



Vaani's strategy

Actor Vaani Kapoor reflects on her career choices, always valuing meaningful roles over mainstream visibility and fame


LEISURE | **P2**



Trump unleashes tariffs

Donald Trump's latest wave of tariffs on exports from dozens of trading partners sends global stock markets tumbling

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



UPI transactions

The number of transactions through the popular UPI touched a record high of 19.47 billion in July, according to NPCI data

BUSINESS | **P11**



India take lead

Yashasvi Jaiswal's unbeaten 51 takes India to 75/2 at stumps on day 2 of fifth Test against England, with a lead of 52 runs

SPORTS | **P12**

Vice presidential elections Sept 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The election for the post of Vice President will be held September 9 and is set to be a keen contest with the Congress-led Opposition likely to field a common candidate to take on the BJP-led NDA which has the numbers on its side.

The surprise resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar July 21 was the first time an incumbent stepped down mid-term and did not seek a higher office. Dhankhar had over two years of tenure left at the time of his resignation.

Earlier, VV Giri and R Venkataraman had quit their offices mid-term, but both were contesting the presidential election in 1969 and 1987 respectively.

The Election Commission Friday announced that the 17th vice presidential election will be held September 9. The notification for the election will be issued August 7 and the last date for filing nomination papers will be August 21.

The polling, if required, shall take place in room number F-101, Vasudha, on the first floor of Parliament building September 9 between 10 am and 5 pm.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE: A man jumps into the swollen river as people sit on a partially submerged structure amid an increase in the water level of Ganga and Yamuna in Prayagraj, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Odisha tops in sickle cell disease

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: Odisha tops the nation in sickle cell disease incidence, with a whopping 96,484 cases registered in the sickle cell portal, Union Health Minister JP Nadra informed the Parliament Friday.

More than six crore people have been screened for sickle cell anaemia in 17 states, of which 2.16 lakh have been identified as diseased, Nadra said answering a question in the Lok Sabha.

"As per data till July 28, a total of 6,04,50,683 people in the

17 identified tribal dominated states, including scheduled areas, have been screened, out of which 2,16,118 have been confirmed as diseased," Nadra said. Further, of the individuals diagnosed with the disease, more than 16.7 lakh are carriers of the condition.

"Odisha topped the states in sickle cell disease, with a whopping 96,484 cases registered with the sickle cell portal, followed by Madhya Pradesh (30,580 cases), Gujarat (28,150), Maharashtra (23,218), and Chhattisgarh (26,104)," Nadra said.

India-Russia ties time-tested: MEA

New Delhi: The Ministry of External Affairs said India and Russia have a "steady and time-tested partnership" and that New Delhi's bilateral ties with various countries should not be seen from the "prism" of a third country. The comments by MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal came against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's repeated criticism of India. "India and the United States share a comprehensive global strategic partnership anchored in shared interests, democratic values, and robust people-to-people ties," Jaiswal said.

'Pushkara' bags National Award

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Pushkara, a powerful cinematic adaptation of the Odia novel Nadabindu, has been named Best Odia Film at the 71st National Film Awards, announced Friday. The recognition marks a proud moment for Odia cinema and especially for the film's debutant director Subhran-shu Das, a cinematographer-turned-filmmaker.

Directed by Das and produced under the banner of Tarang Cine Productions, Pushkara is based on the acclaimed novel by eminent writer Sankar Tripathy. The film, which released in 2023 across cinemas in Odisha, stars Sabyasachi Mishra in the lead alongside Supriya Nayak, Ashrumochan Mohanty, and Choudhury Bikash Das. It also features a memorable performance by the late Pintu Nanda, whose contribution to the film is being fondly remembered.

Pushkara tells the haunt-



ing story of Neelakantha, a con artist who impersonates a holy man named Pushkara to exploit people's religious faith for personal gain. However, his journey takes a tragic turn when he falls in love with a widow, leading to unforeseen consequences.

A Special Mention was conferred on Odia documentary film 'The Sea And The Seven Villages'. The documentary directed by Himanshu Khatua captures the journey of displaced coastal communities of Satabhaya.

Trump moves nuclear subs closer to Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 1: In a warning to Russia, President Donald Trump said Friday he's ordering the repositioning of two US nuclear submarines "based on the highly provocative statements" of the country's former president Dmitry Medvedev.

