





# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**

You will experience a profound connection with the cosmos today. And you will be very grateful to the almighty for showering his grace on you. Your love for your kith and kin deepens today, says Ganesha, and you will spend extravagantly on them.

**TAURUS**

this is not one of those easy and carefree days. You are in for a lot of mental anguish. The mental pressure you feel, you will realise, is of your own making. Unless you make radical changes in your basis outlook, mental tensions are likely to become an everyday affair. You need to face and accept things as they are.

**GEMINI**

Your desire to go travelling with your family members will receive an impetus today and you will set out to schedule your itinerary. It is a good time for travel and you will be able to more than satisfactorily execute your travel plans within your budget, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**

You think you are smart. You will be most certainly savouring the positive aspects of your life. Sometimes, it is quite possible that you find yourself at the end of your wits. You had better sit together with your spouse and thrash out personality clashes and private quarrels, suggests Ganesha.

**LEO**

Today may not be the best time to mess with you, considering the aura of invincibility that you possess. Be it a game, a competition, or an argument, you will have the edge over others in every sphere, says Ganesha. Also, you may come across people with whom you will have personal differences, and those who will try to change your fortunes.

**VIRGO**

Appreciate the things that people do and try your best to inspire them to achieve greater success, says Ganesha. Put on your thinking cap and contemplate seriously. Simply criticising others will only hurt you. Be as level-headed as you can and keep pegging on towards your targets.

**LIBRA**

Today is an important day for you, and you will learn a lot from your life partner. Even on the work front, business partners will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Your chances of winning in cut-throat competitions are very bright today, predicts Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**

Focus is the buzzword for you; your eyes should be set on the things you aim, advises Ganesha. You may even indulge into some kind of research work. Today, you may bump into an old pal with whom you relive those good old school days and rejuvenate yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS**

You will be your usual self today, frank and precise. You are all ears for what your life partner has to say. This will make them feel special! According to Ganesha, be patient and carry out your work gracefully.

**CAPRICORN**

Your grand orchestration may not come to fruition, and even your best-laid plans may go awry, says Ganesha. Squabbles with people over petty issues will add to your growing vexation; keep calm and you'll handle all of it just fine.

**AQUARIUS**

Today, you will want to expand your horizon of knowledge. You will give a tough fight to your opponents and come out triumphant, feels Ganesha. Troubles will not be able trouble you as you will be able to turn them into your advantage.

**PISCES**

Financial bearings will be at the fore front of your attention today, feels Ganesha. Bank accounts, stocks, loans and other such things will dominate your thoughts and words. Earning money will be your primary goal and you will focus on those methods that will be most profitable to you, today.



## RITA ORA'S NEW MUSIC CELEBRATES HER SEXUALITY

Rita Ora has revealed what fans can expect from her new music. "I was really inspired for me and my womanhood to really kind of celebrate my sexuality, my sexiness and get back into my body, you know? And this really just embodied that," shared the 34-year-old.

## SARAH CONFIRMS SHE DATED NICOLAS CAGE

Sarah Jessica Parker has finally set the record straight on long-standing rumours about her romantic link to Nicolas Cage. The 60-year-old has revealed the pair did have a brief romance during a filming before she met her spouse in 1991.



## Priya loves grey shades

**Mumbai:** Actress Priya Banerjee is all set to grace the screen in a bold and unpredictable avatar in Vikram Bhatt's forthcoming series, *Heartbreaker*.

Shedding light on her role, Priya confirmed that she will be seen playing a grey character in her next.

"Yes, it's a grey character, and always the most exciting kind of roles are grey. She is complicated, as we all are, but she is intense. And to play a character like this, you need immense versatility and range as an actor," she shared.

This is the first time that Priya is trying her hands at the vertical format with *Heartbreaker*.

Talking about pushing her creative boundaries, she added, "Honestly, I didn't have much time to prepare for the character. And for the first time, I'm trying my hands with this format. Vertical format is the future for sure and I'm glad I got to venture into it with such an impactful role."

Priya's last release, *Maaya Ka Moh* saw her sharing screen with Pankit Thakker, Sheetal Dabholkar, and Mahesh Shetty.

On the personal front, Priya recently made headlines due to her wedding to actor Prateik Babbar.

The couple tied the knot in an intimate yet beautiful ceremony on February 14th this year.

IAN S

## Sara's note of gratitude

**Mumbai:** Actress Sara Ali Khan thanked the audience for "accepting and loving Chumki", her character from the recently released romantic entertainer *Metro...In Dino*.

Treating her InstaFam with some goofy behind-the-scenes photos from Anurag Basu's directorial, Sara penned a heartfelt gratitude note for the viewers.

She wrote on her IG: "Grateful, blessed and so so so happy... Thank you for all the love you've given our film and thank you accepting and loving Chumki too. P.S clearly there were was no middle ground with our moods."

Previously, during an exclusive interaction with this agency, Sara revealed that she was surprised after witnessing director

Basu's process of putting the film together.

She stated that the filmmaker believes in giving his actors a lot of space and this often results in magical moments being created on the camera. The *Kedarnath* actress said: "I was surprised throughout. I think that the minute you let go some sur-

prising things land up happening. Basu da calls it magic. I feel like just being able to let free, let go and truly be present in the moments that we were because the whole set would come alive. There was just a palpable energy in

gener-al so you just had to let go not think and be there. And that was what we had to flow".

IAN S



## Prateeksha makes playback debut

**Mumbai:** Singer, composer, and writer Prateeksha Srivastava has made her debut as a Bollywood playback

singer with the heartfelt number *Mila Tujhe* from the romantic drama, *Aap Jaisa Koi*, starring R. Madhavan, and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

*Mila Tujhe* marks Pra-

teeksha's second professional association with composer Vishal Mishra. They had earlier worked together on the track *Holi Aayi Re*, released on Coke Studio in 2025.

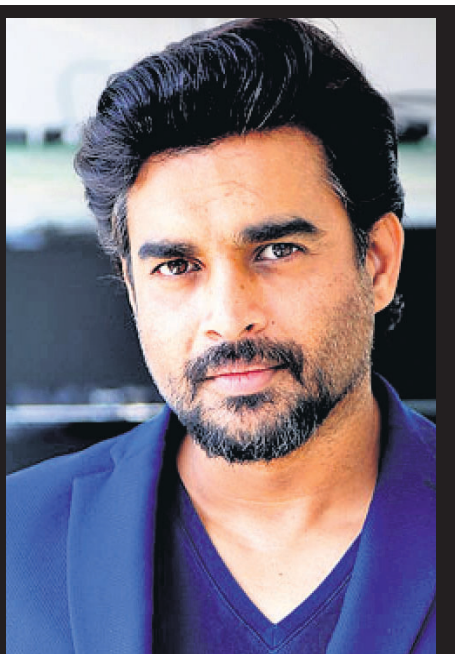
*Mila Tujhe* enjoys music scored by Justin Prabhakaran with lyrics penned by Raj Shekhar.

Sharing her views on *Mila Tujhe*, Prateeksha shared, "Mila Tujhe is my second collaboration with Vishal Mishra, but very first in Bollywood, and I couldn't have asked for a

better piece of music. The song is exactly the kind that I love singing, it's about the quiet kind of love, the sweetness of the mere presence of love."

"It's like a soft love anthem for the soft-love era, and to be working with Justin Prabhakaran, Raj Shekhar, and Vishal Mishra is like working with a dream team. The icing on the cake is being the playback voice for R. Madhavan and Fatima Sana Shaikh," she added.

IAN S



## 'Back then girlfriend meant marriage'

**Mumbai:** Actor R Madhavan has opened up about his early memories of first love. He shared that, back then, romance was rooted in sincerity and a sense of long-term commitment.

Speaking during a conversation about his latest film, *Aap Jaisa Koi*, Madhavan was asked if the story of the film brought back memories of his first love. The *Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein* actor recalled how different love was during his youth. "At that point of time, we used to run through a guilt," he said. "If you held a girl's hand and she became your girlfriend, which meant you were going to marry her. That was the ultimate goal. There was never this idea of 'let's try and see where it goes'—no benching, orbiting, or whatever it's called now."

He went on to reflect on the innocence of young love in his time, emphasizing that the intentions were always heartfelt and sincere. "When we fell in love, the imagination was always long-term. It was never about getting physical quickly. It was about making mixtapes, buying thoughtful gifts, and wooing the person properly."

Madhavan clarified that his latest role doesn't mirror his own personal story; he admitted the themes of love and finding connection later in life do strike an emotional chord. In the film, his character—a man over 40 who hasn't yet married—finally finds love and purpose when a beautiful woman agrees to marry him.

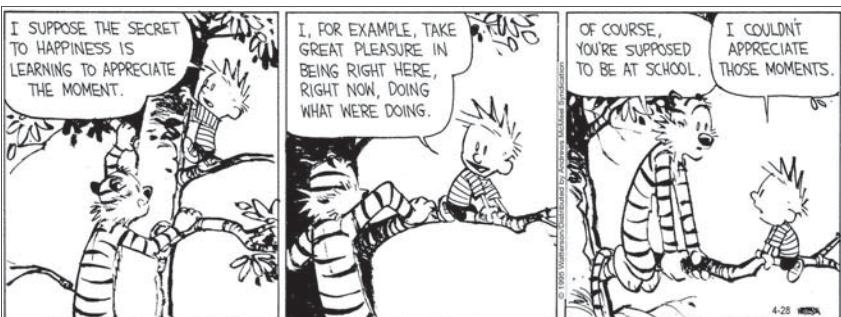
IAN S

## MADDY'S MEMORY OF FIRST LOVE

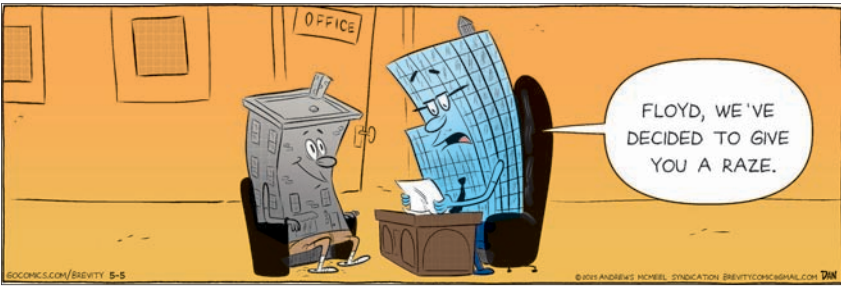
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

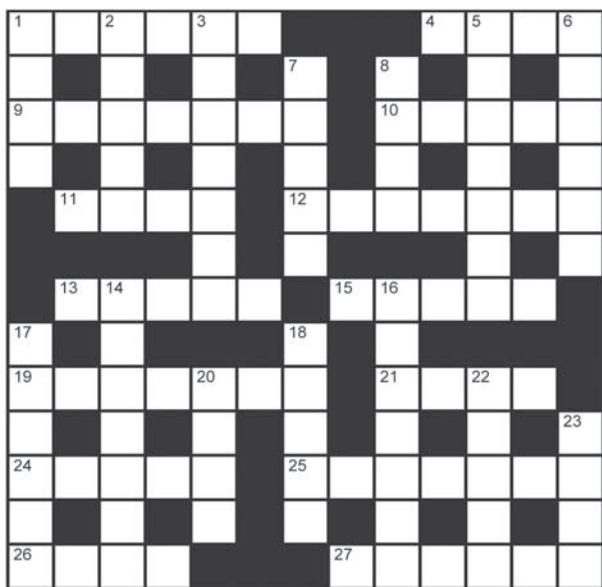


### BREVITY



## FUN post

### CROSSWORD



#### Across

- 1 Fight back
- 4 Chooses
- 9 Accomplished
- 10 Pigeon's perch
- 11 Smile widely
- 12 Like a toenail, at times
- 13 British biscuit
- 15 Chinese zodiac animal
- 19 Eternal
- 21 Fumble

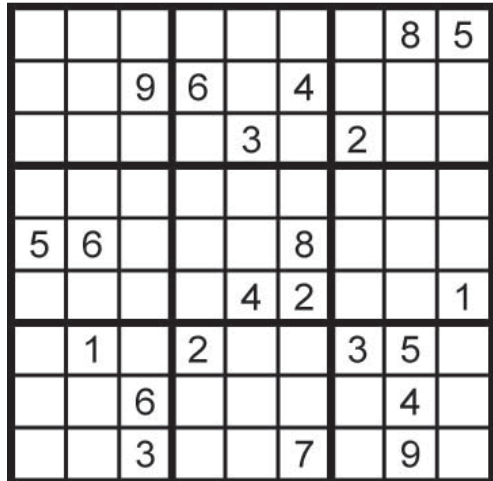
#### Down

- 21 Bring together
- 25 Rapture
- 26 "Piece of cake!"
- 27 Unconscious mind
- 1 Farrier's tool
- 2 Paris divider
- 3 Man of wisdom
- 5 Racetrack area

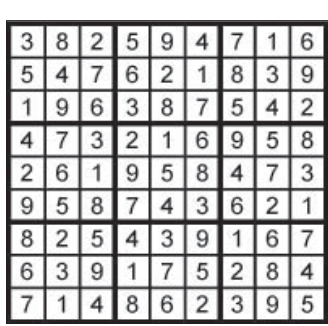
- 6 Beer mugs
- 7 Own up to
- 8 Wallop
- 14 Links figures
- 16 Scourge
- 17 Periwig
- 18 Michaelmas daisy
- 20 Former spouses
- 22 Swiss capital
- 23 Combustible heap

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







# Law min vows stern action against ‘kangaroo courts’



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 14:** Expressing concern over the back-to-back incidents of tribal couples being tied to yoke and publicly humiliated by villagers for ‘violating’ customs, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Monday said stringent legal action would be taken against those operating such ‘kangaroo courts’.

Terming the acts as ‘immoral’, Harichandan said, “We will not encourage hateful practices and kangaroo courts. The state government has already initiated legal action.”

He attributed such incidents to lack of awareness among people, especially in remote areas.

The Law minister added that some influential people in rural

a tribal couple – a 32-year-old man and his father’s cousin sister – was tied to a yoke and forced to plough farm land by villagers for being in a relationship and getting married ‘secretly’ against their families’ wishes.

A group of villagers, including women and minors, were seen witnessing the cruel punishment.

Similarly, in the Koraput incident, another couple, a 21-year-old youth and his cousin, 20, was seen tied to a yoke and being paraded through the streets for marrying within the same clan, which villagers considered a violation of tribal customs.

Videos of both incidents went viral on social media, prompting the Law minister to intervene and direct officials to take swift legal action against those responsible for organising the kangaroo courts and humiliating the couples.

Despite the public outrage, some villagers have defended the actions, claiming they were carried out as part of customary tribal purification rituals.

Meanwhile, Rayagada police have detained several villagers based on video evidence and were questioning them. In the Koraput case, the local administration has also launched an investigation into the incident.

## Padma Library hosts talent fest on founder’s birthday

**Bhubaneswar:** The Society for Nature Education and Health (SNEH) Monday organised a special programme for orphaned children at Mayfair Nagar in the Salia Sahi slum, marking the birth anniversary of late social worker Padmakar Kanti. In his memory, the Padma Library was set up in 2021 to support underprivileged youth in the area. The celebration saw the participation of around 50 slum children and teenagers. Designed to foster creativity and confidence, the event featured essay writing, musical chairs, and balloon-blowing competitions. The winners were awarded during the program. Authors of children’s literature Srutakirti Tripathy and Rashmi Samal attended as guests of honour. “Libraries are windows to the world. I am glad to see children engaging with books and stories in such an inspiring environment,” said Tripathy. The local dance troupe, The Black Diamond Group, delivered energetic performances, further enlivening the atmosphere.



## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, BBSR, No - 29 dated 14.07.2025 I, Ratnakar Sahoo, At - Darajisahi, PO - Old Town, PS - Sri Lingaraj, Bhubaneswar district Khordha, declare that I have changed my daughter’s name from Akshita Sahoo to ANSHITA SAHOO. Henceforth, she shall be known as ANSHITA SAHOO for all purposes.

# Left parties, Congress to stage protest July 18

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 14:** The Opposition, including the Congress and several Left parties, will stage a mass protest July 18 in front of Lok Seva Bhawan, demanding justice in the self-immolation case involving a student of Fakir Mohan College, Balasore.

A joint meeting in this regard held at Congress Bhawan Monday saw participation from Odisha Congress president Bhakta Charan Das and leaders from the Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation [CPI(ML)], All India Students’ Federation (AISF), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Samajwadi Party (SP), and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The leaders pledged statewide protests against rising atrocities on women and institutional negligence.

They demanded the resignation of the Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, the local MLA and MP, and immediate arrest of the college principal and the accused faculty member. Citing a series of recent violent and unethical incidents across the state, they termed it a reflection of systemic administrative failure.

Monday, several Left parties and the Navnirman Krushak Sangathan staged separate protests demanding justice for the victim, who is currently battling for her life at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar. The CPI(M) and the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) held demonstra-



## Govt seeks compliance report on IC formation

**Bhubaneswar:** The Higher Education (HE) department Monday asked all public and private universities and degree colleges to submit compliance reports within 24 hours, ensuring constitution of internal committees (ICs) in their institutions under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The HE department’s directive follows a shocking incident at FM Autonomous College in Balasore, where a second-year integrated B.Ed student attempted self-immolation Saturday, allegedly in protest against sexual harassment by assistant professor Samir Kumar Sahu of the Educational Studies department.

According to reports, the student resorted to the extreme act after allegedly receiving no support from either the college

authorities or the internal committee following her complaints.

Both the assistant professor and the college principal have since been suspended and arrested by the police.

In a letter addressed to the registrar of public and private universities and principal of government and aided colleges, the deputy director of the HE department emphasised that the department had previously communicated the necessity of constituting ICs in all higher educational institutions.

“The institutions have now been directed to submit compliance reports within 24 hours, ensuring adherence to Section 4 of the Act,” the department said.

The guidelines mandate appropriate representation of women and inclusion of ex-

ternal members on the committee.

Additionally, all institutions must comply with the UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015.

Colleges have also been instructed to display the names and contact details of all IC members in prominent locations on campus and to upload this information on the HIMS portal.

Registrars and principals have been asked to immediately organise workshops to sensitize students and staff regarding the 2013 Act.

They are also required to upload a geo-tagged photograph showing where the IC details are displayed via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/IC-CHED25>.

## BIPF rolls out outreach vans in Kalinganagar

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 14:** Reaffirming its commitment to community-centric development, the Bansidhar & Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF) — the CSR arm of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys Limited (IMFA) — launched two flagship outreach initiatives, Kanya Express and e-Shiksha Express, in Kalinganagar, Jajpur, Monday. The programmes were inaugurated by Jajpur Collector and District Magistrate, P Anvesha Reddy.

Commenting on the significance of the initiatives, Shaifalika Panda, Trustee and CEO of BIPF, said, “True development isn’t about waiting for operations to begin — it’s about showing up for communities from day one. With Kanya Express and e-Shiksha Express,



we’re bringing essential services directly to where they’re needed most. These initiatives reflect our belief that early investment in health, education, and dignity lays the foundation for a more resilient and inclusive future.”

The Kanya Express, part of BIPF’s healthcare vertical since 2021, is a mobile health initiative focused on combating anaemia among adolescent girls. It raises awareness on nutrition, menstrual hygiene, and preventive healthcare. With anaemia

affecting over 56 per cent of adolescent girls in India, the programme addresses a critical gap in rural healthcare services.

Complementing it is the e-Shiksha Express, introduced in 2024, which functions as a mobile digital learning centre. It delivers basic digital literacy and computer skills to underserved communities, empowering individuals—especially youth and women—to confidently navigate an increasingly digital world.



**AT LORD'S ABODE:** Devotees, including kanwaris, throng Srimandir in Puri to have a glimpse of the sibling deities on Shraavan Monday

OP PHOTO

## 12TH PURI HERITAGE WALK

# Rains fail to dampen spirit of heritage enthusiasts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 14:** Braving the rainy weather, 24 heritage enthusiasts from different parts of the state participated in the 12th Puri Heritage Walks (PHW) Sunday. They had come from far-off regions such as Rourkela, Berhampur, Bhubaneswar, and Konark.

In the first phase of the heritage journey, participants visited the Mangu Mutt, located in front of Srimandir. This was followed by a heritage discussion held on the premises of Radhaballav Matha, where Dr Surendra Kumar Mishra shed light on the culture of the mutts (monastic institutions) of Srikshetra (Puri) and the historical significance of the cluster of mutts surrounding the shrine. He also shared information about the various mutts, their connections with the temple, and the rights they hold for different temple services.

During a special ‘Ratha’ observation session, Balakrishna Maharana, chief Maharana



servitor of Lord Balabhadra’s chariot, explained various aspects of chariot-making. He discussed the differences in the wheel diameters of the three chariots, the rules for accurate construction, the reasons why the chariots take turns while moving, and the method for executing the southern turn.

Participants later visited the Sanachhata Mutt and Uttaraparshwa Mutt, where the

Mathadheesha Shri Narayan Ramanuja Das elaborated on the authorised services performed by the mutt and informed that the mutt has five traditional stoves (Chuli) and two Sara Gharas inside the temple’s main kitchen.

In the final leg, the group had ‘darshan’ of Lord Shri Raghnath, the presiding deity of the mutt, marking the conclusion of the day’s heritage walk.

Historian and researcher Debi Prasanna Nanda was the guide for the event. Heritage activist Sanjay Kumar Baral urged young heritage lovers to become more active and organised. The event concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Kumar Aurojyoti. Heritage coordinator Biswaranjan Dehury, documentary filmmaker Bisweswar Dash, heritage promoter Ashoka Nayak, Priyanka Maharana, Siddharth Mahapatra, Subrat Bal, Jyotsna Mohapatra, Suprabha Sahu, and Satyaprakash Nayak were among others participated in the event.

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# Hungry Vamsadhara gobbles up land, farmers' livelihoods

Not only do its unforgiving waters eat up riparian farmlands, but a meandering Vamsadhara has also turned into farmers' sorrow by redrawing borders between them and their livelihoods



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paralakhemundi, July 14:** Large swathes of agricultural land in Gajapati district's Kashinagar block are being steadily consumed by the Vamsadhara owing to change in course of the river.

Despite the presence of three mega irrigation projects along the river intended to facilitate water supply to farmlands, farmers in the region are facing increasing losses.

Hundreds of acres of cultivable land have been consumed by the river, severely affecting the livelihoods of many farming households. Locals recall the devastating floods of 1980, during which the river had changed its course engulfing significant portions of farmlands along its banks. That trend continues till date, with the river steadily eroding its banks and swallowing farmlands.

The erosion is acute across several riparian panchayats and villages. These include Palasing, Khandaba, Sara, Badigaon, Purutiguda in Khandaba panchayat, Kidigaon and Kashinagar town as well as Gouri, Bhanna, Kitingi, Bathaba, Budura, and Idudi in Budura

## DOUBLE TROUBLE

Many farmers of Abhilama mouza in the border region of Kashinagar block allege that parts of their farmland now lie on the Andhra side due to the river's shifting path

The combined effect of natural erosion and disputed interventions across the border has sparked concern among farmers

panchayat.

Every year, the river eats away farmlands in these villages due to change in its course. The annual monsoon rains and recurring floods further exacerbate the erosion as the river eats away as much as 30-40 feet into the bank.

As a result, hundreds of acres of land have already been lost and crop production has significantly declined. Farmers say their land now exists only on official records not in reality. Things have come to such a pass that many cultivators are left without any land to grow crops.

Residents of riverside villages say the river's altered course and powerful current are the primary reasons for the loss of

farmlands. They are also concerned about embankments reportedly being constructed along the Andhra Pradesh side of the river, which they allege is diverting water flow towards river banks in Odisha side, worsening erosion.

Many farmers of Abhilama mouza in the border region of Kashinagar block allege that parts of their farmland now lie on the Andhra side due to the river's shifting path. The combined effect of natural erosion and disputed interventions across the border has sparked concern among farmers, threatening both their land and their livelihood.

In 2003, farmers under the leadership of late Paralakhemundi MLA Trinath Sahu, began cultivating mangoes, cashew, and other fruit-bearing trees on their rightful land across the Andhra border. However, over the years, frequent elephant intrusions turned the area into a hotspot for wildlife movement, making it increasingly difficult for farmers to cross the river and cultivate their fields on the other side of the state border.

Locals and intellectuals in the town claim the land has gradually fallen under the unofficial control of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh due to the lack of consistent monitoring.

Despite repeated appeals to the state government to relocate the affected farmers or provide alternative farmland and a permanent solution, no substantial step has been taken so far.

Residents have urged the district administration to intervene and take concrete steps to support the distressed farmers.

# Pregnant woman carried across river on sling



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhendipada, July 14:** In a heart-wrenching scene from Bhaliasar village under Nua-gaon panchayat of Chhendipada block in Angul district, a pregnant woman in labour was carried across a swollen river on a makeshift sling by her family after an ambulance failed to reach the village due to the absence of a motorable road.

The woman, Mami Pradhan, wife of Rajendra Pradhan, began experiencing severe labour pain Monday. Her family called an ambulance, but no vehicle could reach the remote village, as the swollen Aaunli river stood as a major barrier on the way to the nearest health facility.

Bereft of any other option, the family placed her on a makeshift sling and carried her on their shoulders across the overflowing river. From there, she was transported in a vehicle to the Bagadia Primary Health Centre (PHC), where she was admitted for delivery.

The incident has once again highlighted the lack of basic infrastructure and emergency medical access in remote rural areas of the state.

With the state experiencing low-pressure triggered heavy rainfall, many rivers in various parts of the state are in spate. This has cut off connectivity between the villages and disrupted normal life of the villagers.

# Woman's body found with injuries; husband detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barbil, July 14:** The body of a 41-year-old woman, identified as Nirmala Sharma, wife of Neel Prasad Sharma, an assistant manager working with Rungta Mines, was recovered Monday morning from the company's colony quarters in Barbil area of Keonjhar district.

Police sources said the body bore multiple injury marks, prompting suspicion of foul

play. Nirmala's husband has been detained for questioning as police continue their investigation, treating the case as a suspected murder.

According to initial reports, Nirmala's body was transported by ambulance from the company quarters to the Barbil Community Health Centre (CHC), where doctors declared her dead. However, the presence of several injuries on the body led to suspicion of a possible murder.

Following the discovery, police registered a case of unnatural death and began a detailed inquiry. The deceased woman's body was sent for post-mortem to ascertain the exact cause of death.

Nirmala and Neel Sharma have two children. Their daughter is currently pursuing higher studies in Bhubaneswar, while their son studies in Class X at a private school in Barbil.

Police said the couple's daughter and other family

members arrived in Barbil following the incident and post-mortem procedures had commenced at the time of reporting. Authorities have stated that further investigation will continue based on the post-mortem report and other evidence gathered.

While the exact cause of any possible conflict between the couple remains unclear, police suspect that Nirmala's death could have been the result of a brutal assault.

# MKCG doc booked as patient referred to pvt clinic dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 14:** A doctor of MKCG Medical College and Hospital here has been accused of negligence and unauthorised referral of a patient to a private nursing home, resulting in the patient's death following a botched surgery.

The deceased, Balamram Gouda, 28, son of Ramesh Gouda, hailed from Baghalati village under Golanthara police limits in Ganjam district. He was reportedly injured in a bike accident July 10 and brought to MKCG by locals in an ambulance. After being admitted to the casualty ward, Balamram came under the care of senior orthopaedic surgeon Dr Dilip Pradhan.

According to the complaint, Dr Pradhan allegedly told the family that Balamram's condition was serious and that the hospital lacked adequate facilities. He reportedly assured them that Balamram would recover in just two days if treated at a private hospital in Goilundi. Acting on his advice, the family shifted Balamram to Binayak Hospital.

Surgery was performed July 13 at the private clinic. However, his condition worsened during the procedure. The hospital staff then suggested referring him to a Bhubaneswar facility. Family members were denied access to him during this time. While being transported in an ambulance, a paramedic accompanying Balamram declared him dead.

Balamram's brother Jagannath Gouda later lodged a complaint with MKCG authorities, accusing Dr Pradhan of gross medical negligence and financial misconduct. Based on the complaint, a police case (352/25) was registered at Baidyanathpur police station.

Dr Pradhan is reportedly absconding and unreachable, with his phone switched off, according to police sources. MKCG Dean and Principal Dr Suchitra Dash assured a thorough investigation and strict action against those found guilty. "We are taking the matter seriously and will act based on the findings," she said. Ganjam SP Saravana Vivek M confirmed he has been briefed on the case. "Detailed inquiries will be conducted and necessary action will follow," he added.

# Student alleges mental harassment by lecturer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Titilagarh, July 14:** A female student has alleged mental harassment by a faculty member at Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) Autonomous College in Titilagarh in Bolangir district. The incident, coming in the wake of a student suicide case in Balasore over sexual harassment, has sparked concern.

According to reports, the lecturer had been subjecting the student to sustained mistreatment for several days. On Saturday, the lecturer allegedly sent a message at 7:47am asking her to report for a practical examination at 9am. When the student arrived slightly late, the lecturer reportedly abused her verbally and asked her to leave the hall, barring her from taking the test.

As a result, the student lost



marks in the practical exam. Feeling humiliated, she returned home in tears and later collapsed. Her parents and sister immediately went to the college and submitted a written complaint to the principal.

However, the student's family has accused the college principal of attempting to resolve the matter informally by collecting signatures from

the student and her relatives instead of initiating a formal inquiry. Media representatives who approached the principal for comment were met with silence.

The student later lodged a complaint at the Titilagarh police station Sunday. On Monday, a closed-door meeting was held at the college, which, according to sources, appeared

aimed at suppressing the issue. The principal allegedly pressured the student and her family to sign a resolution promising not to escalate the matter.

The principal also reportedly questioned the family why they had informed the media. His conduct and the signature collection process have drawn criticism.

The student is currently in a distressed mental state, family members said.

When contacted, Titilagarh IIC Kalyani Behera confirmed that both parties—the student, her family, the lecturer and the principal—have been called for questioning. "We are monitoring the situation closely. An investigation is under way and appropriate action will be taken based on the findings," she said.

# Cousins killed in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Polsara, July 14:** Two cousins were killed after their bike rammed into a temple gate at Tini Chhak in Chirikipada Sasan village under this police limits in Ganjam district late Sunday night.

The deceased cousins were identified as Deepak Nayak, 20, and Arata Nayak, 20, of Mangalpur village in Bada Pankalbari panchayat under the block. Sources said, the bodies lied on the deserted road throughout the night. Their death came to light after locals spotted them in the morning and informed the police.

Police sent the bodies to Polsara Community Health Centre, from where those were sent to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for post-mortem. Police also seized the bike and launched an investigation. Police registered a case after Arata's father Bishikesan Nayak filed an FIR at Polsara police station.

It was raining lightly as the cousins were riding back home after visiting a relative at Chirikipada Sasan village. Meanwhile, their bike rammed into an arch gate of temple and they were thrown of their vehicle.

