

Actor-musician Shruti Haasan, following breakup with boyfriend Santanu Hazarika, opens up about embracing singlehood LEISURE | P2

#### VOLUME 15, ISSUE 108 I www.orissapost.com

China backs Russia's push to revive the Russia-India-China (RIC) troika, calling it vital for the shared interest of the three nations INTERNATIONAL | P10

**BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | JULY 18, 2025** 

## No oil threat

India shuns threat of US imposing sanctions on countries buying Russian oil, saying will meet oil needs

BUSINESS | P11

# Pragg stuns Carlsen

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa takes down world number one Magnus Carlsen en route the quarterfinals at Freestyle Grand Slam Tour

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE | ₹5.00

quested the authorities of mar

kets, transport, educational in-

stitutions, offices and banks to

peacefully across the state, in-

cluding Bhubaneswar, and people have been supporting

the cause for which we are

Asked about the inconvenience

faced by people stranded at bus

stands and railway stations, Das

said, "We are with the people and requesting them to cooperate.

Those with emergency needs are

all walks of life-businessmen,

trade unions, petrol pump

workers-have extended their

the circumstances in which the

college student self-immolated

her. The victim had pleaded for

help for over a week, from MLAs,

MPs, college authorities to the

CM's office — yet no one respond

ed. This is not suicide; it is insti-

tutional murder. Our fight will

'The people are not accepting

Lallu claimed, "People from

being allowed to proceed."

support to the bandh.

fighting," Das said.

"The bandh is being observed

support the shutdown call.

# **Govt: Ensure safety of** women at workplace

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The state government Thursday directed all departments to ensure safety of women at workplace.

The direction came in the wake of the self-immolation death of a college student following an alleged inaction by the authorities over her complaint of sexual harassment against a teacher in Balasore.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja wrote to all government departments to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 by all institutions or organisations.

In the letter, the Chief Secretary said that the implementation of the Act in workplaces and institutions is essential to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all. particularly women.

Ahuja also directed the department heads and authorities that the compliance report on the action points be submitted to the Women and Child Development department within 15 days.

"Sexual harassment not only violates an individual's dignity and rights but also undermines productivity, morale, and equal opportunities," he said. Ahuja also mentioned in the letter that by enforcing the Act, organisations fulfil their legal and ethical responsibility to prevent, prohibit, and redress instances of harassment.

He said it fosters a culture of accountability, encourages reporting without fear, and builds trust among employees or members, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more equitable work or institutional space.

Ahuja has also advised all the department authorities to go for the constitution of Internal Committee (IC), capacity building and sensitisation, timebound inquiry and redressal mechanism, annual reporting and transparency and responsibility of management.

### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Normal life came to a standstill in the state Thursday as Opposition Congress and seven other political parties enforced a 12-hour bandh over the death of a student of FM (Autonomous) College in Balasore who set herself on fire after being denied justice in an alleged sexual harassment incident.

There were no reports of violence or untoward incidents from any part of the state, a senior Home department official said, adding that the bandh has mostly affected transport and business sectors.

Roads in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and other parts of the state wore a deserted look, while train services were affected in some places due to picketing on tracks. According to an ECoR official, some trains which were detained early in the day resumed operations after police cleared the protesters from the tracks. "However, several trains were running late since 6am due to the demonstra-

tions," the ECoR official added. Markets, schools and business establishments remained closed in almost all places across the state. However, there was no adverse impact on the operations of essential services like ambulances, hospitals and milk parlours.



**BANDH CRIPPLES LIFE** 

Congress leaders, including OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das and party's Odisha in-charge Ajay Kumar Lallu, take out a bike rally in Bhubaneswar during the 12-hour bandh, Thursday PIC: MA

Protesters staged blockades on several arterial roads in the state Capital, raising slogans against the BJP government and demanding justice for the deceased college girl. Leaders of the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), CPIM (ML), Forward Bloc, RJD, SP and NCP hit the streets, holding their par-

CM: Odisha active partner in

nation's governance reforms

ty flags to enforce the bandh. They demanded justice for the college girl, who succumbed to 95 per cent burns during treatment at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar late Monday night. There was a scuffle between security personnel and Congress supporters near the CM's residence.

OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das and party's Odisha incharge Ajay Kumar Lallu were among the protestors taken to custody by police, sources said.

"We have been requesting people to support the bandh as women are no longer safe in Odisha since the BJP formed

the government in the state. As many as 15 women and girls are raped every day in the state, and the government has completely failed to check such incidents," Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam alleged.

Opposition parties had re-

# GMU asst prof arrested for sexual exploitation

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Odisha is proud to be an active partner in India's journey towards responsive and transparent governance. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Thursday. Majhi, along with Union Min-

on good governance practices at

In his keynote address, Ma-

jhi highlighted Odisha's strides

in administrative transforma-

tion, from paperless budgeting

to digital grievance redressal

system. "Our annual Budget

presentation is now entirely

paperless. For internal govern-

ment communication, we have

implemented OSWAS (Odisha

Secretariat Workflow Automa-

tion System), a fully automated

system that has significantly re-

duced response time," the CM

said, adding that OSWAS has

made governance more respon-

Lok Seva Bhawan here.

POST NEWS NETWORK





not just as a host but as an ac tive partner in India's journey towards responsive and transparent governance," Majhi added. He said Odisha has embraced the vision of PM Narendra Modi to transform India from 'rule-based to role-based' governance. "We are empowering civil servants by transforming them from being 'karmachari' to

# ED charge sheet against Vadra AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 17: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday filed a charge sheet against Robert Vadra, the businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in a land deal in Haryana's Shikohpur, official sources said. His office issued a state ment later saying the present proceedings are nothing more than an extension of the political witch hunt by the present government against Vadra. This is the first time that any probe agency has filed a prosecution complaint naming Vadra in a criminal case. The ED, sources told PTI, has also attached 43 immovable properties worth ₹37.64 crore related to Vadra and his linked entities like Sky Light Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. A provisional attachment order was issued by the agency Wednesday under the PMLA, they said. The sources said the charge sheet has been filed before the Rouse Avenue court here.

Sambalpur, July 17: An assistant professor of Gangadhar Meher University (GMU) here was arrested Thursday for al-



continue until the CM and Union Education Minister resign," Lal lu said. CPI(M) state secretary Suresh Panigrahi demanded a judicial probe into the incident. In support of the bandh, the Odisha Petroleum Dealers Association shut down all fuel

stations across the state from

6am to 6pm.

**MORE P3&5** 





overnment still encourages vou to sell pakoras, samosas, alebis... just add a health warning

sive and transparent. ister Jitendra Singh, inaugurated a two-day national conference As part of the good gover-

> nance initiative, most of the citizen-centric services are now available online. Basic services such as obtaining birth/death and residence certificates, and benefits from various schemes are just a click away on mobile phones, Majhi said.

> Asserting that the state's grievance redressal mechanism is nothing short of revolutionary, he said, "In addition to personally addressing people's grievances as often as possible, we have an online platform for automated grievance redressal that is highly effective."

"Odisha is proud to contribute

'karmayogi'," he added. Singh stressed the importance of regional collaboration for reform in governance.

"Good governance means turning every challenge into an opportunity. By holding these conferences across different states, we ensure that governance models are both locally relevant and nationally cohe sive," he said.

Jointly organised by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Odisha government, the inaugural occasion of the conference saw participation of 400 delegates from across the country.

legedly sexually exploiting a 20-year-old student of the premier institution on the pretext of marriage, police said.

"Dr Gopikanta Suna, 32, Assistant Professor. School of Education, GMU in Sambalpur, has been arrested in connection with Mahila PS case-56 of July 16, 2025 under Section 69 of BNS," said Sambalpur SP

Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo. Suna was arrested from his official residence at Professor Colony and produced before a court here. He was later remanded to judicial custody following rejection of the bail plea, an official said.

In her complaint, the woman alleged that Suna, a resident of Dahita village under Buden police limits in Bargarh district, sexually exploited her

Gopikanta Suna

for months on the promise of marriage. However, he later refused to marry her.

Following his arrest, the uni versity suspended the assistant professor with immediate effect

The incident comes a few days after a 20-year-old female student of FM (Autonomous) College in Balasore set herself on fire following alleged inac tion by the authorities over her complaint of sexual harassment against a teacher.

She died at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Monday night.

# **IRAQ MALL FIRE KILLS 69** Europe's oldest lake settlement uncovered in Albania

#### REUTERS

Baghdad, July 17: A massive fire in a hypermarket in al-Kut city in southern Iraq has left at least 69 people dead and 11 others missing, the city's health authorities and two police sources told Reuters Thursday.

Reuters' footage of the aftermath of the overnight fire

showed the blackened exterior of 'Cor-

niche Hypermarket' building, with rescue teams and security forces still at the site.

Videos verified by Reuters showed firefighters spraying water on the blazing building overnight and people climbing from the roof with the help of rescue teams

"We have more bodies that have not been recovered still under fire debris," city official Ali al-Mayahi told Reuters.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but an initial police report suggested that the fire had first erupted on the floor where perfumes and cosmetics are sold.

"Raging fires trapped many people inside the mall, and evervone was desperately trying to find a way out," said Ali Al-Zargani, whose house is next to the market **PM ORDERS PROBE** building and

> who entered the premises after the fire had subsided. "I saw the charred bodies of children and women lying on the ground — it was a horrifying scene.

As rescuers combed the smoke-charred building for more bodies, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani ordered an immediate investigation to 'uncover any shortcomings', his office said in a statement.

REUTERS

Lin (Albania), July 17: Archaeologists working on the shores of Ohrid Lake in Albania are convinced they have uncovered the oldest human settlement built on a European lake, finding evidence of an organised hunting and farming community living up to 8,000 vears ago.

The team, from Switzerland and Albania, spends hours each day about three metres (9.8 feet) underwater, painstakingly retrieving wooden stilts that supported houses.

They are also collecting bones of domesticated and wild animals, copper objects and ceramics, featuring detailed carvings.

Albert Hafner, from the University of Bern, said similar settlements have been found



in Alpine and Mediterranean regions, but the settlements in the village of Lin are half a millennium older, dating back between 6,000 and 8,000 years. "Because it is under wa-

ter, the organic material is well-preserved and this al-

lows us to find out what these people have been eating, what they have been planting," Hafner said

Multiple studies show that Ohrid Lake, shared by North Macedonia and Albania, is the oldest lake in Europe, at over

The team, from Switzerland and Albania, spends hours each day about three metres underwater, painstakingly retrieving wooden stilts that supported houses

The age of the findings is determined through radiocarbon dating and dendrochronology

- More than 1,000 wood samples have been collected from the site, which may have hosted several hundred people
- It is believed to cover around six hectares, but so far, only about one per cent has been excavated after six years of work

one million years.

The age of the findings is determined through radiocarbon dating and dendrochronology, which measures annual growth rings in trees. More than one thousand wood samples have been collected

from the site, which may have hosted several hundred people.

It is believed to cover around six hectares, but so far, only about one per cent has been excavated after six years of work

Hafner said findings show that people who lived on the lake helped to spread agri culture and livestock to other parts of Europe.

"They were still doing hunting and collecting things but the stable income for the nutrition was coming from the agriculture," he said.

Albanian archaeologist Adrian Anastasi said it could take decades to fully explore the area

"(By) the way they had lived eaten, hunted, fished and by the way the architecture was used to build their settlement, we can say they were very smart for that time," Anastasi said















# leisure



## **PRETTY LITTLE BABY FAME** FRANCIS PASSES AWAY

Connie Francis, beloved for hits like Pretty Little Baby and Mama, has died at 87. Her close friend Ron Roberts confirmed her passing, noting recent hospitalization. In her final days, Francis expressed heartfelt gratitude to fans for their unwavering love and support.

### **JLO DOESN'T WANT TO GET MARRIED ANYMORE**

While performing on her Up All Night tour in Europe, Jennifer Lopez reacted to a fan's "JLo, marry me?" sign by saying, "I think I'm done with that. I've tried that a few times," hinting at her four past marriages.



# TUNE FORECAST 🗟 Ganesha Speaks.com

accuracy • reliability • trust

Today, you will show every-one what you're capable of. You are likely to come up with great ideas and work strategies which will prove productive. However. if appreciation doesn't come your way, Ganesha says you must learn to take disappointment in your stride.

# TAURUS

The time you previously spent on certain activities may not yield results as expected, predicts Ganesha. You will be reluctant to travel today. Your may find yourself wanting more space and freedom of expression. A stroll with your sweetheart

hand in hand, may be the highlight of your day, says Ganesha.



You will end up having an argument with people owing to your aggressive nature.

These people could slander your reputation on account of your enemity. However you will be able to defeat them. They will have to give up against your intellectual superiority. Be wary, says Ganesha.

# CANCER

Today looks set to be a day full of extremes, especially when it comes to your shifty moods. However, you will need to keep reminding yourself of not getting overly emotional or impractical. Otherwise you may end up being in complicated situations, warns Ganesha. It is high time that you gave due consideration to your health and eating habits. Consciously cultivate change. Overeating is a strong probability!

LEO

Your children's health may be a cause of concern today, says Ganesha. The best way to put your and your family's fears to rest would be by paying a quick visit to the doctor. As always, kids remain a surprise package of delights; the happiness of your children shall double your joy as a parent. But then, Ganesha reminds, only a healthy kid is a happy kid.

VIRGO

### Expenditures will be like oil spills- wasteful and dirty. But

cosmic energies and positivity are gathering wind today, and you should do well to make full use of them in your personal and professional life, says Ganesha.

# LIBRA

Ganesha says today is the right day to get closer to your loved one. You will spend the evening with your beloved. Today you will be mentally very energetic too. Make the most of the day.

# **Shruti defines singlehood**

Mumbai: Shruti Haasan is currently in a relationship—with herself. In a refreshingly honest and deeply personal podcast conversation, the actor and musician opened up about embracing singlehood with newfound joy and clarity. "I genuinely love myself the most right now," she shared, reflecting the emotional strength she's cultivated over the years. "I've worked incredibly hard throughout my life to become my own person.

For Shruti, being single isn't a void to be filled-it's a phase of empowerment and self-exploration. She's channelling her energy into what truly matters: her craft, her music, and her personal evolution. Her words have resonated widely, especially with a generation that is increasingly choosing self-love and solitude over outdated societal expectations.

Known for breaking conventions-be it through her eclectic film choices, genre-defying music, or bold, unfiltered voice-Shruti continues to inspire as a symbol of independence and authenticity. She embraces vulnerability not as a weakness, but as a mark of strength and growth. As she prepares for her upcoming pan-India release, *Coolie*, Shruti stands tall as a modern

icon of self-assured living. In a world where relationship status often defines worth, Shruti is redefining the narra-

tive-choosing self-love, and owning it unapologetically.

AGENCIES

Mumbai: Actress Zareen Khan has strongly criticised a troubling trend in paparazzi culture that she finds both disrespectful and objectifying. In a recent interview, the Veer actress expressed her discomfort with photographers who zoom in on female celebrities' body parts in videos and pictures, calling the practice "disgusting."

"I cannot really understand paparazzi today's paparazzi culture. I'm not saying all of them do it, but there are many paps who zoom in on areas where there's absolutely no need to," she said. Za-reen stressed that the focus should remain on a celebrity's face and work, not random or inappropriate close-ups "A celebrity is known by their face, right? So how can you show some random body part and ask 'Guess who?' And that too a weird body part. I don't understand what they're trying to do," she added.

Zareen also noted that such videos are losing appeal, both among the media and the public. "Even the audience is not enjoying it anymore. They also find it disgusting," she remarked.

Recently, she called out photographers taking pictures of her from behind at a public event, saying, "Mujhe dekho, ye nahi." On the professional front, Zareen was last seen in Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele (2021), with no new projects announced yet. AGENCIES

Zareen

slams

YOU WEREN'T THAT

BIG A HELP!

Mumbai: At the 10th edition of India's International Movement to Unite Nations (I.I.M.U.N.) "Role Model Series", acclaimed actor Vidya Balan delivered an inspiring and emotional session that left a lasting impact on students. Moderated by I.I.M.U.N. founder Rishabh Shah, the candid conversation touched on individuality, rejection, and the critical importance of self-love in a world obsessed with validation.

"There is only one of you in the world, so don't waste your time trying to be anyone else," Balan urged the young audience. "You are unique, you're different, you're specialcelebrate that every day of your life.

She reflected on her early struggles, recalling how her first Malayalam film was shelved midway, leading to multiple rejections and being labeled "jinx." "I was heartbroken," she shared. "But those were different times. Today, the pressure is relentless—one post gets five likes, another gets 500, and kids

start questioning their worth. Speaking on enduring rejection and finding resilience, Balan said, "I was replaced in a dozen films. I felt angrywith God, the world, even my parents. But I didn't give up." Her unwavering self-belief, she said, was her anchor, reminding students that self-love is the powerful most form of strength. AGENCIES

# Vidya's tips for young minds

# Pooja on career's toughest song

Mumbai: Actress Pooja Hegde has talked about how the song Monica from the film Coolie was one of the most 'physically toughest and demanding' songs of her career. Pooja took to Instagram, where she shared a string of behind-the-scenes videos and photographs. In one clip, she is heard talking about shooting while fasting for Maha Shivratri and the actress said "it feels great". Another video showcased the actress putting band aids on the blisters of her foot. She wrote in the caption: "Thank you for all the love on Monica. Monica was one of the MOST

physically toughest and demanding song of my career. (sic)" Revealing why it was the toughest song of her career, she said: "Trying to combat the EXTREME heat, sun burn that's left tan lines for months to come.... humidity, the dust, blisters and high energy dance moves (my first hectic dance shoot after my ligament tear). (sic)."

She added: "And after all that, still making sure it looks GLAMOUROUS and effortless was the key. I gave my ALL to Monica and it's gonna be a blast to watch in the theatres, I promise. Dance away (sic)."

Pooja gave a special shout out to the dancers who stood by her in "this task and gave me energy through all that especially on the Mahashivratri day when I was fasting. You'll were just

#### **SCORPIO**

There are strong indications that today you will be recep-tive and sensitive towards the needs of other people. Negative vibes will disrupt your thinking, and you will rely on the company of close friends to keep you in good cheer. Do not succumb to the pessimism that might cloud your thought today as it is only a passing phase, advises Ganesha.

### SAGITTARIUS

No pains, no gains. So, when you go through a lot of turmoil and toil hard for your work, the rewards are definitely going to be fruitful, says Ganesha. Time for get together and soiree with family and friends! In a nutshell, a day with lot of fun activities.

