

### Tamannaah's take

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia shares a fresh perspective on work-life balance, calling it a myth in showbiz

LEISURE | **P2**



### End to escalation

Thai and Cambodian leaders will meet in Malaysia for talks to end hostilities, a spokesperson for the Thai prime minister's office says


INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



### Historic low

Savings deposit rates of some PSBs are prevailing at a historic low since their de-regulation in 2011

BUSINESS | **P11**



### Sensational draw

Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar and Shubman Gill strike fine hundreds as India secure a morale-boosting draw in 4th Test

SPORTS | **P12**

## 6 dead, 28 injured in Haridwar temple stampede

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Haridwar, July 27:** A stampede broke out during a rush of pilgrims along a stair route leading to the Mansa Devi temple on a hilltop in Haridwar Sunday, killing at least six people and leaving 28 injured, police said.

Rumours of an electricity current where the stairs begin triggered panic among people, leading to the stampede, Haridwar SSP Pramendra Singh Dobal said. The officer added that 34 people were rushed to a hospital of which six died.

The incident took place around 9am. Being a Sunday, a sea of devotees had gathered at the temple atop the Shivalik hills at a height of more than 500 feet.

Videos from the spot showed a massive rush of people, including children and women, towards the narrow entrance of the temple and outside the hospital, and of worried family members waiting for the news of their loved ones. Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami said a magisterial probe has been ordered into the circumstances leading to the stampede. Haridwar's ADM has been assigned the task of conducting a probe into the incident and submit a report within 15 days making recommendations on how to prevent the recurrence of such happenings in future, DM Mayur Dikshit said.

Speaking to reporters here, CM Dhami said, "A stampede broke out at the Mansa Devi temple in the morning because of a rumour.... We have ordered a magisterial probe into the incident and those responsible for spreading the rumour will face strict action." The chief minister later visited the district hospital in Haridwar where most of the injured were admitted.

He assured the relatives attending them of all support from the government.

Dhami also announced a financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of the deceased persons and Rs 50,000 to the injured. President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the political leaders who expressed grief over the loss of lives in the stampede.

**P8**



### IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Looks like some communicable disease. No BJP leader has visited him since he quit for health reasons



### RACE TO WIN

People participate in a bull race at a paddy field in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Sunday. During the monsoon season, when the fields are submerged in water, villagers organise bull races to prepare the fields for the next harvest

PTI PHOTO

# Flood wreaks havoc

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar/Bhadrak, July 27:** More than 11,000 people in six districts have been affected by the floods in the state, an official said Sunday.

Over 1,000 people have been rescued from the affected areas in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Sundargarh, and Keonjhar districts to safer places, he said.

Addressing a press conference, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) DK Singh said the flood was caused by the overflowing waters of the Subarnarekha, Baitarani and Jalka rivers following heavy rainfall.

"The rescued people have been provided shelter at different cyclone centres and other buildings. The government is providing dry food items and cooked food to them," he said.

Five teams of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), one team of NDRF, and 26 fire services teams have been deployed in Balasore district. One ODRAF and 23 fire service teams have been deployed in Mayurbhanj district, Singh said.

One ODRAF, one NDRF and 13 fire service teams have been sent to Bhadrak district, and one ODRAF team, a NDRF and



- Over 11,000 people in 6 dists affected
- Over 1,000 people rescued
- 10 ODRAF, 3 NDRF, 76 Fire services teams deployed
- 106 rescue boats deployed

14 fire service teams have been sent to Jajpur district, he said.

He provided the details after attending a review meeting, chaired by Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari.

A total of 106 rescue boats have also been deployed in these districts to carry out rescue and relief operations.

Singh said the water levels of all major rivers, except the Subarnarekha, are declining.

"Night patrolling has been

tightened in the flood-affected areas. Arrangements have been made to provide safe drinking water to people, and sufficient anti-venom has been kept in stock," he said.

In its evening flood bulletin, the Water Resources Department said the Baitarani river was flowing at 36.24 metre at Anandapur in Keonjhar district as against the danger level of 38.36 metre. The water level of the Jalaka river was 6.52 metre at Mathani, against the danger level of 6.50 metre. Subarnarekha was flowing at 48.86 metre at Jamsholaghat against the danger level of 49.16 metre.

However, the water level of Subarnarekha at Rajghat was 11.17 metre and against the danger level of 10.36 meter, the bulletin said. Several villages in Bhandaripokhari and

Dhamnagar blocks in Bhadrak district remain waterlogged, with farmlands, roads and houses submerged.

"Rescue and relief operations are in full swing, with teams on the ground providing aid and assistance. The administration remains on high alert, continuously monitoring the flood situation and coordinating relief operations," said Bhadrak Collector Dillip Routray.

The Flood Cell of the Department of Water Resources is functioning around the clock to monitor the situation, officials said.

Two chief engineer-rank officers were deputed to the Subarnarekha and Baitarani river basins to monitor the situation, they said. Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj inspected various sites of the Baitarani embankment in Bhadrak district.

A breach on the right bank of the Jambhira river embankment at Bodhi in the Rasgovindpur block of Mayurbhanj district was detected. The breach was closed with sandbags, officials said. A landslide was reported from Sundargarh district, blocking the Koida-Chunaghati stretch of NH-520. The debris were cleared from the road immediately, they said.

**P5**

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation's BJD corporator Amaresh Jena was arrested from Balasore district Sunday in connection with a rape case registered against him here and remanded to 14-day judicial custody, police said.

The BJD suspended him from the party immediately after his arrest. Jena was booked under various BNS Sections, including rape, committing miscarriage without a woman's permission, obscene act and criminal intimidation, and the POCSO Act.

As Jena was not available at his house and remained incommunicado, the police formed a special squad and launched a manhunt. "Finally, he was located at a village in Nilagiri area under the Berhampur police station limits and apprehended by the special squad," Abhimanyu Nayak, ACP, Zone-IV, said.

He was brought to the City and produced before a POCSO court, the officer said. Jena was remanded to judicial custody for 14 days after his bail petition was rejected, the police said.

Immediately after his arrest, the BJD issued an office order stating, "Amaresh Jena, Corporator, Bhubaneswar Municipal

## Girl child 'sold' for ₹20K; probe begins

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Titilagarh, July 27:** A couple in Bagadera village under Titilagarh block in Bolangir district allegedly sold their one-month-old daughter to an issueless couple from Paikamal area of Bargarh district for Rs 20,000.

After reports surfaced, a four-member team from the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and Childline visited the village to verify the claims. Titilagarh police have questioned Neel Rana, the father of the child. Sources said Rana had three daughters with his first wife who left him after a dispute. He later remarried and had two more daughters. The youngest, born about a month ago, was reportedly sold due to the family's extreme poverty.

Former minister and ex-Titilagarh MLA Tukuni Sahu visited the village and counselled the mother against selling children under any circumstances.

DCPU official Arun Khuas said no formal complaint had been received, but the probe was initiated based on media reports. Discussions are underway with police to recover the infant, who is believed to be in the custody of the couple from Paikamal.

Authorities are working to determine whether the incident was an outright sale or an illegal transfer disguised as adoption. As of Sunday evening, the infant had not been rescued.

## City BJD corporator held for rape, suspended from party



Corporation, is hereby suspended from the party with immediate effect." The survivor, in a written complaint at Laxmisinghagar Police Station earlier this week, alleged that the corporator sexually exploited her with the promise of marriage when she was 17 years old.

The complainant, now aged 19, accused Jena of committing rape, foeticide, cheating, and criminal intimidation.

She claimed that Jena took her to Puri, got her engaged in physical relations, and in February 2024, when she was still a minor, forced her to undergo an abortion. The woman also alleged that she was threatened and directed not to reveal the matter to anyone. While being taken to Capital Hospital for medical examination, Jena said, "Archana Nag has trapped me. I'm 100 per cent sure she framed me. Ask her, she'll reveal everything."

Nag told reporters that she had no connection with Jena's case.

**P4**

## TCS to lay off over 12K employees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** India's largest IT services firm, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), is set to lay off about 2 per cent, or 12,261 employees, of its global workforce this year, with the majority of those impacted belonging to middle and senior grades.

As of June 30, 2025, TCS's workforce stood at 6,13,069. It increased its workforce by 5,000 employees in the recently concluded April-June quarter.

The move is part of the company's broader strategy to become a 'future-ready organisation', focusing on investments in technology, AI deployment,

market expansion, and workforce realignment, TCS said in a statement.

"TCS is on a journey to become a Future-Ready organisation. This includes strategic initiatives on multiple fronts, including investing in new-tech areas, entering new markets, deploying AI at scale for our clients and ourselves, deepening our partnerships, creating next-gen infrastructure, and re-aligning our workforce model.

"Towards this, a number of reskilling and redeployment initiatives have been underway. As part of this journey, we will also be releasing associates from the organisation whose deployment may not be feasible," it said.

## 'Clerical error' makes MP farmer 'poorest man in India'

AGENCIES

**Satna (MP), July 27:** A certificate showing a Madhya Pradesh farmer's annual income as Rs 3 went viral on social media with the Internet dubbing him as the 'poorest man in India', prompting the authorities to clarify that it was a 'clerical error'.

A photograph of the income certificate issued to Ramswaroop, 45, a resident of Nayagan village under Kothi tehsil of Satna district, complete with the tehsildar's signature, surfaced on social media this week.

The document, issued with the signature of tehsildar Sa-

rabh Dwivedi July 22, was circulated widely on social media, with netizens calling Ramswaroop the 'poorest man in the country'.

Officials soon scrambled into action, and by July 25, a new certificate was issued, boosting the farmer's reported annual income to ₹30,000. That would mean his monthly income stands at ₹2,500.

The original certificate implied Ramswaroop earned 25 paise a month.

"It was a clerical error, which has been corrected. A new income certificate has been issued," Dwivedi clarified.

Meanwhile, the Congress



Party in Madhya Pradesh took to social media to slam the government for creating such a blunder. They shared a post along with the photo of the orig-

inal certificate on X, saying that the government is on a mission to make people poor.

"In MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's rule, we discovered

**The document, signed by tehsildar Saurabh Dwivedi July 22, was circulated on social media, with netizens calling Ramswaroop the 'poorest man in the country'**

India's poorest man! Annual income: just ₹3!" The Congress party claimed in its post.

"Isn't it shocking? A mission to make people poor? Because now the chair itself eats the commission," the party alleged.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
You are likely to give in to the demands of your children today. Ganesha says it is for times like this that you labour so hard. You will finish the tasks that you have been postponing for a long time. It is a good day for people in the medical field and in the public sector.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you will be as creative and competent as you can get. Your work style, the deft way you handle things will awe and amaze your colleagues and superiors. Your subordinates will be highly impressed and motivated. They will be eager and compliant and will support and assist you to the utmost. The project you are working will progress speedily. This will turn out to be an exceptionally fruitful day, assures Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will listen to your heart over your head, swept away as you will be in a flood of emotions today. This could mean that you will be unable to distinguish between good and bad. However, looking back upon your day in the evening, you are unlikely to regret any of the decisions you made, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright future. You will resolutely implement plans that you have made thoughtfully. Such methodical decisions will save you a lot of time in the future. Ganesha says that you will succeed in every endeavour today.

**LEO**  
Your natural self-confidence and capability will help you attain a position of strength today. As a result, all your tasks will be completed easily and you will reap rewards greater than your expectations, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Ganesha says you realise the importance of family matters today. You have great skills when it comes to negotiations, and you will use them in settling disputes amicably. Ganesha says you have learned the lessons of life on staying level-headed, and that you keenly believe that opposition eventually leads to progress.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will have a good time with your family members and will have fun with them. You will also be able to organize a picnic or a party for your family members and enjoy the day with them. Ganesha says you will go out for a trip to a religious place or temple, which will enhance your mind and ideas.

**SCORPIO**  
Try to take a chill pill as you may be worried about petty issues today. Do not let them hinder your happiness and take a toll on your health. However, the day looks promising towards the end. Friends are just a phone call away, call them and set out for a destination unknown to destress and rejuvenate.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Suddenly, you become ambidextrous and plan to multi task today, says Ganesha. Your instincts will guide you today; trust them and move ahead. You may come across few challenges. But, anyway, who wants an easy way out, right?

**CAPRICORN**  
Actions speak louder than words. Your sincere efforts and honest intentions will motivate others also to put in their best, feels Ganesha. You'll be like a friend, philosopher and guide to them. People will follow you, but it has a darker side to as many will even over take you. It is certainly not a pleasant sight to see opportunities pass by!

**AQUARIUS**  
You are disappointed and you seek solace in spirituality. Don't run away from the problems; rather face them with strength and confidence, advises Ganesha, to bring your life back on track. With patience and belief in the Almighty, you will be sail through the storm. Understand that challenges are a part of everyone's life.

**PISCES**  
You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary. In brief, today will be a challenging day for you, says Ganesha.



## ANDERSON, NEESON FUEL DATING RUMOURS

Rumours of a romance between Pamela Anderson and Liam Neeson gathered pace recently after the pair recreated the iconic scene in *Titanic* and posted it to social media. The pair have been on a promotional tour of their latest movie *Naked Gun*.

## CURTIS SLAMS TREATMENT OF AGING ACTORS IN INDUSTRY

Hollywood veteran Jamie Lee Curtis (66) has revealed that she has been “self-retiring” for the last three decades. Speaking to The Guardian, she said this decision was influenced by her parents—notable Hollywood actors Janet Leigh and Tony Curtis—and their struggles with aging in the industry.



# Tamannaah on work-life balance

**Mumbai:** Tamannaah Bhatia has joined the ongoing discourse on work-life balance in the film industry, a conversation recently reignited by Deepika Padukone's reported exit from Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit*. As per reports, Deepika opted out of the project after the director allegedly declined her request for an eight-hour workday.

Speaking at a fashion event, Tamannaah offered a different take on the issue. She dismissed the conventional notion of work-life balance as unrealistic, emphasising the importance of maintaining personal equilibrium instead. “I think work-life balance is a lie. You have to be balanced, and then work and life happen. If you are balanced, then work-life balance ho jata hai,” she said. She further noted that while contractual work terms may appear ideal on paper, the ground reality often involves long, irregular hours—making it essential for

individuals to find balance within themselves.

Tamannaah's perspective reflects a broader sentiment shared by many in the industry who advocate for more humane working conditions.

Professionally, she has a packed slate with *VVAN: Force of the Forest* alongside Sidharth Malhotra, *Ranger* with Ajay Devgn and Sanjay Dutt, and an untitled project with John Abraham, reportedly directed by Rohit Shetty.

AGENCIES



**Mumbai:** Bollywood icon Kareena Kapoor Khan continues to impress fans not only with her stellar performances but also with her honest and heartwarming approach to motherhood. Known for her dazzling on-screen presence, Kareena is equally admired for being a hands-on mom, balancing her film career with parenting duties. Whether it's sharing glimpses from family vacations, school runs, or bedtime stories with her sons, she offers a refreshing take on what it means to be a modern superstar mother.

Recently, Kareena struck a chord with parents everywhere through a humorous and relatable post on her Instagram story. She wrote, “Before I had kids, I didn't realise I could ruin someone's day by simply asking them to brush their teeth.” The witty remark brought smiles to countless mothers, offering a candid peek into the universal parenting struggles that often go unspoken.