## JUMBOS IN JEOPARDY

# Another electrocuted in Dhenkanal; carcass recovered in Keonjhar



DHENKANAL



KEONJHAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal/Keonjhar, July 14:** Just a day after a female elephant died of electrocution in Sambalpur district, another succumbed after coming in contact with wire fencing illegally connected to a power line at a jungle near Bariharagadi village in Khajuriakata forest section and Hindol forest range in Dhenkanal district, Monday morning.

Age of the deceased female pachyderm was within 10 years, Forest officials said. On being informed, Forest officials arrested one villager Prabha-kar Sahu, 55, in this connection.

A joint taskforce team led by CCF Manoj V Nayar, RC-CF Sanjiv Kumar Swain, task force members Vivek Kumar, DFO Sumit Kumar Kar, Hindol ranger and other forest personnel reached the spot and launched an investigation,

while veterinarians conducted a post-mortem examination of the carcass.

The accused villager had put up a fence around his farmland with wires illegally connected to a low-tension (LT) supply power line. Preliminary inquiries indicated that the animal was electrocuted after coming in contact with the charged wire fencing around the farmland.

Meanwhile, in Keonjhar district, the carcass of an elephant was recovered close to a dam near Saleikana village under Telkoi forest range Monday.

Forest officials were yet to ascertain the gender of the animal which, they said, died a few days back. Forest officials launched an investigation but the probe was halted due to heavy rainfall in the district. Telkoi forest ranger Shivaji Mohan Rao said he can comment on issue after the probe is completed.

## CHILD DIES IN WALL COLLAPSE


**PATANA:** In a tragic incident, a nine-year-old girl was killed after a wall collapsed on her Sunday under Turumunga police limits in Keonjhar district. The deceased, identified as Khulana Sundari, was the daughter of Santosh Nayak of Nishchitpur village under the Baunsuli panchayat of Patana block. According to reports, she was playing with her friends near a changing room by the village pond when its wall suddenly gave way and collapsed on her. Khulana was rushed to the Keonjhar District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in critical condition, where she later succumbed to her injuries while undergoing treatment. Her body was sent for post-mortem, and later handed over to her family Monday. Turumunga police have registered a case (18/25) in connection with the incident. Assistant Sub-Inspector Debendra Murmu confirmed that an investigation is under way.



“

When we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have Knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO



# Trump Targets BRICS

US President Donald Trump is opening new theatres of his global tariff war. This appears to be a strategy he is determined to adopt even as his trade war is forcing some of the US-friendly countries to join hands with those with which they do not see eye to eye on many issues.

Trump betrays his increasing impatience by making the BRICS group of emerging major economies a new target of his tariff war. He has threatened members of the group, which include China and India, with 10 per cent tariffs on goods exported to the US in addition to heightened tariffs already on the horizon for some of them. As leaders of the group met for an annual summit in Rio de Janeiro recently, Trump thundered threatening on social media “any country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS” will face those duties with “no exceptions.” He then followed it up with the assertion that he intended to break up the group.

In a sense, the new development demonstrates how the US under Trump is concerned by the fact that BRICS is growing from strength to strength expanding its membership to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, while more countries are waiting in the wings for entry. It also puts the international spotlight on the group, which roughly serves as the Global South’s answer to the US-led G7 advanced economies. It is also true that the BRICS member states are too politically and ideologically disparate to be effective. That gives rise to the question why Trump is so concerned about it. The answer seems to be his worry that BRICS may pose a grave threat to the dominance of the dollar in the world economy and the accumulation of wealth in the USA. What he said during his cabinet meeting soon after the BRICS session points to this direction: “BRICS was set up to hurt us, degenerate our dollar and take it off as the standard.”

In fact, the ambitious goal of a “BRICS currency” had first been suggested by Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2023, but the idea was shelved as it appeared to be too complex and practically impossible. While most other nations supported Brazil’s idea, it was India that opposed the push for a unified currency simply due to political considerations and not economic. However, BRICS countries are keen on expanding trade in their national currencies, rather than relying on the US dollar. The aim is to reduce the dollar dependence of a significant chunk of the global economy. BRICS members account for more than a third of global GDP based on purchasing power parity. Interestingly, in a joint declaration released during their Brazil summit, the group of BRICS leaders endorsed ongoing discussions of a “cross-border payments initiative” between member countries. If such a system is developed, analysts suggest, it could potentially become an alternative to the SWIFT inter-bank network, using BRICS countries’ currencies or their digital equivalents.

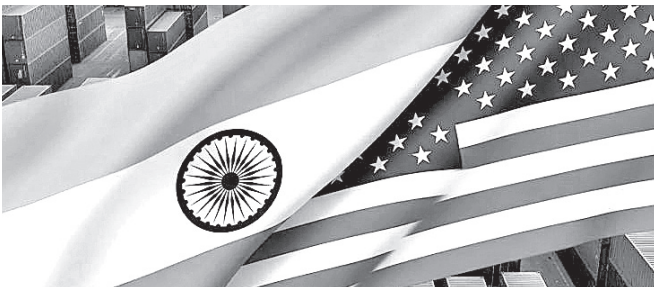
Bypassing SWIFT and a dollar-denominated trade system has obvious benefits for certain BRICS countries, such as Russia and Iran, as it could allow them to wriggle out of heavy Western sanctions. Other countries also see a benefit in not relying on the US dollar for trade. For example, China has long been aiming to make its renminbi an international currency and counter what it calls the US’ “financial hegemony.”

There are conflicting interests in the BRICS group that make united economic actions a very difficult task. But, what appeared to be too complex even a few months back, now becomes feasible for the simple reason that Trump is resolved to reset the global economic order dismantling the previous system. His belligerence in asserting America’s economic power is ironically bringing together other countries in the Global South so that they can work against the might of the US and precisely negating his intentions.



Jagdish Rattanani

THE DRIFT IS CLEAR. THE US WANTS TO EXTRACT IF NOT EXTORT



The US has extracted significant concessions from others, including the UK, and would demand that India, too, fall in line

ence of the government under Narendra Modi. In other words, this government should ignore image management within the nation vis a vis the trade deal and take tough calls that protect Indian interests even if this runs the risk of not having a trade deal. We may have a deal and be worse off as a nation if India allows concessions and gives in where it should not; we may equally not have a trade deal and be worse off in different ways since tariffs will impact trade and hurt India and its exports.

The latter will create disruption in the immediate, but it has chances of some mitigation with the US in a trade war against all that will likely bring some reversals over time since its own economy will not be able to take the hit of tariffs beyond a point. Besides, this will be a signal to the world that India will not and should not be pushed. Having a trade deal by granting undue concessions to the US can be far worse since it may open Indian markets in ways and to products and services that will have deep and long-lasting impacts on the nation. The risks are many, but they will take their toll long after the deal is signed, so this is the space to be more watchful. Powerful US lobbies sitting close to if not right with in the White House are at work

pushing for what India will see as undue concessions.

In this context, two hot button items that appear to have emerged are the US push for exports of GM crops and exports of cow milk to India. None of these are new demands. Both are red lines that cannot be crossed and should not be crossed. They cannot be part of discussions if the Indian side makes it clear that no negotiations on these are possible. For example, India requires that dairy products used as food must be from animals that are not given blood meals or given feeds containing internal organs or tissues of ruminant or porcine origin. This is a perfectly fair and reasonable requirement – cows and buffaloes used for milk production are herbivores and must not be given any animal products as food.

Further, milk in the Indian context is culturally sensitive given that it is used for religious offerings and in sweets for auspicious occasions. Which Indian would like milk that comes from a source that is fed organs or blood? Yet, the US position as articulated in the US ‘2025 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (FTB)’ is that Indian requirements “lack a discernible animal health or human health justification.”

This is one small part of a larger problem, one that the US wants to dump its excess produce which itself is achieved through intensive methods and a growing chemicalisation of the industry. Such a sectoral opening up will kill the Indian dairy sector. It will mix up imported US milk that contains recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), which is approved in the US since 1993 to increase milk production in cows but is banned in the European Union and Canada. Milk and meat from these sources have higher levels of IGF-1, a growth hormone which at high levels is said to be linked to prostrate, breast, colorectal and other cancers though the linkage is not definitive, according to the American Cancer Society.

On GM crops, the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture or ASHA-Kisan Swaraj network which brings together farmers and agriculturists has written to the government appealing against any concessions to the US.

The US wants much more than this. Take the example of stent prices, which were capped in India when the regulators found that price inflation was as high as 2000%. Everyone made merry while patients suffered, till the caps came in. The US in the 2025 FTB report has argued that “price controls (on coronary stents and knee implants) have not been increased in line with inflation and do not differentiate on the basis of the cost of production or technological innovation, which dissuades U.S. companies from serving the market.”

The drift is clear. The US wants to extract if not extort. India must resist.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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## SPECTRUM POLITICS

# Should we gild the cornices?



Andrzej Lubowski

TRUMP’S RIDING HIGH AFTER SIGNING THE “ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL ACT” AND BOMBING IRAN, SO A TRADE SUCCESS WOULD BE THE CHERRY ON TOP. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CHERRY WILL HAVE TO WAIT A BIT LONGER

Last weekend, US President Donald Trump, from his private golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, was deliberating over the phone about what to do with the tariffs announced on “Liberation Day.” Should he impose these, or give the world—and especially reluctant contractors—a few more weeks to think it over? The White House reminded, not for the first time, that the waiting rooms were crowded with eager parties, and the president had “clearly stated: The United States, the largest and best consumer market in the world, holds all the trumps and leverage in negotiations to unilaterally make deals with appropriate tariff rates for our trading partners.”

So it’s understandable that the president is a bit irritated—things are dragging on, since it’s been over three months since “Liberation Day.” Trump’s riding high after signing the “One Big Beautiful Act” and bombing Iran, so a trade success would be the cherry on top. Unfortunately, the cherry will have to wait a bit longer.

On Monday, he postponed

the implementation of the tariffs for another three weeks and sent warning letters to contractors who were dragging their feet. In the evening, he told journalists that the new deadline—August 1—was “final, but not 100% final.” On Tuesday morning, he published an online statement saying that “no extensions will be granted,” only to announce later that day that the original deadline hadn’t changed at all. During Tuesday’s cabinet meeting, he said, “that wasn’t a change,” but rather “a clarification, maybe.”

That meeting—fresh as warm rolls—gave the president a chance to share his feelings with the world. And he did, for 104 minutes. The mood swung from gloomy and full of complaints to cheerful. At the start, he lamented that “it’s hard to have a successful country when you have corrupt media.” Here, the president was referring to those who dared quote the preliminary intelligence assessment, which differed from his opinion that the strikes on Iran had “wiped nuclear sites off the face of the earth.” In a constructive tone,

he pointed out who should be thrown out over this. He expressed his disappointment with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who remains nice but just not enough.

When a journalist asked who decided to halt arms deliveries to Ukraine, a decision Trump suddenly reversed on Monday, he replied, “I don’t know. Maybe you can tell me?” And unfortunately, we still don’t know who decided. Maybe some insubordinate major, say, from the Marines.

It’s known that Trump can’t wait for the new central bank chief, so he pointed to the Secretary of the Treasury and said, “I like you better.” He was very annoyed when asked about Jeffrey Epstein, the American financier and convicted sex offender, and, in his usual delicate way, chewed out his people, who once were eager to solve mysteries but no longer are. And that’s the point. Once he let out most of his complaints, the mood clearly improved, as the president focused on interior decorating.

He described a pendulum clock he took from the State Department. Then he gave a

history lesson, focusing on several of his predecessors. The cabinet learned, for example, that President James K. Polk “was, in a sense, a real estate guy—people don’t know that,” and Dwight D. Eisenhower “was the toughest, at least until we came along.” He then turned to John Quincy Adams’ portrait, specifically its frame. “You know,” he said, “I’m a frames guy. Sometimes I like the frames more than the paintings.” The cabinet laughed. Then Trump looked up at the ceiling. The matter of whether to gild the cornices was weighing on him.

“Linda, do you have an opinion?”—he asked the Secretary of Education. Ms. McMahon—the one from the wrestling federation—replied that she liked the idea of gilding the ceiling. Then the president addressed the entire cabinet: “Who would be in favor of gilding? Could you raise your hands?”

Unfortunately, I don’t know the outcome of that vote. If anyone does, I’d be most grateful for the information.

The writer is a Polish journalist and economist.

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## WISDOM CORNER

“ If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

“ The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.

CONFUCIUS

“ Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

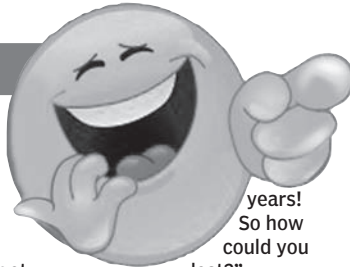
DALE CARNEGIE

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1799 The Rosetta Stone is found. The ancient Egyptian rock inscribed with a decree by King Ptolemy V was found in the Egyptian port city of Rashid (Rosetta) by French Captain Pierre Bouchard.
- 1955: Mainau Declaration is signed by 18 Nobel laureates. The declaration against the use of nuclear weapons was initiated by German scientists Otto Hahn and Max Born.
- 1965: Close-up pictures of Mars provided by Mariner 4. The Mariner 4, an uncrewed space probe launched by NASA in 1964, flew by Mars and returned close-up pictures of its surface on this day in 1965, the pictures proving that the planet’s rumoured canals were actually illusions.
- 1978: American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan performed in England before 200,000 people.
- 1988: The thriller Die Hard was first released in U.S. theatres, launching a hugely popular series and helping establish Bruce Willis as an action star.

## LOL LOST FAR FROM HOME

A police car pulls up in front of grandma Bessie’s house, and grandpa Morris gets out. The polite policeman explained that this elderly gentleman said that he was lost in the park...and couldn’t find his way home. “Oy Morris,” said grandma, “You’ve been going to that park for over 30



years! So how could you get lost?”

Leaning close to grandma, so that the policeman couldn’t hear, Morris whispered, “I wasn’t lost.....I was just too tired to walk home.”

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

## Broken system

Sir, The Election Commission of India’s revelation of illegal enrolment of Bangladeshi, Nepalese, and Myanmar nationals in Bihar’s voter list exposes alarming flaws in the electoral system. Despite repeated checks, loopholes allow foreign nationals to obtain voter IDs, jeopardising the integrity of elections. The rot stems from multiple factors—administrative negligence, political patronage, forged documents, and weak coordination between agencies. Local officials often overlook verification, while political elements misuse the system for vote banks. The government must act decisively to protect democracy. This includes mandatory Aadhaar-voter ID linkage, cross-border verification systems, regular door-to-door revisions, AI-based fraud detection, strict punishment for corrupt officials, and dedicated border monitoring cells. Safeguarding the voter list is vital to protect India’s democratic foundation. Any failure to act will allow external forces to manipulate electoral outcomes, undermining public trust. It’s time for citizens to demand accountability and for authorities to fix the broken system.

RS Narula, PATIALA

## Looming danger

Sir, The resurgence of the Nipah virus in Kerala has raised significant public health concerns, following the confirmed death of a 58-year-old man in Palakkad district. Six districts have been placed on high alert, with over 500 people under surveillance. Despite proactive measures by Kerala’s health authorities—including isolation protocols, contact tracing, and mandatory mask usage—the highly infectious and often fatal nature of the virus continues to cause alarm. The virus, believed to be transmitted by fruit bats and through close human contact, poses a serious threat if not contained swiftly. Given the risk of interstate transmission due to travel and cross-border movement, other states are strongly advised to remain vigilant. Hospitals and health workers must be alert to early symptoms such as fever, headache, drowsiness, or respiratory distress. Public gatherings in sensitive zones should be minimised, and people returning from affected regions must be closely monitored. The current situation serves as a warning, underscoring the need for heightened surveillance, public awareness, and preparedness across all states to prevent a wider outbreak.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD



# Crime wave in poll-bound Bihar

Proliferation of firearms, which are illegally manufactured or procured without a valid license, coupled with unchecked availability of ammunition, have contributed to the recent spurt in violent crimes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, July 14:** Back-to-back killings targeting businessmen, politicians, lawyers, teachers and ordinary citizens have raised serious concerns about Bihar's law and order, with police blaming the surge on the widespread availability of illegal firearms and ammunition. Over the past 10 days, a string of killings — including those of businessman Gopal Khemka, BJP leader Surendra Kumar, a 60-year-old woman, a shopkeeper, a lawyer, and a teacher — has rocked the poll-bound state.



