



Vaani's regret

Actor Vaani Kapoor says social media has increasingly become a space filled with negativity

LEISURE | P2



India-US trade deal

Trump indicates that the ongoing negotiations between India and the US for a much-anticipated interim trade deal are on track

INTERNATIONAL | P10



NPCI expands UPI corridor

NPCI International Payments enhances UPI-PayNow payment linkage between India and Singapore

BUSINESS | P11



Yamal's b'day bomb

Barcelona star faces probe over the presence of a group of people with dwarfism as entertainers at his 18th birthday party

SPORTS | P12

Drunk man kills parents, spends night with bodies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, July 16: A drunk auto driver allegedly killed his parents with a hammer in Mayurbhanj district and spent the night with the bodies lying in a pool of blood, police said Wednesday.

The chilling incident happened in Dhonapal village in the Baisinga police station area Tuesday night.

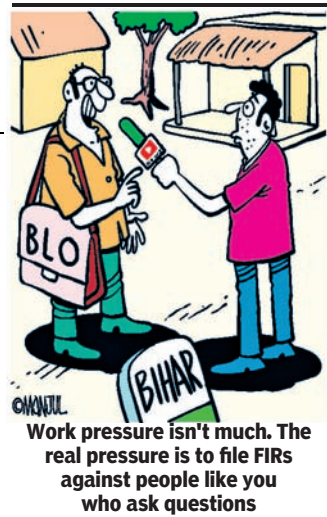
Locals spotted the bodies of the aged couple, Hadibandhu Sahu (81) and Shanti Sahu (72), with their son, Himanshu (55), sitting on a cot Wednesday morning and reported the matter to the police.

On receiving the information, police reached the spot, arrested Himanshu and sent the bodies to the PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada for post-mortem examinations.

As per preliminary investigation, Himanshu allegedly killed his parents using a hammer used for breaking stone following a quarrel last night, a police officer said.

Himanshu's wife and children were living separately for a long time due to family disputes, he said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Cabinet approves ₹4,879-cr 'Samruddha Sahar' scheme

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The state government Wednesday approved the ambitious 'Samruddha Sahar' scheme to promote planned urbanisation and balanced regional development as part of its broader 'Viksit Odisha 2036' vision.

The state Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, cleared 13 major proposals across 11 departments to accelerate urban growth, improve emergency services, strengthen governance, and enhance education access.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said the 'Samruddha Sahar' scheme, with a total outlay of ₹4,879.30 crore, will serve as a cornerstone for urban transformation. The initiative includes two major components: the Town Planning Scheme and Cities as Growth Hubs.

The Town Planning Scheme, with an allocation of ₹4,114 crore, aims to enhance land and asset management while ensuring sustainable urban development. The second component, 'Cities as Growth Hubs', will receive ₹765.30 crore to boost infrastructure, attract private investment, and generate employment in urban areas.

"This scheme will help transform cities into engines of economic growth, bringing Odisha closer to its goal of becoming a developed state by 2036," Ahuja stated. Among other key approvals, the Cabi-

DEATH OF FM STUDENT SOUMYASHREE

ODISHA BANDH TODAY



BATTLEFIELD LOWER PMG: Water cannons being used to disperse agitators during a protest by BJD workers over the death of the FM (Autonomous) College student following self-immolation over sexual harassment in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

- BJD protest turns violent; police use water cannons, fire tear gas shells
- Naveen condemns police 'excess' as party leaders injured during rally

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Eight Opposition parties, led by the Congress, are set to observe an 'Odisha bandh' Thursday to protest the alleged harassment and death of Soumyashree Bisi, a 20-year-old student of FM Autonomous College in Balasore, who attempted self-immolation on the campus Saturday over inaction and later succumbed to burn injuries at AIIMS Bhubaneswar Monday.

State Congress president Bhakta Charan Das Tuesday announced the bandh call de-

manding a judicial inquiry into the incident. Senior Congress leader Jayadev Jena said it will be observed in a peaceful manner across the state from 6am to 6pm. Jena appealed to all people of Odisha to support the bandh to provide justice to the deceased college student.

Das, through a video message, informed that all the private and government bus and truck services will be halted. Train services will also be affected during the bandh. Besides, all the government and private educational intuitions will be closed. Banks, govern-

ment and private offices will be closed too. Shops have also been requested to keep the shutters down. Only emergency services will be allowed during the bandh.

Meanwhile, several BJD workers and leaders, including two former ministers, were injured in a scuffle with police personnel here Wednesday during the principal Opposition party's protest rally.

The BJD's demonstration turned violent near the Lower PMG Square when its workers and leaders breached a barricade to march towards the state

secretariat, Lok Seva Bhavan, and clashed with the police personnel, an officer said.

The police used water cannons and fired tear gas shells to disperse the agitating BJD workers, he said.

However, the injured BJD leaders claimed that they were hit by rubber bullets, an allegation dismissed by the police.

"The allegation is untrue. The police used water cannons and tear gas shells to disperse the protesters. There was no use of rubber bullets as alleged," Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena said.

BJD president and Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, on the other hand, strongly condemned the police "excess" and described the action as "barbaric and inhuman". He said such brutality on peaceful protesters is not acceptable. Taking to X, Patnaik said, "The right to democratic protest is under grave threat in #Odisha. Today, the @bjd_odisha exercised its constitutional right to hold a peaceful demonstration, protesting the tragic death of a 20-year-old girl student - a victim of systemic apathy and sheer betrayal." **MORE P3**

Israel strikes Syrian defence HQ

REUTERS

Damascus/Jerusalem, July 16: Powerful airstrikes shook Damascus Wednesday, targeting the defence ministry as Israel vowed to destroy Syrian government forces attacking Druze communities in southern Syria and demanded they withdraw.

Reuters reporters heard warplanes swoop low over the capital and unleash a series of massive strikes on central Damascus. The cityscape was blanketed in smoke with a thick plume rising from the defence ministry.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on powerful strikes that hit in the mid-afternoon, which Syrian state media said were carried out by Israel.

The Israeli military had earlier announced a strike on the gate



- Israel strikes Syrian military targets to protect Druze minority
- Violence in Syria involves Druze, Bedouin, and government forces
- Israel warns Syria to leave Druze alone, vows continued strikes

of the defence ministry. Shortly before the massive blasts, Defence Minister Israel Katz had said painful blows will come.

Scores of people have been killed this week in violence around the southern city of Sweida, pitting fighters from the Druze minority against government security forces and members of Bedouin tribes,

prompting Israel to strike repeatedly with the declared aim of protecting the Druze.

The violence has underlined big challenges facing interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa despite warming ties with the United States, as he seeks to stitch Syria back together in the face of deep misgivings from groups that reject Islamist rule.

Akbar brutal but tolerant, Babur ruthless: New NCERT textbook

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Akbar's regime was a blend of brutality and tolerance, Babur a ruthless conqueror while Aurangzeb was a military ruler who reimposed taxes on non-muslims, says the NCERT's new Class VIII textbook while describing the reign of Mughal emperors.

The book, Exploring Society India and Beyond, released this week, is the first in the new NCERT curriculum to introduce students to the Delhi Sultanate, Mughals, Marathas and the colonial era.

While earlier versions covered some of these topics in Class VII, the NCERT says the timeline has now been shifted entirely to Class VIII, in line with the recom-

mendations of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023.

At the beginning of the book is a section titled 'Note on Some Darker Periods in History', where the NCERT offers context for the inclusion of sensitive and violent events, primarily war and bloodshed.

The note urges students to understand the historical origin of cruel violence, abusive misrule or misplaced ambitions of power dispassionately and states, "No one should be held responsible today for events of the past."

Michel Danino, Head, NCERT's Curricular Area Group for Social Science, defended the textbook, asserting there is no attempt to demonise Mughal rulers.

Rare oil portrait of Gandhi fetches millions at auction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 16: A rare oil portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, believed to be the only one he sat for the artist to paint, has fetched triple its estimate at 152,800 pounds in a Bonhams auction in London.

The painting, which had never before been offered at auction, had been on offer for an online auction with a guide price range between 50,000 and 70,000 pounds and was the top lot of the Travel and Exploration sale, which concluded Tuesday.

The portrait artist, Clare Leighton, was introduced to Gandhi when he visited London in 1931 to attend the Second Round Table Conference.

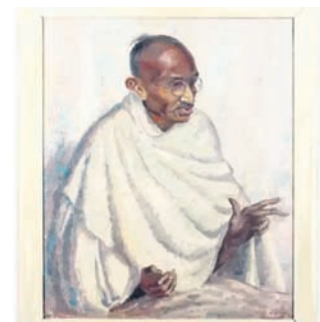
"Thought to be the only oil painting of Mahatma Gandhi, which he sat for, this was a very special work, which had never before been offered at auction," said Rhyanon Demery, Bonhams Head of Sale.

"Completed in London by the artist Clare Leighton, mainly known for her wood engravings, this work was a testament to Gandhi's power to connect

with people far and wide, and presented a lasting document of an important moment in history," she said.

The portrait remained in the artist's collection until her death in 1989, after which it was passed down through her family. "It is no wonder that this work sparked such interest across the globe," added Demery.

At the time of painting it, Leighton was in a relationship with the political journalist Henry Noel Brailsford. A passionate supporter of Indian



independence, Brailsford had travelled to the country in 1930, later publishing the book 'Rebel India' in support of the

Indian independence cause, the year he first met Gandhi at the Round Table Conference.

Bonhams said that it was through this connection that Leighton was introduced to Gandhi. She was one of the very few artists admitted to his office and was allowed to sit with him on multiple occasions to sketch and paint his likeness, the auction house revealed.

In November of 1931, Leighton showcased her portrait of Gandhi in an exhibition at the Albany Galleries in London.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You're finally impressed by the yogis. A degree course in Art of Living? Ganesha approves. You may even fulfill a desire to begin lessons in music or dance, or something that has interested you since long. A good, good day, and it smells of sweet success.