Unlike many celebrities, Kareena and her husband Saif Ali Khan have openly shared their parenting journey. The couple welcomed their first son, Taimur, December 20, 2016, who soon became a media darling. Their younger son, Jeh, born February 21, 2021, also captured fans' hearts with his adorable antics.

On the professional front, Kareena was last seen in *Singham Again*, Rohit Shetty's high-octane action film released during Diwali 2024.

AGENCIES

## Kareena's take on parenting

## SALMAN GIVES LIFE ADVICE

**Mumbai:** Bollywood superstar Salman Khan is reflecting back on some regrets in his life. The actor has confessed that he has said yes to things in life which he didn't want to, and it didn't pay off really well for him.

The actor took to his Instagram, and of himself. He also penned a long note he spoke about a life lesson, which his screenwriter Salim Khan shared with him.

He wrote, “Present becomes yr past, 2 your future, present is a gift, do right repeated becomes a habit n then your blame any 1 , no 1 can make u u don't want to (sic)”.

“My dad just said this to me, it's so true. Kash I heard this earlier but never too late”, he added.

Earlier, Salman took to social media to express his happiness over the warm support newcomers Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda are receiving from the film industry. The actor shared his joy and wished the debutantes all the best for their journey ahead.

AGENCIES

shared a picture in the caption, as father, legendary him recently. past catches up with it, mistakes character, dont do anything that



## Ananya's 'most terrifying moment'

**Mumbai:** Ananya Panday is currently busy shooting her upcoming romantic comedy *Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri* alongside Kartik Aaryan in the scenic locales of Rajasthan.

Directed by Sameer Vidwans, the film has been in production for a while, with both lead actors frequently sharing behind-the-scenes glimpses that have kept fans intrigued.

Recently, Ananya opened up about experiencing one of the most frightening moments of her life during the shoot.

In her Instagram stories, the actress shared photos capturing a surprising moment with a peacock.

While she was posing for the camera, the peacock decided to join her but ended up startling her, which she described as the “most terrifying moment” of her life. In the next photo, she revealed that they made peace and posed together for a lovely picture. She also recently visited the famous Kale Hanuman Ji Temple in Jaipur, where she expressed her heartfelt gratitude.

Ananya has also been treating fans to vibrant snippets from the shoot, showcasing the lively and colorful backdrop of the film. *Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri* is slated for a theatrical release February 13, 2026—just in time for Valentine's Day, setting the stage for a romantic cinematic celebration.

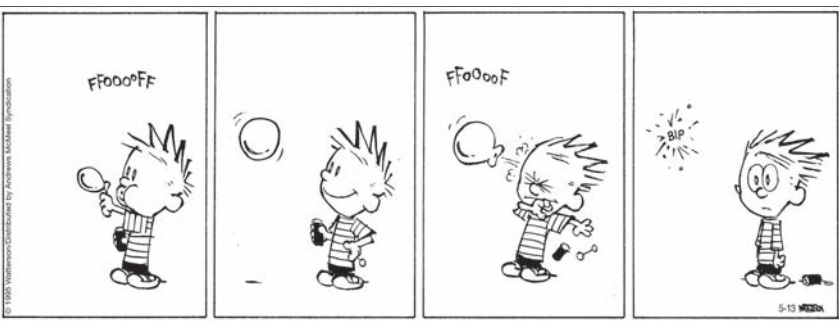
AGENCIES



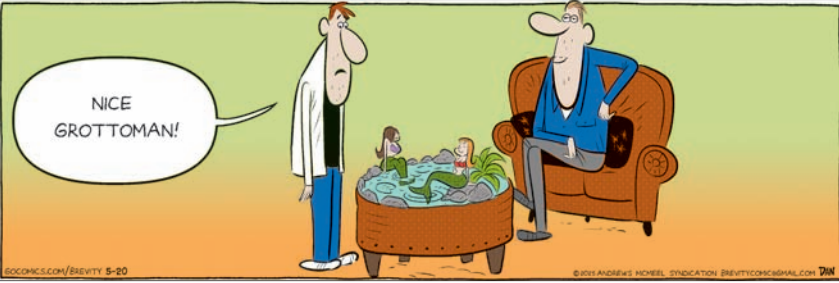
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

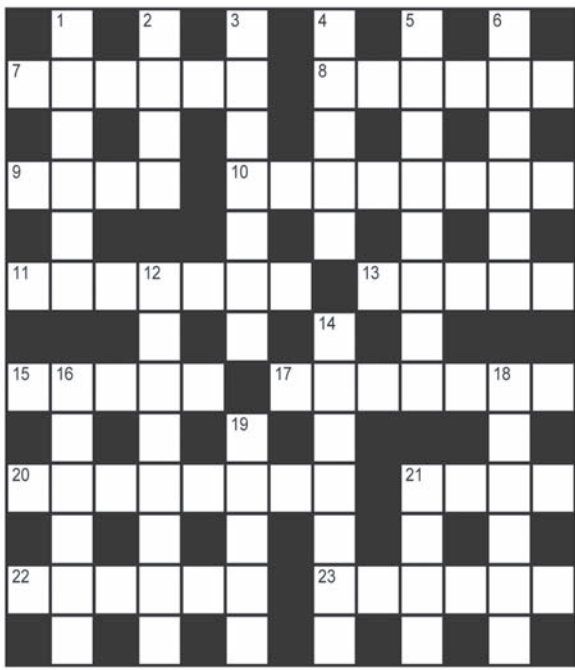


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 7 Scarce
- 8 Irish accent
- 9 Stomach woe
- 10 Snake's bane
- 11 Time off
- 13 Op-ed piece
- 15 Bout of indulgence
- 17 Imposing house

### Down

- 1 Save
- 2 Monster
- 3 Scandinavian kingdom
- 20 Sweater material
- 21 Harassed
- 22 Decanted
- 23 Bread units

### 4 Hard wood

- 5 Goliath, for one
- 6 Volga River locale
- 12 Flock watcher
- 14 Springbok
- 16 Keyboard instruments
- 18 Lots and lots
- 19 Exploits
- 21 Knock about

## 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.

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

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

E	C	H	O		B	Y	E		C	O	L	T
G	O	P	I		G	P	U					
R	O	T	O		P	O	I		N	T	E	R
E	E	I	S		N	I	N					
S	I	L	I	C	A	T	A		I	C	H	I
		K	I	N		A	P					
M	O	L	L	I	C	O	D	D	L	E		
A	A	Y	Y		T		B					
S	E	R	A	P	H		T	O	U	C	H	E
Y	L	E	E	I	N	E	A					
U	C	R	L		C	E	I					
M	A	K	O		L	E	I		A	B	E	T

### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



MONSOON SHOWERS

Commuters use umbrellas to protect themselves from heavy rain that lashed Bhubaneswar due to the impact of a low pressure area formed over Bay of Bengal, Sunday



PUBLIC AUTHORITY ROW

HC issues notice to Info Commission, Jajpur RMC

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** Adjudicating a petition concerning transparency and accountability in public institutions, the Orissa High Court has issued notice to the State Information Commission and Regulated Market Committee (RMC), Jajpur.

Taking cognisance of a writ petition filed by Shantilata Sahoo, a resident of Jajpur district, challenging the decision of the State Information Commission in a Right to Information (RTI) case, the High Court issued notices seeking compliance report from both the government-run institutions.

The petitioner, represented by lawyer Akhand, moved the High Court under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution, seeking to set aside the decision dated May 15, 2025, passed by the State Information Commissioner. The Information



THE PETITIONER HAD SOUGHT DETAILS REGARDING DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN AGAINST HER LATE HUSBAND, A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF THE JAJPUR RMC, UNDER RTI ACT

Commissioner had dismissed the appeal by holding that the RMC is not a 'public authority' under RTI Act, 2005, and hence it is not obliged to furnish the information sought.

The petitioner had sought details regarding disciplinary action taken against her late husband, a former employee of the RMC, under RTI Act. Despite directions from the First Appellate Authority to

provide full information, the RMC allegedly failed to comply.

In her writ petition, Sahoo argued that RMCs are established by state government under Orissa Agricultural Produce Markets Act, 1956, and hence clearly fall within the definition of "public authority" under Section 2(h) of RTI Act.

When the matter came up for hearing July 21, the High Court noted that the State Information Commissioner had dismissed the second appeal without giving the petitioner an opportunity to rebut the legal precedents cited by the Commission. Terming this as 'procedural lapse', the court observed that the petitioner was denied a fair hearing.

The HC, taking note of the issue, issued notice to the Odisha Information Commission and RMC, Jajpur to submit their respective replies. The matter has been listed for further hearing August 26 next.

Elevated corridor to ease traffic snarl

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 27:** In a bid to curb chronic traffic congestions in the Silver City, authorities have approved the construction of an elevated corridor stretching from OMP Square to Kandarpur, according to Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab.

The Rs 640-crore project aims to streamline transportation and reduce gridlock in the bustling city, a key economic hub in the state.

Mahtab said that discussions with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari have been finalised, and the detailed project report (DPR) is complete. "The project is on the verge of receiving final approval, and construction is expected to begin within the next three months," Mahtab said Sunday.

The elevated corridor is designed to improve connectivity and reduce travel time for commuters navigating Cuttack's busy streets. Local officials anticipate the infrastructure upgrade will not only ease traffic bottlenecks but also spur economic growth by facilitating smoother movement of goods and people.

Lok Adalat resolves over 500 cases

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** A district-level Lok Adalat was successfully organised Sunday, in accordance with the directives of the Odisha State Legal Services Authority (OSLSA) at District Court, Bhubaneswar, and focused exclusively on resolving cheque bounce cases.

Presided over by District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Bhubaneswar chairman and District and Sessions Judge Biranchi Narayan Mohanty, the Lok Adalat aimed to provide quick and amicable resolution to pending disputes through mutual settlement.

A total of 1,443 cases were brought before the Lok Adalat



from various criminal courts across the district. Of these, 522 cases were successfully resolved through compromise and mutual agreement between the parties involved. The total settlement amount reached a

substantial Rs 7,04,52,903.

DLSA secretary Salomi Sahoo extended her sincere appreciation to the first-class judicial officers and other contributors for their support and cooperation, which led to the success of the initiative.

Also present at the event were registrar Sabyasachi Pradhan, court manager Shashikant Pradhan, and other judicial and administrative staff, whose coordinated efforts facilitated the smooth conduct of the Lok Adalat.

This initiative reinforces the role of Lok Adalats as a vital component of country's alternative dispute resolution system, ensuring timely and cost-effective justice delivery at the grassroots level.

Keonjhar 'kirtan' troupe draws PM's praise

IN HIS MONTHLY 'MANN KI BAAT' RADIO BROADCAST, PM NARENDRA MODI ALSO SAID MORE THAN 650 TRIBAL WOMEN HAVE REVIVED THE SANTALI SAREE IN MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT



Pramila Pradhan of Keonjhar



A woman from Mayurbhanj weaves a Santali saree

OP PHOTOS

Ashram here, according to an official statement.

Majhi also explained to them about the purpose and motivational aspects of the PM's programme.

He advised the children to study well and work hard to achieve success in their lives, according to the statement issued by the chief minister's office (CMO).

On this occasion, the Chief Minister planted a neem sapling on the ashram premises.

State BJP president Monmohan Samal and the party's in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar have also listened to the PM's programme at two places in the state capital.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday praised tribal women from Mayurbhanj district for the revival of Santali sarees and hailed Pramila Pradhan of Keonjhar for creating awareness among people to protect the environment and prevent forest fire.

In his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast, the PM said more than 650 tribal women have revived the Santali saree in Mayurbhanj.

Now, these women are earning thousands of rupees every month, and they are not just making cloth, but also carving their own

identity, he said.

The PM also appreciated the efforts made by Pramila Pradhan of Keonjhar district for creating awareness through Sankirtan to protect the environment and prevent forest fire.

"The most beautiful glimpse of India's diversity is found in our folk songs and traditions, and our bhajans and kirtans are a part of this. But have you ever heard that people are made aware of forest fires through kirtans? You may not believe it, but amazing work is happening in Keonjhar district of Odisha," Modi said in his radio programme.

A group, named 'Radhakrishna Sankirtan Mandali', chants the

mantra of environmental protection. The inspiration behind the initiative is Pramila Pradhan, he said.

To protect the forest and the environment, she has added new lyrics and new messages to traditional songs. Her troupe visits villages and makes the people understand how much damage a forest fire causes, the PM stated.

"This example reminds us that our folk traditions are not something of the past; they still have the power to give direction to society," he added.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi listened to the 124th episode of the PM's radio programme with the children of Vanavasi Kalyan

ODISHA RAINBOW PRIDE WALK 2025

Despite rain, City draped in colours of 'Pride'



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** A vibrant celebration of gender and sexual diversity, showcasing powerful assertion of rights, identity, and dignity, hundreds of individuals from Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual (LGBTIQ++) communities, along with their supporters, gathered in the Capital city Sunday, braving heavy rains to participate in Odisha Rainbow Pride Walk 2025.

The annual pride walk, organised by a coalition of advocacy and community-based organisations including

Sakha, Third Gender Welfare Trust (TWT), Solidarity and Action Against the HIV Infection in India (SAATHI), Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR), SINI, SAKHI, The Humanity, civil society groups, and other LGBTIQ++ organisations, commenced from Master Canteen Square and concluded at Subham Market Complex.

"The community gathers to celebrate the full spectrum of human sexualities, genders and to renew its pledge to challenge and change social norms that deny people their rights because of who they are or whom they love," said Meghna Sahoo, an organising

member of the rally.

Odisha has witnessed significant legal and social strides in advancing LGBTIQ++ rights since the first-ever pride walk in 2009. Some of the landmark milestones include, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) verdict of 2014, recognising the right of transgender individuals to self-identify their gender; decriminalisation of Section 377 in 2018) marking a historic moment for equality by legalising consensual same-sex relationships; progressive rulings by Orissa High Court affirming the rights such as co-habitation, protection, and access to state benefits like family pensions for transgender and queer individuals.

Additionally, government welfare initiatives such as 'Sweekruti' scheme and the national 'SMILE' scheme have provided critical support to transgender individuals across the state and country.

"Despite these achievements, members of LGBTIQ++ community continue to face systemic discrimination, social exclusion, and violence," Pradosh Das, one of the participants. Pride walks and awareness drives play a crucial role in seeking visibility, inclusion, and equality in every sphere of life—legal, social, economic and cultural.