**Increasing criminal incidents involve the sand mafia, land mafia and liquor mafia. These mafias are linked to the RJD. RJD members want to spread anarchy in Bihar before the elections**

VIJAY KUMAR SINHA | DEPUTY CM, BIHAR

ability of ammunition are issues which are being looked into by the authorities", he said. "A state with such a large population, having over 60 per cent population under the age of 30 and unemployed, is bound to be vulnerable to law and order problems", Additional Director General of Police (Headquarters) Kundan Krishnan said. According to the National Database of Arms Licenses-Arms License Issuance System (NDAL-ALIS) portal (Ministry of Home Affairs), Bihar has 82,326 firearms holders and 77,479 active arms licences. Out of 141 licensed arms dealers in the state, only 114 are operational, while 27 have been found inoperative. An analysis of district-wise firearm licences in relation to population reveals that Bhojpur has the highest density, with 205 firearms and 196 licensees per lakh population,

surpassing Patna, which has 161 firearms and 156 licences per lakh. SCRB data further shows Patna as the leading district in Arms Act cases, averaging 321.7 cases annually, followed by Begusarai (167.7), Muzaffarpur (158.3), Nalanda (117.9), and Vaishali (117.8). "Most violent crimes in the state involve the use of firearms. However, ammunition used in these crimes are manufactured by licensed industrial units. Therefore, the identity of the 25 inoperative arms dealers out of 138 listed in the state can be exploited by criminals to illegally procure arms/ammunition", the ADG added. Talking to PTI, Jitendra Rana, Inspector General (IG) of central range (Patna), said, "It is not true to say that gun-related violence has increased in Patna. Yes, it is true that some sensational murder cases have taken place. But, the accused

The state recorded 1,376 murders with an average of 229 each month between January and June, compared to 2,786 in all of 2024 and 2,863 in 2023. In the last 10 years, the number of recovered country-made firearms has more than doubled from 2,356 in 2015 to 4,981 in 2024. A correlation between arms Act cases and violent crimes shows Patna again topping the list, averaging 82 violent incidents annually, followed by Motihari (49.53), Saran (44.08), Gaya (43.50), Muzaffarpur (39.93), and Vaishali (37.90).

have also been arrested in those cases and arms and ammunition were also recovered". Commenting on the surge in violent cases, Abhayanand, former DGP, told PTI, "I must say that the existing criminal justice system is not able to match up to the crime. The legislature must make laws to give more power to police to check such crimes effectively". Reacting to surge in crimes, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in a post on X said, "If the crumbling law and order and rampant corruption in Bihar aren't making anyone angry in the state, then we must say that the person's sense of justice and human compassion has died. Ignoring the government's failures and public sentiments in the name of caste and religion is disastrous for Bihar and the people of the state. Under the NDA's rule, 65,000 murders have taken place so far !!! Does the unconscious Chief Minister dare to make a statement on any such incident?"



People offer prayers to Lord Shiva on the occasion of the first 'somwar', Monday, of the holy month of 'shravan' at a temple, in Patna, Bihar, Monday

PTI PHOTO

## 42 grassland bird species recorded in Kaziranga

**Guwahati:** Over 40 bird species, including a critically endangered and two endangered ones, have been recorded in the first-ever grassland survey in Assam's Kaziranga National Park, a state minister said Monday. "Thrilled to share that @kaziranga\_'s first-ever grassland survey has recorded 43 grassland bird species - including 1 Critically Endangered, 2 Endangered, and 6 Vulnerable species, plus several regional endemics," Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said in a post on X. The Brahmaputra floodplain ecosystem boasts the highest diversity of grassland obligate birds in India, reflecting the habitat's robust health and effective protection, he said.

# New SDG index shows stronger progress in NE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 14:** With better data systems, broader district coverage and stronger state involvement, the 2023-24 edition of the NER District SDG Index offers a more refined and reliable picture of the development journey of India's Northeastern Region. The 2023-24 index shows remarkable progress in several areas. All districts in Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura have now achieved 'Front Runner' status.

**All districts in Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura have now achieved 'Front Runner' status**



Hnahtial in Mizoram emerged as the top-performing district. States like Nagaland and Tripura showed well-balanced and strong performance across various goals. Compared to the first edition, the proportion of districts in the Front Runner category has increased from 62 per cent in 2021-22 to 85 per cent in 2023-24. This improvement is the result of national flagship schemes, better localisation by states, and saturation efforts under initiatives like the Aspirational Districts Programme. Released by NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this is the second edition of the index, building on the first report from August 2021. This latest edition tracks how districts in the eight northeastern states are performing on 15 of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). It covers 121 out of 131 districts, an increase from 103 districts in the first edition. The data for this index has also improved, with 84 indicators being used -- 41 from central sources and 43 from

state systems -- reflecting better coordination and reporting. The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, aim to reduce poverty, improve healthcare and education, ensure clean water and jobs, and create a more just and equal world by 2030. In India, NITI Aayog leads the national effort, linking these global goals to government schemes and working closely with all ministries. The UN team in India supports the process by ensuring inclusiveness and strong financial backing. The index not only ranks districts but also highlights gaps, challenges and disparities -- both within states and between them. It aims to encourage competitive federalism, support local planning, promote peer learning, and improve data systems.

## MIZORAM ON TRACK

# Aizawl joins India's rly network after 26 years



Mizoram's capital has been linked to the rest of the country through the 51.38-km Bairabi-Sairang line, making it the fourth capital in the northeast to get rail access after Guwahati, Agartala and Itanagar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Aizawl, July 14:** First conceptualised in September 1999, the Bairabi-Sairang railway line has finally brought Mizoram's capital Aizawl on the country's railway map after overcoming unprecedented challenges in terms of alignment, short working seasons and frequent landslides.

Officials said the dream which Railways saw in 1999 turned into a reality when it was commissioned in June this year by the Commissioner of Railway Safety. The 51.38-km long railway line will soon be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In 1999, when engineers learnt that a preliminary survey was not possible due to thick forest, poor visibility, and other local issues, it was agreed to conduct a reconnaissance survey, which involved a rough route assessment, according to documents. "Under a Preliminary Engineering cum-Traffic Survey (PET) a detailed examination of the route is done. As a PET survey was found not feasible, the Board was requested to change it to Reconnaissance Engineering-Cum-Traffic (RET) survey, which the Railway Board agreed on July 15, 2003," a senior railway official said. He added, "The RET survey for the Bairabi-Sairang Rail link was carried out by the Northeast Frontier Railways in March 2006. Based on this, RITES was asked to carry out a pre-construction Survey and Geo-Technical Investigation in 2008 for a new BG Railway line from Bairabi-Sairang. Accordingly, RITES submitted its final report in August 2011."

## Massive infrastructure, engineering feats

- 48 tunnels covering 12.853 km
- 55 major and 87 minor bridges
- 5 road overbridges and 9 road underbridges
- A towering bridge numbered 196, rising 104 metres high, 42 metres taller than the Qutub Minar

The NF Railways completed the land acquisition process by 2014-2015 and a year later, in 2015-16, it started the construction in full swing. Engineers working on the site said the project access/site roads are prone to frequent landslides and failures and become slippery even after a single rain, resulting in the stoppage of movement of materials at the site.

# Bihar: Rare sight on Kachhi Kanwaria Path in Munger

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Munger, July 14:** In a remarkable display of devotion, the followers of Lord Shiva, popularly known as Baba Bholenath, undertook an extraordinary journey in Bihar's Munger district. Blindfolded and guided by faith alone, the devotee walked the Kachhi Kanwaria Path to Baba Dham, vowing to complete the pilgrimage within 24 hours and offer water to the deity. The devotee, Mahendra Prajapati, hailing from Darbhanga, along with his companion Rajendra Prasad Yadav from Siwan, began the arduous trek as a fulfillment of a sacred promise made to the deity. Mahendra had prayed for a wish to be granted. Upon its fulfillment, he pledged to embark on this journey blindfolded, practicing what he referred to as "Hatha Yoga" — a spiritual discipline rooted in unwavering dedication. "I want Baba Bhole to reside in my eyes," Mahendra said. "That's why I have blindfolded myself — to see only with devo-



tion, not through sight." The journey, both physically challenging and spiritually intense, has caught the attention of fellow Kanwaris and onlookers alike. Many were awestruck by the unwavering determination of Mahendra, who walked without the aid of sight, relying solely on the guiding hand of his companion and chants of "Bam Bam Bhole". The Kachhi Kanwaria Path, a prominent route during the month of Sawan, often witnesses colourful and intense expressions of devotion. But this rare

## BLINDFOLDED DEVOTION

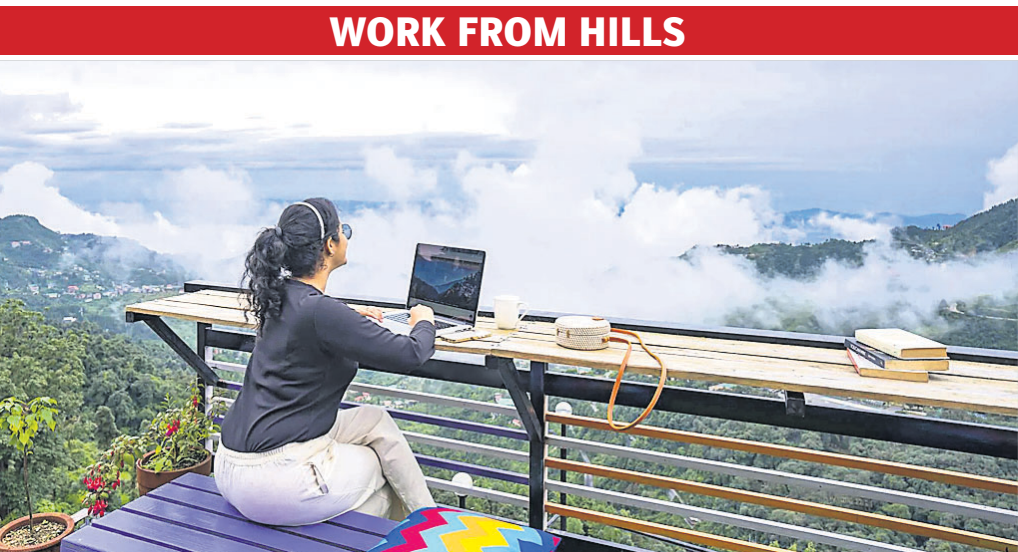
sight of blindfolded worship has touched hearts and stirred conversations among pilgrims. Sawan, also known as Shravana, is a sacred month in the Hindu calendar that typically falls in July or August. Dedicated entirely to the worship of Lord Shiva, it is considered a time of deep spiritual significance, associated with renewal, meditation, and heightened religious fervour. Devotees observe fasts, offer prayers, and perform rituals such as 'abhishekam' pouring water or milk on Shiva's idol. Many undertake the Kanwar Yatra during Sawan, carrying holy water from the Ganga river to offer at Shiva temples across the region. This act of devotion, known as the Dak Bam tradition, often involves long, barefoot treks. But Mahendra's unique journey, blindfolded and fueled by gratitude, has added a new layer of meaning to the spiritual tapestry of the season.

# Sikkim unveils village for remote workers

This initiative marks new chapter in sustainable, community-driven tourism and digital innovation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Gangtok, July 14:** A remote village in Sikkim is gearing up to welcome the first group of professionals, who are looking to work from the hills. Yakten village in Pakyong district, which offers breathtaking views of the Kanchenjunga, has been developed in such a way that it can host people who are looking to work remotely, living amid nature, an official said Monday. "Once isolated due to a lack of infrastructure, Yakten has undergone a major transformation to cater to the needs of modern remote workers. It has high-speed Wi-Fi with reliable backup, uninterrupted power



supply, and eight work-friendly homestays. Local transport tie-ups have also been established to ensure smooth accessibility for visitors," District Collector Agawane Rohan Ramesh said. "The mainstay of Sikkim's

## WORK FROM HILLS

economy is tourism, and now, apart from seasonal tourism, new areas with potential are being targeted by the government," he said, asserting that this is the first such kind of village to be developed in the country.

Ramesh said Yakten has been developed as a pilot project, which will be monitored over the next three years, and based on the results, more such villages will be brought under the ambit of the 'Nomad Sikkim'

scheme, which is being implemented in collaboration with NGO Sarvahitey. This model aims not only to provide a refreshing work setting but also to promote local livelihoods and bring attention to lesser-known regions of Sikkim, he said. Social welfare advisor to state government Pamin Lepcha, who declared the village open, said that as India embraces a digitally empowered future, 'Nomad Sikkim' stands as a replicable model, not only redefining the concept of workspace but also ensuring meaningful socio-economic opportunities for rural areas, setting a precedent for other regions across the country. "By enabling a lifestyle that harmonises productivity and purpose, 'Nomad Sikkim' stands as an example of how digital connectivity can empower rural communities and redefine the future of work from the heart of the Himalayas," she said.



of the day **quote**

The government will ensure a fully secure and comfortable Kanwar Yatra for Shiv bhakts (devotees). We will give full facilities and welcome kanwariyas

**REKHA GUPTA** | DELHI CM

In the midst of national discussions over the poor law and order situation in Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of the NDA government appears to be making announcements to divert public attention

**MAYAWATI** | BSP CHIEF

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who has dared to call the faith of Hindus a business, has actually made Muslims, mosques and madrasas his 'vote market'. The Samajwadi Party workers should demand that their brave leader change the name of Samajwadi Party to Madrasawadi Party

**KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA** | UP DY CM

**SHORT TAKES**

**Vadra appears before ED**

**New Delhi:** Robert Vadra, the businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, appeared before the Enforcement Directorate Monday for his questioning in connection with the UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari linked money laundering case, official sources said. The businessman's statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

**Contraband worth ₹15cr seized, 2 held**

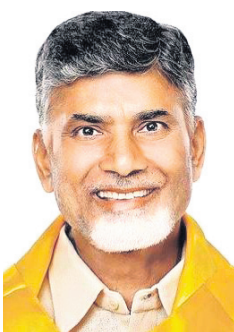
**Morigaon/ Guwahati:** Two persons were arrested and narcotics worth Rs 15 crore seized from them in two separate operations in Assam. The first arrest was made in Morigaon district, while the other operation was carried out in South Salmara. Police said that a 25-year-old woman, hailing from Manipur, was arrested near Jagiroad railway station in Morigaon.

**Bihar: Youth gunned down**

**Begusarai:** A 25-year-old youth was shot dead and another injured by unidentified miscreants in Bihar's Begusarai district Monday morning, police said. The deceased has been identified as Amit Kumar, while the injured is Prince Kumar (24). A statement by the district police said, "The incident took place in ward No. 24 in Lohiya Nagar area when the duo was shot at by unidentified persons." According to eyewitnesses, the accused fled after the incident.

