

Raths roll amid sea of devotees

CHARIOT PULLING TO RESUME TODAY: TALADHWAJA HALTS AT BALAGANDI CHHAK, DARPADALANA AT MARICHKOTE, AND NANDIGHOSHA NEAR SRIMANDIR

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, June 27: Lord Jagannath devotees will get another chance to pull the chariots Saturday as none of them reached their destination Friday after Lord Balabhadra's Taladhwaja chariot got stuck while negotiating a turn, causing delays that prevented the others from arriving at Gundicha Temple, 2.6km away from the 12th-century shrine.

"There is no major issue. It is not unusual for chariots to be pulled on the following day. All rituals were conducted on time. There have been no accidents or untoward incidents," Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said.

When Lord Balabhadra's chariot came to a halt at Balagandi Chhak, Devi Subhadra's Darpadalana was stopped at Marichkote. Meanwhile, Lord Jagannath's Nandighosha chariot was only symbolically pulled as part of the ritual and remains parked near the main temple.

Explaining the delay, the Minister said, "Due to



WHEELS OF FAITH: The chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra being pulled by devotees on the Grand Road in Puri, Friday.

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Trump hints at 'very big' trade deal with India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, June 27: US President Donald Trump said America is going to have a 'very big' trade deal with India, hinting at significant progress in the negotiation process of a long-awaited bilateral trade agreement between the two countries.

"We're having some great deals. We have one coming up, maybe with India, a very big one, where we're going to open up India," Trump said during an event at the White House promoting passage of the GOP's tax and spending cuts legislation Thursday.

"In the China deal, we're starting to open up China. Things that never really could have happened, and the relationship with every country has been very good," Trump said.

The President, however, did not elaborate on the details of the deal signed with China.

"You remember a few months ago, the press was saying, 'Do you really have anybody of any interest?' Well, we just signed with China yesterday, right? We just signed with China. We have everybody. We're not going to make deals with everybody. Some we're just going to send them a letter and say thank you very much. You're going to pay 25 per cent, 35 per cent, 45 per cent. That's the easy way to do it, and my people don't want to do it that way. They want to do some of it, but they want to make more deals than I would do," he said.

Oppn parties slam RSS leader's call on Preamble

New Delhi: The Congress and other Opposition parties Friday slammed RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's call for a national debate on whether the terms 'secular' and 'socialist' should remain in the Preamble, terming it 'political opportunism' and a 'deliberate assault' on the soul of the Constitution. Hosabale's strong pitch for a review of the two words inserted in the Preamble of the Constitution during the Emergency days has kicked up a political row.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Your case is different. You can't get bail like him. He's a convicted rapist. You haven't even gone to trial in five years

Student gangraped in Kolkata college

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 27: A first-year student of a law college in south Kolkata was allegedly gangraped inside the institution by an alumnus and two senior students of the institution, a police officer said Friday.

All three accused were arrested and produced in a court which remanded them to police custody for four days. The process of the victim's submission of a confidential statement before a judicial magistrate was also underway, police said.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the incident that occurred on the evening of June 25, the National Women's Commission asked the Kolkata Police to file a detailed action taken report within three days.

The incident at the South Calcutta Law College brought back the horrific memories of the rape and murder of an intern inside the city's RG Kar Medical

were completed in accordance with the schedule.

The Pahandi and chariot pulling began on schedule, but the chariots could not reach their destination due to issues with the movement of Lord Balabhadra's chariot.

Earlier, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, and many other dig-

nitaries joined the devotees and were among those who pulled the chariots.

Amid chanting of 'Jai Jagannath' and 'Hari Bol', beating of cymbals and blowing of trumpets and conch shells, the 'Taladhwaja' first started rolling at 4.08 PM. It was followed by 'Darpadalans' and finally 'Nandighosha'.

While thousands of people

pulled the chariots, lakhs of others also reached the sea-side temple town to participate in the festival. An estimated one million devotees gathered in Puri for the annual Rath Yatra, officials said.

The chariot pulling commenced after Puri's titular king, Gajapati Maharaja Divyasingha Deb, performed the ritual of Chhera Pahanra

(sweeping of the chariots).

Wooden horses of different colours were fitted on three chariots before they were pulled by the devotees.

Earlier, the trinity — Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath — had ascended their respective chariots after over two-hour long ceremonial 'Pahandi' ritual. During 'Pahandi', the

three wooden idols were carried to the chariots from the 12th-century temple.

The Shankaracharya of Govardhan Peeth, Swami Nischalananda Saraswati, along with selected disciples, visited three chariots after the deities were placed on them. The 81-year-old seer came near the chariots in a wheelchair. **MORE P6&7**

Free hearse service '109' soon in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: To ensure dignified transportation of the dead to their homes or cremation grounds and ease the emotional and financial burden on bereaved families, the state government will soon launch free hearse service '109', whose blueprint is scheduled to be finalised July 2, officials in know of the development said Friday.

"A preliminary meeting, chaired by the Health secretary, has already been held in this regard. The blueprint for the service will be finalised during a high-level meeting, chaired by the Chief Secretary, July 2," they said.

In a letter to additional chief secretary, Home, and principal secretaries of the Finance, Commerce and Transport June 24, Health and Family Welfare Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S said that a draft guideline is being prepared for the proposed service and requested interdepartmental coordination to develop a comprehensive policy.

Tackling deepfakes: Denmark to grant citizens copyright over their face, voice

AGENCIES

Copenhagen, June 27: The Danish government is set to take action against the creation and distribution of AI-generated deepfakes by amending copyright law to guarantee individuals' rights to their own bodies, facial features, and voices. On Thursday, the government announced plans to enhance protections against digital impersonations in the first law of its kind in Europe.

With broad support from various political parties, the culture department intends to present a proposal for amending the existing law for public consultation before the summer break, with plans to submit the

amendment in the autumn. The proposed law defines a deepfake as a highly realistic digital representation of a person, encompassing both their appearance and voice.

Danish Culture Minister Jakob Engel-Schmidt expressed hope that the bill would convey a clear message: everyone has the right to control how they look and sound.

He told the Guardian: "In the bill we agree and are sending an unequivocal message that everybody has the right to their own body, their own voice and their own facial features, which is apparently not how the current law is protecting people against generative AI."



He added: "Human beings can be run through the digital copy machine and be misused for all sorts of purposes and I'm not willing to accept that."

The move, which is believed to have the backing of nine in 10 MPs, comes amid rapidly developing AI

technology that has made it easier than ever to create a convincing fake image, video or sound to mimic the features of another person.

The changes to Danish copyright law will, once approved, theoretically give people in Denmark the right to demand that online platforms remove such content if it is shared without consent.

It will also cover "realistic, digitally generated imitations" of an artist's performance without consent. Violation of the proposed rules could result in compensation for those affected.

The government said the new rules would not affect parodies and satire, which would still be permitted.

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ARIES

You will achieve things today, not by the sleight of your hand but by your communication skills, says Ganesha. Your eloquence shall win many hearts. The stars suggest monetary benefits, but you need to guard against injury and minor ailments.

TAURUS

Financial gains are on the cards today, predicts Ganesha. Happiness will fly in as you receive some good news from an overseas friend. If you have feelings that you haven't expressed to someone you dearly love, today is a good day to go ahead and let them know. The evening promises rejoicing and relaxation, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Emotional and material security will hold equal importance today. You want to be in love, but you know that love can't buy you dough. In academics, you will be able to solve whatever problems you set your mind on. Your spare time will be spent on devising methods of making the best use of your knowledge.

CANCER

When the going gets tough, it's better to go with the flow. But you belong to a school of thought that believes that in such troubled times, it's better to stay out of water altogether. Since it is not your day today, you are likely to postpone all important decisions and work.

LEO

Call it an epiphany of sorts, but today promises to be a day of revelations for you. Finally, things fall into place as your Odyssey nears its end, and you come to terms with your hidden talents, says Ganesha. Follow your heart and dive into the bottomless pool of your imagination.

VIRGO

There is a strong indication that you will dabble in writing or performing arts, and emerge with excellent results. Since these are your passions, you may cultivate hobbies in these fields, if they are not already your profession.

LIBRA

Your family is the cornerstone of your success. And today is no different. Your auspicious day starts from your home, and you manage to carry this luck everywhere you go with the same tempo and gusto, predicts Ganesha.

SCORPIO

The target is locked in and the arrow is shot. It is only a matter of time before Cupid celebrates a bull's eye and you find yourself in the mush of things. Sentiments and romance will be the order of the day.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, you will most certainly put your heart and soul into your work. But it is rather unlikely that you will get the returns in proportion to the efforts you put in. Yet, at the end of the day, you will be more than satisfied that you have got the chance to display your innate talents, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

New projects and partnership will keep you busy today, says Ganesha. If a meeting is scheduled, you may be praised vociferously for your ability to make the right decision at the right time. You may also bag rewards for the commendable efforts you'd put in the past.

AQUARIUS

If Elvis Presley is who you dreamed of being, today may be your day! You seem to impress one and all, and even money flows in! You play smart today and everything seems to work in your favour. Take care, says Ganesha, things may not be as they seem.

PISCES

You can probably count your chickens before they hatch today, for it is likely that every nest-egg you expect to mint money will. A good day to trade in the stock markets as well, as long as you keep in mind that the horns of a rampaging Bull market can be every bit as deadly as the paws of a lumbering Bear market, says Ganesha.



BRAD PITT'S LA HOME BURGLED

Police are investigating a break-in at a home reportedly owned by Brad Pitt, who has been on a globe-spanning promo tour for his new movie, *F1*. The Los Angeles Police Department confirmed they responded to a break-in Wednesday night at a house on the 2300 block of North Edgemont Street in LA.

SELENA GOMEZ REVEALS HER CHILDHOOD CRUSH

Singer-actress Selena Gomez revealed to have a crush on rapper Ice Cube, when she was five. Appearing on Complex's *GOAT Talk*, the actress said: "Can I tell you my first one that I had a crush on, Ice Cube? I had the biggest crush on him when I was, like, five."



Fatima on her insecurities

Mumbai: Actor Fatima Sana Shaikh has learned to rise above social media chatter and fake news about her personal life. While promoting her upcoming film *Metro...In Dino*, she opened up about dealing with insecurities and public scrutiny. In the anthology film, which explores modern-day love, Fatima stars alongside a large ensemble cast. She admits it's easy to feel insecure when multiple actors are involved: "You don't know what the script is, or how long your track is. But we trust Anurag Basu sir completely. He gives each character their moment."

