



Anupria’s candid talk

Actor Anupria Goenka says the male actors often fear being judged during romantic scenes

LEISURE | P2



'Russia downed MH17'

Europe's top rights court rules Russia responsible for the 2014 MH17 downing and systematic human rights violations in Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Equity MF inflow rises

Net inflow into equity mutual funds surges 24% to ₹23,587 crore in June, reversing the declining trend of the last five months

BUSINESS | P11



Third Test today

With the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy series now level at 1-1, all eyes will be on who will emerge victorious at the iconic Lord's

SPORTS | P12

4 found scaling garbage heaps to enter Srimandir; inquiry ordered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, July 9: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Wednesday constituted a committee to inquire into the alleged breach of security at the 12th-century shrine here after four unknown persons were found scaling the outer perimeter wall of the temple.

SJTA chief administrator has formed a committee headed by the administrator (security) to inquire into the matter, Puri District Collector Chanchal Rana told reporters after a video of four people scaling the garbage heap near the 'Meghnada Pachari' (outer boundary wall) went viral in social media. PTI could not independently verify the authenticity of the video.

Admitting that there was a lapse, Rana said that the committee will probe into the alleged breach of security. Trespassers are being identified and accountability will be fixed in this incident. Subsequent action will also be taken, the collector said.

Stating that the district administration has taken the matter seriously, the collector said that the CCTV footage will be verified and the persons involved in such activities to be identified.

It was seen in the video that four unidentified men gained unauthorised access into the shrine by scaling the outer perimeter wall, using a large pile of garbage accumulated near the wall as support.

The incident took place Tuesday despite elaborate security arrangements in place during and after the annual Rath Yatra and Niladri Bijie rituals.

Biswanath Khuntia, a servitor, said that he has witnessed many people scaling the garbage heap and entering into the temple premises. The number of people illegally entering into the temple is not four, it should be hundreds, Khuntia said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



This was built by the Opposition. Our bridges collapse before the inauguration

'GAPS' IN GUJARAT



Rescuers and locals look for survivors after several vehicles fell into a river following the collapse of an entire slab between the piers of a bridge in Mujpur near Vadodara in Gujarat, Wednesday

State re-introduces fail system for Class V, VIII

Aiming to ensure that foundational learning levels are achieved before students are promoted to higher classes, the state government has done away with automatic promotion in primary schools and restored the 'pass-fail' system for Class V and VIII students in a major shift in elementary education policy. Notably, the latest Ministry of Education (MoE) survey, Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) Rashtriya Sarvekshan, painted an abysmal picture of the elementary education scenario in the country, pointing out that only 55 per cent of Class III students can arrange numbers up to 99 in ascending or descending order while only 53 per cent of them in Class VI know tables up to 10. The transition in education policy may go a long way in improving learning outcomes while ensuring that students are not pushed forward without mastering basic competencies.



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 9: Allowing schools to hold back students if they do not meet the required academic standards, the state government has re-introduced the 'pass-fail system' in Class V and VIII annual examinations from the current academic year, an official notification said Wednesday.

To implement the decision, the government has brought necessary amendments to Odi-

sha Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010.

As per a notification issued by state School and Mass Education (S&ME) department, a regular examination in Class V and VIII will be held at the end of every academic year.

If a child fails in the examination, he/she will be given additional instruction and granted opportunity for re-examination within a period of two months from the date of

declaration of the result, it said.

If the child appearing in the re-examination fails to fulfil the promotion criteria again, he/she shall be held back in fifth class or eighth class, as the case may be, said the notification.

However, no child will be expelled from any school till the completion of elementary education, the order said. This amendment takes immediate effect upon its publication in the Odisha Gazette, it added.

Notably, the state government had adopted a no-detention policy in schools at the elementary level some years ago.

In December last year, the Government of India had amended the Right of Children and Free School Education Act 2010 (RTE Act 2010). The amendments allow states to hold regular exams for the students of Class V and VIII and hold them back if they fail. These amendments come five years after the RTE Act was amended, in 2019.

2 pilots killed in IAF jet crash near Churu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur/New Delhi, July 9: Two pilots of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were killed Wednesday morning in a crash of a Jaguar trainer aircraft near Churu in Rajasthan.

The IAF said a court of inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident. "An IAF Jaguar Trainer aircraft met with an accident during a routine training mission and crashed near Churu in Rajasthan, today," it said in a brief statement.

Both pilots sustained fatal injuries in the accident. No damage to any civil property has been reported, it said.

The IAF is yet to make public the names of the deceased pilots. It said it deeply regrets the loss of lives and stands firmly with the bereaved families in this time of grief.

The aircraft crashed in an agricultural field in Bhanoda village around 1.25pm. It was the third incident involving Jaguar aircraft this year.



Twin strikes disrupt vehicular movement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 9: Vehicular movement in different parts of Odisha, including the capital, was affected Wednesday due to strike by trade unions and drivers' associations.

A joint forum of 10 central trade unions staged a Bharat bandh, or a nationwide strike, Wednesday in protest against the four labour codes, contractualisation, and privatisation of PSUs among others. The forum of ten central trade unions and their associates, which include, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, CITU, AI-UTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AACITU, LPF and UTUC are participating in the nation-wide protest.

Opposition Congress and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) extended their support to the protest of trade unions. Similarly, the drivers of different transportation vehicles including buses, taxis, and trucks have resorted to the cease work

protest since Tuesday morning demanding welfare measures for the drivers in the state.

The protestors staged demonstrations in different places and blocked several roads including national highways in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bargarh, Bhadrak, Balasore, Bolangir, and Sambalpur. Due to the protest by trade unions and thousands of drivers, vehicular movement has been severely affected in the state, said a police officer.

A large number of vehicles were standing on both sides of major roads and NHs as the protesters picketed on the roads. Protesters were also seen staging a protest blocking the railway tracks in Bhubaneswar station. Commuters remained stranded in the bus stands across the state.

Several Central government offices, banks, business establishments and educational institutions were also partially affected.



Women members block road traffic at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar as part of a 'Bharat bandh' called by various trade unions, Wednesday

SHORT TAKES

Jaga Pradhan out on bail



Bhubaneswar: A local court here Wednesday granted bail to BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan, who was arrested in a case involving the physical assault of a senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) office. The District and Sessions Court, Khurda has granted bail to Pradhan on security of ₹30,000. The court has sought the telephonic conversation between Pradhan and Ratnakar Sahoo, the victim OAS officer. P3

Apple's India-born COO

New Delhi: Moradabad-born Sabih Khan has joined an elite league of India-born C-suite executives at global giants after being elevated to the position of chief operating officer of iPhone maker Apple, following the path laid by the likes of Indra Nooyi, Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai. Khan, who will still have Apple CEO Tim Cook as his leader, will take over his new role from Jeff Williams later this month.



AI taking toll on America’s largest power grid

Burgeoning AI usage is reshaping not just industries, but the very infrastructure powering them. Think of it like a Ghibli art film turned dark—what was once a whimsical landscape of windmills and glowing grids is now shadowed by the relentless rise of data centres and energy-hungry AI models. As demand from data centres, especially those supporting AI like chatbots, grows faster than new power plants can be built, PJM Interconnection, America’s largest power grid, is nearing a breaking point. The political fallout is already here with Pennsylvania’s governor threatening to leave the grid and top PJM leaders out. It’s a perfect storm of energy policy, infrastructure delays, and a digital future demanding power PJM can’t yet supply.

REUTERS

Harrisburg (Pennsylvania), July 9: America’s largest power grid is under strain as data centres and AI chatbots consume power faster than new plants can be built.

Electricity bills are projected to surge by more than 20% this summer in some parts of PJM Interconnection’s territory, which covers 13 states - from Illinois to Tennessee, Virginia to New Jersey - serving 67 million customers in a region with the most data centres in the world.

The governor of Pennsylvania is threatening to abandon the grid, the CEO has announced his departure and the chair of PJM’s board of managers and another board member were voted out.

The upheaval at PJM start-



ed a year ago with a more than 800% jump in prices at its annual capacity auction. Rising prices out of the auction trickle down to everyday people’s power bills.

Now PJM is barreling towards its next capacity auction Wednesday, when prices may rise even further.

The auction aims to avoid blackouts by establishing a rate

at which generators agree to pump out electricity during the most extreme periods of stress on the grid, usually the hottest and coldest days of the year.

High prices out of the auction should spur new power plant construction, but that hasn’t happened quickly enough in PJM’s region as ageing power plants continue to retire and data centre demand explodes.

PJM has made the situation worse by delaying auctions and pausing the application process for new plants, according to more than a dozen power developers, regulators, energy attorneys and other experts interviewed by Reuters.


“We need speed from PJM, we need transparency from PJM and we need to keep consumer costs down with PJM,” Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro told Reuters in an interview. “I think they’ve taken some steps in that direction which is really encouraging to me and we’re going to continue to work at it.”


Meanwhile, data centre demand is surging. By 2030, PJM expects 32 gigawatts of increased demand on its system, with all but two of those gigawatts coming from data centres.


leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

 **GaneshaSpeaks.com**
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
 Decisions about career and finance will keep you preoccupied today. After a hectic day, all you may want to do is relax. In that case, Ganesha may send a short but pleasurable trip your way, which is sure to rejuvenate you. Group activity suggests you will make more friends, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
 This is not a day when you should be fooling around with your health. Do not take your health and fitness for granted, warns Ganesha. You will be feeling lazy and listless all day long. Chances are that you could fall ill on account of carelessness. Both physical exertion as well as mental stress should be meticulously avoided.

GEMINI
 Today, the bond that you share with your friends will get stronger. You are also likely to fall in love. If you are already in a relationship, you will plan to validate your bond either through an engagement or marriage. If you are a student, this is a good phase for you. Along with love, you will also get good grades.

CANCER
 There is every possibility that today, you will be probing and prying about your future, predicts Ganesha. A visit to a well-known astrologer cannot be ruled out. Also, you are likely to consult a doctor. It is all due to your bad lifestyle and habits. You had better improve your lifestyle.

LEO
 Fortune smiles on but a few, and when it does, it can take you to places you have never even dreamt of. Today is an exceptional day, in the sense that Lady Luck is backing you in all earnestness. So go with the flow and take your chances. You will find, much to your delight, that success is easy to achieve when you are willing to work hard and have luck guiding you.


VIRGO
 Reflect on past glories and assemble the machinery for accomplishing more in the future. New relationships will mark the road to progress. Your easy-going nature will help you get along famously with people.

LIBRA
 Today might be a good day to invest in that body armour you saw on the telly last night. At least find one that will shield you from being at the receiving end of your seniors and the daily grind of life. If you happen to be a job aspirant, be prepared to slog it out for your success. Put off auction bids and sealed tenders for a luckier day.

SCORPIO
 House renovation is in the offing. You may furnish it with portraits and artefacts. Today, you may also feel like playing the stock market game and stake your bets, says Ganesha. Have a great time at home by hosting friends over.

SAGITTARIUS
 Personal grooming will be on your mind today. A small fortune may be spent on enhancing the way you look, especially on a new hair-do. Retail Therapy is on the cards, and you may indulge spending on clothes and jewellery.

CAPRICORN
 It's difficult to keep calm and have a control over your temper in times of distress, but today, you will prove all who surrendered to the whims of adversity wrong, foresees Ganesha. You will be unfaltering in dealing with problems, and will overcome them with ease. At home, you will be content and at peace, and this will also reflect in your work, adding to your already high efficiency.

AQUARIUS
 The day seems normal as you are unlikely to encounter unpleasant situations, says Ganesha. The high point of the day will be your consummate skill with which you will handle mundane tasks. Ganesha reminds you of the saying, "Success is one percent inspiration and 99% perspiration."

PISCES
 Fear is a part and parcel of life, and while it can not be eliminated, it can certainly be tamed, and that is what you will be doing today. All your suppressed audacity will be on full display, says Ganesha.



ED SHEERAN EXPLORES NEW CREATIVE AVENUES

English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, who has been getting a great response to his recently released track *Sapphire*, is exploring new creative avenues. *The Shape of You* hitmaker turned to painting as a creative outlet and set up a makeshift workshop in a disused car park in central London, reports *Female First UK*.

SARAH ON WHY SHE KEEPS AWAY FROM TALKING POLITICS

Hollywood star Sarah Jessica Parker has revealed why she likes to keep away from talking about politics on social media. During a recent appearance on *The Best People* podcast, the actress said: "I often don't talk on social media because I don't think it's a place that's deserving of any real complicated conversation."



RHEA RELIES ON INNER VALIDATION

Mumbai: Actress Rhea Chakraborty took to social media to reveal that she no longer seeks external validation to feel worthy.

Emphasizing the importance of inner strength and self-love, Rhea posted a couple of her photos and videos, giving a glimpse of her favorite hobbies. The *Chehre* actress simply captioned the post, "Favourite hobbies : Dancing Talking Directing a street shoot for @chapter2drip."

Chakraborty also shared a video of herself accepting an award, where she mentioned in her speech that she isn't

used to receiving so much external validation, as inner validation has always been her go-to. In the clip, Rhea stated, "I would like to say thank you. I am not used to so much external validation, inner validation has been my go-to but I can't get the charm of it."

The 33-year-old actress also posted a video of herself dancing along with others, set to the popular Neha Kakkar and Badshah song *Garmi* as the background score.

A few days ago, the actress gave a sneak peek into one of her most memorable birthday celebrations, spent in the joyful company of her little friends. The *Half Girlfriend* actress shared a series of photos and videos from the celebration and wrote, "Best birthday spent with my best little friends Love and gratitude for these beautiful kids Heart is full."

IAN S



Shekhar supports AI in content business

Mumbai: Padma Bhushan awardee Shekhar Kapur is coming out in support of Artificial Intelligence in the content business.

The director Wednesday took to his X and penned a note talking about how AI is the best thing to have happened to storytellers. He called it the most democratic technology ever.

He wrote, "Amazing how unaware people in the content business are of immense change AI is causing. We're either too afraid of change, or hiding our heads in the sand. AI is the most democratic technology ever. So if you're a Gatekeeper in the Content Business, you won't survive. For soon kids will be able to create content that was once the realm of big budget Studio Movies or Shows. At a tiny tiny tiny fraction of your budgets."

He further mentioned that even distribution won't be a challenge



for the art produced by AI as he went on to quote the example of the Chinese short-format video platform TikTok.

He shared, "And the argument that they will still need our distribution won't hold. .. remember TikTok? It was a multi-billion dollar business before Hollywood could even spell the word. It's the time of the best storytellers, not gatekeepers (sic)".

IAN S



Anupria on rarely adiscussed side of filmmaking

Mumbai: Anupria Goenka, who has done several romantic scenes on screen, sheds light on the emotional effort involved in performing such parts — a side of filmmaking that's rarely discussed. Speaking candidly with *Mirror*, the actress known for her work in the web show *Aashram* says, "It is very important your co-star and you are on the same page along with the director. I feel that often male actors are the ones who get a little

conscious and their heroines have to do double the work."

Elaborating on this interesting point of view, the *Tiger Zinda Hai* actress says, "When you are romancing for the camera, your male co-star often becomes conscious and fears being judged and misunderstood. It is extremely important that you have a beautiful chemistry with them and genuine on-screen chemistry stems from this trust and comfort. When that happens, the audience can feel it."

AGENCIES



Shanaya old school romantic at heart

Mumbai: Shanaya Kapoor, daughter of Sanjay and Maheep Kapoor, completed her education at Ecole Mondiale World School and honed her skills in dance and acting before stepping into the film world.