**Farmer mauled to death by tiger**

**Pilibhit (UP):** A farmer was mauled to death by a tiger that clawed his neck and chest before dragging him nearly 20 metres into a sugarcane field in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district Monday, officials said. The incident, the sixth tiger attack in two months in the region, occurred in Bari Pulhar village when Dayaram, 39, stepped out of his house early in the morning to inspect his sugarcane crop. As he entered the field, a tiger lying in wait pounced on him, inflicting fatal injuries to his neck and chest and dragging his body deeper into the field.



**Heartiest congratulations to P Ashok Gajapathi Raju Garu on his appointment as the Governor of Goa. This is a moment of great pride for the people of our state**

**N CHANDRABABU NAIDU** | ANDHRA CM

**DELHI CM WARNS AGAINST DISTURBING KANWAR YATRA**

The Kanwar Yatra got into high gear on the first Monday of the Hindu month of Shravan with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewing preparations and his Delhi counterpart Rekha Gupta saying her government would ensure "secure" passage for the Shiv devotees. Reports also came in of an eatery allegedly being vandalised in Muzaffarnagar by a group of kanwariyas



**INDIAN NURSE ON DEATH ROW IN YEMEN**

**Nothing much govt can do: Centre to SC**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The Centre Monday informed the Supreme Court that it was doing whatever was "utmost possible" to save an Indian nurse facing execution July 16 for murder in Yemen, but "nothing much" could be done keeping in view the status of Yemen.

"There is a point up to which the Government of India can go and we have reached that point," attorney general R Venkataramani informed a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta. The top law officer said the government was keen to save its citizens and was doing "utmost possible" in the matter.

"Having regard to the sensitivity and status of Yemen as a place, there is nothing much the Government of India can do," he said. He further referred to the Houthis in Yemen, saying it was not even diplomatically recognised.

Venkataramani said the government recently wrote to the public prosecutor of the area concerned to find out if the execution could be suspended for the time being.

"The Government of India is trying its best," Venkataramani said, "and has also engaged with some sheikhs who are very influential people there."

Priya, a nurse from Palakkad district of Kerala, was convicted of murdering her Yemeni business partner in 2017. She was sentenced to death in 2020, and her final appeal was rejected in 2023. She is currently imprisoned in a jail in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen.



**The apex court was hearing a plea seeking a direction to the Centre to use diplomatic channels to save Indian nurse Nimisha Priya, 38, facing execution in Yemen**

On Monday, the counsel appearing for petitioner organisation 'Save Nimisha Priya - International Action Council' which extends legal support to assist Priya, said it was a "very unfortunate situation".

He said mother of Priya was there in Yemen along with a social worker to negotiate with the family of the deceased for blood money. Venkataramani said, "Blood money is a private negotiation."

The bench said, "They (petitioner) are saying they may be able to arrange for the blood money. The only question is the negotiating link." Venkataramani said Yemen was not like any other part of the world where the government, through a diplomatic process or an inter-governmental negotiation, can sought something.

"It is very complex," he said, "and we don't want to complicate the situation by going too

much public".

Venkataramani added, "And probably we got some kind of an informal communication saying probably the execution is kept under abeyance. We don't know how far to believe that." He said there was no way the government could get to know what was really happening in Yemen.

The top law officer said, "It is not a matter where the government can be asked to do something beyond the defined limit. It is not possible."

The bench posted the matter on July 18 and asked the parties to apprise the court about the status. On July 10, the top court agreed to hear the plea after the petitioner's counsel said diplomatic channels were needed to be explored at the earliest.

The counsel said payment of blood money to the family of the deceased permissible under Sharia law could be explored.

**SC raps cartoonist over post on PM Modi, RSS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The Supreme Court Monday said the right of freedom of speech and expression was being "abused" while hearing the plea of a cartoonist accused of sharing alleged objectionable cartoons of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and RSS workers on social media.

"Why do you do all this?" a bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar asked the counsel of cartoonist Hemant Malviya, who sought anticipatory bail in the matter.

Advocate Vrinda Grover, representing Malviya, said the matter was over a cartoon made in 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic. "It may be unpalatable. Let me say it is in poor taste. Let me go to that extent. But

is it an offence? My lords have said, it can be offensive but it is not an offence. I am simply on law. I am not trying to justify anything," she said.

Grover agreed to delete the post made by Malviya. "Whatever we may do with this case, but this is definitely the case that the freedom of speech and expression is being abused," Justice Dhulia observed.

Additional solicitor general K M Nataraj, appearing for Madhya Pradesh, said such "things" were repeatedly done. When Grover said there should be some maturity, Nataraj said, "It is not the question of maturity alone. It is something more." Referring to the time of the cartoon's inception, Grover said there had been no law and order problem since then.



Farmers plant rice saplings at a field amid the monsoon season in Ranchi, Jharkhand

PTI PHOTO

**Global vaccine reserves helped prevent over 3L deaths: Study**

**The alliance, established in 2000, funds the roll-out and scale-up of new vaccines through routine healthcare systems and preventive campaigns**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Global stockpiles of vaccines under programmes supported by 'Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance,' helped prevent more than 5.8 million cases and 3,27,000 deaths from outbreaks in low- and middle-income countries since 2000, according to a new study.

The alliance, established

in 2000, funds the roll-out and scale-up of new vaccines through routine healthcare systems and preventive campaigns.

The findings, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health, highlight life-saving impacts and economic benefits of nearly \$32 billion due to outbreak response immunisation programmes aimed at containing vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. "For diseases with routine vaccination programs, maintaining high levels of population immunity is vital for preventing large outbreaks," lead author Dominic Delpert, a PhD candidate at Burnet Institute, an Australian-based medical research institute and NGO said.

"But when outbreaks do occur, a rapid vaccine response



typically provides the greatest protective impact for the population at risk - and the faster the response, the greater the impact," Delpert said.

The researchers added that with routine vaccination declining and also impacted by cuts to the US' foreign aid, the study

highlights the ongoing need for an insurance policy against major outbreaks of diseases like cholera, Ebola and measles. The study analysed 210 outbreaks across 49 low- and middle-income countries that occurred between 2000-2023 for five diseases - cholera, Ebola, measles,

meningitis and yellow fever.

Globally, routine vaccine coverage has been shown to falter, with a recent study published in The Lancet journal attributing this to persistent inequalities, challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a growth of vaccine misinformation and hesitancy - factors which increase the risk of vaccine-preventable outbreaks, it said.

Low- and middle-income countries have been studied to bear the major brunt of these outbreaks.

Senior author Nick Scott, associate professor and head of modelling and biostatistics, Burnet Institute, said the global decline in routine vaccine coverage highlights the value of vaccine stockpiles as insurance against major outbreaks.

The authors wrote, "Across 210 outbreaks, ORI (outbreak

response immunisation) programmes are estimated to have averted 5.81 million cases 327,000 deaths."

The team also looked at the impact of outbreak response immunisation programmes in helping control large outbreaks in low- and middle before they became overly disruptive.

Larger outbreaks are linked with worse health and economic outcomes, often requiring more disruptive public health measures that involve travel interruptions and school and business closures.

"We found here that the presence of the (outbreak response immunisation) consistently resulted in smaller outbreaks (eg, reducing the percentage of measles outbreaks with more than 100,000 cases from 41 per cent to eight per cent)," the authors wrote.

**I-T Department cracks down on fraudulent claims of deductions**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The Income Tax Department Monday conducted a "large-scale" verification operation across 150 locations in the country as part of a tax evasion probe against individuals and entities facilitating fraudulent claims of deductions and exemptions in Income Tax Returns (ITRs).

Official sources told PTI that the department undertook searches and surveys at multiple office and house locations in various states during the operation that came about after analysing financial data received from third-party sources, ground-level intelligence, and advanced artificial intelligence tools.

These findings were further substantiated by recent search and seizure operations conducted by the department in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh, where evidence of fraudulent claims was found to have been used by various groups and entities, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

"Investigations have uncovered organised rackets operated by certain ITR preparers and intermediaries, who have been filing returns claiming fictitious deductions and exemptions."

The analysis, the Board said, reveals "rampant misuse" of deductions available under sections 10(13A) (exemption under house rent allowance), 80GGC (contribution made to political parties), 80E (deduction for interest on education loan), 80D (deductions related to medical insurance), 80EE (deduction for interest on home loan), 80EEB



(deduction for electric vehicle), 80G and 80GGA (contributions made to charitable or research organisations), and 80DDDB (deduction for treatment of critical illness like cancer, etc.).

"Exemptions have been claimed without valid justification. Employees of MNCs, PSUs, government bodies, academic institutions, and entrepreneurs are among those implicated," the policy-making body for the I-T Department said.

It was found that taxpayers are often lured into these fraudulent schemes with promises of "inflated" refunds in return for a commission, the CBDT said.

The Board said the tax department follows the guiding principle of 'Trust Taxpayers First', and it has always emphasized voluntary compliance and it has carried out extensive outreach efforts over the last few years by sending SMS and email advisories, nudging suspected taxpayers to revise their returns and pay the correct tax.

The CBDT said that despite a fully e-enabled tax administration system, ineffective communication remained a "significant" hurdle in assisting taxpayers as it was observed that such ITR preparers often create temporary email IDs solely for filing bulk returns, which are later abandoned, resulting in official notices going unread.

**SC junks plea against extension of ban on SIMI**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The Supreme Court Monday dismissed a plea challenging an order confirming the five-year extension of the ban imposed on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta refused to hear the plea against the July 24, 2024 order of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) tribunal. The tribunal was constituted under the UAPA after the Centre on January 29, 2024 decided to extend the ban on SIMI for five years.

It was set up for adjudicating whether or not there was sufficient cause for declaring SIMI an outlawed organisation. SIMI was first declared outlawed in 2001 during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government and since then the ban has been extended periodically.



of the day

quote

A seasoned statesman with vast administrative and parliamentary experience, his guidance will be invaluable as we continue our journey towards Viksit Goa 2037

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM



Rohit had shared a list of names that were in the original FIR. Most of them are now associated with the BJP. He is being targeted for being in the opposition and for raising his voice against the government

SUPRIYA SULE | NCP (SP) LOK SABHA MP



As many as 10,623 pension cases, which have been unresolved and pending for years, have been resolved in just one-and-a-half years under the ZPM government. There are 10,000 more such cases, which will be resolved in the next one month

K SAPDANGA | MIZORAM HOME MINISTER



POST

OF THE DAY

Politicians send their own kids abroad. And ask the middle class hard working folks to stay and build India.

Politicians avail hospital treatments abroad. And ask people to avail the extraordinary treatment that happens in India. Politician kids study in international schools. But, ask others to study at government schools. Point: don't believe in what people are "telling" you. Believe what people are "doing".

@RajeshwariRW

SHORT TAKES

Legendary actor B Saroja Devi dies

**Bangalore:** Veteran South Indian Actor B Saroja Devi died here Monday, film industry sources said. She was 87 years old. She died due to age-related ailments at her residence in Malleswaram, Bangalore. According to sources, she was found unconscious at her residence and was rushed to a hospital nearby, where she was declared brought dead. The doe eyed beauty, who made her debut when she was 17-years-old in a Kannada film, 'Mahakavi Kalidasa' (1955), went on to become a legend in not just Kannada, but also Tamil, Telugu and Hindi.

3 schools receive hoax bomb threats

**New Delhi:** Three schools in the national capital, including two CRPF schools and a Navy children's school, received bomb threats Monday morning, which were later declared "hoax" by authorities. The threats were sent via email in the early hours of Monday to CRPF schools in Sector 16, Dwarka and Prashant Vihar and the Navy Children School in Chanakyapuri, officials said.

UP: Female student stabbed inside college

**Aligarh:** Tension gripped a prominent women' degree college in Aligarh district Monday after an undergraduate student was allegedly stabbed by unidentified attackers within the college premises. The incident triggered protests outside the college, prompting police intervention.



Pleased to share that NITI Aayog has officially recognised West Bengal's strong performance across key socio-economic indicators – most notably in employment. The state's annual unemployment rate for 2022-23 stood at just 2.2 per cent, which is 30 per cent lower than the national average of 3.2 per cent

MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CM

ANTI-SACRILEGE BILL INTRODUCED IN PUNJAB ASSEMBLY

The AAP government Monday introduced in the Punjab Assembly an anti-sacrilege Bill, proposing punishment up to life imprisonment for sacrilegious acts against religious scriptures



SC ALLOWS SECRET RECORDINGS AS PROOF IN MATRIMONIAL CASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The Supreme Court Monday held "secretly" recorded conversations of spouses to be evidence in matrimonial disputes, including divorce proceedings.

A bench of Justice B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma, as a result, set aside a Punjab and Haryana High Court's verdict which referred to right to privacy and held such conversations were protected under Section 122 of the Evidence Act not to be used in judicial proceedings.

The top court disagreed

with the argument that allowing such evidence jeopardises domestic harmony and matrimonial relationship as it would also encourage snooping on the spouse.

"We do not think such an argument is tenable. If the marriage has reached a stage where spouses are actively snooping on each other, that is in itself a symptom of a broken relationship and denotes a lack of trust between them. The said snooping cannot be said to be a consequence of the Court admitting the evidence obtained by snooping," Justice Nagarathna said.

The judge underlined that



snooping between partners was an "effect" and not a "cause of marital disharmony". "The privacy of communication exists be-



tween spouses, as has been recognised by Section 122, but the said right of privacy cannot be absolute and has to be read also in light of the ex-

ception provided in Section 122 of the Evidence Act..."

The bench in the process restored the trial court order and said recorded conversations can be taken note of during the matrimonial proceedings. The family court was ordered to proceed with the case after taking judicial note of the recorded conversations.

Section 122 deals with the communications during marriage and said that "no person who is or has been married, shall be compelled to disclose any communication made to him during marriage by any person to whom he is or has

been married".

The case stemmed from a matrimonial dispute between two persons , who were married in 2009 and have a daughter born in 2011. The husband filed for divorce in 2017 citing marital discord, later amending the petition in 2018. As part of his evidence, the husband sought to submit a supplementary affidavit along with memory cards, a compact disc, and transcripts of telephonic conversations with his wife, recorded during 2010 and 2016. The family court at Bathinda had allowed the submission of these materials in 2020.

EC: 83% Bihar voters to be in draft electoral roll



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** The names of over 6.60 crore out of the total 7.89 crore electors of Bihar will be included in the draft electoral roll, the Election Commission (EC) said Monday amid the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of the voters' list.

The poll authority said with 11 more days left for the last date of submission of the filled enumeration forms (EFs) in the ongoing Bihar SIR, EFs of 6,60,67,208 or 83.66 per cent of the 7,89,69,844 electors in Bihar have been collected after two rounds of door-to-door visits by booth-level officers (BLOs).

So far 1.59 per cent of electors have been found deceased, 2.2 per cent permanently shifted and 0.73 per cent were found to be enrolled at more than one place.

"Therefore, 88.18 per cent of electors have either already submitted their EF or died or retained their names at one place or permanently shifted out of their previous place of residence. Only 11.82 per cent of electors now remain to submit their filled EFs and many of them have sought time to submit their forms with documents in the coming days," the commission said.

It said for the electors who may have temporarily migrated out of the state, focused efforts through newspaper advertise-

ments and direct contact with such persons are being made to ensure that they are able to fill their EFs well in time and have their names also included in the draft roll to be published August 1.

Such electors can easily fill up EFs online using their mobile phones through the ECINet App or the online system. They can also send their forms to the concerned BLOs through their family members or any online means, including WhatsApp or similar applications.

In the fourth phase of intensive revision in Bihar, the draft electoral roll will be published on August 1. The list will include all electors whose forms have been received by the deadline.

Names for which no enumeration form has been submitted before July 25 will not appear in the draft roll.