#### CAPRICORN Despite repeated failures.

very few realise that the key to success is in having the patience of a saint. Vexation invariably leads to an outburst which, in turn, can ruin your reputation and future prospects in innumerable ways. Today, Ganesha advis es you to keep your calm and smile back even if faced with an adverse situation. Doing as directed may help you overcome troubles and take the right decisions.

# 

Be sure of your strengths and decisions, and Ganesha guarantees you success. You don't care what others think about you, but don't be so indifferent that you ignore their choices, preferences and comforts completely. The smile of you sweetheart will work like a charm and you will forget all your worries, feels Ganesha.

# **PISCES**

Ganesha warns that your expenses could be twice as much as your income or prof it. You need to be more careful in money matters. It is not an auspicious day for any new work, new deal or any new beginnings. Ganesha indicates that things will look up after two davs or so

#### I GOT AN "A" ON BECAUSE YOU WERE FORTY-NINE SUCH A BIG HELP, MY REPORT, SNOOPY! FLAVORS I'M GOING TO TREAT YOU TO AN ICE-CREAM CONE

# **CALVIN AND HOBBES**



# BREVITY

PEANUTS





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# SUDOKU

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

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

# SOLUTIONS

|   | SL | SUDOKU | ο  | ۲ | _ |   |   |   | CROSSWORD             | SW          | Ō | R |   |   |
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| 8 | 6  | 9      | 2  | 7 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | Z                     | O<br>T      |   | В | _ | W |
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| 4 | 9  | 8      | 6  | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | Y                     | E           |   | В |   | С |

# **OrissaPOST**

FRIDAY | JULY 18, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

# downtown



# **CB** records statement of person who tried to save Soumyashree

Bhubaneswar/Balasore, July 17: The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police Thursday recorded the statement of a person who suffered burn injuries while trying to save 20-year-old student Soumvashree Bisi who died after immolating herself over alleged sexual harassment, official sources said.

The Crime Branch Wednesday took over the investigation into the death of the student of Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College in Balasore.

Two officers of the Crime Branch visited SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where Jyotiranjan Biswal, who was injured in his bid to save the student, is undergoing treatment, they said.

He is the lone available eyewitness who would be able to throw light on what actually happened on the college campus July 12 when the woman set herself on fire, they said.

She died while undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar Monday night.

While the woman student suffered 95 per cent burn injuries, Biswal suffered 15 per cent burns.

The Crime Branch officials asked Jyotiprakash about the sequence of events, whether she poured petrol on her or somebody poured or supplied the inflammable to the student, the sources said.

"This question is vital as the



deceased student's mother alleged that she doubts someone else set her daughter on fire," an official said.

The team also spoke to Biswal's treating doctors at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Department of the hospital.

Meanwhile, a Crime Branch team, led by DSP Iman Kalyan Nayak, also visited the college in Balasore as part of the ongoing investigation into the incident.

"We have taken over the case

### 5 booked for harassing victim's family

The Balasore Police have registered a case against five persons at Bhograi police station based on an allegation of cyber harassment of the victim's family. The complaint was lodged by the brother of the deceased woman. Her brother, in his complaint, had alleged that five persons of the locality had been mentally harassing the family members by posting objectionable remarks on the family and even against the deceased woman on social media. "This was a mental torture for us when we are passing through the worst period after her death," the brother wrote in the complaint. The police have booked the five persons under Sections 238 (causing disappearance of evidence), 253 (2) (making, publishing, or circulating false statements), 356 (2) (defamation) and 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy) of BNS.

MAHANADI DISPUTE Engage in meaningful

discussions: Tribunal POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 17: The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal, adjudicating the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh, Thursday urged both the states to engage in meaningful discussions to arrive at a plausible settlement expeditiously, as talks at the highest levels continue.

During the latest hearing, Advocate General of Odisha, Pitambar Acharya, informed the tribunal that discussions aimed at resolving the issues are underway at the apex government level. However, senior advocate AK Ganguli, appearing for Chhattisgarh, stated that he had received no instructions or updates regarding such negotiations.

Despite the apparent disconnect, the tribunal emphasised that significant time has already passed without tangible progress and urged both parties to engage in "concrete discussions" and attempt to reach a resolution.

The tribunal led by Chairman Justice Bela M Trivedi, Justice Ravi Ranian and Justice Indermeet Kaur Kochhar directed the counsels representing both the states to report on the progress of these discussions at the next hearing scheduled for 11am August 2.

In addition, the tribunal requested Acharya to provide an updated list of witnesses and submit any supplementary affidavits required in lieu of examination-in-chief before the next hearing.

# **POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



# Bhubaneswar 9th cleanest city in India

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The Capital City has found position among top 10 cleanest cities in the country in a survey conducted by the Centre.

The Temple City has been ranked 9th in the Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs among cities with a population between 3 to 10 lakh. The City held 34th position in last year's survey

Moreover, Aska and Chikiti have received the Swachh Shehar honours in their respective population categories. Aska received the award in the 50,000-20,000 population segment, while Chikiti was honoured in the under 20,000 population category. Both the cities secured 2nd place nationally in their respective categories

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was felicitated as the 'Promising Swachh Shehar of Odisha' by Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal at the Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 Award Ceremony in New Delhi Thursday. The awards to Aska and Chikiti were given away by the President of India.

The awards were received in the presence of Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mohapatra, along with senior department officials and representatives from various Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) including BMC Mayor

Sulochana Das, BMC Commis sioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Usha Padhee

Congratulating the Housing & Urban Development depart ment for the laurels, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said, "The national recognition of Aska, Chikiti and BMC is a testament to the department's relentless efforts, effective lead ership, and community-driven approach. My heartfelt appreci ation goes to all officers, ULB representatives, sanitation workers, and citizens who made this achievement possible. Let us continue working together to build a Swachh and Samruddha Odisha," the Chief Minister said on X.

# Bandh hits life in City BJP, BJD trade barbs over student's death MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Normal life was hit across the City Thursday following the 12-hour 'Odisha Bandh' enforced by Congress, and seven other Opposition parties, over the death of a Fakir Mohan Autonomous College student who set herself a blaze after being denied justice in an alleged sexual harassment case.

Since early morning hours, Congress and various Left party activists blocked roads at various junctions in the City and held demonstration at the railway station.

Offices and business establishments wore a deserted look, while vehicles on the NH-16 were stranded for a long time as the protestors, waving party flags and placards, squatted on the road and burnt tyres. Schools, colleges, other educational institutes also remained closed along with courts and government establishments.

law and order and disperse protestors. At many places, motorists were seen arguing with the agitators.

At Lower PMG Square, several Congress leaders and activists, led by OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das fought with the police when they were prevented from marching towards the state Assembly. Many activists were taken into custody for defying prohibitory orders. The disruption in public transport brought miseries to

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Opposition BJD and ruling BJP Thursday traded barbs over the 20-year-old college student's death by self-immolation over alleged sexual harassment by a teacher.

from the Sahadevkhunta police

station in Balasore. The Crime

Branch is verifying the investi-

gation conducted by the district

police. We are collecting infor-

mation from the ground level,"

Earlier, Balasore Police ar-

rested two persons -- Samira

Kumar Sahoo, suspended head

of the Education department,

and Dillip Ghose, suspended

principal of the college. They

have been charged with abet-

ment to suicide. sexual harass-

ment, stalking, and insulting

Also, the three-member

high-level committee of the

Higher Education department

has issued a notice to the col-

lege principal and the mem-

bers of the Internal Complaint

Committee (ICC) for examina-

tion on the campus Friday.

The committee had earlier

interrogated the then college

principal Dillip Ghose, who

was subsequently arrested.

the modesty of a woman.

Nayak told reporters.

While the saffron party accused the Opposition of disturbing the deceased's family, the BJD alleged that the authorities did not do anything when the student was running from pillar to post with her complaint.

The second-year BEd student of Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College in Balasore died at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Monday night. She had set herself on



charge Ajay Kumar Lallu. Sarangi also targeted Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik, the BJD president. Respected Naveen Patnaik Ji is shedding crocodile tears over the death of the female student. There have been many such incidents during the 24 vears of the BJD government from 2000 to 2024," the Bhubaneswar MP said. The BJP leader's barb at Patnaik was countered by BJD's vice-president Snehangini Chhuria and

and blaming Naveen Patnaik. The BJD government under Patnaik's leadership played a leading role in raising the dignity of women in the state and providing justice to women,' Mallick said.

many women were harassed and hospitalised during his tenure. Our CM has visited the Balasore college student twice at AIIMS and monitored her health condition," Sarangi said.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi also offered to airlift the student for better treatment, and he spoke to her family members, she said, and asked, "Has Patnaik taken any such step as CM?'

Sarangi listed the steps taken by the state's BJP government after the student set herself ablaze. The state government suspended and arrested accused teacher Samira Kumar Sahoo and the college principal Dillip Ghose, she said. This apart, Sarangi said, the health minister and the higher education minister stayed in touch with the family of the victim, and she was treated in consultation with AIIMS-Delhi. Sarangi said President Droupadi Murmu also visited student at the burn ward. Referring to a complaint lodged by the victim's brother, Sarangi alleged that the family is feeling unsafe due to BJD and Congress leaders and workers. "He has complained that they are being troubled by them (BJD and Cong people). They should not fear, the CM is standing by the family and also all women of the state, she said.

BJD leaders Chhuria and Mallick lashed out at Aparajita.

"Sarangi is playing cheap politics on the death of a sister. The BJP is in power and it is free to take action against the people who are disturbing the victim's family. Sarangi is make ing such comments only for political gain. Don't distort fact by blaming others. Why didn't the police register a case after accepting the victim's complaint? Which leader of the ruling party put pressure on the police at



However, vehicles carrying essential services and ambulances were not stopped during the bandh period.

Heavy police presence was seen on all major roads in the City during the day to maintain commuters Sharing his experience, a City resident who was stopped by a group of agitators while travelling to a hospital due to an emergency, said, "We completely support the protest. But common

people shouldn't pay the price. I had an urgent appointment with a doctor, but I won't be able to make it on time if I am not allowed to go by the protestors."

fire on the college campus July 12 over inaction against a professor who allegedly sexually harassed her. While the state was mourn-

ing the death of the student. "Congress leaders from Delhi" are unnecessarily creating disturbances in Odisha, Bhubaneswar MP and BJP's national spokesperson Aparajita Sarangi told a press conference. She was referring to Mahila

Congress president Alka Lamba and the party's Odisha-informer MP Rajashree Mallick. 'Sarangi is making such a statement to hide the inefficiency of the BJP government

As a woman leader, the focus of Sarangi, a two-time MP, should be on how the victim student would get justice, Mallick said.

The people of Odisha have blessed Naveen Patnaik five times, the BJD leader said, wondering what success Sarangi achieved

"How many times did Patnaik visit any victim in hospitals, as

that time also needs to be inves tigated," Chhuria said.

She asked when the victim was going door to door for justice, was the government sleep ing? "Apart from complaining to the college authorities, the victim sought the intervention of the local MP, MLA, the higher education minister and the chief minister. Though she had said that she would die by suicide if justice was not given. no one took action on her complaint," Chhuria said.

# 'BANDH ALONE WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING'

Civil society leaders, students, activists call for prompt government action and stricter enforcement of laws to ensure safety of women

#### ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: A state-wide bandh brought Odisha to a standstill Thursday following the tragic self-immolation and death of a young female student who had reportedly faced sexual harassment and received no action from authorities despite multiple complaints.

The incident has triggered widespread anger, protests, and soul-searching across the state. Civil society leaders, students, and activists have united in grief and frustration — not only in mourning the loss but also condemning what many are calling a systemic administrative and societal failure.

However, they said calling a bandh to protest the tragedy is not enough to bring about a change in the system, or ensure safety to women.

skepti-Voicing strong cism over the effectiveness of bandhs, social activist

Priyadarsini Matrumayee

said, "Even those shouting on the footpaths know very well that this cannot bring any real transformation. Bandhs have become more of

a political strategy than a tool for justice," she said.

"Until stricter laws are enforced and civil society becomes more vigilant, more girls will continue to suffer and die in silence," she added.

Srusti Misra, a university student, called

incident deeply shameful. "If a girl is not safe in an educational institution, then it is a disgrace.

Despite her repeated complaints, the government didn't act. If they had, she might still be alive



today," she said.

However, she said observing bandh alone would not solve the actual problem, unless the government becomes pro-active in ensuring women's safety. "This bandh might have some impact,

but what matters is whether the government takes real action." Shweta Agarwal from Un-

mukt Foundation called the situation 'hor-rifying'. "It is rifying'. horrifying that a girl had to burn herself just to be heard. And

tragically, even this will be remembered only until the next headline replaces it," she said.

"Institutions are still silencing victims and protecting the accused. Why didn't anyone act when she was alive," she asked.

A 2021 report

by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) cited by Agarwal noted 86 rapes occur daily in India, with 49

women every hour. Renowned social activist Namrata Chadha

pointed to complete administrative collapse. "The victim complained to her college, the police — yet no one acted. This is a failure of every authority responsible for her safety. Protests are being stifled instead of heard. That tells us everything," she stated.

Abharani Choudhury, secretary of Odisha Patita Udhar Samiti (OPUS), said the situation reflects poorly on the state government. "Sexual harassment acts must be enforced strongly — otherwise

what's the point of having it? It's shocking that Odisha still funclacks a tioning State Women's Com-

mission even after a year of BJP rule," she said. "The Chief Minister must answer what his government is doing for Beti Bachao beyond slogans." While the bandh captured headlines and mobilised thousands, many remain doubtful that it will lead to meaningful reform without sustained public pressure and political accountability.



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: India Thursday successfully test-fired nuclear-capable short range ballistic missiles Prithvi-II and Agni-I from an integrated test range off the Odisha coast, demonstrating its strategic de-

terrence capability. The test-firing of the missiles, conducted by the elite Strategic Forces Command, validated all operational and technical parameters, according to the Defence Ministry.

On Wednesday, India successfully test-fired indigenously developed Akash Prime missile in Ladakh, that has been customised to operate at an altitude above 4,500 metres.

The test-firing of the missiles came over two months after the May 7-10 military conflict between India and Pakistan.

The Prithvi-II missile has a range of around 350 kms and it is capable of carrying a payload of up to 500 kgs. It can carry both conventional as well as nuclear warheads.

The Agni-I missile has a

range of 700-900 kms and it can carry a payload of 1,000 kgs. Both Prithvi-II and Agni-I

missiles have been an integral part of India's nuclear deterrence.

Short-range ballistic missiles -- Prithvi-II and Agni-I -- were successfully test-fired from the Integrated Test Range in Chan dipur, Odisha July 17, the ministry said in a brief statement.

It said the launches validat ed all operational and technical parameters. These tests were conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, the ministry said.

On test-firing of Akash missile, the ministry said it carries added significance as it follows the exceptional performance of India's indigenously developed air defence systems during Operation Sindoor.

Akash Prime is an upgraded variant of the Akash weapon system built for the Indian Army.

The test-firing of the missile in Ladakh assumed significance as it is close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).





the











# downtown/state

# **Ranital-Bhadrak stn** fourth line gets nod

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The Ministry of Railways has sanctioned the fourth line between Ranital Link Cabin and Bhadrak station (5.06 km) at an estimated cost of ₹149.32 crore.

According to a release issued by East Coast Railway (ECoR), this vital project will significantly boost the capacity and efficiency of train operations along Howrah–Chennai mainline and improve freight connectivity to Dhamra and Paradip ports. The Ranital Link Cabin–Bhadrak section is part of the Howrah– Chennai High-Density Network (HDN) - one of the busiest railway corridors in the country.

The fourth line will help decongest the corridor by separating port-bound freight traffic from the mainline, ensuring faster and more punctual operations for both passenger and Mail/Express trains. It will also support the smooth movement of more coaching trains between Khragpur to Bhubaneswar, and beyond.

Currently, the section experiences heavy congestion, which often leads to detention of trains. With the completion of this project, operational restrictions will be eased, enabling a more reliable and timely train schedule for the public.

### CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Angul dated -15th July 2025 I, SANTOSH SAHOO, S/o - KANDARPA SAHOO permanent resident of Vill - Kanyabeda, PO - Kandasar, PS - Nalco Nagar, Dist. - Angul, declare that I have changed my name from SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU to SANTOSH SAHOO. Henceforth, I shall be known as SANTOSH SAHOO for all purpose. SANTOSH SAHOO

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before The Executive Magistrate, Badamba, Dated : 11/07/2025, I, Mithun Kumar Pradhan, S/o

# SC: Tribal woman has equal property rights

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Supreme Court Thursday held that a tribal woman or her legal heirs would be entitled to an equal share in ancestral property.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Joymalya Bagchi said denying the woman heir a right in the property only exacerbated gender division and discrimination, which the law should ensure to weed out

"When applying the principle of justice, equity and good conscience, the courts have to be mindful of the above and apply this otherwise open-ended principle contextually," the bench said.

The top court observed in the present case, if the views of the subordinate court were upheld, the woman and her successors would be denied a right to property on the basis of the absence of a positive assertion to such inheritance in custom

"However, customs too, like the law, cannot remain stuck in time and others cannot be allowed to take refuge in customs or hide behind them to deprive others of their right," it added.

The verdict came on an apjudgement said the issue also

peal filed by the legal heirs of a woman belonging to a sched uled tribe. They sought partition of a property belonging to their maternal grandfather.

The trial court and the first appellate court dismissed the plea by the legal heirs saying their mother had no right in the property of her father. It was held so for the reason

that no evidence had been led to show that the children of a woman heir were also entitled

to property. A provision of the Hindu Succession Act lays down that the law of succession should not apply to the members of scheduled tribes unless the union of India, by notification in the of

ficial gazette, otherwise directs. The provision stipulates that a daughter in a scheduled tribe community cannot legally demand her share in the father's property. The top court's

involved the question of violation of Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution. "There appears to be no rational nexus or reasonable classification for only males to be granted succession over the property of their forebears and not women, more so in the case where no prohibition to such effect can be shown to be

prevalent as per law." The bench went on, "Article 15(1) states that the State shall not discriminate against any person on grounds of religion. race, caste, sex or place of birth. This, along with Articles 38 and 46, points to the collective ethos of the Constitution in ensuring that there is no discrimination against women.'

The top court said denying the mother her share in her father's property, when the custom was silent, would violate her right to equality vis-à-vis her brothers or those of her legal heirs vis-à-vis their cousin.