Trump posted on his social media site that based on the "highly provocative statements" from Medvedev he had "ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that."

The president added, "Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences, I hope this will not be one of those instances."

It wasn't immediately clear what impact Trump's order would have on US nuclear subs, which are routinely on patrol in the world's hotspots, but it comes at a delicate moment in the Trump administration's relations with Moscow.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He has no PA, no secretary - just a dozen camerapersons to help him do his duty.

Vatican set to become carbon-neutral

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, August 1: Italy has agreed to a Vatican plan to turn a 430-hectare (1,000-acre) field north of Rome, once the source of controversy between the two, into a vast solar farm that the Holy See hopes will generate enough electricity to meet its needs and turn Vatican City into the world's first carbon-neutral state.

The agreement stipulates that the development of the Santa Maria Galeria site will preserve the agricultural use of the land and minimise the environmental impact on the territory, according to a Vatican statement.

Details weren't released, but the Vatican will be exempt from paying Italian taxes to import the solar panels, but won't benefit from the financial incen-



tives that Italians enjoy when they go solar. Italy, for its part, can use the field in its accounting for reaching the European Union's clean energy targets. Any excess electricity generated by the farm beyond the Vatican's needs would be given to the local community, officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the agreement was not public.

Vatican officials have esti-

mated it will cost under 100 million euros (\$114 million) to develop the solar farm, and that once it is approved by the Italian parliament, the contracts to do the work could be put up for bids.

Vatican foreign minister Archbishop Paul Gallagher signed the agreement with Italy's ambassador to the Holy See, Francesco Di Nitto. The Italian parliament must approve the arrangement since

it has financial implications for the territory, which holds extraterritorial status in Italy.

The Santa Maria Galeria site has long been the source of controversy because of electromagnetic waves emitted by Vatican Radio towers located there since the 1950s. The once-rural site, some 35 kilometres (20 miles) north of Rome, is dominated by two dozen short- and medium-wave radio antennae that transmit news from the Catholic Church in dozens of languages around the globe.

Over the years, as the area became more developed, residents began complaining of health problems, including instances of childhood leukaemia, which they blamed on the electromagnetic waves generated by the towers. The Vatican denied there was any causal link but cut back the transmissions.

₹2,738cr boost for water resources

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The state Cabinet led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday approved the extension of the Mukhyamantri Adibandha Tiyaari Yojana (MATY) 3.0 for another five years, from FY26 to FY30. With an estimated outlay of ₹2,738 crore, the government aims to construct 3,313 new check dams and improve 3,529 existing ones under MATY.

Another key decision was the amendment of the Odisha Food Processing Policy, 2016, intended to align it with the revised 2022 policy for better implementation. Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja explained that the previous approval structure for fiscal incentives to MSMEs included three committees: the SDLC under the Director of Industries for proposals up to ₹25 lakh, the Sub-SLEC chaired by the MSME Secretary for investments between ₹25 lakh and ₹1 crore, and the SLEC headed by the Chief Secretary for investments above ₹1 crore.



With the new amendment, the structure has been redefined to simplify the process. Now, the District Level Committee, chaired by the Collector, will handle proposals involving investment in plant and machinery up to ₹1 crore. The SDLC, under Director of Industries, will review proposals between ₹1 crore and ₹10 crore. For investments exceeding ₹10 crore and up to ₹50 crore, the State Level Committee chaired by the Secretary of the MSME Department will be responsible.

The Cabinet also approved amendments to OGST Act, 2017. The changes address several operational challenges faced by both taxpayers and

tax authorities. Key revisions include the removal of ambiguity between the terms "plant and machinery" and "plant or machinery" for input tax credit (ITC) claims, granting taxpayers more flexibility in return filings, and requiring recipients of credit notes to proportionately reverse ITC in case of reduced supply values. A track-and-trace mechanism will be introduced to curb tax evasion in vulnerable sectors like pan masala, brick kilns, and sand mining.

The Cabinet approved the amendment of the Odisha Law Officers Rules, 1971. The amendment, necessitated by an inadequate number of law officers in the Odisha State Prosecution Service cadre, is expected to ease the burden of pending cases.

The Cabinet also approved amendment to Orissa District and Civil Courts' Judicial Staff Services (Method of Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2008 to strengthen the legal acumen and operational capability of subordinate judicial staff.