DSPL-184



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DSPL-187







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ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା  
ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ  
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ବିଶ୍ୱ ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ଦିବସ


୨୮ ଜୁଲାଇ ୨୦୨୫


- ଜନ୍ମର ୨୪ ଘଣ୍ଟା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁକୁ ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ପ୍ରତିଷେଧକ ଟୀକା ଦିଆଯାଏ । ସମସ୍ତ ସରକାରୀ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ ଏହା ବିନା ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ମିଳେ ।
- ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ :
  - ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ‘ବି’ ଓ ‘ସି’ ର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ବିନା ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।
  - କେବଳ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତିପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ନୁହଁ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କରୁ ରକ୍ତ ଓ ରକ୍ତଜାତ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
  - ଅସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ଯୌନ ସମ୍ପର୍କରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ ।
  - ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ହାତ ଧୋଇବା ସହ ଡଟିକା ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଆନ୍ତୁ ଓ ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧ ପାନୀୟ ଜଳ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ପଞ୍ଜିତିଭ୍ ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ମହିଳାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରସବ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ କରାନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁକୁ ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ଇମ୍ୟୁନୋଗ୍ଲୋବୁଲିନ୍ ଇଞ୍ଜେକ୍ସନ୍ ଦେଇ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ।


ଆର୍ଥିକ, ସାମାଜିକ, ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାଗତ ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ ତଥା ଅନ୍ଧବିଶ୍ୱାସକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେବା ଏବଂ ହେପାଟାଇଟିସ୍ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ କରିବା

ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା ହେଲ୍ପ ଲାଇନ୍: ୧୦୪

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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# NHRC seeks ATR on labourer's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 27:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken serious note of the alleged brutal murder of 22-year-old labourer Arit Jena, who was employed at a private stone crusher unit in Jajpur district. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, seeking an Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks amid allegations of torture, threats, and police inaction.

The complaint, filed by rights activist Srikanth Pakal, states that Jena—hailing from Jaraka village—had worked for three months at the Padmabati Crusher Unit in Dharmashala block, allegedly owned by Gyanaranjan Mohapatra and operated by his relatives, Hemant and Rony.

The incident reportedly took place April 27, when Arit Jena

na failed to return home from work. Concerned, his family visited the crusher unit and later the owner's residence, where they found him semi-conscious and critically injured. The complaint alleges Arit was brutally assaulted—beaten with an iron rod, burned with heated metal, struck in the chest with a puncture pipe, and kicked in the groin, leaving him bleeding. He was allegedly chained and left helpless.

His family further claims they were held at gunpoint, forced to sign blank papers, and had Arit's Aadhaar card seized. Despite their resistance, they were reportedly filmed while being coerced into submission.

Out of fear, the family waited until April 28 to admit Arit to Dharmashala Primary Health Centre, from where he was referred to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. After



battling for four days, Arit succumbed to his injuries May 1.

Even after his death, the family alleges that local police refused to register an FIR against the accused, reportedly due to their political clout and financial influence.

The NHRC, after reviewing the complaint dated May 6, placed the matter before the Commission July 25. A bench headed by member Priyank Kanoongo observed that the allegations point to prima facie serious human rights violations. The Commission has directed the Jajpur DM and SP to conduct an inquiry and

submit an Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks.

It also instructed that all official communication be made exclusively through the HRC-Net portal, clarifying that email responses will not be accepted.

Activist Srikanth Pakal has called for a judicial inquiry by the NHRC, strict criminal action against the accused, and ₹50 lakh compensation for the victim's family, citing grave human rights violations. "This was not just a murder—it was a cold-blooded act of torture against a helpless young man who was simply trying to earn a living," Pakal said.

The incident has sparked outrage among local labour rights groups and civil society organisations, who allege that migrant and informal workers continue to face exploitation and violence under the shield of political and corporate influence.



**REGALING POSE:** Dancer Swapna Dutta performs Odissi during Naba Gunjan Utsav organised by Gunjan Dance Academy at Kala Vikas Kendra in Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## Man held for rape bid on FM asst prof's wife

**Balasore:** A man has been arrested for allegedly attempting to rape the wife of an assistant professor of Fakir Mohan (FM) University in Balasore district at his official quarters on the campus, police said Sunday. The incident took place Saturday afternoon when the man, posing as an LPG cylinder mechanic, entered the assistant professor's quarters. The accused rang the doorbell and the woman opened the door. He offered a routine check of the LPG cylinder in the kitchen. Once he entered the house, he allegedly locked the door and attempted to catch hold of the woman, her husband said in a complaint with Remuna police station. However, the woman could manage to escape and locked herself in another room, called up her husband and screamed for help. The security personnel present at the colony gates rushed to the house and managed to overpower the accused. He was handed over to the police. The accused has been identified as Shankar Patra, a resident of Nilagiri area in Balasore district. The incident sparked tension on the Fakir Mohan University campus which houses official quarters and women's hostels.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhadrak, dtd- 07.07.2025, I, Sunita Sutar, D/o- Sudarsan Sutar, Vill- Budang, P.O.- Dolasahi, P.S.- Tihidi, Dist.- Bhadrak, PIN- 756127, declare that I have changed my name from Sumati Sutar to Sunita Sutar. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sunita Sutar for all purposes.

## LOST

I, Priya Ranjan Behera (31), S/o - Mohan Behera, A/P - Bori, PS - Gangapur, At - Satyabadi Nagar, PO - Gamundi, PS - Bhanjanagar, Ganjam, while I was shifting my house on dated - 23.07.2025, I lost my original grade sheets vide Sl No. - 194308, 237856, 00264083 and 00266951 and Degree Certificate Vide Sl No. - D08160101189 having Registered No. 1101204103 issued by BPUT Rourkela, Odisha some where and could not traced out. Anybody who found may contact to given police stations the above.

## Experts urge responsible living & digital innovation in conservation

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** Ahead of World Nature Conservation Day (July 28), Odisha resonated with calls for collective environmental responsibility, tech-driven innovation, and deep respect for nature's bounty. Observed annually, the day highlights the urgent global need to conserve natural resources, safeguard biodiversity, and foster sustainable lifestyles.

This year's theme, "Connecting People and Plants: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation", underscores the significance of technology in safeguarding ecosystems while fostering human-nature connections. Environmentalists, scientists, and educators from across the state gathered in Bhubaneswar to discuss practical steps for sustainable development and ecological preservation.

Wildlife biologist and founder of Bikash Saathi, Biswajeet Panda, emphasised Odisha's rich but fragile biodiversity. "The state harbors numerous endemic and cryptic species that are vital for ecological balance. But fragmented habitats are slowly eroding this balance," he said. Panda stressed the need for responsible conservation and habitat restoration, urging citizens to "Restore with Respect" to protect the landscape for future generations.

He likened nature to a nurturing mother, offering sustenance and healing without demand. "Preserving nature is not a choice—it's a responsibility.



Respecting nature is respecting life itself," Panda added.

Noted environmentalist Jaya Krushna Panigrahi highlighted the importance of integrating digital tools into conservation strategies. "From AI to GIS, and remote sensing to mobile apps—modern technology can transform conservation into a mission-mode effort," he said. Panigrahi reiterated the need to preserve plant communities and maintain the quality of abiotic elements like soil, air, and water.

Ahead of the global observance, an awareness event in Bhubaneswar brought together young faculty, students, and scientists. Organised by Science for Common People Society (SCOPE) in collaboration with SOA University, the Indian Meteorological Society (IMS) Bhubaneswar Chapter, and Trident Academy of Technology, the event sought to galvanize youth around the cause of conservation.

Dr Prabodh Mohanty, MD of SNM Group and president of the Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industries, addressed the gathering as Chief Guest. Acknowledging the historical environmental toll of industrialisation, he pointed to recent shifts towards

eco-friendly business practices. "Industries are increasingly adopting green technologies due to evolving regulations and public expectations," he said, encouraging technical students to blend development with responsibility.

Dr Bijay Ketan Patnaik, vice president of SCOPE and former PCCF, delivered the keynote address, stressing the urgent need for sustainable growth in the face of environmental challenges.

Prof UC Mohanty, president of SCOPE and a renowned climate scientist from SOA University, delved into the science behind climate change and ecosystem interdependencies. He emphasized simplifying complex scientific ideas to involve the public in participatory conservation efforts. "Reducing our carbon footprints is crucial to mitigating climate extremes," he noted.

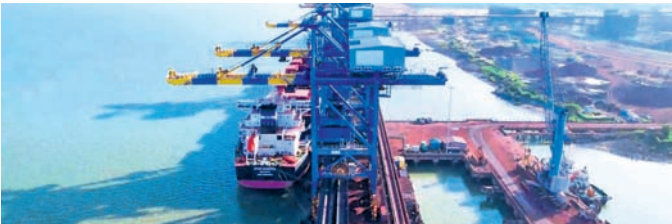
Dr Manorama Mohanty, director of IMD Bhubaneswar and Co-Chairperson of IMS – Bhubaneswar, drew attention to the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. She stressed the role of community-level engagement and IMD's impact-based warning systems in building climate resilience.

## Odisha's maritime push gathers full steam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** With a forward-looking, policy-driven approach, Odisha is making strategic strides to revitalise its maritime sector. Spearheaded by the Odisha Maritime Board and led by the Commerce & Transport department, the state is focusing on modernising and expanding key ports. These initiatives aim to build strong port-linked economic ecosystems, driving long-term growth and coastal prosperity.

Odisha's maritime trade and logistics network has gained significant momentum, both at the domestic and global levels. Non-major ports now boast a combined cargo handling capacity of 80 MTPA. In FY 2024-25, Dhamra Port handled 46.08 MTPA, while Gopalpur Port managed 6 MTPA, contributing to a substantial state revenue of ₹306.15 crore. Meanwhile, Paradip Port Authority retained its position as India's top major port by handling 150.41 MTPA



cargo during the same period.

The introduction of advanced port technologies and deeper berths is opening new avenues for trade, industry, and regional integration. Internationally, improved connectivity through Dhamra and Gopalpur ports has made Odisha a crucial hub for global commerce, enhancing export-import ties and market access. Domestically, focus on better coastal shipping routes and feeder services have improved connectivity to industrial and agricultural centres, ensuring seamless last-mile delivery of goods.

The execution of concession agreement with JSW Utkal Steel Limited for the establishment of a captive jetty to han-

dle cargo for its Integrated Steel Plant highlights the state's dedication to supporting industrial growth through specialised maritime infrastructure. The said project shall bring a whopping investment of ₹2,104 crore and employment generation (direct & indirect) of nearly 3,450 persons.

On the other hand, the concession agreement with the Gopalpur Ports Ltd. has also been revised to bring into effect the shareholding change of 95 per cent equity shares to Adani Ports & SEZ. This shall bring in an investment of ₹16,554 crore with direct and indirect employment generation of about 5,000 people. The efforts emphasise the holistic, strate-

gic and economic development of the state through leveraging its coastline.

Odisha's maritime strategy stands out due to its emphasis on sustainability, integrated logistics, and network viability, coupled with a strong focus on safety and skill development. The pioneering focus on multi-modal logistics integration at these ports is improving operational efficiency and laying the groundwork for well-planned, sustainable port development across the state.

To strengthen maritime training, simulators have been installed at the Crew Training Institute, Chandbali, and the Odisha Maritime Academy, providing hands-on ship operation experience. In a parallel move to enhance safety in inland water transport, the Directorate of Ports & IWT has distributed around 35,000 life-saving devices—including lifebuoys, life jackets, and fire extinguishers—to boat owners, with a 95 per cent subsidy.

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 27:** Hours after the arrest of Bhubaneswar BJD corporator Amaresh Jena in connection with a rape case registered against him in the state capital, his wife claimed that her husband is a victim of a political conspiracy.

"My husband is a senior corporator of ward 45 in the BMC. He has been trapped," she said.

She also claimed that her husband surrendered before the police. A senior officer, however, said that Jena was staying in a village in Nilgiri area, which is close to the forest and could escape from there if

any police were conducting an operation to apprehend him.

Meanwhile, a political slug-fest began over Jena's arrest.

BJD Bhubaneswar president Ashok Panda told reporters that Jena's suspension would not affect the party.

"No one is indispensable in the BJD. I reiterate that the law will take its own course. The BJD has acted immediately as soon as Jena was arrested by the police. We stand by the party's pro-women ideology," Panda said.

Ruling BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal claimed that the complainant was being "sexually abused since 2023, but could

not lodge a complaint due to fear and political pressure under the BJD regime".

"Now that there's faith in the system, she finally came forward. Justice will now prevail," he said.

"Those (BJD leadership) who suspended Jena from the party should also take up the moral responsibility if they are truly sensitive to the issue," Biswal added. Saturday night, the police arrested five aides of Jena for allegedly providing conveyance and assisting Amresh Jena to evade the arrest.

The police have recorded the statement of the woman, and she also underwent a medical test.

WEATHER

Max Temp

34.2°

Min Temp

26.4°

Humidity

73%

Rainfall

25.5mm

CTC

34.2°

24.4°

83%

Nil

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain or Thunderstorm

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## Rape victim delivers stillborn; another girl raped in Malkangiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri/Korukonda, July 27:** Two minor girls were allegedly raped while one of them delivered a stillborn after being impregnated by the accused youth in separate incidents under Mudulipada and Orkel police limits in Malkangiri district, police said Sunday.

In the first incident, a minor girl was impregnated after being allegedly raped by a youth 10 months back under Mudulipada police limits. She delivered a stillborn baby boy Saturday. Police arrested a youth in this connection and launched an investigation after family members lodged a complaint at Mudulipada police station the same day.

Similarly, a minor girl was allegedly raped by a youth on the pretext of offering lift on his bike and dropping her at her maternal uncle's house under Orkel police limits in Malkangiri district July 20. He took her to Chitrakonda dam and raped her in Hatimaba jungle while returning the same day evening.

The girl's family members lodged a complaint at the Orkel police station Saturday. Police registered a case and arrested a youth identified as Daya Madhi, 27, in this connection Sunday.

# Fifth wave of flooding in Subarnarekha



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhograi/Baliapal, July 27:** The Subarnarekha surged again Sunday morning, marking the fifth wave of flooding in Balasore district and cutting off multiple low-lying villages as water levels rose sharply above the danger mark.

At 7am, the river's water level at Rajghat was recorded at 9.16 metres, by 3pm it rose to 10.97 metres — well above the danger threshold — prompting fears of a major flood. By late Sunday night the river swelled to 11.44 metres.

Officials said discharge of 6,000 cusec water from 13 open

gates of the Galudih barrage Saturday afternoon caused the sudden rise. The barrage had exceeded its storage capacity, and authorities warned this may be the biggest flood of the year in the Subarnarekha. Notably, since the first wave of flood June 20, water levels have continued to swell in the river.

Floodwaters had breached both banks of the Subarnarekha by Sunday morning, inundating parts of Bhograi, Baliapal, Basta and Jaleswar blocks, as well as several panchayats in Mayurbhanj district. Villages in low-lying areas became isolated, and police were seen deployed in the worst-hit zones.

While floodwaters had not fully receded from low-lying villages in Bhogarai and Baliapal blocks, the fifth wave of flood has further disrupted daily life. Over 100 villages across 20 panchayats in Bhogarai, 12 in Baliapal, and six in Jaleswar have been submerged, affecting lakhs of people who remain stranded without access to basic services.

Major village roads and key thoroughfares are submerged and swept by strong currents, cutting off inter-village connectivity. Many residents have taken shelter in elevated pucca houses, while others have moved to designated cyclone

Lakhs affected; several villages cut off once again

Rescue visuals show people using country boats and banana rafts to move between villages

shelters with their children and livestock. The local administration deployed motorised boats to evacuate people.