"Keeping with the principles of justice, equity and good conscience, read along with the overarching effect of Article 14 of the Constitution, the appellant-plaintiffs, being her legal heirs, are entitled to their equal share in the property," it held.

# Two held for ₹1.56cr online gaming fraud

#### UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Odisha police Thursday arrested two fraudsters on charges of duping a woman from Cuttack district of ₹1.56 crore on the pretext of higher returns in online gaming platforms The CID officials acted on

a complaint filed by Mamata Rout, 38, a native of Balisahi village under Salipur police station in Cuttack, alleging that she was duped to the tune of ₹1.56 crore by the cyber fraudsters for wilful adoption of deceitful means and promise of high return on investment in different online gaming platforms, including world.net, bounty game, bitcoin staking opportunity, ride BNB, and HAHM, between February 2024 and February 2025.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the cyber crooks, Kamadev Rout, Bikram Kumar Jethi, and their associates. had assured the victim of a high-value return on invest ment and lured her to transfer ₹57,39,471 to 10 different bank accounts furnished by the accused persons. Besides the cash, ₹98,60,529 was also transferred by the victim to the accused persons on different dates. CID officials said.

On due analysis of the finan-

Woman Ayush doc dies due to 'overdose' of sleeping pills POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargaon, July 17: A woman Ayush doctor died after having overdose of sleeping pills at Runga village under this block in Sundargarh district late Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Dr Salila Panda, an Ayush doctor posted at the primary health centre in Runga village Her husband Debabrata Mishra lodged a complaint at Bargaor police station alleging that his wife Salila died due to overdose of sleeping pills.

Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem. Police said that the actual rea son behind her death could be ascertained only after post-mor tem and an investigation which will unravel whether she died due to overdose of sleeping pills or for some other reason

### Worker killed in accident at Rayagada rly stn yard

Rayagada: One worker was killed and two others were injured after a push trolley and a goods train got entangled a Rayagada railway station yard Thursday officials said. In a statement, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) said, "Unfortu-nately, one contractual labourer got hi by the goods train and expired. Anothe labourer and one trolleyman sustained minor injuries. They are admitted to a nearby hospital and will be discharged after due medical attention." The misha occurred in the morning when the umbrella of a push trolley got entangled with a wagon of a moving goods trai

# **STAMPEDE** 147 people record statements

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Altogether 147 people have so far recorded their statements as part of an administrative inquiry into the June 29 stampede in Puri district, where three persons were killed and around 50 others injured during this year's Rath Yatra, officials

statements before Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg, who is leading the administrative

During the last hearing, held at the Special Circuit House, Puri Wednesday, 42 people, including police personnel and staffers who were on duty June 29 and deployed at the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), recorded their statements, the officials said. Garg, who has been asked to



also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the

on social media platforms, following



"We have recorded statements of different stakeholders both in Bhubaneswar and Puri in four different sessions."

Seventeen people attended the public hearings in Bhu baneswar, and three other sessions were held in Puri where many others recorded their statements on the stampede incident which took place near the Shree Gundicha tem ple, she said.

The stampede took place

amid a massive rush of devotees early June 29 when three chariots of sibling deities were parked in front of Gundicha temple.

cial transactions of the victim

and those of the accused per-

sons, it was found ₹14,77,000 and

₹8,45,046 has been transferred

to the accounts of accused Ka-

madev Rout and Bikram Ku-

mar Jethi, respectively, during

the reported period from the ac-

count of the complainant and

her friend Kshirendra Kumar

The accused persons, Ka-

madev Rout and Bikram Ku-

mar Jethi, with the intention to

further extract money from the

victim, contacted her over the

phone and came down to Cut-

tack July 16 and 17, and were

apprehended by the team of the

Electronic gadgets, including

mobile phones of the accused

persons, were seized. Prelimi-

nary investigation further re-

veals that the fraudsters have

purchased several immovable

properties, including land, ve-

hicles, and gold ornaments, in

Bhubaneswar and Jharkhand.

CID of Crime Branch.

Sahoo.

Garg started her inquiry the next day and has so far met servitors, police, public and other stakeholders for preparing her final report. She has visited the site where the stampede took place, an official said.

Immediately after the tragic

**Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg** met the suspended SP and Collector of Puri, and held discussions with senior officials of Jagannath Temple police and media persons

had placed the then collector and SP of Puri under suspen sion. Garg, during her inquiry also met both the officers and held discussions with senior officials of Jagannath Temple Police (JTP) and media persons

She sought video recording from media houses and the public, the official added.



Initially, the school was se-

lected under a transformation

installed near the school, which could have resolved the water

crisis. However, a local resi-

dent, who claims that the land

is private, has encroached upon

cracks, while many have broken walls. The school's toilets lack running water, compelling students to go outside and relieve themselves in the open.

plan during the previous BJD government. Funds worth ₹45 lakh were allocated for upgrades. However, due to the absence of a registered land record (RoR), the funds were returned, halting all developmental works in the school and thereby depriving students of even minimum facilities.

Earlier, a borewell had been

# Students walk a km daily for MDM as school lacks infra

said Thursday.

These people recorded their inquiry, they said.

submit a report by July 30, said,



incident, the state government

Maneka Pradhan, Address : At - Pangali, P.O. - Pangali, Dist. -Kandhamal, Odisha - 762104, declare that I have changed the name of my son from Jashua Melvin to Jashua Melvin Pradhan. Henceforth, he shall be known as Jashua Melvin Pradhan for all purposes. Mithun Kumar Pradhan

LOST

I, Sarita Jayanti Samal, W/o - Sambit Kumar Nayak, R/o - Kadapata, Nalanga, Dist. -Bhadrak declares that while communicating between Acharya Vihar to Rupali Chhaka in Bhubaneswar, I have misplaced original sale deed bearing No.4208/ Dt.25.05.2009 of Mouza - Pokhariput, Khata No.81, PL-No.25 of Area Ac.o.067.5 Decs. If anyone finds it, please contact: 9437087251.

at a cost of ₹50 lakh under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), currently has strength of 85 students from Classes VIII to X.

or heat, are forced to walk for

a kilometre daily to a nearby

primary school for lunch. Sev-

eral classrooms have developed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, July 17: Even as

the government continues to

spend crores on beautifying

and renovating school campus-

es, ground realities remain grim

in many state-run institutions.

Bishnuguda Government High

School under Pitamahal pan-

chayat in Rayagada block and

district, where students have to

walk a kilometre daily braving

the sun and rain to have their

mid-day meals (MDM). They also

face other hardships due to lack

The school, built in 2016-17

of basic facilities in the school.

A glaring example is the

the land and fenced it. A labora-However, poor quality contory building intended for scistruction and stalled develence classes is no longer in use opment projects have left the due to safety concerns owing to school in a dilapidated state, headmistress Rashmibala Padhy alleged. The school has no

its rickety condition. Though a sanitary napkin vending machine was installed for girl students, teachers said drinking water supply and no proper seating arrangement for that it remained non-functional students to eat MDM, she said. in the absence of a usable toilet Students, irrespective of rain on campus.

Despite repeated complaints by school authorities, only minor repairs have been carried out. the headmistress said.

#### Woman commits suicide Man gets 5-yr RI for posting following alleged betrayal, minor's nude photos online blackmail by boyfriend Cuttack: A court here Thursday

convicted a man from Madhya Pradesh and sentenced him to rigorous Kendrapara: A 23-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide Wednesday evening after being imprisonment of five years for posting betrayed and blackmailed by her objectionable photographs of a minor on social media in Jagatsinghpur district boyfriend at a rented house under Aul police station in Kendrapara four years ago. The Special POCSO court district. The deceased, a resident of Dharmadaspur under Mahanga police convict, who was arrested by the Odisha Police in December 2021. The convict, limits, was employed at a micro financing company. According to the who was a minor in 2021, had befriended FIR lodged by her brother Chandan the girl on social media while both were Kumar Jena at Aul police station, the taking online medical coaching classes. victim's boyfriend, identified as Aiay. a police officer said.The convict later had established a physical relationship started harassing the girl by sharing her objectionable photographs and videos with her under the pretext of marriage He later allegedly blackmailed her with which the minor's parents filed a written an intimate video, which drove her to take the extreme step. complaint with the cyber police station.

#### 36 ration cards distributed to beneficiaries in Koraput

Koraput: A special ration card distribution drive was organised Thursday at the Koraput Municipality, where 36 new beneficiaries received their cards under the Public Distribution System (PDS). The event was attended by MLA Raghuram Maccha along with Chairman of Koraput Municipality Lalat ranjan sethy, Vice-Chairman Sabita Panda, Executive Officer Gyanajit Tripathy, who personally handed over the documents to eligible families The initiative aims to ensure that all deserving citizens, especially those from economically weaker sections. are included in the welfare schemes facilitated through ration cards. Speaking at the event, chief guest MLA Raghuram Maccha emphasised the government's commitment to transpar ency and inclusivity in public welfare programmes. "Our goal is to make sure that no family is left behind when it comes to accessing basic necessities like food grains and essential supplies through the PDS network," he said.

|        |                     | MA     | RKET WATCH               |        |  |
|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|--|
| C      | URRENCY             |        | BOURSES                  | COMM   | ODITIES  |
| INDEX  | VARIATION           | INDEX  | VARIATION                | INDEX  | VARIATION  |
| DOLLAR | <b>86.16 •</b> 0.16 | SENSEX | 82259.24 🕈 375.24        | GOLD   | ₹ <b>97,400                                   </b> |
| EURO   | <b>99.87 </b> 0.10  | NIFTY  | <b>25111.45 †</b> 100.60 | SILVER | ₹ <b>111,981                                 </b>  |



#### WEATHER

|          | BBSR  | СТС   | FORECAST               |
|----------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Max Temp | 33.2° | 32.4° | Cloudy sky with        |
| Min Temp | 27.1° | 26.6° | possibility<br>of rain |
| Humidity | 79%   | 83%   |                        |
| Rainfall | Trace | 0.6mm | Ä                      |

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# 4 arrested over student suicide POST NEWS NETWORK

Thursday.

Keonjhar, July 17: Police arrested four employees of a private English Medium School at Champua in Keonjhar district in connection with the suicide of a Class X male student,

The action came five days after the student identified as Krishna Pradhan jumped off the third floor of the hostel building and committed suicide at about 5.30am, July 12. He sustained critical injuries in the act. School authorities rushed him to the Champua hospital where

days after the student identified as Krishna **Pradhan jumped off** the third floor of the hostel building

The action came five

doctors pronounced him dead. Family members alleged that the boy was assaulted and tortured by the school authorities. The death of the boy sparked tension on school premises and hospital for over 10 hours.

The arrested employees were identified as Daitari Sahu, 45, Shasi Sekhar Jha, 58, Prakashan T, 48, and Surendra Nath Mishra, 52, of the school.

Police arrested them after conducting investigation into the student's suicide over a complaint filed by the deceased father. Sub-Divisional Police Officer Champua Rashmi Ranjan Sahoo said that the four were arrested after a detailed investigation. During the investigation, negligence was found on their part and they were produced in the court. he said. Further investigations were on.

# state/downtown



# **12-HR BANDH BRINGS STATE TO HALT**

**OrissaPOST** 

FRIDAY | JULY 18, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

The dawn-to-dusk 'Odisha Bandh' called by Opposition Congress and Left parties over the self-immolation death of a female student of FM (Autonomous) College, Balasore, allegedly due to sexual harassment by her HOD paralysed public transport and brought normal life to a grinding halt across the state. The bandh remained by and large peaceful, even as vehicular movement on major roads and highways were disrupted by the agitating Congress workers. The 12-hour bandh also affected train services at a dozen railway stations, as Congress workers resorted to 'rail roko'







GANDARPUR CHOWK, CUTTACK



CPI LEADER SURA JENA BEING DETAINED





OPCC PRESIDENT BHAKTA CHARAN DAS (RIGHT) DETAINED BY POLICE



CONGRESS LEADER AJAY KUMAR LALLU **BEING DETAINED** 







PURI RAILWAY STATION





SATSANG VIHAR SQUARE, BHUBANESWAR



JAYADEV VIHAR, BHUBANESWAR



**OP PHOTOS** 

COMMUTERS WAIT AT BSABT, BHUBANESWAR



MALGODOWN, CUTTACK



SHOP OWNERS SHARE A LIGHT MOMENT DURING THE BANDH







KORAPUT



RAYAGADA



**BADAMBADI, CUTTACK** 

#### SAMBALPUR





STATION CHOWK, BALASORE



BHAWANIPATNA



from our office at above address. Alternatively, the format can be downloaded from our website. Last date for submission of offer is up to 4.00 PM on 28.07.2025 at Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar. Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone

# EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/E-Tender/42 Bated: 10.07.2025 (1) Tender No: e-tender-Brkur-138-2025, Dtd. 01.07.2025 DESCRIPTION PROPOSED STRENGTHENING AND REPLACEMENT OF CORRODED MEMBERS WITH METALIZED NEW MEMBERS AND RE-RIVETING OF BRIDGE NO. 63UP, 1050UP & 1052UPIN THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/ BRIDGE/ SOUTH/KUR OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the work (₹): 94.45 Lakh

(2) Tender No. e-tender-BrkUR-89-2025, Dtd. 01.07.2025 DESCRIPTION :: PROPOSED REPLACEMENT/STRENGTHENING OF CORRODED STEEL MEMBERS OF CORRODED STEEL MEMBERS OF OF LOOSE AND WORN-OUT/HEAD LOSS RIVETS OF BRIDGE NO. 553 DN, 1004 UP & DN, 1046 UP & DN AND 1122 UP & DN OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx Cost of the work (₹): 86.36 Lakh

EMD (₹): 1,72,700/-. (3) Tender No: e-Tender-EastKUR-148-2025,

DId. 02.07.2025 DESCRIPTION PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF LHS AT KM. 427/17-19 TO AVOID TRESPASSING 42/11/11/19 TO AVOID TRESPASSING B ET W EEN K AN D A R P U R-RAGHUNATHPUR STATIONS ON CUTTACK-PARADEEP LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. (AIR PUSHING METHOD).

Approx Cost of the work (₹): 179.48 Lakh, EMD (₹): 2,39,800/-Completion period: 10 Months (for SI.

No. 1 & 2) & 08 Months (for SI. No. 3). Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 25.07.2025 (for all Tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier No manual offers sent by Post / Council Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is variable in website : www.ireps.gov.in <u>Note</u> : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer(s)/ bidder(s) can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / R-367/Q/25-26 Khurda Road PR-367/Q/25-26





NABARANGPUR







ଓଡ଼ିଶା କନ୍ଦ



















ANGUL











# power post



# We have every one of us a role

to fulfill, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy.

THE MOTHER

# **Imminent Indictment**

ecent days have witnessed some of the worst attacks against Ukrainian civilians since the start of the war in February 2022. According to Danielle Bell, the head of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), "The surge in long-range missile and drone strikes across the country has brought even more death and destruction to civilians far away from the frontline.'

In fact, according to new data from the HRMMU, which has monitored loss of life throughout all of Russia's major bombing offensives, the monthly casualty rate among Ukraine's civilian population in June was the highest in more than three years. Civilian casualties included 232 deaths, with a further 1,343 Ukrainians injured in the span of one month.

As dire as conditions for civilians have become, the surge in Russian violence may also mark a turning point in Ukraine's favour. US President Donald Trump has now signalled a shift in his position, which Ukrainians and their allies across the West hope will be sustained.

Trump's decision to supply the type of lethal missiles (paid for by Europe) that will allow Ukraine to continue its fight against Russian aggression reflects his slow loss of trust in Russian President Vladimir Putin's willingness to negotiate a peace agreement. Likewise, Trump's

accompanying threat to impose new sanctions comes in response to Putin's failure to honour his promises

Putin has another reason to worry. On 15 July, Ukraine's parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of establishing, together with the Council of Europe, a special tribunal to try Russia for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The Ukrainian decision ratifies the agreement that was signed in Strasbourg on 25 June, during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's first visit to the Council of Europe.

An unmistakable signal has now been sent that there will be no safe haven for Putin and the clique who made the decision to wage aggressive war against Ukraine. The future outside of Russia tribunal will allow investigations of all the highest-ranking leaders of the Russian state. While heads of state, heads of governments and foreign ministers benefit from personal immunity from prosecution, this will be no bar to gathering evidence against them and being prepared to issue a formal indictment the instant they leave office.

The agreement follows the Council of Europe's suspension of Russia's representation rights in February 2022, after 26 years of Russian membership, and then expelling Russia a month later, in accordance with Article 8 of its statute.

The tribunal is the culmination of three years of pressure to hold the Kremlin accountable for its actions in Ukraine. Already the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova, Russia's commissioner for children's rights, for her role in the unlawful deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia, Last year ICC judges issued arrest warrants for former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the Russian General Staff of the Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov for attacks on Ukraine's electricity infrastructure

But a tribunal has become necessary because, despite having jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity (which now include the destruction of schools, hospitals, and infrastructure, and the deliberate targeting of civilians), and genocide committed on Ukraine's territory, the ICC cannot prosecute Russia's political and military leaders for the crime of aggression. This is because Russia is not a party to the Rome Statute, which established the ICC, and because the country's veto power at the United Nations prevents the Security Council from referring the matter to the Court. That leaves only a

# POLITICS FOCUS **POWER GAMES**

n the Congress, we play out our faction fights in the public glare, the BJP does it behind closed doors," laments a senior Congress leader. The Shashi Tharoor versus Congress saga in Kerala and the Siddaramaiah versus DK Shivakumar soap opera in Karnataka are fresh examples of the Congress propensity for scoring self-goals through public recrimination. By contrast, the power tussles within the BJP and intra-sangh parivar battles rarely get the same attention because the mikes are kept firmly out of the picture. Then be it the Amit Shah versus Yogi Adityanath turf war in UP or the BJP versus RSS wrangle that has delayed the announcement of a new BJP president for several months now, the warring doesn't make headlines because of a fearful veil of silence in the ranks.

Which is one reason why RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's recent remarks advising public figures to step aside and 'retire' at 75 years have raised more than a few eyebrows. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will turn 75 in September as will ironically Bhagwat. The opposition has been quick to seize on the RSS leader's comments, claiming that the saffron brotherhood's paterfamilias wants to urgently effect a 'succession plan' in the BJP.