Electoral registration officers and assistant electoral registration officers will scrutinise the forms against the eligibility criteria laid down in Article 326 of the Constitution, which requires electors to be Indian citizens, aged 18 or above, and ordinarily resident in the constituency. Copies of the draft roll will be provided to recognised political parties free of cost and uploaded on the EC website.

Electors who miss the initial deadline can still apply during the claims and objections period using Form 6 along with a declaration form. Booth-level agents (BLAs) can continue to submit up to 10 forms per day even after the draft roll is published. In the fifth phase, from August 1 to September 1, any member of the public can file claims and objections. During this time, the electoral registration officers and assistant electoral registration officers will scrutinise applications and objections.

5 high courts get new chief justices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Nearly two months after their names were recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, chief justices were appointed to five high courts Monday, the law ministry said.

Separately, chief justices of the Rajasthan, Tripura, Jharkhand and Madras high courts were also transferred Monday. According to separate law ministry notifications, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

He was so far the acting chief justice of that court. Justice Vibhu Bakhru, a judge of the Delhi High Court, has now been elevated as chief justice of the Karnataka High Court, while Justice Ashutosh Kumar, the acting chief justice of the Patna High Court, is now chief justice of the Gauhati High Court.

Similarly, Justice Vipul Manubhai Pancholi, a judge of the Patna High Court, has been appointed as its chief justice.

Inspect fuel switch locking of Boeing 787, 737: DGCA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 14:** Aviation watchdog DGCA Monday directed airlines to inspect the fuel switch locking system in their Boeing 787 and 737 planes, two days after AAIB's preliminary report said fuel switches were cut off before the Air India plane crash that killed 260 people last month.

There are more than 150 Boeing 737s and 787s being operated by Indian airlines. Air India, Air India Express, Akasa Air, SpiceJet and IndiGo are the domestic carriers operating these aircraft.

Of these, IndiGo has seven B 737 Max 8 and one B787-9. All these are leased planes --either on wet or damp lease-- and so are not registered in India.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), back in 2018, had flagged the potential disengagement of the fuel control switch locking feature on certain models of Boeing aircraft, including 787s and 737s.

It was mentioned in a Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) but there was no airworthiness directive, indicating that the issue was not a safety concern.

On Monday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said it has come to its notice that several operators- internationally as well as domestic - have initiated inspection on their aircraft fleet as per the FAA's SAIB.

"... all airline operators of the affected aircraft are hereby advised to complete the inspection... no later than 21st July 2025. Inspection plan and report after accomplishment of inspection shall be submitted to this office under intimation to concerned Regional Office," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in an order. Fuel control switches regulate the flow of fuel into



CRASH PROBE RAISES MORE QUESTIONS: AIR INDIA CEO

**NEW DELHI:** The preliminary report into the crash of Air India flight AI171 last month has raised more questions, the airline's CEO said as he defended the fitness of pilots and aircraft saying no mechanical or maintenance issues have been flagged in the report. Chief Executive Officer Campbell Wilson said the probe into the June 12 crash of an Air India plane in Ahmedabad, which killed all but one of the 242 onboard and 19 others on ground, was far from over and it is unwise to jump to any premature conclusions. "The release of the preliminary report marked the point at which we, along with the world, began receiving additional details about what took place. Unsurprisingly, it provided both greater clarity and opened additional questions," he said in an internal memo to airline staff.

the aircraft engines. In its preliminary report on the Boeing 787-8 crash released Saturday, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) said the fuel supply to both engines of the plane was cut off within a gap of one second, causing confusion in the cockpit soon after take off.

"In the cockpit voice recording, one of the pilots is heard asking the other why did he cut

off? The other pilot responded that he did not do so," the report said.

AAIB, which mentioned about FAA's SAIB in the report, did not suggest any recommended action.

Air India Group has already started checks of the fuel switch locking system in their Boeing 787 and 737 aircraft.

Sources said the checks of the locking system in more than half of Air India's Boeing 787s have been completed while the checks are almost complete with respect to Boeing 737s.

Tata-owned Air India has a total of 33 wide-body Boeing 787s while Air India Express has around 75 narrow-body 737s. The sources said the group initiated the voluntary exercise as a precautionary measure.

Akasa Air and SpiceJet operate Boeing 737s. IndiGo also operates Boeing 787 and 737s but they are leased from foreign airlines, which means they won't be subject to the DGCA directive.

In the wake of the AAIB report, globally, some airlines, including Etihad Airways, have initiated steps for inspection of the fuel switch locking system in their Boeing 787s.

Air India flight AI 171, operated with Boeing 787-8, enroute to London Gatwick crashed soon after takeoff from Ahmedabad June 12, killing 260 people.

Shuks showcases zero-gravity experiment aboard ISS

After an 18-day stay at the ISS, Shukla and three others -- commander Peggy Whitson and mission specialists Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary -- of the commercial Axiom-4 mission set off on a return journey to Earth Monday evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla, the Axiom-4 mission pilot, has showcased a zero-gravity experiment aboard the International Space Station (ISS) involving water to illustrate how microgravity transforms everyday physics.

The experiment, part of Axiom Space's outreach and scientific mission, highlighted the unique behaviour of water in space.

After an 18-day stay at the ISS, Shukla and three others -- commander Peggy Whitson and mission specialists Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland and Tibor Kapu of Hungary -- of the commercial Axiom-4 mission set off on a return journey to Earth Monday evening.

Using surface tension to their advantage, Shukla formed a floating water bubble. "I've become a water bender here in the station," he joked. Another astronaut, Whitson, further went



on to press a plastic bag gently into the sphere, demonstrating how surface tension behaves like a magnet in microgravity by clinging to the object and distorting light like a lens.

The astronauts also spoke about the opportunity not just to engage in science but also to communicate the wonder and beauty of Earth from space. "I try to savour every moment I get -- just sitting by the window and looking down. It's the most beautiful view I've seen," Shukla said onboard the ISS.

Whitson explained that the crew is nearing the end of their two-week mission, during which they've balanced rigor by clinging to the object with education and public engagement.

Their mission has also included outreach to students and STEM communities around the globe, including in India, Hungary, and Poland.

Asked about re-entering Earth's gravity, Whitson was frank: "From me having experienced it, I know first person -- it sucks. Gravity really does."

Shukla, on his maiden space-flight, said he hopes to handle the descent better than his ascent, which involved some space motion sickness.

In the final leg of his space sojourn, 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.

"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 June 9.

The sprouts experiment is led by two scientists -- Ravikumar Hosamani of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dhar-

wad and Sudheer Siddappureddy of the Indian Institute of Technology, Dharwad.

Once returned to Earth, the seeds will be cultivated over several generations to examine changes in their genetics, microbial ecosystems and nutritional profiles, a statement from Axiom Space said.

In another experiment, Shukla deployed and stowed microalgae, which are being investigated for their potential to produce food, oxygen and even biofuels. Their resilience and versatility make them ideal for supporting human life on long-duration missions.

Shukla also captured images for the crop seeds experiment, where six varieties will be grown over multiple generations post-mission. The goal is to identify plants with desirable traits for genetic analysis for sustainable farming in space. Shukla said his research tasks on the space station spanned various domains and disciplines.



of the day

quote

HERE NOW

We hope for the leadership of the United States, because it is clear that Moscow will not stop unless its... ambitions are stopped by force




VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

The fact remains that the supply of weapons, ammunition, and military equipment from the United States continued and continues to Ukraine



DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

The threat to use the snapback mechanism lacks legal and political basis and will be met with an appropriate and proportionate response from the Islamic Republic of Iran



ESMAEL BAGHAEI | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, IRAN

SHORT TAKES

Russia to import 1mn workforce from India

**Moscow:** Russia will import up to 1 million workforce by the end of this year to address labour shortage in the country's highly industrialised areas, a business leader said. "As far as I know, by the end of the year, 1 million specialists from India will come to Russia, including the Sverdlovsk region. A new Consulate General is opening in Yekaterinburg, which will deal with these issues," Andrey Besedin, the head of the Ural Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told the RosBusinessConsulting (RBC) news agency.

Indian woman dies in UAE apartment fire

**Dubai:** A 46-year-old Indian woman was killed when a fire broke out in her apartment in the United Arab Emirates' Sharjah, according to a media report. The blaze erupted in the Al Majaz area last week when the woman was reportedly performing a special ritual in her home, Gulf News reported, quoting authorities. The woman was not identified in the report, which only mentioned her nationality. The fire, which started late Thursday in the unit located on the eighth floor of an 11-storey building, only damaged the woman's flat before it was contained.

Court cuts sentence for Kosovo's fighter

**The Hague:** Appeals judges at the Kosovo tribunal in The Hague confirmed the conviction of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) member Pieter Shala for war crimes, but reduced his sentence to 13 years in prison, the court said Monday. Shala was initially convicted in 2024 of war crimes including torture, murder and arbitrary detention, committed as he ran a makeshift prison during the 1998-99 Kosovo uprising against Serbian troops. People considered to be spies or collaborators with Serbs were abused at the facility and at least one man was killed, the judges found.

Nigeria's Buhari to be buried Tuesday

**Lagos:** Nigeria's late former President Muhammadu Buhari, who died in a London clinic Sunday aged 82, will be buried in his northern home state of Katsina Tuesday, the state governor said. Buhari, a former military ruler after a coup in the 1980s, returned to frontline politics to become the first Nigerian president to oust an incumbent through the ballot box in 2015. He was re-elected for a second term four years later.

WAR GAME WITH US

*Up to 40,000 troops from 19 nations are taking part in Talisman Sabre, across thousands of kilometres from Australia's Indian Ocean territory of Christmas Island to the Coral Sea on Australia's east coast*

REUTERS

**Rockhampton, Australia, July 14:** Australia's army fired a truck-mounted long range rocket system that has become a priority for US allies in the Indo-Pacific for the first time Monday, alongside US and Singapore forces firing the same system in joint war games.

Armoured trucks with HIMARS - High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems that can reach 400 km (250 miles) - are in high demand in the Ukraine conflict and are also being acquired by US allies in the Indo-Pacific, including Australia, which is reshaping its forces to respond to China's military build-up. On the first day of Australia's largest war games, "Talisman Sabre", the US, Australia, Japan, France, South Korea and Singapore held a live-fire exercise in northern Queensland involving US F-35B fighter jets and land-based long-range strike rockets and missiles. Up to 40,000 troops from 19 nations are taking part in Talisman Sabre, across thousands of kilometres from Australia's Indian Ocean territory of Christmas Island to the Coral Sea on



Australia's east coast. Australian Army Brigadier Nick Wilson, director general of the combined live-fire exercise, said it was the first time Australia, Singapore and the United States had fired HIMARS together, and the first firing by Australia on home soil. "HIMARS will be utilised

**The EU remains ready to react and that includes robust and proportionate countermeasures if required and there was a strong, feeling in the room of unity**

LARS LØKKE RASMUSSEN | FOREIGN MINISTER, DENMARK

**WILDFIRE DESTROYS HISTORIC LODGE**

A wildfire that levelled a historic lodge and visitors centre on the Grand Canyon's North Rim grew rapidly more than a week after it began as firefighters pushed ahead Monday with efforts to slow its spread. Park officials have closed access for the season to the North Rim



Pakistani airline blunder sends passenger to Saudi Arabia instead of Karachi



**Karachi, July 14:** In a bizarre airline blunder, a passenger from Lahore was flown to Saudi Arabia instead of Karachi and was deported back to Pakistan. The incident happened July 7 with Malik Shahzain, an electrical engineer from Karachi, aboard an AirSial flight. A Civil Aviation Authority official said they are investigating the unusual incident. "A passenger boarding the wrong flight by mistake can happen, but we have never come across a case where a domestic passenger ended up on an international flight," the official said. According to Shahzain, he was returning to Karachi from Lahore on the night of July 7 after learning that his child had fallen ill. He arrived at the airport on time and presented his pre-booked boarding pass, and was then directed to the lounge and the departure gate.

"There were two AirSial aeroplanes on the tarmac, one headed to Karachi and the other to Jeddah. The staff, without checking properly, put me on the international flight, and I only realised this when, even after two hours of flying time, we did not land," Shahzain said. While the passenger landed in Jeddah, his luggage reached Karachi. At the Jeddah airport, Shahzain was questioned by immigration officials for hours before they realised that he landed there for no fault of his and directed the airline to put him on their next flight to Karachi. However, the ordeal didn't end there, as the airline flew the passenger back to Lahore, informing him he would need to arrange his ticket to Karachi. The engineer claims the airline staff accepted their mistake in putting him on the international flight from Lahore to Jeddah when he was supposed to fly from Lahore to Karachi. However, he is still awaiting a formal response and apology from the private airline.

Trump gives 50-day ultimatum to Russia

REUTERS

**Kyiv/Washington, July 14:** US President Donald Trump announced new weapons for Ukraine Monday, and threatened to hit buyers of Russian exports with sanctions unless Russia agrees a peace deal in 50 days, a major shift in policy brought on by frustration with Moscow.

Sitting side-by-side with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in the Oval Office, Trump told reporters that he was disappointed in Russian President Vladimir Putin. Billions of dollars in weapons would be distributed to Ukraine, he said.

"We're going to make top-of-the-line weapons, and they'll be sent to NATO," Trump said, adding that Washington's NATO allies would pay for the weapons.

The weapons would include Patriot air defence missiles, which Ukraine has urgently sought to defend its cities from Russian air strikes.

"It's a full complement with the batteries," Trump said. "We're going to have some come very soon, within days... a couple of the countries that have Patriots are going to swap over and will replace the Patriots with the ones they have."

Some or all of 17 Patriot batteries ordered by other countries could be sent to Ukraine "very quickly", he said.

His threat to impose so-called secondary sanctions on Russia, if carried out, would be a major shift in Western sanctions policy. Lawmakers from both political parties in the United States are pushing for a bill that would authorise such measures, targeting other countries that buy Russian oil.

Throughout the more than three-year-old war, Western countries have cut off most of their own financial ties to Mos-



- Trump threatens secondary sanctions on Russia in 50 days
- Says up to 17 Patriot batteries could be available 'very soon'
- Russian markets rise, suggesting relief over delay

cow, but have held back from taking steps that would restrict Russia from selling its oil elsewhere. That has allowed Moscow to continue earning hundreds of billions of dollars from shipping oil to buyers such as China and India.

"We're going to be doing secondary tariffs," Trump said. "If we don't have a deal in 50 days, it's very simple, and they'll be at 100%."

**GRACE PERIOD** Still, Trump's announcement of a 50-day grace period was greeted with relief by investors in Russia, where the rouble recovered from earlier losses and stock markets rose.

"Trump performed below market expectations. He gave 50 days during which the Russian leadership can come up with something and extend the negotiation track. Moreover, Trump likes to postpone and

extend such deadlines," said analyst Artyom Nikolayev from Invest Era, a financial information firm.

Trump, who returned to power this year promising a quick end to the war, said his shift was motivated by increasing frustration with Putin, who, he said, had talked about peace but continued to strike Ukrainian cities.

Earlier Monday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held talks with Trump's envoy Keith Kellogg. Zelenskyy said he had discussed "the path to peace and what we can practically do together to bring it closer", including "strengthening Ukraine's air defence, joint production and procurement of defence weapons in collaboration with Europe."

An air-raid alert was declared in Kyiv shortly after Zelenskyy's talks with Kellogg took place.

Separately Monday, Zelenskyy said he would replace his long-serving prime minister Denys Shmyhal with Shmyhal's first deputy, Yulia Svyrydenko, in "a transformation of the executive branch". Her appointment will require parliamentary approval.