Fatima also reflected on the pressures of being in the public eye, especially with constant speculation about her relationships. "Initially, it affected me," she confessed. "But then I realised people only think about someone else for a second—most of the time, they're thinking about themselves." She's since learned to block out noise, saying, "Someone may post something on Instagram or Reddit, but they're ultimately worried about their own life."

Recently, Fatima was in the news for rumours about dating actor Vijay Varma. At the trailer launch of her Netflix film *Aap Jaisa Koi*, she shut down speculation, saying, "No one is there. No good guys. They exist only in films." *Metro...In Dino* releases July 4, followed by *Aap Jaisa Koi* July 11.

AGENCIES

Manushi promotes menstrual health

Mumbai: Manushi Chhillar, former Miss World and founder of Project Shakti, is steadfast in promoting menstrual health and hygiene. In her latest initiative, she visited a Mumbai school to engage young girls in conversations about menstruation, distribute sanitary pads, and break the stigma around periods. Project Shakti, her brainchild, has long focused on menstrual health advocacy across India.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Chhillar urged state governments to provide free sanitary pads and essential supplies to financially distressed women. So far, Project Shakti has supported over 5,000 women in 20 villages and has expanded its reach internationally with menstrual health campaigns in Africa and low-cost compostable sanitary pads.

Chhillar's broader public health work also includes contributions to World AIDS Day initiatives, reflecting her wider commitment to health education. Her recent school visit indicates a strategic focus on early-age

menstrual awareness, aiming to build open conversations and encourage long-term positive behavioural change among adolescents. Meanwhile, Chhillar continues her acting career with two upcoming Bollywood films, *Maalik* opposite Rajkumar Rao and *Tehran* alongside John Abraham, which will see her in varied roles. Although she hasn't detailed the next steps for Project Shakti, her dedication to menstrual health education remains strong.

AGENCIES

Global honour for Ayushmann

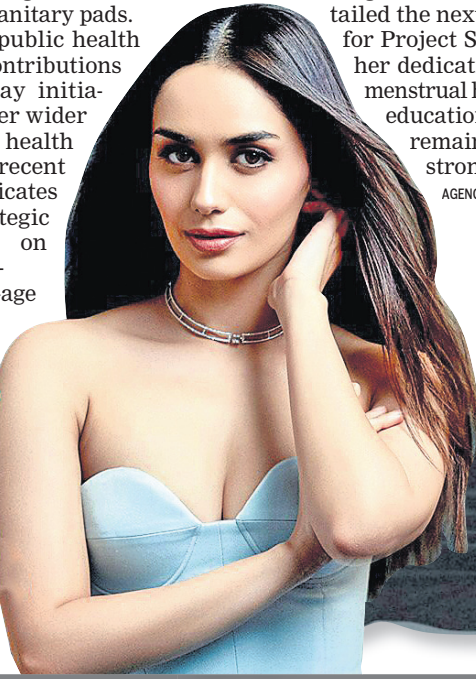
Mumbai: Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana joins names such as Kamal Haasan, Ariana Grande and Jeremy Strong at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences this year.

Ayushmann along with names such as Kamal Haasan Naomi Ackie, Gillian Anderson, Branford Marsalis, Conan O'Brien, Jimmy Kimmel, Stephen Graham, Jodie Comer and Jason Momoa are among 534 individuals who were invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences June 26.

"We are thrilled to invite this esteemed class of artists, technologists, and professionals to join the Academy," said Academy CEO Bill Kramer and Academy President Janet Yang. "Through their commitment to filmmaking and to the greater movie industry, these exceptionally talented individuals have made indelible contributions to our global filmmaking community." The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has invited distinguished artists from across the world for their contributions to motion pictures and cinema.

As per a statement from The Academy, the membership process for its 19 branches and one membership classification is conducted by sponsorship, not application. Except for Associates, candidates must be sponsored by two Academy members from the branch or category to which the candidate seeks admission.

IAN5



AGENCIES

Rashmika's note for 'overthinkers'

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna recently took to social media to pen an emotional note for "all the overthinkers."

Along with a series of candid pictures, she shared her thoughts in a diary-style message: "Dear Diary, You know those days when your brain just won't stop? Like, there's a reel playing in the back of your mind on loop..."

She described the common spiral of self-doubt many go through, writing, "Did I say the right thing? Was that too much? Should I have just stayed quiet? Yep. That's meeee (sic)." Opening up about her struggle with mental noise, she added, "Sometimes I wish I had a switch that could just turn off all the noise. But then again, maybe it's all part of being someone who feels deeply... who cares."

In her message, Rashmika encouraged her followers to be gentle with themselves. Acknowledging the overwhelming pace of modern life and inner chatter, she reminded her audience to pause and breathe. "To everyone whose mind is running fasterrrr than their day... take a minute, breathe and remind yourself that not every thought needs a response," she wrote, offering comfort to those dealing with anxiety and overthinking.

Alongside her introspective post, Rashmika also shared the first poster of her upcoming film *Mysaa*. Calling it a project close to her heart, she expressed her excitement and nervousness about taking on a new and intense character. "I always try to give you something new... something different... something exciting... This is one of those," she wrote. Describing her role as fierce, raw, and unlike anything she's done before, Rashmika said, "It's a version of me even I hadn't met till now... This is just the beginning."

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

G	P	B	A	F	J
P	A	G	O	D	A
T	O	F	C	A	R
B	E	A	R	F	O
H	S	T	L	E	D
O	S	M	S		
A	G	O	R	A	
A	T	S	D		
I	M	M	O	R	A
B	I	O	I	A	G
D	I	E	S	E	L
T	E	E	E	D	T

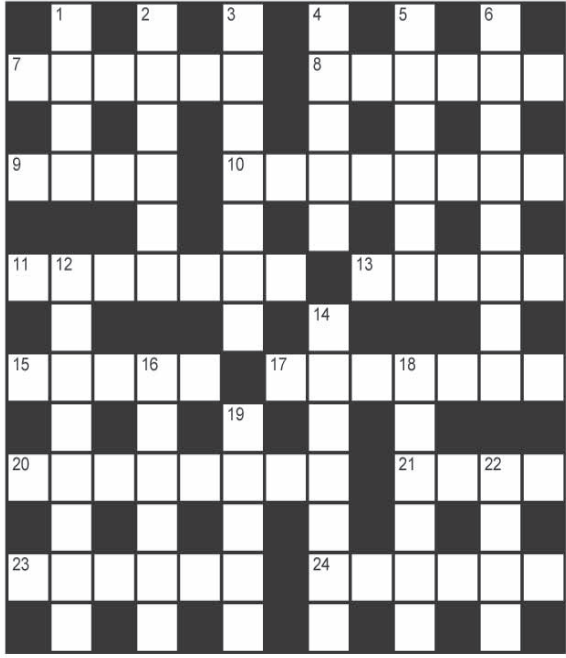
CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Way across
- 8 Chess piece
- 9 Bugbear
- 10 Skulduggery
- 11 Shipping hazard
- 13 Taste, e.g.
- 15 Swig
- 17 Movie theatres
- 20 Blunders

Down

- 1 Hot rum drink
- 2 Modifier
- 3 Moves unsteadily
- 4 Coil of yarn
- 21 Ivory source
- 23 Audition (3,3)
- 24 Assert without proof

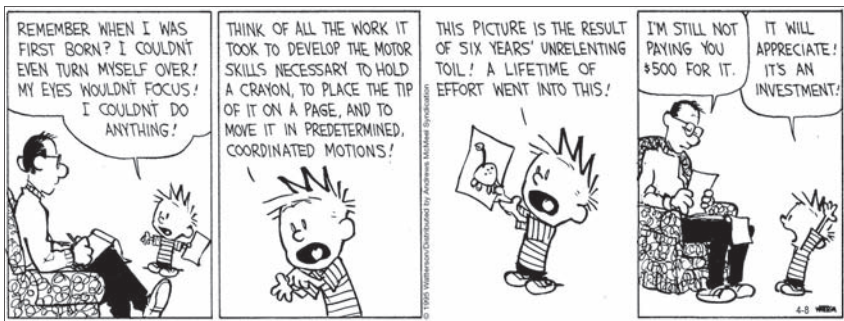
- 5 Predicament
- 6 Personal magnetism
- 12 Messengers
- 14 Short sleeps
- 16 Water depth measure
- 18 Lauds
- 19 Large edible ray
- 22 Endorse

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FOCUS AXIOM MISSION

INDIA'S GIANT STRIDE



Shubhanshu Shukla's life and journey teaches us that accomplishing lofty goals does not require positions or patronage, but a dream to cherish and a will to achieve

of a Wing Commander in the Indian Air Force. During this time, he completed a Masters degree in Aerospace Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. His name as a member of India's manned Gaganyaan programme was first announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27, 2024.

He continued his glorious journey as he got selected as the Pilot of the Axiom mission, (a joint effort of NASA, SpaceX, and ISRO) to fly to the International Space Station on SpaceX's Falcon 9 vehicle. For this, he received rigorous training at NASA's Johnson Space Centre in USA. Shubhanshu was entrusted with the most crucial job of the mission of piloting the spacecraft.

Subhanshu's space journey would prove to be a source of inspiration for all Indians. As an astronaut, he epitomizes India's evolving presence in global space ventures, from Gaganyaan to partnering with NASA and SpaceX. His mission isn't just scientific, it's emblematic of India's renewed ascent in space exploration. He represents India's hopes and aspiration for a global leadership position in space sector in this highly challenging world dominated by powers like China and Japan. His journey from a small city like Lucknow to the low Earth orbit of the infinite cosmos signifies how best a human endeavour can achieve under the most difficult realities of life. His life and journey teaches us that accomplishing lofty goals does not require positions or patronage, but a dream to cherish and a will to achieve!

The writer is Education Officer at Regional Science Centre, Bhopal

to microgravity conditions of space, conducting complex scientific experiments in microgravity and working with in an international space protocol system. This knowledge will prove to be immensely beneficial in preparing India to launch its own astronauts to space as a part of the Gaganyaan programme and its ambitious plan of launching an indigenous space station by 2028.

Delving briefly into the life and journey of Subhanshu, he was born on October 10, 1985 in Lucknow and was the youngest of the three children of his parents of a middle class family. Since childhood, he possessed a deep interest for bravery and aspired for a career in the military field. Inspired by the valour of Indian soldiers in the 1999 Kargil War and India's glorious victory over the enemy, he studied at the National Defence Academy, Pune after clearing the Entrance examination. He came out with flying colours from the Academy after completing a Bachelor's degree in

Computer Science in 2005. He was then selected for the flying branch of the Indian Air Force and underwent training at the Indian Air Force Academy, Dundigal. In June 2006, he was commissioned into the Fighter stream of the Indian Air Force as a Flying officer.