Rescue visuals show people using country boats and banana rafts to move between villages. In response, the district administration has alerted block development officers (BDOs), tehsildars, and other government officials via virtual meetings to

remain vigilant and ready for emergency response.

Similarly, five panchayats including Solampur, Malda, Rahania, Napang and Kurigaon under Bhandaripokhari block in Bhadrak district have been waterlogged despite floodwater flowing below the danger mark at 18.33 metre at 12 noon Sunday. Thousands of hectares of farmlands and roads connecting these panchayats have been submerged disrupting communication in these areas.

Officials said the situation may deteriorate if rainfall continues or further discharge is required from the barrage. Residents in vulnerable areas have been advised to stay alert.



# Bargarh turns hub of narcotics

3 arrested after major haul of banned cough syrup, drugs



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, July 27:** The booming narcotics trade in Bargarh district has become a matter of growing public concern as drug traffickers continue to operate despite police crackdown leading to frequent arrests and seizure of large quantities of various intoxicants.

In the latest crackdown, Bargarh Town police Saturday seized 1,970 bottles of cough syrup, which is widely misused as an intoxicant, from the Bishipara area. Officers also seized 1,000 banned tablets, a Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycle, and two mobile phones. Three suspects, including two brothers, were arrested during the operation.

The accused have been identified as Uttam Sindria, 26, of Bishipara, Rohit Gadtia, 26, and his younger brother Ritik Gadtia, 22, of Harijanpada. A case (373/25) has been registered at Bargarh Town police station and the three were remanded to Bargarh jail after a local court denied them bail.

This haul follows a major seizure less than a week earlier, when police recovered 2,171 bottles of cough syrup July 21 from the same locality and arrested seven individuals, including a married couple. In total, 4,141 bottles of cough syrup have been seized from Bishipara within a week — a figure that has sparked alarm across the town.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Western Range) Indurekha Paschimkapat, addressing a press briefing, said police had intensified their campaign against narcotics and formed a dedicated unit to deal with the issue. Acting on a tip-off, the team conducted Saturday's raid and achieved what she termed a "significant breakthrough". She added that similar operations will continue in the days ahead.

Despite repeated efforts, the rise in narcotics trade — particularly in Bishipara — has led locals to question whether the dealers are receiving covert protection. The brazenness of the illegal operations has prompted speculation and dis-

content, as residents say drug peddlers appear to be outmanoeuvring law enforcement.

The latest arrests come close on the heels of several similar crackdowns. A couple was arrested from Bishipara July 22 with seizure of 70 gram brown sugar. Three people were taken into custody from Ghulipali Chhak with 50 grams brown sugar July 18. Earlier, a woman was arrested by Excise officials with 12.3 grams brown sugar July 8.

Although authorities insist the anti-drugs drive is ongoing, the recurring nature of seizures and the increasing quantities involved have sparked intense debate in Bargarh over the effectiveness of the current approach.



## Kandhamal man trampled, dismembered by elephant

POST NEWS NETWORK

**G Udayagiri, July 27:** In yet another incident of human-animal conflict, a wild elephant trampled and dismembered a 55-year-old labourer on the outskirts of this Kandhamal town Saturday evening, police said. This gory death has sparked anger among villagers who say officials ignored repeated warnings about the rampaging herd.

Samanta Digal of Malansuga village was walking home from work with two companions when the elephant charged at them near Pajimaha, about 2 km from G Udayagiri, according to eyewitness Sanjeeb Pradhan. Digal was caught by the trunk, trampled and torn apart. The others escaped death by a whisker.

Forest range officers Prashanta Sahu and Rasmita Buxi reached the scene with

senior police officers Sunday morning — 18 hours after the attack. They promised compensation to the family and said that they had briefed the divisional forest officer, who had yet to appear, fuelling residents' frustration.

Villagers said elephant incursions have destroyed crops and claimed lives for months, yet authorities have taken no concrete step to drive the animals back into the forest. Some warned they would kill the elephants themselves if officials failed to act swiftly.

Police recovered Digal's scattered remains for a post-mortem.

The incident is the first in the area in which a victim was mutilated. It has intensified criticism of what locals call a slow and inadequate response to escalating human-elephant conflict.



## Transforming villages: TPSODL expands Model GP initiative

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 27:** TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) continues its transformative journey towards rural empowerment by extending its "Model Gram Panchayat (GP)" initiative to 14 more GPs across southern Odisha. Earlier, the company successfully achieved its vision by developing 113 Model GPs, benefiting around 2 lakh people in the region.

This initiative, rooted in TPSODL's commitment to "enhance customer experience through reliable power supply and quality services", focuses on improving the lives of rural consumers by offering a superior experience in areas such as power supply reliability, timely metre reading and billing, new connections, grievance redressal, and overall customer support. It also emphasises electrical safety, community awareness, and digital empowerment.

The Model GP programme is specially designed for GPs that require reliability improvement and safety aware-



ness. These villages, selected from across TPSODL's eight operational districts, are now witnessing transformation in the quality of services.

Speaking on the initiative, TPSODL CEO Amit Kumar Garg said, "We remain committed to driving inclusive growth through the Model GP initiative. This programme is not only about better power supply, it's about building empowered communities. By integrating digital technology, safety, and quality service, we are developing a robust and consumer-centric power distribution system in rural areas."

With this expansion, the total number of model GPs has reached 127. This initiative now spans across eight districts of southern Odisha.

# NIT Rourkela's Institute of Counselling Services saved lives of 8 students last yr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Rourkela, July 27:** The Institute Counselling Services (ICS) at National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela, a dedicated initiative supporting students' emotional, academic, and psychological needs, has helped save eight lives last year, according to officials.

Since its inception in 2017, ICS has grown into a robust support network that includes professional counsellors, psychiatrists, faculty advisers and peer mentors, they said.

Over the past year, NIT Rourkela's ICS has successfully intervened to save eight lives through its coordinated efforts. It conducted over 2,000 online and offline sessions with 987 students.

"As a result, the institute successfully addressed the concerns of students fighting depression and self-harming symptoms and ensured complete support from its peer mentor and institute's quick response team," said RK Biswal,



head of ICS, NIT Rourkela.

Biswal said that based on the counselling requests received, ICS counsellors have recorded that academic self-improvement is the most common reason for which students seek guidance and support for.

"Many a times, students struggle with anger, procrastination, time management, focus, and decision-making which results in overthinking, low self-esteem and sleep problems which add to their mental stress. Problem in relationships with parents, friends, and partners often lead to emotional isolation and confusion, as many students hesitate to share their feeling with others."

"Career related anxiety is another challenge for which students seek guidance and support. They often feel unsure about their academic and career choices which in some cases have led to depression and substance abuse leading to financial struggles," he said.

In special cases, if needed, ICS also contacts the families of students and advises temporary break from the academic responsibilities.

"Students are encouraged to focus on their recovery with parental support and can only return once they provide a medical certificate confirming their emotional stability. Additionally, at the time of rejoining the

institute, ICS psychiatric team also conducts a fitness assessment to ensure they are ready to resume their studies."

"The institute has established a structured mentorship system where every 10 first-year students are paired with a senior batch student who is a trained mentor. These mentors ensure they navigate their juniors with the emotional and academic challenges in their first two-years at NIT Rourkela," Biswal said.

Additionally, to ensure timely resolution of hostel-related problems, hostel wardens and assistant wardens have been made part of the ICS advisors with the other half being faculty advisors.

"These advisors are trained to identify early signs of emotional distress. Since they are often the first point of contact for many students, they notify the ICS staff, which initiates a series of appropriate follow-up actions such as mentor counselling or psychiatric therapy sessions," the ICS chief said.

## Woman's body found in pool of blood; husband on the run

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Basudevpur, July 27:** A 45-year-old woman was found dead in a pool of blood inside her house in Parapokhari village under Kasia Marine police limits and this block early Sunday morning. It is suspected that the woman's husband killed her with a sharp weapon before fleeing, police said.

Following preliminary investigation, police said the victim, Gurubari Jena, is believed to have been attacked late Saturday night by her husband, Gopinath Jena, 58, over a dispute related to money. Gurubari had reportedly sold part of her ancestral land recently and kept the proceeds, which allegedly triggered repeated quarrels.

Police said her body bore deep injuries on the head, arms and torso, indicating she was axed multiple times. Excessive bleeding is believed to have caused her death.

Kasia Marine police station Officer-In-Charge Sabitri Panda, SDPO Bichitrnanda Sethi, and a forensic team from Bhadrak visited the scene and launched an investigation. The woman's body has been sent to Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital for autopsy.

Police sources said Gopinath was originally from Adhua village and Gurubari was his second wife. They had two sons and a daughter, all of whom are married and live elsewhere. The couple had been living alone.

The victim's daughter Kunilata filed a formal complaint, leading police to register a murder case (113/25). Police said Gopinath is absconding but is expected to be arrested soon.

Residents and local leaders have demanded justice and immediate arrest of the accused.

## Man beaten to death by wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rajgangpur, July 27:** A man was brutally beaten to death by his wife with a crowbar following a tiff between the couple over his regular boozing habits at Kadeidipa village under Sagor panchayat and this police limits in Sundargarh district late Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Sudip Bara, 30, and his accused wife as Sangeeta Bara, 25. Rajgangpur police arrested the woman and seized the murder weapon, Kansbahal police Officer In-Charge Prabhasiraman Singh said. A case was registered in this connection and the accused will be produced in the court Monday, the OIC said.

The OIC said that Sudip, who was an alcoholic, used to stay with his wife Sangeeta and two sons in the village. He used to come home drunk regularly and pick up a quarrel with his wife.

The incident occurred when he again returned home drunk Saturday night and quarreled with his wife. Enraged, his wife picked up a crowbar and brutally thrashed him. Bleeding profusely, Sudip collapsed on the spot and breathed his last.

On being informed, Kansbahal and Rajgangpur police rushed to the spot and launched an investigation. The body was handed over to the family members after a post-mortem.

## Man arrested for raping minor girl

**Koraput:** A man was arrested Sunday for allegedly raping a minor girl in Khadamalguda village in Koraput district. According to reports, the incident occurred while the girl was on her way to a local pond for bath. After returning home, she described her ordeal to parents, who filed a complaint at the Sadar police station. They also stated that the accused, identified as Manoj Benya, threatened the survivor to prevent her from reporting the crime. Koraput Sadar police promptly responded and Inspector-In-Charge Runu Majhi confirmed that Benya was arrested at 2pm the following day after the case was registered. Authorities have charged him under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The survivor is currently receiving both medical and psychological support. The case has sparked local outrage, with villagers demanding swift and strict action. The police have assured the locals of a fair and thorough investigation.



The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it

THE MOTHER



## Greener Route

In a landmark ruling that has come as a shot in the arm for the global climate movement, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 23 July observed that countries are legally bound to act on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and failure to do so could hold them financially liable. Although the ruling is an advisory opinion and doesn’t directly affect any nation immediately, it carries significant consequences in the global battle against climate change. By highlighting that climate action isn’t just a policy imperative for countries but also a legally-binding duty under international law, the Hague based top UN court’s advisory opinion will hopefully come to the aid of developing nations and everyone else pushing for stronger climate action from wealthier, more industrialised countries. This was especially needed after the US has taken a U-turn in its commitment to climate action after Donald Trump’s reversal in climate policies.

Following years of advocacy from at-risk island nations concerned about the threat of rising sea levels, the UN General Assembly requested an advisory opinion from the ICJ in 2023. The ICJ was tasked with addressing two key questions: First, what responsibilities do countries have under international law to safeguard climate and environment from human-induced greenhouse gas emissions? Second, what legal repercussions do governments face when their actions, or inactions, significantly damage climate and environment?

The Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, which has a population of 3.2 lakhs, took the lead in this case, with the support from over 130 countries. It was the biggest case ever heard by the ICJ, featuring more than 150 submissions from States, international organisations, and civil society groups. Last December, over 100 States and international organisations joined in for the hearings. The court took a close look at the details of three important climate treaties — the 1994 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and the 2015 Paris Agreement — along with a few other international laws related to environment. Calling the climate crisis “an existential problem of planetary proportions that imperils all forms of life and the very health of our planet,” ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa said during the hearing that “Failure of a state to take appropriate action to protect the climate system... may constitute an internationally wrongful act.”

Climate activists and other stakeholders have hailed the advisory opinion, which received unanimous support from all 15 judges of the highest international court, viewing it as a significant milestone in global climate legislation. The court emphasised that wealthy, industrialised nations listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC must take the lead in emissions reduction and support developing countries through technology and financial assistance. Additionally, the court outlined various obligations for countries, stating that failure to meet these responsibilities could result in “an internationally wrongful act” with legal repercussions. Such consequences may include liability for full reparations to nations affected by climate-related disasters or other impacts of climate change. Furthermore, countries could be held accountable for the negligent actions of private businesses or corporations if they failed to exercise due diligence and implement sufficient regulatory or legislative measures to curb irresponsible behaviour by private entities.

The top world court’s opinion opens avenues for further legal actions, such as countries approaching the ICJ to ensure mutual accountability, as well as domestic legal challenges and instruments like investment agreements. Additionally, activists may feel empowered to initiate lawsuits against their own nations for not adhering to the ruling, which spans over 130 pages.

The timing of the ruling couldn’t have been more appropriate as people all over the world see for themselves the devastating impact that climate change has wrought upon their lives. Rising sea levels, unbearable heatwaves, floods, cyclones and other extreme events have become all too common, upending lives and destroying livelihoods. In the decade up to 2023, sea levels rose by a global average of around 4.3 cm. The world has also warmed 1.3 degrees Celsius since pre-Industrial era, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels.

The ICJ ruling shows hope for a future in which governments can no longer ignore their legal obligations as it reinforces a fundamental principle of climate justice: Those who contributed the least to this crisis are entitled to protection, reparations, and a sustainable future. However, the most crucial aspect still remains - What authority does the ICJ have to enforce legalities on sovereign nations that refuse to comply or participate. Until & unless the rules apply to everyone, no one will be willing to take the greener route.

### WISDOM CORNER

A man who as a physical being is always turned toward the outside, thinking that his happiness lies outside him, finally turns inward and discovers that the source is within him

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Nature shows that with the growth of intelligence comes increased capacity for pain, and it is only with the highest degree of intelligence that suffering reaches its supreme point

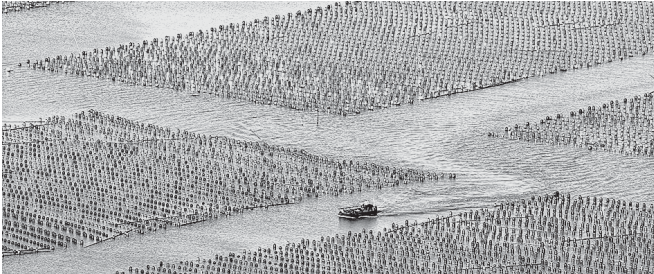
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1750: Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the greatest composers of all time, died at age 65.
- 1821: Peru declared its independence from Spain. The Peruvian War of Independence against Spain began in 1811 and ended with a declaration of independence under the leadership of José de San Martín.
- 1868: The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—which granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and slaves who had been emancipated after the Civil War—entered into force.
- 1914: Beginning of World War I. Using the assassination of the Austrian archduke Francis Ferdinand as a pretext to present Serbia with an unacceptable ultimatum, Austria-Hungary declared war on the Slavic country on this day in 1914, sparking World War I.
- 1954: The classic film On the Waterfront—directed by Elia Kazan and featuring one of Marlon Brando's most iconic performances—was released in the United States.
- 1958: National Aeronautics and Space Act is passed by the US Congress. The act established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- 1976: An earthquake in the industrial city of Tangshan, China, killed more than 240,000 people.