Avoiding trade curbs vital for normalisation of ties, India tells China

REUTERS

**Beijing/New Delhi, July 14:** India and China must resolve friction along their border, pull back troops and avoid "restrictive trade measures" to normalise their relationship, India's foreign minister told his Chinese counterpart in Beijing Monday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Wang Yi in Beijing during his first trip to the country since 2020, when a deadly border clash between their troops led to a four-year military standoff and damaged ties until a thaw began in October, when they agreed to step back.

"Good progress" made by the countries in the past nine months for normalisation of relations is a result of the resolution of friction along their border, Jaishankar told Wang.

India and China share a 3,800 km (2,400 miles) border that is poorly demarcated and has been disputed since the 1950s. They fought a brief but brutal border war in 1962 and talks over the decades to settle the



border dispute have made slow progress.

Last month, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told his Chinese counterpart that the two countries should seek a "permanent solution" to the border dispute, seen as a new push by New Delhi for a conclusive outcome.

"It is now incumbent on us to address other aspects related to the border, including de-escalation," Jaishankar said, adding that it was also critical that restrictive trade measures and roadblocks be avoided to foster mutually beneficial co-operation.

The minister was speaking in the backdrop of Beijing's restrictions in recent months on supplies of critical minerals such as rare earth magnets and machinery for manufacturing of high-tech goods.



A reveller is tossed by a wild cow at the bullring, at the San Fermin festival in Pamplona, Spain

REUTERS

Italy's abortion taboos challenged by new law in Sicily

REUTERS

**Catania, Italy, July 14:** Monia, a Sicilian woman in her early forties, was overjoyed when she discovered in October 2022 she was expecting her first child. Her doctor, however, recommended a genetic test due to her age, and the result was one no parent wants to receive.

The foetus had a genetic syndrome. Monia, who declined to give her surname, asked her gynaecologist what she could do. "Nothing. You don't want to terminate, do you?" the doctor asked her, she said.

He was a conscientious objector, Monia said, one of hundreds on the southern Italian island. More than 80% of gynaecologists in Sicily refuse to perform abortions for moral or religious reasons, according to the latest health ministry data, which dates to 2022, even

though the procedure has been a legal right for women in Italy since 1978.

To address that situation, in late May Sicily's regional council - run by a centre-right coalition - passed a law in a secret ballot requiring all public hospitals to create dedicated abortion wards and to hire staff willing to provide the service.

Under the national rules, abortion is permitted within the first 90 days of a pregnancy, or later if there are risks to the mother's health or foetal abnormalities. The latter circumstance applied to Monia, who went to the Sant'Antonio Abate hospital in the city of Trapani, in western Sicily, to terminate her pregnancy.

"All the gynaecologists were objectors," she said. "An obstetrician gave me a bed with only a mattress cover and said they would administer a pill every



Abortion is contentious in Catholic Italy, particularly in south

Over 80% of Sicilian gynaecologists refuse to conduct abortions

three hours until I went into labour." She was told she would receive no further assistance. Her story is far from unique

New regional law requires hospitals to hire willing doctors

Opponents ready to challenge law as discriminatory

in southern Italy, where cultural traditions are more conservative than in the Catholic country's richer north and centre.

At first, Monia's pills were ineffective, but after five days and a change of treatment she finally miscarried, attended to by a doctor and a midwife.

Hospital staff referred to her as "Article 6," she said, after the provision in the law that allows abortions beyond 90 days.

Abortions are only available in around half of Sicily's hospitals, health ministry data shows, a figure much lower than in central and northern Italy, where rates are around 70%.

**CATHOLIC INFLUENCE** Most other European Union countries allow health workers to refuse to perform abortions on ethical grounds, according to a 2022 study published in the Acta Biomedica journal. But the right is generally exercised far less commonly than in southern Italy.

One exception is deeply Catholic Poland, where abortion is

only legal in cases of rape or incest or when a woman's health or life is at risk. The Acta study said many Polish women have been forced to travel abroad to terminate their pregnancies.

Abortion has always been contentious in Italy, a Catholic country that hosts the Vatican. Right-wing Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni passed legislation last year to try to deter women from terminating pregnancies.

Pro-life groups have been allowed into abortion advice clinics, in a move Meloni's party said was aimed at giving women an opportunity for reflection before making a final decision. Some Sicilian politicians who strongly oppose the new rules believe the region should instead bolster its healthcare and support facilities for pregnant women, who often feel abandoned and see no alternative to abortion.



of the day

quote

Our entry into Europe and the UK later this year marks the next phase in our global ambition backed by engineering excellence and innovation

PAWAN MUNIAL | HERO MOTOCORP CHAIRMAN



I believe we have successfully navigated the merger and the bank is now positioned for faster growth. The reset in loan growth and the consolidation of the merger have resulted in a much stronger bank, that is now poised to capitalise further on growth opportunities

SASHIDHAR JAGDISHAN | HDFC BANK MD & CEO



Airports are among the most influential enablers of economic growth, urban transformation, and real estate development

TANUJ SHORI | CEO & FOUNDER OF SQUARE YARDS



SHORT TAKES

India, New Zealand trade negotiations

**New Delhi:** India and New Zealand Monday started the second round of negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement, aimed at boosting two-way commerce and investments, an official said. These talks will end on July 25. After a gap of about ten years, the two countries on March 16 this year announced the resumption of negotiations for the trade pact. "The second round of negotiations started on July 14 here," the official said. India and New Zealand began negotiating the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in April 2010. However, after ten rounds of discussions, the talks stalled in February 2015. According to economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), a major challenge in the renewed talks will be the disparity in tariff structures. New Zealand's average import tariff is only 2.3 per cent, with over half of its tariff lines already duty-free, meaning Indian goods already have substantial access to its market. In contrast, India's average tariff stands at about 17 per cent, meaning it would have to make significant reductions, making a traditional FTA less attractive for India, the GTRI has said.

India's vegetable oil imports flat in June

**New Delhi:** India's vegetable oil imports remained flat at 15.49 lakh tonnes in June compared to the same month last year, even as shipments of crude edible oils surged more than 25 per cent, industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said Monday. The rise in crude oil shipments came after the government reduced the Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on crude edible oils, including crude palm oil, crude soybean oil, and crude sunflower oil, to 10 per cent from 20 per cent, effective May 31. Total vegetable oils, comprising both edible and non-edible oils, stood at 15.50 lakh tonnes in June 2024. In the edible oil category, barring crude sunflower oils, imports of other crude edible oil variants rose 25.64 per cent to 11.51 lakh tonnes in June from 9.16 lakh tonnes a year earlier. However, crude sunflower oil shipments declined 53.58 per cent to 2.61 lakh tonnes in June from the year-ago period. According to SEA data, crude palm oil (CPO) imports rose 23.55 per cent to 7.88 lakh tonnes in June from 6.37 lakh tonnes a year earlier, while crude soybean oil imports increased 30.39 per cent to 3.59 lakh tonnes from 2.75 lakh tonnes. Crude Palm Kernel Oil (CPKO) imports rose 33.33 per cent to 4,000 tonnes in June from 3,000 tonnes in the year-ago period. Total imports of crude edible oils (CPO, CPKO, crude sunflower and crude soybean oils) stood at 11.51 lakh tonnes in June.



Our talent is more cost-effective compared to other countries. It is estimated that it costs 30-50 per cent less than the US, UK and Australia

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

BITCOIN SOARS TO NEW ALL-TIME HIGH

Bitcoin continued its rapid climb and hit another all-time high Monday as US lawmakers begin a week focused on passing pro-crypto legislation. Data from Coin-MarketCap showed bitcoin climbed above USD 123,000, up from about USD 108,000 only a week ago. The world's oldest and most popular cryptocurrency is currently the fifth most valuable asset class in the world at USD 2.4 trillion, giving it a higher market cap than Amazon.



SENSEX, NIFTY FALL FOR 4TH DAY



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 14:** Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined Monday, extending the losing run to the fourth day amid selling in IT shares and foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 247.01 points or 0.30 per cent to settle at 82,253.46. During the day, it fell 490.09 points or 0.59 per cent to 82,010.38 but recovered some of the losses towards the close.

The 50-share NSE Nifty settled lower by 67.55 points or 0.27 per cent to 25,082.30.

Sensex has dropped nearly 1,460 points or 1.75 per cent and Nifty by 440 points or 1.73 per cent in the four days of fall since July 9.

Among Sensex firms, Asian Paints fell the most by 1.58 per cent. Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

However, Eternal, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra and ITC were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,104.22 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

The broader indices, however, outperformed the benchmark, with midcap and small-cap indices gaining between 0.71 per cent and 1.04 per cent.

"Consolidation continued in the domestic market as the

tariff headlines and a subdued start to the earnings season are influencing investors to be more sensitive with valuation trading at 3 yrs high level," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said.

However, stock-specific action continues with sector-wise pick-up in healthcare, realty, consumer & discretionary, while IT remains the laggard due to the risk of earnings downgrades in FY26, Nair added.

"Markets started the week on a volatile note and extended their recent decline, ending nearly half a per cent lower. After an initial dip, the Nifty attempted to stabilize in early trade, but sustained pressure from heavyweight stocks dragged the index down as the session progressed," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.67 per cent and small-cap index edged higher by 0.57 per cent.

BSE Focused IT dropped 1.07 per cent, IT by 0.99 per cent, teck by 0.79 per cent and industrials by 0.24 per cent.

Realty surged 1.38 per cent, healthcare jumped 1.15 per cent, consumer discretionary (0.54 per cent), commodities (0.24 per cent) and power (0.24 per cent). As many as 2,137 stocks declined while 2,054 advanced and 149 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Retail inflation eases to over 6-year low of 2.1%

Wholesale price inflation turns negative after a gap of 19 months, declining 0.13 per cent in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Retail inflation declined to over six-year low of 2.1 per cent in June, nearing the RBI's comfort zone, on account of subdued prices of food items, including vegetables, driven by widespread monsoon.

The Consumer Price Index-based inflation was 2.82 per cent in May and 5.08 per cent in June 2024. Inflation is on a decline since November 2024.

Year-on-year inflation rate based on CPI for the month of June 2025 over June 2024 is 2.1 per cent, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said in a statement.

"There is a decline of 72 basis points in headline inflation of June 2025 in comparison to May 2025. It is the lowest year-on-year inflation after January 2019," it said.

The previous low of 1.97 per cent was recorded in January 2019. The NSO said the significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation in June 2025 is mainly attributed to favourable base effect and decline in inflation of vegetables, pulses and products, meat and fish, cereals and products, sugar and confectionery, milk and products and spices.

The Reserve Bank, which has been tasked to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent (with a margin of 2 per cent on either side), has cumulatively reduced the key short-term lending rate by 100 basis points since February in the wake of slowing retail inflation.

Meanwhile, the wholesale price inflation (WPI) turned negative after a gap of 19



months, declining 0.13 per cent in June as deflation widened in food articles and fuel, along with softening in manufactured product costs.

WPI-based inflation was 0.39 per cent in May. It was 3.43 per cent in June last year.

"Negative rate of inflation in June, 2025 is primarily due to decrease in prices of food articles, mineral oils, manufacture of basic metals, crude petroleum & natural gas etc.," the industry ministry said in a statement.

As per WPI data, food articles saw a deflation of 3.75 per cent in June, as against a deflation of 1.56 per cent in May, with vegetables seeing a sharp drop.

According to the NSO data on CPI, the annual inflation in the food basket during June 2025 over June 2024 was (-) 1.06 per cent.

A sharp decline of 205 basis points is observed in food inflation in June 2025 in comparison to May 2025. The food inflation in June was also the lowest after January 2019.

The inflation rural was lower than the national average at 1.72 per cent while it was higher in urban areas at 2.56 per cent.

The lowest inflation was in Telangana (-0.93 per cent) and the highest in Kerala (6.71 per cent). On all India basis, the annual inflation was negative in vegetables (-19 per cent), 'meat

and fish' (-1.62 per cent), 'pulses and products' (-11.76 per cent), and spices (-3.03 per cent).

Commenting on the CPI data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said the cooling was entirely led by the food and beverages (F&B) segment, which witnessed a deflation of 0.2 per cent after a gap of 75 months, after printing at 1.5 per cent in the previous month.

"The CPI inflation eased for the eighth consecutive month to a softer-than-expected 2.1 per cent in June 2025 from 2.8 per cent in May 2025, touching the lowest level since January 2019. We are not ruling out the possibility of a final 25 bps rate cut in the August 2025 meeting, carrying forward the front-loading seen in June 2025," Nayar said.

Paras Jasrai, Associate Director at India Ratings and Research, said that notwithstanding the deflationary turn of food items, core inflation increased to 4.4 per cent in June 2025, the highest since September 2023.

"A closer look indicates that it was largely on account of an uptick in inflation of jewellery items. Inflation of gold increased to a 58-month high of 36 per cent (as geopolitical tensions flared up in the Middle-East), the inflation of silver and other ornaments was also at elevated levels of 17.8 per cent and 21.5 per cent, respectively, in June 2025," Jasrai said.

Jane Street deposits ₹4,843cr in escrow account

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** US-based hedge fund Jane Street, which allegedly made handsome gains through market manipulation, has deposited the mandated Rs 4,843.57 crore in an escrow account in favour of Sebi and requested it to lift certain restrictions.

The watchdog is examining the request, Sebi said in a statement Monday.

In an interim order July 3, the regulator found Jane Street (JS) guilty of manipulating indices by taking bets in cash and futures & options markets simultaneously for making massive gains.

Sebi barred the hedge fund from accessing the market and impounded over Rs 4,843 crore in gains. The probe found that JS made a profit of Rs 36,671 crore on a net basis during the probe period from January 2023-May 2025.

In compliance with the interim order, a sum of Rs 4,843.57 crore has been credited to an escrow account with a lien marked in favour of Sebi, the regulator said.

"Jane Street has further requested Sebi that, following the creation of this escrow account in compliance with Sebi directions, certain conditional restrictions imposed under the interim order be lifted and that Sebi issue appropriate directions in this regard," the statement noted.

"This request is currently under examination by Sebi in accordance with the directions of the interim order," it added.

The regulator said it remains committed to following due process and ensuring the integrity of the securities market.



India achieves 50% non-fossil fuel power generation capacity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** India has achieved 50 per cent non-fossil fuel-based power generation capacity of 242.8 GW out of the total 484.8 GW installed capacity, five years ahead of its 2030 target, Union New & Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi said Monday.

This assumes significance in view of India's commitment at international fora to increased non-fossil fuel-based power generation in the country.

India has set an ambitious target of having 500 GW of renewable energy-based electricity generation by 2030.

"Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendrmodi ji, a major climate commitment has been fulfilled. India's

total installed power capacity now stands at 484.8 GW, with 242.8 GW coming from non-fossil fuel sources -- a powerful testament to our green progress. This is not just a milestone -- it's a giant stride towards a greener, cleaner Bharat by 2047," Joshi said on X.

"Historic Green Leap for India! India achieves 50 per cent on non-fossil fuel capacity -- 5 years ahead of its 2030 target."

Achieving 50 per cent non-fossil fuel capacity five years ahead of the 2030 target is a proud moment for every Indian, he stated, adding that Modi's leadership continues to drive Bharat's green transformation, paving the path towards a self-reliant and sustainable future.

Silver jumps ₹5,000 to hit fresh peak of ₹1.15L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Silver prices skyrocketed Rs 5,000 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 1,15,000 per kg in the national capital Monday as investors rushed to safe-haven assets following weakness in the US Dollar amid uncertainties over US tariff threats.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal rallied by Rs 4,500 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,10,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) Saturday.

As per the Association, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 200 each to Rs 99,570 and Rs 99,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), respectively.

"Silver prices are surging, reaching a new record high in the domestic market and hitting the highest level in



almost 14 years in the international market. This rally is driven by a change in investor interest toward alternatives to gold," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HD-FC Securities, said.