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ARIES
Just grab any chance you get to demonstrate your expressive abilities, as it will fetch widespread appreciation. Something about your children may make you proud. However, Ganesha says, don't neglect the aged members of your family.

TAURUS
This day could be full of surprises, mostly unpleasant, fears Ganesha. Nothing is likely to turn out as planned and expected. There will be sharp and sudden twist and turns, unexpected shocks and setbacks all day long. You will, however, with the grace and blessings of the Almighty, manage to stay steady and unruffled, and move ahead. By evening, this phase will pass.

GEMINI
You will be able to express your thoughts and opinions to the people you come in contact with today. They will also reciprocate and echo your feelings and emotions. This will give you validation and satisfaction. The day should be filled with fun and entertainment overall, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Your career will reach a decisive moment. You can expect a transfer, promotion or pay hike. Alongside your responsibilities will also increase. A chance of new job is also indicated. You can reject a tempting job offer.

LEO
Your expenses may shoot through the roof if you do not pay careful attention to your finances. You will want to splurge on expensive perfumes and clothing. You will be able to attract those of the opposite sex. You must guard against coming off as a show-off. Be humble and polite to everyone, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
A mixture of the desirable and undesirable is on the cards today. Sentimental people will tend to think of you as a little immature. However, your sense of humour will be as robust as ever and you will never fall short of jokes.

LIBRA
The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesha feels that today, you bring to the scales the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain.

SCORPIO
Despite a secured job and a harmonious home environment, you are still looking for something else. Long-term, financial security keeps bothering you. And your worries are solved to some extent as unexpected monetary gains are on cards today, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Your stars are mighty today and plan a pleasant day for you, says Ganesha. You are a thorough professional and garner compliments for this attitude. You also have a knack to sail through all the troubles at work.

CAPRICORN
You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesha. Your honesty and sincerity will give depth to your existing relationships.

AQUARIUS
If you're stuck indoors today, make the most of it. There's always carrom, checkers, chess and partying! Shake yourself a bit, and you'll come up with creative ways to spend a leisurely day. You'll find that either way, life is wonderful, says Ganesha.

PISCES
You are not by nature ill-tempered or jealous. However, you will need to be on guard against being both, today. Someone may try to sully your image or slander your name today. However, the best way to deal with provocation is not to loose your temper and to continue as usual, for things will take care of themselves soon enough, says Ganesha.



TEJANO LEGEND FLACO JIMENEZ PASSES AWAY

Tejano music legend Flaco Jimenez, renowned accordionist, passed away at 86, leaving behind a rich musical legacy. Born Leonardo Jimenez in San Antonio, he rose to global fame, collaborating with icons like the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan.

STRONG TO PLAY ZUCKERBERG IN SOCIAL NETWORK PART II

Succession star Jeremy Strong is in negotiations to essay the role of META Ceo and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg in *The Social Network Part II*. No formal offer has been presented to the actor, but he is the top choice of the makers for the role, as reported by entertainment news outlet *Deadline*.



12TH Fail wins big at 71st Nat'l Film Awards

Rani Mukerji, Shah Rukh Khan and Vikrant Massey bag top honours, their maiden Nat'l Film Awards, in acting category

New Delhi: Hindi cinema dominated the 71st National Film Awards Friday with top star Shah Rukh Khan winning his career's first best actor award for *Jawan* alongside Vikrant Massey for *12th Fail*, which was named the best feature film.

The awards, announced for the year 2023 by jury head and filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker, recognised Rani Mukerji in the best actress category for *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*. It is also her career's first National Film Award.

Jawan, which minted over Rs 1,100 crore at the worldwide box office, was a high-octane thriller from South filmmaker Atlee and featured SRK in the dual role of Army officer Vikram Rathore and his jailor son Azad.

The jury praised Massey's performance as one that portrayed the transformative journey of a village boy with "raw honesty and emotional depth".

Filmmaker Karan Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* was named the best popular film providing wholesome entertainment while Meghna Gulzar-directorial *Sam Bahadur* was recognised as the best film promoting national, social and environmental values.

Vaibhavi Merchant won



Best Actress in Leading Role: Rani Mukerji

Best Actor in Leading Role: Vikrant Massey

Best Actor in Leading Role: Shah Rukh Khan

the best choreography award for *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* song Dhindhora Baaje. Shilpa Rao was named best female playback singer for *Jawan* track *Chaleya*.

A biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, *Sam Bahadur* was also named in categories for make-up

and costume.

Filmmaker Sudipto Sen won the best director award for his film *The Kerala Story*, which also bagged the honour for best cinematography. The film had courted controversy for its portrayal of women in Kerala being forcefully converted and recruited by terror

group Islamic State.

Sanya Malhotra-starrer *Kathal: A Jackfruit Mystery* was named the best Hindi film.

While Hindi cinema ruled in the main categories, regional movies were recognised in categories such as best supporting actor as well as actress and in technical segments.

MAJOR AWARDS

Best Film: 12th Fail

Best Actor in Leading Role: Shah Rukh Khan (*Jawan*),

Vikrant Massey (*12th Fail*)

Best Actress in Leading Role: Rani Mukerji (*Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*),

Best Direction: Sudipto Sen (*The Kerala Story*)

Best Music Direction: GV Prakash Kumar (*Vaathi*),

Best Playback Singer: Shilpa Rao (*Chaliya - Jawan*),

Rohit (*Premisthunna - Baby*)

Best Odia Film: Pushkara

Best Hindi Film: *Kathal*

Vijayaraghavan for Malayalam film *Pookalam*, Muthupettai Somu Bhaskar for Tamil film *Parking* shared the best supporting actor trophy.

The best supporting actress honour went to Urvashi for Malayalam movie *Ullozhokku* and Janki Bodiwala for Gujarati title *Vash*. Both movies won best films in their respective language segments.

PTI

Rashmika roots for DIY beauty hacks

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna is a huge fan of home remedies and credits her mother stirring up concoctions in the kitchen for her glow. She says she loves it when "simplicity works".

Asked her if she has ever tried any DIY beauty hacks that actually worked, Rashmika, who is the founder of Dear Diary told this news agency: "So many! I've grown up with home remedies; my mum was always mixing up something in the kitchen! I love it when simplicity works."

The actress then spoke about her favourite comfort food when she needs a pick-me-up. Pat came the reply from Rashmika, who revealed: "Rasam rice, a good poke bowl... or honestly, just dessert! Sometimes all I need is something sweet to lift my mood." For Rashmika, a bowl of rasam rice is very comforting. "It really depends on the day, but rasam rice will always feel like a warm hug," said the actress.

On the work front, Rashmika was last seen in *Kuberaa*, an action crime drama film directed by Sekhar Kammula. It stars Nagarjuna Akkineni, Dhanush, Jim Sarbh and Dalip Tahil. The 29-year-old actress has *The Girlfriend* lined up for release. The upcoming Telugu movie is directed by Rahul Ravindran.

IAN S



Vaani's breakaway strategy

Mumbai: In an industry where visibility often takes precedence, Vaani Kapoor chooses a different path—one defined by thoughtful decisions and creative integrity. With a modest filmography spanning over a decade, including titles like *Shuddh Desi Romance*, *Befikre*, *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, and now *Mandala Murders*, Vaani has consistently prioritised substance over spotlight. Her OTT debut in *Mandala Murders* is perhaps her boldest step yet, diving into a character that is complex, grounded, and emotionally layered.

Drawn by director Gopi Puthran's vision, Vaani says she trusted him instinctively. "I've always connected with his storytelling," she shares. What truly fascinated her was the writing and the gravitas of her role, Rhea. The physical demands of the series, especially the action sequences shot in 44-degree heat, tested her limits. "I didn't expect it to be so exhausting, but it was rewarding," she admits.

Despite the challenges, Vaani remains committed to meaningful roles. "I've never chased visibility for its own sake. I've auditioned, struggled, supported my family, and chosen not to take up projects just for money," she says.