There is a story in my 2024 election book about PM Modi's desire to stay in power at all costs. Apparently, as a young man when Modi worked briefly at his uncle's canteen in Ahmedabad, he would take a state transport bus to and from his Vadnagar home. He would leave his ihola, or bag. behind in the bus to reserve a seat since the same bus would take him back to Vadnagar. Moral of the story? Once Modi has sat on a chair, no one can snatch it away from him! The story maybe apocryphal since it was related to me by a Gujarat Congress leader but the underlying message is clear: an instinctively domineering



Despite the misgivings in some quarters, the **RSS knows Modi remains their best bet** for now to retain political and ideological hegemony

figure, Modi is uncomfortable without total control over his destiny. Such larger than life figures are loathe to take a backseat, forget retirement.

At the same time, RSS chieftains usually weigh their words carefully so what explains Bhagwat's sudden reference to the 75 years age limit? That a section of the Sangh has been desirous of a generational change within the BJP has been whispered in power corridors for a while. The underlying tugof-war between BJP and RSS leaderships came to the fore in 2024 general election campaign when BJP president JP Nadda remarked in an interview to the Indian Express that the BJP has grown from the time it needed the RSS and is now 'saksham' (capable) of running its own affairs. Those remarks caused disquiet within the sangh parivar hierarchy, a reflection perhaps of a wider discomfort within the RSS of a political eco-system that revolves around the inexorable cult of Modi as a 'God-like' figure. Last September, Bhagwat appeared to reflect the inner angst when he declared, "Through work, everyone can become a revered figure. But whether we ourselves have reached that level will be determined by others, not by ourselves. We should not proclaim that we have become God!" The reference to the prime minister being projected as a self-styled 'non-biological God' was unmistakable

And yet, despite the misgivings in some quarters, the RSS knows Modi remains their best bet for now to retain political and ideological hegemony. As the CSDS 2024 post-poll survey shows, Modi's popularity is still well above that of the BJP. One in every four voters of the BJP said they voted for the party only because of the Prime Minister's leadership. Take away the 'Modi factor' and the BJP looks far more vulnerable politically. He is the political mascot of Brand Hindutva, its commander-in-chief and star attraction. In a sense, we are in an age of 'Moditva' where a personality cult is suffused into religious majoritarianism. From a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to Article 370 being withdrawn in J&K to now even attempts at pushing through a uniform civil code in BJP-ruled states, the Modi government has ensured the effective implementation of the RSS's core agenda. In fact, the BJP's political dominance gives the RSS the long-cherished opportunity to spread its footprint like never before, be it in university campuses, cultural fora or even newsrooms. As a result, there has been a

clear shift in the power dynamics within the sangh parivar. For much of its 100 years of existence, the RSS was the undisputed ideological fountainhead within the saffron brotherhood. The Modi decade has changed the rules of engagement. The

BJP still draws its support systems from the well-entrenched RSS grassroots structures but at a leadership level, it is now PM Modi- an RSS pracharak turned politician -- and not sarsanghchalak Bhagwat who is 'primus inter pares' or first among equals. This is marked departure from the Vajpayee years for example when the RSS leadership would repeatedly snipe at an ageing prime minister leading a coalition government. Recall how then RSS chief, KS Sudarshan was openly contemptuous of Vadecision-making, ipayee's even urging him to step aside, a criticism that led to a piqued Vajpayee making his famous 'tired, na retired' remark.

In sharp contrast, Bhagwat knows that he cannot confront Modi directly. Floating a 'retirement' trial balloon is only an opening gambit, not a checkmate. Ironically, it was the Modi-Shah combine who in 2015 introduced the concept of a 'Marg-Darshak Mandal', a symbolic grouping of 75 yearplus party veterans like LK Advani and MM Joshi whom the Modi-Shah regime cut to size by pushing them into a permanent retirement abode. The RSS realizes it cannot force a 'Marg Darshak'-like role upon PM Modi at this stage but it still would like the party to create a more consensual path for a younger post-Modi BJP leadership. Post-script: Intriguingly, in

the same week that Bhagwat was giving retirement advise, Shah was telling a group of women farmers in Ahmedabad, "I have decided that whenever I retire, I will spend the rest of my life for Vedas, Upanishads and natural farming." The ultimate practitioner of ruthless power politics 'retiring' to farming? Not quite. Gujarat's Jodi No. 1 one has thrived on absolute power in Gandhinagar and Delhi and they are in no mood to give up so easily. Age in the Modi-Shah political universe is only a number.

> The writer is a senior journalist and author.

#### ECONOMY SPECTRUM

Rajdeep Sardesai

**GUJARAT'S** 

**POWER IN** 

**JODI NO. 1 ONE** 

**HAS THRIVED** 

**ON ABSOLUTE** 

GANDHINAGAR

**UP SO EASILY** 

# Camouflaging inequality

he claim by government about India's stature as the fourth most equal country in the world based on the World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief is deceptive and camouflages the stark reality of poverty and inequality that plague India despite its high economic growth. At the same time, other international data shows significant disparities in areas like gender inequality, and economic participation and human development. The inequality represented by Gini index ranges from 0 to 100, where zero represents perfect equality and 100 indicates extreme inequality. It is reported that India's consumption Gini index which was 28.8 in 2011-12, has declined steadily to 25.5 in 2022-23, placing it in the "moderately low inequality" category ahead of China (35.7), and the US (41.8). But it's crucial to understand that these measures are not directly comparable across countries. What is camouflaged is that the Gini index of our "consumption" is compared to the Gini index of "income" of other countries. This is nothing but incomparable. The World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform

(PIP) provides Gini indices for 104 countries based on consumption surveys and 73 countries

second most unequal country after South Africa. This inequality is massive, when we

"inequality declined post-independence till the early 1980s, after which it began rising and has skyrocketed since the ear ly 2000s." Between 2014-15 and 2022-23, the rise of top-end inequality has been particularly pronounced in terms of wealth concentration. In Oxfam's 2024 Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI), India ranks 127th out of 161 countries down from 123rd out of 161 countries in 2022. Our regressive tax system penalises honest taxpayers while benefits the rich and corporations. According to another Oxfam report, most billionaire wealth is taken, not earned – 60% comes from inheritance, cronvism and corruption or monopoly power. India's unique demographic shift is fuelling rapid expansion of family offices and it is estimated \$1.3 trillion in wealth is set for intergenerational transfer over the next decade. Hence, it is imperative for the government to impose wealth and inheritance taxes and spend more on health and education.



Gordon Brown

Quite simply, there will be few places where Putin can be certain of potential arrest. **His impunity** 

**AND DELHI AND THEY ARE IN NO MOOD TO GIVE** 

not facing the humiliation of a

> is coming to an end

special tribunal to prosecute Putin's foundational crime: planning preparing, and executing the invasion, occupation, and attempted annexation of Ukraine, dating back to the invasion of Crimea in 2014.

Prosecuting the regime for the crime of aggression against Ukraine falls squarely within the mission of the Council of Europe, founded in the aftermath of World War II, when much of the continent lay in ruins, with the goal of upholding the rule of law and human rights. It would also send the important message that a rules-based system is still the best way to create a more stable and peaceful world.

That message is needed now more than ever as Putin ramps up Russia's war machine and increases the pressure not only on the front line in Ukraine but also on civilians. The Kremlin has reportedly imported labourers from Asian and African countries to bolster the workforce in factories manufacturing drones, with China accused of providing vital components in large quantities.

So, what has happened this week is of great significance. New American armaments will begin to arrive soon, and the message has gone out to Putin and his criminal cabal: criminal indictments are coming. and there will be nowhere to hide. Quite simply, there will be few places outside of Russia where Putin can be certain of not facing the humiliation of a potential arrest. His impunity is coming to an end.

The writer, a former prime minister of the United Kingdom, is UN Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of Education Cannot Wait. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

# WISDOM CORNER

- What's money? A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night and in between does what he wants to do. BOB DYLAN
- I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest ٦ fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle - victorious. VINCE LOMBARDI
- People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anvone. AUDREY HEPBURN

## 'HIS DAY **in history**

- 1902: American mechanical engineer Willis Carrier completed drawings for what would became the first modern air conditioner.
- 1918: Former Russian tsar Nicholas II and his family were executed by Bolsheviks
- 1955: Disneyland opens its doors for the first time. The popular theme park ("The Happiest Place on Earth") was opened by Walt Disney in Anaheim, California.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

**INDIA HAS MORE INEQUALITY THAN OTHER COUNTRIES AND** REMARKABLY **LESS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY** THAN ALMOST **ANY OTHER** COUNTRY based on income surveys

Most countries in the PIP database that report consumption inequality are low income or low middle-income countries, whereas the reported Gini for most upper- and high-income countries is based on income. Further, the consumption-based Gini index tends to be lower than the income-based Gini because it doesn't fully capture the income inequality, especially among higher earners who tend to save and invest more. Further richer sections of society smokescreen their consumption too. According to experts, typically, a consumption inequality Gini is 7-14 percentage points lower than the same population's income inequality.

The Gini index for India has worsened over time, with its ranking dropping from 115 in 2009 to 176 in 2019 out of 216 countries, suggesting a considerable level of income disparity within the country. More importantly, income inequality in the country rose from a Gini of 52 in 2004 to 62 in 2023. This actually places India as the

### A rare admission

Sir, Hats off to Lt Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha, for taking full responsibility for the Pahalgam killings. In an interview to a leading newspaper, the LG, without any ifs and buts, took it on the chin - "Pahalgam was a security lapse, I take full responsibility for it." We live in times when the political class has become synonymous with vice, corruption and all manner of wrongdoing. Our politicians have very thick skins and know how to wriggle out of an uncomfortable situation. Their arsenal of lies, baseless arguments and whataboutery always comes to their rescue and bails them out. It's not surprising therefore, that no politician has taken the moral responsibility for heinous crimes against women (in government campuses), unruly behaviour, rail accidents, collapsed bridges, the pathetic condition of our roads, hospitals or government run schools. (I am not mentioning corruption here, because it is now a part and parcel of India's socio-political culture). A fact that sticks out like a sore thumb is that neither the PM nor our HM have so far tendered an apology to the nation for the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the lives of 26 innocent Indians.

Avinash Godboley, DEWAS (MP)

compare our wealth inequality, where our Gini index for wealth has increased from 0.70 in 2000 to 0.75 in 2023. Wage disparity remained high, with the median earnings of the top 10% being 13 times higher than the bottom 10% in 2023–24.

Recently, none other than Union minister Nitin Gadkari expressed concern over the rising number of poor people and concentration of wealth. India has more inequality than other countries and remarkably less equality of opportunity than almost any other country. The gap between rich and poor has widened rapidly in the last decades especially in the post-liberalization period with the income of the top 10% skyrocketing. According to the World inequality report 2022 released in December 2021, India stands out as a "poor and very unequal country, with an affluent elite."

The grim reality is that a working paper, titled "Income and Wealth Inequality in India. 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj," by World Inequality Lab has estimated that

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

### Stellar return

Sir, The safe return of Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and his fellow astronauts from the Axiom-4 mission is a proud moment for India and a big step forward in our space ambitions. This successful mission has given India not just glory but also valuable lessons and experience in human spaceflight. We must appreciate the teamwork of Axiom Space, SpaceX, and ISRO in ensuring both mission success and astronaut safety. Shukla's presence on the International Space Station (ISS) shows how international collaborations can benefit India's future space missions, especially Gaganyaan. Now, it is important that ISRO uses this momentum to build strong training, rehabilitation, and research programmes. Insights from this mission will help India plan safe, efficient, and longer manned missions in the future. Let us keep aiming high, learning more, and preparing better as we take our next giant leap in space exploration.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI



Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and

columns (between 600-1000 10 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: dit@orissapost.com



B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

















TWO STATES





# **Uttarakhand goes greener**

Over 8 lakh trees planted state-wide during Harela Festival



#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, July 17: Uttarakhand witnessed a remarkable transformation as the 'Harela festival' evolved from a cultural tradition into a sweeping environmental movement Wednesday.

With over 8.13 lakh saplings planted across all 13 districts, the state marked its largest-ever tree plantation drive on the occasion of any festival, turning the event into a symbol of ecological renewal and public participation.

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for environmental stewardship, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expanded the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign into a statewide initiative themed "Celebrate Harela. Repay the Debt of Mother Earth.'

The Chief Minister personally launched the drive by planting a sapling in Dehradun, emphasising that the campaign was not merely a government program but a people's movement rooted in

# FIR in Meghalaya against YouTuber, astrologer over 'human sacrifice' remark PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, July 17: An activist has complained to the police against a YouTuber and an astrologer who reportedly claimed in a post that tribals in Meghalaya still practice human sacrifice. A police officer said a case has been registered in this

regard. The activist, Enlang, also petitioned the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), seeking action against the two. Enlang, in his complaint, said the video posted June 13 with defamatory and inflammatory remarks has maligned the tribal communities of Meghalaya.

WITH MORE THAN 8.13 LAKH PLANTS ROOTED STATE-WIDE AS OF JULY 16, THE DATA REFLECTS NOT ONLY THE SCALE OF THE CAMPAIGN BUT ALSO THE DECENTRALISATION OF **ITS IMPACT - EVERY DISTRICT** PLAYING ITS PART IN PAINTING UTTARAKHAND GREEN

shared responsibility.

Data from the state government shows that tree plantations across Uttarakhand's districts during the Harela festival witnessed widespread and enthusiastic participation in

the environmental campaign. According to data, Champawat led the effort with over 1.24 lakh saplings planted, followed by Udham Singh Nagar at around 93,800 and Uttarkashi at just over 89,000. Significant contributions also came from Pithoragarh, Chamoli, and Garhwal, each reporting upwards of 60,000 plantings.

Even relatively smaller districts such as Bageshwar, Rudraprayag, and Nainital showed strong engagement, adding tens of thousands of trees to the collective total. From remote villages to bustling towns, thousands of plantation events unfolded simultaneously, involving local administrations, forest officials, schoolchildren, Anganwadi workers, women's groups, and youth volunteers.

The collective effort painted Uttarakhand in shades of green, reinforcing the state's identity as a land deeply connected to nature and committed to sustainable development.

Harela, traditionally celebrated to mark the onset of the monsoon and the agricultural cycle, has long been a reflection of Uttarakhand's cultural soul. But this year, the festival took on a new dimension - one that fused heritage with environmental consciousness The saplings planted were

not just trees but living symbols of hope, resilience, and the promise of a greener future. Chief Minister Dhami under

scored that Uttarakhand is not only a Himalayan state but a beacon of civic awareness and ecological responsibility. He reiterated the govern-

ment's commitment to balancing development with environmental preservation, stating that protecting forests, water sources, and land is central to the state's policy framework.

As the planted seeds take root, they represent more than just foliage - they embody a collective awakening. The Harela festival of 2025 will be remembered not just for its rituals and celebrations but for mobilising an entire state toward a green**OPERATION KALNEMI** 

Over 300 fake 'babas' nabbed in Uttarakhand

'Kanwariyas' carry holy water from River Ganga for Lord Shiva's worship during the month of 'Shravan', in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, Thursday

Speaking to IANS, Inspector General (IG) Kumaon Riddhim Agarwal confirmed that the operation was conducted across all six districts of the Kumaon region, where over 300 individuals posing as saints, babas, or spiritual guides were identified. Action has been initiated through FIRs, challans, and preventive detentions.

superstition, deceit, and false claims of divine powers," Agarwal told IANS.

"They had no valid identity proof or documentation to support their credentials. During the campaign, suspects were taken into custody, their backgrounds verified, and necessary legal action was taken.'

Agarwal further added that all police stations and outposts across Kumaon have Sanatan Dharma.

been instructed to remain vigilant and continue the crackdown against suspicious figures masquerading as spiritual leaders.

The operation is inspired by the mythological figure Kalnemi, a demon who ap peared as a saint to mislead people. Drawing from this allegory, CM Pushkar Singh Dhami launched Operation Kalnem July 10, calling it a necessary move to protect the image of

ter Pushkar Singh Dhami, aims to weed out fraudulent spiritual figures misguiding the public in "These individuals were exploiting people's faith through er, more sustainable tomorrow. the name of faith. **BOND WITH MONSOON** 

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

division.

Haldwani, July 17: In a sweep-

ing crackdown on imposters ex-

ploiting religious sentiments,

Uttarakhand Police has taken

action against more than 300

fake babas under Operation

Kalnemi across the Kumaon

The initiative, launched un-

der the directive of Chief Minis-

# More than 1,700 kg of single-use plastic seized in Meghalaya dist

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Khliehriat, July 17: Authorities in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district on Wednesday said they have seized over 1700 kg of single-use plastics in a major crackdown on plastic pollution, officials said.

The Meghalaya High Court has banned the sale, production and storage of single-use plastic items across the state.

Acting on the directions of the High Court, a team comprising Executive Magistrates, police personnel, and representatives from the Meghalava State Pol-

inspections across several mar ket areas in the district recent ly. The team inspected markets such as Ladrymbai Market, Khliehriat Market, Sookilo Market, and Umpleng (Cement Market) area, they said.

"During the drive, officials seized approximately 1705.451 kilograms of single-use plastics that were below the permitted thickness of 120 microns," according to a senior distric administrative officer. The of ficials confirmed that the items confiscated mainly included plastic carry bags and packaging materials that violate the

# World's first rain museum to open in Mawsynram

In Meghalaya, rain is more than just a weather pattern—it is deeply embedded in the

traditions, languages, and spiritual beliefs of its indigenous communities

### AGENCIES

Mawsynram, July 17: In India, rain-especially the monsoon-holds immense cultural and climatic significance. It is the lifeblood of agriculture. crucial to the nation's food security and economy, while also shaping festivals, folklore, and artistic traditions across the country. It is therefore fitting that the world's first Rain Museum is being built in Mawsynram, Meghalaya, the wettest place on Earth. With an estimated budget of Rs 35 crore, the museum aims to offer an immersive experience that honours this deep

of all ages, the museum will

feature interactive exhibits on

rainfall and climate change,

live rain simulation zones,

and installations that show-

case cultural traditions. A key

highlight will be a dedicated



not only the land but the very identity of Meghalaya's people.

Livelihoods And Climate Change

Rain shapes every aspect of life in Meghalaya—nourishing the land, sustaining live lihoods, and deeply influencing local culture. In a region so intertwined with rain, the upcoming Rain Museum offers a meaningful space to explore and reflect on this vital relationship. For the largely agrarian population, rain is essential for crop cultivation and food security-its absence

The YouTube channel, hosted by content creator Raghav Sharma, featured astrologer Sushil Guru

In the broadcast, the guru allegedly claimed that "Meghalava tribals still practice human sacrifice and cannibalism.

The complainant claimed that the video with "hate speech" has gone viral.