# RETHINKING OCEAN FINANCE

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY



It may be a long time before humans fully understand the ocean. But it is no mystery that we urgently need to reappraise and improve ocean financing methods



Claudio de Sanctis

THERE MAY BE THREE TIMES MORE MARINE SPECIES THAN WE HAVE IDENTIFIED. THAT ALONE SHOULD LEAD US TO STOP TAKING THE OCEAN FOR GRANTED

The more that humans learn about the ocean, the more we realise how little we truly understand. For example, there may be three times more marine species than we have identified. That alone should lead us to stop taking the ocean for granted. Moreover, the ocean is critical to the global economy. In 2023, trade in ocean goods and services reached record highs of \$900 billion and \$1.3 trillion, respectively. Fisheries sustain 600 million people, mostly in developing countries, and the marine biotechnology market is projected to reach \$6.4 billion by 2025.

The ocean also plays a crucial role in planetary sustainability. Through multiple processes, it acts as a climate regulator, absorbing around 25% of human-caused carbon dioxide emissions, and as an essential source of biodiversity. But there are concerning trends in both these areas. In 2024, the Global Ocean Health Index dropped sharply, with marked declines in measures of habitat, species, and iconic species. All told, scores declined for 187 of the 220 regions measured.

It is not all doom and gloom. By the end of the UN Ocean Conference in June, 50 countries had ratified the UN High Seas Treaty, with 19 more promising to do so this year. With the treaty tantalisingly close to a final binding agreement, we could soon see significantly increased marine protections in international waters.

Still, humanity is not investing nearly enough in ocean sustainability. The Ocean Panel (comprising 18 leaders of maritime states) estimates that, over the last ten years, less than 1% of the ocean’s value has been invested in sustainable projects through philanthropy or official development assistance. What is to be done? The Ocean Panel’s own five priorities are to manage seafood production sustainably, mitigate climate change, stem biodiversity loss, seize the opportunity for

economic recovery from climate and ecosystem shocks, and manage the ocean holistically. And in recent years, there has been considerable progress toward developing frameworks to finance these aims. From our experience at Deutsche Bank, this has meant enhancing ocean-protection due-diligence policies by following global frameworks like the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles, launched by the UN in 2018 to support Sustainable Development Goal 14, “Life Below Water,” and becoming the first bank to join the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance as a full member and ORRAA’s UN-backed #BackBlue commitment.

These supporting frameworks are becoming clearer. For example, the 2025 Ocean Investment Protocol – launched by the UN Global Compact and the UN Environment Program Finance Initiative – offers a practical road map for financial institutions, insurers, and development banks to manage ocean-related risks and unlock investment opportunities that support SDG 14. Such frameworks will continue to shape internal policies, risk assessments, and investment strategies across the financial sector, helping to standardise definitions, improve transparency, and scale finance toward a sustainable ocean economy. At the same time, financial innovation – such as loan guar-

antees, blended finance, and project aggregation – will help make ocean investments more attractive to mainstream capital. I do not want to downplay the remaining challenges. Many ocean projects offer limited scalability, and there is still a paucity of investment offerings and solutions. Despite the progress noted above, some components of the current investment frameworks are rather difficult to implement, and a lack of data remains a problem.

Nonetheless, the resources are there, and the financial system is developing the tools to mobilise them in the interest of the ocean’s health. In thinking about this work, one always must be mindful of different potential investors’ objectives and how sustainable ocean finance can best meet them. As head of Deutsche Bank’s Private Bank, I know that many investors – both private and institutional – have a clear appetite for sustainable ocean investment. In creating innovative financing solutions for these clients, we often end up working with other partners like multinational development banks and developing-country financial institutions.

But what do investors really want from sustainable ocean investments, and what is the most effective way to meet their expectations? Generally, they want a visible return, be it real-world impact (say, coral protection), financial gain, or a combination of the two. While “impact” may

be measurable on its own, most sustainable ocean investments do combine impact and financial returns, and therefore need to be assessable and investable in a way that makes sense in the context of an overall portfolio. Otherwise, the universe of potential ocean investors will shrink, and with it our ability to scale up ocean investment.

Notable recent efforts in the wider market include a collaboration between an environmental organisation and a major global insurance provider to develop reef insurance products, and the Asian Development Bank’s Blue SEA Finance Hub, designed to help Southeast Asian economies structure their blue-economy investments. I would also point to the Nautilus Blue Guarantee Company. Launched in March by ORRAA and the Development Guarantee Group, it aims to unlock private capital by offering guarantees for investments in six key blue-economy sectors, including sustainable seafood, ocean conservation, and blue infrastructure. Nor should we overlook the importance of existing and new ocean funds that are bringing together public and private capital. The Korean Ocean Business Corporation’s successful \$300 million blue-bond issuance in April demonstrated that when issuers can present a convincing rationale, investors will respond. A sound investment thesis, combined with a collaborative approach between private- and public-sector bodies, is key.

While improving and scaling up “blue finance” will require determination, commitment, and continued innovation to create and institutionalise investable solutions, ensuring that finance goes toward supporting ocean health is nonnegotiable for the planet and humanity. It may be a long time before humans fully understand the ocean. But it is no mystery that we urgently need to reappraise and improve ocean financing methods.

The writer is a Member of the Management Board at Deutsche Bank.

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### SPECTRUM INDIA-UK FTA

## Shift in India's global trade architecture



Shivaji Sarkar

THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT OFFERS OPPORTUNITY, BUT DEMANDS READINESS

The recently-concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the UK marks a critical shift in India's global trade architecture—expanding its reach into a major European economy while signalling a willingness to negotiate complex regulatory frameworks.

India-UK bilateral trade stood at \$21.34 billion in 2024, with Indian exports to the UK rising by 12.6% to \$14.5 billion, and imports marginally increasing by 2.3% to \$8.6 billion. The trade balance currently tilts in India’s favour, showing a surplus of \$5.94 billion. With the FTA, both countries aim to more than double trade volumes to \$112 billion by 2030.

The agreement could lead to a shift in the Indian trade surplus as certain UK exports, such as automobiles, alcoholic beverages, and machinery, may see reduced barriers and increased access to the Indian market. The UK sees a substantial increase in exports to India. According to the UK government impact assessment, India’s demand for global imports is estimated to

increase to £2.8 trillion by 2050, making it the third largest importer in the world. The FTA’s improved market access and reduced regulation are expected to create major opportunities for UK businesses and consumers, the UK perceives.

According to the World Economic Forum, the deal is expected to generate over \$34 billion in additional bilateral trade annually. The UK’s own projections suggest a 60% rise in exports to India by 2040, and a 25% increase in imports from India, potentially raising overall trade by 39%, or £25.5 billion a year.

India’s manufacturing and export sectors stand to benefit the most. The FTA slashes duties on 90% of tariff lines, including textiles, leather goods, jewellery, engineering products, IT services, and processed food—industries where India has comparative advantage and a large SME base. This opens significant room for Indian farmers, fishermen, artisans, and small businesses to access a high-value European market.

India successfully resisted pressure to liberalise dairy

imports, protecting domestic producers from competition with highly subsidised UK agri-business. In terms of job creation and rural income, this clause alone reflects New Delhi’s political calculus to support its agricultural backbone while expanding global market access.

Despite the hype, the FTA will not be immediately operational. British parliamentary ratification and multi-level regulatory vetting mean the deal will take at least a year—unlikely till mid-2026—to become enforceable. The UK is betting on India’s expanding consumption base. It hopes to push exports of cars, premium liquor, cosmetics, and machinery—sectors where British firms have strong brands and pricing power. Tariffs on UK whiskies and gin will be cut from 150% to 75% initially, and 40% after 10 years. Similarly, UK carmakers—including Jaguar (owned by India’s Tata)—will benefit from duty reductions from up to 110% to 10% under a quota system. However, these gains may not translate into cheaper goods for Indian consumers, at least not in the near term. The primary

beneficiaries of these cuts will be importers and foreign manufacturers, as India’s indirect taxes, distributor margins, and local logistics costs remain high.

Also, increased market access for UK exports could eat into India’s current trade surplus. Sectors like automobiles, alcohol, cosmetics, and high-end electronics could see a surge in imports, shifting the trade balance—unless India rapidly upgrades its own domestic offerings and branding to match global benchmarks. The FTA is not a jackpot, but a calculated and strategic gain. It reflects ambition without recklessness, expansion without overexposure. As with all FTAs, the true impact will unfold over years—not months. The agreement offers opportunity, but demands readiness. Indian businesses, regulators, and trade negotiators must now ensure that this opening is used not just to expand exports, but to upgrade quality, branding, and supply chains to stay competitive in a maturing global order.

INFRA

### Break the silence

Sir, As the world observes World Hepatitis Day on 28 July, we are called to action under the 2025 theme, “Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down.” This powerful message urges us to dismantle the financial, social, and systemic barriers that allow viral hepatitis—types A through E—to persist in silence. Though hepatitis is preventable, treatable, and often curable, millions remain at risk due to delayed diagnosis, limited access to care, and enduring stigma. The continued burden of this disease not only costs lives but also deepens health inequalities and strains healthcare systems. This global observance reminds us to prioritise timely screening, early intervention, and open conversations about liver health. It’s time to break the silence, raise awareness, and encourage proactive steps to protect ourselves and our communities. India has taken significant steps through the National Viral Hepatitis Control Program, offering free screening and treatment for hepatitis B and C. Alongside vaccination drives and dedicated clinics, efforts are being made to improve public awareness and empower individuals to act. But government action alone is not enough—we all have a role to play. Whether it’s getting tested, guiding family and friends toward screening, dispelling myths, or sharing trusted information, every effort matters. A simple blood test could be the beginning of saving a life. Let us use this day as a catalyst to strengthen health literacy, reduce stigma, and advocate for accessible healthcare. Together, we can turn the tide—and build a future free from hepatitis.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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# ‘Van Rani’ toy train to make grand return with Vistadome coaches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Jul 27:** A revamped “Van Rani”, the toy train which was a huge attraction for visitors to Mumbai’s Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), is set to make a comeback soon with Vistadome coaches, offering a scenic ride through the forest in the middle of the metropolis. Trial runs of the first Vistadome toy train in the park, with glass roofs and wide side windows, commenced June 30, 2025, with a successful full-capacity trial completed July 5. Daily technical verifications concluded July 25.

The train, whose services were suspended four years ago, is likely to be reintroduced for SGNP visitors soon, according to the office of local BJP MP and Union minister Piyush Goyal, who is instrumental in getting back the iconic train in the national park, a vast expanse of forest nestled in the heart of Mumbai in suburban Borivali. One of the key attractions of the park, which houses a wide array of plant, animal and bird



species besides ancient caves, the revamped toy train is set to provide an elating and exciting experience to visitors, especially children.

The original Van Rani (queen of the jungle) toy train was launched in 1974, marking 50 years of legacy in 2024. Sponsored by the Tata Group, it was a popular ride operating on a narrow-gauge railway line (762mm) and held deep nostalgic value for generations of Mumbaikars.

The yellow-coloured train started with three coaches and

quickly became a key attraction for people visiting SGNP, a popular destination for family picnic and trekking enthusiasts.

Its operations were halted after Cyclone Tauktae in May 2021 caused extensive damage to the track and surrounding vegetation.

The revival of the toy train was accelerated by Goyal, the Lok Sabha member from Mumbai North, and has rekindled the joy of once again riding on Van Rani with a blend of modern technology and eco-conscious design.

The new Vistadome Van Rani is going to be a battery-operated train with four coaches, making it more environment friendly than the earlier diesel-powered version. Coaches are adorned with wildlife illustrations native to SGNP, making the ride visually enriching and educational, Goyal’s office said in a statement.

Glass roofs and large glass windows on the red-black coloured train will offer panoramic forest views, while metro-style seating will ensure comfort for tourists. A second train with completely open-air coaches, no windows or doors and designed to immerse passengers directly in nature, is also expected to arrive soon at the park.

Each Vistadome train can accommodate 80 passengers, enhancing capacity and accessibility. The train will operate on a 2.3 km narrow-gauge track, winding through the 5.5 square km Krishnagiri Upvan (a section of the park), biodiversity spots, a mini zoo, and artificial tunnels, adding thrill of adventure to the ride.

ture to the ride.

As of July 17, track and embankment have been fully laid and linked across the entire route. All 15 bridges across the route are complete. A loco shed has been constructed near Krishnagiri station for train parking and maintenance, said the office of the BJP MP, under whose constituency the park is located.

The statement said the Krishnagiri station is nearly complete with finishing works (divyangian ramp, artistic murals, railing) in progress.

The Krishnagiri station has been designed to resemble a butterfly, a symbol of transformation and nature, and features waiting rooms, accessible ramps, and other visitor amenities.

The administration of SGNP, managed by the Maharashtra forest department, will explore branding and advertising on trains and stations using posters and stickers, creating revenue streams to support the ongoing park maintenance and development, the statement added.



A Pheasant-tailed jacana near blooming water lilies in Nadia, West Bengal  
PTI PHOTO

# WB steps up migrant distress response

Officials and TMC leaders call a “coordinated and calibrated” approach, the government has rolled out a WhatsApp-only helpline, reactivated district-level migrant welfare cells, and empowered grassroots-level TMC task forces across migration-prone districts to serve as first responders and grievance redressal units

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 27:** With reports of Bengali-speaking migrant workers allegedly being detained and harassed in several Indian states triggering outrage, the West Bengal government and the ruling TMC have launched a multi-layered initiative to tackle the crisis with a blend of administrative urgency and political outreach. In what officials and TMC leaders call a “coordinated and calibrated” approach, the government has rolled out a WhatsApp-only helpline, reactivated district-level migrant welfare cells, and empowered grassroots-level TMC task forces across migration-prone districts to serve as first responders and grievance redressal units.

“The approach is two-pronged. On one hand, the government has launched help-lines and activated its administrative machinery to contact officials in other states, while on the other, the party has established multi-layered coordination teams, ranging from the grassroots to the district levels. Our workers are constantly in touch with families of migrants, especially in high migration zones,” senior TMC leader and state minister Manas Bhunia told PTI.

The initiative follows incidents of Bengali workers reportedly having faced profiling, detention or forced deportation in recent weeks in states such as Odisha, Rajasthan, Maha-



raashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh.

The WhatsApp helpline, launched by the West Bengal Police Friday, enables families of distressed migrants to send text-based complaints containing the victim’s name, work location, and nature of the problem.

The state police have urged citizens to widely share the helpline number via social media, terming it a vital tool for timely intervention.