During his career in the Indian Air Force, Shubhashu served as a Combat Leader and Test pilot and flew several fighter aircrafts like Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, An-39 where he clocked 2000 hours of valuable flight experience. Later, impressed by his flying skills, the Indian Air Force included him in the Indian Human Spaceflight programme spearheaded by ISRO. In 2020, he was sent to Russia for receiving basic training related to space flight at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Moscow. After completing his training, he returned to India and further received extensive training at the Astronaut Training facility in Bengaluru. Later, he was promoted to the rank



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

THE AXIOM MISSION WILL SERVE AS A SIGNIFICANT LAUNCH PAD FOR INDIA'S UPCOMING SPACE PROGRAMMES

In a significant space achievement, the Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla created history by flying to space as part of the Axiom 4 mission aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 spacecraft. After several previous re-schedules due to weather and technical problems, the rocket finally cleared the launch pad on 25th June 2025 at 12.01 PM IST and soared to the sky carrying Shubhanshu and other crew members to space. With this success, Shubhanshu became the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station and the second after Rakesh Sharma to be orbiting the Earth in space. It is worth noting that Rakesh Sharma travelled to space in 1984 as the first Indian astronaut on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft and spent 8 days in the Salyut-7 space station. Now, after a long gap of 41 years of Rakesh Sharma's journey, another Indian citizen travelled to space. Hence, a space voyage with an Indian astronaut was long due for the country.

Commanded by the US astronaut Peggy Whitson, with crew members from Poland and Hungary, the mission marked India's re-entry into orbital spaceflight after 41 years of silence. During his 14-day stay in space, Shubhanshu will remain busy in conducting many groundbreaking experiments in science and technology in the zero gravity conditions of space which were designed by various scientific organizations of the country and abroad.

The Axiom mission will serve as a significant launch pad for India's upcoming space programmes. The mission will provide valuable real time experience in working in the International Space Station ecosystem, adapting

SPECTRUM EUROPEAN UNION

Lesson from Poland for India

On 1 January this year, Poland took over the rotating presidency of the Council of European Union in a grand ceremony at the Grand Theatre in Warsaw.

As the six-month presidency ends on the 30th June, it is a good time to assess the Polish performance from an Indian perspective. Like India, Warsaw faces an autocratic neighbour on its borders, which was once one of the two super powers, is in military occupation of an independent country, Ukraine, which shares long borders with it. Warsaw had fought wars against Russia that had invaded and occupied it. India's relations with autocratic China could not be dissimilar to that of Poland-Russia relations.

But, unlike India, Poland has been smart enough to join NATO for its security and the European Union for its growth and development. Of late, Poland has been the fastest-growing economy in Europe and is increasingly seen as the mouth-piece of Europe in view of the relative decline of Germany and France, the two big brothers of the European Union.

For the current presidency of the Council, Poland profoundly articulated the motto as 'Security Europe' and maintained the continuity of thought and diligent work that has gone into making Europe safe and secure. As expected, Polish presidency put the biggest emphasis on the security of Ukraine which will define the cohesion of Europe which Russia seeks to destabilise. Poland held that Russia was trying to redraw the geo-political and security scenarios of Europe. So stopping Russia in its tracks was the foremost priority of the European Union. Warsaw urged the member countries to increase their budget on defence upto at least 2 per cent of their GDP. Having been a victim of Russian autocracy and imperialism in the past, and now experiencing Russian bombs dropped 15 kms away from its borders, Poland is in the right strategic position to warn others on the threats to freedom and sovereignty. Poland advocates Ukraine's eventual entry into EU and defending Ukraine, in the meantime, by all means, against Russian aggression. Poland also urges EU-member countries to with-

draw from importing Russian gas and oil immediately by 2/3rd and eventually complete independence from Russian energy supply.

Poland argued that, Russian act of invasion of Ukraine attacks the fundamental values the European Union espouses and it was created to defend - freedom, democracy and human rights. Ukraine is a litmus test for continued existence of European Union as a democratic and plural entity.

Poland took over the presidency of the Council at about the same time as Donald Trump walked into the White House for the second time. Donald tusk, the Polish Prime Minister, grasped Trump's mercurial and self-centred approach and urged Europe to stand solid and united to negotiate with their traditional ally.

However, the most noteworthy impact of the Polish presidency is fore fronting the security imperative in context of invasion of Ukraine. Poland successfully reiterated the European commitment to the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.

The lesson India can draw is to ensure its own security and

concentrate its energies on growth of its economy and development of its people by being a part of a security network as Poland has done. Neutrality is a strategic fantasy and not maintainable. Poland realized that. And as Poland and India raise their ties to a strategic level, New Delhi should realize that too and deepen its contact with Poland.

The second takeaway from the Polish presidency is the engagement of three Civil Societies which include think tanks, development organisations, human rights defenders and so on. The think tanks enrich government policies, and others become a kind of conscience keeper, enhance people to people contact and so on. The shrinking civil society space and non-involvement think tanks does not augur well for India. New Delhi needs to realise that foreign policy making needs multiple intellectual inputs. It could no longer be an exclusive and elitist domain of a few.

The writer is Prof of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions @INFA



DK Giri

EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNION OF INDIA HAVE A LOT IN COMMON AND THEY SHOULD BE CLOSER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN

AI wars

Sir, The battle for AI supremacy is heating up, with Microsoft sharply criticizing Apple's newly introduced 'AI General,' calling it nonsensical and lacking real innovation. Once a pioneer, the iPhone maker now appears to be falling behind in the rapidly evolving AI race. In a bid to catch up, Apple is reportedly eyeing a major acquisition—AI search startup Perplexity—to regain its footing. As tech titans jostle for control of the future, the clash highlights both the fierce competition and the widening gap between those leading the AI revolution and those scrambling to stay relevant.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Leadership crisis

Sir, The Congress high command's apparent indifference towards state-level politics is proving to be a major setback for the party. The inability to consolidate its position even in winnable states has pushed Congress into one of its most challenging phases. After the debacle in Haryana and Maharashtra, the situation in Delhi appears equally grim, with the state unit functioning under an interim president. The lack of a permanent leader, with Assembly elections just two months away, reflects the party's unpreparedness.

Jayanthi Ramaniam, COIMBATORE

Touching chariot rope

Sir, During the world-famous Rath Yatra in Odisha, devotees try to touch the chariot rope carrying the deities. What could be the reason? It is believed that the Lord himself comes down to the human level to show and tell them that he is like any of his devotees. Simple love and faith can make any devotee witness the supreme power of the Lord's divinity. Such is the love of Lord Jagannath that there are many rituals which show how pure love is enough for the Lord to descend from his pedestal just to bless his devotees! It is believed that the chariot is the embodiment of the Lord himself, while the soul lies inside the deities placed on the chariots. This is one of the occasions when the Lord chooses to merge with the masses and gives them a way to reach out to him—therefore, they touch him and feel his blessings.

Anandambal Subbu, MUMBAI

There is a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench. It is only the Divine's love that can satisfy that thirst.

THE MOTHER



Double-engine PMO

Since February, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has been operating for the first time with two full principal secretaries, P.K. Mishra and Shaktikanta Das. The arrangement reflects the scale of ambition in Modi 3.0: fast-track delivery, tighter coordination, and a laser focus on 2030 goals.

Mishra oversees economic ministries, infrastructure, and appointments; Das oversees key service ministries like health, agriculture, and education. The division is logical, and the intention is unmistakable: cut through bottlenecks and compress decision cycles.

But, observers note, with more power now flowing into two unelected officials, what becomes of the ministries? When every major call is either cleared or nudged from the top, ministerial leadership risks being reduced to a relay function. They are waiting for signals, rather than setting directions.

And this isn't just about turf, it's also about institutional resilience. Concentrating so much decision-making within the PMO creates a single point of failure. Both Mishra and Das are immensely capable, but no governance model should depend on individual capacity alone.

The real tension here is between speed and depth. A centralized structure may get more done, faster. But it also limits scrutiny and the open debate that democratic systems rely on.

Under Modi, India's ambitions are large and long-term. A double-engine PMO may well accelerate project execution, but only if ministries remain more than just delivery arms. Otherwise, what looks like efficiency may, over time, expose its own fragility. The South Block can steer, but the engine of governance needs all its parts running, not just the ones closest to the PM.

Warning bell for honest public service

There's a rustling in the forests of Uttarakhand. It's the collective disbelief over the sudden, near-mysterious departure of Dr Dhananjay Mohan, the state's Head of Forest Force (HoFF). A top-notch forest officer, a Dehradun native, an IIT-Kanpur gold-medallist, and a bird expert of global repute, Dr Mohan wasn't exactly a babu you'd expect to vanish from service in 24 hours flat. And yet, he did.

His Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) application, submitted on June 20, just two months before his superannuation, was accepted with the kind of speed usually reserved for emergency transfers or political exits. He had even applied for leave to visit Bengaluru from June 25 to July 2. What changed is the big question?

Officially, there's no explanation. Unofficially, there are too many. Sources have told DKB that some believe that Dr Mohan's hallmark integrity may have been his undoing. Another view holds that he was too methodical for a system that wants instant decisions. Then there's the speculation about a political scandal around sapling procurement under the Miyawaki project that may have created enough unease for someone to want a quick reshuffle.

It's ironic and also troubling that a man who lived for forests might have been nudged out by the very ecosystem he sought to protect. If that's the case, it's not just a babu we've lost; it is a warning bell for honest public service.

CBDT's top deck shuffle

Another month, another round of top-level musical chairs. This time, it's the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) gearing up for a shuffle. Or possibly, just a slow remix.

Chairman Ravi Agrawal's extended innings ends on June 30, and with him, two other senior members — Prabodh Seth (administration) and R N Parbat (legislation) — are also on their way out. Or are they? If the whispers in North Block are to be believed, Agrawal may just get another run, this time on a contractual basis.

Now, while some observers argue continuity is key in tax administration, there's a growing section in the revenue service that's itching for fresh blood. And for good reason. A new CBDT line-up could trigger long-overdue changes down the chain — DGs, PCCITs, and other key field positions, several of which are already vacant or about to be.

There's also the optics question. Post-election, this is one of the first major senior-level bureaucratic reshuffles in the making. Will the Centre play it safe and stick with familiar hands, or signal reform and renewal?

The Income Tax Department, like much of India's babudom, often functions in a delicate dance between experience and inertia. The hope is that this transition isn't just about who sits in the big chair, but whether the system around them gets sharper, swifter, and a little less status quo.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

Whereas it is difficult for everything to work out easily, a man cannot even afford to be a human.