TAURUS

Your business is going to thrive this day, says Ganesha. Your plans, projections, speculations and gambles are likely to pay off and give you good dividends. You will be admired and respected in the business world for your honesty and integrity. You will be in the right frame of mind to think about expanding your business.

GEMINI

If you are into retail business, planetary positions indicate today is a day for bumper sales. You will set records in making profits. After work, you may want to take your beloved out shopping. Though it may burn a hole in your pocket, the returns you get once you reach home will be worth every penny!

CANCER

Ganesha says that you will carve out your path for progress. You will get respect and recognition from people. Business rivals and illness may bother you. Beware of enemies' actions. Your alertness will thwart their designs.

LEO

The discomfort of the fish-out-of-water syndrome will be a thing of the past, as today you will be more flexible, says Ganesha. So much so that you may even begin to feel bound by the environment in your office. Ganesha sees this as a good sign, as being adaptable helps you manoeuvre your way around people.

VIRGO

The artist in you will set the floor ablaze today. You have the remarkable abilities of a showman and comedian, and people will feel thrilled at your treasure of jokes in the evening, says Ganesha. However, you will do well to conserve some energy for other urgent matters and duties as well.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that you will try to enhance your skill regarding new technological inventions and will want to learn about the same in your spare time. Ganesha says that if you wish to gain success you need to first leave your ego behind. Only then will you be able to stride ahead on the path to progress.

SCORPIO

Don't put off cultivating healthy eating habits, says Ganesha. You should do better to control over-indulging in food as it may lead to obesity. Ganesha advises you to stick to a healthy lifestyle, especially when it comes to meals.

SAGITTARIUS

You may have been experiencing hair loss in the past due to back-breaking stress, but things will begin to clean up today. As complex issues begin to fall in place, you are likely to receive some good news about a promotion or increment. At the end of the day, you will feel content in your comfort zone in the company of near and dear ones.

CAPRICORN

You comparatively less experienced than others in the office, but the boss will choose you with a hope to get the company out of the existing troubles. Trusting your intelligence, skills, and potential, you will assigned some crucial matters. It is a great deal to live up to such high expectations, but you will be able to do so and win the hearts of many, predicts Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

You need to think dispassionately and with clarity, says Ganesha. As always, sentiments may come in the way of your success today. Be careful, especially while taking decisions that will impact your future.

PISCES

Now is the time when the inner circle of friends that you have nurtured over the years will prove their worth, says Ganesha. It is good to know that in times of need you can bank on their support and count on their cooperation. You will be able to luxuriate in the benefits of their friendship today.



MILEY FINDS IT HARD TO MAINTAIN SOBRIETY

Grammy winning pop star Miley Cyrus says she finds it really hard to maintain sobriety while touring. During an appearance on *Good Morning America*, Cyrus said: "It's really hard to maintain sobriety when you're on the road, which is kind of a pillar of stability in my life."

EMMA WATSON BANNED FROM DRIVING FOR 6 MONTHS

Harry Potter star Emma Watson, 35, has been banned from driving for six months, after she was caught driving at 38mph in a 30mph zone in Oxford. The actress was also ordered to pay £1,044 as penalty.



Vaani's take on online negativity

Mumbai: Actor Vaani Kapoor Tuesday said social media has increasingly become a space filled with negativity and urged people to check the amount of hate they put out into the world. Vaani's comments come months after she faced criticism for sharing screen space with Pakistani actor Fawad Khan in the movie *Abir Gulaal*. The romantic film, which was set to arrive in cinema halls May 9, was not allowed to release in India in the aftermath of the Pahalgaon terror attack in April.



"Last couple of months, years, everything became hectic and heavy on social media. So, I hope one can calm down on hate, create room for love and kindness, I know it doesn't sound very interesting. But what you give will come back to you. If you hate or troll somebody, it will someday get back at you, and it's going to sting you worse. "So, just be nice, kind, and try to be just as humans. I'm wishing we could be in a happier space, and be kinder to each other and ourselves," Kapoor told reporters at the trailer launch of her debut OTT show *Mandala Murders*. It is created and directed by Gopi Puthran, known for his work on the *Mardaani* franchise. Manan Rawat serves as the co-director.



Saiprasanna official face of Mrs. Grand International

beauty pageant for married women, has now come full circle, as she has been appointed the Official Face and Brand Ambassador of the year for the years 2025–2027. This makes her not only the first individual in the pageant's history to transition from winner to the face of the brand, but also the first Indian ever to be bestowed with this prestigious title.

Dr Behera not only bagged the trophy for 2023-24, she was also re-crowned as Mrs. Grand International 2024-25—a testament to her outstanding dedication, commitment, and the exemplary way she fulfilled her queenly duties.

Bhubaneswar: The journey of Dr. Saiprasanna Behera, the current titleholder of Mrs. Grand International, a



Shahana's startling confession



Mumbai: Actress Shahana Goswami has revealed that she is polyamorous and has multiple partners. Her movie *Four Years Later* may explore love the old-fashioned way, but her personal life couldn't be more modern. "For me love is open and free flowing. I have people in my life, but it's not a conventional setup. I am polyamorous. So, I do have partners, I have lovers. So, in a sense I am also single because there could be more," she confesses. Coming out publicly about her polyamorous identity, she says,

was second nature. "I speak about everything. I think it's important to speak about one's life. I don't feel any need to hide anything really. My family and I have always been very honest, open, and sharing. I've been the same with my friends. I understand that people have ideas of privacy that come from protecting parts of themselves. But I'm okay to not have someone understand. I'm not asking somebody to be like me, I'm only expressing who I am," shared the *Firaaq* actress in a recent podcast.

India's first Hollywood star gets biopic

Mumbai: India's maiden Hollywood actor Sabu's extraordinary life story is coming to life on the big screen.

The film and television rights to *Sabu: The Remarkable Story of India's First Actor in Hollywood*, the acclaimed biography by author Debleena Majumdar has been acquired by Almighty Motion Picture.

The biography chronicles the incredible true story of Sabu Dastagir, the Indian boy who rose from elephant stables in Mysore to become an international movie star.

"Sabu's story deserves to be told with grandeur and truth.

He wasn't just India's first global star—he was a bridge between worlds, cultures and eras. To bring his story to the screen is more than filmmaking," said Prabhleen Sandhu, Producer - Almighty Motion Picture.

The son of a mahout (elephant handler), Sabu's journey from colonial India to the Hollywood Walk of Fame reads like a forgotten epic of fame, war, identity, and legacy. His story spans continents, cultures, and eras — from his breakout role in *Elephant Boy* to his service as a decorated air gunner in World War II.

Sabu, who was born in 1924

in Karapura, Mysore, Kingdom of Mysore, then a Princely State of British India, made



his debut in the 1973 film *Elephant Boy* based on Rudyard Kipling's Toomai of the Elephants from *The Jungle Book*.

The film was directed by documentary filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty, who produced the Indian footage, and supervising director Zoltan Korda, who completed the film and won the best director award at the Venice Film Festival.

He went on to star in Hollywood classics including *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), *Jungle Book* (1942), *Arabian Nights* (1942) and *Black Narcissus* (1947), becoming a box office sensation and cultural bridge between East and West.

Indradhanu An Odia anthology set to break the mould

Bhubaneswar: Several Hindi anthology films—such as *Bombay Talkies*, *Lust Stories*, *Ludo*, and *Ajeeb Daastaans*—have resonated with cine-goers in the past, but will this format work back home in Odisha? While it's difficult to predict a film's box-office fate, young and enthusiastic director Arjun Samantray claims *Indradhanu*, comprising seven stories penned by contemporary Odia writers, will offer something unique amid the recently released commercial potboilers.

Samantray has also handled cinematography and editing. The film, set to release across Odisha July 18, is based on stories by Nikhilesh Mishra, Saroj Bal, and Badal Mohanty. Produced by Rajendra Mohanta, *Indradhanu* was conceptualised by screenwriter and co-producer Suryasnata Tripathy, alongside fellow producer Suravi Patnaik.

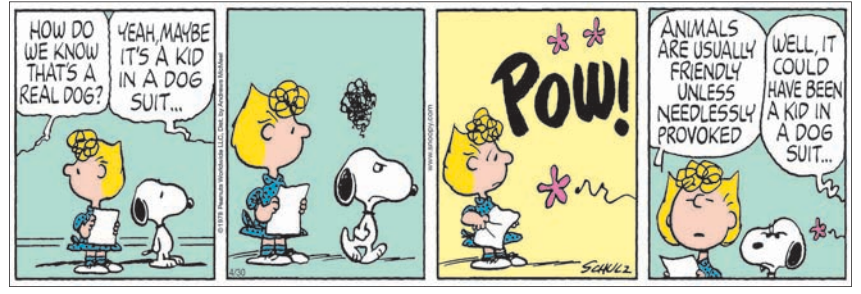
Popular musician Omprakash Mohanty composed two title tracks with lyrics by eminent poet Devdas Chhotray; leading singers Ratikant Satpathy and Susmita Das have lent their voices. Young composer Anurag Patnaik has taken the background score to the next level. The ensemble cast includes Ch. Bikash Das, Abhisek Giri, Di-



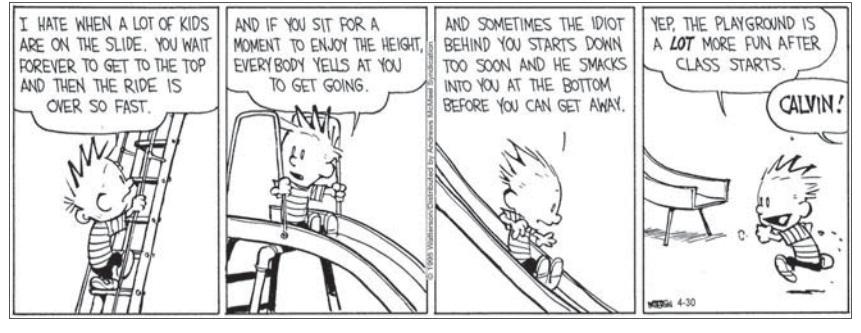
panwit Dashmohapatra, Bhaswati Basu, Ramakant Mishra, Smita Mohanty, Dharitri Khandual, Sudhashri Madhusmita, Rinku Pradhan, Samarpita, Soumya Ranjan, Dishani Debanjana, Debadatta Pati, Nishikanta, Ranesh, and Saqti Mohanty.

