TCS tumbled ₹37,971.83 crore to ₹15,49,626.88 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys tanked ₹23,811.88 crore to ₹7,56,250.47 crore.

ITC's mcap dropped by ₹16,619.51 crore to ₹6,11,423.11 crore and that of State Bank of India slumped by ₹13,431.54 crore to ₹7,56,717.85 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited declined by ₹13,125.49 crore to ₹20,28,695.57

crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation went lower by ₹11,821.5 crore to ₹8,50,389.88 crore and that of ICICI Bank diminished by ₹7,843.75 crore to ₹8,42,176.78 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever dipped by ₹4,288 crore to ₹6,32,862.41 crore.

However, the mcap of HDFC Bank jumped ₹32,759.37 crore to ₹12,63,601.40 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) soared ₹1,075.25 crore to ₹7,47,677.98 crore.

Last week, the BSE benchmark declined by 350.77 points or 0.43 per cent.

In the ranking of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the number one rank followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

# Spending on outbound tourism to rise 11% annually: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 4:** Spending on outbound tourism is expected to grow from USD 18.82 billion in 2024 to USD 55.39 billion in 2034, a report said.

The 'Navigating Horizons' report jointly prepared by Nangia NXT and Ficci said packaged tours still dominate the outbound market in India, with a share of 39.20 per cent in 2024, as there is a preference for choosing pre-planned tour packages from travel service providers due to greater convenience and customisation.

The report said that availability of Indian or vegetarian food options as well as awareness about niche tourism will help increase the number and frequency of Indians engaging in foreign travel in the coming years. The market has already seen robust growth with rising disposable incomes, an expanding middle class, systemic ease and flexibility in obtaining visas, and a desire for international experiences.

"Countries like Egypt, Azerbaijan and Georgia, among others, known for their rich history, cultural heritage, natural beauty and unique topographies, are attracting more and more Indians to venture abroad. Such destinations are often more affordable as well," the report said.



With a rising urban and young population, the inclination towards exploring international destinations is expected to continue to grow. Demographic trends thus are likely to support growth in outbound tourism in the near future, it added.

"India's outbound tourism market is showing stellar growth and is projected to reach USD 18.82 billion in 2024. There have also been measurable benefits to allied industries such as aviation and hospitality. The growth in the industry is bolstered by increased consumer spending, visa reforms, social media visibility and commercial marketing efforts," said Suraj Nangia, Head (Government and Public Sector Advisory), Nangia NXT.

With the Indian outbound market expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.4 per cent and reach USD 55.39 billion by 2034, the outlook is positive with coordinated efforts by all stakeholders propelling the industry forward, Nangia added.

# RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged at 6.5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, August 4:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to keep the key interest unchanged at 6.5 per cent Thursday, and wait for more macroeconomic data before taking a call on rate cut in line with expectations, experts said.

The US Federal Reserve has decided to maintain a status quo on its interest rate for now and indicated there could be monetary policy easing in the coming months.

Amid persisting inflationary pressures, RBI will be closely tracking the US monetary policy trajectory before changing its stance on interest rate, which has remained unchanged since February 2023, experts opined.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate).

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for August 6 to 8. Das will announce the decision of the rate-setting panel August 8 (Thursday).

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly monetary policy reviews.

"We do expect a status-quo



position to be adopted by RBI in the forthcoming credit policy. Inflation remains high even today at 5.1 per cent and while this will come down numerically in the coming months, it will be more due to the base effect," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

He further said growth is on the stable path which means that the present interest rate situation does not militate against business.

"The RBI would rather wait and be sure that inflation is on the downward path on a durable basis before taking any action. While we do not expect any change in GDP forecast, there is a possibility of new guidance on inflation numbers," Sabnavis said. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said that high growth in FY2024, combined with the inflation of 4.9 per cent in first quarter of the current fiscal are unlikely to shift the voting

pattern of the four members who voted for a status quo in the June 2024 meeting towards a change in stance or rate cut in the August 2024 meeting itself.