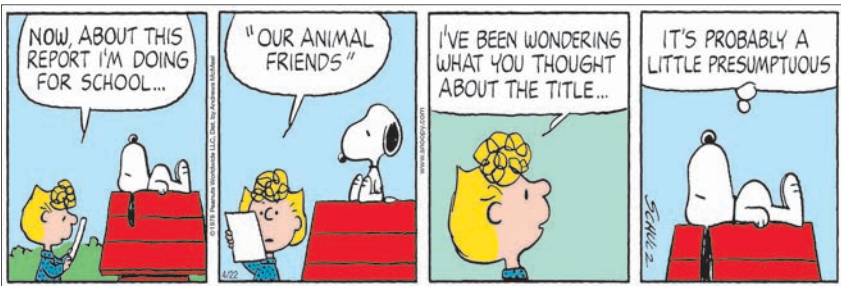
Prior to her acting debut, she gained experience as an Assistant Director on her cousin Janhvi Kapoor's film *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*.

In a recent interview, Shanaya revealed that despite being part of Gen-Z, she holds traditional romantic values close to her heart.

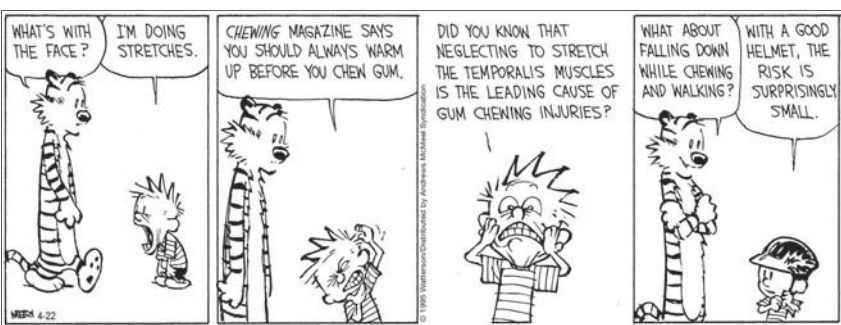
When asked if she is an old-school romantic at heart, Shanaya told an entertainment portal that she had expressed the same thought. She acknowledged that their generation is very detached and quick to move on, and she is part of that generation too. She mentioned that her friends behave that way, and everyone has their own approach. However, deep down, she considers herself an old-school girl when it comes to love. She looks for a long-term relationship and is not quick to move on or jump around, as that is not who she is. When she finds that special person, they become like home to her. She wants to find that feeling of home and that sense of comfort.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

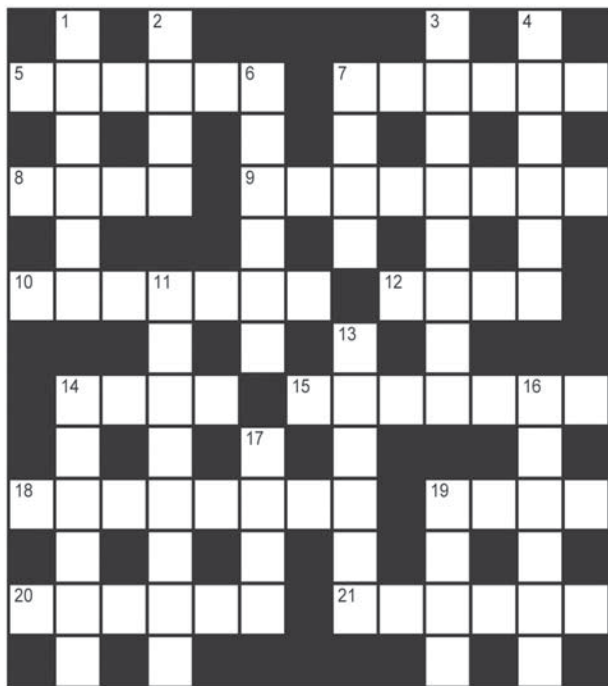


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com

Across

- 5 Dark reddish-brown colour
- 7 Respectful
- 8 Coop group
- 9 Catastrophe
- 10 Silences
- 12 Tints
- 14 Marshes
- 15 Gang member
- 18 Luzon native

- 19 Anise-flavoured liqueur
- 20 Llama relative
- 21 Spheres

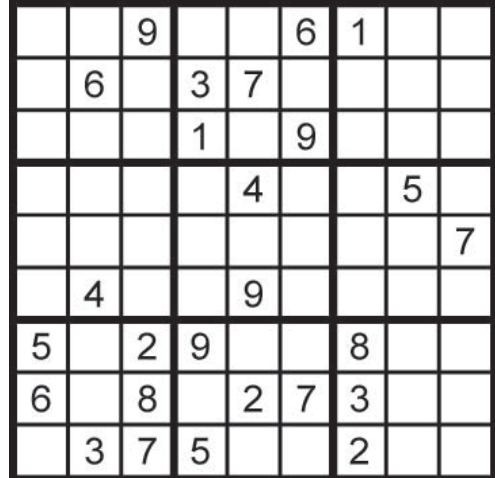
Down

- 1 Capital of Alaska
- 2 Northern seas diving bird
- 3 Vociferates
- 4 Position

- 6 Metallic element
- 7 Coconut tree
- 11 Indian Ocean island
- 13 Accolade
- 14 Idiosyncrasy
- 16 Pepsin, e.g.
- 17 Verdi opera
- 19 Australian export

SUDOKU

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

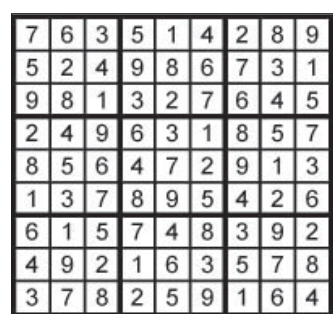


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Odisha bags best state agriculture award

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha was recognised as the best state for agriculture and received the Agriculture Leadership Award from the Agriculture Today Group on Wednesday. The award was presented at the 16th Agriculture Leadership Conclave organised by the Agriculture Today Group, India's leading agricultural media outlet. Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment and Energy, Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, accepted the award at a glittering ceremony in New Delhi, attended by Union Minister Piyush Goyal, former Chief Justice of India and Award Committee chairman Justice P Sathasivam, and other dignitaries. "This award reflects the innovation and hard work of Odisha's farmers. I dedicate it to the annadatas of Odisha. The Government of Odisha thanks the Agriculture Today Group for this honour and its commitment to making Odisha a model of sustainable agricultural development in India," said Singh Deo.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit No.04/dated.04.07.25 sworn before Executive Magistrate, Hatadihi, I, Mamatamayee Samantaray after marriage known as Priyanka Parida, wife of Ranjan Kumar Parida, Address - Village - Boilo, Post - Purunahat, P.S. : Kishan Nagar, PIN- 754131, Dist.- Cuttack, Odisha, declare that I have changed my name from Priyanka Parida to Mamatamayee Samantaray. Henceforth, I shall be known as Mamatamayee Samantaray for all purposes. Mamatamayee Samantaray

By virtue of an affidavit No.15AA285788 sworn before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, dated-09-07-2025. I, Nityananda Sahoo, Kundibag, Bhadrak Bypass, Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN-756181 declare that I have changed my name from Nityananda Sahu to Nityananda Sahoo. Henceforth, I shall be known as Nityananda Sahoo for all purposes. Nityananda Sahoo

LOST

I, Sudeshna Priyadarshani Mohapatra, W/o Gadanayak Dharmendra Ranjan Rout, Vill/P.O./P.S. : Soso, Dist.: Kendujhar, Pin – 758078 Now residing At : Acharya Nagar, Bonth Chhak, P.S./Dist. : Bhadrak, Pin –756101 have purchased a land by virtue of a bearing registered sale deed No. 10232205903 dtd. 30.12.2022. That the original interim sale deed bearing No. 10231101992 dtd. 21.04.2011 has been lost somewhere while I was coming from Tahasil Office, Bhadrak. Inspite of my thorough search I could not found the same. If any body found the documents pls contact to Advocate Jaminikant Nayak, Mob. No. 8249360491.

Odisha braces for fuel crunch amid protest

Odisha's Drivers' Mahasasngha's protest halts fuel supply, sparking fears of widespread shortages and panic buying

FUEL STOCKS AT PETROL PUMPS EXPECTED TO RUN OUT SOON DUE TO 48-HOUR SUPPLY DISRUPTION AMID ONGOING STRIKE

PROTESTERS DEMAND BETTER WELFARE AND FACILITIES; GOVERNMENT TALKS HAVE YET TO RESOLVE THE STRIKE



MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 9: The ongoing protest by the Odisha Drivers' Mahasangha, which began Tuesday, has severely disrupted goods transportation—especially the supply of petrol, diesel, and LPG. Sanjay Lath, general secretary of the Utkal Petroleum Dealers' Association, warned that many fuel stations may face shortages by Thursday if the situation continues.

Lath said, "Petrol pumps typically hold stock for three to four days, but the ongoing drivers' strike and Bharat Bandh have disrupted supply for 48 hours. This will likely lead to fuel shortages and trigger panic buying among the public."

Lath further added, "If fresh supplies don't arrive by Thursday evening, some petrol pumps may run dry. To prevent this,

the government should hold proper discussions with the protesting drivers and urge them to allow uninterrupted supply of petrol and LPG during the agitation."

It is important to note that the Odisha Drivers' Mahasangha has launched a statewide protest demanding the fulfillment of a seven-point charter. Their demands include the inclusion of auto drivers in the Drivers' Welfare Board, pension benefits for drivers over 60 years of age, and the provision of restrooms and toilet facilities at regular intervals of every 100 km. The group has also firmly demanded that police be barred from verifying drivers' documents during the protest.

The strike entered its second day as talks with the government failed to yield any resolution.

ABVP's celebrates 77th Foundation Day



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 9: The Odisha unit of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) organised a bike rally in the City Wednesday to observe Rashtriya Vidyarthi Divas and celebrate its 77th foundation day.

Hundreds of ABVP activists and supporters took part in the rally, which began at Utkal University and concluded at Ram Mandir. Prominent leaders including ABVP state joint secretary Rajkumar Mishra, Bhubaneswar joint secretary Gangadhar Padhi, and national executive council member Bishwajit Patra were among participants.

At the end of the rally, participants lit earthen lamps (diyas) at Ram Mandir, offering prayers for the prosperity of the organisation and the nation.

BMC inaugurates 3 modern public toilets

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 9: In a move to strengthen urban sanitation, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) recently inaugurated three modern public toilets at key City locations.

The first facility, located at CRP Square near Priyadarshini Market, was jointly inaugurated by Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh and Mayor Sulochana Das. The second was opened near Toshali Plaza in Satyanagar by Bhubaneswar-Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, while the third, near Utkal Hospital, was inaugurated by Mayor Das.

Deputy Mayor Manjulata Kanhar, Standing Committee Chairman Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar, local corporators, senior citizens, SHG members, and market association representatives attended the events.

Mayor Das said the initiative reflects BMC's commitment to ensuring clean and accessible sanitation for the thousands of people who visit the Capital city daily.

OTV GROUP LAUNCHES 'IKATAN'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 9: Odisha Television (OTV) Group has recently launched IKATAN—a purpose-led initiative dedicated to reviving India's Ikat heritage and empowering its artisans. Through its e-commerce platform, www.ikatan.com, IKATAN offers a curated selection of 100 per cent authentic, hand-woven Ikat silk sarees.

Founder of IKATAN and OTV MD Jagi Mangat Panda said, "With IKATAN, we're not just creating a brand—we're honouring the hands that keep our traditions alive. This is our way of giving back."

She further said, "While weaves like Maheshwari,

Jamdani, Banarasi, and Chanderi have received significant attention, Ikat—particularly from Odisha—has remained underrepresented. IKATAN aims to change that. It's the first-of-its-kind initiative solely focused on positioning Ikat as a symbol of luxury, legacy, and craftsmanship."

"We chose to launch as an e-commerce platform to reach a global audience and ensure direct investment into the weavers and their ecosystem," Jagi emphasised.

She added, "To ensure affordability, we've introduced a non-designer line that remains true to the authenticity and craftsmanship of Ikat, making it more accessible to a wider



audience."

IKATAN's debut collection merges heritage with high

fashion through a collaboration with globally acclaimed designer Bibhu Mohapatra. His designs spotlight Odisha's traditional Ikat on global platforms—redefining it as a textile fit for runways, red carpets, and heirloom collections.

With its digital-first launch, IKATAN ensures global reach and meaningful reinvestment. While a physical store may follow, the online model keeps the mission lean and focused.

The name IKATAN—meaning 'to bind or tie'—symbolises the weaving together of tradition and innovation, community and customer. Its tagline, "Woven with Heart, Tied by Purpose," captures the essence of its vision.

Odisha State Law Commission holds first meeting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 9: The Odisha State Law Commission convened its inaugural meeting Wednesday here at Toshali Bhawan. Justice Bishwanath Rath chaired the session, joined by the Law department Principal Secretary Manas Ranjan Barik, Professor Lalit Kumar Deb, senior advocate Surya Prasad Mishra, and Sourya Chandra Mohapatra.

The Commission discussed five key agenda items in its first meeting, including unveiling its official logo and public



email ID (oslc703@gmail.com). The session also focused on legal issues requiring attention from the state government.

In accordance with Clause 19(1) of the resolution passed by

the Law department 16.03.2016, the appointments of Professor Lalit Kumar Deb, senior advocate Surya Prasad Mishra, and Sourya Chandra Mohapatra to the Sub-Committee of the Odisha

State Law Commission were approved.

Additionally, under Clause 14(2), the Commission approved the role of the Secretary in evaluating all applications or requests for legal reform, legal aid, or consultation received from various departments, authorities, and institutions of the State Government. The Secretary is authorized to provide necessary advice, recommendations, and correspondence on behalf of the Commission, as per an official statement from the Commission's office.

17 record statements in Puri stampede hearing

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 9: Seventeen persons recorded their statements at the public hearing on the stampede in Puri in which three people were killed and 50 others injured, according to an official statement.

The administrative inquiry into the tragic incident, which happened June 29, is being carried out by Development Commissioner Anu Garg.

She has been mandated by the state government to submit a report on how the incident happened and what measures could be taken to avoid such a situation in the future.

Garg held the public hearing at the State Guest House in Bhubaneswar, according to the statement. "Seventeen per-

sons/organisations attended the public hearing held today and recorded their statements," it said. A similar hearing will be held at the Special Circuit House in Puri Thursday from 3pm, it added.

Garg also visited the stampede site near the Gundicha temple and spoke to different stakeholders about the incident. The state government had earlier urged the people to share information, video footage or any other materials related to the stampede for a proper and transparent inquiry.

The opposition BJD and Congress have demanded a judicial probe into the incident, stating that the tragedy took place despite around 10,000 security personnel being deployed for the Rath Yatra.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	85.76 ▲ 0.01	SENSEX	83536.08 ▼ 46.40	GOLD	₹96,530 ▲ ₹63
EURO	100.56 ▼ 0.16	NIFTY	25476.10 ▼ 176.43	SILVER	₹107,530 ▼ ₹455

Safer transit: Women drive Odisha Yatri use

RISING TRUST IN ODISHA'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT SEES WOMEN MAKE UP OVER 57 PER CENT OF ODISHA YATRI USERS, UNDERSCORING ENHANCED SAFETY AND INCLUSIVITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 9: Reflecting rising confidence in Odisha's public transport system, recent data reveals that 57.44 per cent of Odisha Yatri app users between October 2024 and July 2025 were women. Of the 2.57 lakh passengers, over 1.48 lakh were female—highlighting improved safety, accessibility, and gender inclusivity in the state's urban mobility landscape.