Additionally, silver futures rallied by Rs 2,135 or 1.88 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 1,15,136 per kilogram on the

commodities exchange.

Meanwhile, the most traded gold contracts for August delivery climbed by Rs 518 or 0.53 per cent to Rs 98,336 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

"Gold prices saw a positive trend as renewed global tariff tensions kept the outlook firm. With the US imposing addition-

Indian exports to US to be more competitive: NITI Aayog

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Indian exports to the US will become more competitive following imposition of higher tariffs by the Trump administration on countries, including China, Canada, and Mexico, NITI Aayog said in a report Monday.

The Aayog in its third edition of "Trade Watch Quarterly" said there will be significant opportunities for India in the US markets both in terms of the number of products and volume of the US market.

"India is expected to gain competitiveness in 22 out of the top 30 categories (HS 2 level), representing a market size of USD 2,285.2 billion," the Aayog said.

It further explained that China, Canada, and Mexico are the leading exporters to the US in these categories, therefore

higher tariffs on these countries at 30 per cent, 35 per cent, and 25 per cent, respectively, will enhance India's competitiveness.

The thematic focus of this quarter's edition is the evolving US trade and tariff structures and their implications for India's export competitiveness.

"India's relative tariff advantage vis-a-vis major competitors presents a strategic window to expand market share in the US market, especially in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, textiles, and electrical machinery, among others," the Aayog said, adding that the evolving global trade environment demands agile policymaking to capitalise on new trade alignments.

The government think tank said India's competitiveness will remain unchanged in 6 out of 30 categories, amounting for 32.8 per cent exports to the US



and 26 per cent of the US total imports, amounting to USD 26.5 billion.

While for six product categories at HS 2 level, India faces a higher average tariff (between 1-3 per cent) which can be negotiated with the US, the Aayog said, "In 78 products, accounting for 52 per cent of India's exports and 26 per cent share

in total US imports, India is expected to gain competitiveness."

For 17 products (accounting for 28 per cent of India's export to the US) out of the top 100 products at the HS-4 level, the Aayog said India's competitiveness remains unchanged due to no change in tariff differential. The Aayog also pointed out

that "India stands to gain in sectors with high tariff gaps vs China, Canada and Mexico -- minerals and fuels, apparel, electronics, plastics, furniture, and seafoods in a USD 1,265-billion market."

To support MSMEs and boost export competitiveness, it said the government could consider expanding production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes to include labour-intensive sectors such as leather, footwear, furniture, and handicrafts.

The Aayog also called for rationalising electricity tariffs by reducing cross-subsidisation for industrial users and promoting renewable energy adoption could help lower operational costs and enhance the global competitiveness of Indian manufacturers.

It suggested that building on the model of the India-UK agreement, India should pursue a services-oriented trade deal with the US, placing strong emphasis on key sectors such as information technology, financial services, professional services, and education.

"The agreement should include robust provisions for digital trade, creating a framework for enhanced cross-border service delivery," the Aayog said.

Meanwhile, an Indian commerce ministry team has reached Washington for another round of talks on the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA), which will begin Monday.

The visit assumes significance as both sides have to iron out issues in sectors like agriculture and automobiles. It is also important as the US has further postponed the imposition of additional tariffs on several countries, including India, until August 1.



# Heartbreak at Lord's

England beat India by 22 runs in 3rd Test as Jadeja's resilient innnings goes in vain



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, July 14:** Veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and the usually fragile tail brought India back from the brink but fell heartbreakingly short in the face of England captain Ben Stokes' resolve, going down by 22 runs in the wildly fluctuating third Test here Monday.

Down and out at 112 for eight, Jadeja (61 not out off 181) took the game deep with the help of Jasprit Bumrah (5 off 54) and Mohammed Siraj (4 off 30) before agonisingly ending up on the wrong side of the result in a game for the ages. The visitors trail 1-2 in the five-match series.

India were chasing a seemingly gettable 193 but folded for 170 after their front-line batters endured a rare collective failure, engineered by the pace trio of



Jofra Archer (3/55), player of the match Stokes (3/48) and Brydon Carse (2/30).

Siraj showed plenty of fight, as he always does, but his forward defence off Shoaib Bashir rolled back to his stumps, bringing him down on his knees in despair and a thrilling fin-

ish to the match.

In an extended afternoon session, Jadeja batted efficiently alongside Bumrah and Siraj to take the visitors to 30 runs shy of the victory target of 193. The south paw showed the stomach for fight as he batted out the two and a half hour session with the tail-enders.

India were 163 for nine at tea, collecting 41 runs in the session for the loss of Bumrah (5 off 54), enthraling a packed crowd that got it's money's worth thanks to the gritty cricket on display by both the sides.

It was Jadeja's fourth half-century in a row and

came in the most trying circumstances with India staring at a big defeat.

In the morning, the match looked as good as over for India whose inexperienced batting line-up failed in its first major test and surrendered against the Archer-led England pace attack.

India, who batted brilliantly in the first two Tests, could not stand the test of Archer and Co. on a spicy day five pitch.

The outcome was a fore-gone conclusion when Chris Woakes had Nitish Reddy caught behind at the stroke of lunch to leave India tottering.

However, Jadeja's steely effort created a glimmer of hope for India.

Starting the day at 58 for four and needing another 135 runs on a rapidly deteriorating surface with variable bounce, India needed their experienced batters to fire for their fourth success at the iconic ground since 1932 but it was not to be.

The loss of Rishabh Pant (9 off 12 balls), KL Rahul (39 off 58) and Washington Sundar (0 off 4) inside the first hour made the chase an improbable task for India.

Archer, making a Test comeback after more than four years, flaunted his X-factor status once again as he produced a beauty to send back a half-fit Pant back into the dressing room. There is an eight-day gap before the start of the fourth Test in Manchester from July 23.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**England: 387 and 192.**

**India: 387 and 170** all out in 74.5 overs (Ravindra Jadeja 61 not out, KL Rahul 39; Jofra Archer 3/55, Ben Stokes 3/48).

HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

MEETLE MEET 2025

OrissaPOST

A 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

On this day in 2006, a social media platform was launched to the public, quickly becoming a global sensation for microblogging. What was its original name, now known differently?

ANSWER TO MONDAY'S QUESTION

Bastille Day

RULES & REGULATIONS

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to [mettlemeet@orissapost.com](mailto: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

REENA RAVICHANDE

RUCHISMITA PRUSTY

Others who answered correctly are

Niranjan Nayak, Chandrasekhara Patnaik, Bhumika Subhalaxmi, Saswat Sourabh, Om Prakash Rath, Tanishna Bisoi, R Sekhar Rao, Megha Satapathy, Abha Priyadarshini, Debadatta Tripathy, Surendra Pradhan, Divyanshu Mohanty, Subhashree Jena, Ahaana Paikray, Saurav Saha, Pratyush Satapathy

## SHORT TAKES

### Women's WC: Divya, Humpy in last-16

**Batumi:** Woman Grandmaster Divya Deshmukh and the country's first woman to become a GM, Koneru Humpy made it to the last-16 of the FIDE Women's World Cup in contrasting fashion here.

Divya, a point ahead, needed a draw which she got against Teodora Injac of Serbia, while Humpy had to work hard to oust Kulon Klaudia of Poland.

With two Indians sealing their spots in the last-16, the other three in the competition – D Harika, Vantika Agrawal and R Vaishali -- too can make the grade but it all depends on how they perform in the tiebreaker. With \$6,91,250 at stake, the event promises a purse of \$50,000 for the winner.

In addition, the top-three will qualify for the next Candidates tournament, which will decide the contender to Ju Wenjun, the reigning women's world champion.

### Modric's new chapter

**Milan:** The worst-kept secret in football has finally been confirmed by AC Milan's official channels; Luka Modric will represent the Rossoneri during the 2025-26 campaign. The iconic Real Madrid midfielder tearfully revealed his departure from the Spanish capital at the end of last season. "The time has come," he wrote in an emotional post. "The time I never wanted to come, but that's football, and in life everything has a beginning and an end." After reportedly failing to strike an agreement with Lionel Messi's Inter Miami, the Swansea City co-owner has stayed within Europe's elite to join historic Italian giants Milan. "Ciao everybody," Modric told the club's social media followers. "I just landed in Milan. Very happy to be here to start a new chapter in my career. A big hug to everyone."

### Aaron joins SRH

**Hyderabad:** Sunrisers Hyderabad Monday appointed former India pacer Varun Aaron as their bowling coach for the 2026 IPL season. Aaron will take over from former New Zealand left-arm quick James Franklin.

# ROYAL BLUES REIGN SUPREME

## Chelsea beat PSG 3-0 for Club World Cup title as Palmer scores brace

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**East Rutherford, July 14:** Cole Palmer scored twice and fed João Pedro for a goal as Chelsea overwhelmed Paris Saint-Germain in the first half and beat the European champions 3-0 Sunday in the final of the first expanded Club World Cup.

Palmer had almost identical left-footed goals from just inside the penalty area in the 22nd and 30th minutes, then sent a through pass that enabled João Pedro to chip goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma in the 43d for his third goal in two starts with the Blues.

A 23-year-old who joined Chelsea from Manchester City two years ago, Palmer scored 18 goals this season.

PSG finished a man short after João Neves was given a red card in the 84th minute for pulling down Marc Cucurella by his hair. After a testy final few minutes in a game with six yellow cards, the teams needed to be separated as PSG coach Luis Enrique and Donnarumma pushed João Pedro near the center circle.

A heavy favorite who had outscored opponents 16-1, PSG had been looking to

It's a great feeling. Even better because obviously everyone doubted us before the game

COLE PALMER

complete a quadruple after winning Ligue 1, the Coupe de France and its first Champions League title.

Before a tournament-high crowd of 81,188 at MetLife Stadium that included US President Donald Trump, Chelsea showed the energy of a fourth day of rest after its semifinal, one more than PSG. Trump was booted when he walked on the field for the postgame awards, then posed with Chelsea players after he and FIFA president Gianni

Infantino handed the trophy to captain Reece James.

Chelsea had finished fourth in the Premier

### Scuffle breaks out between players

A scuffle broke out after the end of the Club World Cup final Sunday with Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique and goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma appearing to push Chelsea forward João Pedro. Enrique was on the field near the center circle and appeared to push João Pedro on the throat. Donnarumma shoved the 23-year-old forward, who fell over. Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca moved away Donnarumma, a fellow Italian. "This was completely avoidable at the end," Enrique said through a translator. "My goal and my objective as always, try to separate the footballers to avoid greater problems. There is a lot of tension, a lot of pressure, and there was a whole bunch of pushing that was going on by many people."

## National Sports Governance Bill to be tabled soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Monday said the long-awaited National Sports Governance Bill will be tabled in Parliament during the monsoon session beginning July 21.

The minister, while speaking to the media on the sidelines of an event to launch department of youth affairs' initiatives against drug addiction, also reiterated the government's position that Pakistani athletes will not be stopped from coming to India for multi-lateral sporting engagements.

"The bill will be tabled in the Parliament during the upcoming session. I will give more details in a couple of days," Mandaviya said.

The bill seeks to ensure greater accountability for the country's sports administrators with the provision of a regulatory board which would have the power to grant recognition and decide funding to National Sports Federations (NSFs) based on their adherence to provisions related to good governance.

## Indians miss the Open for first time since 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Portrush, July 14:** The flavour this week is all about the latest career Slam achiever Rory McIlroy, the 2019 Open winner at Portrush, Shane Lowry, and the course itself, which is expected to draw almost 280,000 fans over the week.

It will be the second highest number since the 290,000 attendance at the 150th Open at St Andrews in 2022.

McIlroy won the Masters in April and was T-7 a Trust but then had a short none-too-good spell at the US PGA (T-47), RBC Canadian (MC) and US Open (T-19) before he was T-6 at Travelers and tied second on Sunday at the Scottish Open.

Lowry has not won since the Zurich Classic in 2024 and was T-2 at Trust in May and has since missed two cuts at the US PGA and US Open and his best has been T-13 at the Canadian.

But between the two, they have guaranteed the second largest crowd ever at the Open as the sea-side town of Portrush is bursting at its seams with fans from all over.

**No Indians at 2025 Open**

There will be no Indian golfers at the 2025 Open, which is a pity, since Shubhankar Sharma has done well at the last two Opens – he was T-8 at Royal Liverpool for the best-ever result by an Indian — and was T-19 last year at Royal Troon.

The most appearances by an Indian at the Open is six by Anirban Lahiri and the best finish is T-8 by Sharma in 2023. Eight Indians have played at the Open – Gaurav Ghei, Jyoti Randhawa, Jeev Milkha Singh, Arjun Atwal,, Shiv Kapur, Gaganjeet Bhullar, Anirban Lahiri and Shubhankar Sharma.

Though Shubhankar is not in the field, he remains the only Indian to have played the Open at Portrush, and his appearance came back in 2019.

## Badminton stars Saina, Kashyap part ways

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 14:** Indian badminton star Saina Nehwal and husband Parupalli Kashyap, who is also a top former shuttler, have announced their decision to part ways mutually. Taking to Instagram Sunday, Saina shared the personal update that has taken the sporting world by surprise.

"Life takes us in different directions sometimes. After much thought and consideration, Kashyap Parupalli and I have decided to part ways. We're choosing peace, growth, and healing – for ourselves and each other," Saina, a two-time Commonwealth Games champion, wrote. "I'm grateful for the memories and wish nothing but the best moving forward. Thank you for understanding and respecting our privacy during this time," she added.

Saina and Kashyap married in December 2018. They trained together at the Pullela Gopichand

ing but the best moving forward. Thank you for understanding and respecting our privacy during this time," she added.

Saina and Kashyap married in December 2018. They trained together at the Pullela Gopichand

Academy in Hyderabad from their early days. While Saina became a global icon with her Olympic bronze and world No 1 ranking, Kashyap broke into the world top 10 and clinched the 2014 Commonwealth Games gold.

## MI New York lift MLC Trophy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dallas (USA), July 14:** MI New York clinched their second Major League Cricket Trophy in three years defeating Washington Freedom by five runs with former South African keeper-batter Quinton de Kock smashing a fine half-century at the Grand Prairie Stadium here.

De Kock's 46-ball 77, studied with six boundaries and four sixes, helped MI New York, owned by IPL franchisee Mumbai Indians, to a competitive 180 for 7 in 20 overs.

In reply, Washington Freedom could only manage 175/4 despite New Zealand opening batter Rachin

Ravindra's quick-fire 70 (41 balls) and country-mate Glenn Phillips unbeaten 34-ball 48. MI New York openers Monank Patel (28) and De Kock laid the platform for a fighting total with a 72-run stand before West Indian Nicholas Pooran (21) and De Kock put up another half-century partnership.

New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson (3/21) was the most successful Washington Freedom bowler, accounting for both the openers and the dangerous Kieron Pollard for a duck. Washington Freedom were off to a bad start, losing opener Mitchell Owen and Andries Gous for duck before Ravindra and Jack Edwards

steaded the innings with an 84-run third-wicket stand.

But the departure of Ravindra as he tried to go for a big hit to accelerate the run-rate in the 16th over saw Washington Freedom lose the way. This is Mumbai Indians' 13th major title globally, and their third in 2025, following MI Cape Town's SA20 win and the Mumbai Indians Women's triumph in the WPL earlier this year.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**MI New York** 180 for 7 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 77, Lockie Ferguson 3/21) beat **Washington Freedom** 175 for 5 in 20 overs (Rachin Ravindra 70, Glenn Phillips 48 not out; Trent Boult 2/32, Rushil Ugarkar 2/32)

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