"If the food inflation outlook turns favourable on the back of a normal distribution of rains in the second half of the monsoon season, and in the absence of global or domestic shocks, a stance change is possible in October 2024. This could be followed by a 25 bps rate cut each in December 2024 and February 2025, with an extended pause thereafter," she said.

Last month, Governor Das had said the question of change of stance on interest rate is quite premature given the gap between current inflation and 4 per cent target.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman, Signature Global (India), too said that the central bank is expected to maintain

the status quo on the interest rate for now as retail inflation continues to pose challenges.

"We hope central bank would shift towards a more supportive stance later. The likely change in stance, as and when it happens, would offer borrowers a sigh of relief, and housing loan offtake, which is showing early signs of moderation, would probably again start seeing the uptick. This shift, combined with achieving the 4.9 per cent fiscal deficit target, will benefit the overall economy, including real estate, and the sooner it happens, the better," Aggarwal said.

Puneet Pal, Head - Fixed Income, PGIM India Mutual Fund, also opined that the RBI would keep the rate unchanged.

"We think that the upcoming MPC policy's undertone may be relatively dovish given that fiscal consolidation is well on track with the fiscal deficit number printing below 5 per cent and the global monetary easing cycle well and truly underway with rate cut by Bank of England after the rate cuts from ECB and Bank of Canada," Pal said, and added the last US Fed meeting earlier in the week also had dovish undertones.

The MPC is entrusted with the responsibility of deciding the policy repo rate to achieve the inflation target of 4 per cent keeping in mind the objective of growth.

# India plans tougher ad curbs on liquor makers

REUTERS

**New Delhi, August 4:** India, which bans direct advertising of liquor, is set to announce sweeping rules that will ban even surrogate ads and sponsoring of events, which could force firms such as Carlsberg, Pernod Ricard and Diageo to redraw marketing campaigns.

Such "surrogate ads" often get round the ban by ostensibly showing less desirable items instead, such as water, music CDs or glassware garbed in logos and hues linked to their key product, and often promoted by popular Bollywood film stars.

Now they could bring fines for companies and bans for celebrities endorsing tobacco and liquor ads deemed misleading, according to the top civil servant for consumer affairs and draft rules being reported for the first time by Reuters.

"You can't take a circuitous way to promote products," the official, Nidhi Khare, told Reuters, adding that final rules were expected to be issued within a month.

"If we find ads to be surro-

gate and misleading, then even those who are endorsing (products), including celebrities, will be held responsible."

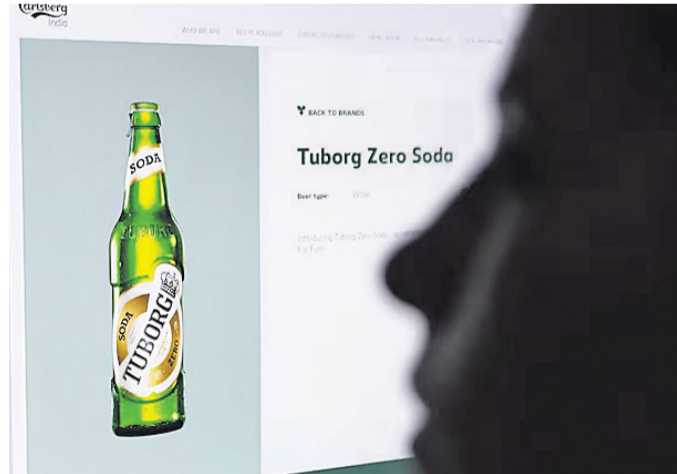
For example, brewer Carlsberg promotes its Tuborg drinking water in India, with an ad showing film stars at a rooftop dance party and the slogan "Tilt Your World," which echoes its beer ads elsewhere, emblazoned with the message: "Drink Responsibly."

Competitor Diageo's YouTube ad for its Black & White ginger ale, which has drawn 60 million views, features the signature black-and-white terriers from its scotch of the same name.

The changes threaten a sea change for liquor makers in India, the world's eighth-biggest alcohol market by volume, with annual revenues Euromonitor estimates at \$45 billion.

Growing affluence among its 1.4 billion people makes India a lucrative market for the likes of Kingfisher beer maker, United Breweries, part of the Heineken Group, which has more than a quarter of market share by volume.