Launched by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in January 2025, Odisha Yatri began pilot operations in October 2024. Month-on-month data highlights a consistent preference among women, with female ridership peaking at 61.63 per cent in January 2025. As of July 2025, women continue to



lead usage with a 55.38 per cent share—well above their male counterparts.

Transport officials attribute this positive trend to several key features of the platform, including real-time trip tracking, verified drivers, seamless last-mile connectivity, and an efficient grievance redressal mechanism.

The app's integration with enforcement and transport authorities has fostered a secure, transparent commuting environment, particularly benefiting women and other

vulnerable groups.

A representative from the Housing & Urban Development (HUD) department stated, "The data speaks for itself—women are not just participating; they are leading the adoption of Odisha Yatri. This reflects the government's strong commitment to gender-responsive, inclusive transport. It also aligns with HUD's vision of providing 'Mobility as a Service' (MaaS), delivering holistic first and last-mile solutions for urban mobility."

In a show of community support, Odisha Yatri—alongside the State Transport Authority, Odisha—facilitated free auto rides for over 30,000 pilgrims during this year's Rath Yatra, further reinforcing its public-oriented mission.

Looking ahead, the platform is set to expand to more cities across Odisha, with plans to introduce additional services such as ambulance and boating facilities—extending its reach and impact across diverse mobility needs.

As Odisha moves toward a smarter, safer, and more inclusive public transport system, the rising participation of women riders stands as a powerful testament to the platform's credibility and the government's focus on dignity-driven, secure transport for all.

WEATHER			FORECAST Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain/thundershower.
	BBSR	CTC	
Max Temp	31.4°	29.4°	
Min Temp	25.9°	24.2°	
Humidity	82%	87%	
Rainfall	NII	NII	

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, **A.P. Tours and Travel**, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, **Aurobindo Market**-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, **Airport Road**-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, **Anish Infotech**- Tankapani Road-9861341488, **Bapuji Nagar**- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, **Baramunda Rental Colony**-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, **Baramunda Housing Board Colony**-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, **Cuttack Road**-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, **District Center (Chandrasekharpur)**-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, **Forest Park**-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, **IRC Village**-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, **Janpath**-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, **Jaydev Vihar**-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, **Jagannath Mobile Point**- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, **Kanan Vihar**-Auro Electronics-8260697560, **Khandagiri**- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, **KIIT Road**-Jugad Jn-9338545031, **Laxmi Sagor**-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, **Lewis Road**-Spider Web-7809186415, **Metro Satellite City**-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, **Madhusudan Nagar**-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, **Maa Santoshi travels**- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, **Nayapalli**- The Cake Room- 7873660137, **Near Mayfair Lagoon**-Cookiemann-9439491273, **Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels**-9668284823, **Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate**- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, **Net Square**- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, **Priyadarshini Market**-Astro Point-9938134346, **R.N. General Store**-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, **Sahid Nagar**- Maa Communication- 9437353424, **Sahini General Store**- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, **Satya Nagar**-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, **Samantapur**- Download Point-7504557743, **Sailashree Vihar**-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, **Saheed Nagar**-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, **Siripur**-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, **Sushree fashion**- Jagmara-9938714347, **Shree Vision**- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, **Unit-3**-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, **Unit-7**- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, **VSS Nagar**-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, **XIMB Square**-LD Books-9658061373.

Lightning claims 83 lives in 3 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 9: There is no let-up in deaths due to lightning strikes as the natural calamity has claimed 83 lives in areas under Southern Police Range in Berhampur in the last three years, a report said, adding that Ganjam has topped the list with 45 deaths.

According to sources, the state government is conducting awareness programmes on possible steps to be adopted by people during lightning strikes. However, there is no end to casualties due to the natural disaster.

As a preventive measure, the state government is laying stress on plantation of more palm saplings as these trees can only save people from lightning

In 2022, as many as 24 deaths due to lightning strikes were reported from areas under Southern Police Range. Similarly, 27 deaths were reported in 2023, and 32 in 2024. Currently, various areas in the state are witnessing heavy rainfall accompanied by lightning.

Reports also said that 14 persons died in lightning during thunderstorms May 16. Among them, two persons died in separate incidents, while Gajapati district reported one death May

16. In Ganjam police district, at least 45 deaths occurred during last three years. Similarly, the district reported 13 deaths in 2022, 15 in 2023 and 17 in 2024.

Moreover, Berhampur police district witnessed 13 lightning deaths, while Boudh reported six, Gajapati 11 and Kandhamal eight during the last three years.

An analysis of the records reveals that Ganjam district recorded maximum incidents of lightning and maximum number of deaths.

Usually, police register unnatural death (UD) cases and sends the bodies for post-mortem following which the family members of the deceased are awarded compensations as per government norms.

As a preventive measure, the state government is laying stress on plantation of more palm saplings as these trees can only save people from lightning.

It is learnt that volunteers and social activists are collecting palm seeds and planting them in various areas of Ganjam district.

Secretary of Rushikulya Samudra Kainchha Surakshya Samiti (Rushikulya Marine Turtles Protection Committee) Rabindranath Sahu and his team collected over 12,000 palm seeds and planted them in various areas for the purpose.

Palm seeds have been planted in various areas of Chhatrapur and Ganjam blocks as well as in both sides of the Rushikulya river, and on the opposite side of Tampara lake.

Bengal MLA's car runs over man in Simulia

Simulia: A 56-year-old man was killed after the car of an MLA from neighbouring West Bengal hit his scooter at Jamujhadi on National Highway-16 about 5 km from Simulia police station in Balasore district Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Radhakanta Lenka, a resident of Sajanpur under Soro police station in the district. Lenka died on the spot. The car (WB12K-8988) belongs to Howrah MLA Goutam Choudhury, according to police. The mishap occurred after the driver of the car lost control on the wheels and hit Lenka's scooter when the MLA was returning home after visiting Puri with his family members. Police seized the car and detained the driver Sambit Singhray for investigation.

Girl found hanging; kin allege foul play

Malkangiri: A 15-year-old girl was found hanging from the ceiling of Shakti Sadan shelter home in Malkangiri sub-division Wednesday, raising suspicion over her death. The deceased, identified as Usha Biswas, hailed from MPV-81 village under Kalimela police limits in Malkangiri district. According to sources, Usha had eloped with a youth from Karimnagar, Andhra Pradesh, about seven months ago. They also tied knots later. However, her mother lodged a complaint with Kalimela police who traced and rescued Usha from Karimnagar and subsequently placed her at the government-run Shakti Sadan shelter home. During her stay, Usha had reportedly attempted to escape multiple times, according to Nityananda Pradhan, an official at the shelter home. She was found hanging from a rope inside one of the shelter's storage rooms Wednesday. Police reached the spot, seized the body and sent it for post-mortem. However, Usha's family members have alleged that she was murdered.

A physician leading language movement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 9: Many people live by their profession, but a few truly live for them. Among the latter is Sagar Ranjan Tripathy, a notable figure in Ganjam district, who exemplifies how one's profession and passion can converge. Despite being an Ayurvedic physician, Tripathy spearheads a language movement in the state for protection of the mother tongue.

Born in Lunighati Brahman Sasan under Polasara tehsil, Tripathy hails from a culturally enriched Odia family. His father, Krushna Chandra Tripathy, was a distinguished literary figure — a poet and author of repute. After completing his primary education in Dharakote and matriculation from Gopabandhu High School in Polasara, Tripathy pursued higher education at Kaviraj Ananta Tripathy Sharma Ayurveda College & Hospital (KATS). Since his early years, signs of his literary brilliance started showing up.

With a deep-rooted pride in his language and culture, Tripathy chose the path of an independent Ayurvedic practitioner rather than latching onto a government job. Today, he is not only a reputable Ayurvedic physician but also a recognised columnist and speaker across Odisha. His contribution to Odia language and culture has earned him numerous awards.

It was during various literary and cultural programmes that Tripathy first sensed the 'declining status of Odia language'. This realisation ignited in him a lifelong mission to protect and promote his mother tongue. In response, he launched a unique movement on the day of Pana Sankranti also known as Maha Vishuba Sankranti in 2016 — a



878-day silent black flag procession across Odisha, advocating for promotion of Odia language. This movement, which began in Berhampur in 2017, was spearheaded by Tripathy himself.

Asked whether his goals have been achieved, he said the previous government accepted the demand by enacting the Odia Language Act. Furthermore, an Odia university has been established at Satyabadi in Puri. While public awareness about language, culture and tradition is growing through various forums and committees, more remains to be done. Tripathy affirmed that the movement will continue until the goals are achieved.

For the past eight years, his linguistic crusade — now transformed into a personal quest — has made a significant impact. Be it honouring the heroes of Berhampur or advocating the designation of Utka Ashram as a heritage site, his commitment has been unwavering.

Tripathy firmly believes that while learning all languages is important, love for one's mother tongue is a fundamental duty. He hopes this movement, will inspire the younger generation.

In addition to his linguistic efforts, Tripathy is also a known figure in Kalinga Herbal Fair. His contribution to Ayurvedic medi-

Fresh flood maroons 17K in Balasore



Country boats are being used to travel from Kudamansingh to Routrapur under Baliapal block as Subarnarekha is in spate Wednesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal/Kalipada, July 9: As many as 17,000 people in 25 villages under four panchayats of Baliapal block in Balasore district were left marooned in floodwaters of Subarnarekha as the river witnessed third consecutive flood during the season so far.

The first two waves of flood claimed two lives. Due to the incessant rains caused by a low-pressure system in the upper catchment areas, the river's water level has been steadily rising for the last three days.

At Rajghat, the danger level for Subarnarekha is marked at 10.36 metres and the warning level is 9.45 metres. However, by 4pm Wednesday, the water level had already surpassed the warning level and was flowing at 10.05 metres. It is apprehend-

Continuous rainfall in upper reaches over the past few days, coupled with release of water from Galudih dam in Jharkhand, has led to a fresh flood in Subarnarekha

ed that if the rainfall does not stop and the water level crosses the danger mark then more villages might be inundated affecting over 30,000 residents.

Low-lying areas of Baliapal block have been submerged due to pressure on the open river embankment. Continuous rainfall in the upper reaches over the past few days, along with the release of water from Galudih dam in Jharkhand, has led to a fresh flood situation in Subarnarekha basin.

As a result, several villages in low-lying areas under four panchayats have been inundated. These include Bishnupur,

Nayabali, Ikadpal, Rasalpur, Rautarapur, Ramanagar and Rasalpur under Bishnupur panchayat; Talpada, Kulhachad, Lakhapal, Paljamkunda and Kalarui under Jamakunda panchayat; Talabaliapal, Sungamuhin, Kudamansingh, Athabatia and Gunapur under Baliapal panchayat; Chadabasta, Kalarui and Choudhurikuda under Madhupura panchayat; and Palachampe, Sharadharasahi, Chadabadhapal, Suryapur, and Kantabani under Asti panchayat.

Floodwaters have entered houses and fields, impacting normal life. As in previous

floods, water is flowing three feet above the road at Talbaliapal on Bishnupur-Baliapal road, cutting off road connectivity and isolating several villages.

The villages of Pancharukhi and Chaudharikuda in Keonjhar district have been completely cut off from the outer world after floodwaters rose up to two to three feet over the connecting road.

Residents were seen wading through the floodwaters to procure daily essentials. They were left distressed after boat services near the affected villages were suspended around noon due to a shortage of petrol.

In 2015 floods, two youths from Chaudharikud village drowned in the river, highlighting the region's vulnerability during monsoon seasons. Af-

ter that tragedy, the then Basta MLA Nityananda Sahoo visited the village and assured the construction of a Biju Setu (rural bridge). However, even a decade later, the promised bridge remains a distant dream.

The flooding has been attributed to the breached embankment of the Subarnarekha river near Kudumansingh. Knee-deep water continues to flow on the road connecting Baliapal and Panchrukhi to Chaudharikud village.

In an earlier incident, a fisherman from Bishnupur village lost his life after being swept away by the current. Despite repeated floods over the years, villagers still risk their lives by entering the swirling waters, as authorities have failed to provide any permanent solution.

Teacher rapes woman in Kendrapara

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalpara, July 9: A 39-year-old woman was allegedly raped by a teacher in an area under Jambu Marine police limits under this block in Kendrapara district, police said Wednesday.

The accused was identified as Ranjit Mandal, a teacher posted at a government school. Police detained Mandal after the survivor lodged a complaint in the police station Wednesday. A case (139/25) has been registered in this connection and an



investigation began.

A woman police officer also recorded the statement of the survivor under Section-180 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The survivor will further record her statement in the court of the magistrate Thursday.

Meanwhile, she has been rehabilitated at a short-stay home and a medical examina-

tion has been conducted on her at the Mahakalpara community health centre.

Jambu Marine police inspector in-charge (IIC) Soumya Ranjan Biswal said that an investigation has been launched and action will be taken against the accused as per norms.

Block education officer Kailash Chandra Dalei said he is yet to receive any complaint against the teacher. "Action will be taken against the accused teacher on the basis of government norms after receiving a complaint," he said.

Youth gets 10-year RI for rape

Kendrapara: The Ad-hoc Additional Sessions Judge (Fast Track Special Court) of Kendrapara Wednesday sentenced a youth to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) and imposed a fine of ₹10,000 for raping a mentally-challenged girl from his village. The court directed that if the convict fails to deposit the fine amount, he will have to undergo an additional one-month imprisonment. The accused, identified as Manas Kumar Samal of Paniola village under Kendrapara Sadar police limits, had repeatedly raped the girl in the absence of her father, who used to travel to Kolkata for livelihood. The incident came to light September 21, 2023, when the girl's father noticed unusual behaviour in his daughter. She was taken to the DHH, where doctors found her to be five months pregnant. The victim's father lodged an FIR with Kendrapara Sadar police September 26, 2023 following which the accused was arrested and forwarded to court. Fast Track Special Court Judge Tribikram Keshari Chinchara convicted the youth and awarded him the sentence.

भारतीय संसद
PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

राज्य सभा सचिवालय
RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS
EXAMINATION OF "CYBER CRIME - RAMIFICATIONS, PROTECTION AND PREVENTION"

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by **Dr. Radha Mohan Das Agrawal, M.P.**, Rajya Sabha is currently examining the subject "Cyber Crime - Ramifications, Protection and Prevention" focusing on various aspects such as legal frameworks to counter cyber crime; emerging cyber security threats; issues faced by individual victims and the redressal mechanisms for cyber crime; awareness and training for cyber crime prevention; preventive mechanisms against cyber financial frauds; prevalent globally accepted best practices to address the issue of cyber crime; amendment to the cyber related laws; and the necessary measures for overall prevention and protection from cyber crime.

2. The Committee solicits views/suggestions on the said subject in writing in Hindi and English only from individuals/organizations/institutions/experts which may be sent to **smt. Neelam Bhatt, Deputy Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Room No. 409, B-Block, Parliament House Annexe Extension, New Delhi - 110 001 (Tel. No. 011-23035783), (email: rsc-ha@sansad.nic.in)** within 15 days of publication of this advertisement. Those who are willing to appear before the Committee for oral evidence may indicate so in their Memorandum. However, the Committee's decision in this regard shall be final. The Memorandum submitted to the Committee will form part of the records of the Committee and would be treated as strictly confidential and may not be made public, as such an act would constitute breach of privilege of the Committee.