"This is an organic and deeply rooted Odia film of a different genre, carefully curated. It explores human emotions, relationships, fragile dreams, and the rich spectrum of human connections in a truly intriguing way," says director Samantray, who is eager to see the audience's response.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

Across

7 Boring movie

8 Vinegary

9 Mongolian desert

10 Greek letter

11 Little lie

12 Reporter's wish

14 Darjeeling or oolong

15 Complete

18 Morse E

19 Cricket club

20 Caravan beast

22 Tasseled cap

23 Clarified butter

24 "Fine by me"

27 Split

28 Archipelago off Scotland

Down

1 Mexican sandwich

2 Fireplace piece

3 Elliptical path

4 Noisy snake

5 Dowel

6 Lessen

13 Hot-tempered

16 Large heavy jungle knife

17 Rocket launcher

21 Train stop

25 Summit

26 Lion's home

SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

BJD LEADERS HURT; NAVEEN CONDEMNS POLICE ‘EXCESS’



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 16: As several BJD workers and leaders, including two former ministers, were injured in a scuffle with police personnel here Wednesday during the party's protest over the death of a college student following self-immolation in Balasore, BJD president and Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Naveen Patnaik strongly condemned the police 'excess' and described the action as 'barbaric and inhuman'.

The BJD's demonstration turned violent near the Lower PMG Square when its workers and leaders breached a barricade to march towards Lok Seva Bhavan and clashed with the police personnel.

Though police said they used water cannons and fired tear gas shells to disperse the agitators, the injured BJD leaders claimed that they were hit by rubber bullets.

Naveen said such brutality on

peaceful protesters is not acceptable.

Taking to X, Patnaik said, "The right to democratic protest is under grave threat in #Odisha. Today, the @bjd_odisha exercised its constitutional right to hold a peaceful demonstration, protesting the tragic death of a 20-year-old girl student - a victim of systemic apathy and sheer betrayal."

"As BJD leaders marched in a disciplined manner towards Lok Seva Bhawan, the police unhesitatingly used water cannons to disperse the peaceful crowd. Shockingly, they even fired rubber bullets without any provocation," he added.

Rajya Sabha MP Sulata Deo claimed she was hit by a rubber bullet and lost consciousness for some time. "The police resorted to brutality without provocation," she alleged.



Former minister Sudam Marndi alleged that party leader and former minister Priti Ranjan Gharai was also fired with rubber bullets and was admitted to a private hospital. Former minister Pranab Prakash Das was also admitted to a private hospital after sustaining severe injury on his leg, BJD said in a statement.

Patnaik, who was also in charge of the Home department for 24 years during his tenure as CM, alleged that the police used heavy-handed tactics to sabotage the BJD's peaceful march.

"Police acted in a blatantly partisan manner, rushing to fire rubber bullets when there was absolutely no justification

for such excessive force," he said.

He claimed that just a few days ago, a senior IPS officer was caught on camera near the CM's residence instructing his force to break the legs of protesters and promising rewards to those who achieved this feat.

"Today, the legs of two former ministers have been broken, probably requiring surgery," Patnaik said, adding that a woman MP and several party workers have been brutally assaulted by the police.

"Clearly, the government owes an explanation for this kind of directive," he said.

Patnaik said the BJD will continue its fight until justice is served for the college student who lost her life.

"Neither water cannons nor rubber bullets can weaken our resolve. Let it be clear: no force can stifle our commitment to stand up for justice and uphold the democratic rights of the people of #Odisha," he said in a social media post.

Patnaik spoke to Deo, and former ministers Pranab Prakash Das and Priti Ranjan Gharai over the phone and inquired about their health and wished them a speedy recovery.

Commissioner of Police S Dev Datta Singh, however, said, "The police have worked under the framework of the democratic system. We respect people's liberty and therefore reacted to the situation in a controlled manner. The police have taken action to uphold democracy, used water cannon and tear gas shells to disperse the crowd."

Balasore Bandh cripples life



UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Balasore, July 16: Normal life came to a grinding halt in this district Wednesday due to an eight-hour bandh called by Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the main Opposition party in the state Assembly, in protest against the death of Soumyashree Bisi, a student of FM (Autonomous) College.

The bandh, observed from 6am to 2pm, passed off peacefully with no reports of untoward incidents.

The BJD called the bandh alleging apathy and inaction by the college authorities, district administration, and political leadership, which, they claimed, led to the death of 20-year-old Soumyashree, a second-year Integrated BED student.

Soumyashree allegedly committed self-immolation after failing to get any response to her complaints of mental and sexual harassment by assistant professor Samira Ranjan Sahu.

According to her allegations, the Head of her department had made indirect sexual advances. She reportedly waited nearly two weeks for justice but received no support from the concerned authorities.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi spoke to Soumyashree's father and expressed his condolences over the family's irreparable loss

The bandh severely disrupted daily life. Schools, colleges, and other educational institutions remained closed. Public transport, including buses, stayed off the roads. Shops, markets, and business establishments remained shuttered. Train services were affected, especially at Soro, where protesters blocked the tracks. Banks and financial institutions also remained shut.

Although the district offices and courts remained open, functioning was nearly par-

alysed due to the absence of lawyers and public visitors. The main market areas in town wore a deserted look.

Meanwhile, the Congress and several other political parties have called for a 12-hour statewide bandh Thursday, also in protest over the same incident.

As protests and demonstrations continue to spread across the state, Soumyashree's father has appealed to all parties and organisations not to politicise his daughter's death.

In a related development, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, spoke to Soumyashree's father and expressed his condolences over the family's irreparable loss.



National Conference on Good Governance Practices

17-18 July 2025

State Convention Centre, Bhubaneswar

Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances
Government of India

General Administration and Public Grievance Department
Government of Odisha

Senior citizens pilgrimage scheme '25-26 launched

Applications open from July 17 to August 15 and can be submitted online or offline at block or district administration offices



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The state Tourism department has launched the Senior Citizen Pilgrimage Scheme (Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana - BNTYY) for the financial year 2025-26, aimed at facilitating pilgrimage opportunities for senior citizens across the state. Announcing the scheme at a press conference held Wednesday at the Panthanivas Auditorium in Bhubaneswar, Deputy Chief Minister Pravatari Parida invited eligible beneficiaries to apply. She informed that each eligible senior citizen will be able to avail the benefit of this scheme once in their lifetime. The scheme will be implemented in collaboration with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). All details, including eligibility and the application process, are available on the official Tourism department website: dot.odisha.gov.in. Citizens aged between 60 and 75 years, irrespective of caste or religion, are eligible. In the

case of senior citizen couples, either one must be above 60 years of age. Those in the 70-75 age group may take one attendant above 18 years with them during the journey. Applicants must submit one valid document for address, age, identity, or category proof, as per norms prescribed by the Government of India or the state government. Documents such as MGNREGS Job Card, Antyodaya Card, Annapurna Card, Old Age Pension Card, Widow Pension Card, or Ration Card under NFSA (bearing the applicant's name and age) will be accepted as proof of financial status (EWS category) and must be attached with the application. Applications will be accepted from July 17 to August 15, both online and offline. Offline submissions can be made at block or district administration offices. A district-level screening committee will verify the applications. District Collectors will select beneficiaries based on district-wise quotas. In case the

number of applications exceeds the quota, a lottery system will be used for final selection. Additionally, a waiting list (20 per cent) will be prepared to accommodate potential dropouts. The government will arrange transportation from the applicant's village to the railway station and back. During the pilgrimage, IRCTC will manage lodging, transportation, meals, travel guides, group escorts, travel insurance, and medical facilities. Each pilgrimage trip is expected to last five nights and six days. The BNTYY was launched by the state government February 1, 2016, to facilitate pilgrimage opportunities for senior citizens from all districts of the state. So far, over 37,555 senior citizens from various districts have benefited from 40 pilgrimage batches organised under the scheme, visiting prominent destinations such as Madurai, Rameshwaram, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Ajmer, Pushkar, Tirupati Balaji, Vellore, Srikalahasti, Shirdi, Nashik, Trimbareshwar, Velankanni, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Dakshinashwar Kali (Kolkata), Kamakhya, Agra, Mathura, Vrindavan, and others. In the financial year 2024-25, a total of 7,967 senior citizens undertook the pilgrimage in 10 batches to destinations including Shirdi, Nashik, Dakshinashwar Kali (Kolkata), Kamakhya, Ayodhya, and Varanasi. Each batch comprises 800 travelers, including 775 pilgrims and 25 escort officers.

PROTEST OVER FM STUDENT'S DEATH

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi over the death of a female college student in Balasore district, Mahila Congress chief Alka Lamba Wednesday said President's Rule must be imposed in the state as it was done in Manipur. The second-year BEd student of Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College died at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Monday night. She had set herself on fire on the college campus July 12 over inaction against a professor who allegedly sexually harassed her. Lamba alleged that the student died due to the failure of the system in Odisha. "Since the chief minister is the head of the system, he should resign and President's Rule should be imposed in the state," she said here. Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself earlier demanded imposition of President's Rule in Rajasthan, alleging that women and girls were not safe there, she claimed. Lamba said the Congress-led



Opposition had pressed for the imposition of President's Rule in ethnic strife-torn Manipur and will demand the same for Odisha during the upcoming Lok Sabha session. She claimed that the chief minister has no experience in running the government and has 'failed' to perform in the one year in office. "The CM has put up big posters of him with the PM across the state. But the reality is that entire Odisha is moving towards destruction and no woman or girl is safe in the state," Lamba alleged.