Popular for their whiskies, Diageo and Pernod taken to-



gether, have a market share of about a fifth, while for Pernod, India contributes about a tenth of global revenues.

The new rules call for "prohibition against engaging in surrogate advertisement," which extends to sponsorships and ads for products viewed as "brand extensions" that share the characteristics of an alcohol brand, the draft said.

Penalties under the new rules rely on consumer law, opening manufacturers and endorsers to fines of up to 5 million ru-



The group was in talks with the government and supported advertising of "genuine" brand extensions, she added.

The World Health Organization says bans or comprehensive curbs on alcohol advertising "are cost-effective measures" in the interest of public health.

Its data shows India's consumption of alcohol per person will rise to nearly 7 litres in 2030, from about 5 litres in 2019, a period over which fellow Asian giant China's consumption will drop to 5.5 litres.

And alcohol-related deaths in India stood at 38.5 for every 100,000 of its population, versus 16.1 for China.

Khare said India's draft followed a review of global best practices, in countries such as Norway, which bans ads for alcohol and other goods relying on features of a liquor brand, in curbs that researchers say have cut alcohol sales over time.

The new draft rules prohibit marketing of items such as soda or music CDs employing a "similar label, design, pattern, logo" to that of alcohol products, explicitly targeting efforts to get

around current bans.

Ads for items such as glasses and soda cans allow "brand names to appear in all their ads, creating its recall value for the consumers," however, the draft states.

The new rules follow warnings to some liquor companies, such as Pernod, and some domestic tobacco firms to halt misleading ads, a senior government source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

India is not against brand extension ads, the official added, but wants them to properly depict the product being showcased, rather than giving consumers the impression that the ad is for a liquor brand.

One India video promoted by Pernod, ostensibly for glassware products linked to its whisky brand, Blenders Pride, shows Bollywood star Alia Bhatt walking a ramp under flashing disco lights, and saying, "My life, my pride."

While it has a logo similar to that of the whisky brand, the video, which also appears on the website of the Blenders Pride Glassware Fashion Tour, shows no glassware products.

# DAY OF HEARTBREAKS IN PARIS

## SEN LOSES IN SEMIS, TO PLAY BRONZE-MEDAL PLAYOFF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, August 4: India's dream of a first-ever Olympic gold in badminton will remain unfulfilled after Lakshya Sen suffered a straight-game defeat to reigning champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at the Paris Games here Sunday.

The 22-year-old from Almora, a world championships bronze medalist, squandered a three-point advantage in the first game and a 7-0 lead in the second to surrender 20-22 14-21 to the two-time world champion Axelsen in a 54-minute semifinal clash.

Sen will get another chance to become the first Indian male shuttler to win an Olympic medal when he meets Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal playoff.

It was Sen's eighth loss to the Danish star with the Indian beating him only once at the 2022 German Open final.

"If I would have closed the first game, then I would have had better chance of closing the match. In the second game also, I started

well but couldn't keep the lead," Sen told the broadcaster after the contest.

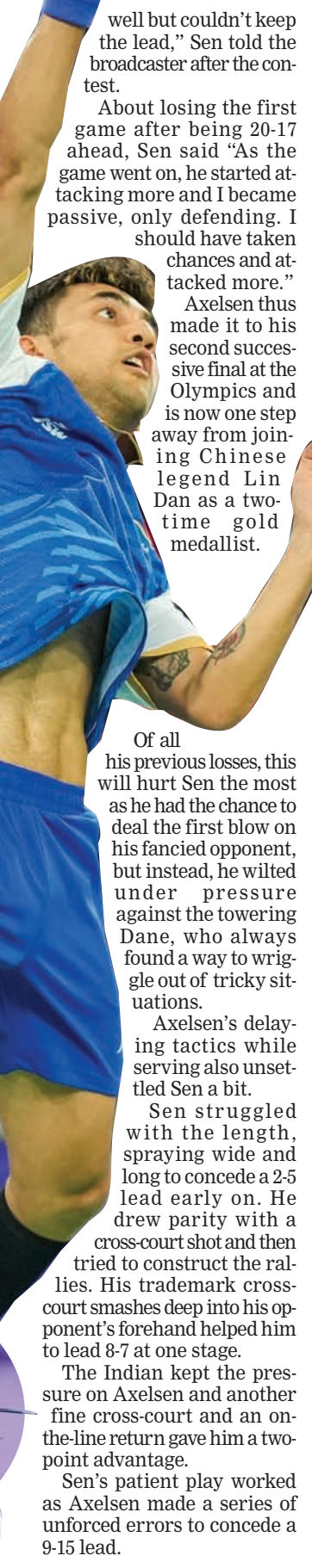
About losing the first game after being 20-17 ahead, Sen said "As the game went on, he started attacking more and I became passive, only defending. I should have taken chances and attacked more."