CBC-31202/11/0002/2526

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Request for Proposal for Selection of Design Consultant for Comprehensive Museum Design (Architectural and Exhibition Design) Services for **Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum**, New Delhi has been floated on 09 July 2025 by Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Interested bidders may see details on eprocure.gov.in.
Last date for bid submission is 01 August 2025.
CBC-09101/11/0010/2526

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Kalpana Parida, W/o. Sanjay Ku. Biswal, At: Lulai, P.O.: Lulai, P.S.: Nihal Prasad, Dist.: Dhenkanal, Odisha - 759016 state that ICSE 10th Class original statement of mark bearing TV No. 20085607 and pass certificate bearing TV No. 60085305 of my son Chiranjib Biswal which unique ID 7993045 issued by Loyola School, Bhubaneswar has been lost near Pingua Market (Dhenkanal) area on 03.07.2025 at about 11.00 A.M. and inspite of thorough search the same original documents could not be traced out. I request all to intimate me if found the same by any one.
Date: 09.07.2025
Dhenkanal
Kalpana Parida
At: Lulai, P.O.: Lulai
P.S.: Nihal Prasad
PIN - 759016
Mob. No.: 8895786057

भांडागारण विकास और विनियामक प्राधिकरण
भारत सरकार
एनसीयूआई भवन, चौथी मंजिल, 3, सिरि इंस्टीटुशनल एरिया, अगुस्त क्रान्ति मार्ग, हाउज खस, नईदिल्ली - 110016, दूरभाष: 49536496, 49092978

Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority
Government of India
NCUI Building, 4th Floor, 3, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg
Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016, Tel. No. 49536496, 49092978
एफ. नं. / File No. IT-CR/1/2024-IT/1229 दिनांक / Dated: 23.06.2025
Subject: Engagement of 01 Junior Consultant (Information Technology) in WDRA on Contractual Basis.
Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) is statutory body constituted under the Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2007 to implement the provisions of the Act.
2. Applications are invited for the position of 01 Junior Consultant (Information Technology) in WDRA on contractual basis initially for a period of one year. The period of engagement of the consultants can be further extended as per requirements.
3. Eligibility criteria, terms and conditions etc. for engagement of 01 Junior Consultant (Information Technology) is available on the website of the WDRA www.wdra.gov.in. Interested applicants, who fulfill the eligibility criteria, may submit their applications in the prescribed proforma in a sealed cover superscripted "Engagement of 01 Junior Consultant (Information Technology) in WDRA on contractual basis" within 30 days from the date of advertisement on WDRA website. The applications may be sent to the Assistant Director (HR) Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority, NCUI Building, 4th Floor, 3, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016. A copy of the advertisement shall also be published in the Newspapers/Employment News.

Lalit Kumar
(ललित कुमार)/Lalit Kumar
सहायक निदेशक (प्र. एवं वित्त एवं अनुबंध)/ Assistant Director (A&F&C)
CBC-08109/12/0005/2526

Each new dawn brings the possibility of a new progress.

THE MOTHER

Moment of Truth

On 10 July, the European Parliament will vote on whether to dismiss Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and her entire team. This motion of censure – the European Union’s equivalent of a no-confidence vote – is highly unusual. While such motions have never succeeded, they represent the bloc’s most powerful check on executive authority and have historically reshaped the political dynamics in Brussels.

The stakes could not be higher. As Europe negotiates a potential trade deal with US President Donald Trump’s administration and struggles to maintain its influence in the on-again, off-again Ukraine-Russia peace talks, the vote’s outcome could determine the EU’s strategic direction. It may finally compel von der Leyen to make a defining choice: govern from the political center or continue what some Europeans see as a drift toward the nationalist right. Von der Leyen’s choice could have profound implications for the bloc’s global relevance and credibility.

The censure motion, prompted by a recent court ruling criticizing von der Leyen’s refusal to disclose the text messages she exchanged with Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla during the COVID-19 vaccine negotiations, was initiated by right-wing and far-right groups. It also reflects broader concerns about her alleged bypassing of the EU Parliament and centralization of power within the Commission.

Although the motion has little chance of passing, it cannot be dismissed as mere posturing or, as von der Leyen put it, “another crude attempt to drive a wedge between our institutions, between the pro-European, pro-democratic forces in this House.” Ironically, the right-wing push to unseat von der Leyen has provided a platform for mainstream parties to air their own frustrations with her increasing willingness to accommodate far-right positions.

The three centrist parties that played a vital role in securing a second term for von der Leyen as Commission President – the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Renew Europe (formerly ALDE), and the Greens/European Free Alliance – have grown disillusioned with what they see as her abandonment of their shared political priorities. Although she pledged to govern from the center with these parties’ backing, her European People’s Party (EPP) has increasingly relied on support from the right.

This strategic pivot has led the EPP to undermine the European Green Deal by diluting corporate sustainability-reporting regulations and delaying the EU’s deforestation law. More recently, it has reportedly sought far-right support to secure key rapporteur appointments on two immigration laws that could make the bloc’s migration policies significantly more restrictive.

These shifts have left von der Leyen politically vulnerable. A Commission president caught between two incompatible parliamentary blocs threatens the EU’s ability to pursue a coherent political agenda.

Since its establishment in 1958, the European Parliament has held censure powers as a key instrument of democratic oversight. From the moment of its appointment, the European Commission is collectively accountable to the Parliament. When trust breaks down, Parliament retains the authority to impose the ultimate sanction.

Yet all 13 censure motions brought forward since the European Parliament’s creation have either been withdrawn or failed. This is partly due to the deliberately high threshold: two-thirds of votes cast, representing at least 361 members – an even higher bar than for electing the Commission president in the first place.

The far-reaching consequences of forcing the entire Commission to resign have traditionally dissuaded mainstream parties from endorsing such motions. More fundamentally, MEPs have long been guided by a sense of institutional loyalty, often prioritizing European unity over democratic accountability.

But limited use has not rendered the mechanism politically irrelevant. In parliamentary democracies around the world, opposition parties routinely use no-confidence votes to extract concessions from governing coalitions. While the EU’s version is more demanding, the underlying dynamic remains the same: opposition forces can create leverage even when success is out of reach.

It’s happened before. In 1996, Parliament established a committee of inquiry into the mad cow disease crisis. Although a subsequent censure motion was defeated, it paved the way for a “conditional censure” mechanism through which lawmakers gave the Commission six months to address specific concerns, using the threat of future action to secure concrete policy commitments.

Today, mainstream European parties find themselves in a surprisingly strong position to apply similar pressure. Without their continued support, von der Leyen cannot advance several major policy priorities: the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework budget negotiations, the implementation of the EU’s competitiveness agenda, a package of single-market reforms, and the European rearmament initiative, which requires unprecedented levels of fiscal coordination.

The Social Democrats, Liberals, and Greens in Parliament could use this moment to demand explicit commitments in exchange for their continued support. More importantly, they must force von der Leyen to choose between two irreconcilable political paths: governing with the centrist coalition that has defined EU policy for the past five decades, or continuing to court nationalist parties whose votes come with decidedly non-centrist policy strings attached.

With democratic institutions under pressure worldwide, Europe’s ability to self-correct matters far beyond its own borders. The question isn’t whether Parliament will remove von der Leyen – it won’t – but whether it will seize the opportunity to define the terms for responsible European governance.

Von der Leyen’s ongoing political ambiguity has become a strategic liability at a time when Europe’s allies need clarity. Above all, they must know whether they are engaging with a Commission committed to democratic values or one being shaped by nationalist actors who often prioritize the interests of Russia and the Trump administration. The 10 July vote will reveal whether European democracy has matured to the point where democratic accountability takes precedence over institutional loyalty, and whether the bloc is prepared to face today’s challenges with purpose and resolve.

The writer is Professor of European Union Law at HEC Paris and visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges and Natolin.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Bruhaspati Samal

THE STRENGTH OF INDIA POST LIES NOT IN REVENUE CHARTS, BUT IN PUBLIC FAITH. IT IS NOT DESIGNED TO GENERATE PROFITS BUT TO GENERATE ACCESS



Alberto Alemanno

From the moment of its appointment, the European Commission is collectively accountable to the Parliament. When trust breaks down, Parliament retains the authority to impose the ultimate sanction



Dhurjati Mukherjee

INDIA NEEDS TO GENERATE AT LEAST 8 MILLION JOBS EVERY YEAR OVER THE NEXT DECADE TO BECOME A DEVELOPED NATION BY 2047

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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

FOCUS PRIVATIZATION

DON'T CORPORATIZE TRUST

In the quiet village lanes of rural India, where even the reach of roads is uncertain, there exists one institution that has never failed to arrive—the post office. It may not bear the glitz of a private courier or the automation of a modern bank, but its presence is sacred. The red letter-box, the khaki-clad postman, and the familiar voice calling out names with letters from afar—this has been India Post for nearly 170 years. For millions, especially in remote and underprivileged areas, it is not merely a government department but a lifeline of emotion, memory, trust, and service. It is in this deeply emotional context that the recent statements by Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia have caused unrest among postal employees and concerned citizens.

On 2 July, Scindia, while addressing the Postal and Sorting Assistants, praised the spirit of “Dak Sewa, Jan Sewa”—rightly recognizing the Department of Posts as a service-oriented institution with a rich legacy of connecting India’s people. However, within days, in an interview published by The Times of India on 7 July, he made remarks that stand in sharp contrast. He proposed to transform India Post into a “profit centre” and announced a planned revamp of its six operational verticals: mail, international mail, parcel, postal life insurance, post office savings bank, and citizen-centric services. He also spoke about exploring the option of leasing certain post office buildings. These statements have sparked justified fears that the government is once again contemplating the corporatization of India Post under the broader ideological push for privatization, typical of the present regime.

This apprehension is not unfounded. The resemblance between Scindia’s current approach and the recommendations of the Task Force Committee headed by former Cabinet



At a time when the world is realizing the value of strong public institutions, India must not let one of its finest fade into a profit-first shadow

Secretary TSR Subramanian in 2014 is striking. The Task Force, constituted by the NDA government after coming to power, had strongly recommended restructuring India Post into six independent corporate units, essentially converting the department into a set of business enterprises. The rationale was to make India Post financially self-sustaining and efficient. However, the proposal met with countrywide protests by postal employees, trade unions, and other stakeholders, who viewed the corporatization plan as a threat to the department’s service mandate. Due to massive resistance and political sensitivity, the recommendations were shelved. Yet, they were never officially rejected, and their shadow seems to reappear in today’s policy language.

What makes Scindia’s position particularly curious is that he was also the Minister of Communications in the UP government in 2008 when Project Arrow was launched. That project, aimed at “Look and Feel Good” modernization of post offices, focused on computerization, improved customer interface, and dignified working environments, all without tampering with the core character of the department as a public service entity. It was reform without rupture. The current line of thinking, however, is more aggressive and aligned with a commercial mindset,

where profitability is seen as the goal and service is seen as a cost. This inversion of priorities is deeply problematic.

India Post is not just another government department—it is the largest postal network in the world, with over 1.6 lakh post offices, of which nearly 1.4 lakh are in rural India. Its geographical spread is unmatched, and its workforce, particularly the Gramin Dak Sevaks, are often the only state representatives seen in remote hamlets. To treat such a service giant as a commercial enterprise is to completely misread its purpose. The strength of India Post lies not in revenue charts, but in public faith. It is not designed to generate profits but to generate access. Expecting profitability from post offices in deserts, hilltops, tribal belts, or border villages is as unjust as asking a primary school in a forested region to sustain itself financially. These institutions exist not for gain, but for justice and equity. They are part of the social contract, not market competition.

Once the profit logic creeps in, deterioration of service becomes inevitable. When services are leased or privatized, decision-making is guided not by need, but by market viability. Fees rise, access shrinks, and accountability suffers. The rich get better services, the poor get neglect. This is not a hypothetical fear—it is a lived experience in various sectors that have un-

dergone privatization in India. If India Post is corporatized, it will lose its sovereign accountability, its inclusive spirit, and ultimately, its soul.

It is also important to ask—why this push for corporatization at all? If the goal is efficiency and outreach, the same can be achieved by empowering India Post through investment in training, technology, and better infrastructure. Instead of dismembering it into business units, the government should reinforce its public utility character. The IPPB, while an attempt at modernization, should remain under full government ownership with public welfare as its primary goal. Rather than leasing post office premises, the focus should be on utilizing them as digital service centres for the common citizen—offering everything from e-governance to financial services under one trusted roof.

The red box of India Post is not just a brand—it is a symbol of reliability across generations. The postman is not a vendor—he is a friend, a guardian, a silent messenger of the state. The letter he carries is not a product—it is emotion, hope, and memory. Any move that reduces this to a mere business transaction will not only erode service quality but irreparably damage the emotional bond India Post shares with its people. Rather, it should be nurtured, not monetized; reformed, not corporatized. If anything, its network and services should be expanded, and its employees respected as essential service providers, not as cost liabilities.

At a time when the world is realizing the value of strong public institutions, India must not let one of its finest fade into a profit-first shadow. Let India Post continue to be the department of the people—serving without conditions, reaching without profit, and delivering with care.

The writer is a service union representative and a columnist.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Incentive for employment creation

The Cabinet’s decision to roll out the Employment Linked Incentive scheme with an outlay of over ₹99,000 crore to create 3.5 crore jobs over the next two years, to be run by EPFO from this August is welcome. Job creation is a critical problem given that the workforce is increasing with every passing year in a country with a massive population.

Delving into the scheme, it needs to be stated that its focus is on the formal sector which, no doubt, needs attention. The decision to pay one month’s wage of ₹15,000 in two installments is fine but the limit prescribed i.e. up to a salary ceiling of ₹1 lakh should be reconsidered. It’s very much on the higher side and should have instead been a maximum of ₹50,000. Firms participating in the scheme will get a cash incentive of ₹3000 for each additional employee hired for two years. However, this should have been raised as it would help in garnering more employment.

Such an incentive scheme is necessary for the informal sector where conditions of workers and the meager salary they re-

ceive need urgent attention. It would have been better if the government had simultaneously announced some scheme for this sector as it makes a valuable contribution to the country’s economy and absorbs a large section of workforce.

It is also a fact that India needs to generate at least 8 million jobs every year over the next decade to stay on course for its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047. This was rightly pointed out by Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran while addressing the Columbia India Summit 2025, at Columbia University in April. Nageswaran underlined the imperative to increase job creation and the proportion of manufacturing in the GDP. He stressed that although India cannot dictate the international environment, it must work within its limitations to create a robust domestic growth trajectory conducive to creating more employment.

It is estimated that over 66% of India’s population is of working age. India’s median age is 29.5 years, which starkly contrasts with China’s 39.8 years and the UK’s 40.6 years. Between 2014

and 2024, India created 17.19 crore jobs, compared to the previous decade’s creation of just 2.9 crore jobs (2004-14). Notably 4.6 crore jobs were added in the year 2023-24 alone. Some initiatives of the government helped in reducing unemployment and increasing workforce participation. The unemployment rate fell from 6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24, while the labour force participation rate rose from 49.8% to 60.1% during the same period.

These figures offer little reassurance, as both unemployment and significant underemployment persist. Low wages remain a problem even for qualified candidates; for instance, most MBA or B.Tech graduates earn only ₹20,000-25,000 to start. Those relocating for work must cover living expenses from already modest salaries. The obvious reason for the low remuneration is the large number of candidates available in the market. The government may consider fixing an entry-level minimum salary for such candidates, joining the private sector.

For job creation, there is a need for the institutions to coordinate with industry and

reorient technical education as per their needs. Specialized skills in areas such as artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, electric mobility as also marine engineering, space technology etc. may help in garnering employment but that would not be sufficient to tackle the problem of job creation. India’s ambitious target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030 is good for the environment and this may become one of the biggest job generators. Likewise, the Indian space economy, valued today at \$8.4 billion, is supposed to reach \$44 billion by 2033 and would create thousands of specialised jobs, directly or indirectly. While private sector investments are called for in a big way, the thrust must be on labour-intensive cottage and small units and special incentives need to be given to them.