The petitioner asserted that the statement is not only false and derogatory but also designed to incite communal hatred and tarnish the scheduled tribe communities in Meghalaya. "The remarks are a gross cultural insult and an attempt to demonise an entire community," the complaint reads.

connection to rain by blending How Communities In Meghalaya Honour Rain science, art, and local culture. Designed to engage visitors

and ISRO.

In Meghalaya, rain is far more than a seasonal event it is a sacred force woven into the cultural and spiritual fabric of its indigenous tribes: the Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos. For the Khasis, rain is a divine gift from Lei U Blei, the sky

meteorological research centre,

envisioned to collaborate with

institutions like the India Me-

teorological Department (IMD)

Confirming progress on the

project, Meghalaya Tourism

Minister Paul Lyngdoh an-

nounced that tenders have al-

ready been floated. "Construc-

tion will begin after the current

monsoon season." he added.

god, with legends of a woman who once climbed Shillong Peak to offer prayers and end a drought.

The Jaintias view the first thunderstorm as a cosmic moment marking the separation of heaven and earth, while for the Garos, monsoon rains symbolise fertility and are central to their creation story.

This reverence is reflected in vibrant post-sowing festivals like Megong, Behdeiñkhlam, and Shad Suk Mynsiem, where communities gather in celebration through music, dance, and ritual. Rain also dictates agricultural rhythms, guiding planting and harvesting cycles. Enriching the region's lush biodiversity, rainfall shapes

or excess can disrupt lives. Rivers, springs, and streams fed by rain provide drinking water and irrigation, forming the backbone of rural survival.

Yet, this deep reliance brings growing concerns. Climate change is altering rainfall patterns, threatening ecosystems and age-old practices. Meanwhile, deforestation and unsustainable land use worsen the effects of heavy rains, causing floods and landslides. Ironically, even in one of the world's wettest regions, seasonal water scarcity highlights the urgent need for sustainable management. The Rain Museum will aim not only to celebrate this unique bond with rain but also to spark conversations around resilience and conservation.

Iution Control Board conducted notified environmental norms



#### GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. 0-446 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BHADRAK ee\_rwbdk2@yahoo.co.in "e" Procurement Notice for Building Works Identification Online Tender 04/RWD/BDK-II/2025-26 Dtd.15.07.2025 Name of the Work Building works as per Annex Total Number of Works 3 Nos Rs.26.25 lakhs - Rs.33.61 lakhs Approximate Estiamted Cost Class of Contractor As per Annexure Period of Completion As per Annexure Other details the details are as follows Availability of Tender Last date Onliner for Bidding & time of Bid Date & time Procuremen seeking ntifica of opening Officer No. From to tender of Bid 6 3 4 Executive 22.07.2025 30.07.2025 30.07.2025 31.07.2025 Engineer 04 upto upto R.W. Division 11.30 A.M. 5.00 P.M. 3.00 P.M. 11.30 A.M II, Bhadrak Further details can be tendersorissa.gov.in". seen from the e-procure nent portal "https://w Any otehr changes/co may be seen only in tendersorissa.gov.in Date of transparent lottery to be conducted on Dt.19.08.2025 at 11.30 A.M. i eer, Rural Works Division-II, Bhadra Sd./- Executive Engineer the office of the Superintending Engin OIPR-25090/11/0021/2526 R.W. Division-II. Bhadrak

# From tea stall to Mt Everest: Rifiness aims for 7 summits

hearts of many -- not just for her

physical endurance and mental

countless other women from

The 20-year-old mountaineer recently etched her name in history as the youngest person from the state to conquer Mount Everest

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shillong, July 17: From serving tea and noodles at a roadside stall to dreaming of summiting the highest peaks across all seven continents, Meghalava's Rifiness Wariri is charting a path of grit and grace

The 20-year-old mountaineer recently etched her name in history as the youngest person from the state to conquer Mount Everest. But even with this extraordinary feat, Rifiness



remains deeply rooted in her humble beginnings.

In an interview, Rifiness strength but also for the humilstood proud, yet grounded, as ity and warmth she continues she shared her dreams of scalto carry. Eyeing the prestigious ing the tallest mountains on seven summits challenge, Rifiness hopes her path will inspire every continent.

Her journey has captured the

It's my home. My roots keep me grounded... the mountains teach us humility. When I stood atop Everest, I realised how small and insignificant we are. That was one lesson I brought back and I am sharing with everyone RIFINESS WARJRI

struggling working-class families in small towns and marginalised communities to chase big dreams.

Born in Nongthymmai but now residing in Laitkor area of East Khasi Hills district on the outskirts of Shillong, Rifiness comes from a modest, hardworking family.

Her mother runs a small roadside tea stall while her father sells chicken to support the family.

Despite the national and international recognition she now receives, Rifiness is still often seen helping out at the family stall, wiping tables, serving tea, and chatting with customers, just as she always did.

Despite being a man of few words, her father Shlurbor Kharmyndai could not hide his pride.

**Rifiness's journey to Everest** was anything but easy. Meghalaya, though rich in natural beauty, lacks mountaineering infrastructure and organised support for adventure sports.

Sponsorship and funding are limited, especially for athletes, and mountaineering is not a popular sport in the state. But with unshakeable determination, intense training, and the emotional strength drawn from her family, Rifiness overcame every obstacle placed in her path.











national



Where are these **Rohingyas? Give** us the addresses. Rohingya is a tribe from Myanmar. Since when did they start speaking **Bengali? Those who say** these things don't even know what they are talking about MAMATA BANERJEE BENGAL CN

### PM TO VISIT BENGAL TODAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit West Bengal Friday to address a BJP rally in Durgapur and unveil key infrastructure projects, in a politically charged backdrop marked by TMC's outcry over alleged harassment of Bengali-speaking migrants in several **BJP-ruled states** 





Every village in Bastar will become 'your achha gaon' (good village). Now no one can stop

development of Bastar. The youth of Bastar today is full of self-belief

VISHNU DEO SAI CHHATTISGARH CM

Farmers are the soul of the Indian economy, and serving them is our duty. We need to increase

per-hectare yield, promote mechanisation through small equipment, and boost modernisation through startups SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN UNION MINISTER



forest land HIMANTA BISWA SARMA ASSAM CN

# SHORT TAKES

### Ex-armyman hit by truck, dies

New Delhi: A 47-year-old retired armyman from Haryana died after being hit by a truck on the Salimgarh Flyover in central Delhi, police said Thursday. Mahender Pal from Harvana's Palwal was the sole-breadearner of his family and is survived by his 41-year-old wife and two sons. The incident took place around 2 am July 15. Pal was travelling with his son and other family members to Palwal when their car's tyre got punctured near the Salimgarh Flyover, they said

### **Bihar: 19 killed in** lightning strikes

Patna: At least 19 people were killed in lightning strikes in Bihar in the last 24 hours, the chief minister's office said Thursday. The highest number of five fatalities was reported in Nalanda, followed by Vaishali (four), Banka and Patna (two each). Besides, Sheikhpura, Nawada, Jehanabad, Aurangabad, Jamui and Samastipur districts

### **STADIUM STAMPEDE**

# Govt report blames RCB, DNA Network, KSCA

*In its status report on the* June 4 stampede near the M Chinnaswamy stadium that was submitted to the Karnataka High Court, the state government said Royal Challengers Bengaluru, DNA Entertainment Networks Private Limited, and the KSCA unilaterally organised the team's massive victory parade and celebration without prior permission or furnishing mandatory details

to the authorities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 17: The Karnataka government has blamed IPL franchisee RCB, its event management partner, and the state cricket association for ignoring standard procedures and safety measures during the team's victory march here, leading to a stampede that claimed 11 lives last month.

In its status report on the June 4 stampede near the M Chinnaswamy stadium that was submitted to the Karnataka High Court, the state government said Roval Challengers Bengaluru, DNA Entertainment Networks Private Limited, and the KSCA unilaterally organised the team's massive victory parade and celebration without prior permission or furnishing mandatory details to the authorities. The report emphasised that the organ-



isers never formally sought

police permission in the prescribed format as mandated by the Licensing and Controlling of Assemblies and Processions (Bangalore City) Order, 2009. It clarified that merely submitting an intimation does not amount to seeking permission, particularly for events involving large public gatherings in central

Bengaluru. According to the report, at about 6.30 pm, just hours before the IPL final between RCB and Punjab Kings (PBKS) in Ahmedabad, the Karnataka State Cricket Association, on behalf of DNA Networks Pvt Ltd. RCB's event management partner, submitted a letter of intimation to the Cubbon Park

police station here. "Should RCB emerge victorious in the tournament, the management of RCB/DNA Entertainment Networks Private Limited intends to plan potential victory parades around the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, culminating in victory celebrations at the stadium. This was in the nature of an intimation. not a requisition for permission as required under the law," the

report said. However, the police denied permission due to the lack of critical information, including projected crowd size, event logistics, and crowd control measures. The proposal was also made on short notice, which precluded due processing.

Despite this, RCB unilaterally proceeded June 4, announcing a public 'Victory Parade' from Vidhana Soudha to Chinnaswamy Stadium via multiple social media posts starting at 7.01 am. A final post at 3.14 pm announced that the parade would begin at 5.00 pm and would be followed by stadium celebrations.

This post was the first to mention that free passes were available online, but it came after large crowds had already started gathering. The posts garnered widespread attention, with the first four updates accumulating viewership figures of 16 lakh, 4.26 lakh, 7.6 lakh, and

This crowd estimate is sup ported by BMRCL ridership June 4, which saw 9.66 lakh commuters compared to a daily average of six lakh.

# EC's SIR diabolical move to rig polls via large-scale disenfranchisement: Cong

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Congress Thursday alleged that the Special Intensive Revision of the electoral roll in Bihar is a "deliberate and diabolical" move to rig elections through large-scale disenfranchise ment, with Rahul Gandhi asking whether the poll body has completely become the BJP's 'Election Chori branch".

Gandhi claimed that the Election Commission (EC) had been caught "red-handed" stealing votes in the name of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

The EC has all along maintained that the revision, being held after 22 years, will cleanse the voters' list of ineligible people, duplicate entries and include those eligible according to law to vote. Gandhi shared a post by Ajit Anjum, whose YouTube channel is running a series on SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar. "The Election Commission has been caught red-handed stealing votes in the name of 'SIR' in Bihar. Work -- just theft, but name is 'SIR' and FIR will be lodged against the one who exposes it!" Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

"Is EC still 'Election Com mission' or has it completely become BJP's 'Election Chori branch?" the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. Anjum has been accused of spreading communal tensions in the Begusarai district by the local administration.

He had denied the allegation and shared a screenshot of an FIR lodged against him. Congress general sec retary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that after seeing all that is happening in the name of SIR in Bihar. the people are asking whether 'votebandi" is being imple

# India hits back at NATO warning over Russia ties

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte had warned India, China and Brazil that they could be hit hard by secondary

sanctions if they continue to do business with Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: In a firm response to NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte's threat of secondary sanctions over New Delhi's ties with Moscow, India Thursday cautioned against "double standards" on the matter and asserted that its energy procurement from Russia is based on national interests and market dynamics.

Rutte had warned India, Chi na and Brazil that they could be hit hard by secondary sanctions if they continue to do business with Russia.

"We have seen reports on the subject and are closely following the developments. Let me reiterate that securing energy needs of our people is understandably an overriding priority for us," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

"In this endeavour, we are guided by what is on offer in the markets, and by the prevailing global circumstances. We would particularly caution against any double standards on the matter," he said.

Asked about US President Donald Trump threatening 100 per cent tariff on Russian exports and "secondary tariffs" on any country that has trade links with Moscow, Jaiswal said: "We are closely following developments that are in this regard, and the articulations that are being made.



India, China and Brazil have been the major buyers of Russian crude oil notwith standing the Western sanctions on Moscow for its inva sion of Ukraine.

"My encouragement to these three countries, particularly is if you live now in Beijing, or in Delhi, or you are the president of Brazil, you might want to take a look into this, because this might hit you very hard, Rutte told reporters in Washington DC.

"So please make the phone call to Vladimir Putin and tell him that he has to get serious about peace talks, because otherwise this will slam back on Brazil, on India and on China in a massive way," he said.

The NATO chief's remarks coincided with Trump's warn ing to Russia of major significant trade restrictions if it does not reach a peace deal with Ukraine within 50 days.

"We're going to be doing very severe tariffs (on Russia) if we don't have a deal in 50 days,' Trump said Tuesday.

India, China and Brazil are members of the BRICS and Trump has been critical of the grouping as well.

Earlier this month, Trump had threatened BRICS member nations of 10 per cent additional tariffs on exports to the US apart from reciprocal tariffs.

# Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan turns into arena

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 17: Supporters of two MLAs, one from the ruling BJP and the other from Opposition NCP (SP), came to blows inside the Maharashtra legislature complex Thursday, a day after a heated exchange between the two legislators themselves. Supporters of NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) MLA Jitendra Awhad and BJP's Gopichand Padalkar were involved in the scuffle, and clashed briefly before onlook ers separated the two groups an eyewitness said. Padalkar MLA from Jat, tendered an apology over the incident af ter meeting senior BJP leader Chandrashekhar Bawankule Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis termed the incident as "absolutely inappropriate" "Such behaviour does not suit the dignity of the Vidhan Bha van. I have urged the Speaker and Chairperson to take the matter seriously and ensure strict action.

# SNIPPETS

### SC frowns upon HC granting bail to Darshan in murder case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday expressed its reservation over the Karnataka High Court's decision to grant bail to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa in the Renukaswamy murder case. A bench of Justices J B Pardivala and R Mahadevan said it was "not at all convinced" by the manner in which the high court exercised its discretion. The bench asked senior advo cate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the actor, to give "good reasons" why it should not interfere with bail order. "To be very honest with you, we are not convinced with the manner in which the high court has exercised discretion. Very honestly, we will say this. We will hear you because your clients are on bail.



accounted for one death each. Condoling the deaths, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased and urged the people to take ample precautions during bad weather.

### **Delhi court punishes 4** accused for contempt

. . . . . . . . . .

New Delhi: A Delhi court directed four accused persons to stand in the court with their hands raised in the air for the entire day after finding them guilty of contempt of court. Judicial magistrate Saurabh Goyal was hearing a 2018 complaint case, which was at the stage of pre-charge evidence.

they have come for cancellation of bail and you must have seen the manne which the high court had dictated the order," Justice Pardiwala told Sibal.

## Land-for-jobs scam: Lalu moves SC to stay trial court proceedings

New Delhi: Former Bihar chief minister and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav has moved the Supreme Court against an order dismissing his plea seeking a stay on the trial court proceedings over the CBI's land-for-jobs case. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh would likely hear the matter July 18. On May 29, the Delhi High Court said there were no compelling reason to stay the proceedings. The high court issued notice to the CBI on Yaday's plea for quashing of the CBI FIR and posted the hearing August 12.

# 30 Cong MLAs suspended from Chhattisgarh Assembly for a day

Raipur: Thirty Congress members were suspended from the Chhattisgarh legislative assembly for a day Thursday after they created an uproar, accusing the state government of failing to ensure adequate supply of diammonium phosphate (DAP) fertilizer. Due to the pandemonium during the discussion on the issue, the Speaker had to adjourn the House twice. Raising the issue in the Question Hour, senior Congress MLA Umesh Patel asked about the demand of DAP and its supply in the state. He also asked whether there is a shortage of this fertilizer.



A man clears water from his boat at submerged Dashashwamedh Ghat as the water level of River Ganga continues to rise during the monsoon season, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh PTI PHOTO

### **INDIA to hold online** meeting Saturday

New Delhi: A meeting of the leaders of the INDIA bloc parties will be held online Saturday evening to discuss the prevailing political situation in the country, the Congress announced Thursday. The meeting comes right before the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which starts Monday. It will be held after a long gap since the INDIA bloc parties jointly deliberated the country's political situation.

### **TV actress alleges** molestation

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Kolkata: A police case was registered after a television actress alleged that she was molested and threatened with an acid attack in the Jadavpur area of south Kolkata. However, the accused have filed a countercomplaint, alleging that they were assaulted by the actress's friends.

# Ahmedabad cleanest city under new ranking system

Indore, which has been the cleanest city in this category for the past seven years, has been elevated to the Super Swachh League (SSL) cities along with Surat (last year's joint topper), Navi Mumbai (last year's second), and Vijayawada, another consistent top performer in the million-population category

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: Ahmedabad was named the cleanest big city Thursday, followed by Bhopal and Lucknow in the government's annual cleanliness survey, even as Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai and Vijavawada among 23 cities were elevated to a newly formed 'Super Swachh League Cities' category for demonstrating exceptional performance in sanitation. The results of the Swachh

Survekshan were announced Thursday. According to the gov-

ernment, 14 crore people participated in the survey through face-to-face interactions, the Swachhata App, MyGov and social media platforms in over 4,500 cities.

Seventy-eight awards were presented this year across four categories -- Super Swachh League Cities; Top three clean cities in five population categories; Special Category: Ganga Towns, Cantonment Boards, Safai Mitra Suraksha, Mahakumbh: and State-Level Awards -- promising clean city of a state or Union Territory.



Municipal Corporation sanitation workers celebrate after Bhopal was ranked the second cleanest city in India in Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 (Cleanliness Survey) ΡΤΙ ΡΗΟΤΟ

Under the new category ulation category 'Super Swachh League', Noi-

New Delhi (NDMC), Tirupati, Ambikapur and Lonavala have been part of the 50,000 to three lakh population category. These cities in their five-population categories will compete with each other as they have been made part of the 'Super Swachh League Cities' and the results will be announced in the next cleanliness survey.

President Droupadi Murmu gave away the awards to the winners at an event which was attended by Union Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) Minister Manohar Lal and others.

To promote new cities towards cleanliness, the 'Swachh Shahar' category has also been introduced, the official said, adding Ahmedabad has secured the first position, followed by Bhopal, Lucknow, Raipur, Jabalpur, Greater Hyderabad, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune, GVMC Visakhapatnam, Agra and Ghaziabad.

Among the top 40 cities with a population of over 10 lakh, Chennai ranked 38th, Ludhiana 39th and Madurai 40th.

Manohar Lal presented the award for Best Ganga Town to Prayagraj, followed by Varanasi and Kanpur.

Secunderabad Cantonment was honoured as the Best Cantonment Board for its exemplary sanitation efforts, followed by Deolali Cantonment, MHOW Cantt, Ahmedabad Cantt and Kirkee Cantt. In the list of 58 Cantonment areas, Delhi Cantt ranked 30th, Shillong 56th, Agra 57th and Kanpur 58th.