Alongside administrative measures, the TMC has mobilised its party network across Malda, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, Birbhum, Nadia, North and South 24 Parganas districts, which have high migration rates. Every municipal ward, gram panchayat, and block has been instructed to create migrant tracking cells, run by local party workers, to maintain real-time registers

of outbound migrants. These grassroots units function under the supervision of area leaders, elected panchayat members, and MLAs.

Each task force typically includes a ward-level party member, a panchayat representative, and a TMC youth volunteer. Upon receiving a complaint, they verify details and coordinate with local police and block offices.

“These help desks are often the first point of contact for desperate families. They assist in documentation, alert the administration, and sometimes even arrange transport for the complainants,” said a senior TMC functionary from Malda.

To reinforce field-level efforts, district migrant worker coordination teams have also been formed, comprising BDOs, MLAs, municipal councillors, panchayat officials, and representatives from the district migrant board and labour department. One of the more effective

district-level interventions has emerged in Uttar Dinajpur’s Itahar, where TMC MLA Mosaraf Hussien has opened a full-time helpdesk near the Pater Sathi bus stand to assist families whose members have been detained in Haryana.

The desk, manned by volunteers, has already intervened in multiple cases, including two alleged custodial detentions in Gurugram.

The West Bengal Migrant Workers’ Welfare Board is also revamping district migrant cells, many of which were not so active in recent years, with new staffing and direct coordination lines to district magistrates.

The board is mapping major Bengali migrant clusters across India and aligning the data with inputs from local panchayats and party committees.

Rajya Sabha MP and board chairman Samirul Islam, who is overseeing the restructuring, stated that the narrative that people are fleeing West Bengal due to a lack of jobs is misleading.

While TMC leaders assert that the response is driven by humanitarian concerns, many acknowledge its political resonance ahead of the 2026 assembly polls. BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari has, on the other hand, launched a parallel campaign, asking citizens to share details of alleged Rohingya or Bangladeshi Muslim infiltrators. He claimed 1.25 crore illegal immigrants have been added to the state’s electoral rolls.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, July 27:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will Monday kick off her “weekly protest movement” against the alleged harassment of Bengali-speaking people in BJP-ruled states.

She will lead a protest rally there in Birbhum district. The reason for choosing Birbhum as the starting venue of the protest, which Mamata Banerjee describes as another “Bhasha Andolan (Language Movement)”, is the district’s rich association with Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and the Gurudev-founded Visva Bharati University at Bolpur-Santiniketan in the district.

Political observers feel that Mamata Banerjee has deliberately chosen the district as the starting venue to exploit Bengali nostalgia associated with Gurudev.

The Chief Minister has started facing criticisms about la-

bellung the protest as “Bhasha Andolan”, since, historically, Bhasha Andolan was a political movement in what was then East Pakistan. It was a campaign advocating for the recognition of the Bengali language as an official language, which ultimately led to the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation after erstwhile East Pakistan was liberated from Pakistan in 1971. At the event, Mamata Banerjee is likely to air her reservations on the special intensive revision (SIR) of West Bengal’s electoral rolls ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls. The SIR exercise is ongoing in neighbouring Bihar, where Assembly elections will be held before the end of this year.

As per the Chief Minister’s office, Banerjee will reach Birbhum district on Sunday night. On Monday, she will attend an administrative meeting in Bolpur, where she will do online inauguration of several govern-

ment projects.

Later in the day, CM Banerjee will launch the Bhasha Andolan march in Bolpur-Santiniketan.

“The Chief Minister will hold an administrative meeting at Gitanjali Theatre in the afternoon tomorrow. Following that, she will join the language movement procession. The procession of about three kilometres will commence from the Tourist Lodge crossing in Bolpur to Jamboni bus stand,” said a state government official.

The CM will also garland the statue of Rabindranath Tagore at Jamboni and address the gathering from a makeshift stage. From there, the Trinamool Congress chief is likely to give a clarion call to her party leaders and workers to fight against the alleged high-handedness of the BJP and put an end to the alleged discrimination against Bengalis in the country. “We are expecting direction from Banerjee at tomorrow’s protest rally on how to counter the BJP. This attack on migrant workers from Bengal has to stop. We are ready to start the movement,” said Trinamool Congress’s Birbhum district committee chairperson, Ashish Banerjee.

The Chief Minister is scheduled to return to Kolkata from Birbhum on Tuesday. Before that, she will attend a government programme in Ilambazar of Birbhum district.

The Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari slammed CM Banerjee for her protest against the BJP.

## YEOOR HILLS PROTECTED

# Civic body bans transport of construction material

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thane, July 27:** The Thane Municipal Corporation has issued directives prohibiting the transportation of construction material at the Yeoor Hills, an environmentally sensitive zone here, officials said Sunday.

The directives were issued after a review meeting chaired by municipal commissioner Saurabh Rao Friday, they said.

“Yeoor is an environmentally sensitive area. No construction material can be brought into Yeoor without a construction permit issued by the Thane Municipal Corporation’s Urban Development Department,” an official release said.

Individuals with authorised construction permissions must mandatorily register their details with the forest department’s entrance post, including the permit copy, the type of construction material, and information about the transporting vehicles, it said. During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Dinesh Tayde informed that out of the



10 turf constructions in Yeoor, eight have already been evicted.

One turf was authorised, and eviction proceedings for the remaining were underway as the deadline expired. A survey of unauthorized commercial constructions was underway, the official said.

So far, 188 notices have been issued to residents in Yeoor for such violations. DCP Prashant Kadam informed that 18 FIRs have been registered under various provisions related to noise and firecracker violations. To ensure sustained enforcement and ecological preservation of the region, Rao announced the formation of a multi-agency coordination committee under the chairmanship of the additional commissioner, the release said.

# Kolhapuri chappals get QR code as govt moves to protect craft

The GI-tagged handmade flat leather sandals, known for their intricate craftsmanship and cultural heritage, now carry an added layer of protection and authenticity in the form of QR codes, thanks to recent technological and legal innovations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolhapur, July 27:** The humble Kolhapuri chappal, one of India’s most iconic traditional crafts, is enjoying renewed prominence not only in domestic fashion circles but also in international markets, amid Italian brand Prada being accused of appropriating the footwear.

The move aims to check counterfeiting and highlight the identity of the artisan behind each product, boost consumer trust and strengthen the market position of the traditional craftsmen, officials from the government-run Leather Industries Development Corporation of Maharashtra (LIDCOM) said.

Recently, artisans cried foul after footwear similar to the Kolhapuri chappals featured in Italian luxury fashion brand Prada’s new collection, alleging violation of the GI (Geographical Indication) rights.

Following the row, Prada had acknowledged the sandals showcased in their men’s 2026 fashion show were “inspired”



by traditional Indian handcrafted footwear.

The brand, however, clarified in a reply to the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce that the showcased sandals are still at the design stage and not yet confirmed for commercial production.

A team of experts from Prada visited Kolhapur earlier this month to interact with artisans and assess the local footwear manufacturing process.

Dating back to the 12th century, the footwear has been primarily crafted in Maharashtra’s Kolhapur, Sangli and Solapur districts. Its distinctive design, made using naturally tanned leather and handwoven straps, has been

preserved through generations of artisans. A major boost came in the early 20th century when visionary ruler Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj promoted it as a symbol of self-reliance and Swadeshi pride.

To safeguard this cultural legacy and ensure fair recognition for artisans, the Maharashtra and Karnataka governments jointly secured the GI tag in 2019. Under international trade rules such as the TRIPS agreement, this GI status legally reserves the rights to manufacture and market Kolhapuri chappals to artisans from specific districts in both the states. The certification defines the product as handmade, using traditional techniques and natural leather, with open-toe construction, prohibiting the use of synthetic materials or mechanised processes.

Going a step further, the LIDCOM has introduced QR-coded certification for each pair of chappals, the corporation said in a statement. This digital initiative aims to tackle counterfeiting and highlight the identity of the artisan or self-help group

behind each product, it said.

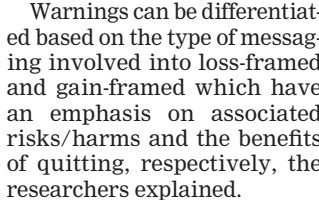
Buyers scanning the code can access details like name and location of the artisan or production unit, district of manufacture in Maharashtra, craft techniques and raw materials used, validity and status of the GI certification.

The corporation is now calling upon consumers, designers and the common public to stand in solidarity with India’s indigenous craft traditions.

“Kolhapuri chappals are not just fashion accessories. They are a powerful expression of traditional skill, identity and the dignity of small artisan communities,” the statement quoted LIDCOM Managing Director Prerna Deshbhratar as saying. Founded in 1974, LIDCOM has been a pivotal institution in empowering rural leather artisans. Through training programmes, market development, design innovation and economic support, the organisation has transformed traditional footwear-making into a symbol of Maharashtra’s cultural pride and grassroots economy.











Rahul Gandhi's continuous comments targeting the ECI show that the mindset has not changed even 50 years after the Emergency

SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI | BJP MP

## RAJ DRIVES TO MATOSHREE TO GREET UDDHAV ON HIS B'DAY

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray Sunday met cousin and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray to wish him on his 65th birthday, the meeting coming amid shifting political dynamics in the state



## of the day uote

When we tried to raise issues by giving notices on issues regarding the poor, atrocities against women, dalits and downtrodden, and incidents like Hindu-Muslim clashes, he did not give us an opportunity. It (reason for Dhankhar's resignation as Vice President) is between him and Modi. We don't have any information on that

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Tree planting is not just a ritual; it is a responsibility. We want to turn this campaign into a people's movement

BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

The initiative taken by NCERT to include India's tales of valour in the school curriculum is a good and commendable step

ANIL VU | HARYANA'S ENERGY AND TRANSPORT MINISTER

## POST OF THE DAY

One more handloom, one more headline. Dior sells a \$200K coat using Lucknowi mukaish embroidery.

12 Indian artisans. 34 days of work. No credit. No context. No mention of India. The world loves Indian craftsmanship — But rarely credits the craftspeople. And almost never shares the value. Because the branding, storytelling, and pricing power stay elsewhere. The hand that creates remains invisible. Culture is soft power. Japan did it with design. Korea did it with pop culture. India must do it with craft. From sourcing destination to storytelling nation. A home of global brands. The lion has to come out. And roar.

@IRadhikaGupta

## SHORT TAKES

### Haryana CET conducted smoothly

**Chandigarh:** The Common Eligibility Test (CET) was conducted for the second day Sunday across Haryana amid tight security, with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini saying "everyone worked as a team" to ensure that the exams were conducted smoothly. The exam was conducted over two days -- Saturday and Sunday -- in morning and afternoon shifts. The Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) conducted the CET for the 'Group C' posts recruitment.

### Bihar Deputy CM receives 'death threat'

**Patna:** Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary has allegedly received a death threat from an unknown person, police said Sunday. A message was sent on the mobile phone of one of Samrat's supporters, claiming that the deputy CM would be shot dead within 24 hours, they said.

### IndiGo to add more int'l destinations

**New Delhi:** IndiGo will continue to add more overseas destinations with A321 XLRs set to join the fleet this fiscal year and aims to increase its international capacity share to 40 per cent by 2030. Also, the country's largest airline plans to explore new opportunities in the MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) space, according to its annual report for 2024-25.

# Parl set for fiery debate on Pahalgam attack, Op Sindoor



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** The first week of disruption in Parliament's Monsoon session is set to give way to a fiery debate on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor from Monday as the ruling alliance and the Opposition prepare to lock horns over the two issues steeped in national security and foreign policy imperatives.

The BJP-led ruling National Democratic Alliance and Opposition parties are expected to field their top guns during the discussion in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

Sources said Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will be speaking on the issues amid indications that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may make an intervention to convey

his government's "robust" stand against terrorism.

Leaders of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, may lead the charge against the government along with Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav, besides a host of other members.

After the first week of session ended up a virtual wash-out due to Opposition protests on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar and other issues, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had said July 25 that the Opposition has agreed to the start of a discussion on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor in the Lok Sabha Monday and in the Rajya Sabha Tuesday.

The two sides have consented to a marathon 16-hour debate in each House, which invariably

The BJP-led ruling National Democratic Alliance and Opposition parties are expected to field their top guns during the discussion in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha

stretches longer in practice.

Besides its battery of ministers and leaders like Anurag Thakur, Sudhanshu Trivedi and Nishikant Dubey, the ruling NDA is expected to field its members from the seven multi-party delegations that had travelled to over 30 world capitals to present India's case after Operation Sindoor.

They include Shrikant Shinde of the Shiv Sena, Sanjay Jha of the JD(U) and Harish Balayogi of the TDP, among others.

A big question mark is on whether Shashi Tharoor, who had led the delegation to the US among other countries, will be picked as a speaker by the Congress, as the seasoned Lok Sabha member's enthusiastic endorsement of the government's action following the terror attack has soured his ties with his party.

## Rahul slams BJP over demolitions in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said hundreds of slum dwellers in Delhi are going through the pain of being rendered homeless with their houses being destroyed by the BJP government, as he claimed that this "atrocities" exposes the ruling party's "insensitivity" towards the poor and its "arrogance of power".

The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha shared a video of his recent visit to Delhi's Ashok Vihar area where houses of several people were brought down by the administration.

"Imagine, how would you feel if the roof over the head of your parents, children or siblings is suddenly taken away - if your entire family is rendered homeless in a single moment? Hundreds of poor families living in the jhuggis of Delhi are going through this pain today," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi on X along with the video. The small houses in which they had settled their entire life were "ruthlessly destroyed" by the BJP government, he alleged.

These were not just houses - these were their dreams, their dignity and their means of living, he said. "This atrocity being committed in the name of administration exposes the BJP's insensitivity towards the poor and its arrogance of power," Gandhi said.



People visit the newly inaugurated glass bridge — Maharashtra's first — built over the Napne Waterfall, near Vaibhavwadi, in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

# BSF steps up Bangla border watch with cams, biometrics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** More than 5,000 body-worn cameras are being provided to Border Security Force troops guarding the India-Bangladesh international border as part of a measure to record visuals and evidence of deporting illegal Bangladeshis apart from instances of criminals attacking the personnel on duty.

Official sources in the security establishment told PTI that a select number of border outposts (BOPs) of the force along the 4,096 kms front are also be-

ing equipped with gadgets to capture biometrics like finger prints and iris (eyes) scan of illegal Bangladeshis for sharing this data to the Foreigners Registration Office (FRO).

The two policy decisions to bolster BSF capabilities at this front have been taken in the wake of the stepped up security arrangements along the border following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh August 5, 2024.

The sources said the Union home ministry recently approved these two proposals of



the BSF headquarters following a "comprehensive review" of the security situation along the Bangladesh border.

About 5,000 body-worn

About 5,000 body-worn cameras are being sent in two batches to BSF troops guarding the India-Bangladesh international border

These cameras are night-vision enabled and can record about 12-14 hours of footage, the sources said

cameras are being sent in two batches to BSF troops guarding the India-Bangladesh international border. These cameras are night-vision enabled and

Gujarat (37.20 per cent), Dungarpur (35.04 per cent), and Sukma in Chhattisgarh (34.76 per cent). Wasting, which indicates acute malnutrition, was highest in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, at 17.15 per cent, followed by Bijapur in Chhattisgarh (15.20 per cent) and Mon in Nagaland (15.10 per cent). Madhya Pradesh has multiple districts with stunting above 50 per cent, including Shivpuri (58.20 per cent), Khar gone (55.02 per cent) and Guna (52.86 per cent).