What is of equal importance is that India needs to transform its present education curriculum with special emphasis on skilled education, right from the school statute. More investment in education is required for candidates to get the requisite qualification to enter the job market.

INFA

Toothless regulator

Sir, This refers to “Cong slams govt, SEBI over inaction on Jane Street illegal profits,” **Orissa POST**, July 9. The shocking revelations of US-based Jane Street’s algorithmic manipulation of India’s equity and futures & options markets expose the glaring lapses of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). Being the capital market watchdog, SEBI failed to prevent the systematic abuse of algorithmic trading tools that enabled Jane Street to rake in illegal profits while destabilising the market ecosystem. The firm reportedly used high-frequency trading strategies to front-run orders, exploit latency differences, and distort prices—practices that went unchecked under regulator’s weak surveillance framework. The funds amassed through these means were swiftly routed out of the country, breaching capital control regulations. Meanwhile, small investors—lacking access to such sophisticated systems—suffered massive losses, eroding trust in the fairness of India’s financial markets. SEBI’s reactive stance and toothless enforcement mechanisms allowed foreign players to game the system with impunity. India needs a technologically empowered, proactive market regulator.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

A sustainable future

Sir, Every year on 10 July, Global Energy Independence Day is observed to honour the great scientist Nikola Tesla and spread awareness about reducing the use of fossil fuels. India has set big goals, such as reaching net-zero emissions by 2070 and getting 50% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. These targets were highlighted at India Energy Week 2025 in New Delhi, where delegates from over 120 countries joined. India also announced a major plan to produce five million metric tons of green hydrogen every year by 2030 and is focusing on biofuels, ethanol-blended fuel, and cleaner transportation. Along with clean energy, India is also developing its traditional energy sources to meet its growing needs. Through the Open Acreage Licensing Program, the country is allowing new oil and gas exploration. With steady progress in nuclear power and strong international partnerships, India is becoming a role model for other developing countries by showing how clean energy, technology, and good policies can together create a sustainable future.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD



1,209 elephants died in Assam during 2000-2023

Electrocution emerged as the leading cause of human-induced mortality, accounting for 209 elephant deaths during the 23-year period, the Wildlife Institute of India report released recently says



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, July 9: Human-elephant conflicts in Assam have claimed over 1,400 lives during 2000-2023, while 1,209 pachyderms died in the state during the same period with majority 626 fatalities due to anthropogenic activities, a Wildlife Institute of India (WII) report has said.

Electrocution emerged as the leading cause of human-induced mortality, accounting for 209 elephant deaths during the 23-year period, the report released recently said.

The other major causes of unnatural death of pachyderms over the period were accidental deaths (127), various other anthropogenic stressors (97), train collisions (67), poaching (55), poisoning (62), retaliatory killings (5) and vehicle collisions (4).

Of the 583 fatalities due to natural causes, 'natural deaths' accounted for the maximum number of elephant deaths at 344 which includes old age, heart attacks and stillbirths, drowning, struck by lightning, falling from hills, etc.

Territorial fights accounted for 81 deaths, and unknown factors resulting from natural causes led to 158 deaths between 2000-23, the report said.

ADULT MALES, THE ECOLOGICAL KEYSTONES OF ELEPHANT POPULATION, ARE THE MOST AFFECTED BY ANTHROPOGENIC FACTORS, PARTICULARLY ELECTROCUTION AND RETALIATORY KILLINGS

THIS CAN THREATEN THE LONG-TERM STABILITY OF ELEPHANT POPULATIONS IN THE AREA, AS MALES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES, GENE FLOW AND MAINTAINING HEALTHY HERD DYNAMICS

Division-wise, the highest number of elephant fatalities were from Nagaon Territorial, Sonitpur West, Dhanasiri and Karbi Anglong East.

Adult males, the ecological keystones of elephant population, are the most affected by anthropogenic factors, particularly electrocution and retaliatory killings.

This can threaten the long-term stability of elephant populations in the area, as males play a crucial role in social structures, gene flow and maintaining healthy herd dynamics, the report noted.

The expansion of railway tracks and poorly maintained power lines, illegal use of electricity from distribution lines for fencing have contributed significantly to elephant

deaths, it added.

During the same period of 2000 to 2023, 1,806 human-elephant conflict incidents were recorded in the state, including 1,468 deaths and 337 injuries, the report said.

The division-wise analysis revealed that Sonitpur West (110 deaths, 92 injuries) recorded the highest number of incidents, followed by Goalpara (175 deaths), Udalguri (168 deaths, 34 injuries), Sonitpur East (156 deaths, 21 injuries), and Golaghat (110 deaths, 92 injuries).

Over the years, 527 villages were affected by human-elephant conflict, with Goalpara reporting the maximum number of impacted villages (80), followed by Sonitpur West (53), Sonitpur East (51), and Udalguri (39).

The seasonal distribution of incidents revealed the highest number of cases during the monsoon season. Incidents involving male victims were significantly higher across all seasons, the report said.

To minimise elephant mortality, the report underscored the urgent need for holistic conservation strategies that integrate habitat restoration, conflict mitigation and infrastructure modification.

Strengthening human-elephant coexistence through community engagement, habitat connectivity restoration and improved policy interventions are essential to ensuring the long-term survival of elephant populations in the region.

Collaborative efforts among Forest departments, training officials in advanced technologies, regular training programmes for railways and forest department officials on emerging technologies will improve response efficiency and coordination, the report said.



People use a banana raft to travel as they shift to a safer place from a flood-affected area, at Dighal Jarani village in Hojai district, Assam

PTI PHOTO

Bengal para teachers to post financial demands on CM's social media wall

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 9: 'Para-teachers Oikyo Manch', a platform of part-time contractual teachers in state-run primary and upper primary schools, Wednesday announced that they would post their demands for rise in pay scale in the wall of the official social media page of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Convenor of the representative apex platform of para-teachers Bhagirath Ghosh in a statement said a 'para teacher' gets Rs 10,000 at the primary level and Rs 13,000 at the upper primary level with which it is impossible to sustain a family having no other earning members.

He said as part of 'Mukhyo Mantrike Bolun' (tell the CM) programme they will write their demands for rise in pay scale on the wall of the facebook page of CM.

"From today to July 11 we



will write on the facebook page of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who will certainly consider our just demands. Despite working for hours in an educational institution and shouldering so much academic responsibilities in many primary-upper primary schools, we are being neglected," Ghosh said.

He said the association mem-

bers will humbly request the CM to consider their demands "with a humane approach."

"After several demonstrations, sit-ins, fast and processions with begging bowls in past years, there has been no increase in our salary for seven years while government drivers and other contractual staff are getting salary as per the state notification March 1,

2024. With our back to the wall, we are now forced to directly approach the CM through social media to draw the attention of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO)," Ghosh told PTI.

Para teachers are contractual employees working under projects like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and after the project winds up they can be engaged under specific terms and conditions on a case-by-case basis.

They require a minimum of 12th grade pass and some form of teacher training like D EL, Ed or BED.

A school education department official said the government is sympathetic to their demands but there is little scope in hiking the allowance considering the nature of their job.

"We have ensured that a para teacher after working for 10 years at least will receive Rs 1 lakh upon reaching 60 years of age," he added.

Activists seek urgent dredging of Kolkata lake

KOLKATA: A group of environmental activists Wednesday urged the West Bengal government to dredge the Rabindra Sarobar in south Kolkata and map the area to protect its rich biodiversity. The 104-year-old manmade lake covers an area of 73 acre. It is surrounded by 119 acre of green cover, which is home to various flora and fauna. In a letter to Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA), the custodian of the lake, Save Rabindra Sarobar Forum member Somendra Mohan Ghosh said that mapping the water body and its surrounding green cover would help track changes over time, enabling authorities to prevent encroachments. Referring to an earlier directive of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to submit an action taken report by September 2 on steps to save the rich biodiversity of the lake, the forum said scientific dredging using modern equipment was urgently needed to effectively clean the lake.

EVICION DRIVE IN ASSAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhubri (Assam), July 9: Alleged encroachers damaged excavators and tried to attack police personnel during an eviction drive in Assam's Dhubri district Tuesday, prompting security forces to resort to a baton charge to disperse the mob, officials said.

Altogether 1,069 families were living in three revenue villages where the anti-encroachment drive was being carried out, a district official said.

Police had to resort to baton charge as the situation

'ENCROACHERS' DAMAGE EXCAVATORS

threatened to turn volatile around noon, though the rest of the operation was carried out in a peaceful manner with heavy security deployment and in the presence of top civil and police officers.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma affirmed that the government will continue to clear encroached land so that it can be used for public purposes.

"About 90 per cent of the encroachers had already left the place. The eviction had to be carried out for only 10 per cent people...our objective is that all encroached land in the state will be cleared so

that it can be used for public good," Sarma told reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Tamulpur.

He added that another eviction drive to clear reserve forest land in Goalpara district will be carried out Thursday. Dhubri District Commissioner (DC) Dibakar Nath said about 3,500 bighas of land under Chapar circle office of Bilasipara sub-district is being cleared during the drive.

"An ex gratia of Rs 50,000 to each family who were living here without land rights has been sanctioned. We have already distributed

350 cheques and more are in process," he said.

Nath said some land is occupied by people with land 'patta' and they will be provided with compensation as per norms.

On the situation turning violent, the DC claimed that it was the result of "some misunderstanding" as there was "some delay in an ambulance reaching the site and rumours" were doing rounds.

The situation was promptly brought under control by police and the eviction drive continued without further disruptions, Nath added.

Rains elevate Kolkata's air quality by several notches



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 9: Heavy rains, which lashed Kolkata for the past two days, improved air quality by several notches as the pollutants got cleansed in the showers, a senior West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBP-CB) official said Wednesday.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) was reported 'good' in several pockets of the metropolis.

While the AQI was recorded 26 PM 2.5 at the Rabindra Sarobar automated air monitoring station, it was 60 (PM 2.5) at Ballygunje and 50 at Jadavpur at 6 pm of Wednesday in the southern parts, the official said.

In Victoria Memorial area, the AQI was 44 while it was recorded 51 in Rabindra Bharati University and 42 in Bidhanagar air station in northern parts of the city.

In Botanical Gardens air monitoring station, across the river Bhagirathi in Howrah city, a known pollution hotspot, the AQI was 45 during the same time.

While the AQI within 50 is interpreted as 'good' in the environment parlance - free and fresh from toxins - it is considered moderate between 51-100.

Good AQI is considered satisfactory with minimal or no health risks while AQI in moderate zone is overall acceptable

barring those with respiratory conditions.

The rains cleansed pollutants in the air by reducing pollution level by several notches and elevated air quality as a result bringing it to 'good' or 'moderate' level.

The AQI was 'poor' between June 26 and July 2 when the city was gripped by hot and humid conditions before the onset of monsoon interrupted by sporadic rains, the official said.

In environment parlance the AQI is classified as poor from 101-150 indicating significant air pollution that can cause breathing discomfort for most people, especially those with pulmonary issues, particularly children and elderly persons and prolonged exposure may lead to potential health risks.

From July 2 to July 7, the AQI turned satisfactory reading between 51-100 limits in most places and between 30-50 in three others, he said.

The AQI hovered between 26-60 across different air monitoring stations July 8.

Heavy rain lashed several southern districts of West Bengal, including Kolkata on that day.

"If there are few more spells of rain the AQI will remain so or further slide by a few notches," the official said.

TURNING UNCERTAINTY INTO ENTERPRISE

Rural youth lead change in Assam's Karbi Anglong

Launched in July 2024, the project 'Riso Ejang' is currently working across six villages in the hill district, with the goal to empower local youth (aged 18-35) to envision and work towards financially independent, socially conscious and ecologically sustainable futures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Diphu (Assam), July 9: Once shy and uncertain, Maibising, Barnabas, Jyotsna, and Hardward are now emerging as changemakers in Assam's remote Karbi Anglong hills — equipped not with formal degrees or financial capital, but with purpose, resilience, and a strong sense of community. These four youth are part of a transformative grassroots initiative called Riso Ejang, which is nurturing a new generation

of rural entrepreneurs determined to shape a better future for themselves and their communities.

Launched in July 2024, Riso Ejang — meaning "Let's Begin" in the local language — operates under the broader initiative Youth Engagement towards Financial Prosperity and Self-Actualisation. The programme is spearheaded by Dhriiti — The Courage Within, an NGO committed to fostering entrepreneurship and micro-enterprises among India's youth.

In Karbi Anglong, the initiative is helping local youth (aged 18-35) turn ambition into action by aligning entrepreneurship with the social, ecological, and cultural realities of the region. "We aim to ignite a new wave of youth-led change in Karbi Anglong," said Nidhi Arora, co-founder of Dhriiti. "We believe the Entre Leaders emerging from this journey will not only create livelihoods for themselves and others, but also become catalysts of resilience — strengthening their communities through entrepreneurship and enterprise."



The programme's first year focused on identifying young people across six villages with leadership and entrepreneurial potential. These individuals were then trained through an intensive orientation and four residential training sessions that combined skill-building, exposure visits, and mentoring. Now, each Entre Leader is paying it forward by mentoring peers in their communities, collectively reaching over 70 youth through local youth groups.

Take Maibising, for instance. A youth leader from Chowkihola, he describes the programme


as a gateway to growth. "A defining moment was visiting Nepal," he shared. "It broadened my perspective and deepened my appreciation for cross-border collaboration and community-led development."

Barnabas Singnar from Koilamati echoed a similar transformation. "One of the most inspiring visits was to Mrititika, where I saw how mud could be transformed into beautiful jewelry. It taught me the power of tradition, creativity, and the importance of financial discipline."

Jyotsna, also from Koilamati, once a shy young woman who had never stepped outside her



The biggest help from the BJP members of Parliament would be to get special permission under Forest Clearance Act to the state for allotment of forest land to disaster-hit families and the state government would consider allotting them such land



SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HP CM

The roots of Buddhist tradition are very deep in Chhattisgarh, and the state government is moving on the path of development by assimilating the message of love, peace and compassion of Lord Buddha



VISHNU DEO SAI | CHHATTISGARH CM

No cabinet reshuffle is on the cards. Myself and the chief minister are meeting central ministers to discuss various state issues



D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

District courts in HP receive bomb threats

Shimla/ Nahan (HP): District courts in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla, Kullu and Nahan Wednesday received bomb threats via emails, police said. Authorities swung into action and the premises of district courts in Shimla, Nahan, Kullu and Rampur were immediately evacuated, they said. Bomb and dog squads were deployed and a detailed inspection of the court buildings and surrounding areas is being conducted, the police said. So far, no explosives or suspicious items have been found, they said. Shimla SP Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told PTI that emails threatening to blow up court premises in several places, including Shimla and Rampur, were received Wednesday. Preventative actions are being taken, and police teams headed by DSP-level officers are on the spot, he added.

2 labourers die during hospital maintenance

New Delhi: Two labourers fell unconscious and died while carrying out maintenance work at a private hospital in west Delhi's Paschim Vihar, police said Wednesday. The incident happened at Action Balaji Hospital Tuesday, they said, adding that those killed have been identified as Uttar Pradesh natives, Birjesh (26) and Vikram (30). According to the preliminary investigation, the two labourers had fallen unconscious while working on the maintenance of a carbon filter system inside the hospital premises, they said.

Delhi court extends Rana's judicial custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday extended the judicial custody of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana till August 13. Special Judge Chander Jit Singh passed the order after Rana was produced before it through video conference after expiry of his judicial custody granted earlier.