She claimed that the victim was associated with the ABVP, the students' wing of the RSS. "At least the PM should have posted a tweet in Odia, paying tributes to the victim and offering condolences to her family," Lamba said. The Congress will continue the fight for the safety of the state's women, she added. Meanwhile, Youth Congress members, led by its state president Ranjit Patra, organised a protest march to gherao the chief minister's official residence here, demanding resignation of Majhi and Higher

CITY METRO PROJECT Committee deliberates on critical issues

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The first Inter-Ministerial Sub-Committee meeting for Bhubaneswar Metro Project was convened Wednesday at Lok Seva Bhawan Conference Hall here, under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo. Formed under the directive of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the sub-committee includes a panel of ministers and senior officials.



The committee deliberated on several critical aspects of the metro project, including the comprehensive mobility plan (CMP), traffic decongestion strategies, and mechanisms for smooth inter-departmental co-

ordination. Emphasis was laid on creating an integrated and efficient public transportation system tailored to the City's growing needs. Discussions also focused on the transition between rail and road networks and aligning infrastructure development with the City's long-term urban planning goals. Notably, consultations have already begun with senior officials from the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, including CEO Kalyan Patnaik, Vikas Kumar, and Pramit Garg.

ICMR flags salt risk

NEW DELHI: Indians consume an average of 11 grams of salt daily—2.2 times the WHO-recommended limit of 5 grams—raising risks of hypertension, stroke, and kidney disease, warns ICMR's National Institute of Epidemiology. The findings highlight the urgent need to reduce sodium intake to prevent health complications.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit in Notary Public, Sunabeda I, Prahallad Pujari, aged about 46 yr. S/o. Late Lalit Pujari, resident of Qr No. J-140, HAL Township Sunabeda, PO/PS - Sunabeda, Dist. - Koraput, my son Susant Pujari has completed his matriculation from Public School, Sunabeda vide unique ID No. - 7889688 in the year of 2023. My son's D.O.B is wrongly recorded as 08.03.2007 instead of 08.03.2008 is Correct in his Birth Certification and D.O.B Correction Aadhaar Card. Aadhaar No. - XXXX XXXX 7617 all Future purposes.

I, Dinesh Pandey, S/o Late Sh. Mathura Dutt Pandey, Resident of Plot No. 125, Suanga, Near Radhe Krishna Temple, P.O.- Sarakantara, Dist. Khordha, Odisha, PIN-751019, declare by this affidavit No.- 27383 dtd.- 15/07/2025 that now onwards I shall be known as DINESH CHANDRA PANDEY for all future purposes.

UG spot admission deadline extended



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: In a significant development for aspiring undergraduate (UG) students, the Higher Education department has extended the last date for Spot admissions under the Student Academic Management System (SAMS). Initially scheduled to conclude July 16, the Spot admission process will now remain open until July 19. According to an official notification issued Wednesday, the extension aims to provide additional time for students and institutions to complete the admission process without hassle. The department has instructed all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) offering UG courses through SAMS to comply with the new timeline. "All HEIs are hereby directed to take necessary steps to ensure a smooth and hassle-free admission process during the extended period," the notification stated. The extension is expected to benefit hundreds of students who were yet to secure admission due to various logistical or personal delays. The move has been welcomed by students and parents alike, especially those coming from remote areas or facing internet-related challenges. Educational experts believe the decision reflects the department's flexibility in accommodating student needs while maintaining academic schedules. Further details and updates regarding the admission process can be accessed on the official SAMS Odisha portal.

ODISHA TO HOST NATIONAL MEET ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The two-day national conference on 'Good Governance Practices' will be kicked off Thursday here, bringing together senior policymakers, district administrators, and public service leaders from across the country to share transformative governance models and award-winning public service initiatives. Organised jointly by the department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and state government, the conference aims to highlight innovative practices that have received national recognition under the prime minister's awards for excellence in public administration. The conference will be jointly inaugurated by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh. DARPG secretary V Srinivas

and Odisha Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja will address the inaugural session. Ahuja reiterated the importance of inter-state collaboration and digital governance in shaping the future of public administration. The event features five plenary sessions focused on award-winning initiatives, under the themes of holistic development of districts and aspirational block programme. These sessions are being

chaired by senior officials, including DARPG additional secretary Puneet Yadav and joint secretary Sarita Chauhan. More than 200 delegates from across India, including District Collectors and senior state and central government officials, are participating in the conference. Over 20 speakers will present on innovative governance models and the positive transformations achieved through various flagship government schemes.

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ENHANCING ROAD SAFETY

Training for crash investigators



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: In a bid to enhance road safety, the Commerce and Transport department, in collaboration with IIT-Madras, organised a capacity-building session in Bhubaneswar for crash investigation officers. The core objective was to equip officers with practical skills to adopt a systems approach in crash investigations, moving beyond traditional methods to a more scientific and data-driven model. The session was attended by approximately 35 crash investigating officers from various districts, marking a concerted effort to equip them with advanced, data-driven investiga-

tion techniques. A major focus was the Root Cause Analysis Matrix (RCAM), a structured tool designed to identify crash causes from the perspectives of Man (Human), Machine (Vehicle), Method (User Behaviour), and Environment (Road)—collectively known as the 3M&E model. Officers refreshed their field data collection and analysis skills and learned to develop and communicate evidence-based hypotheses. The workshop aimed to deepen understanding of RCAM, promote design thinking, and encourage data-backed interventions. It also strengthened officers' capacity to conduct death audits and understand the human factors behind crashes.

Hands-on sessions using real-life case studies allowed officers to apply the RCAM Matrix and conduct structured crash scene assessments. This integration of theory and practice ensured the officers could directly implement their learnings in the field. Venkatesh Balasubramanian from IIT-Madras, the session's resource person, explained that RCAM enables factual, evidence-based intervention strategies by analysing human, vehicle, and property damage data. Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Usha Padhee highlighted the importance of consistent follow-up and personal responsibility, urging officers to be mindful of behaviour and committed to road safety. "Each of us can contribute meaningfully to safer roads," she said, encouraging innovative solutions. Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur praised IIT-Madras's initiative and stressed public awareness and accountability. "Every road accident must be followed by proper investigation. Even small efforts to spread awareness can have a big impact," he noted.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	86.01 ▲ 0.13	SENSEX	82634.48 ▲ 63.57	GOLD	₹98,054 ▲ ₹843
EURO	99.95 ▼ 0.46	NIFTY	25212.05 ▲ 16.25	SILVER	₹112,046 ▲ ₹560

WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.2°	32.4°	mostly cloudy sky
Min Temp	24.4°	23.4°	
Humidity	89%	94%	
Rainfall	39.6mm	26.6mm	

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The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or creed or scripture or idea or philosophy

SRI AUROBINDO



Far-Right Solidarity

Until recently, the spectre of an international far-right alliance of populist parties in democracies around the world has been just that: any appearance of cooperation was a form of self-promotion, rather than an expression of true solidarity. Few far-right figures have made any sacrifices for one another or seriously interfered in other countries' internal affairs to prop up allies. And efforts to unite the far right in the European Parliament have fallen dismally short. But that may be changing. US President Donald Trump's threat to impose punitive tariffs on Brazil, with the explicit goal of protecting its far-right former president, Jair Bolsonaro, from a "witch hunt," marks a significant shift in tactics. What's more, Trump's meddling in other democracies in the name of "free speech" serves powerful interests in the United States: tech companies that do not want to be regulated by foreign governments.

The international far right is often said to be a contradiction in terms. After all, every far-right leader is a nationalist, which would seem to preclude, by definition, an international alliance. But this view shows little philosophical sophistication or, for that matter, historical awareness.

In nineteenth-century Europe, liberals like Giuseppe Mazzini helped one another in their various struggles for freedom and independence from imperial powers. At the time, no one complained that there was a deep contradiction embedded in a liberal international alliance devoted to national self-determination.

By the same token, today's far-right populists can claim that they form a united front against "globalists" and supposedly illegitimate "liberal elites." This rhetoric – and the attendant conspiracy theories, often tinged with anti-Semitism – has easily crossed borders. Far-right politicians have also copied from one another what scholars have called "worst practices" for undermining democracies. Just think of the proliferation of laws that force civil-society organizations to register as "foreign agents," or other thinly veiled repressive tactics.

The far right also has a transnational ideological infrastructure. To be sure, there is no populist Comintern issuing binding interpretations of doctrine. But collaboration is real: for instance, Hungarian institutes lavishly endowed by Viktor Orbán's government are now allied with the Heritage Foundation in the US.

So far, though, there has been a lack of concrete solidarity among populist leaders. When Trump fraudulently claimed to have won the 2020 US presidential election, his international allies, from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, could have refused to recognize Joe Biden as president. Instead, they congratulated Biden on his victory, choosing pragmatism over ideological affinity.

But Trump is changing that in his second term, embracing an ideologically driven approach to confronting other countries that obviously undermines long-standing international norms. In the case of Brazil, he is using the threat of a 50 per cent tariff to pressure the government into ending the federal criminal trial against Bolsonaro for seeking to engineer a coup after losing the 2022 presidential election. Unlike Trump, who was never held accountable for his role in the 6 January, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol, Bolsonaro – often called the "Trump of the Tropics" – has already been banned from running for office until 2030.

In his letter to the Brazilian government announcing the levy, Trump also accused it of "insidious attacks on ... the fundamental Free Speech Rights of Americans," including the censorship of "US Social Media platforms." This highlights another dimension of Trump's economic bullying: his administration's crusade against efforts to prohibit hate speech and regulate the digital sphere. In February, US Vice President JD Vance berated Europeans for their supposed lack of respect for "free speech." Meanwhile, the State Department has reportedly targeted the prominent Brazilian judge Alexandre de Moraes, who at one point blocked Elon Musk's X in Brazil and is taking the lead in holding Bolsonaro criminally accountable for his conduct.