MIRZA GHALIB

The best portion of a good man's life: his little, nameless unremembered acts of kindness and love.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

ROBERT FROST

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1519: Charles V—who, as Charles I, was already king of Spain—was elected Holy Roman emperor; his struggles to hold the empire together led to his abdication in 1556.
- 1838: Victoria was crowned queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 1914: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his consort, Sophie, were assassinated by Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo, Bosnia, precipitating the outbreak of World War I.
- 1919: The Treaty of Versailles was signed at the Palace of Versailles in France, signifying the end of World War I.

LOL

LEARN TO BE MORE POLITE

One day, Bill and Tom went to a restaurant for dinner. As soon as the waiter took out two steaks, Bill quickly picked out the bigger steak for himself. Tom wasn't happy about that: "When

are you learn to be polite?" Bill: "If you had the chance to pick first, which one would you pick?" Tom: "The smaller piece, of course." Bill: "What are you whining about then? The smaller piece is what you want, right?"



Letters TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

LORD'S TRYST WITH DEVOTEES



ISKCON, BHUBANESWAR



RCM, BHUBANESWAR



(Not in order) Dignitaries including Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Governor Hari Babu Kam-
 bhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CMs Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, Advocate
 General Pitambar Acharya and Puri MP Sambit Patra at Puri on the occasion, Friday



CHANDINI CHOWK, CUTTACK



BALUGAON



KEONJHAR



BOIPARIGUDA



BHOGRAI



KORAPUT



NAYAGARH



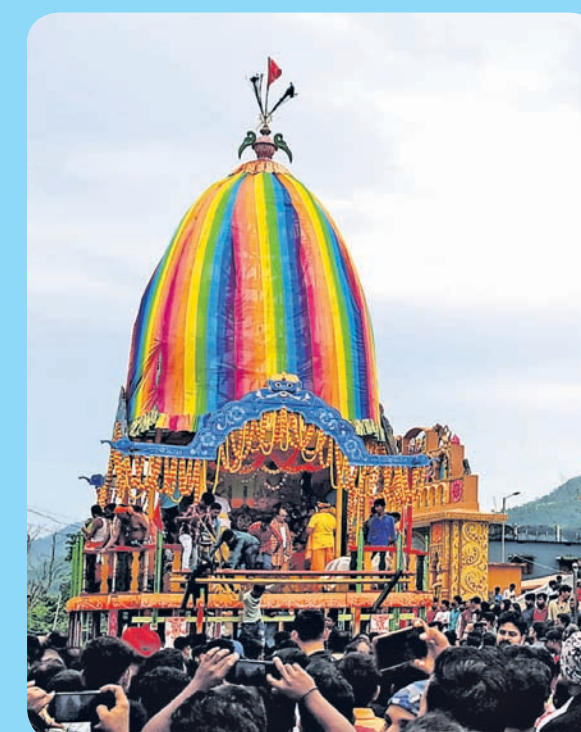
PATTAMUNDAI



NABARANGPUR



RAIRANGPUR



LANJIGARH



SUNABEDA



KHALLIKOTE

of the day
Quote

The news of the death of five tigers, including a tigress, at the sacred hills of Male Mahadeshwara—a place where the tiger is revered as the vehicle of the deity—is extremely shocking, inhumane, and has deeply distressed the minds of devotees. If the cause of death is poisoning, it is a most heinous and condemnable act

B Y VUAYENDRA | BJP K'TAKA PRESIDENT

Last night we deported 20 more Bangladeshis as part of our ongoing efforts to detect and push back illegal infiltrators. The decision to toughen Aadhaar issuance rules will only aid our efforts in this direction

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

I do not aim to target anyone. My concern is only how to resolve their issue and provide relief to those who are in trouble

ASHOK GEHLOT | EX-RAJASTHAN CM

SHORT TAKES

Toll in U'khand bus accident rises to 4

Rudraprayag: The body of another pilgrim was retrieved Friday from the Alaknanda river as SDRF personnel on board a raft scoured its swirling waters in search of pilgrims who went missing after a 31-seater bus taking them to Badrinath fell into the river near Gholtir between Rudraprayag and Gauchar a day ago. The toll in Thursday's accident has mounted to four now with this recovery, Rudraprayag Superintendent of Police Akshay Prahlad Konde said. The fourth body retrieved Friday was identified as that of 55-year-old Sanjay Soni, a resident of Udaipur in Rajasthan, he said.

13 Naxalites surrender before security forces

Bijapur: Thirteen Naxalites including eight women, carrying a collective bounty of ₹22 lakh on their heads, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Friday, a senior official said. The surrendered cadres cited their disappointment due to the atrocities committed by senior leaders on tribals and the "hollow" Maoist ideology as the reason for giving up the path of violence, the police official said.

NIA gets 10-day remand of 2 Pahalgam terror accused

Jammu: A special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday granted a 10-day remand of the two accused who were arrested for harbouring Pakistani terrorists behind the deadly Pahalgam terror attack in April, officials said. A local court had earlier granted the NIA a five-day remand of the two accused Monday, which expired Friday.

Nagaland govt, QCI sign pact

Kohima: Nagaland Friday marked 'World MSME Day' with the signing of an MoU between the state government and the Quality Council of India (QCI). The agreement aims to enhance quality standards through 'ZED' and 'LEAN' certifications, providing a major boost to manufacturing MSMEs, an official release said. In his address on the occasion, Agriculture Advisor Mhathung Yanthan underscored the potential of MSMEs, especially in agriculture and horticulture, and stressed the need to improve packaging and localise outreach through workshops, regional translations and facilitation centres at Krishi Vigyan Kendras and District Industries Centres.



Andhra Pradesh will be the future destination for wellness and happiness. My goal is a wealthy, healthy, happy Andhra Pradesh—that is the goal I have set

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM



ELEPHANT RUNS AMOK DURING RATH YATRA IN AHMEDABAD

One person was injured Friday during the Rath Yatra procession in Ahmedabad, when a male elephant, agitated by excessive noise, broke a barricade and rushed into a narrow lane, officials said. The mahouts on two other elephants followed the jumbo and controlled it, ensuring that the procession proceeded smoothly on its designated route, said RK Sahu, superintendent of Kankaria Zoo in the city

Oppn slams Hosabale's call on Preamble

RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, while addressing an event on Emergency said, “The Preamble to the Constitution Baba Saheb Ambedkar made never had these words. During Emergency, when fundamental rights were suspended, Parliament did not work, the judiciary became lame, then these words were added”

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: The Congress and other Opposition parties Friday slammed RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's call for a national debate on whether the terms 'secular' and 'socialist' should remain in the Preamble, terming it “political opportunism” and a “deliberate assault” on the soul of the Constitution.

As Hosabale's strong pitch for a review of the two words inserted in the Preamble of the Constitution during the Emergency days(1975-77) kicked up a political row, an article published in an RSS-linked magazine Organiser said it is not about dismantling the Constitution but about restoring its “original spirit”, free from the “distortions” of the Congress' Emergency-era policies.

Union minister Jitendra Singh and senior BJP leader sought to defend the call by the second senior most functionary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS), saying any right-thinking citizen will endorse it because everybody knows that these words were not part of the original Constitution written by Dr B R Ambedkar.



Addressing an event Thursday in connection with the 50th anniversary of the imposition of Emergency, Hosabale said, “The preamble of the Constitution Baba Saheb Ambedkar made never had these words. During the Emergency, when fundamental rights were suspended, Parliament did not work, judiciary became lame, then these words were added.”

“The Preamble is eternal. Are the thoughts of socialism as an ideology eternal for India?” said Hosabale, who was also imprisoned during the Emergency.

While the Congress saw Hosabale's remarks as a “deliberate assault” on the soul of the Constitution and claimed the

RSS-BJP had never accepted Ambedkar's Constitution, the CPI(M) said the demand exposes the RSS' long-standing objective of subverting it. The RSS is the ideological mentor of the BJP.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the mask of the RSS has come off again as they want 'Manusmriti'. “The Constitution irks them because it speaks of equality, secularism, and justice,” he said in a post in Hindi on X.

CPI(M) leader and Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Hosabale's call is a “brazen attempt to dismantle the core ideals of our Republic”.

The Left parties and RJD alleged that Hosabale's proposal was part of a conspiracy to change the Constitution. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the BJP/RSS attacked Ambedkar, Nehru, and others involved in the framing of the Constitution from November 30, 1949, onwards. “In the RSS' own words, the Constitution was not inspired by Manusmriti,” he said in a post on X.

In a post on X from its official handle, the Congress alleged the RSS-BJP's ideology stands in direct opposition to the Indian Constitution.

“RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale has openly called for the removal of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' from the Preamble. This is not just a suggestion -- it is a deliberate assault on the soul of our Constitution,” it said.

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who claimed that social justice and communal harmony are his guiding principles, voiced his anguish on X by terming the RSS a “casteist” outfit.

“They do not have the guts to cast an evil eye on the Constitution and reservations provided therein. Why are people

with an unjust character so full of hatred for democracy and Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution?”

In a statement, the CPI(M) Politburo said the inclusion of 'socialism' and 'secularism' in the Preamble is not an arbitrary addition and reflects the core values for which freedom fighters sacrificed their lives.

CPI General Secretary D Raja said everyone knows what RSS wants. “Everyone knows it is opposed to Constitution/why they spoke of '400-paar’ and that is why defending constitution became the central issue for opposition parties.”

Citing the Constituent Assembly debate on the issue, the Organiser weekly stressed that Hosabale's call resonates with the democratic principles championed by B R Ambedkar and the Constituent Assembly, which rejected a proposal to describe India as a “secular, federal, socialist Union of States” in 1948.

Talking to reporters in Jammu, Minister Jitendra Singh said, “I think any right-thinking citizen will endorse it because everybody knows that it was not part of the original Constitution written by Dr Ambedkar and the team.”



Naked, tied-up: 42 rescued from Noida old-age home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, June 27: Forty-two elderly people were rescued from an “illegal” old-age home after a police raid at the institution found some women tied up many residents without clothes and others in “basement-like” rooms, officials said.

During a raid conducted Thursday in the presence of members from the Uttar Pradesh State Women Commission and the State Welfare Department, the old-age home was found in a deplorable condition, they said.

Meenakshi Bharala, a women's commission member, said the Anand Niketan Vridha Seva Ashram at C-5, Sector 55, Noida was an illegal old-age home. “During the raid, an elderly woman was found tied up while other elderly people were locked in basement-like rooms,” she said.

Some men did not even have clothes, while many elderly women were found in half-cloth condition, Bharala said. “This old age home is completely illegal. There were 42 elderly people living in the ashram, out of which three elderly people will be shifted to an old-age home run by the social welfare department on Friday and the rest will be shifted to other government-approved old-age homes in the next five days, she added. Bharala said the old-age home will be sealed with the help of the administration.