Meghalaya: Stepfather impregnates minor

Shillong: A 38-year-old man was arrested in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district for allegedly raping his stepdaughter and impregnating her, police said Wednesday. The accused was arrested from a village in Ri-Bhoi district on Tuesday night. He was hiding there since his wife registered a complaint with the police July 1, they said.



The BJP government has failed to provide adequate employment, with over 30 lakh vacancies lying unfilled across various departments of the Government of India and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | AICC GENERAL SECY

GOVT TO PROCURE 1,500 MORE HANDHELD X-RAYS TO UPSCALE FIGHT AGAINST TB

To further strengthen the fight against tuberculosis, the Union Health Ministry will soon procure 1,500 more handheld X-ray machines to facilitate large-scale screening and early detection of cases, official sources said



Vande Bharat, Chenab Bridge take spotlight at World Expo '25 in Osaka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: Vande Bharat and Chenab Bridge have emerged as a star attraction at the ongoing World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, drawing enthusiastic crowds and high praise from visitors for its remarkable journey of modernisation and technological innovation, the Railway Ministry Wednesday said.

"Held at Yumeshima, an artificial island on Osaka's waterfront, the World Expo 2025 opened its doors April 13 and will continue till October 13, welcoming millions of visitors from across the globe. Amid the vibrant international exhibits, the Indian Pavilion, particularly the section dedicated to Indian Railways, has become a focal point of admiration," the ministry said in a press note.



"In the showcase, the magnificent Chenab Bridge, the world's highest Railway bridge soaring across the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir; the iconic Anji Khad Bridge, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge in the challenging Himalayan terrain; the state-of-the-art Vande Bharat Express trains, known for their speed and passenger comfort; and many more latest advancements in electric locomotives underscore India's commitment to sustainable mobility," it added.

According to officials, several Japanese visitors gathered around the Indian Railways exhibit, keenly listening to presentations about the genesis of one of the world's largest Rail networks and its incredible transformation over the decades.

"Visitors have praised not only the scale of the projects but also India's vision of integrating modern infrastructure with environmental consciousness," the press note said.

The theme for the Expo 2025 is "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", with three sub-themes namely Saving Lives, Empowering Lives and Connecting Lives, beautifully aligns with the Indian Railways' vision of delivering safe, inclusive and sustainable transportation, it added.

Shubhanshu Shukla grows moong, methi in Space

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: In the final leg of his space sojourn, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla turned into a farmer, taking photos of 'moong' and 'methi' seeds sprouting in petri dishes and inserting them into a storage freezer on the International Space Station (ISS) as part of a study on how microgravity influences germination and early plant development.

Shukla and his fellow Axiom-4 astronauts have spent 12 days on the orbital lab and they are expected to return to Earth any day after July 10, depend-

ing on the weather conditions off the Florida coast.

NASA is yet to announce a date for the undocking of the Axiom-4 mission from the space station. The duration of the Axiom-4 mission docked to the ISS is up to 14 days.

"I am so proud that ISRO has been able to collaborate with national institutions all over the country and come up with some fantastic research which I am doing on the station for all the scientists and researchers. It is exciting and a joy to do this," Shukla said in an interaction with Axiom Space Chief Scientist Lucie Low Wednesday.



The sprouts experiment is led by two scientists – Ravikumar Hosamani of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and Sudheer Siddapureddy

of the Indian Institute of Technology, Dharwad.

Once returned to Earth, the seeds will be cultivated over several generations to exam-

AI plane crash preliminary report in two days: AAIB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) told a parliamentary committee Wednesday that it will make public its preliminary report on the Ahmedabad plane crash in a couple of days, sources said.

AAIB Director General G V G Yugandhar told the panel that it will upload the report within 30 days of one of the worst aviation disasters in recent decades and the first crash involving a Boeing Dreamliner.

Concerns over aviation safety dominated the proceedings of the parliamentary committee headed by JD(U) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, as over 97 representatives covering almost the entire gamut of the sector, including official agencies, airlines and other stakeholders, shared their views with parliamentarians in the day-long meeting.

Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft operating flight AI 171 en route to London Gatwick had crashed into a medical hostel complex soon after take-off from Ahmedabad June 12, killing at least 260 people, including 241 persons aboard.

The sources also said that no preliminary report has been submitted by AAIB to the civil aviation ministry. Under the ICAO norms, AAIB can submit a preliminary report within 30 days of the accident to it. Jha described the meeting as "very



extensive and thorough", noting that every stakeholder participated in the discussion and answered queries of the panel's members. Officials told that panel that this is the first time the black box of a crashed plane is being investigated in India, noting that they have shored up their technological know-how in recent times and are consulting foreign experts, including those from Boeing, as required.

The US government has helped with the platform needed to decipher the data, and the aviation secretary had led the coordination efforts.

They said the black box and voice recorder of the ill-fated aircraft were intact, and the data was being investigated.

Official sources said that the MPs were of the view that the regulator and the safety infra-

structure have not kept pace with the growth of the country's aviation sector, noting that Air Traffic Control oversees nearly 30 flights on a radar compared to the norm of eight to 10 in many places.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has over half of its sanctioned strength vacant, they added.

Some MPs faulted Air India and official agencies for not being communicative enough with the public following the Ahmedabad crash to restore their confidence.

Asked about the impact of the crash, which was followed by several operational incidents, on the aviation sector, officials said the domestic traffic fell by over eight per cent, but international traffic fell by less than a per cent, the sources said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: The Supreme Court has initiated a suo motu case over the issue of investigation agencies summoning lawyers who offer opinion or represent parties in cases to examine if they can be put to notice.

A bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and N V Anjaria will hear the matter July 14, when the court reopens after the summer break.

The action comes in the wake of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoning a couple of senior lawyers – Arvind Datar and Pratap Venugopal.

However, the ED June 20 directed its investigating officers not to issue summons to any advocate in a money laundering investigation being carried out against their client, adding that exception to this rule can only be made after "approval" by the agency's director.

The central probe agency, tasked with combating money laundering crimes, issued the circular for the guidance of its field formations, stating that "no summons" should be issued to any advocate in violation of Section 132 of the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023.

"Further, if any summons needs to be issued under the exceptions carved out in proviso to Section 132 of the BSA, 2023, the same shall be issued only

with the prior approval of the director, ED," the agency said.

The counsel had offered legal advice to Care Health Insurance Limited on the employee stock ownership plan given to Rashmi Saluja, former chairperson of Religare Enterprises.

The summons were condemned by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCORA), calling it a "disturbing trend" that struck at the very foundations of the legal profession.

The bar bodies had urged the chief justice of India to take suo motu cognisance of the matter.

On June 25, a bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh observed the legal profession was an integral component of the process of administration of justice and allowing police or probe agencies to directly summon lawyers for advising clients would seriously undermine the autonomy of legal profession and was a "direct threat" to the independence of justice administration.

The bench had framed a couple of questions in the matter.

"Some of the questions which arise for consideration are: (1) when an individual has an association with a case only as a lawyer advising the party, could the investigating agency/prosecuting agency/police directly summon the lawyer for questioning?" the bench asked.

'China building a ticking water bomb for India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: China's mega dam being built near the Arunachal Pradesh border will be a ticking "water bomb", an existential threat and a bigger issue than anything else apart from the military threat, the state's Chief Minister Pema Khandu has said.

In an interview to PTI VidEOS Tuesday, Khandu said the world's largest dam project on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, the Tibetan name for Brahmaputra, is a matter of grave concern as China is not a signatory to the international water treaty that could have forced it to abide by international norms.



"The issue is that China cannot be trusted. No one knows what they might do," said Khandu in the interview at PTI headquarters. "Setting aside the military threat from China, it seems to me that this is a far bigger issue than anything else. It is going to cause an existential threat to our tribes and our livelihoods. It is quite serious because China could

even use this as a sort of 'water bomb'," he said. The dam project, known as Yarlung Tsangpo dam, was announced after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited the border region in 2021.

According to reports, China approved the construction of the USD 137 billion, five-year project in 2024. It is projected to produce 60,000 MW of power, making it the world's largest hydropower dam. Had China signed the international water treaty, Khandu said, there would have been no problem because it would be mandatory to release a certain amount of water downstream for the basin, for aquatic and marine life.

STARLINK GETS THE ALL-CLEAR FOR INDIA LAUNCH

The Starlink Gen1 Constellation is a global constellation with 4,408 satellites orbiting Earth at an altitude between 540 km and 570 km, and is capable of providing an approximately 600-GBPS throughput over India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: India's space regulator INSPACE has granted a licence to Elon Musk-run Starlink to offer space-based internet services in the country.

"Indian National Space Authorisation and Promotion Centre (INSPACE) granted authorisation to M/s Starlink Satellite Communications Private Limited, New Delhi (SSCPL) for

enabling provisioning of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites constellation, namely Starlink Gen1. The authorisation will enable SSCPL to provide satellite communication services in India," a statement from the space sector regulator said.

The authorisation is valid for a five-year period from the date of authorisation (July 8) or the end of the operational life of the Gen1 constellation – whichever is earlier.



The rollout of services is subject to the stipulated regulatory provisions and the requisite clearances, approvals and licences from the relevant government departments.

The Starlink Gen1 Constel-

lation is a global constellation with 4,408 satellites orbiting Earth at an altitude between 540 km and 570 km, and is capable of providing an approximately 600-GBPS throughput over India.

Starlink had been eyeing the Indian market since 2022 for launching commercial operations. Last month, Starlink became the third company after Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communications to get a licence from the Department of Telecommunications to provide satellite internet services in India. The companies that have received the licence would, however, have to wait a tad longer for commercial satcom spectrum as the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has just recently sent its recommendations on pricing and terms and conditions to the government for its consideration. The players will be

able to start their services after the allocation of radio-wave frequencies. Typically, even before the commercial spectrum, the trial spectrum is required to test and verify the systems and processes on security parameters to demonstrate that all norms and requirements are being complied with.

Starlink is a satellite internet service developed by SpaceX – the American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation company founded by Musk in 2002. It provides high-speed, low-latency broadband internet worldwide using satellite technology and is aptly described by some as broadband beamed from the skies.

of the day

quote

The rupee opened weak near 85.90 against the dollar but recovered slightly after initial losses. Ongoing trade deal negotiations and tariff delay extensions provided some relief, helping the rupee stabilise and limit further downside near the 86.00 mark. The rupee is expected to trade within a range of 85.30 to 86.20

JATEEN TRIVEDI | VP RESEARCH ANALYST, LKP SECURITIES

Gold prices dropped below USD 3,300 per ounce as markets balanced US interest rate cut prospects with new trade risks

RAHUL KALANTRI | VICE-PRESIDENT COMMODITIES, MEHTA EQUITIES

Free trade agreements (FTAs) with developed markets such as Australia, UAE and UK will provide greater market access for the domestic agri sector

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

IndiGo Ventures raises ₹450cr

Mumbai: IndiGo Ventures, the corporate venture capital arm of domestic carrier IndiGo, Monday announced the first close of its maiden fund at Rs 450 crore. Besides, the company also announced the first investment in Hyderabad-based aerospace startup Jeh Aerospace, without disclosing the amount. Jeh will deploy the investment to scale its advanced digital manufacturing infrastructure, enhance its AI-driven production optimization and deep supply chain integration platforms, and attract engineering and production talent, it said. Launched in August last year with approval from SEBI to raise Rs 600 crore, IndiGo Ventures is focused on investing in early-stage startups driving innovation in aviation and allied sectors.

TPSDI launches centre to skill professionals

New Delhi: Tata Power Skill Development Institute, an initiative of Tata Power Wednesday launched a centre in the national capital to skill professionals in the solar energy sector. The centre was inaugurated by Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and Tata Power CEO and MD Praveer Sinha. Green Energy Skill Centre will impart training in renewable energy technologies, viz solar PV systems, including installation, commissioning, operations and maintenance, energy storage, pumped hydro storage, and electrical safety to prepare a future-ready green energy workforce for the country's energy transition.

Airtel selects Ericsson core for fixed wireless access

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel and Ericsson Wednesday announced a new agreement to support the telco's rollout of Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services in India with core network portfolio, deepening a long-standing partnership between the two companies. The deployment will enhance Airtel core capability and capacity for FWA, thereby elevating customer experience for Airtel FWA users, according to a release. As part of this agreement, Ericsson is introducing a new platform which will support high capacity FWA with a smaller footprint and better total cost of ownership. The agreement - the financial terms of which were not disclosed - builds on a partnership that spans over 25 years and covers multiple generations of mobile technology.

India is now exporting fruits and vegetables to different countries. We can increase our exports from Rs 4 lakh crore to Rs 20 lakh crore (by focusing) on food processing, better quality of packaging and branding

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

CRA regulations revised

Credit rating agencies (CRAs) may undertake rating of financial instruments, which fall under the purview of any other FSR, provided it shall comply with the regulatory framework, said SEBI

New Delhi, Jul 9: Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Wednesday proposed permitting credit rating agencies (CRAs) to undertake the rating of financial instruments that may come under other financial sector regulators, even if they have not issued any rating-related guidelines.

Under the current CRA regulations, credit rating agencies are only allowed to rate securities that are listed or proposed to be listed on a stock exchange recognised by SEBI.

However, the regulations do not stop CRAs from rating products, securities, or issuers if such ratings are done under the guidelines of another financial sector regulator or any authority specified by SEBI.

In its consultation paper, SEBI proposed that CRAs may be permitted to undertake activities that are not regulated by it, subject to certain conditions.

"CRA may undertake rating of financial instruments, which fall under the purview of any other FSR, provided it shall comply with the regulatory framework, if any, as may be specified by the respective FSR for the matters relating to policy, eligibility criteria, risk management, investor grievance or dispute handling mechanism, inspection, enforcement and claims," SEBI proposed.

The regulator suggested that CRAs may undertake only those rating activities that are fee-based and non-fund-based. Additionally, such activities should be carried out strictly on an arm's length basis through one or more Separate Business Units (SBUs), which should be



segregated by a Chinese Wall and ring-fenced from SEBI-regulated functions.

The regulator further stated that CRAs should ensure the transfer of all non-SEBI-regulated activities to these separate business units within six months from the date of notification of the proposal.

These SBUs would also be required to establish distinct grievance redressal mechanisms, including escalation procedures, which are separate from those applicable to SEBI-regulated activities.

Moreover, CRAs should maintain independent records within the SBU for such non-SEBI-regulated activities, and the personnel engaged in these functions must be distinct from those involved in SEBI-regulated operations.

However, crossing the Chinese Wall may be permitted for staff, subject to due procedures approved by the Board of Directors and proper documentation. Notably, this restriction does not apply to key managerial personnel.

The regulator also clarified that the minimum net worth requirement of a CRA, as specified under the CRA Regulations, should be protected from any impact arising out of non-SEBI-regulated activities.

A CRA will be required to

disclose on its website the list of activities that are not regulated by SEBI, along with a disclaimer clearly stating that SEBI's investor protection mechanisms will not apply to any grievances or disputes related to such activities. This disclosure should also be prominently displayed in rating reports associated with non-SEBI-regulated activities.

Prior to undertaking any such activities, the CRA should provide an upfront written disclosure to all relevant stakeholders, including clients, beneficiaries, and counterparties. This disclosure should be included in all engagement letters, contracts, agreements, and business communications, indicating that the activities do not fall within SEBI's regulatory framework.

Also, stakeholders should confirm, at the time of engagement, that they understand the nature of the activities, associated risks, and the non-availability of SEBI's investor protection mechanisms.

For existing and ongoing arrangements related to non-SEBI-regulated activities, CRAs should make the necessary disclosures and obtain acknowledgements from stakeholders. A compliance report on this should be submitted to SEBI within six months of the notification.