Big Tech is clearly displeased with the extensive regulations that the European Union and Brazil have placed on its industry. As in other areas – notably its attacks on higher education – the Trumpists are weaponizing free speech to exert power over supposed political adversaries.

The hypocrisy is apparent: while advocating for deregulation of platforms ostensibly to protect free speech, the US government is snooping around in foreigners' social-media accounts for speech it dislikes (and then refusing a visa or entry on this basis). Pious talk of defending democracy as a shared Western value sits uneasily with the abject disrespect for other countries' right to determine their own approach to platform regulation.

Whereas far-right leaders of smaller countries are limited by realpolitik, Trump can use America's might to advance his punitive-cum-populist agenda at will. After all, a pliant Republican Party will not question his abuse of the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act. True, the courts may ultimately decide that his desire for political revenge hardly constitutes an "emergency," but the damage will have been done. As in other areas where his administration has taken plainly illegal actions, many of those being targeted will seek a deal rather than a fight. Solidarity is costly, but not for Trump.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

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WISDOM CORNER

Things are as they are. Looking out into the universe at night, we make no comparisons between right and wrong stars, nor between well and badly arranged constellations

ALAN WATTS

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies

ROBERT FROST

Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, be fortified by it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it

HERMANN HESSE



DK Giri

NO COUNTRY CAN OPENLY OPPOSE THE CALL TO PRINCIPLES EVEN IF THEY DO NOT SUPPORT IT IN ACTION

Since Independence, India sought to conduct its foreign policy on principles – Non-Alignment, Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence), and off late, focus on dialogue and diplomacy, an unwavering commitment to a rules-based international order, under the world institutions. But admittedly, international relations have sunk to the bottom of moral stupor. It is hard to believe and impossible to accept the depth of degradation.

I was aghast to hear this dismal and helpless acceptance of the burial of principles in a diplomatic get-together. I was part of the discussion. The Ambassador of Morocco, serving in India for over nine years, a polished, experienced and articulate diplomat remarked, "The world now is driven by the policy of 'might is right'", the famous Darwinian theory. I sat there in utter shock to hear the public acceptance of this 'dark reality'. When national and international politics were structured, mainly after the World War-II, during the creation of national democracies and the UN, the idea was to bury Darwin's concept and set principles of justice, fairness, freedom, equality, solidarity and so on.

How did the world begin to resurrect Darwin? There could be many reasons. But the principal one is the unbridled greed of the countries for power. Lord Acton's famous and profound statement then came into action, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Power has corrupted the thinking of the leadership of the so-called powerful countries. The existing world institutions have failed to check the misuse of power. Lord Acton had warned way back in the 19th Century that unchecked authority can erode ethical principles and lead to abuse of power. So it has been.

There have been two phases in world politics that marked the urge for acquisition of power by several countries.



It is only the stubborn maintenance of principles through balance of power that can end wars, prevent them and ensure peace and stability

After World War-II, the craze was for military power. Ironically, arms control and disarmament dialogues between the two super powers, during the Cold War period, led to greater armaments.

In the second phase, during the period of globalisation, economic power became the driving desire for countries. The strength of a country came to be measured by the size of its GDP. The Deputy Ambassador of India in France, about 15 years ago, when globalisation was at its zenith, shared this in an informal dinner meeting with 11 Indian MPs I was escorting in Europe. He said, "In the past, all the Indian embassies were instructed to deal in security matters with each host country, but now it is about trade and investment."

The leaderships of the major countries that have produced rich political philosophy have fallen victims to the lust of power. They have been either helpless in the face of competitive power politics or hypocritical; espousing principles on the one hand and killing them by the other.

In the Ukraine war, it is instructive to observe the contest between principles and priorities. In addition to Russia and Ukraine who are fighting it out, the other two actors are Europe and USA. Europe says that the war on Ukraine is actually a war on European values and traditions. But what are the European values today,

do we know? We do know that the EU was created to defend human rights and promote freedom, pluralism, solidarity and so forth. Did EU uphold them in their international relations? The answer is, No.

One can understand that EU foreign policy was taking time to shape-up; but what about the individual countries, the big powers driving the Union? One is referring to Germany and France. The EU, mainly Germany, conducted brisk business with China, where human rights and democracy are non-existent. It propped up China as a belligerent authoritarian power by building its economy to a formidable size. It also compromised to a large extent with Russia because of its oil and gas. Consequently, the EU did not take any clear and definite position on violation of human rights or acts of terrorism and territorial incursions in other parts of the world. But leave the rest of the world, in their own neighbourhood, when they are fighting a proxy war in support of Ukraine, they are yet to declare their decoupling with China which has an alliance-for-ever with Russia.

Take the case of America, Donald Trump despite his capricious personality, knows one thing in his bones. That is, he has to make money at any rate, and in any event. He promised to end the war in Ukraine. That was his over-confidence. He may

have tried. But the whole world witnessed how he and his Vice-President bullied Ukrainian President Zelenskyy in the White House. Later, they twisted his arms and got a deal for rare minerals from Ukraine. Second, when Trump failed to warm-up to Putin, he got back to business that he knows best. Now, the US is selling weapons to NATO which will supply them to Ukraine. Against this backdrop, how does a country talk about stopping wars and adhering to international law?

There is a glimmer of hope. I began by alluding to India's commitment to principles. New Delhi must look for partners who subscribe to a principled position. In the recent past, I referred to Poland, a border country of Russia, a growing economy, fiercely committed to sovereignty. More important, Warsaw has experienced the agony of colonisation. Poland has made strategic alliances to defend itself but still heavily upgrades its defence budget. Warsaw could openly campaign for principles by sacrificing partly its economic interests. I am referring to China. A clear stand against Chinese style of politics and leadership is called for. Likewise, New Delhi should escape the disinformation campaign by Russia.

One can understand the primacy of national interests. This, however, needs to be re-defined, it needs to manifest in principles. No country can openly oppose the call to principles even if they do not support it in action. The bottom line is, wars must stop, and trade and economic ties cannot stop wars. In both world wars, Germany was trading with countries it invaded. It is only the stubborn maintenance of principles through balance of power that can end wars, prevent them and ensure peace and stability.

The writer is Professor of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions.

INFA

SPECTRUM SCIENCE

To space and back

In a landmark space achievement, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla created history by flying to space as part of the Axiom 4 mission aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 spacecraft and returning safely back to the Earth. After undocking from the International Space Station on 14 July, the crew splashed down off the coast of California aboard SpaceX Dragon "Grace" on 15 July. Axiom 4 has been an extraordinary space mission with 300 plus sunrises and sunsets over nearly 20 days and a total journey of 1.3 crores km in space, 33 times the distance between the Earth and the Moon.

Over the course of their 18-day mission aboard the orbiting laboratory, the Ax-4 crew conducted more than 60 scientific experiments in zero gravity conditions across a wide range of disciplines, including life sciences, materials research, Earth observation, and technology demonstrations. These investigations represented the contributions of 31 countries, underscoring the mission's

global impact in advancing science and innovation in microgravity conditions.

With this success, Shubhanshu became the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station and the second after Rakesh Sharma to orbit the Earth in space. It is worth noting that Rakesh Sharma travelled to space in 1984 as the first Indian astronaut on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft and spent eight days in the Salyut-7 space station. Commanded by the US astronaut Peggy Whitson, with crew members from Poland and Hungary, the mission marked India's re-entry into orbital spaceflight after 41 years of silence.

The Axiom mission will serve as a significant launch pad for India's upcoming space programmes. The mission will provide valuable real time experience in working in the International Space Station ecosystem, adapting to microgravity conditions of space, conducting complex scientific experiments in microgravity and working within an international space pro-

tolocol system. This knowledge will prove to be immensely beneficial in preparing India to launch its own astronauts to space as a part of the Gaganyaan programme by December 2025 and its ambitious plan of putting an indigenous space station by 2028.

It will be worthwhile here to delve briefly into the life and journey of Subhanshu Shukla. Inspired by the valour of Indian soldiers in the 1999 Kargil War and India's glorious victory over the enemy, Subhanshu studied at the National Defence Academy, Pune and completed a bachelor's degree in computer science in 2005. He was then commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force as a flying officer.

During his career in the Indian Air Force, Subhashu served as a combat leader and test pilot and flew several fighter aircraft like Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, An-39 where he clocked 2000 hours of valuable flight experience. Later, he was selected for the Indian Human Spaceflight

programme of ISRO. In 2020, he was sent to Russia for receiving basic training related to space flight at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Moscow. His name as a member of India's manned Gaganyaan programme was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 27 February, 2024. Subhanshu continued his glorious journey in his space ambition as he got selected as pilot for the prestigious Axiom mission.

Subhanshu's space journey should prove to be a source of inspiration for all Indians. He represents India's hopes and aspiration for a global leadership position in the space sector in this highly challenging world dominated by powers like Japan and China. His life and journey teaches us that accomplishing lofty goals does not require positions or patronage, but a dream to cherish and a will to achieve!

The writer is Education Officer, Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Giant leap forward

Sir, This refers to "Shuks eyes Gaganyaan after historic ISS mission," Orissa POST, July 16. Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's landmark journey aboard the Axiom-4 mission marked a defining chapter in India's space history. As the nation's first astronaut to live and work aboard the International Space Station (ISS), his 18-day mission realized India's presence in commercial human spaceflight and set the stage for ISRO's upcoming Gaganyaan mission. Conducting over 60 experiments—including seven from India—Shukla contributed to critical global research in space biology, human physiology, plant growth, and material science. These findings aid both space exploration and Earth-based applications like medicine and climate resilience. Shukla's hands-on experience in emergency protocols, spacecraft docking, and crew operations offered ISRO valuable operational insights for manned missions. His presence fostered international cooperation with NASA, Axiom Space, and SpaceX, amplifying India's role in global space partnerships. Beyond the labs and capsules, his mission ignited enthusiasm in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, inspiring a generation across continents. Shukla's odyssey has been a giant leap forward for Indian aspirations and global scientific progress..