SC stays enhanced payout in defence project near LAC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: The Supreme Court Friday stayed an order that enhanced the compensation awarded for acquiring 537 acre of land for the establishment of a defence-related project near the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh.

A bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh passed the direction while hearing a plea filed by the Centre and others challenging a March 2025 order of the Itanagar bench of the Gauhati High Court. The Centre told the bench that compensation to the beneficiaries was already paid and the land was acquired but subsequently, one person, on the strength of a power of attorney, filed a reference case.

It said the earlier compensation awarded was around ₹70 crore for all beneficiaries, but it was increased to over ₹410 crore by the additional district and sessions judge in the reference case in October 2024.

The Centre argued in the apex court that the reference was based on a “fraud” and the person had “fabricated power of attorney” of over 100 persons. It said the government had approached the high court seeking a stay on the operation of the order passed in the reference case.

The Centre said the high court had directed that order passed in the reference case shall stand stayed subject to the condition that 50 per cent of the enhanced amount awarded be deposited within

The Centre argued in the apex court that the reference was based on a “fraud” and the person had “fabricated power of attorney” of over 100 persons

three months. The government challenged the high court's direction before the apex court, which agreed to hear the matter.

The top court observed the Centre's counsel argued in the high court that the government was ready to deposit 10 per cent as security deposit but there should be no order for withdrawal of the disbursement until the disposal of the appeal.

“Issue notice to the respondents. There shall be a stay of operation of the impugned order on condition that the petitioner (Centre), as undertaken by them (before the high court), deposit 10 per cent of the enhanced amount in the registry of the high court within four weeks from today,” the bench said. The court further stayed the October 2024 order of the reference court and posted the matter August 18. When the bench asked if the Centre had paid the undisputed amount, the counsel said, “Yes. ₹70 crore was paid.”



Indian Navy stealth frigate INS Teg at the Port Victoria as part of its ongoing operational deployment to the South West Indian Ocean Region. The port call, scheduled from June 26-30, aims to strengthen maritime security cooperation and bilateral defence ties between India and Seychelles. During the visit, INS Teg will engage in official interactions, cultural exchanges, and joint EEZ surveillance operations with the Seychelles Coast Guard

Over 4,400 Indians evacuated from Iran, Israel, says MEA

New Delhi: India has so far evacuated more than 4,400 Indian nationals from Iran and Israel in 19 special flights under Operation Sindhu launched June 18 to bring home its citizens amid an ongoing conflict between the two countries, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The evacuated Indian nationals included “more than 1,500 women and 500 children”, the MEA said in a statement Friday. “The government of India is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of its citizens abroad. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance, Operation Sindhu is another demonstration of this commitment,” it said. “We thank the governments of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Armenia and Turkmenistan for their support during Operation Sindhu. Indian Missions will stay engaged with host governments and the Indian community in Iran, Israel and the wider West Asia region,” the MEA added. A batch of 173 Indians evacuated from Iran reached Delhi late Thursday night in a flight from Armenian capital Yerevan, the MEA had said in a post on X. Responding to queries on Operation Sindhu at his weekly media briefing a day before, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi was assessing the situation on the ground and a decision on the future course of action would be taken based on it.

Search on for 3 JeM terrorists in Basantgarh; body recovered

Jammu: A search operation by a joint team of security forces is underway to track down three Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists in a forested area of Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district Friday, officials said. A Pakistan-based JeM terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces Thursday and three of his associates remain trapped in the forested area of the Basantgarh belt. Backed by drones and sniffer dogs, the operation resumed afresh this morning, with the cordon further strengthened with additional reinforcements to eliminate the remaining terrorists of the group, they added. “In the ongoing operation at Basantgarh, we had an encounter with terrorists around 8:30 am yesterday. Due to poor weather, the operation faced challenges. This group consisted of four terrorists,” Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tuti told reporters here. He further said that one terrorist has been successfully neutralised and the search is on to track down the remaining three.

Raj, Uddhav to protest against Hindi ‘imposition’, language policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 27: Estranged cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray will unite for the cause of the Marathi language, as their parties will stage a joint protest against the “imposition” Hindi and the state government's three-language formula for Classes 1-5.

The protest July 5 will bring Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray on the same platform. Both leaders had asserted Thursday that they would vehemently oppose the imposition of Hindi and the three-language formula while addressing separate press conferences at the same time.

Uddhav had announced to join a protest by civil society

at Azad Maidan July 7, while Raj declared that he would take out a non-political march from Girgaum Chowpatty July 6, and would invite leaders of all political outfits, including the Shiv Sena (UBT).

Talking to reporters Friday, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said Raj invited him to take part in the July 6 protest. He said Uddhav immediately consented to be part of the protest but raised concerns that Ashadhi Eka-dashi, which is celebrated across the state with much fanfare, falls July 6, and it would be inconvenient for everyone. Raut said the Sena (UBT) chief suggested a joint protest by both parties July 5, and Raj also consented to it.

There has been a buzz about a possible rapprochement be-



tween the Thackeray cousins, and the language issue may prove to be the platform they need to put up a united front.

The Rajya Sabha MP said that the two cousins feel there should be a fight similar to the one put up during the Samyukt

Maharashtra movement for the formation of the state in 1960, and the Thackerays should lead it. “Similar attacks are now taking place to break Mumbai and drive the Marathi mannos out of Maharashtra,” Raut said. He said other politi-

The protest July 5 will bring Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray on the same platform

Both leaders had asserted Thursday that they would vehemently oppose the imposition of Hindi and the three-language formula while addressing separate press conferences at the same time

ical parties will also be invited to take part in the protest.

MNS Mumbai president Sandeep Deshpande said, “As a Marathi mannos, I am happy for the way Raj saheb took the lead for Marathi mannos, and it was reciprocated by Uddhav saheb.” Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has made it clear

that Hindi is optional while Marathi is compulsory.

The row erupted after the state government last week issued an amended order stating Hindi will “generally” be taught as the third language to students in Marathi and English medium schools from Classes 1 to 5. According to the order, if 20 students per grade in a school wish to study any other Indian language, they can opt out of Hindi. If such a demand arises, either a teacher will be appointed, or the language will be taught online.

School Education Minister Dada Bhuse has said that there will be no books for Classes 1 and 2. The medium of instruction will be oral, and students of these two grades will be taught songs and shown pictures.

international

of the day quote

No agreement has been made for resuming the negotiations. No time has been set, no promise has been made, and we haven't even talked about restarting the talks

ABBAS ARAGHCHI | FOREIGN MINISTER, IRAN

This election is a choice between a candidate with a blue collar and one with a silver spoon. A choice between dirty fingernails and manicured nails

ERIC ADAMS | MAYOR, NEW YORK

People often know they won't get full recognition as refugees, but they set off for Germany because it is known that, even without asylum recognition ... you can have your family follow. That is a significant pull effect and we are removing this pull effect today

ALEXANDER DOBRINDT | INTERIOR MINISTER, GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

Wintour resigns as editor Of US Vogue

Washington: Magazine legend Anna Wintour stepped down as editor of US Vogue Thursday after 37 years during which she was often hailed as the single most influential figure in the fashion world. Wintour, 75, was famous for making Vogue's front covers an authoritative statement on contemporary fashion, and for her total control over the glamorous pages inside. She will no longer run day-to-day editing of the fashion bible, but magazine group owner Conde Nast was quick to scotch suggestions of retirement. She will continue to hold senior roles at the group and remain Vogue's global editorial director. British-born Wintour came to public renown as the inspiration for "The Devil Wears Prada," a hit 2003 novel and 2006 movie, for which Meryl Streep earned an Oscar nomination for her role as tyrannical magazine editor Miranda Priestly.

Smuggling to N Korea: SK detains Americans

Seoul: Six Americans were detained Friday in South Korea for trying to send 1,600 plastic bottles filled with rice, US dollars bills and Bibles toward North Korea by sea, police said. The Americans tried to throw the bottles into the sea from front-line Gwanghwa Island so they could float toward North Korean shores by the tides, said a police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media on the issue. He said they are being investigated on allegations they violated the law on the management of safety and disasters.

Major purge in Chinese military

Beijing: The purge of China's powerful defence and security establishment continued as top military officials, including a senior general, chief of navy and a nuclear scientist, were expelled from the national legislature Friday. General Miao Hua along with Vice Admiral Li Hanjun, chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and Liu Shipeng, deputy chief engineer of China National Nuclear Corporation, have been removed from the National People's Congress (NPC), the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Li is the latest of a string of PLA generals and a handful of defence industry executives to have been implicated in a sweeping crackdown in the military, the Post reported.



India is a shining star for the rest of the world in terms of digital transformation and in terms of addressing some of the social and economic issues with technological innovation and the right policy

IRAKLI KHODELI | HEAD OF ETHICS OF AI UNIT, SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES SECTOR, UNESCO

UNITED NATIONS TURNS 80

The United Nations, a collaborative global dream built into reality out of the ashes of World War II, marks its 80th anniversary this month. Its clout on the world stage is diminished. Facing major funding cuts from the United States and others, it has been forced to shed jobs and start tackling long-delayed reforms. Its longtime credo of "multilateralism" is under siege



Snow blankets world's driest desert after a decade

The Atacama, home to the world's darkest skies, has for decades been the go-to location for the world's most advanced telescopes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Chile, June 27: Residents of the world's driest desert, the Atacama in northern Chile, woke up Thursday to a jaw-dropping spectacle: its famous lunar landscape blanketed in snow.

"INCREDIBLE! The Atacama Desert, the world's most arid, is COVERED IN SNOW," the ALMA observatory, situated 2,900 meters (9,500 feet) above sea level, wrote on X, alongside a video of vast expanses covered in a dusting of white.

AWESOME! The Atacama Desert in Chile, the driest in the world, is SNOWY! posted an user on X.

The observatory added that while snow is common on the nearby Chajnanator Plateau, situated at over 5,000 meters and where its gigantic telescope



is situated, it had not had snow at its main facility in a decade. University of Santiago clima-

tologist Raul Cordero told AFP that it was too soon to link the snow to climate change but

Hamas battling to survive

The Islamist group faces defiant clans and doubts over Iran

REUTERS

Cairo, June 27: Short of commanders, deprived of much of its tunnel network and unsure of support from its ally Iran, Hamas is battling to survive in Gaza in the face of rebellious local clans and relentless Israeli military pressure.

Hamas fighters are operating autonomously under orders to hold out as long as possible but the Islamist group is struggling to maintain its grip as Israel openly backs tribes opposing it, three sources close to Hamas said. With a humanitarian crisis in Gaza intensifying international pressure for a ceasefire, Hamas badly needs a pause in the fighting, one of the people said.