DRAFT GUIDELINES TO INCENTIVISE DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF RARE EARTH

Consultations are underway to draft guidelines for incentivising production of rare earth minerals and magnets to help India reduce dependence on China for these critical inputs used in sectors including telecom and EV, according to sources. Ministries of heavy industries and mines are working on a scheme to boost domestic production of rare earth magnets and minerals. The scheme will be for both private sector as well as PSUs



Markets close lower

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 9: Stock markets closed lower Wednesday due to selling in IT and oil & gas shares as investors turned cautious ahead of the start of earnings season and mixed global trends.

Dragged by late selling, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 176.43 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 83,536.08. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 46.40 points or 0.18 per cent to end at 25,476.10.

From the Sensex firms, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Bharat Electronics and ICICI Bank were among the laggards. Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement and Power Grid were among the gainers.

US has extended the suspension of its April 2 reciprocal tariffs until August 1. Shares of mining giant Vedanta dropped 3.38 per cent to end at Rs 440.80 on the BSE.

The BSE SmallCap gauge climbed 0.45 per cent while mid-cap index dipped 0.05 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, oil & gas dropped the most by 1.41 per cent. Metal (1.41 per cent), realty (1.40 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.80 per cent), teck (0.71 per cent) and IT (0.67 per cent) were among the losers.

FMCG, auto, consumer durables, services, consumer discretionary and financial services were the gainers.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled higher while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower. European markets were trading higher.

US markets ended on a flat note Tuesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.51 per cent to \$70.51 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 26.12 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

EQUITY MF INFLOW RISES



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: The net inflow into equity mutual funds surged 24 per cent to Rs 23,587 crore in June, reversing the declining trend of the last five months, driven by strong equity market performance across segments, data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed Wednesday.

Also, the latest fund infusion by investors marks the 52nd consecutive month of net inflows into the segment. Additionally, a healthy growth was witnessed in SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) inflow at Rs 27,269 crore during the month under review, an increase from Rs 26,688 crore in May.

According to the data, equity-oriented mutual funds saw an inflow of Rs 23,587 crore in June, way higher than the Rs 19,013 crore inflow seen in May.

This was the first increase in net equity fund inflows after five straight months of decline.

The net inflows continuously declined from Rs 41,156 crore in December to Rs 39,688 crore in January, Rs 29,303 crore in February, Rs 25,082 crore in March, and Rs 24,269 crore in April. Prior to this downward trend, inflows stood at Rs 35,943 crore in November.

While most equity segments posted healthy inflows in June, equity-linked savings schemes (ELSS) were the only

category to record a net outflow of Rs 556 crore.

Within equity fund categories, Flexi Cap Funds recorded the highest inflows in June, attracting Rs 5,733 crore. In addition, Small Cap Funds (Rs 4,024 crore) and Mid Cap Funds (Rs 3,754 crore) registered robust inflows. Besides, Large Cap Funds saw net inflows of Rs 1,694 crore.

Overall, the mutual fund industry experienced an infusion of over Rs 49,000 crore in June, higher than Rs 29,000 crore in May. The inflow has lifted the industry's assets under management to a record Rs 74.4 lakh crore as of June from Rs 72.2 lakh crore at the end of May.

"This growth (in AUM) continues to be powered by strong retail participation and the steady rise in SIP inflows," Venkat Chalsani, Chief Executive at Amfi, said.

Gold ETFs witnessed a sharp uptick in investor interest in June, posting net inflows of Rs 2,081 crore, making it the highest monthly inflow since January. This was in comparison to an inflow of Rs 292 crore in May.

On the other hand, debt funds registered a net outflow of Rs 1,711 crore in the month under review compared to Rs 15,908 crore outflow in May. Before that, the funds registered a staggering inflow of Rs 2.2 lakh crore in April.

CCI fines Carlyle, Bequest for flouting competition norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed a total fine of Rs 4 lakh on Carlyle and Bequest for erroneously using the green channel route to acquire stakes in engineering services firm Quest Global Services.

The competition watchdog found that Carlyle and Bequest's "combination did not meet the criteria of Green Channel prescribed under schedule III of the combination regulations," the CCI said in an order passed on June 26.

In October 2023, the CCI said it received a notice jointly submitted by Carlyle's affiliate CA Plume Investments and Bequest Inc under the green channel route for the acquisition of up to 23.6 per cent equity stake in Quest Global Services and 9.17 per cent holding by Bequest with share buyback component. Bequest is a holding entity of Quest Global Services' co-founder and CEO, Ajit Aravind Prabhu.

The green channel criteria are a fast-track approval route intended for combinations with no horizontal, vertical or complementary overlaps.

In the notice, the acquirers -- Carlyle and Bequest -- submitted that no overlaps existed between the acquiring entities and the target company (Quest Global).

However, the CCI observed that the activities of Carlyle and Bequest, including their affiliates and those of Quest and its affiliates, exhibited certain vertical or complementary interface/ overlaps. Thereby, the combination did not appear to fall under the norms. Thereafter, the fair trade regulator issued a show cause notice (SCN) to Carlyle and Bequest in April 2024, CCI said in the order.

In response to the show-cause notice, the acquirers have admitted inadvertent error and tendered an unconditional apology, proactively identified more overlaps, extended cooperation through the course of proceedings and supplied requisite material/ documents, as per the order.

TATA Auto, Skoda to manufacture railway components in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: Auto components maker TATA AutoComp and Skoda Group Wednesday announced the formation of a joint venture to manufacture railway propulsion systems and components in India envisaging "multi-million euro investment" in the country.

This partnership is aimed at supporting the growing Indian railway and mobility markets, TATA AutoComp said in a statement. Skoda Group is a leading European manufacturer of components and vehicles for public transport. On the other hand, TATA AutoComp has a significant market position in providing systems and components for electric vehicles.

"This partnership will diver-



sify TATA AutoComp's portfolio and strengthen its capability in railway and metro segment," the company said.

The new company, jointly owned by the two partners, will focus on manufacturing converters, drives and auxiliary converters for medium high-speed and regional trains, metros and light rail vehicles, the statement said.

"Manufacturing operations will be based in India. The joint

Trump's extended tariff deadline keeps global trade in limbo

TRUMP'S THREAT GROSSLY VIOLATES THE RULES OF THE WTO AND THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE TRADE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Washington, July 9: After months of promises to overhaul or eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency, President Donald Trump is touting a fast and robust federal response to the devastating Texas floods.

One former agency leader says it's "a defining event that can help them realise that a Federal Emergency Management Agency is essential".

Trump also teased that he'll declare more tariffs against US trading partners ahead of his latest Aug 1 deadline for negotiations. The 27-member European Union hopes to seal a trade deal ahead of that date, and meanwhile is preparing retaliatory measures against American products, from beef to Boeing jets.

USAID cuts threaten millions of deaths

The agenda of Trump's "multilateral lunch" Wednesday with the leaders of Liberia, Senegal, Gabon, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau includes economic development, security, infrastructure and democracy, according to a statement from the Liberian presidency. The White House has not provided further details.

The surprise meeting comes

as Trump takes radical steps to reshape US relationship with Africa, dissolving the US Agency for International Development and shifting from what the administration calls "a charity-based foreign aid model" to partnerships with nations that have "the ability and willingness to help themselves".

A study published in the

Lancet medical journal projects Trump's shift will lead to more than 14 million additional deaths globally by 2030, including 4.5 million children.

West Africa possesses untapped resources. They're also among countries that might fall under an expansion of Trump's travel ban.

Overly obnoxious

Russia's Foreign Ministry accused US Wednesday of hinting at potential tariffs against the trade alliance of Brazil, Russia, India and China as a form of political pressure.

Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said unilaterally applying such tariffs would destroy the existing architecture for international economic cooperation. She accused Washington of "hiding" behind principles such as fair competition and national security.

Trump's threat "grossly vio-

lates the rules of the WTO and the principles of free trade, which, until recently, Washington insisted on as a universal truth," Zakharova said.

Trump teases more letters on trade being sent to US trading partners Wednesday

"We will be releasing a minimum of 7 countries having to do with trade, tomorrow morning, with an additional number of Countries being released in the afternoon," the president said Tuesday night in a post on his social platform.

Trump has for several days teased letters listing tariffs that the administration plans to impose on different countries -- even as it also continues to negotiate trade deals. So far, Trump's trade blitz has produced lots of uncertainty but deals with just two countries -- the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

ANDERSON-TENDULKAR TROPHY THIRD TEST AT LORD’S

Tougher batting test awaits



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 9: The in-form Indian batters will back themselves to succeed on a potentially challenging surface while the bowling attack, which did not inspire confidence not so long ago, will pose a tougher test to an unsettled England with the return of Jasprit Bumrah at the Lord’s Test beginning Thursday.

With the series nicely poised at 1-1 going into the third Test, the narrative built around both the teams has changed significantly following India’s 336-run routing of England at Edgbaston.

If it wasn’t for the dropped catches and low-

er-order collapses at Leeds, India would have been 2-0 up in the five-match series.

Considering the inexperience of the Indian squad under new captain Shubman Gill, the team has not only competed but has won majority of the sessions over the course of the two Tests.

England, on the other hand, were expected to steamroll the opposition following the retirements of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli but India’s performance thus far has been a testament to their depth and rich talent.

The mountains of runs scored by Gill and Co have forced Ben Stokes to depart from their original template: prepare flat tracks and bat the opposition out

of the game.

The roaring success of the Indian batters on flat tracks has proved counterproductive for the hosts who are now expected to dish out a surface offering a fair amount of seam movement. Add to that a rather unique challenge of a slope -- that runs up and down -- at the iconic Lord’s.

The return of Bumrah and Jofra Archer, who will play his first Test for England in four years, will only make the batters’ task tougher.

The tourists have little to worry about in the batting department barring the form of Karun Nair, who has looked a tad uncomfortable against the ball that jumps from length. Trust

England to pepper Yashasvi Jaiswal with short stuff into the body but like he often does, the Indian opener will find a way to score runs.

The only expected change in India’s playing eleven will be Bumrah coming in place of Prasidh Krishna. Serious question marks were raised over the efficacy of the Indian pacers after Leeds but the trio of Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj and Bumrah gives a potent look to the attack.

With a 10-wicket match-haul in the second Test, Akash Deep had a dream debut in England and considering his penchant to target stumps all the time, the home side batters would need to be extra careful against the wily operator.

Siraj would take confidence from his match-winning effort at Lord’s in 2021 while Bumrah is a threat even on the flattest of tracks.

The Teams:

India: Shubman Gill (captain), Rishabh Pant (vc & wk), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Karun Nair, Nitish Reddy, Ravindra Jadeja, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav.

England (Playing XI): Ben Stokes (captain), Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jamie Smith (wk), Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer, Shoaib Bashir.

HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

MEETLE MEET 2025

OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

QUIZ

Extravaganza

It's time for **MEETLE MEET**. An initiative by the state's only home grown English daily, **OrissaPOST** to revive quizzing in Odisha. This year, the Preliminaries will take place **August 9** and the **Grand Finale August 10**. Like in the previous years, top educational institutions of the State both from schools and higher education institutions will be competing for Prizes worth **₹3,50,000 & the Champions Title in both Junior and Senior segments**.

As a reader of **OrissaPOST**, this is a chance for you to be part of the exciting **Grand Finale** if you can give correct answers in the daily quiz. Starting **July 01, 2025** there will be one question each day for you to answer till **July 31, 2025**. Every day two winners will be selected from correct entries. Then winners will be decided by draw of lots. The winners will be invited for the **Grand Finale** which will be conducted by a nationally acclaimed quizmaster. So buckle up and get set for some brainstorming.

TODAY'S QUESTION

Established on this day in 1911, which premier institution in Bengaluru began admitting its first batch of students?

ANSWER TO WEDNESDAY'S QUESTION

South Sudan

RULES & REGULATIONS

● Everyone will have to mail their answers to mettlemeet@orissapost.com

● Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.

● Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.

● **OrissaPOST's** decision on all entries will be final. No complaints will be entertained.

● Participants must send their entries with a **passport size photograph, mobile numbers and residential address**. Otherwise the entries will not be entertained.

● There can be only one winner from one family.

● Invitation cards to the winners will only be issued on presentation of Valid ID proof – **Voter Card, Aadhaar Card, Driving License, Passport, School ID card** (In case of students till Class XI)

● No employee or families of **OrissaPOST** team can be part of the competition.

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS



ARCHIT MOHAPATRA



SAMBIT BISWAKETAN

Others who answered correctly are

Sarita Priyadarshini, Rudra Narayana Sahoo, Om Prakash Rath, Tanishna Bisoi, Megha Satapathy, Tapan Kumar Mohanty, Y V Saimadhav, Bhumiika Subhalaxmi, Niranjan Nayak, R Sekhar Rao, Abha Priyadarshini, Pratyush Satapathy, Mantu Bhuyan, Anurag Samantary, Nivedita Naik, Debadatta Tripathy, Amar Kumar Jena, Parameswar Dalai, Jigyansa Priyadarshini, Sachin Minj, Ruchismita Prusty, Subhashree Jena, Ronan Slade Toppo, Amandip Lakra, Shoumik Jena, Janvi Naik & Anup Kumar Sahu

SHORT TAKES

India A men’s hockey team dominates

Eindhoven: The India A men's hockey team kickstarted their tour of Europe with a dominant 6-1 victory over Ireland at the Hockey Club Oranje-Rood. India had a complete performance throughout the four quarters and hardly put a foot wrong. Uttam Singh opened the scoring for the men in blue and Amandeep Lakra later extended their lead. This was followed by an impressive brace by Aditya Lalage as he scored back-to-back goals.

No personal coaches at national camps

New Delhi: In a move to strengthen centralised training and maintain consistency across the national boxing programme, the Interim Committee overseeing the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has reinforced its long-standing policy to disallow personal coaches and support staff at official national camps. The directive is aimed at ensuring uniform preparation standards as Indian boxers gear up for major global events, such as the World Boxing Championships in Liverpool in September, followed by the World Boxing Cup Finals in New Delhi this November, and leading up to the Asian Games next year.

India women's compound team enters final; men exit

Madrid: India were assured of at least one medal at Stage 4 of the Archery World Cup after the compound women's team stormed into the final, even as the men's team bowed out in the quarterfinals here Wednesday. The top-seeded women's trio of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Parneet Kaur and the 16-year-old debutant Prithika produced a dominant show, beating Indonesia 230-226 in the semifinals. Earlier, they eased past El Salvador 235-226 in the quarterfinals. They will face the 10th seeds Chinese Taipei for the gold medal Saturday. However, the men's compound team -- Rishabh Yadav, Prathamesh Fuge and Aman Saini -- fell short by a single point, losing 233-234 to Mexico in a hard-fought quarterfinal.

Fabio Fognini announces retirement at Wimbledon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 9: Former top-10 player Fabio Fognini announced his retirement from professional tennis Wednesday at Wimbledon, where he lost to Carlos Alcaraz in a five-setter Day 1 of the tournament last week.

The 38-year-old Italian pushed two-time defending champion Alcaraz for more than 4 1/2 hours before coming out on the wrong end of the 7-5, 6-7 (5), 7-5, 2-6, 6-1 score in the fortnight's first match at Centre Court.

That extended Fognini's losing streak to 10 consecutive tour-level matches, including a 0-7 record in 2025. He previously had said he would end his career at the end of this season, but held a news conference at the All England Club Wednesday to say he is done now.

"It's the best way to say goodbye," Fognini said.