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Dependency risks

Sir, US President Donald Trump has given Russia a 50-day ultimatum to strike a peace deal or face harsh trade tariffs as high as 100 per cent, with NATO promising arms to Ukraine which it will replenish from the US. Moscow remains defiant, while Ukraine' President Zelensky is celebrating and preparing to use the US weapons against Russia. For India, this raises the threat of secondary US sanctions if it deals with Russia, risking disruptions to its Russian oil imports, currently over 2 million barrels daily. Defence supplies, including pending S-400 missile systems, may also face delays making India's strategic balancing tougher. Hence India needs to swiftly diversify its energy sources, revive stalled defence projects with other partners, and enhance indigenous defence manufacturing to reduce dependency risks and safeguard national interests.

RS Narula, PATIALA



Her death, too, has been registered as an accidental death by the police. The back-to-back suicides have sparked concern, with questions being raised about the intense academic pressure students face while preparing for highly competitive exams like NEET.

Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Wednesday transferred to the CBI the investigation into the alleged assault of a colonel by Punjab Police personnel over a parking dispute in March. The alleged incident took place on the intervening night of March 13 and 14 when Colonel Pushpinder Singh Bath and his son were having food at a roadside dhaba (eatery) in Patiala. The court's directive came two days after the high court reprimanded Chandigarh Police over its probe into the matter. The petitioner in its fresh plea sought an independent probe preferably by the CBI, said his lawyer Deepinder Singh Virk. After the hearing in the matter Wednesday, Justice Rajesh Bhardwaj transferred the case to the CBI, Virk added.

Nutritious bite for MPs, officials: Parl gets new Health Menu

international

of the day quote

Each state must immediately review and suspend all ties with the State of Israel ... and ensure its private sector does the same

FRANCESCA ALBANESE | UNITED NATIONS' SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR FOR GAZA

The entire nation must work more to produce, to increase overall national activity throughout the year, and to improve France's situation

FRANCOIS BAYROU | PRIME MINISTER, FRANCE

The fact that our nation is ready to face the power of the United States and its dog on a leash, the Zionist regime (Israel), is very praiseworthy

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN

SHORT TAKES

Indian student jailed for 35 months

Singapore: A 22-year-old Indian student was Wednesday sentenced to 35 months in prison for causing the death of a fellow Indian national by pushing him into the river while intoxicated. Legha Pawan pleaded guilty to voluntarily causing grievous hurt to Jasbir Singh, a 33-year-old construction worker, on the night of June 30 last year. The original charge of causing death by a rash act was reduced and another charge was taken into consideration, according to a Channel News Asia report. Singh, who was married with two young children in India, had been the sole breadwinner for his family. The court heard that both Legha and Singh were intoxicated June 30 night when the incident happened.

Pakistan Airlines to resume UK services

Islamabad: Pakistan's national carrier Wednesday inched closer to resuming flights to the UK after London removed the ban imposed on PIA due to air safety concerns. "Following air safety improvements, the UK's Air Safety Committee has lifted UK restrictions on Pakistani carriers. Individual airline carriers will still need to apply for permits to operate to the UK through the UK Civil Aviation Authority," the British High Commission said here in a statement. The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was banned from operating in EU countries and the UK after the 2020 air crash, followed by a scandal about the licensing of Pakistani pilots.

3 killed in firing on passenger bus

Karachi: Three persons were killed and seven others injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on a passenger bus in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province Wednesday, a senior official said. The vehicle was going from Karachi to provincial capital Quetta when it came under attack in the Kalat area of the restive region, Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Ukraine's parl votes to dismiss PM

Kyiv: The Ukrainian parliament voted to dismiss Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal Wednesday, lawmakers said, part of a government overhaul aimed at strengthening wartime economic and military management. The move effectively dissolves the cabinet, and lawmakers are expected to approve new members Thursday.

Pak civilian-military meeting sparks buzz: Who's next?

The latest round of rumours came after Field Marshal Munir called on Sharif at the PM House shortly before the latter met Zardari at the president's house Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 16: The latest meeting of Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership has once again fuelled rumours of a possible change in the country's political landscape amid speculations of the army chief possibly aspiring to be the next president.

This is the third time this month that there have been widespread speculations about the change in presidency, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif himself last week dismissing rumours that President Asif Ali Zardari may be forced to step down and army chief



Field Marshal Asim Munir to assume his post.

The latest round of rumours came after Field Marshal Munir called on Sharif at the PM House shortly before the latter met Zardari at the president's house Tuesday, The Express Tribune reported.

The high-level engagements have taken place amid growing speculation about a possible 27th constitutional amendment and rumours suggesting Zardari may step down to make way for his successor, the report said.



Under current circumstances, both sides believe it is very important for China and Europe to strengthen dialogue and cooperation

LIN JIAN | SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

ITALY MAY RELEASE UP TO 10K PRISONERS

Italy may release up to around 10,000 people from prison, or about 15% of the total population of inmates, to ease overcrowding, the Justice Ministry has announced. Some 10,105 prisoners are "“potentially eligible” for alternative measures to prison, such as house arrest or probation



4 killed in clashes during NCP rally in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, July 16: At least four people were killed in clashes over a rally organised by the National Citizen Party (NCP) Wednesday in Gopalganj, the hometown of Bangladesh's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, according to media reports.

The hometown of Rahman, also known as Bangabandhu, turned into a virtual battlefield as hundreds of supporters of his daughter and deposed premier Sheikh Hasina clashed with police, ahead of the planned march of student-led NCP, Prothom Alo newspaper reported.

Three of the deceased were identified as Dipto Saha (25), Ramazan Kazi (18) and Sohel Molla (41), the paper said.

The deceased were brought to Gopalganj General Hospital with gunshot injuries, doctors said, adding that nine more people were being treated at the facility with bullet wounds.

Four extra platoons (nearly 200 soldiers) of the paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were rushed to Gopalganj as authorities vowed stern action against those who carried out attacks on the NCP.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's office said a 22-hour curfew has been ordered from 8 pm Wednesday for Gopalganj, adding the perpetrators of the attack on the NCP would not go unpunished.

According to media reports and witnesses, the protesters, equipped with bamboo sticks and brickbats, clashed with police and security forces, including the army and paramilitary BGB.

The security arrangements were made to facilitate a planned rally by the newly-floated National Citizen Party (NCP), which emerged as an offshoot of the Students against Discrimination movement in February, with the support of interim government chief Muhammad Yunus.

Trump hints at trade deal with India soon



Trump said the proposed deal could provide American companies greater access to the Indian market in line with the trade pact between the US and Indonesia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, July 16: President Donald Trump has indicated that the ongoing negotiations between India and the US for a much-anticipated interim trade deal are on track and it could be sealed soon.

Trump said the proposed deal could provide American companies greater access to the Indian market in line with the trade pact between the US and Indonesia.

India and the US have been holding negotiations for the trade pact primarily to keep the tariffs below 20 per cent.

"We made a deal with Indonesia...We have full access into Indonesia," the US president told reporters.

The US president said his administration is going to announce a few other trade deals and mentioned India in that context. Under the trade deal, Indonesia is giving the US access to the country, which we

never had, Trump said.

"That's probably the biggest part of the deal...India is basically working along that same line. We are going to have access to India," he said.

Washington has already sent letters to several countries sharing details of reciprocal tariff rates that would come into effect August 1.

New Delhi hopes it will be able to strike a deal with the US to avoid the reciprocal tariffs. At the same time, India has indicated that it will not enter into the trade deal in a hurry.

India does not enter into any trade agreement based on deadlines and will accept the proposed trade deal with the US only when it is fully finalised, properly concluded and in the national interest, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said earlier this month.

An Indian commerce ministry team is in Washington for another round of talks on the proposed trade agreement.

India has hardened its position on the US demand for duty concessions on agri and dairy products. New Delhi has, so far, not given any duty concessions to any of its trading partners in a free trade agreement in the dairy sector.

New Delhi is seeking the removal of this additional tariff (26 per cent).

Russia attacks Ukraine with hundreds of drones

Kyiv: Russia attacked cities across Ukraine overnight with hundreds of drones and a missile strike, hitting energy infrastructure and wounding at least 15 people, authorities said Wednesday. Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 400 drones and one ballistic missile, primarily targeting Kharkiv, Kryvyi Rih and Vinnytsia - three cities in different parts of Ukraine. The large-scale long-range attacks targeted energy infrastructure, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on X. Power was cut for 80,000 families in Kryvyi Rih and other locations in the Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukraine's largest private energy company DTEK said on the Telegram app. The air force said it had shot down most of the drones, but that 12 targets were hit by 57 drones and the missile.



SNIPPETS

Crush at Gaza aid site kills 20, GHF blames armed agitators



Cairo/Jerusalem: At least 20 Palestinians were killed Wednesday at an aid distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, in what the US-backed group said was a crowd surge instigated by armed agitators. The GHF, which is supported by Israel, said 19 people were trampled and one fatally stabbed during the crush at one of its centres in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. "We have credible reason to believe that elements within the crowd - armed and affiliated with Hamas - deliberately fomented the unrest," GHF said in a statement. Hamas rejected the GHF allegation as "false and misleading", saying GHF guards and Israeli soldiers sprayed people with pepper gas and opened fire. GHF said Hamas' account was "blatantly false". "At no point was tear gas deployed, nor were shots fired into the crowd. Limited use of pepper spray was deployed, only to safeguard additional loss of life," GHF said in a written response to Reuters via e-mail.



Lava emerges through a fissure following a volcano eruption near Grindavik, Reykjanes, Iceland

REUTERS

Ukraine celebrates Trump's weapons reversal, but 'devil's in details'

REUTERS

Washington, July 16: President Donald Trump has finally found a way to like arming Ukraine: ask European allies to donate their weapons, and sell them American replacements.