Axelsen thus made it to his second successive final at the Olympics and is now one step away from joining Chinese legend Lin Dan as a two-time gold medalist.

Of all his previous losses, this will hurt Sen the most as he had the chance to deal the first blow on his fancied opponent, but instead, he wilted under pressure against the towering Dane, who always found a way to wriggle out of tricky situations.

Axelsen's delaying tactics while serving also unsettled Sen a bit. Sen struggled with the length, spraying wide and long to concede a 2-5 lead early on. He drew parity with a cross-court shot and then tried to construct the rallies. His trademark cross-court smashes deep into his opponent's forehand helped him to lead 8-7 at one stage.

The Indian kept the pressure on Axelsen and another fine cross-court and an on-the-line return gave him a two-point advantage. Sen's patient play worked as Axelsen made a series of unforced errors to concede a 9-15 lead.



**I would take my learnings and positives from this game and give my 100 percent in bronze medal match**

LAKSHYA SEN

Axelsen won two good rallies, including one involving 43 shots. Soon, Sen moved to 17-11, but Axelsen then started dominating proceedings and rained down a monstrous forehand to narrow the lead down to 16-18.

Sen left his opponent wrong-footed with an away shot and then produced another incredible cross-court to gather three game points.

But the youngster imploded next as he lost all three of them after serving into net and going long twice. Sen sent a return to serve out and netted again to hand over the opening game to his rival.

The Indian looked too defensive and committed a series of unforced errors as the Dane made it 7-8 after nailing down another forehand smash.

## Lovlina outwitted in QF

Indian contingent exits Paris without medals after Lovlina, Nishant lose QFs

Paris: India's boxing campaign at the ongoing Olympics came to a medal-less end after Tokyo edition bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) bowed out following a hard-fought quarterfinal loss to China's Li Qian in the women's competition here Sunday.

Borgohain, the reigning world champion in the category, went down 1-4 to the Tokyo Games silver-winning 34-year-old in a messy contest during which both the boxers were repeatedly cautioned for clinching and holding.

The 26-year-old's loss ended India's boxing campaign in the Olympics after Nishant Dev was ousted from the men's 71kg quarterfinals Saturday night, also a close contest.

A six-strong boxing contingent, comprising four women and two men, was representing the country in the Games. Out of these, four had crashed out in the preliminary stage itself.

It was a pacey start to the proceedings as Borgohain and Qian quickly got into a tangle. However, none of the boxers

seemed willing to launch the first attack. The holding and clinching started pretty early in the bout and the referee had to repeatedly step in to separate the two old foes.

Qian seemed determined while Borgohain came across the more animated of the two early on.

The Chinese connected some clean combination punches and a left hook towards the end of the first round. She was particularly impressive before she took a 3-2 lead in the contest.

The second round didn't start any different but Qian was more purposeful in her approach. Her right straights were on target while Borgohain was cautioned twice for excessive holding.

It was once again 3-2 in favour of Qian but with a different set of judges scoring in her favour this time, she only had a slender one-point lead on one card, while the remaining four were tied.

The holding and clinching continued in the third round too and both the women seemed a bit drained.

However, Qian showed great

presence of mind throughout to keep Borgohain at a distance. Borgohain was not up to it when it came to controlling the pace of the bout and repeatedly took hits on counter-attacks.