This was the 63rd Grand Slam event for Fognini, whose best result was getting to the quarterfinals at the 2011 French Open, although he didn't play in that round there because of an injured thigh, allowing his opponent, Novak Djokovic, to advance.

Fognini is the husband

of 2015 US Open champion Flavia Pennetta.

A self-described hothead, Fognini was well-known for some outlandish on-court behaviour that repeatedly resulted in fines.

He was docked \$3,000 at Wimbledon in 2019 for saying during a match that he wished "a bomb would explode at the club" and a then-record \$27,500 in 2014 for a series of outbursts. He was put on two-year probation by the Grand Slam Board in 2017 after insulting a female chair umpire at the US Open and getting kicked out of that tournament's doubles event.

WORLD CUP DREAM IS ALIVE: SWEETY DEVI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 9: The objective of qualifying for the Women's Asian Cup achieved, the Indian women's football team is now realistic about making the FIFA World Cup in near future, with senior player Ngangbam Sweety Devi earmarking it as their "next target".

India beat hosts Thailand 2-1 in the fourth and final Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers Group B match at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium last Saturday to qualify for next year's main event.

Sangita Basfore scored a brace to hand India a memorable win which helped them qualify for the tournament after 22 years.

"Honestly, it's still hard to express," said centre-back Sweety Devi, who also captained the side on that memorable evening.

"There were so many mixed emotions. It didn't even feel real. We kept reassuring each other, 'Yes, it has happened, we've actually done it.' That feeling... it's indescribable. Anyone who supports women's football or is part of it would

understand what it feels like to qualify."

The stakes were high as the Women's Asian Cup is also the path to the FIFA Women's World Cup.

After the outpouring of emotions, hugs and tears, coach Crispin Chhettri gathered everyone in a huddle and asked them to stay focussed on the next goal.

"The top of the mountain is the bottom of another mountain. We must continue to learn and grow as a team. We've made it to the Asian Cup. Our next target is the World Cup. We have to keep dreaming," Chhettri said.

These women's dreams have taken a few hits in the

past, none as heartbreaking as the withdrawal from the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022, hosted by India, due to a COVID outbreak in the camp.

The Blue Tigresses had only played one game, a 0-0 draw with Iran, and were theoretically only three matches away from qualifying for the World Cup before their dreams were shattered.

"I still get flashbacks from that. The regret lingered," Sangita Basfore had said nine days before scoring both goals against Thailand, which will give India another shot at making the world stage.

SNIPPETS

Junior Nat'l Rugby 7s C'ship 2025: Odisha bags Silver

Bhubaneswar: Odisha women's rugby team has won silver medal at the Junior National Rugby 7s Championship 2025 in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj congratulated the team and extended his best wishes for the players' bright future. He also expressed that the victory will inspire athletes in Odisha, especially women athletes, to build a promising future in the field of sports.

Horner sacked; Mekies takes over

Milton Keynes (England): Red Bull's Formula 1 team is changing team directors for the first time since it was founded 20 years ago, after Christian Horner's sacking sent shockwaves through the sport Wednesday. But his replacement Laurent Mekies could be the calm presence the team needs amid what promises to be an intense period of scrutiny. Mekies, who had been head of sister team Racing Bulls, brings vast experience to the role after he was hired to replace Horner as chief executive of Red Bull's F1 team. The timing of Horner's firing at least gives him a little bit of time to prepare, as he takes charge of his first race at the Belgian GP July 27. The 48-year-old Frenchman, Mekies, has been in F1 since the early 2000s. He worked as a race engineer with the Minardi team -- which featured future Red Bull driver Mark Webber -- and was among the Minardi staff who stayed when Red Bull took over and created the Toro Rosso team in 2005. He brings vast experience, and F1 knowledge from both working inside teams and inside the institution of motor sport's governing body, FIA.

Ancelotti gets jail term over tax fraud

Madrid: A Spanish court Wednesday sentenced Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti to a one-year prison term for tax fraud when he was Real Madrid manager in 2014. The Madrid court also fined Ancelotti €386,000 (\$452,187). Ancelotti is the latest in a string of major soccer profiles to face a crackdown by Spanish authorities over unpaid taxes, although none have actually been sent to prison so far.

João Pedro doesn't celebrate goals for Chelsea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

East Rutherford (US), July 9: João Pedro had just scored on a 20-yard curling shot in his first start for Chelsea, putting his team ahead in a Club World Cup semifinal less than a week after signing with the London power. He took two steps to start to celebrate and then he stopped.

He clasped his hands. He muted his joy.

He would not exhibit excessive exuberance against the team that developed him from a boy into a professional.

"When I was young, I

didn't have nothing. They gave everything to me," he said after his two goals lifted Chelsea over Fluminense 2-0 Tuesday and into the Club World Cup final against Real Madrid or Paris Saint-Germain.

João Pedro scored in the 18th and 56th minutes, both with his right foot, the first from just outside the penalty area and the second when he cut inside about 15 yards from goal.

At 23, he is with a major club after starting in the Fluminense academy when he was 10 or 11, moving to Watford at 18 and then to Brighton when he was 21. He debuted with Brazil's

national team in November 2023, but like many of his nation's top stars could make far greater money outside his country.

"It doesn't make sense for Brazil to try to compete with European clubs in terms of finances," Fluminense coach Renato Gaúcho said through a translator. "Brazilian clubs trade players and sell them to Europe so they can survive, and that's been true even since I was a player."

Top English clubs benefit from the Premier League's worldwide popularity and broadcast rights fees, and they join with their Spanish, German, Italian and

French counterparts in the financial success of deep Champions League runs.

João Pedro joined Chelsea from Brighton July

2, signing with a six-time English titlist and two-time Champions League winner, a club one victory from its second world

championship. In the glow of his success, he wasn't going to forget where he came from.

"They showed me to the world," he said. "If I'm here, it's because they believed in me, so I'm very grateful."

Chelsea signed him last Wednesday after he scored 19 goals in 58 Premier League matches for Brighton, and he debuted two days later as a 54th-minute substitute in the 2-1 quarterfinal victory over Palmeiras.

Roberto De Zerbi, Brighton's former manager and now Marseille's coach, had recommended João Pedro

to Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca.

"The reason why we brought him is because this season we faced many teams with low block(s) and his quality is very good against this kind of team," Maresca said.

Chelsea striker Liam Delap was suspended for yellow-card accumulation, and Maresca inserted João Pedro. While most of Chelsea's roster has been training and playing almost continuously since last summer, João Pedro had not appeared in a game since April 19, a benefit in MetLife Stadium's stifling heat and humidity.

Printed and published by Adyasha Satpathy on behalf of Navajet Printers and Media Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Navajet Printers, B-15 Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar -751010, Odisha;Phone:7894447142 (Marketing). Editor: Tathagata Satpathy, RNI No. ODIENG/2011/37159

Enhance artificial intelligence integration in healthcare services and simplify the procurement process for medicines and equipment. Build the capacity of health staff through innovative training initiatives



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

Our government considers the people's pain as its own. The Jan Seva Sadan will not only bring governance closer to citizens, but will also reaffirm that this is a responsive, sensitive and people-centric government. We are here not to rule, but to serve



REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

Thousands of farmers came to (market yard) express their pain despite police threats. The government deployed 2,000 personnel to block them. Is this how farmers are treated?



Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSRCP CHIEF

POST OF THE DAY

Footage of Gambhir bridge from April 2025, where the reporter is showing the dire condition the bridge was in.



@citizen_kau

SHORT TAKES

Sena MLA slaps canteen staffer

Mumbai: Viral video footage showing a ruling Shiv Sena MLA slapping and punching an employee at the MLAs' hostel canteen here for serving "stale food" has drawn widespread condemnation from government and Opposition, with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis denouncing the act. He said such behaviour sends a "wrong message" about legislators misusing their power. The widely circulated video shows Buldhana MLA Sanjay Gaikwad, wearing a vest and a towel, confronting the canteen contractor and forcing him to smell a packet of dal before slapping and punching him. The contractor falls on the floor due to the impact, and as he tries to get up, the MLA continues with the assault.

HC to hear Sanjoy Roy's plea July 16

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court Wednesday said it will hear July 16 an appeal by Sanjay Roy, sentenced to imprisonment till the end of his life for the rape and murder of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital doctor, seeking acquittal. In the appeal, moved before a division bench comprising justices Debangsu Basak and Prasenjit Biswas, Roy pleaded for acquittal, claiming that he was not guilty of the crime.

71 villages cut off amid heavy rains

Nagpur: An 18-year-old boy died and another person went missing after being swept away in flood waters in separate incidents, even as 71 villages were cut off amid heavy rains in Nagpur district Wednesday, an official said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'red' alert for Nagpur and Wardha districts, 'orange' alert for Amravati and Yavatmal, and 'yellow' alert for Akola, Washim, Buldhana, Chandrapur, Bhandara and Gondia districts of Maharashtra's Vidarbha region for the day.

BRIDGE COLLAPSE IN VADODARA

Opposition seeks CM's resignation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, July 9: Hours after the portion of a bridge collapsed in Gujarat's Vadodara killing 11 persons, Opposition parties Wednesday said negligence on the part of the state government was resulting in such incidents, and sought Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel's resignation.

They said although some leaders of Opposition parties had earlier drawn the attention of the administration to the condition of the bridge, it did not pay heed and failed to act.

11 persons, including two siblings, were killed and nine others rescued, some of them with injuries, after several vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river when a portion of a four-decade-old Gambhir bridge collapsed in Vadodara district around 7.30 am Wednesday, officials said.

Speaking about the tragedy, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Amit Chavda said, "Local people, including Congress leaders, had represented many times to the administration that the condition of the bridge was very bad. We had said that its life was over as it was 40 years old."

"The government had, however, not paid any attention to the representations. The bridge has collapsed due to the criminal negligence of

11 persons, including two siblings, were killed and nine others rescued, some of them with injuries, after several vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river when a portion of a four-decade-old Gambhir bridge collapsed

the state government. We demand inquiry and punishment for those responsible for such grave negligence," he said.

As incidents of bridge collapse are rising in the state, the government should conduct an audit of all old bridges. The report should be made public so that people know whether they should travel on that bridge or not, he said. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Gujarat unit president Isudan Gadhvi demanded resignation of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

"Many people have died in Gujarat due to corruption of the BJP government. This is not an accident, this is a man-made disaster. People have lost their lives due to the state government's negligence," he said.

SNIPPETS

Punjab Police foils major terror plot, recovers cache of arms

Chandigarh: The Punjab Police Wednesday said they have foiled a major terror plot orchestrated by Pakistan-based terrorist Harwinder Rinda and recovered a cache of arms from a forest area in Gurdaspur. Preliminary investigation has found that the consignment was pushed into India by Pakistani agencies and Rinda as part of a premeditated plan to carry out attacks at multiple locations in Punjab aiming to disrupt public peace, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said. Acting swiftly on human intelligence, Anti-Gangster Task Force teams under the supervision of Additional DGP, AGTF, Promod Ban managed to trace the terrorist hardware consignment from a forest area in Gurdaspur, before it could reach to the operatives of Harwinder Rinda, said the DGP.

'Harassing juniors on WhatsApp groups will be treated as ragging'

New Delhi: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed higher education institutions to monitor any informal WhatsApp groups created to harass juniors, saying it will be treated as ragging and attract strict action under anti-ragging rules, according to officials. The UGC receives dozens of complaints every year from freshers alleging harassment by seniors. "In several cases, seniors form informal WhatsApp groups, contact juniors and subject them to mental harassment. This too amounts to ragging and will invite disciplinary measures," the UGC said in its latest directive.

PM conferred with Namibia's highest civilian award

Windhoek: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Wednesday conferred with Namibia's highest civilian award, the 'Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis'. The award was presented by Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah. Addressing a gathering after being conferred with the honour, PM Modi said, "Namibia's Welwitschia, after which this award is named, is not an ordinary plant. It is like an elder in the household, one who has witnessed the passage of time. It symbolises Namibia's struggle, courage, and culture."

Bihar becomes Bengal in NITI Aayog map

Mamata demands apology, immediate correction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 9: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday wrote to the Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog expressing her strong disapproval over the state being shown as Bihar in an official report.

She condemned the error and demanded an apology from them, taking immediate corrective measures in this connection.

In a post on X, Banerjee shared a copy of the letter and a screenshot of India's map that appeared on the front page of the report, in which Bihar was shown as West Bengal.

"I am writing with deep concern and unequivocal disapproval that in the 'summary report for the state of West Bengal' published by NITI Aayog and available on its website, the map intended to represent the state of West Bengal has depicted the territory of Bihar in its place," Banerjee wrote to Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog Suman K Bery.

Describing the error as a "grave lapse" of the NITI Aayog, the CM claimed that such a blunder in an official publication of NITI Aayog reflects an "alarming lack of diligence and respect" towards the states of the Union.

"This raised legitimate concerns about the rigour and reliability of the institution's work, which policymakers and citizens alike depend on for accurate and informed decision-making and casts sig-



nificant doubt on the quality, authenticity and credibility of reports and publications of NITI Aayog," she added.

"The government of West Bengal strongly condemns this inaccuracy and calls upon NITI Aayog to issue a clarification and apology and take immediate corrective action to rectify the document and to institute



robust mechanisms to prevent such lapses in future," the Bengal CM said.

Earlier in the day, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale took to social media to flag how the front page of the NITI Aayog report has shown Bihar as West Bengal.

"It is pathetic that the Govt of India cannot even place West

PET DOG SAVED 60 LIVES

The ability of a dog to sense danger beforehand saved 60 precious lives in Mandi's Siyathi village on the night of June 30 when monsoon fury struck several parts of the district



Adulterated toddy claims two lives; 28 hospitalised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, July 9: Two people died and as many as 28 people, including 12 women, were hospitalised here after allegedly consuming adulterated toddy, officials said Wednesday.

According to a police official of Cyberabad, two people who were taken to the hospital Tuesday night were declared brought dead.

State Excise and Prohibition Department officials in a statement said 28 people fell ill after allegedly consuming the toddy. The state-run Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, where the patients are being treated, in a statement, said three patients are critically ill.

"More than 15 people were admitted to hospitals Tuesday night. By Wednesday morning, this number had increased to 28," a statement from the department said.

The affected people consumed toddy in different toddy shops July 6 and July 8 in Kukatpally, Balanagar, and other areas of the city, and they were initially admitted to different hospitals Tuesday after complaining of ill health--acute gastroenteritis.

"Three patients are critical. One is on Inotropic support and is undergoing dialysis. One is on ventilator, and dialysis is planned for another," NIMS said in a statement. Telangana Minister for Excise and Prohibition Jupally Krishna Rao Wednesday visited NIMS Hospital and met the affected persons.

As all the affected persons were having common symptoms, consumption of adulterated toddy is suspected to be the cause, as per preliminary information, the minister said. He said the police and excise officials have registered cases in connection with the incident and launched an investigation.

Excise Department officials said they apprehended five persons in connection with the case.



Firemen douse a fire after a cooking gas cylinder explosion, at MGR Nagar area, in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu

PTI PHOTO

Mall employee alleges rape, blackmail by colleague

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 9: A 19-year-old woman working at a prominent mall here has accused its cash supervisor of raping her after spiking her drink with sedatives and blackmailing her with a video of the incident, police officials said Wednesday.

The accused has been arrested, a senior officer said. In her complaint to the police, the woman said she works at the mall in Lucknow and a few months ago, she met the cash supervisor near a tea stall behind the mall. Later, the supervisor took her to a hotel on some pretext, where he offered her a cold drink laced with sedatives. When she lost consciousness, he raped her and recorded the incident on video, the woman alleged. Following this, the accused continued to extort money from her by threatening to leak the video on social media.