Now comes the hard part — agreeing on who will actually give up their prized systems, including the Patriot missile batteries that Kyiv has been desperately seeking.

"We're going to make top-of-the-line weapons, and they'll be sent to NATO," Trump said in the Oval Office Monday.

Some Patriot missile defense systems should arrive in Ukraine "within days," added Trump, who faces resistance from some high-profile figures in the MAGA movement who oppose US support for Ukraine. The costly Patriot systems

- in high demand among US allies - have proven effective at destroying Russian ballistic missiles aimed at Ukraine's cities.

The US has also signaled willingness under the proposed arrangement with European allies to send additional offensive weapons, said one source familiar with the matter, though Trump has said that Ukraine should refrain from attacking Moscow.

The plan, which Trump and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte hatched in recent days, according to two sources familiar with the discussions, has been received positively by Ukraine and its allies.

Leaders in Kyiv and elsewhere have celebrated a major tonal shift from Trump, who had until recent weeks spoken glowingly of Russian President



Vladimir Putin.

But since the announcement, it has become clear Trump presented a framework - not a fleshed-out plan. How material any support ends up being for Ukraine will depend on com-

ing negotiations about who provides which equipment, according to 10 officials in the US and Europe.

"As always with these things, the devil is in the details," said one northern European ambas-

Still no clarity on which countries will send weapons to Ukraine

Trump admin examining NATO stockpiles to come up with plan

US-NATO weapons purchasing scheme hatched in recent days

sador in Washington.

The central question is who would donate the Patriot batteries, and when.

SPARE A PATRIOT?

During his Oval Office meeting with Trump Monday, Rutte mentioned six NATO countries - Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Canada - that were willing to participate in the weapons-purchasing scheme.

High-ranking sources at two of those countries' embassies in the US told Reuters they personally learned of the plan as it was announced. Even close US allies appeared to learn of the proposal in real time.

"It is my clear sense that nobody has been briefed about the exact details in advance, and I also suspect that internally in the administration they are only now beginning to sort out what it means in practice," said a separate European ambassador.

Kurt Volker, a former US ambassador to NATO, said Trump found a way to balance support for Ukraine with the political realities of the Republican Party. Having the European allies underwrite US arms supplies is "very consistent with what he (Trump) said during the campaign," he said.

of the day

quote

This movement follows a three-day consolidation phase for the US-DINR pair, ranging from 85.70 to 86.05. The sentiment remains acutely favourable for the dollar, driven by expectations of a hawkish Federal Reserve post-US inflation data and persistent uncertainties regarding India-US trade agreements

DILIP PARMAR | RESEARCH ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

Gold edged higher to \$3,346 per ounce, supported by renewed tariff threats from President Trump, who signalled possible levies on pharmaceuticals, with additional duties on semiconductors also under consideration

KAYNAT CHAINWALA | AVP-COMMODITY RESEARCH, KOTAK SECURITIES

It is fascinating to see how Indian travellers seamlessly blend convenience with cultural connection on their journeys

SANTOSH KUMAR | BOOKING.COM REGIONAL MANAGER - SOUTH ASIA

Q1 RESULTS

ITC Hotels profit rises

New Delhi: ITC Hotels Ltd Wednesday reported a 53 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 133.71 crore in the June quarter, on the back of higher revenue. The company, which had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 87.16 crore in the first quarter last fiscal, said it is targeting to reach 220 operational hotels and more than 20,000 keys by 2030. Consolidated revenue from operations in the April-June quarter stood at Rs 815.54 crore against Rs 705.84 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, ITC Hotels said in a regulatory filing. Total expenses in the quarter under review were higher at Rs 674.97 crore compared to Rs 596.41 crore in the same period last fiscal. In the first quarter, room revenues delivered strong growth driven by superior performance across retail, MICE and wedding segments, ITC Hotels said in a statement.

Tech Mahindra net profit rises

New Delhi: IT services firm Tech Mahindra Wednesday posted a 33.9 per cent rise in consolidated net profit for the April-June quarter to Rs 1,140.6 crore. The Pune-headquartered firm had logged a net profit (attributable to owners of the company) of Rs 851.5 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations for the first quarter of FY26 came in 2.65 per cent higher at Rs 13,351.2 crore, as against Rs 13,005.5 crore in the year-ago period. Seen sequentially, net profit was 2.2 per cent lower, while revenues saw a marginal decline of 0.2 per cent. The company's total headcount stood at 148,517 as of June 30, 2025, an increase of 897 employees year-on-year. The LTM (last twelve months) IT services attrition was at 12.6 per cent.

DB Corp net profit falls

New Delhi: Media firm Dainik Bhaskar Corp Ltd Wednesday reported a 31 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 80.84 crore for the first quarter ended June 2025, impacted by lower revenue. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 117.86 crore in the first quarter of the last fiscal, DB Corp Ltd said in a regulatory filing. Its consolidated revenue from operations in the first quarter stood at Rs 559.45 crore against Rs 589.85 crore a year ago, it added.



A bad deal, especially one that removes India's tariffs without reciprocal benefits, could be worse than no deal at all

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | GTRI FOUNDER

MARUTI SUZUKI HIKES PRICES OF ERTIGA, BALENO

Maruti Suzuki India Wednesday said prices of Ertiga and Baleno will increase by up to 1.4 per cent with immediate effect due to the inclusion of six airbags as standard fitment in the models. The standardisation of six airbags will result in an average ex-showroom price increase of 1.4 per cent in Ertiga and 0.5 per cent in Baleno. Premium hatchback Baleno is priced between Rs 6.7 lakh and Rs 9.92 lakh while Ertiga is tagged between Rs 8.97 lakh and Rs 13.25 lakh



NPCI expands UPI corridor

NPCI has expanded the UPI-PayNow international remittance service with 13 new banks. This enhancement allows customers of these banks to send real-time cross-border remittances to Singapore via UPI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: NPCI International Payments Wednesday said it has enhanced the UPI-PayNow real-time payment linkage between India and Singapore by adding 13 more Indian banks.

The expanded network for remittances to India now includes 19 banks.

"With this development, which will go live July 17, 2025, users in both countries can remit funds to a wider base, making the service more accessible and convenient," NPCI International Payments Limited (NPI) said in a release.

NPI is the international arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

The UPI-PayNow service was launched as a joint initiative between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

The 19 banks are Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Federal Bank, HDFC Bank, IDFC FIRST Bank, IndusInd Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank, South Indian



Bank, UCO Bank alongside Axis Bank, DBS Bank India, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, and State Bank of India.

Recipients in India can receive remittances from Singapore in their accounts held with any of these 19 banks through their preferred UPI-enabled apps such as BHIM, Google Pay and PhonePe, as well as bank apps.

Outward remittances from India to Singapore are available through Canara Bank, HDFC Bank and Karur Vysya Bank, along with ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas

Bank and State Bank of India. In Singapore, customers of DBS SG and Liquid Group can avail of this service.

"The expansion of the UPI-PayNow linkage marks a step forward in strengthening cross-border payment infrastructure. By enabling access to more banks in India, we are deepening the reach of real-time remittances and supporting greater financial connectivity between the two countries," Ritesh Shukla, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of NPCI International, said.

It facilitates real-time

SEBI brings new norms for valuation of gold, silver ETFs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is considering a review of the valuation methodology for physical gold and silver held by mutual funds through exchange-traded funds (ETFs) to ensure greater consistency and better alignment with prevailing domestic market prices.

In this regard, SEBI has proposed that AMCs should use spot prices published by domestic commodity exchanges to value gold and silver, replacing the current practice of using LBMA prices, according to its consultation paper Wednesday.

It is also looking to identify a uniform domestic benchmark and make the detailed polling mechanism for spot price determination publicly available.

Currently, gold held by any gold ETF scheme is required to be valued at the AM fixing price of the London Bullion Market

Association (LBMA) in US dollars per troy ounce for gold having a fineness of 995.0 parts per thousand.

Similarly, silver held by a silver ETF scheme is valued at the AM fixing price of the LBMA in US dollars per troy ounce for silver having a fineness of 999.0 parts per thousand.

While the physical gold and silver held by gold and silver ETFs are valued based on the LBMA price after necessary conversions, the Exchange Traded Commodity Derivatives (ETCDs) on gold and silver held by mutual fund schemes are valued using the closing price of futures on the respective domestic commodity exchanges.

This variation in valuation methods for the same underlying asset has highlighted the need for standardization.

Accordingly, SEBI, in its consultation paper, "proposed that instead of using LBMA price as a starting point for valuation,

TECH DEAL TALLY PLUNGES IN APR-JUN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: India's tech sector logged 60 deals worth \$460 million in the April-June quarter of 2025 (including IPOs and QIPs), reflecting cautious investment sentiments, marking a notable decline from the first quarter levels according to Grant Thornton Bharat.

The April-June quarter numbers slacked 34 per cent in volumes but fell even more sharply (79 per cent) in terms of deal values compared to the

first quarter of 2025.

"India's tech sector recorded 60 transactions valued at \$460 million, including IPO and QIP activity...This reflects a more cautious investment environment amid ongoing macroeconomic headwinds," Grant Thornton Bharat Q2 2025 Technology Dealtracker revealed.

The Q1 2025 scores were boosted by large-ticket private equity transactions and a \$1 billion IPO by Hexaware Technologies, it noted. If public market activity were to be excluded, the

SBI to raise ₹45K-cr via equity, debt issue in FY26



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Country's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) will raise up to Rs 45,000 crore by equity and debt issuances, including up to Rs 25,000 crore by way of QIP, which opened Wednesday.

In a regulatory filing, SBI Wednesday said it will raise up to Rs 20,000 crore by issuing bonds to domestic investors during the current fiscal.

Separately, SBI also launched its share sale to institutional buyers via Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) on Wednesday at a floor price of Rs 811.05 apiece. The bank said it may offer a dis-

count of up to 5 per cent on the floor price.