Assam also has multiple districts with stunting above 50 per cent, including Cachar (54.11 per cent), Darrang (51.65 per cent), and South Salmara-Mankachar (52.67 per cent). Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap (52.74 per cent) and Upper Subansiri (52.10 per cent) also figure among the worst hit.

Karnataka's Raichur (52.76 per cent) and Bagalkot (51.61 per cent), Rajasthan's Salumbar (52.95 per cent), and Gujarat's Narmada (50.71 per cent) further have high prevalence of stunting. Among Union Territories, Mahe in Puducherry had a stunting rate of 57.38 per cent, the highest among UTs.

Responding to another question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur had stressed that nutrition is not just about food but involves factors like sanitation, safe drinking water, and education.

She added that the government is implementing 'Mission Saksham Anganwadi' and 'Poshan 2.0', an umbrella scheme that integrates anganwadi services, 'Poshan Abhiyaan', and adolescent nutrition programmes.

# K'taka mass burial: SIT intensifies probe; DGP joins investigation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mangaluru (Karnataka), July 27:** The Special Investigation Team (SIT), set up by the Karnataka government to probe the allegations of "mass burials" in Dharmasthala, intensified its investigation, with consultation and inquiries Sunday.

The man who had confessed to burying bodies in Dharmasthala appeared before the SIT for the second day for inquiry. The SIT team was joined by its chief Pronab Mohanty -- Director General of Police (Internal Security Division) -- who oversaw on-ground assessments and reviewed progress with officers. The team also held detailed discussions with local authorities, scrutinised records of missing persons, and revisited earlier reports of suspicious deaths in the region, officials said. Investigators also interacted with residents in and around Dharmasthala and inspected specific sites believed to be associated with the allegations, they said.

The SIT was constituted by

the state government following claims about alleged mass murder, rape, and burials in Dharmasthala, over the past two decades. The SIT, headed by Mohanty, consists of Deputy Inspector General of Police (Recruitment) M N Anucheth and IPS officers Soumyalatha S K and Jitendra Kumar Dayama. Twenty police personnel--inspectors, sub-inspectors, head constables and constables--from Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada have also been deployed to the SIT.

A former sanitation worker, whose identity has not been revealed, has claimed that he worked in Dharmasthala between 1995 and 2014, and that he was forced to bury a number of bodies, including those of women and minors, in Dharmasthala. He had alleged that some of the bodies showed signs of sexual assault. He has also given a statement before a magistrate in this regard. Further field visits, including technical and forensic surveys, are expected in the coming days as the SIT continues its probe, said police sources.

## Banke Bihari temple panel moves SC against UP govt ordinance

**New Delhi:** The management committee of the Thakur Shree Banke Bihari Ji Maharaj temple in Mathura has moved the Supreme Court against a Uttar Pradesh government ordinance that vests the control of the shrine's administration with the state. In a plea filed through advocate Tanvi Dubey, the temple management committee, comprising 350 members and "sewayat" Rajat Goswami, said the state's conduct is visibly mala fide as an issue concerning the use of temple funds to acquire five acres of land was already decided by the high court on November 8, 2023 and it has denied the state the permission to use the temple funds for acquiring the land. The committee said the Uttar Pradesh government did not file appeals against the high court's November 8, 2023 order and instead, an impleadment application was filed in the pending plea before the top court.

# Over 50 per cent children stunted across 13 Indian states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** As many as 63 districts across 13 states and Union Territory, including 34 in Uttar Pradesh, have reported that more than 50 per cent of children enrolled in anganwadis are stunted, according to an analysis of multiple documents submitted in Parliament.

The analysis also showed that 199 districts reported stunting levels between 30 per cent and 40 per cent. Stunting is a form of chronic undernutrition that occurs when children do not receive adequate nutrition over a long period of time.

According to the data based on the Ministry of Women and Child Development's Poshan Tracker for June 2025, some of the worst-affected districts with highest level of stunting include Nandurbar in Maha-



ashtra (68.12 per cent), West Singhbhum in Jharkhand (66.27 per cent), Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh (59.48 per cent), Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh (58.20 per cent), and Bongaigaon in Assam (54.76 per cent). Uttar Pradesh leads the list with 34 districts showing stunting

levels above 50 per cent, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Assam.

In response to multiple questions, the Women and Child Development Ministry said that 35.91 per cent of the 8.19 crore children aged 0-76 years measured across anganwadis



# international

## of the day quote

We have a 50-50 chance, maybe less than that, but a 50-50 chance of making a deal with the EU

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

Maldives and India have a very good relationship that goes back centuries, and with his leadership and cooperation between our two countries, between our two governments, I am sure it's going to be prosperous, even more prosperous in the days ahead

MOHAMED MUIZZU | PRESIDENT, MALDIVES

The continued captivity of hostages, the starvation and denial of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people, the increasing violence from extremist settler groups, and Israel's disproportionate military escalation in Gaza

KEIR STARMER | PM, BRITISH

## SHORT TAKES

### No US visa for Nigerians

**WASHINGTON:** The United States is pausing all routine visa services at US embassy in Nigerian capital Niamey until further notice, according to a State Department spokesperson and an internal State Department cable seen by Reuters Saturday. The July 25-dated cable did not provide a reason for the move but a State Department spokesperson said the pause, which would cover all immigrant and non-immigrant visa categories, was in place until Washington addressed "concerns with the Government of Niger." The spokesperson did not provide further details on the reason, but said that most diplomatic and official visas were excepted from the pause.

### Russia starts NK flights

**Moscow:** Russia will launch direct passenger flights from Moscow to North Korea's capital Pyongyang Sunday, Russian authorities said, as the two former communist bloc allies move to improve ties following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The start of regular flights between the capitals for the first time since the mid-1990s, according to Russian aviation blogs, follows the resumption of Moscow-Pyongyang passenger rail service, a 10-day journey, in June.

### Oppn members executed

**Tehran:** Iran said Sunday it has executed two members of the exiled opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq after convicting them of carrying out attacks on public and civilian infrastructure. The judiciary's official news website, Mizan Online, reported that Behrouz Ehsani Eslamlou and Mehdi Hasani were hanged Sunday morning after being found guilty of using improvised mortar launchers to target residential areas, educational institutions and government buildings. The report said Eslamlou had a long history with the group, dating back to the 1980s.

### IS rebels kill 34 in church

**Kinshasa:** The death toll from an attack on a Catholic church in eastern Congo by Islamic State-backed rebels has risen to 34, according to a civil society leader. "The bodies of the victims are still at the scene of the tragedy, and volunteers are preparing how to bury them in a mass grave that we are preparing in a compound of the Catholic church," Dieudonne Duranthabo, a civil society coordinator in Komanda, in the Ituri province, told The Associated Press.

# Weight of war: Gaza infant dies lighter than born

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Gaza Strip, July 27:** A mother pressed a final kiss to what remained of her 5-month-old daughter and wept. Esraa Abu Halib's baby now weighed less than when she was born.

On a sunny street in shattered Gaza, the bundle containing Zainab Abu Halib represented the latest death from starvation after 21 months of war and Israeli restrictions on aid.

The baby was brought to the pediatric department of Nasser Hospital Friday. She was already dead. A worker at the morgue carefully removed her Mickey Mouse-printed shirt, pulling it over her sunken, open eyes. He pulled up the hems of her pants to show her knobby knees. His thumb was wider than her ankle. He could count the bones of her chest.

The girl had weighed over 3 kilograms when she was born, her mother said. When she died, she weighed less than 2 kilograms.



A doctor said it was a case of "severe, severe starvation."

She was wrapped in a white sheet for burial and placed on the sandy ground for prayers. The bundle was barely wider than the imam's stance. He raised his open hands and invoked Allah once more.

Zainab was one of 85 children to die of malnutrition-related causes in Gaza during the war, according to the latest toll released by the territory's Health Ministry Saturday. It said 127 people had died of malnutrition-related causes overall,

with the adult deaths counted in just the past few weeks.

"She needed a special baby formula which did not exist in Gaza," Zainab's father, Ahmed Abu Halib, told The Associated Press as he prepared for her funeral prayers in the hospital's courtyard in the southern city of Khan Younis.

Dr Ahmed al-Farah, head of the pediatric department, said the girl had needed a special type of formula that helps with babies allergic to cow's milk.

He said she hadn't suffered from any diseases, but the lack

## BORDER DISPUTE

# Thailand, Cambodian leaders to meet for talks

*The 800-kilometre frontier between Thailand and Cambodia has been disputed for decades, but past confrontations have been limited and brief*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangkok, July 27:** Thai and Cambodian leaders will meet in Malaysia for talks to end hostilities, a spokesperson for the Thai prime minister's office said Sunday.

Jirayu Huangsap said Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai will attend Monday's talks in response to an invitation from Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim "to discuss peace efforts in the region."

This comes following pressure from US President Donald Trump to end a deadly border dispute, now in its fourth day, which has killed at least 34 people and displaced more than 168,000.

The spokesperson also said Phumtham's Cambodian counterpart Hun Manet will also attend the talks, though this was not immediately confirmed by the Cambodian side. He added that Anwar was acting in his capacity as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations,

or ASEAN, held on an annual rotating basis by its 10 members.

Trump posted on Truth Social Saturday that he spoke to the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he would not move forward with trade agreements with either country if the hostilities continued. He later said both sides agreed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire.

### Both sides agree for truce

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said earlier Sunday his country agreed to pursue an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire." He said Trump told him that Thailand had also agreed to halt attacks following the US president's conversation with Phumtham.

He said he tasked his deputy, Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to coordinate next steps with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and to engage directly

with Thailand's foreign minister to implement the ceasefire.

Thailand expressed cautious support. Phumtham thanked Trump and said that Thailand agreed in principle to a ceasefire but stressed the need for "sincere intention" from Cambodia, the Thai Foreign Ministry said. Phumtham called for swift bilateral talks to discuss concrete steps toward a peaceful resolution, it said.

### Blame game

The fighting flared Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Both sides blamed each other for starting the clashes. Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings with Cambodia.

Despite the diplomatic efforts, fighting continued Sunday along parts of the contested border, with both sides refusing to budge and trading blame over renewed shelling and troop movements.

Col Richa Suksowanont, a Thai army deputy spokesperson, said Cambodian forces fired heavy artillery into Surin province, including at civilian homes, early Sunday.

He said Cambodia also launched rocket attacks targeting the ancient Ta Muen Thom temple, claimed by both countries, and other areas in a bid to reclaim territory secured by Thai troops.

We continue our military operation in Ukraine because all proposals for dialogue were rejected, both by Ukraine and by Western countries

DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

85 CHILDREN HAVE DIED OF MALNUTRITION-RELATED CAUSES IN GAZA DURING THE WAR

ISRAELI MILITARY ANNOUNCES DAILY PAUSES IN GAZA AREAS TO ALLOW AID FOR HUNGRY

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME SAID THAT A THIRD OF GAZA'S POPULATION OF AROUND 2MN WERE NOT EATING FOR DAYS AND NEARLY HALF A MILLION WERE ENDURING FAMINE-LIKE CONDITIONS

of the formula led to chronic diarrhea and vomiting. She wasn't able to swallow as her weakened immune system led to a bacterial infection and sepsis, and quickly lost more weight.

The child's family, like many of Gaza's Palestinians, lives in a tent, displaced. Her mother, who also has suffered from malnutrition, said she breastfed the girl for only six weeks before trying to feed her formula.

"With my daughter's death,

## KOREAN WAR ANNIVERSARY

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the country would achieve victory in "anti-imperialist, anti-US" battles, as the country marked the anniversary of the Korean War armistice, state media reported Sunday. North Korea signed an armistice agreement with the United States and China July 27, 1953, ending the fighting in the three-year war



## Indian brutally attacked with machete in Australia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Melbourne, July 27:** A 33-year-old Indian-origin man was brutally attacked with a machete by a group of teenagers in Australia, leaving him with multiple injuries, including a nearly severed hand.

Saurabh Anand was approached by the teenage boys from behind when he was walking home July 19 after picking up medicines at a pharmacy at Central Square Shopping Centre in Altona Meadows, Melbourne, according to media reports and police.

They shoved him to the ground before viciously attacking him, The Age newspaper reported.

One of the teenagers had his hands in Anand's pockets, rummaging for valuables.

He said another boy punched him in the head repeatedly until he fell to the ground. A third teen pulled out a machete and held it to his throat.

"They didn't stop there," the newspaper quoted Anand as saying from his hospital bed, days after enduring several surgeries to reattach his severed left hand.

"My instinctive reaction was to bring my arm up to protect my face and wrist. While I was trying to protect myself, the machete just went through my wrist. The second attack, the machete went through my hand ... the third went through my bone."

Anand alleged he was then slashed and stabbed with the machete on his shoulder and back. "I was just trying to survive," he said. "All I remember is the pain, and my hand was ... hanging by a thread. There were bone ruptures on my arm as well." "I was just tumbling around, half-concussed half-conscious."

Anand was rushed to the hospital after he cried out for help to strangers passing by. They found him bloodied outside the shopping centre and called triple zero, the paper reported. The teenagers fled with his phone.

Anand said doctors initially thought they would have to amputate his left hand. But surgeons were able to reattach it following hours of gruelling emergency surgery, which included inserting screws into his wrist and hand. He also suffered head injuries, broken bones in his left arm and a fracture in his spine.

# US, EU announce trade framework



REUTERS

**Turnberry, July 27:** The United States has struck a framework trade deal with Europe, US President Donald Trump announced Sunday, averting a spiralling row between two allies who account for almost a third of global trade.

The deal, that includes a 15% tariff on EU goods entering the US and significant EU purchases of US energy and military equipment, will bring welcome clarity for EU companies.

However, the baseline tariff of 15% will be seen by many in Europe as a poor outcome compared to the initial European ambition of a zero-for-zero tariff

deal, although it is better than the threatened 30% rate.

The announcement came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen travelled to Scotland for talks with US President Donald Trump to push a hard-fought deal over the line.

Trump, who is seeking to reorder the global economy and reduce decades-old US trade deficits, has so far reeled in agreements with Britain, Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam, although his administration has failed to deliver on a promise of "90 deals in 90 days."

Trump has periodically railed against the European Union saying it was "formed to screw the United States" on trade.

His main bugbear is the US merchandise trade deficit with the EU, which in 2024 reached \$235 billion, according to US Census Bureau data. The EU points to the US surplus in services, which it says partially redresses the balance.



**CHARRED REMAINS:** A destroyed car is seen on scorched land as a wildfire burns, in the village of Thymari, near Athens, Greece

REUTERS

# UK plans social media watchdog for anti-migrant posts

*Plans for the new unit came as protests outside hotels housing asylum-seekers spread across towns such as Norwich, Leeds and Bournemouth over the weekend*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, July 27:** The British government is planning a new intelligence unit pulled from across police forces to monitor and flag anti-migrant posts on social media to pre-empt them flaring into violent protests, a UK media report claimed Sunday.