Instead, she relies on brand work and a strong support system to stay afloat, while never compromising on her creative choices. IAN S



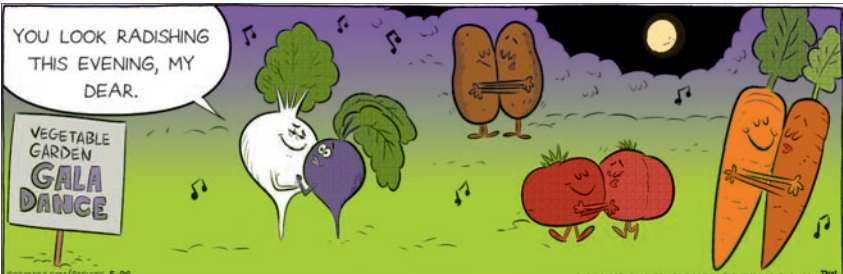
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

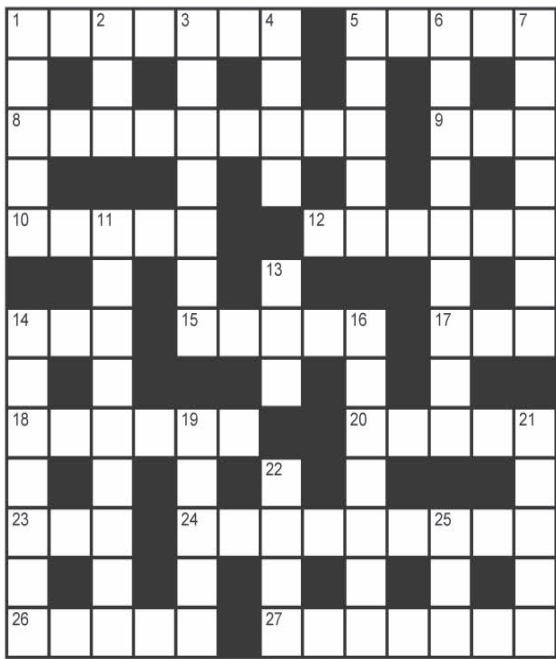


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- Museum display
- Cabin cruiser
- Fiddle stick
- It's a no-no
- Bounce back
- Dove's sound
- Coffee order
- Clunker
- Jot down
- Less typical

Down

- Ant, in dialect
- It may be tipped
- Farmer's mouse catcher (4,3)
- Jog

- Clean up
- Decorate with needlework
- Wasted time
- Library items
- Chowed down
- Theatre item
- Noise reducer
- Ward off
- Tricks
- Bailiwick
- Behold

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

SOLUTIONS

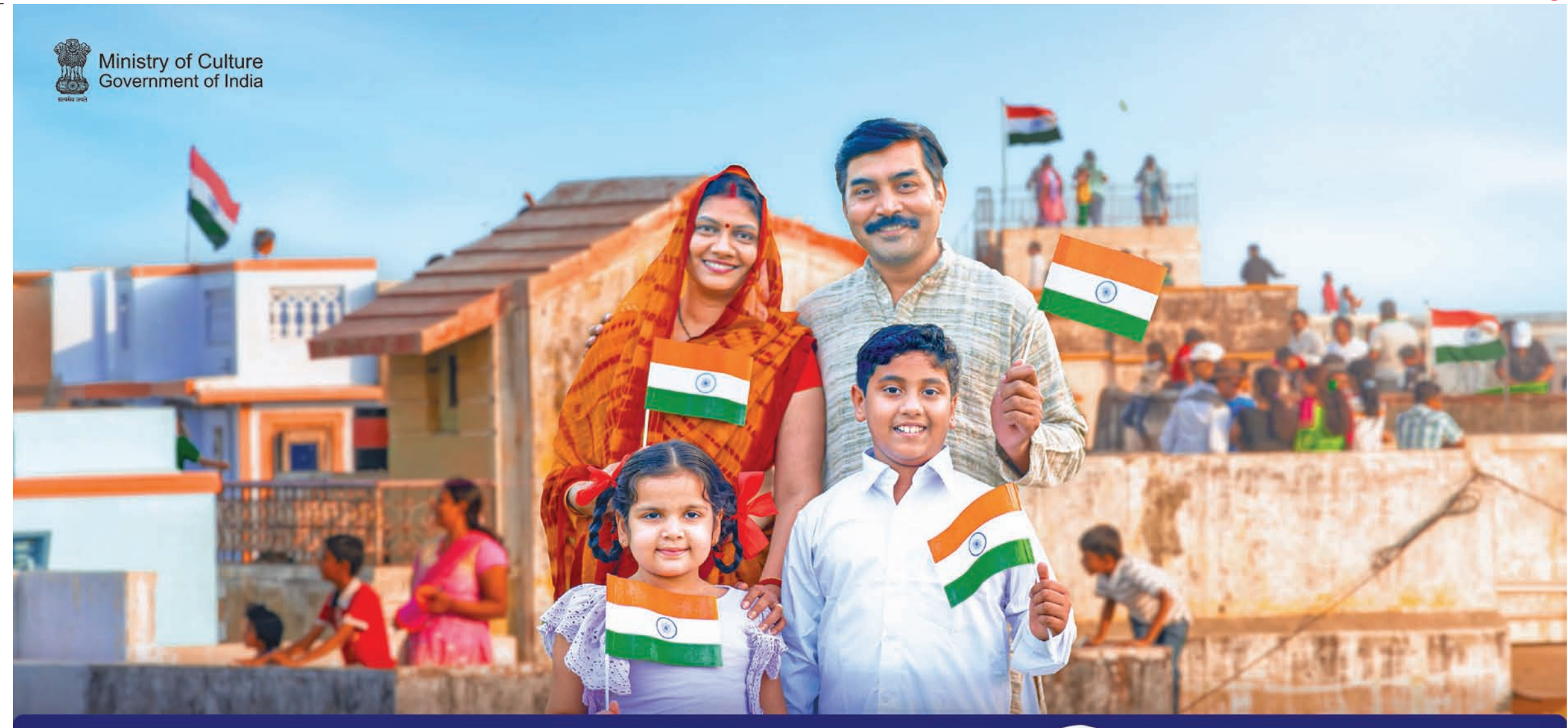
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| A | | | | P | A | N | I | | | | | |
| D | O | C | | U | P | P | E | D | | C | O | B |
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CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