The Assamese had fought Qian in the Asian Games final last year and gone down 0-5. She later beat Qian in the semifinals of the world championship semifinal in 2023. But more recently, she was bested by the veteran in a pre-Olympic tournament in Czechia in June.



## Shooters miss final target

Chateauroux: Indian shooters Vijayveer Sidhu and Anish Bhanwala gave a good account of themselves in the qualifications but could not enter the final of the 25m rapid fire men's pistol event at the Olympic Games here Sunday. Vijayveer and Anish shot brilliantly over two stages of qualification, staying in contention till the final 10 shots of the second rapid-fire stage, only to shoot scores of 92 and 93, finishing ninth and 13th respectively. Only the top six shooters make the final cut. In the women's skeet competition, Maheshwari Chauhan and Raiza Dhillon ended in 14th and 23rd place respectively in the qualification. Maheshwari aggregated 118 across five series with the first three series taking place Saturday. She recorded scores of 23, 24, 24, 25, 22. Raiza aggregated 113 after a sequence that read 21, 22, 23, 23, 24. Here too, only the top six in the qualifications make it to the final.



Italy's 2016 Rio Olympics gold medalist Diana Bacosi also failed to clear the qualifications, finishing just below Maheshwari at 15th place with a total of 117. On the first day of qualifications, Maheshwari was closely following the leading pack at eighth position with an aggregate of 71. She had shot 23, 24, 24 and despite a 25 Sunday, she could not make the cut. Raiza was placed 25th among 29 shooters with an aggregate of 66 (21, 22, 23). In the men's event, both shooters fired scores of 293 in the first precision stage to go into the rapid fire round in fifth and seventh positions. Vijayveer then shot a 100 and 98 in the first two rapid-fire series to move up to second at one stage as Anish also shot 99 and 97 to stay in touch with the top six. But the final round changed all of that. India still has one more start in the shotgun competitions as Maheshwari comes back with Anant Jeet Singh Naruka for the mixed team skeet, an event which will be making an Olympic debut.

## Feeling robbed? Welcome to Olympics boxing competition

New Delhi: For a sport that relies on a simple exchange of blows to decide the winner, boxing has an incredibly complex scoring system.

And every Olympics, the debate, the rage, and the incredulity surrounding what exactly the judges are observing to decide the winner becomes louder, and more intense.

The latest case in point is India's Nishant Dev, who lost 1-4 to Mexico's Marco Verde Alvarez in the 71kg quarterfinal despite seemingly dominating the contest.

He isn't the first and if boxing's stakeholders continue to avoid introspection, he won't be the last or perhaps, he could be among the last in the Olympics at least. The sport's inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 edition is not yet guaranteed and the opaque scoring system isn't helping the cause.

"These Olympics have been horrendous," declared Michael Conlan, the Irish superstar, whose



famous expletive-laden tirade against judges after losing in the 2016 Rio quarterfinals is considered one of the most defining images of the state of the sport.

Conlan, who turned professional after being "robbed" in Rio,

has commented on just one bout at the ongoing Games in Paris and by the look of it, his disgust for the amateur scoring system is intact.

In the Tokyo 2020 Games, it was the iconic MC Mary Kom, who left the ring perplexed when she lost a pre-quarterfinal bout despite actually leading in terms of rounds won.

"The worst part is that there is no review or protest. Honestly, I am sure the world must have seen, this is too much what they have done," she had told PTI at that time.

The Indian had trailed 4-1 in the opening round against Colombia's Ingrid Valencia.

In the next two rounds, Mary Kom got three of the five judges to rule in her favour but the overall scoreline was still in favour of Valencia. The Manipuri clinched the third round too but once again, it was 3-2 and not 4-1 which was what she needed to swing the final score in her favour.

# Djokovic finally becomes GOAT

TENNIS LEGEND WINS FIRST OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL BY BEATING ALCARAZ, GIVING THE 37-YEAR-OLD FROM SERBIA THE LAST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT MISSING FROM HIS GLITTERING RESUME

REUTERS

Paris, August 4: Novak Djokovic completed his career Golden Slam as the 37-year-old Serb fought off Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in a magnificent Olympic men's singles final battle at Roland Garros Sunday.