Not only would a ceasefire offer respite to weary Gazans, who are growing increasingly critical of Hamas, but it would also allow the Islamist group to crush rogue elements, including some clans and looters who have been stealing aid, the person said.

To counter the immediate threat, Hamas has sent some of its top fighters to kill one rebellious leader, Yasser Abu Shabab, but so far he has remained beyond their reach in the Rafah area held by Israeli troops, according to two Hamas sources and two other sources familiar with the situation. Reuters spoke to 16 sources including people close to Hamas, Israeli security sources and diplomats who painted a picture of a severely weakened group, retaining some sway and operational capacity in Gaza despite its setbacks, but facing stiff challenges.

Hamas is still capable of landing blows: it killed seven Israeli soldiers in an attack in southern Gaza Tuesday. But three diplomats in the Middle East said intelligence assessments showed it had lost its



Hamas faces internal challenges, uncertainty over Iran support

Ceasefire needed for Hamas to regroup, sources say

Israel demands exile and disarmament of the group

centralised command and control and was reduced to limited, surprise attacks.

An Israeli military official estimated Israel had killed 20,000 or more Hamas fighters and destroyed or rendered unusable hundreds of miles of tunnels under the coastal strip. Much of Gaza has been turned to rubble in 20 months of conflict.

One Israeli security source said the average age of Hamas fighters was "getting lower by the day". Israeli security sources say Hamas is recruiting from hundreds of thousands of impoverished, unemployed, displaced young men.

Hamas does not disclose how many of its fighters have died.

"They're hiding because they are being instantly hit by planes but they appear here and there, organising queues in front of bakeries, protecting aid trucks, or punishing criminals," said Essam, 57 a construction worker in Gaza City. "They're not like before the war, but they exist."

Asked for comment for this

They face being eliminated on the ground in Gaza if the war doesn't stop, but they also face being erased from any governing formula that ends the war in Gaza (if such a thing can be found)

YEZID SAVIGHI | SENIOR FELLOW, CARNEGIE MIDDLE EAST CENTER

story, senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said the group was working for an agreement to end the war with Israel but "surrender is not an option".

Hamas remained committed to negotiations and was "ready to release all prisoners at once", he said, referring to Israeli hostages, but it wanted the killing to stop and Israel to withdraw.

Hamas is a shadow of the group that attacked Israel in 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking another 251 hostage, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's offensive has killed more than 56,000 people, according to Gaza health authorities.

The damage inflicted by Israel is unlike anything Hamas has suffered since its creation, with most of its top military commanders in Gaza killed. Founded in 1987, Hamas had gradually established itself as the main rival of the Fatah faction led by President Mahmoud Abbas and finally seized Gaza from his control in 2007.

Israel bombs south Lebanon hilltops

1 killed, 11 wounded in intense Israeli strikes on south Lebanon

REUTERS

Beirut, June 27: Israel's air force carried out intense airstrikes on mountains overlooking a southern city in Lebanon Friday, in an attack that the Israeli military said targeted underground assets of the Hezbollah militant group.

Shortly afterward, an apartment building in the nearby city of Nabatieh was struck, killing one woman, wounding 11 and knocking out the building's top floor, according to Lebanon's state news agency.

The state-run National News Agency reported that the woman killed lived in Germany and had come back to Lebanon less than a month earlier to visit family. It wasn't immediately clear if she was a German citizen. The woman's apartment was hit by an Israeli drone strike, according to the report.

said that climate modelling had shown that "this type of event, meaning precipitation in the Atacama desert, will likely become more frequent."

The Atacama, home to the world's darkest skies, has for decades been the go-to location for the world's most advanced telescopes. The ALMA telescope, which was developed by the European Southern Observatory, the US National Radio Astronomy Observatory and the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, is widely recognized as being the most powerful.



The Israeli army, in a statement posted on X, denied targeting a civilian building. The statement said the building was hit by a Hezbollah rocket that had been stored at another location that was targeted by an airstrike and "launched, and exploded as a result." It blamed Hezbollah for storing weapons near residential areas.

Since the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war ended with a US-brokered ceasefire in November, Israel has carried out almost daily airstrikes on southern Lebanon. Friday's strikes were more intense than usual.

Israeli army said that it identified rehabilitation attempts by Hezbollah beforehand and struck infrastructure sites in the area.

SNIPPETS

Japan hangs 'Twitter killer' in first execution since '22

Tokyo: Japan executed a man Friday who killed nine people after contacting them on social media, the first use of capital punishment in the country in nearly three years. Takahiro Shiraishi had been sentenced to death for his 2017 strangling and dismembering of eight women and one man in his apartment in Zama city in Kanagawa near Tokyo. He was dubbed the "Twitter killer" as he contacted victims via the social media platform. Justice Minister Keisuke Suzuki, who authorised Shiraishi's hanging, said he made the decision after careful examination, taking into account the convict's "extremely selfish" motive for crimes that "caused great shock and unrest to society." It followed the execution in July 2022 of a man who went on a stabbing rampage in Tokyo's shopping district Akihabara in 2008.



Norwegian crown princess' son faces rape charges

Oslo: Oslo police Friday announced charges against Marius Borg Høiby, the eldest son of Norway's crown princess, on multiple counts including rape, sexual assault and bodily harm after a months-long investigation of a case that involved a "double-digit" number of alleged victims. Høiby, the son of Crown Princess Mette-Marit and stepson of the heir to the throne, Crown Prince Haakon, has been under scrutiny since he was repeatedly arrested in 2024 amid allegations of rape and on preliminary charges of bodily harm and criminal damage. Evidence in the case was drawn from sources including text-messages, witness testimonies and police searches, the police attorney said. The charges included one case of rape involving intercourse and two cases of rape without intercourse, four cases of sexual assault and two cases of bodily harm, he said.



The best that Bezos' money can buy: Wedding for ages in Venice

Dozens of private jets touched down at Venice's airport as yachts pulled into the city's famed waterways. Aboard were athletes, celebrities, influencers and business leaders, converging to revel in extravagance that is as much a testament to the couple's love as to their extraordinary wealth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Venice, June 27: The Italian city of Venice was making waves Friday with the most anticipated wedding of 2025 — that of billionaire Jeff Bezos and his fiancée Lauren Sánchez. The sky itself is no limit for this couple who has travelled into space, and expectations are about as high.

One of the world's most-enchanted cities as backdrop? Check. Star-studded guestlist and tabloid buzz? Of course. Local flavour? You bet.

Beyond that, the team of the world's fourth-richest man has kept details under wraps. Still, whispers point to events spread across the lagoon city, adding complexity to what would have been a massive logistical undertaking even on dry land.

The heady hoopla recalled the 2014 wedding in Venice of actor George Clooney to human

rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin, when adoring crowds lined the canals and hundreds of well-wishers gathered outside City Hall.

Not so for these nuptials, which have become a lightning rod for protests.

Still, any desire to dampen the prevailing fever pitch has yet to materialise. Instead, the glitterati were set to party, and the paparazzi jostling for glimpses of the gilded gala.

Whatever happens, it will be a wedding for the ages.

Logistics and costs

Venice is famed for its network of canals, where gondoliers croon for lovestruck couples and even ambulances are aquatic. But water transport of everything from bouquets to guests makes Venice among the world's most challenging cities for a party, according to Jack Ezon, CEO of luxury travel advisory and event planner



Embark Beyond.

"It's a very tight-knit community; everyone there knows everyone, and you need to work with the right people," said Ezon, whose company has put on a dozen high-end events in Venice. "There's very tight control, especially on movement there with boats."

It at least triples the cost versus staging the same soiree in Rome or Florence, he said.

Veneto Gov Luca Zaia was first to give an estimated tally for the Bezos/Sánchez bash: He told reporters this week the most recent total he saw was between 40 and 48 million euros

(up to \$56 million).

It's an eye-popping, jaw-dropping figure that's over 1,000 times the \$36,000 average cost of American couples' weddings in 2025, according to wedding planning website Zola's annual report.

Bezos' team has been tight-lipped about where these millions are going. When the youngest son of Asia's richest man married last July, performances by pop stars Rihanna and Justin Bieber pushed up the price tag.

"How do you spend \$40 million on a three- or four-day event?" Ezon said. "You

Widespread backlash from activist groups

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and media personality Lauren Sánchez's opulent wedding festivities in Venice this weekend have ignited widespread backlash from activist groups accusing the billionaire couple of deepening economic divides and disrespecting the city's residents. A coalition of roughly a dozen Venetian organisations—including social housing advocates, university groups, and campaigners against cruise ships—have rallied together to oppose the multi-day wedding celebration. Under the slogan 'No Space for Bezos,' a play on Sánchez's recent journey to space, demonstrators staged symbolic protests throughout Venice. Earlier this week, Greenpeace and the UK group 'Everyone Hates Elon,' known for smashing Teslas in protest against Elon Musk—joined forces to hang a massive banner in St. Mark's Square that read: "IF YOU CAN RENT VENICE FOR YOUR WEDDING YOU CAN PAY MORE TAX." The banner, which depicted Bezos's face prominently, was swiftly removed by police.



could bring headliners, A-list performers, great DJs from anywhere in the world. You could spend \$2 million on an incredible glass tent that's only there for 10 hours, but it takes a month to build," or expand the celebration to local landmarks.

On Thursday, a string of water taxis cut through the lagoon to bring Bezos, Sánchez and guests to the Madonna dell'Orto cloister as some onlookers

cheered. Paparazzi followed in their own boats, trying to capture guests on camera — Oprah Winfrey, Kim Kardashian, Ivanka Trump, Tom Brady, Orlando Bloom — as police on jet skis patrolled.