In the three to ten lakh population category under 'Swachh Shahar', Mira-Bhayandar has secured the first position while Bilaspur and Jamshedpur fol lowed it in the next two spots.

Madhya Pradesh's Dewas has bagged the first position in the 50,000 to three lakh population category and Karhad in Maharashtra and Karnal in Harvana ranked second and third respectively.







da emerged as the topper, fol-

lowed by Chandigarh. Mysore.

Ujjain, Gandhinagar and Gun-

tur in the three to ten lakh pop-



# national



**AI PLANE CRASH** 

After independence till today, whenever Congress party is in power, either in the Centre or in the state. it has given various schemes SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DEPUTY CM

## **NITISH ANNOUNCES 125 UNITS OF** FREE POWER TO ALL HOUSEHOLDS

In a major populist move ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Thursday announced free power up to 125 units to all domestic consumers in the state. Kumar came up with the announcement on social media, stating that the benefit will reach 1.67 crore households



dav

My best wishes to Kavinder Gupta on being appointed as the Lieutenant Gov

ernor of Ladakh But this responsibility is not easy. Working in high-altitude areas is challenging

OMAR ABDULLAH J&K CM

There is no ego, we do not want any credit and the state government is ready to meet with anyone under

his (Nadda) leadership for the welfare, rights and property of disaster-hit people of the state SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HP CM

Our police had apprehended the accused within four hours of the incident. NIA took over the case in

the night...but even after all this time, they have failed to make any headway



# ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM POS

THE DAY 78th murder in 46 days in Bihar

Few goons entered a top hospital in Patna, kílled a man & ran away This is Gangs of Wasseypur in real

life in Bihar or even worse But no Media will call it Jungle Raj of BJP

@mr\_mayank

# SHORT TAKES

### 13-yr-old boy dies by electrocution at school

Kollam (Kerala): A 13-yearold boy died after suffering an electric shock on his school premises in this district Thursday, sparking protests by various Opposition political parties. The victim has been identified as Mithun, a Class 8 student of Boys High School, Thevalakkara here, police said. The incident occurred at around 9.15 am, when he reportedly tried to retrieve a slipper that had fallen on top of the cycle shed adjacent to the school building, they said.

Too early to draw conclusions: AAIB

# PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) Thursday said it is too early to reach any definite conclusions on the Air India plane crash as the probe is still on and urged everyone to refrain from spreading premature narratives amid speculations about the cause of the fatal accident

"It has come to our attention that certain sections of the international media are repeatedly attempting to draw conclusions through selective and unverified reporting. Such actions are irresponsible, especially while the investigation remains ongoing," AAIB Director General G V G Yugandhar said in a statement.

Appealing to all concerned to await publication of the final investigation report, AA-IB said this is not the time to create public anxiety or angst towards safety of Indian aviation industry, particularly on the basis of unfounded facts.

The statement comes against the backdrop of reports suggesting that pilot error led to the crash of the Air India plane that killed 260 people June 12. The Boeing 787-8 aircraft, enroute from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed soon

after take off. "The purpose of the AAIB's investigation and preliminary report is to provide information about 'WHAT' happened. The preliminary report has to be seen in this light. At this stage,



it is too early to reach STATEMENT COMES AGAINST THE to any definite conclusions. The in-BACKDROP OF REPORTS vestigation by UGGESTING THAT PILOT ERRO AAIB is still not complete. INDIA PLANE THAT KILLED 260 The final in-PEOPLE JUNE 12 vestigation report will come NROUTE FROM AHMEDABA out with root TO LONDON GATWICK causes and rec-CRASHED SOON AFTER ommendations,' ΓΑΚΕ ΟΕΕ the statement said.

AAIB also urged both the public and the media to refrain from spreading premature narratives that risk undermining the integrity of the investigative process. "It is essential to respect the

sensitivity of the loss faced by family members of deceased passengers, crew of the aircraft and other deceased persons on ground," it said and added that the accident has been the most devastating accident in recent

aviation history. The investigation is being undertaken in a rigorous and most professional manner in accordance with the AAIB Rules and international protocols, the statement said.

Against the backdrop of concerns raised about the preliminary probe report, AA IB asserted that it has a flawless record in investigating 92 accidents and 111 serious incidents since its inception in 2012.

"Even now, apart from investigating in the ill-fated Air India's B787-8 aircraft VT-ANB, several other accidents and serious incidents are under investigation," the statement noted. Therefore, AAIB appeals to

all concerned to await publication of Final Investigation Report after completion of the Investigation. AAIB will also publish updates, as and when required, which have technical and public interest.

#### Probe should also focus on possible fault in stabilizer: Expert

NEW DELHI: A veteran pilot and aviation consultant has suggested that investigators should also focus on a possible fault in flight AI171's stabilizer, which he believes could have created conditions for the plane's crash, albeit due to an unintended mistake by the pilot. Air India flight 171, had arrived from Delhi before its onward journey to London Gatwick on June 12. The crew reported a fault with the stabilizer to engineers in Ahmedahad who fixed it according to a preliminary report into the investigation released July 12. Aviation expert Captain Ehsan Khalid told PTI that investigators should also check the flight data recorder for stabilizer inputs data, in case it was not fixed properly and created conditions for the crash during the takeoff roll of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner. The stabilizer is part of the aircraft's tail and helps in pitching up and down its nose on command from the pilot.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, July 17: A man, who was a murder convict and out on parole, was shot dead by gunmen inside a private hospital in Bihar's Patna Thursday, police said. The deceased was identified as Chandan, a resident of Buxar district, and went to the hospital for treatment, a senior officer said.

A purported CCTV footage of the incident, which went viral on social media, showed that five armed men were entering the ICU of the hospital and firing at the person. PTI couldn't independently verify the authenticity of the video. Patna (central) SP Diksha said, "We are examining CCTV footage collected from the hospital authorities and trying to identify the killers."

"The police received information that a person was shot at by gunmen inside a private hospital in Patna at 7.30 am Thursday. The incident took place when the deceased had come for treatment at the hospital. He was on parole.' the SP told PTI. The man was admitted to the ICU of the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries, the officer said. A case has been registered and the matter is being investigat

manhunt has been launched to nab the accused. Prima facie, it appears that old rivalry might be the reason behind the murder, she added. "Criminals. protected by the government shot at a patient admitted to a Patna hospital. Is anyone safe in Bihar? Did such an incident happen in Bihar before 2005 during the RJD's rule?" party leader Tejashwi Yadav alleged on X. Independent Lok Sabha MP from Purnea, Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, also alleged that the shooting has completely exposed the Nitish Kumar government.

### Crime surge due to jobless farm workers: Bihar cop

Patna: A senior police officer in Bihar has blamed the recent spurt in crime in the state on seasonal unemployment among agricultural labourers. ADG (Headquarters) Kundan Krishnan made the remarks during an interaction with journalists Wednesday evening. "Bihar has only two major crop seasons. Since there is no crop season between April and July, most farmhands remain unemployed during this period. Consequently, land-related clashes escalate. Some of them, especially the youth, even take up contract killings for quick money," Krishnar said. Murder cases increase mainly between May and July, he added. The comment has triggered outrage on social media, with many people accusing the officer of trying to come up with an excuse for failure to control law and order

# India carries out successful trial of Akash Prime missile

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: India has successfully test fired in digenously developed Akash Prime missile in Ladakh that has been customised to operate at an altitude above 4,500 metres, the defence ministry said Thursday.

The achievement carries added significance as it follows the "exceptional performance" of India's indigenously developed



are made available, the child will stay in a child care institution under the supervision of child welfare committees, officials said. Officials assured strict action if the DNA test confirms that the adult is not related to the child they are accompanying.

The directions were issued to all DCs by the Directorate of Social Security (Women and Child Development) under the project Jeewanjyot-2. Kaur emphasised that the objective of conducting DNA testing was to ascertain whether those accompanying child beggars are their parents. "If they are not, then from where do they bring children and make them beg?" she questioned. With DNA testing, those who are involved in child trafficking will be caught, and strict action will be taken against them, she said. The minister also stated that her department has been consistently taking steps to stop child begging in the state, adding that more than 300 children have been rescued so far. Kaur appealed to the public not to give any money to child beggars and to report the matter to the 109 helpline number.



### Kerala: Red alert in four districts

#### Thiruvananthapuram:

Incessant rains in Kerala caused minor mudslides and flooding of homes in Kozhikode district along with waterlogging of low-lying areas and rise in water levels of various rivers in other parts of the state Thursday. In Kasaragod district, the water level of various rivers, including Uppala, Manjeswaram, Madhur and Puthige, rose due to the heavy rains, prompting authorities to warn people living on the banks of these rivers to be vigilant. Similar warnings were issued by authorities with regard to the Korapuzha and Kuttiady rivers in Kozhikode, Perumba in Kannur and Kabani in Wayanad districts of the state.

### 3 minors held for killing teen

New Delhi: Three minors were apprehended for allegedly strangling a teenage boy, gouging out his eyes to prevent identification, and burying his body near the Yamuna riverbank in Alipur after he resisted a mobile snatching bid, an official said Thursday. The deceased, identified as Sonu Kumar (18), had been missing since April. His skeleton was recovered from a three-foot-deep pit, the official added.

a move aimed at checking child trafficking and their exploitation for begging, the Punjab government directed all Deputy Commissioners (DC) to conduct DNA tests on children found begging with adults on the streets to verify their relationship, offi-

Chandigarh, July 17: In

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

cials said Thursday. While referring to the DNA testing, Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Baliit Kaur noted that Punjab is the first state in the country to have taken such an initiative.

If a child is found begging with an adult, a DNA test will be conducted to verify their family ties. Until the results

air defence systems during Operation Sindoor, it said. Akash Prime is an upgraded variant of the Akash weapon

NSG personnel during a counter-terrorism mock drill near The Claridges hotel in New Delhi

# Assam: One killed as evicted people clash with security forces

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Goalpara (Assam), July 17: At least one person was killed and several others, including policemen, were injured in a clash between evicted people and security personnel in Paikan Reserve Forest in Assam's Goalpara district Thursday, an official said.

Security deployment has

been strengthened, and top police officers and district officials have rushed to the spot, which has been cordoned off. Goalpara District Commissioner (DC) Prodip Timung said forest guards and police personnel were attacked by alleged encroachers with sticks, and stones were hurled at them when they had gone to cordon

off a part of the Paikan reserve forest, where an eviction drive was carried out Saturday. The eviction drive to clear encroachment on around 135 hectares in the Paikan Reserve Forest of the Krishnai Range of the district had affected 1.080 families, and the evicted people were mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims.

PTI PHOTO

Good oral health can reduce cancer risk: Study

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July17: Oral healthcare plays a significant role in enhancing health-related outcomes, including those associated with cancer, researchers from AIIMS Delhi said, underscoring the necessity of integrating oral care practices not only at the primary level but throughout all health management.

Emerging evidences indicate that poor oral health is closely associated with several health problems, cardiovascular including disease, diabetes, adverse pregnancy outcomes and Alzheimer's disease, oncologists Dr Abhishek Shankar and Dr Vaibhav Sahni from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi said in an article published in The Lancet Regional Health - Southeast Asia earlier this month.

The international head and

ral hygiene has been nplicated in cancer isk and its prediction particularly in head and neck cancers (HNC)

he current literature also suggests a link between periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, and ancers of the digestive tract, prostate, breast, ancreas, oropharynx iterus, and lungs

neck cancer epidemiology (IN-HANCE) consortium, through a pooled analysis of 13 studies involving 12,527 controls and 8,925 HNC cases, reported that good oral hygiene (defined by annual dental visits, fewer missing teeth and daily tooth-brushing) was associated with a modest reduction in the risk of HNC, the researchers said.

Presence of pathogenic oral bacteria such as Porphyro-

monas gingivalis and Prevotella intermedia has been shown to elevate cancer incidence and adversely affect overall survival whether with specific-cancer or disease-free, they said.

Oral health is crucial in the context of cancer therapy. A recent systematic review concluded that radiotherapy (RT) to the head and neck region significantly alters the oral microbiome, typically reduc-

ing beneficial bacteria while increasing potentially harmful species, leading to post RT complications, the research suggested.

Patients with severe periodontal disease undergoing intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT), with or without chemotherapy, have shown higher susceptibility to post-treatment bone healing complications, the researchers said.

These findings make it imperative to maintain optimal oral hygiene before, during and after RT, given its role in influencing survivorship outcomes, they added.

Data from the CHANCE study revealed that routine dental visits over the past 10 years were associated with reduced cancer mortality, according to the research.

Dr Shankar and Dr Sahni, however, pointed out that there is a dearth of original data from Southeast Asia reporting on the

association between oral health and cancer, as most original studies tend to limit their scope to epidemiological findings.

"It is abundantly clear that oral healthcare plays a significant role in enhancing health-related outcomes, including those related to cancer survivorship. This evidence underscores the necessity of integrating oral health practices not only at the primary care level but throughout all healthcare settings,' the doctors said.

Efforts should focus on innovating and implementing point-of-care diagnostics in oral health that are evidence-based, economical, validated, and offer sufficient sensitivity and specificity, they stressed. The researchers stated that

the World Health Organisation (WHO) - South East Asia Region (SEAR) could benefit from public health initiatives to improve oral health.

ularly for meeting high-altitude operational requirements.







system built for the Indian Army. The test firing of the mis sile in Ladakh assumed signif icance as it is close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC). "India July 16 achieved a significant milestone by successfully destroying two aerial high speed unmanned targets at high-altitude in Ladakh by Akash Prime, the upgraded variant of Akash weapon system for the Indian Army," the ministry said in a statement.

It said the weapon system is customised to operate in altitude above 4,500 metres and has latest upgrades including indigenous ly developed radio frequency seeker. "Based on the operational feedbacks from users, various upgrades are made to improve the operational effectiveness demonstrating the advantage of the ecosystem created for the indigenous weapon system." the defence ministry said. Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh complimented the Indi-

an Army, the Defence Research

and Development Organisation

(DRDO), and the industry on

this "remarkable achievement"

it said. He described the success

as a significant boost to India's

air defence capabilities, partic-



I hope to be able to meet you again, in a few months, to take part in the ecumenical commemoration of the anniversary of the **Council of Nicaea** POPE LEO CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

## **'RAIN EMERGENCY' DECLARED IN PAK**

Torrential monsoon rains claimed 30 lives in Pakistan's Punjab over the last 24 hours, prompting the provincial government to declare "rain emergency" in different parts. The most affected area was Chakwal, a salt range area of the province, some 300 kms from Lahore, receiving 423 mm of rain in the last 24 hours leading to floods in the area



uote 🖓 Ukraine appoints new govt in biggest wartime overhaul of the day

The people of America need this technology, and you need to have it n your arsenal VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

The doors of a new powerful **Turkey have** been flung wide TAYYIP ERDOGAN

PRESIDENT, TURKEY

Schmidt does not have the right to make decisions and everything he does is breaking Bosnia and Herzegovina down

MILORAD DODIK PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

### SHORT TAKES

### UK, Germany sign friendship treaty

London: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and German **Chancellor Friedrich Merz** signed a landmark treaty Thursday that pledges to tighten defence ties and boost law-enforcement cooperation against criminal peoplesmuggling gangs using the English Channel. Starmer has made it a priority of his centreleft Labour Party to curb the gangs behind cross-Channel people smuggling. Berlin agreed last year to make facilitating the smuggling of migrants to the UK a criminal offence, a move that will give law enforcement more powers to investigate the supply and storage of small boats to be used for the crossings. Merz is expected to commit to adopting the law change by the end of the year. The treaty builds on a defence pact the UK and Germany, two of the biggest European supporters of Ukraine, signed last year pledging closer co-operation against a growing threat from Russia.

### France withdraws troops from Senegal

Dakar (Senegal): The French military completed its

#### REUTERS

Kyiv, July 17: Ukraine's parliament appointed the country's first new prime minister in five years Thursday, part of a major cabinet overhaul aimed at revitalising wartime management as prospects for peace with Russia grow dim.

Yulia Svyrydenko, 39, has been tasked by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy with boosting domestic weapons production and reviving Ukraine's loan-dependent economy.

In a speech to parliament, Zelenskiy said he expected his

new government to increase the share of domestic weapons on Ukraine's battlefield to 50% from 40% within six months.

He also singled out deregulation and expanding economic co-operation with allies as other key aims of the biggest government reshuffle since Russia's February 2022 invasion. Svyrydenko, an experienced

technocrat who had served as first deputy prime minister since 2021, pledged to move "swiftly and decisively" "War leaves no room for de-

lay," she wrote on X. "Our priorities for the first six



months are clear: reliable sup ply for the army, expansion of domestic weapons production, and boosting the technological strength of our defense forces.' Svyrydenko is also well known to the Trump admin-

Ukraine gets first new prime minister of the wa

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Svyrydenko tasked with strengthening arms sector, shaping up economy

elenskiy aims to raise domestic Zelenskiy ainis to raise down

Cabinet overhaul seeks to Crevitalise wartime management

istration, having negotiated a deal giving the US preferential access to Ukraine's mineral wealth. It was considered crucial to bolstering relations be tween Kyiv and Washington. Addressing lawmakers

Thursday, Zelenskiy said further deals with the US would

be forthcoming but did not offer any specific details. Parliament also appointed

former prime minister Denys Shmyhal, Ukraine's longest-serving head of government, as defence minister and Svitlana Hrvnchuk as energy minister Former Svyrydenko depu-

ties Oleksiy Sobolev and Taras Kachka will serve as minister of economy, environment and agriculture and deputy prime minister for European integration, respectively.

# 14 detained after deadly clashes; 22-hr curfew in Bangladesh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, July 17: Military troops, paramilitary forces and riot police Thursday patrolled the thoroughfares in Gopalganj the home town of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rah man, to ensure a 22-hour curfew after 14 people were detained following clashes that left four dead.

Military soldiers in battle gear hoisting red flags in ar moured personnel carriers were moving throughout the south-western Gaopalgani town where residents were forced to stay indoors, businesses were shut and transport off the roads after Wednesday's violence, of ficials said.

Four people were killed in clashes over an National Cit izen Party (NCP) rally, which turned into a virtual battlefield as hundreds of supporters of Rahman's daughter and deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina clashed with police ahead of the planned march of

the student-led party. "A tense calm has gripped Gopalganj," a local journalist said over phone from the town. about 160 kilometres southwest of Dhaka.

Police said they have so far detained 14 people overnight for their alleged involvement in violent clashes but no case was filed in the incident as yet

"The joint forces handed over the 14 individuals to us, Abdullah Al Mamun, inspector (investigation) of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station, was quoted as saying by local media.