After heartbreak in Beijing, London, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo, Djokovic simply would not be denied the one title that had eluded him for so long, winning 7-6(3) 7-6(2) in front of an enthralled crowd on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Top seed Djokovic delivered one of the finest performances of his career to deny a man 16 years his junior and become only the fifth player to win all four singles Grand Slams and the Olympic title during a career.

With points being celebrated by soccer-style chanting that shattered the calm of the adjacent Bois de Boulogne, neither player took a backward step in a ferocious contest.

The first set alone lasted one hour 33 minutes as the two gladiators wrestled for control in a series of spellbinding games, one at 4-4 in which Djokovic repelled five break points.

Alcaraz blinked first in the tiebreak to allow Djokovic to move ahead and when another tiebreak was required to decide the second set, again Djokovic

found another gear, moving 6-2 in front and sealing victory with a stunning forehand winner.

Djokovic roared to the sky and after consoling a stunned Alcaraz at the net he then fell to his knees and sobbed into the Parisian clay in the centre of the court before climbing into the crowd where he was swamped by his family, friends and team.

While Djokovic, the oldest Olympic singles champion since returned to

**It was an incredible fight and I had to play my best tennis. I put my heart, my soul, everything to win gold. I did it for my country first, for Serbia**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

year-old Alcaraz looked inconsolable after failing to add the gold medal to this year's French Open and Wimbledon crowns.

"I think I did a really great tournament, I think I did a really great match," the four-time Grand Slam champion said. "Obviously in front of me, I had a really hungry Novak."

Djokovic had lost three times in Olympic singles semi-finals and only had a solitary bronze medal from four Games appearances. He knew when arriving in Paris that this was his final chance to fill the last remaining space in a bulging trophy

cabinet containing 24 Grand Slam titles.

And how he earned it - overturning his crushing loss to Alcaraz three weeks ago in the Wimbledon final to become the first man to win the

Olympic singles without dropping a set.

Djokovic joins an elite group of Steffi Graf, Andre Agassi, Rafa Nadal and Serena Williams, the latter watching from the front row, in the Golden Slam club and his fans will say this settled the Greatest Of All Time (GOAT) argument once and for all.



## TOWARDS GLORY

Katie Ledecky swims into history books

Already rated one of swimming's all-time greats coming into the Paris Olympics, Katie Ledecky made it official Saturday by storming to victory in her signature event, the 800 metres freestyle to end her work in the French capital in grand style. French torpedo Leon Marchand may be the prince of Paris, electrifying the home nation with four spectacular gold medals. But it is Ledecky leaving Paris sharing the throne of greatest female Olympian with Larisa Latynina after winning a ninth gold medal to equal the Russian gymnast's record. "The week was kind of, you know, had its ups and downs like any other meet," said Ledecky, whose Paris haul also included gold in the 1,500, silver in the 4x200 freestyle relay and bronze in the 400m free. "I knew I just had to focus on the races, don't focus on times, just focus on getting the job done, getting to hear the national anthem at the end of the races as many times as I could." It was Ledecky's second gold medal in Paris and the ninth of her remarkable career, which marked another milestone. She became only the sixth Olympian to reach that figure, joining swimmer Mark Spitz, track star Carl Lewis, Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina and Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi in a tie for second place. The only athlete to win more golds: swimmer Michael Phelps with 23.

## Refugee team's first medal

Cameronian boxer Cindy Ngamba Sunday became the first athlete on the Refugee Olympic Team to clinch a medal at the Paris Games, offering hope for a team created to call attention to the plight of refugees across the world. Ngamba's victory comes after a fierce bout with French boxer Davina Michel in the women's middleweight quarterfinals. The win means she's at least scored a bronze medal as she advances to the semifinals. Ngamba was a flag bearer for the 37 athletes making up the biggest Olympic Refugee Team since the idea was born ahead of the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Ngamba, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, moved to the United Kingdom at the age of 11 and said she was granted refugee status in 2021 because she could have been imprisoned for being gay in Cameroon.