The bank is looking to raise up to Rs 25,000 crore through the QIP. The floor price is at a discount of 2.46 per cent over the Wednesday closing share price of Rs 831.55 a share.

The fundraising of up to \$3 billion (about Rs 25,000 crore) through public offer or private placement in FY26 was approved by the SBI's central board in May. Thereafter, the shareholders had cleared the same in June.

SBI had last raised Rs 15,000 crore in 2017-18 through the QIP route. Shares of SBI settled 1.81 per cent higher at Rs 831.55 apiece on the BSE.



it may be mandated that AMCs directly use the spot prices published by the domestic commodity exchanges to value the gold and silver," SEBI said.

This will aid in the reduction of duplication of efforts and also represent the market prices of gold and silver as per the domestic demand and supply scenarios, it added.

The move is expected to simplify the valuation process, which currently involves using LBMA prices in USD, converting them into INR, adding customs duties, and making adjustments for domestic demand

or supply through notional premiums or discounts.

Additionally, SEBI is looking to identify a domestic benchmark that should be adopted uniformly across the mutual fund industry for gold and silver valuation.

At present, there are multiple sources of domestic spot prices such as commodity exchanges, jewellery associations, and index providers, leading to further inconsistency.

Additionally, SEBI has also proposed that the detailed polling mechanism used by domestic regulated entities for determining spot prices -- including the methodology and policies ensuring fair conduct -- be made public.

Currently, spot prices are derived through polling from participants in the physical market such as traders and importers, with exchanges applying statistical methods to calculate the final price.

IOB cuts MCLR by 50 basis pts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 16: Public sector Indian Overseas Bank revised its Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rates (MCLR) by 50 basis points across all tenors with immediate effect, the bank said Wednesday.

The Asset Liability Management Committee (ALCO) of the bank, at its meeting held July 14, reviewed the bank's MCLR and decided to reduce it with effect from July 15.

Accordingly, the revised MCLR for the overnight tenure has been reduced to 8.15 per cent from the existing 8.25 per cent. For the one-month tenure, the MCLR has been revised to 8.40 per cent from the earlier 8.50 per cent.

For tenures of three, six, and 12 months, the MCLR has been revised to 8.55 per cent (down from 8.65 per cent), 8.80 per cent (down from 8.90 per cent), and 9 per cent (down from 9.10 per cent), respectively, the bank said.

Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rates are used in consumer loans, such as auto and personal loans. Borrowers whose loans are linked to this benchmark are expected to benefit from the reduced rates.



Thermal power to attract ₹2.3L-cr investments by FY28

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS AN AMBITIOUS PLAN OF ADDING AT LEAST 80 GW OF THERMAL CAPACITY BY FISCAL YEAR 2032. CURRENTLY, COMPANIES ARE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DEPLOYING 60 GW OF THIS PIPELINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The thermal power segment is expected to attract Rs 2.3 lakh crore worth of investments over the next three fiscals, on account of renewed focus to help meet India's growing energy demand, Crisil Ratings said Wednesday.

The capital expenditure in thermal power stood at Rs 1.1 lakh crore over the three fiscals through 2025, Crisil Ratings said in a report.

"Investments to set up thermal electricity generation capacities will double to Rs 2.3 lakh crore over the three fiscals through 2028, compared with the preceding three fiscals, because of renewed focus on the segment



to help meet India's growing demand for energy and base load power requirement," it said.

In the preceding three fiscals, private companies accounted for only 7-8 per cent of the

investments. On expanded investment levels over the next three fiscals, private companies will contribute nearly a third, with central and state public sector undertakings

accounting for the balance.

The government has set a target of at least 80 GW of thermal capacity addition by fiscal 2032.

At present, nearly 60 GW of capacity addition has either been announced or is in various phases of implementation, with private developers taking up nearly 19 GW.

The majority of the private capacities will be operationalised only after fiscal 2028, given that these involve long construction periods.

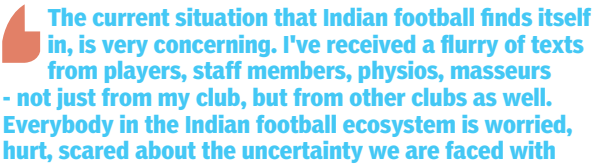
While the majority of these are brownfield expansions involving low implementation risks, timely delivery of equipment -- mainly of boilers and turbines -- remains monitorable, given limited supply

Indian men's team's FIFA rankings has plummeted to a lowly 133, the worst in nine years, and the top tier Indian Super League's upcoming season which was supposed to start in a couple of months is still in a limbo highlighting the sorry state of the sport

New Delhi, July 16: Former captain and top striker Sunil Chhetri Wednesday said the current state of "uncertainty" in Indian football is very concerning and the sport's ecosystem is "worried, hurt, and scared" by the top-tier ISL being put on hold indefinitely.

"It began with worrying about how I am on borrowed time with what I have left in the tank. But speaking with players from across clubs, I've realised that my selfish problem isn't as important," the 40-year-old Chhetri posted on X.

"The current situation that Indian football finds itself in, is very concerning. I've received a flurry of texts



The ISL (Indian Super League) put the 2025-26 season "on hold" due to uncertainty surrounding the renewal of Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the event organisers and the All India Football Federation.

This was after a Supreme Court directive to AIFF in which the body was asked not to negotiate new terms of the MRA with FSDL, the apex governing body's commercial partner running the

The AIFF has said it is "conscious" of ISL's importance to the football ecosystem but had to respect the law of the land by following the Supreme Court directive.



METTLE MEET 2025

OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW

It's time for METTLE 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.



A QUIZ Extravaganza

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 date in 1955, which American amusement park known for its fairy-tale settings opened its gates in California?

ANSWER TO WEDNESDAY'S QUESTION

Manhattan

RULES & REGULATIONS

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to mettlemeet@orissapost.com
- Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.
- Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.
- **OrissaPOST's** decision on all entries will be final. No complaints will be entertained.
- Participants must send their entries with a **passport size photograph, mobile numbers and residential address**. Otherwise the entries will not be entertained.
- There can be only one winner from one family.
- Invitation cards to the winners will only be issued on presentation of Valid ID proof – **Voter Card, Aadhaar Card, Driving License, Passport, School ID card** (In case of students till Class XI)
- No employee or families of **OrissaPOST** team can be part of the competition.

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS



NIRANJANA NAYAK



R SEKHAR RAO

Others who answered correctly are

Bishnu Prasada Dash, Saswat Sourabh, Mayank Mandal, Saroj Nag, Tanishka Bisoi, Om Prakash Rath, Debadatta Tripathy, Sourabh Suman, Bhumnika Subhalaxmi, Anjubala Mohanty, Aslesha Satapathy, Subhashree Jena, Mahesh Prasad Dalabehera, KV Ramana, Ahaana Paikray

Eng docked WTC points

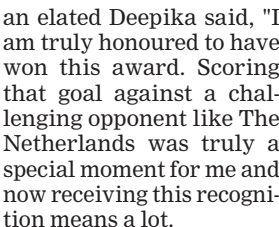
London: The England cricket team slipped a rung to third position in the World Test Championship table Wednesday after being docked two points for maintaining a slow over rate in the third Test against India at Lord's. Ben Stokes and Co were also fined 10 per cent of their match fee after the Test, which they won by 22 runs on Monday. Match referee Richie Richardson imposed the sanction after England were ruled to be two overs short of the target when time allowances were taken into consideration. India are fourth in the WTC points table right now.

London: British tennis player Tara Moore was banned for four years after a court agreed with the International Tennis Integrity Agency that she should be suspended for using performance-enhancing drugs. Moore tested positive for anabolic steroids boldenone and nandrolone in April 2022, but she was cleared in December 2023 after an independent tribunal determined that the result was caused by eating contaminated meat while she was competing in Colombia. The ITIA appealed that ruling, focusing on the portion of the findings related to nandrolone, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled in the ITIA's favor, saying the majority of its panel felt that Moore couldn't prove the sample was consistent with the ingestion of contaminated meat.

Islamabad: An audit report has found financial irregularities to the tune of more than Rs 6 billion (\$21 million) and governance issues within the Pakistan Cricket Board dating back two years. The Auditor General of Pakistan's report for the 2023-24 financial year was published in The News and highlighted the non-recovery of outstanding sponsorship worth Rs 5.3 billion (\$18.6 million) as the major discrepancy identified. PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi is the third person in four years to lead the sport's national administration, following Ramiz Raja and Zaka Ashraf. He is also a government minister.

Deepika first Indian to win Poligras Magic Skill Award

Upon winning the award,
Yamal ur
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
Madrid, July 16: Berce



"I thank my teammates, coaches, family and friends who continue to support and inspire me everyday. This award isn't just mine, it's belong to Indian hockey. Let's keep pushing forward together," she added.

In the second, Sindhu quickly fell behind 1-6. Though she managed to level the score at 11-11, the Korean pulled away with ease to seal the match in

SINDHU BOWS OUT; SATWIK-CHIRAG, LAKSHYA, ANUPAMA ENTER SECOND ROUND



to harm us, they want to prevent us from doing what we like, but they have not offered any work or training to those who are affect-

The Spain international has scored 25 goals for the club in 106 appearances, having made his debut at just 15 years old in 2023.

Unnati Hooda, a Taipei Open semifinalist earlier this year, however, went down 8-21 12-21 to seventh seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand in the opening round.

In a first, one-day domestic athletics meet extended

"The programme will be shortly put on the AFI website. The athletes are advised to book their travel and accommodation accordingly."

Bumrah stays on top; Joe Root back as No 1

rankings within a week of losing it while India's all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja climbed to the 34th spot. Root's scores of 104 and 40

However, Jadeja has risen five places to 34th after scores of 72 and a fighting 61 not out at Lord's. KL Rahul, who made 100 and 39 in the same match, has also climbed five places and now sits one spot behind Jadeja on 35th.