Filing of cases is underway he added

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' 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.

# **Beijing ready to revive Russia-India-China troika**

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, July 17: China Thursday expressed its support for Russia's initiative to revive the dormant Russia-India-China (RIC) troika, saying the trilateral cooperation not only serves the interest of the three countries but also the security and stability of the region and the world.

Russian news portal Izvestia Thursday quoted Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko as saying that Moscow expects the resumption of the RIC format and is negotiating on this issue with Beijing

and New Delhi. "This topic appears in our negotiations with both of them. We are interested in making this format work, because these three countries are important partners, besides the founders of BRICS," Rudenko said.

"Therefore, the absence of this format, in my opinion, looks inappropriate. In this regard, we expect that the countries will agree to resume work within the framework of the RIC -- of course, when relations between these states reach a level that allows them to work in a trilateral format," he said.

Asked for his reaction to Rudenko's comments at a media briefing, Chinese



Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian Thursday "China-Russia-India said. cooperation not only serves the respective interests of the three countries but also helps uphold peace, security, stability and progress in the region and the world".

China stands ready to maintain communication with Russia and India on advancing the trilateral cooperation, he said.

The Russian and Chinese interests in the revival of the RIC followed the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to China to take part in the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting, during which he held talks with top Chinese officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Jaishankar's recent trip

came after the visits of NSA Ajit Doval and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to China.

Lavrov said in May that Russia, which shares close ties with India and China, is "genuinely interested" in the revival of the RIC format.

He said the trilateral mechanism initiated by Russia's former prime minister Yevgeny Primakov resulted in 20 meetings between the three countries at various levels.

A host of issues, including the growing rivalry between India and China and Beijing's persistent backing of its all-weather ally Pakistan in its anti-India acts, diluted the RIC's relevance and importance. Of late, there is increasing Russian and Chinese interest in the revival of RIC as India has become a member of Quad.

# Syria's Sharaa vows to protect Druze rights

an leader Ahmed al-Sharaa accused Israel of trying to fracture Svria and promised to protect its Druze minority Thursday, after US intervention helped end deadly fighting between government forces and

Overnight, the Islamist-led government's troops withdrew from the predominantly Druze city of Sweida, where scores of people have been killed in days of conflict pitting Druze fighters against government troops and Bedouin tribes.

One local journalist said he'd counted more than 60 bodies in the streets of Sweida Thursdav morning. Rvan Marouf of Suwavda24 told Reuters he had found a family of 12 people killed in one house, including women and an elderly man.

Violence in Syria escalated sharply Wednesday as Israel launched airstrikes in Damascus, while also hitting government forces in the south, demanding they withdraw and saying Israel aimed to protect Syrian Druze - part of a small but influential minority that also has followers in Lebanon and Israel

Israel, which bombed Syria frequently under the rule of ousted President Bashar al-Assad, has struck the country repeatedly this year. describing its new leaders as barely disguised jihadists and saying it will not allow them to deploy



forces in areas of southern Syr ia near its border.

Addressing Syrians Thursday, interim President Sharaa accused Israel of seeking to "dismantle the unity of our people", saying it had "consistently targeted our stability and created discord among us since the fall of the former regime".

Sharaa, who was commander of an al Qaeda faction before cutting ties with the group in 2016, said protecting Druze citizens and their rights was "our priority" and rejected any attempt to drag them into the hands of an "external party".

He also vowed to hold to account those who committed violations against "our Druze people". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel had established a policy demanding the demilitarisation of a swathe of territory near the border, stretching from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to the

Druze Mountain, east of Sweida. Syria had sent "its army south of Damascus into an area that was supposed to remain demilitarized, and it began massacring Druze. This was something we could not accept in any way," he said.

REUTERS Damascus, July 17: Syri-

Druze fighters in the south.

withdrawal from Senegal Thursday, its last West African country with a permanent troop presence, amid waning regional influence in recent years. France has faced opposition from leaders of some of its former colonies in Africa over what they described as a demeaning and heavy-handed approach to the continent. The French military handed over Camp Geille, its largest base in Senegal, along with a nearby air facility, to the Senegalese government during a ceremony in the capital, Dakar. General Pascal Ianni, head of French forces in Africa, said the handover marked a new phase in military ties. "It is part of France's decision to end permanent military bases in West and Central Africa, and responds to the Senegalese authorities' desire to no longer host permanent foreign forces on their territory," he said.

### Israeli strikes kill 27 in Gaza

Cairo/Jerusalem: Israeli forces killed at least 27 people in attacks in the Gaza Strip Thursday, including three people who died in a strike on a church that late Pope Francis used to speak to regularly, medics and church officials said. Eight men tasked with protecting aid trucks were reported among the dead in airstrikes that were carried out while mediators continued ceasefire talks in Doha, A US official said this week the talks were going well but two officials from the Palestinian militant group Hamas told Reuters there had been no breakthrough as the Israeli military continued to pummel Gaza.



# Myanmar's military govt recaptures strategic town

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, July 17: Myanmar's military has recaptured a strategic gateway town from rebel forces after nearly a year, state-media reported Thursday, marking a rare turnaround in the country's northeast, where an alliance of ethnic militias seized a large swath of territory in an offensive that began in late 2023.

Nawnghkio, which sits on a major highway trading route linking central Myanmar to China, had been under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, a group in the Three Brotherhood

Alliance, since July last year.

Its recapture by the army comes after a long period where the military government had been seen as being on the defensive against an array of rebel forces in the civil war that is being fought over much of the country.

Nawnghkio, which also stands on the highway leading to the major military garrison town of Pyin Oo Lwin was completely captured by the army at noon on Wednes day after nearly 11 months of operations to retake the town, according to a state-run Myanma Alinn newspaper report Thursday.

General view of the peloton in action during stage 9 of the Tour de France

# Britain to lower voting age to 16 to restore 'public trust' in democracy

The move will bring UK-wide elections in line with the devolved Scotland and Wales regions as part of what the British government described as one of the biggest changes to UK democracy in a generation

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 17: The UK government Thursday announced that it will lower the voting age from 18 to 16 years in time for the next general election expected in 2029, a manifesto commitment made by the Labour Party when it was voted last year.

The move will bring UKwide elections in line with the devolved Scotland and Wales regions as part of what the

British government described as one of the biggest changes to UK democracy in a generation.

The plans also include an expansion of the voter ID system to permit the use of UK-issued bank cards as an accepted form of ID at polling stations, to ensure eligible voters are not "deterred from voting"

"For too long, public trust in our democracy has been damaged and faith in our institutions has been allowed to decline," said UK Deputy Prime



Minister Angela Rayner, marking the release of a strategy paper that sets in motion plans to lower the voting age.

"We are modernising our democracy, so that it is fit for engagement in UK democracy, supporting our Plan for Change," said Rushanara Ali, Minister for Democracy in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The new strategy covers the creation of a new digital "Voter Authority Certificate" to ensure Electoral Registration Officers can meet the digital needs of voters, reduce printing costs and ensure faster delivery.

An increasingly automated voter registration system is intended to make it easier for people to register to vote and reduce the need to fill out their details across different government services on multiple occasions.

In order to boost transparency and accountability in politics, the MHCLG said it will also be closing loopholes that may allow foreign donors via "shell companies" to influence UK political parties.

Meanwhile, new requirements on unincorporated associations will mandate checks on donations over GBP 500 to tackle foreign interference and protect UK democracy from those who attempt to undermine it.

"We cannot take our de mocracy for granted, and by protecting our elections from abuse and boosting participa tion, we will strengthen the foundations of our society for the future," added Rayner.

The changes will form part of an elections bill to be tabled in Parliament, besides secondary legislation to address the implementation schedule.











the 21st century. By delivering

our manifesto commitment to

extend the vote to 16 and 17 year

olds, we are taking a genera-

tional step forward in restor-

ing public trust and boosting







With Santa Cruz **Special Economic Zone** (SEEPZ) contributing a significant share (around 13 per cent) to India's gem and jewellery exports, the availability of a dedicated hand carriage facility just minutes away will enable faster clearances DNYANESHWAR B PATIL

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER, SEEPZ-SEZ 

### TATA ELECTRONICS, BOSCH SIGN PACT

Electronics manufacturer Tata Electronics has signed a pact with German technology firm Robert Bosch GmbH to collaborate on several key areas within the electronics and semiconductor industries, the Indian technology firm said Thursday. The memorandum of understanding intends to collaborate on chip packaging and manufacturing at Tata Electronics' upcoming assembly and test unit in Assam and foundry in Gujarat. Both companies will also identify and pursue local projects within electronic manufacturing services for vehicles



-1.61 %

-1.20 %

-0.97 %

-0.78 9

vestors (FIIs) offloaded equi

ties worth Rs 1,858.15 crore Wednesday. The BSE smallcap

gauge climbed 0.30 per cent

and midcap index went up by

Among BSE sectoral indices

BSE Focused IT tanked 1.47

per cent, followed by IT (1.33

per cent), teck (1.06 per cent),

bankex (0.51 per cent) and utili

Realty jumped 1.22 per cent,

metal climbed 0.62 per cent,

commodities (0.42 per cent),

healthcare (0.28 per cent) and

consumer discretionary (0.25

Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nik-

kei 225 index and Shanghai's

SSE Composite index settled

in the positive territory while

Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended

European markets were trad-

Global oil benchmark Brent

crude dipped 0.06 per cent to

ing higher. US markets ended

higher Wednesday.

In Asian markets, South

0.07 per cent.

ties (0.25 per cent).

per cent)

lower.



**Over the past** five years, AIF commitments and investments have seen a 30 per cent Compounded Annual Growth Rate, heartening signs for

capital formation ANANTH NARAYAN SEBI WHOLE-TIME MEMBER

Not only the foundation stone for Vidarbha first Integrated Steel Plant is being laid at Konsari in Gadchiroli district, but also a step is being taken towards seeing the historic

dream turning into a reality B PRABHAKARAN | LMEL, MD

The strong dollar index kent runee weak while fall in Asian currencies also did not help as

rupee continued to depreciate towards 86 levels ANIL KUMAR BHANSALI | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# 01 RESULTS

FINREX TREASURY ADVISORS LLF

#### Axis Bank profit down

New Delhi: Axis Bank Thursday reported a 4 per cent decline in net profit at ₹5,806 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2025, due to a marginal increase in bad loans. The private sector bank had earned a standalone profit of ₹6,035 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. The total income rose to ₹38,322 crore during the June quarter of 2025-26, from ₹35,844 crore in the same quarter of FY25, Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing. Interest earned by the bank grew to ₹31,064 crore as compared to ₹30,061 crore in the June quarter of FY25.

### Wipro profit rises

New Delhi: IT major Wipro Thursday reported a 9.8 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax at ₹3,336.5 crore during the June quarter. It had posted a profit after tax of ₹3.036.6 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said in a regulatory filing. The consolidated revenue from operations of Wipro was up marginally to ₹22,134.6 crore during the April-June period from ₹21,963.8 crore in the yearago period. It expects revenue from its IT services segment to be in the range of USD 2,560 million to USD 2.612 million in the September quarter.

### **TARIFF THREAT**

# No worry over Russian sanctions: Hardeep Puri

oil, overtaking traditional sup-

pliers from West Asia, Russia

now accounts for as much as 40

per cent of India's oil imports.

annual conference of the Direc-

torate General of Hydrocarbons

(DGH). Puri said there are many

new suppliers coming onto the

market such as Guyana and

supplies can also be ramped up

from existing producers such as

"I don't feel any pressure in

my mind. India has diversified

the sources of supply," he said

in reply to a question on the

Brazil and Canada.

Speaking at the Urja Varta

India is also increasing the hunt for finding new deposits of oil within *the country and quickly* 

bringing them to production to deduce oil dependency

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: India Thursday played down the threat of US imposing sanctions on countries buying Russian oil, saying it is confident of meeting its needs from alternative sources

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the world's third largest oil importer should be able to deal with any problems with Russian imports by seeking supplies from other countries.

India imports more than 85 per cent of its requirement of crude oil, which is turned into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries Traditionally, the Middle East

was the main source, but Russia has been the mainstay supplier for nearly three years now. After much of the West

shunned Russian crude following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russia began offering steep discounts to attract alternative buyers.

impact of US threatening Rus-Indian refiners seized the sia with sanctions. Earlier this week, US Presiopportunity, turning Russia, once a marginal supplier, into dent Donald Trump had threat-India's largest source of crude ened that countries purchasing

center in Hyderabad

Russian exports could face sand tions or steep tariffs if Moscow fails to reach a peace agreement with Ukraine within 50 days.

Puri said India is also increasing the hunt for finding new deposits of oil within the country and quickly bringing them to production.

"I'm not worried at all. If something happens, we'll deal with it," he said. "India has diversified the sources of supply and we have gone, I think, from about 27 countries that we used to buy from to about 40 countries now.'

In the event of Russian supplies being hit, Indian Oil Corp chairman AS Sahney said the country could "go back to the same template (of supplies) as was used pre-Ukraine crisis when Russian supplies to India were below 2 per cent.

The Oil Minister said prior to February 2022, India was buying 0.2 per cent of overall crude oil from Russia. "Today... It has gone up considerably, he said.

Addressing a press conference, Puri said at present the market does not react to geopolitical turmoil, especially in terms of prices as much as there is good availability of oil.

Addressing a press conference, he said at present, the price of crude oil is around \$68.5 per barrel and it is expected to remain around the same levels in the months to come. "I think it will be somewhere around \$65/barrel." he said.

# **Perplexity Pro free** access for Airtel users

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: Bharti Airtel has partnered with AI-powered search engine Perplexity (the AI-powered search and answer engine that offers real-time responses to users in a conversational language) to offer 12-month Perplexity Pro premium subscription free of cost to its 360 million customers.

The move assumes significance as it marks Perplexity's first partnership with an Indian telecom company. It comes at a time when NVIDIA-backed Perplexity is positioning itself to challenge the dominance of Alphabet.

Perplexity has a free offering with search features but the Pro version provides advanced capabilities for professionals and heavy users.

Perplexity Pro includes more daily Pro searches per user, access to advanced AI models (like GPT 4.1, Claude) and the ability to select specific models deep research, image generation, file uploads and analysis. as well as Perplexity Labs.

The Pro subscription, worth Rs 17,000, is now available for free, for all Airtel customers (Mobile, Wi- Fi and DTH) for one year, according to a release. Airtel users can avail this offer by logging on to the Airtel Thanks App.

Gopal Vittal, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Bharti Airtel, said, "This collaboration will bring the powerful and real-time knowledge tool for millions of users at their fingertips, at no extra cost. This first-ofits-kind Gen-AI partnership in India is focused on helping our customers navigate the emerging trends in the digital world with confidence and ease."

Markets close lower

**BSE SENSEX** JULY 17, 2025 CHANGE: -375.24 (-0.45%) 82,259.24 Previous Today's Close Closing 82,634.48 82,400 82,259.24 3 pm 9:15 am -2.76 %

| TATA STEEL       | +1.62 % |          |         | TECH MAH |
|------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| TRENT            | +0.68 % | TOP      | TOP     | INFOSYS  |
| TITAN            | +0.45 % | CAINERS  | LOSERS  | HCL TECH |
| TATA MOTORS      | +0.41 % | GAINLING | LUSLING | ETERNAL  |
| ULTRATECH CEMENT | +0.30 % |          |         | LT       |
|                  |         |          |         |          |

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 17: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty settled lower Thursday following selling in IT and banking shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 375.24 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at 82,259.24. During the day, it fell by 415.21 points or 0.50 per cent to 82.219.27.

The 50-share NSE Nifty closed lower by 100.60 points or 0.40 per cent to 25,111.45.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and subdued quarterly earnings dented investors' sentiment, experts said.

Among Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra declined nearly 3 per cent after its June quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. Infosys, HCL Tech, Eternal, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Consultancy Services and Axis Bank were also among the laggards. However, Tata Steel, Trent, Titan and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional In-

**BYJU's founder to file** over \$2.5bn suit against Glas Trust, others

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: Beleaguered edtech firm BYJU's founders, Byju Raveendran and Divya Gokulnath, are gearing up to file an over \$2.5 billion suit against Glas Trust and others for damage to their reputation and business, a statement from their counsel said Thursday.

The founders are preparing to sue Glas Trust and others in India as well as in foreign countries, according to the statement. BYJU's founders reserve all rights to bring actions against those parties that have caused damage to them personally and their businesses, including Think & Learn. The conduct before the Courts by Alpha, Glas Trust and its counsel has been reprehensible and improper in our view. We reserve the right to use all legal means to obtain justice for BYJU's founders Lazareff Le Bars Eurl, Senior Litigation Advisor, J Michael McNutt, said in a statement. The counsel said claims have already been raised in India against Glas Trust, the former subsidiary of Think & Learn, that Glas Trust now claims to control and other parties.

# \$68.49 a barrel. SEBI to extend tenure of derivatives contracts

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 17: India is looking to improve the quality of the derivatives market by extending the tenure and maturity of such contracts, an official at the markets regulator said in a speech Thursday.

"We must look for further ways to further deepen our cash equities markets, even as we look to improve the quality of our derivatives market by extending the tenure and maturity of the products and solutions on offer." said Ananth Naravan. a whole-time member at the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

### Nuvoco Vistas profit rises

Mumbai: Nuvoco Vistas Corp. Ltd., a leading building materials Company in India, announced its financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2025. With 25 MMTPA of combined installed capacity, the Company is on track to achieve approx. 31 MMTPA cement capacity by **Q3 FY27.** The Company achieved a consolidated cement sales volume of 5.1MMT in Q1 FY26. Consolidated revenue from operations grew 9 per cent YoY to ₹2,873cr in Q1 FY26. The Company also reported its highest-ever first guarterly consolidated EBITDA of ₹533cr in Q1 FY26. Furthermore, the Company remained committed to its deleveraging agenda, reducing like-for-like1 net debt by ₹884cr YoY to ₹3,474cr.

#### HDFC AMC profit jumps

New Delhi: HDFC Asset Management Company (AMC) Thursday reported a 24 per cent jump in profit after tax at ₹748 crore in the three months ended June 2025. In comparison, the asset management firm had posted a Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹604 crore in the same quarter preceding fiscal. The company's revenue from operations increased 25 per cent to ₹968 crore in the first quarter ended June 30, 2025, from Rs 775.2 crore in the same quarter preceding fiscal year, HDFC AMC said in a regulatory filing to the stock exchanges.

agriculture, and without progress in this area, we cannot achieve the goal of a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). This collaboration goes beyond just promoting mechanization; it's about advancing research to reduce chemical inputs, labor dependency, and environmental impact. Our vision extends beyond India; we aim to scale these innovations across Africa."