As Amazon's CEO, Bezos usually avoided the limelight, frequently delegating announcements and business updates to his executives. Today he has a net worth of \$231 billion, according to Forbes.

of the day

QUOTE

Crude oil prices also declined after Iran signalled restraint by avoiding strikes on key oil infrastructure and transport routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz. This de-escalation has reduced immediate risk premiums across markets, pressuring gold further

CHINTAN MEHTA | CEO, ABANS FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPCI) will attract newer foreign players to invest and bring their EV portfolio to the country,

SANTOSH IYER | CEO, MERCEDES-BENZ INDIA

MSMEs are expected to increase their GDP share to 40 per cent by 2030, and the sector will witness significant momentum in the next five years

ASHOK HOLANI | CIO, HOLANI VENTURE CAPITAL FUND

SHORT TAKES

Gold down ₹930 to ₹97,670/10 gm

New Delhi: Gold prices plunged ₹930 to ₹97,670 per 10 grams in the national capital Friday as traders rushed to selling amid easing off Middle East tensions and favourable reports about a trade deal between the US and China. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹98,600 per 10 grams Thursday. Friday, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by ₹850 to ₹97,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at ₹98,050 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

India's foreign debt jumps

Mumbai: India's external debt increased by 10 per cent to \$736.3 billion at the end of March 2025 compared to \$668.8 billion in the year-ago period, the Reserve Bank said Friday. As a percentage of the GDP, the external debt increased to 19.1 per cent at the end of the recently concluded financial year from 18.5 per cent a year ago, it added. In a year which saw some volatilities in the currency markets, the RBI said the "valuation effect" due to the appreciation of the US dollar against the rupee and other currencies amounted to \$5.3 billion, while if one were to exclude the valuation effect, external debt would have increased by \$72.9 billion instead of \$67.5 billion in the year. The overall debt included \$261.7 billion of loans taken by non-financial corporations, \$168.4 billion by the government and \$202.1 billion by deposit-taking corporations, excluding the central bank, RBI said.

New registration plate for hydrogen vehicles

New Delhi: The transport ministry has proposed a new category of registration number plate for hydrogen fuel operated vehicles. According to a draft notification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Friday, in case of a hydrogen fuel operated commercial vehicle, the top half of number plate will be green and bottom half blue, while the figures on plate will be in yellow. In case of private vehicles, the number plate's top half will be green and bottom half will be blue, while figures will be in white. In case of cabs on rent, the top half of number plate will be black and bottom half will be blue while figures on plate will be in yellow.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.50 against the dollar and traded in the range of 85.43-85.65 before settling at 85.48 (provisional), up 24 from its previous close

ANIL KUMAR BHANSALI | ED, FINREX TREASURY ADVISORS LLP



\$13.5bn current surplus

India's current account has seen a significant turnaround from previous deficits, driven by robust services exports and reduced primary income outgo. Increased remittances and strong service sector performance contributed to the entire fiscal year's performance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 27: India posted a current account surplus of \$13.5 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP in March quarter 2024-25 as compared with \$4.6 billion in the year-ago period mainly on account of surge in services exports and higher remittances, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data released Friday.

However, on annual basis, the current account was in deficit at \$23.3 billion (0.6 per cent of GDP) during 2024-25, said the 'India's Balance of Payments during the Fourth Quarter (January-March) of 2024-25' released by RBI.

"India's current account balance recorded a surplus of \$13.5 billion (1.3 per cent of GDP) in Q4:2024-25 as compared with \$4.6 billion (0.5 per cent of GDP) in Q4:2023-24 and against a deficit of \$11.3 billion (1.1 per cent of GDP) in Q3:2024-25," RBI said.

Balance of Payments is an indicator of the country's external payment scenario. Merchandise trade deficit at \$59.5 billion in Q4:2024-25 was higher than \$52 billion in Q4:2023-24. However, it moderated from \$79.3 billion in Q3:2024-25.

"Net services receipts increased to \$53.3 billion in Q4:2024-25 from \$42.7 billion a year ago. Services exports have risen on a y-o-y basis in major categories such as business ser-

vices and computer services," RBI said.

Personal transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, rose to \$33.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 from \$31.3 billion in Q4:2023-24. It further said the net outgo on the primary income account, primarily reflecting payments of investment income, moderated to \$11.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 from \$14.8 billion in Q4:2023-24.

In the financial account, foreign direct investment (FDI) recorded a net inflow of \$400 million in Q4:2024-25 as compared to an inflow of \$2.3 billion in the corresponding period of 2023-24.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) recorded a net outflow of \$5.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 as

POST OFFICES TO ENABLE DIGITAL PAYMENTS

Post offices across India will start accepting digital payments at counters from August after completing the rollout of a new application in their IT system, official sources said. Post offices have not been able to accept digital payments as they don't have their accounts synced with UPI (unique payment interface) system. Pilot rollout of the new system under IT 2.0 has been started in the Karnataka circle. QR-based booking of mail products was successfully carried out at the Mysore head office (HO), Bagalkot HO and its subordinate offices



Investors' wealth surges by ₹12.26 lakh crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: Equity investors became richer by ₹12.26 lakh crore as stock markets surged for the fourth day in a row Friday amid de-escalation in geopolitical tensions and softening crude oil prices in international markets.

Friday, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 303.03 points or 0.36 per cent to reclaim the 84,000 level and settled at 84,058.90. During the day, the Sensex jumped 333.48 points or 0.39 per cent to 84,089.35.

In the past four days, the benchmark has jumped 2,162.11 points or 2.64 per cent.

Tracking optimism in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms soared by ₹12,26,717.72 crore to ₹4,60,09,217.58 crore (\$5.38 trillion) in four trading days.

"Benchmark indices Nifty and Sensex closed on a firm footing in the green on Friday, capping off the week with robust gains. The rally was underpinned by de-escalation in geopolitical tensions post the Israel-Iran ceasefire and growing optimism surrounding a prospective US-India trade pact, which acted as key macro tailwinds. On a weekly basis, both



frontline indices logged gains of 2 per cent," according to Bajaj Broking market commentary.

Friday, as many as 2,251 stocks advanced, while 1,760 declined and 154 remained unchanged on the BSE. From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, ICICI Bank, Reliance Industries, Bharat Electronics, Hindustan Unilever and Sun Pharma were among the major gainers.

In contrast, Trent, Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank and Titan were among the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.54 per cent, and the midcap index went up by 0.38 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, oil & gas jumped 1.21 per cent, services (1.17 per cent), power (1.14 per cent), commodities (1.11 per cent), energy (1.10 per cent), utilities (0.99 per cent) and telecommunication (0.90 per cent).

Cos across US cutting workforces

AGENCIES

Washington, June 27: US public companies have reduced their white-collar workforces by a collective 3.5 per cent over the past three years, according to employment data-provider Live Data Technologies. Over the past decade, one in five companies in the S&P 500 has shrunk.

The cuts go beyond typical cost-trimming and speak to a broader shift in philosophy. Adding talent, once a sign of surging sales and confidence in the future, now means leaders must be doing something harder.

New technologies like generative artificial intelligence are allowing companies to do more with less. But there's more to this movement. From Amazon in Seattle to Bank of America in Charlotte, NC, and at companies big and small everywhere in between, there's a growing belief that having too many employees is itself an impediment. The message from many bosses: Anyone still on the payroll could be working harder.

Procter & Gamble said this month that it would cut 7,000 jobs—or 15 per cent of its non-manufacturing workforce—to create "broader roles and smaller teams." Estée Lauder and dating-app operator Match Group recently said they had each jettisoned around 20 per cent of their managers.

Companies often let go of workers in recessions, then staff up when the economy picks up. Yet the workforce cuts in recent years coincide with a surge in sales and profits, heralding a more fundamen-



tal shift in the way leaders evaluate their workforces.

Managers on the chopping block

The downsizing has caused employees to rapidly lose the leverage they enjoyed during the pandemic, when jobs were plentiful and companies were bidding up for white-collar talent. Even with AI advances on the horizon, many corporate leaders and labour economists have projected long-term shortages in both salaried and hourly jobs.

Managers have been an especially ripe target for cutting, though Live Data Technologies' data show public companies have pared back their no managerial ranks recently, too. The number of managers dropped 6.1 per cent between May 2022 to May 2025. Executive-level roles fell 4.6 per cent.

Agents of change

Many companies are moving toward using more agentic AI,

autonomous bots that can make decisions and complete tasks on behalf of humans, such as paying an invoice or rerouting inventory if a natural disaster interferes with a trucking route.

In 2024, Walmart recorded \$681 billion in sales, an increase of 40per cent compared with 2014. "Many of today's jobs didn't exist just a few years ago, and we expect the pace of change to continue," Donna Morris, Walmart's chief people officer, said in a statement.

Five employees, \$50 million in revenue

The leaner, meaner approach is trickling down to even the smallest start-ups. Jolie, which sells high-end filtered shower heads, is on track to make about \$50 million in revenue this year. It has five employees.

CEO Ryan Babenzien, who previously sold a sneaker brand to Steve Madden, said he never considered head count a sign of success.

BoM opens 58th branch at Ganjam

Bhubaneswar: Bank of Maharashtra, one of premiere public sector bank has opened a new branch at Chatrapur, Ganjam. This addition is the fifth branch in Ganjam district & 58th branch in the state. The bank also announced its plans to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in Bhubaneswar Zone. The new branch was inaugurated by Dibya Jyoti Parida, Collector and Dist Magistrate (Ganjam) in presence of Shibashish Baral Sub Collector, Chatrapur, Sambit Sangramjeet Sahoo, BDO, Chatrapur, Zonal Manager Dilip Kumar Raulo and Branch Manager Jibitesh Parida. Dilip Kumar Raulo, Zonal Manager, BoM Bhubaneswar Zone has said "We are happy to inaugurate one more branch in Ganjam District, a rapidly growing and strategically important in the State of Odisha. This would be a step ahead to support our commitment to provide banking services to customers through a fast-expanding network of branches and other channels. This will facilitate smooth and timely delivery of customer service, improve credit delivery and reduced turnaround time for Retail, Agri and MSME sectors and will enhance customer satisfaction.



Adani Foundation collabs with DMIHER for global healthcare excellence

Ahmedabad: Adani Foundation, CSR arm of Adani Group, has joined hands with Datta Meghe Institute of Higher Education and Research (DMIHER), a Maharashtra-based deemed-to-be university, to develop it into an affordable, global Centre of Excellence (CoE). This collaboration is inspired by Chairman Gautam Adani's philosophy: "Seva hi sadhana hai" (Service is Worship) and reflects the diversified conglomerate's belief of access to a quality healthcare and education. Priti Adani, Chairperson (Adani Foundation) said: "This collaboration with DMIHER reflects our belief that access to quality healthcare and education is a fundamental right, not a privilege. We are proud to support the creation of a Centre of Excellence that will combine academic innovation, clinical research and community care. Together, we aim to build a scalable model that serves with dignity and contributes meaningfully towards the goal of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047." Datta Meghe, Founder, DMIHER said, "It fills me with immense pride to see this collaboration take shape. Over 35 years, our vision of a self-reliant health and education ecosystem has matured into a powerful reality. Collaborating with the Adani Foundation marks a pivotal step in advancing both regional and national development. In the spirit of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, this alliance reflects our shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable progress."