Plans for a so-called National Internet Intelligence Investiga-

tions team working out of the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) in London emerged in a letter to members of Parliament by UK Policing Minister Dame Diana Johnson recently, according to "The Sunday Telegraph".

The NPoCC provides the central planning for police forces across the UK when dealing with protests and civil disorder, similar to anti-immigration protests that broke out last year.

"We are carefully considering recommendations made by the [Commons Home Affairs] committee and HMICFRS [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services] in this area, including building a National Internet Intelligence Investigations team as part of the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC)," Johnson wrote in her letter to MPs.



"This team will provide a national capability to monitor social media intelligence and advise on its use to inform local operational decision-making. This will be a dedicated function at a national level for exploiting

internet intelligence to help local forces manage public safety threats and risks," she said.

The minister was responding to an inquiry by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee into the police's handling of last year's riots in early August. Those riots were trig-

This is the beginning of the state controlling free speech. It is sinister, dangerous and must be fought. Reform UK will do just that

NIGEL FARAGE | LEADER OF ANTI-MIGRATION REFORM UK

gered by online misinformation about the immigration status of Welsh-born Rwandan heritage knifeman Axel Rudakubana who killed three schoolgirls at a Taylor Swift themed dance class in Southport, north-west England, in July 2024.

The report recommended setting up a new policing system with "enhanced capacity to monitor and respond to social media at the national level".

The HMICFRS in its analysis had also flagged policing "hasn't kept pace with the

fast-developing nature of online communications" and was too "passive" in the face of online misinformation.

The watchdog said: "The disorder in 2024 shows that policing needs to act now and be more responsive to those risks. It must recognise that online content could contain vital intelligence."

Meanwhile, Opposition party critics raised free speech concerns over the creation of such a unit. "Two-tier Keir can't police the streets, so he's trying to police opinions instead. They're setting up a central team to monitor what you post, what you share, what you think, because deep down they know the public don't buy what they're selling," said shadow home secretary Chris Philp.



of the day

quote

A good solution needs trained talent, data, and technology. Offer credible, actionable end-to-end solution. You flood clients with data empowerment on time within minutes

ASHUTOSH | CEO, KANALYTICS

I can foresee that even if I am not there at the helm, but the market attraction, the levels of investment and the future of Nestle will continue to be bright in this country

SURESH NARAYANAN | OUTGOING CHAIRMAN , NESTLE INDIA

Right now, our customers are using other UPI apps and we (Indian Bank) have to pay them a fee. Monthly, it will be around ₹12 crore. With the IND-UPI payment facility, customers will be able to save ₹12 crore per month

BINOD KUMAR | CEO, INDIAN BANK

SHORT TAKES

Top IT cos Q1 result

**New Delhi:** India's top IT services firms delivered single-digit revenue growth in April-June, capping off a mixed, somewhat-sobering quarter as macroeconomic instability and geopolitical tensions weighed on global tech demand. An overview of Q1 report cards of Indian IT giants shows year-on-year revenue growth ranging from 0.8 per cent (for Wipro) to 8.1 per cent (HCL Technologies). Axis Securities, while penning its results review on Infosys, noted that overall the business environment remains uncertain due to unresolved tariffs and geopolitical issues, prompting clients to be cautious with discretionary spending, and delaying decision-making. Nuvama Institutional Equities expects the demand environment to remain challenging for the next one-two quarters due to macro uncertainty. TCS' revenue rose 1.3 per cent year-on-year to ₹63,437 crore, while bottomline improved 5.9 per cent to ₹12,760 crore. For Bengaluru-headquartered Infosys revenue was up 7.5 per cent to ₹42,279 crore, while net profit at ₹6,921 crore translated into an 8.6 per cent growth. Wipro's topline grew 0.77 per cent in Q1 to ₹22,135 crore but its profit rose at a faster 9.8 per cent clip to ₹3,336.5 crore. HCL Tech revenue was 8.1 per cent higher at ₹30,349 crore but profit fell 9.7 per cent to ₹3843 crore year-on-year, Tech Mahindra clocked 2.65 per cent revenue growth to ₹13,351.2 crore.

Whirlpool India profit almost flat

**New Delhi:** Consumer durables maker Whirlpool of India Ltd Saturday reported a marginal increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹146.08 crore for the June 2025 quarter. The company had posted a net profit of ₹145.25 crore during the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal, according to a regulatory filing by Whirlpool of India, a subsidiary of US-based Whirlpool Corporation. Its revenue from operations slipped 2.58 per cent to ₹2,432.32 crore during the quarter under review. It was ₹2,496.86 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. "Despite a very significant decline in industry of air conditioners and refrigerators in Q1 2025-26, Whirlpool was able to actually grow profits by keeping its volume decline minimal via continuing to gain market shares in the refrigerator and washer category in April-May," the company said. Whirlpool of India's total expenses were ₹2,289.95 crore in the June quarter, down 2.65 per cent. Its total income, which includes other income, declined 2.42 per cent to ₹2,486.39 crore in the June quarter.

Early Monsoon hits beverage sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** Early monsoon and unseasonal rainfall this year in most parts of the country have impacted the topline of beverage makers in the June quarter.

This has not only impacted sales of the cola brands but also traditional milk-based beverage products, such as lassi, shakes, flavoured milks, and buttermilk.

Interestingly, the beverage makers had early volume gains in 2026 as summer arrived early. They had stocked inventory and channels in anticipation of a repeat of last year's bumper sales.

However, by mid-April, intermittent rainfall started hitting southern and western India, impacting overall which sales from early May.

The Coca-Cola Company Chairman and CEO James Quincey, in the latest investors' call, said the company got a "hit by some early monsoon in India", in the June quarter, which is the important selling season in the country.

The company had a good start in the quarter, but early arrival of monsoon impacted it, said Quincey.

"In India, after a strong start to the year, volume declined, as our business was impacted by early monsoons and geopolit-

ical conflict (India-Pakistan conflict) early in the important summer season," he said.

India is the fifth largest market for The Coca-Cola Company, which operates here with brands as ThumsUp, Sprite, Maaza, Minute Maid, Kinley, besides Coca-Cola and Coke.

For PepsiCo, India continues to be a double-digit growth path; however, its beverage business was also hit in India during the quarter under review.

PepsiCo's International Beverages Franchise (IBF) segment, which focuses on the bottling and distribution of PepsiCo's beverage brands outside of North America, had "a decline in India" in the second (June) quarter, the company said earlier this month in its earnings statement.

IBF includes PepsiCo's international franchise beverage businesses, as well as its soda stream business. In India, PepsiCo's bottling operations in India are mostly handled by its largest franchisee is Varun Beverages Ltd (VBL).

Several dairy companies also faced an impact on sales of beverage products in the quarter, due to unseasonal rainfall and early arrival of monsoon.

IDA President R S Sodhi said more rain has affected the demand for beverages, including dairy-based ones, this year.

NLC India to source rare earth from overseas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** State-owned NLC India Ltd is exploring possibilities to source rare earth element from overseas and the company has also begun preliminary talks for lithium blocks in Mali, West Africa and for copper and cobalt mines in the Republic of the Congo, its CMD Prasanna Kumar Motupalli said.

The remarks came amid China's recent curbs on exports of rare earth elements, impacting the global supply chain of the critical mineral which has diverse usage ranging from the manufacturing of home appliances to electric vehicles.

Motupalli said that both

mines and coal ministries have very clearly communicated to the Navratna firm to "aggressively" explore and mine both critical mineral blocks and rare earth elements.

"We are in touch with the Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Coal, and based on the advice from them we have started taking initial steps of some of the mines abroad. So as on date we are studying some lithium mines in Mali and copper and cobalt mines in the Republic of the Congo," the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) said.

The CMD said that the things are still at the preliminary stage and future course of action will be decided after the signing of the non-disclosure

Economy to grow over 6.5%: Kumar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** Indian economy is growing at a robust pace and will not face any challenge in achieving a growth rate upwards of 6.5 per cent in the current financial year, RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Nagesh Kumar said Sunday.

Kumar, further said that Indian economy, among all economies, continues to remain a bright spot for the world.

"Actually, more than a third of global economies are under the debt crisis...The industrialised economies are facing a lot of pressure and high infla-

tion and the slowdown of economic growth," he said.

But because Indian economy is more driven by domestic consumption and domestic investment, less by export or trade, Kumar said India continues to grow very robustly. "I do not see any challenges in Indian economy achieving upwards of 6.5 per cent kind of growth in the current year and the following year.

"And, you know, hopefully this kind of growth momentum will continue for coming years, but also be over time strengthened to 7-7.5 per cent," he said.

The Indian economy is estimated to have grown at 6.5 per cent in the previous fiscal year.

Demand for educated house help surges in metros: Report

The demand for 10th pass has surged by 112 per cent. The demand rose 102 per cent for graduates, 94 per cent for 10th pass, and an exceptional 255 per cent for 12th pass candidates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 27:** Demand for educated house help or maids has surged manifold, driven by a growing number of dual-income households and their increasing reliance on outsourced support for daily chores, a report has said.

Roles for maids with different education levels have witnessed a sharp growth in 2024 calendar year compared to the preceding year, leading to a steep rise in demand for such domestic helps, said the report by blue and grey collar recruit-

ment platform WorkIndia.

The demand for those with below 10th grade of education has surged by 112 per cent. The demand rose 102 per cent for graduates, 94 per cent for 10th pass, and an exceptional 255 per cent for 12th pass candidates, it added.

The high growth among 12th pass and graduate maids suggests that employers are increasingly seeking more educated individuals for roles that require higher trust such as child care, elderly care, or managing



UK companies can now provide telecom, construction, and related services in India without establishing a local presence, enjoying full national treatment, meaning they will be treated on par with Indian firms

PIYUSH GOYAL | PIYUSH GOYAL



₹7,800 CR DEMAND NOTICE TO TATA COMMUNICATIONS

The Department of Telecom has issued a "show-cause-cum-demand notice" of about ₹7,800 crore to Tata Communications over adjusted gross revenue dues, according to an official note by the company. The demand has been raised by the Department of Telecom (DoT) for adjusted gross revenue (AGR) from 2005-06 till 2023-24



Savings deposit rates of some PSBs at historic low

Savings deposit rates in some public sector banks are at a historic low since deregulation in 2011, according to the report. While small savings schemes remain unchanged, banks have adjusted lending rates downward following repo rate cuts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 27:** Savings deposit rates of some public sector banks (PSBs) are prevailing at a historical low, since their de-regulation in 2011, according to the latest bulletin of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The weighted average domestic term deposit rates for fresh deposits have declined significantly for both PSBs and private sector banks.

"Currently, the savings deposit rates of some PSBs are prevailing at a historical low, since their de-regulation in 2011," said an article published

in the the RBI's July bulletin.

In October, 2011, the RBI had deregulated the savings bank deposit interest rate, and allowed banks to determine the interest rate at their own.

The rates on small savings schemes were kept unchanged by the government during the ongoing September quarter. The prevailing rates on these instruments are higher than the formula-based rates by 33-118 bps, the article said.

It further said in response to the 100-bps reduction in the policy repo rate since February 2025, banks have adjusted their repo-linked external benchmark-based lending rates downward by 100 bps and marginal cost of funds-based lending rate

by 10 bps.

Consequently, the weighted average lending rates on fresh and outstanding rupee loans of commercial banks declined 26 bps (domestic banks - 24 bps) and 18 bps (domestic banks - 16 bps), respectively, during February-May 2025.

On the deposit side, the weighted average domestic term deposit rates on fresh and outstanding deposits moderated by 51 bps and 2 bps, respectively, during the same period.

During the current easing cycle (February-May 2025), the decline in weighted average lending rates on both fresh and outstanding rupee loans was higher for PSBs as compared to private sector banks.

ward," he explained.

The company, he said, is targeting to produce one million metric tonnes of critical mineral in the next five years from both domestic sources and overseas.

The company had earlier bagged two critical and strategic mineral blocks located in Balod district of Chhattisgarh. The blocks - Semhardih Phosphorite and Limestone Block and Raipura Phosphorite and Limestone Block - were awarded to NLCIL through an auction route. The CMD exuded optimism that the exploration of both the blocks will begin at the earliest. NLC India's core businesses include mining of coal and lignite as well as power generation.

No GST on UPI payments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 27:** The government has reiterated that there is no plan to levy goods and services tax (GST) on unified payments interface (UPI)-based transactions exceeding Rs 2,000.

Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State of Finance, said in the Rajya Sabha that "there is no recommendation of levying GST on UPI transactions of over Rs 2,000 from the GST Council".

Answering a question about whether the government is considering a proposal to levy GST on UPI transactions of



over Rs 2,000, the minister told the House that GST rates and exemptions are decided on the basis of recommendations of the GST Council.

The reply came after traders in Karnataka received GST demand notices based on UPI transaction data.

Minister for Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs, Pralhad Joshi, also said

Mcap of six top firms drops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 27:** The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most valued firms diminished by ₹2.22 lakh crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, in-line with a bearish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge declined by 294.64 points or 0.36 per cent.

"Markets ended lower for the fourth straight week as caution prevailed amid mixed cues. However, a dip in stocks like Reliance capped the recovery," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) suffered a combined erosion of ₹2,22,193.17 crore from their market valuation.

HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India made gains in their valuation. The valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled ₹1,14,687.7 crore to ₹18,83,855.52 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

Infosys faced an erosion of ₹29,474.56 crore to ₹6,29,621.56 crore from its market capitalisation (mcap).

The valuation of LIC tanked ₹23,086.24 crore to ₹5,60,742.67 crore and that of TCS dropped by ₹20,080.39 crore to ₹11,34,035.26 crore.

The mcap of Bajaj Finance declined by ₹17,524.3 crore to ₹5,67,768.53 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever fell by ₹17,339.98 crore to ₹5,67,449.79 crore.

However, the market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped ₹37,161.53 crore to ₹15,38,078.95 crore.

ICICI Bank added ₹35,814.41 crore taking its valuation to ₹10,53,823.14 crore.

The mcap of Bharti Airtel climbed ₹20,841.2 crore to ₹11,04,839.93 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by ₹9,685.34 crore to ₹7,44,449.31 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued domestic firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.

last week that the GST notices issued to small-scale traders in Karnataka are the doing of the state government, and not from the Central government.

Responding to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's claim that the state has no role in issuing tax notices, Joshi called the statement "utterly ridiculous." "It is Karnataka's commercial tax officials who issued the GST dues notices to small traders. And yet, the state government is now misleading the public by pretending it has no involvement. This is nothing but an attempt to shirk responsibility," Joshi said.

chores, indicating that the rising demand for maids are no longer just a marker of affluence, but a functional necessity driven by time constraints, changing gender roles, and aspirations for a more modern lifestyle.

The report also found that job postings for women candidates grew by 45 per cent, driven in large part by the maid category.

In contrast, it said, postings for women cooks dropped by 59 per cent, while male cooks saw a 6 per cent rise, indicating a shift in household hiring preferences for food-related roles.

The top five titles with the highest number of postings were cook, housemaid, chef, Chinese cook, and Indian cook, the report said.