BIZBUZZ

TAFE, ICRISAT to begin agri-research

Hyderabad: Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE), one of the largest trac-tor manufacturers in the world and a second largest in India signed a Memorandum

& Extension Centre" at the ICRISAT campus in Patancheru, Hyderabad 11 July 2025. TAFE inaugurated JFarm in 1964 as a CSR initiative. JFarm Adaptive Research

Center at Hyderabad, will leverage ICRISAT's ground breaking innovations such as the machine-harvestable chickpeawith TAFE's farm-mechanization expertise to

validate research across diverse ecologies and crops, while championing gender and social inclusion. TR Kesavan, Group President and a member of TAFE's Board.

said, "Our goal is to implement precision agriculture while safeguarding land and

water resources. We have deep understanding of the diverse needs of the farming

community; we recognize and believe that knowledge-sharing is key to wide-spread adoption of mechanization. With ICRISAT's expertise, we are confident in

effectively disseminating these advancements to the last-mile farmer." Himanshu Pathak, Director General of ICRISAT, added, "Mechanization is pivotal in modern

of Understanding (MoU) with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to establish the "JFarm Adaptive Agriculture Research

# Kinetic Green, Tonino Lamborghini to enter e-carts biz

New Delhi: Kinetic Green Thursday joined hands with Italy's Tonino Lamborghini to roll out golf and lifestyle carts for global markets with expectations to corner a \$1 billion turnover over the next decade. The Pune-based electric vehicle maker will hold 70 per cent stake in the joint venture firm -- Kinetic Green Tonino Lamborghin (KGTL), with the Italian firm holding the rest of the 30 per cent stake. Kinetic Green Founder and CEO Sulajja Firodia Motwani said the JV is eyeing 10 per cent market share of the electric cart business globally over the next ten years. Besides, there are various family offices that want to invest in the business, she said, adding that it could be in the range of \$10 million. The global market for electric carts is around S lakh units per annum, with US being the biggest market, followed by Europe and Asia. Usually, electric carts come with a driving range of 80-150 km and are priced between \$10,000 and \$14,000 per unit. In India, around 1,500 units are sold yearly. Kinetic Green's aim is to build a \$1 billion EV business by 2030. The JV will produce electric carts at Kinetic Green's Pune-based production facility. The JV will roll out the electric carts in two trims - Genesis and Prestige - with prices ranging between \$10,000 and \$18,000 per unit.

Narayan did not provide details on the possible extension of the tenure of these contracts.

The surge in derivatives trading, which has also been driven by retail investors, has prompted the SEBI to limit the number of contract expiries and increase lot sizes to make such trades more expensive.

Earlier this month, SEBI barred US securities trading company Jane Street from the local market until further or-



India is exploring measures to strengthen its cash equities markets while also aiming to enhance the guality of the derivatives market by extending the duration and maturity of contracts

ders, and seized \$567 million of its funds, saying an investigation found it manipulated stock indexes through positions taken in derivatives.

"Short-term contracts dominate our equity derivatives volumes," Narayan said.

He said that these contracts detract from capital formation. SEBI's research shows that 91

per cent of individual traders incurred net losses trading in futures and options in fiscal

Highlighting the imbalance between cash markets and derivatives, Narayan said that on expiry days, comparable turnover in index options can exceed the cash market by over 350 times.

# Govt begins formulation of Automotive Mission Plan 2047

Automotive Mission Plan 2047 aims to make India a leader in the automotive industry. The primary focus is on innovation and sustainability, involves collaboration of government, private players and academia

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

#### New Delhi, July 17: The government has initiated the formulation of the Automotive Mission Plan 2047 (AMP 2047), a strategic road map aligned with the 'Viksit Bharat @2047' vision

to establish India as a global automotive leader, focusing on innovation and sustainability, the Ministry of Heavy Industries said Thursday.

Sub-committees for AMP 2047 have held a meeting to outline objectives and framework and targets for sectoral growth, exports and industry advancement, to help increase India's share in global automotive trade.

Seven sub-committees, comprising experts from government, industry, and academia, will guide the development of a comprehensive plan targeting milestones for 2030, 2037, and

2047."The vision for 2047 is not an aspiration but a strategic road map backed by concrete targets for sector growth, exports, and industry advancement. We must think



beyond specific technologies or companies and focus on India's global standing in 2047, aiming to increase our share in global automotive trade through innovation and quality," Additional Secretary in

the Heavy Industries Ministry Hanif Qureshi said.

The initiative involves various ministries, industry bodies (SIAM, ACMA, CII), academia, and testing agencies for an industry-led effort.

"The Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and with the guidance of Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy has initiated the formulation of the Automotive Mission Plan 2047 (AMP 2047), a strategic roadmap aligned with the Viksit Bharat @2047' vision. The inaugural meeting of the AMP 2047 Sub-Committees was held to outline the objectives and framework," an official statement said.

AMP 2047 seeks to integrate the collective vision of stake-holders, including Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), auto component manufacturers, policy-makers, academia and end users, to address challenges like technological advancements and charging

infrastructure, the Heavy Industries Ministry stated.

The meeting was attended by representatives from various ministries, including the Ministry of Power, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Ministry of Commerce, Minis try of Petroleum and Natura Gas, DPIIT, Ministry of Envi ronment Forest and Climate Change and industry bodies such as SIAM, ACMA, and CIL FICCI, academic institutions research think tanks and test ing agencies.

The AMP 2016-2026 (AMF 2026) is aimed at bringing the Indian Automotive Industry among the top three of the world in engineering, manu facture and exports of vehicles & components; growing in value to over 12 per cent of India's GDP and generating an additional 65 million jobs.













# PORTS

## **FREESTYLE CHESS**

**Pragg makes Carlsen resign** 



The Indian No **1 stuns World** No 1, takes joint lead in Freestyle **Chess Grand Slam; Carlsen out of title** contention

**OrissaPOS** 

FRIDAY | JULY 18, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Las Vegas, July 17: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa took down world number one Magnus Carlsen en route the top-bracket quarterfinals along with Arjun Erigaisi at the \$750,000 Freestyle Grand Slam Tour here.

Praggnanandhaa continued the recent trend of Indian players outsmarting Carlsen and sent the Norwegian's campaign havwire Wednesday. Carlsen has in recent weeks also been beat-

en by reigning world champion D Gukesh, who is not competing here.

The 19-year-old Praggnanandhaa was in his elements as he effectively deployed his pieces right from the word go and even though Carlsen got some chances, Praggnanandhaa crashed through with some imaginative manoeuvres.

The loss against Praggnanandhaa had such a cascading effect on Carlsen that he lost another game against Wesley So in the next round and was shockingly eliminated from the top bracket by Levon Aronian of United States 2-0 in the final tiebreaker for the fourth spot that ensued.

The 16-player event was divided into two groups of eight each and the top four from each pool advanced to the quarterfinals after playing once with each of the other participant.

**Career-defining play** 

The 19-year-old dismantled the Norwegian great in ust 39 moves, reinforcing his ising stature on the global chess stage and continuing a troubling trend for Carlsen against India's new generation of stars

Dlaying with the white pieces, Praggnanandhaa controlled the game from start to finish, registering a remarkable accuracy of 93.9%, compared to Carlsen's unusually low 84.9%

The victory not only gave him the sole lead in Grou White at the time, but also added another chapter to his growing legacy-having now defeated Carlsen across all three maior time formats: three major time formats: Classical, Rapid, and Blitz

The rules have been framed in such a way that na of United States while those who do not make the Erigaisi will have to tackle top bracket in the first set of Abdusattorov.

more than **Classical right now** R PRAGGNANANDHAA INDIAN GRANDMASTER

I like Freestyle

qualifiers can no longer win the event and Carlsen can at best finish third if he wins the remaining matches.

Erigaisi was the other Indian from the second group who made it to the quarterfinals. It was a fine comefrom-behind performance by Erigaisi, who faced some initial struggles.

Praggnanandhaa tied for the first spot on 4.5 points out of a possible seven in his group with Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Javokhir Sandarov, along with Aronian, finishing on four points.

Carlsen ended fifth ahead of Vincent Keymer of Germany, Wesley So and lone woman participant Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan.

In the second group christened black, Hikaru Nakamura topped the standings with an astonishing 6/7 with his American country-man Hans Niemann finishing second on 4.5 points. Erigaisi finished tied

third on four points with another local star Fabiano Caruana. Another American trio

of Leinier Dominguez Perez, Sevian Samuel and Robson Ray finished 5-7 in the second group with Indian Vidit Gujrathi ending on the last spot.

In the Quarterfinals Praggnannadhaa now, will meet Fabiano Carua-

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.

s 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**

n this day in 1925, Adolf Hitler published Mein Kampf, a book about his political ideology and future plans for Germany and the world. What does Mein Kampf translate to in English?

**ANSWER TO THURSDAY'S QUESTION** Disnevland

RULES & REGULATIONS

**A CHANCE TO BE PART OF** 

OrissaPO

Extravaganza

MEET

- 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





AHAANA PAIKRAY

#### Others who answered correctly are

Dr Joseph John, Bhumika Subhalaxmi, BishnuPrasada Dash, Sibananda Dash, Ronan Slade Toppo, Mayank Mandal, Saroj Nag, Tanishna Bisoi, Ayushi Pradhan, Priyanka Nahak, Dr Sukhamava Swain, Sachim Mini, Aniubala Mohanty, KV Ramana, Om Prakash Rath, Pratyush Dhal, Prayag Das, DebadattaTripathy, Sourav Nayak, Jigyansa Priyadarshini

#### 1st WODI: Deepti powers India Yamal inherits Messi's SHORT TAKES JAPAN OPEN to four-wicket victory over Eng Barca number 10 jersey **Biles wins two ESPYS INDIA'S CAMPAIGN ENDS** Los Angeles: Simone Biles won PRESS TRUST OF INDIA two trophies at the ESPYS on

### Wednesday night, including the women's best athlete

Southampton, July 17: Deepti Sharma showed enormous composure with an unbeaten half century that powered India to a comfortable four-wicket victory in the opening women's ODI against England here.

All-rounder

The dress rehearsals for India's 50-over World Cup started in earnest as a target of 259 was chased with 10 balls to spare, courtesy Deepti's unbeaten 62 off 64 balls with three boundaries strike well as they kept the scoreboard ticking and also and a six. Her 90-run fifth wicket hit the occasional boundaries whenever loose deliverstand in 14.2 overs with Jemimah Rodrigues (48 off ies were provided. Deepti, whose slog over 54 balls) proved to be the



#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 17: Indian shuttlers continued to falter at the Japan Open with Lak

shya Sen and the star men's



#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona. July 17: Lamine Yamal will switch to the No 10 jersey at Barcelona, the same number Diego Maradona, Ronaldinho and Lionel Messi wore for the Catalan club.

"I'll try to build my own 10 most recently was with path, but all kids would like to be like them," Yamal said loan with Monaco. Yamal, ac-Wednesday at the club's an- companied by his family, renouncement. "All three have ceived the No 10 jersey from

Yamal wore the No 19 iersev last season. The No Ansu Fati, who will play on club president Joan Laporta The announcement comes after Yamal was criticized for reportedly hiring people birthday party last weekend

May, keeping him in place

ning and growing," Yamal

said. "It's the club of my life.

It's my home, I've been here

since I was 7 years old."

"My goal is to keep win-

until 2031.

Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens.

### Messi's streak ends

award. The 11-time Olympic

medalist claimed the night's

performance for her efforts at the Paris Games. She won

three golds and a silver while

gymnasts win their first team

very unexpected, especially in

a category of all men," Biles

said after kissing husband,

helping the U.S. women's

title since 2016. "That was

first award, best championship

Cincinnati: Lionel Messi's MLS-record streak of scoring multiple goals in five straight matches ended Wednesday night in Inter Miami's 3-0 loss to FC Cincinnati. Cincinnati got a first-half goal from Gerardo Valenzuela and two second-half strikes from Evander to remain one point behind the Philadelphia Union in the Fastern Conference standings. Philadelphia beat CF Montreal 2-1 Wednesday night. Messi is the first player in MLS history to have a multi-goal streak of more than four matches. He was tied for the league lead with 16 goals in 17 MLS matches.

### **Olivia scripts history**

London: Canada forward Olivia Smith has become the most expensive signing in women's football history by completing a one million pound move to Arsenal from Liverpool. Olivia joins the Arsenal on a long-term contract and will wear the number 15 jersey. "It's a privilege and an honour to sign for Arsenal. It's my dream to compete for the biggest titles here in England and in Europe and I'm excited to get started and contribute to doing that here with Arsenal. The atmosphere the supporters create at Emirates Stadium is incredible and I can't wait to have that behind me now," she said. The 20-year-old ended the 2023/24 campaign as the Player of the Season and Young Player of the Season, with her reputation cemented as one of the most highly rated young players in the game.

match-winning one. Amanjot for a lot of flak, was brilliant Kaur (20 off 14 balls) proin planning the chase. vided the finishing touches

The shot of the match with some meaty blows as certainly was her one-handthe target was achieved with ed six off Lauren Bell over deep mid-wicket. She effortminimum fuss despite India being reduced to 124 for 4 lessly picked a length ball after the fall of skipper Harfrom outside the off-stump manpreet Kaur's (17) wicket.

Deepti and Rodrigues took over and farmed the

doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowing out in the second round to draw curtains on the country's campaign batting has always come in at the Super 750 tournament here Thursday

World No 18 Lakshya's inconsistent run resulted in a 19-21, 11-21 loss to Japan's Kodai Naraoka in the men's singles that lasted close to an hour. The 23-year-old, who had looked promising and dispatched it over deep in the opener with a commid-wicket with her bottom manding 21-11, 21-18 win hand coming off the handle. over China's Wang Zheng

Xing, failed to carry the momentum forward. In the men's doubles,

Satwik and Chirag were handed a 22-24, 14-21 defeat by the fifth-seeded Chinese combine of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in a battle between former world No 1 pairs.

With this win. Paris Olympics silver medallists Wei Keng and Wang Chang lead over the Indians to 7-2. After a slow start, the In-

dian pair did well to take an match 21-13 11-21 12-21 in 55 18-14 lead but couldn't hold

on to the momentum as their Chinese counterparts sealed a thrilling first game.

The world number five Chinese duo continue in the same vein in the second game as Satwik and Chirag struggled with their smashes and defence to concede their fourth defeat on the trot to Wei Ken and Chang.

The lone surviving Indian, Anupama Upadhyaya extended their head-to-head fought hard against second seed Wang Zhi Hi of China before losing the round-of-16 minutes

been incredible players, they're legends, and I'll try to follow in their footsteps."

Having turned 18, Yamal was able to sign the con- with dwarfism as entertaintract extension that he had ers during his lavish 18th agreed with Barcelona in

FAREWELL BELLS



# Mandaviya outlines India's medal strategy

Performance-based funding, gene-testing among ideas discussed at ministry's Khelo Bharat Conclave

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 17: Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Manlined India's strategy towards finishing among the top 10 nations in the 2036 Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

At Khelo Bharat Conclave, representatives of the National Sports Federations. Paralympic Committee of India, Indian Olympic Association, institutions, top corporate houses and the who's who of Indian sports

administration took part in at the heart of the Khelo a day-long brainstorming Bharat Niti, the governsession aimed at making



daviya on Thursday out- India a global power by 2047. the National Sports Feder-

The interactive Khelo Bharat Conclave covered several key pillars enshrined in the Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 (sports policy). Among them, critical discussions were held on the importance of good governance

and the upcoming Bill that will be tabled in the Monsoon session of Parliament starting July 21.

While athletes remain ment has highlighted how

ations, state governments and corporate houses have to play a major role to ensure India finish among the top 10 nations in the 2036 Summer Olympics and the Paralympics.

"Sports is a public movement. We can set goals and achieve them only if we all work together. Our Prime Minister Modiji always believes in a united force when it comes to sport and we have to shed our egos, focus on comprehensive

planning and convert plans into a substantial output," Mandaviya said.

Stakeholders attending the six-hour-long Khelo Bharat conclave were unanimous in their view that the government policy was ambitious but an honest endeavour towards achieving global standards in sports. Every presentation was followed by interactive sessions where several stakeholders offered suggestions that were recorded by senior ministry officials.

Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse, said the Khelo Bharat Niti was drafted after studying the "ground realities" and "challenges" facing Indian sports. It has taken the government more than a year to frame the document that saw several updates after protracted discussions with

key stakeholders.

# **Goalkeeper Aditi hangs gloves**

#### New Delhi: Exactly a

decade after becoming the first Indian woman to play professional football in Europe, the trailblazing Aditi Chauhan has decided to announce her retirement

from the game after a career spanning 17 years. The former India women's team goalkeeper, 32, now wants to work off the pitch and build a "stronger pathway and ecosystem" for the next generation. "Thank you, football -- for shaping me, testing me, and carrying me through. After 17 unforgettable years, I'm retiring from professional football with deep gratitude and pride," Aditi wrote in a social media post Thursday. "This game gave me more than just a career; it gave me an identity.'



# Bouchard shocks tennis world

Montreal: Glamorous tennis star Eugenie Bouchard is officially set to bring the curtain down on her on-court career at the age of just 31. Bouchard shot to fame after making the Wimbledon final in 2014 - the first Canadian-born Canadian to do so. However, after struggling with form and injuries in recent years, the Canadian has confirmed she is set to retire - and on home turf no less. Bouchard will play in the National Bank Open in Montreal later this month before ending her career, Tennis Canada said

media, along with pictures of herself playing throughout the years. "Ending where it all started: Montreal.'

Kingston: Flamboyant T20 freelancer Andre Russell will draw the curtains on a start-stop 15-year international career for the West Indies after the second T20I



against Australia here July 22. Russell's most significant achievement is being a member of two T20 World Cup winning West Indies teams in 2012 and 2016 respectively. Since 2019, Russell has featured exclusively in the T20 format. He has represented the West Indies in 84 T20Is, 56 ODIs and one solitary Test. Russell who was part of the title-winning squads in 2012 and 2016, announced his decision just seven months ahead of the 2026 T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka

Russell to bid cricket goodbye

Wednesday. The organization said Bouchard would be given a wild card into the tournament in her hometown. "You'll know when it's time. For me, it's now," Bouchard posted on social