SEBI probes pump and dump scam

New Delhi: Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Friday said it has seized incriminating evidence in the pump and dump scam involving shares of various companies during search operations conducted this month. Without disclosing specific details, the board said as part of probing the scam, search and seizure operations was carried out at multiple locations. In a pump and dump scheme, fraudsters typically spread false or misleading information to create a buying frenzy that will pump up the price of a stock and then dump shares of the stock by selling their own shares at the inflated price.

Illegal construction a rising risk to society

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 27: Real estate is booming and so is the illegal construction. Construction is one of the key elements of development in urban areas. You go outside and turn a bit, large buildings owning the streets like anything. However, the important point is whether or not the construction you are seeing next door is legal. Legal construction is safe and secure as it is approved by the government. But the real threat is Illegal construction.

Illegal construction is a issue that affects urban planning, property values, encroachments and construction violations leading to serious issues like legal trouble and forfeiture of payment. We live in a time

where everybody comes with a project to lure customers, but is important to know the meaning of illegal construction and the legal procedure to file a complaint against it.

What is illegal construction?

Illegal construction simply a construction without government permit or a construction violates land law rules. It includes:

- «Construction without municipal approval
- «Building on encroachment land like: on roads, parks, or government-owned areas.
- «Violation of building height restrictions: Constructing additional floors beyond the approved limit.
- «Illegal conversion: Using residential properties for commercial purposes without approval.



«Unauthorised layouts or colonies: Selling plots without proper government sanction.

Report to illegal construction

Step 1: Gather Strong Evidence: Before filing a com-

plaint, collect strong evidence like pictures or videos of site(s).

Step 2: Identify the Correct Authority: Each state has specific municipal bodies or urban development authorities responsible for handling ille-

gal construction complaints. (Odisha: complaint to housing and urban development department)

Step 3: File a Complaint

One can file an online or offline complaint against the builder/ Owner to the local authorities

Police FIR: If required, file a police complaint to the nearest police station.

Step 4: Follow Up and Escalate if Necessary

Track your complaint on the official website. If no action is taken, escalate to senior municipal officers or file a PIL in court.

Bonus tip:

One can cite the case in case s/he feels that the authority is not taking any action

The Supreme Court, in a

recent order, held that no leniency should be shown towards illegal and unauthorised construction, stating unequivocally that such structures must be demolished. In the case of Rajendra Kumar Barjatya versus P Avas Evam Vikas Parishad and Others, the top court reiterated that all construction must be undertaken in strict adherence to applicable rules and regulations.

Conclusion:

One must raise a voice against illegal construction as it harms urban planning, increase safety risks, and devalue legal property. Moreover, a small leniency gives strength to the suedo developers. Remember, a little step of courage can solve large issue.

FROM BOUNDARY CATCHES TO CONCUSSION PROTOCOLS

ICC tweaks multiple rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, June 27: The ICC Friday announced new playing conditions across formats including a minimum seven-day stand-down period for players diagnosed with concussion, trialling a new wide-ball rule in limited-overs cricket, besides changes with regards to boundary catches.

Cricket's global governing body said on its website that the new playing conditions for Tests were implemented with the start of the new World Test Championship cycle for 2025-2027 with Sri Lanka taking on Bangladesh in first Test at Galle from June 17-21.

The upcoming limited-overs series between the two countries will mark the start dates for new playing conditions for ODIs and T20Is.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will play a three-match ODI series from July 2 and then move on to a three-match T20I rubber from July 10. In context of concussion protocols, the ICC said there are two changes.

Teams will now have to nominate designated concussion replacements for every match, which is being brought in to curb the home team's advantage of being able to select from a larger group of players.

The ICC also announced a "minimum seven-day stand-down" period for any player diagnosed with concussion.



"A player diagnosed with a concussion during a match must observe a minimum stand-down period of a minimum of seven days before returning to play. This change has been recommended by the ICC Medical Advisory Committee to support players' safety and well-being," the ICC said.

The ICC said two new rules will be trialled by full members for a period of six months starting from October 2025. It includes a new wide-ball rule for ODIs and T20Is, and is being brought in to offer a degree of leniency to a bowler who sees

batter moving around "prior or during" a delivery.

"The position of the batter's legs at the point of delivery will now be used as the reference point for a wide, even if the batter subsequently moves across to the off side," the ICC said.

"The trial will see a ball that passes the popping crease between the leg stump and the protected area marker not being called a wide. To help with this, the protected area marker line will be extended to the popping crease and act as a guide for the umpires."

Former South Africa captain

Shaun Pollock, the media representative of ICC's cricket committee, had told PTI in January this year that the governing body is "working on something" to give bowlers "a bit more leeway on wides."

"Any leg side delivery that passes behind the batter's legs and outside of the line at the time the ball reaches the popping crease may still be called a wide. Previously, a wide had been called for a delivery that would not have been called wide if the batter had retained their normal batting position," the ICC said.

Another rule to be trialled is for domestic First-Class cricket, in which teams can now name replacements for a player who suffers a "serious injury" after being picked in the XI.

"A player who suffers a serious injury on the field of play at any time after the match has started (including any pre-match warm-up period) may be replaced for the remainder of the match by a fully participating like-for-like player," the ICC said. For the DRS dismissals, the ICC said wicket zone will now be the actual outline of the stumps and balls.

The governing body has also announced other major changes like bringing in stop-clock in Test cricket, a change in rule for boundary catches, and a move back to having only one ball after the 34th-over mark in ODIs.

Star runner Twinkle

suspended for doping

The latest suspension continues to add to the woes for the country, which has a poor doping record internationally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 27: Multiple National Games medal-winning middle distance runner Twinkle Chaudhary has been provisionally suspended by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) after testing positive for a prohibited steroid.

The 28-year-old Chaudhary had clinched a gold in 4x400m women's relay competition at the Uttarakhand edition of the National Games earlier this year. She had also won a silver in the 800m race and a bronze in the 4x400m mixed relay.

Chaudhary tested positive for Methyltestosterone, a banned anabolic steroid.

In its update, the AIU stated that the runner has been issued a "notice of allegation". The next step would be a hearing in which Chaudhary will get a chance to explain herself.

Chaudhary, who hails from Jalandhar, set a new meet record with a time of 2:00.71sec in the 800m event of the 28th National Federation Senior Athletics Championships in Kochi in April. Earlier this month, she won an 800m silver medal at the Taiwan Open with a timing of 2:06.96s. In May, she had finished fourth in the same event during the Asian Athletics Championships in Gumi, South Korea.

In May, quarter-miler Sneha



Kolleri was suspended after testing positive for Stanazolol, also an anabolic steroid.

Kolleri was a member of the Indian contingent for the Asian Championship but had to be withdrawn after the failed dope test.

In the recently-released 2023 testing figures among countries which analysed 5,000 or more samples, India had the worst adverse findings rate of 3.8 per cent. Globally, 204,809 tests were conducted by the World Anti-Doping Agency in 2023, of which 1,820 came positive for banned drugs.

India's share of 214 accounted for over 11 per cent of the total number of offenders is the highest for any country.

The sports ministry has vowed to aggressively tackle the menace with vigorous awareness campaigns. An amended National Anti-Doping Act is also due to be tabled in the parliament after addressing concerns related to government interference, raised by WADA. The AIU upholds the rules on doping matters in athletics.

Pragg wins UzChess Cup

Masters, now top-ranked Indian and World No 4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tashkent, June 27: Grand-master R Pragganandhaa became India's top-ranked chess player in the live ratings after winning the UzChess Cup Masters 2025, here Friday.

The win took Pragganandhaa's live rating to 2778.3, making him World No 4 -- up three places -- as he achieved his highest career ranking.

The 19-year-old leapfrogged world champion D Gukesh (2776.6) and Arjun Erigaisi (2775.7), who was India's top ranked player until Thursday but has now slipped to world No 6.

Magnus Carlsen (2839.2) remains No 1, followed by Hikaru Nakamura (2807.0) and Fabiano Caruana (2784.2).

Pragganandhaa started the final day a point behind local favourite Nodirbek Abdusattorov and half a point behind Javokhir Sindarov.

A crucial win over Abdusattorov in the final round helped him join both players at 5.5 points at the end of the round-robin stage.

Erigaisi missed a chance to make it a four-way tie after drawing with Aravindh Chithambaram.

Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand congratulated Pragganandhaa on social media, posting: "Congrats to @rpragnachess for winning the Uzbekistan Chess Cup. Third major classical victory this year. Of all his wins this year, this one seemed the least likely with just two rounds to go."

RONALDO'S MIND-BLOWING NEW CONTRACT WITH AL-NASSR

The football star

extends contract

with Al-Nassr for

two more years

AGENCIES

Riyadh, June 27: Just weeks after suggesting that his Saudi Pro League adventure with Al-Nassr was over, Cristiano Ronaldo signed a new 2-year deal with the club, putting an end to all speculations of his potential return to European football.

Ronaldo, despite being the top scorer in the Saudi Pro League over the last couple of

seasons, hasn't been able to win the league title yet. The club's underwhelming show even prevented it from qualifying for the FIFA Club World Cup.

The repeated failures with Al-Nassr seemed to have prompted Ronaldo to pursue the remainder of his career elsewhere, but a lot seems to have changed over the last week or so.

As Al Nassr took to social media to announce, "Cristiano Ronaldo is staying at @AlNassrFC until 2027," reports of the bumper contract that the Portuguese has signed also emerged.

According to reports, Ronaldo is set to earn 178 million pounds per year (approx 400



million euros or INR 2000 crore over the next two years), after signing a contract extension at Al-Nassr.

The Portuguese goalscorer superstar arrived in 2023 in the kingdom to play with the club, heralding a rush of players in the latter stages of their careers to the oil-rich country.

Last month, Ronaldo posted "This chapter is over" hours after the Saudi Pro League wrapped up with Al Nassr finishing third and trophyless once again.

"Ronaldo's presence is a key factor in developing the Saudi league in the last two years and a half. He opens the door for elite and young players to

LAVISH DEAL

- 24.5MN signing bonus (increases to £38MN in second year)
- 8MN bonus if Al Nassr win the Saudi Pro League
- 5MN bonus if Al Nassr win the Asian Champions League
- 4MN bonus for winning the golden boot

- 15% ownership of Al Nassr (estimated at £33m)
- 80K bonus per goal (increases by 20% in second year)
- 40K bonus per assist (increases by 20% in second year)
- 60MN worth of sponsorship deals promised
- 4MN worth of private jet expenses, covered by Al-Nassr

come to Saudi Arabia," a source from the Public Investment Fund (PIF), a major investor in Saudi football, told AFP last month.

The oil-funded PIF, the

sovereign wealth fund behind a number of big-ticket Saudi investments, controls a group of Pro League clubs including Al Nassr, Al Hilal, and Al Ahli.

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