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Prime Minister



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Farmers' registration for Kharif paddy procurement accelerates

BHUBANESWAR: The farmer registration process for procuring Kharif season paddy has started from July 19 and will continue till August 20. The registration is in full swing at the nearest Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), Large Area Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPcS), WSHGs and Pani Panchayats. Around 3,95,949 farmers have registered this year, compared to last year's 3,87,104 farmers registration. All registered farmers are required to link their bank accounts with Aadhaar and to undergo e-KYC as a mandatory process.

CLASSIFIED
LOST

I, Manmeet Singh Chhabda, S/o- Surjeet Singh Chhabda, R/o- Khariar Road, Ward No.- 10, P.S.- Jonk, Dist- Nuapada have lost the original sale deed vide No.- 1777/2005 somewhere on date 04.11.2024. Till date I have not found the same and reported at Jonk Police Station G.D. No.- 009, date 31.07.2025.

I Mr. Lokanath Nayak declare that I have lost the Original Sale Deed No-1134, date 21.10.2024 of landed property of Mouza - Chappirikoilama, Tahasil - Ranapur, Thana - Ranapur, District - Nayagarh, bearing Khata No.31, Plot No.-177, Kisam - Sarad Jala-3, A01.55 Decimal on Dated : 29.07.2025, at about 12.30 P.M., somewhere at Lodhachua locality which I am unable to trace out. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank is going to mortgage the said property as per the banks process. If anyone is having any claim/objection over the aforesaid property, may please contact Mr. Pravakar Pattanayak (Advocate Name), Mobile No. - 9778070590 (Of Advocate) or in this address - Room No. - 309, 3rd Floor, Nirmal Plaza, Near Navin Niwas, Forest Park, Bhubaneswar - 751009 (Registered address of advocate) within 15 days of this publication.

I Sri Bichitra Kumar Nayak (46), S/o - Late Bhramarabara Nayak of Village - Ambasouri, PO/PS - Balichandrapur, Dist. - Jajpur State that on Dtd - 23.07.2025. In the evening while I was going for xerox, somewhere in Balichandrapur Market I lost RSD No. - 1281 on Dtd 05.09.2008, RSD No. - 250 on Dtd 25.02.2008, RSD No. - 10791201853 on Dtd 28.09.2012 from my Authority. The same is going to mortgage in SBI, ADB Bidyadharapur Branch Ly me for availing lone. Mob No. - 9437966425

ED searches at ‘fake’ bank guarantee firm

The money laundering case is against a Bhubaneswar-based company named Biswal Tradelink and its directors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday conducted searches against an Odisha-based company that allegedly ran a “fake” bank guarantee issuance racket for business groups, including providing an alleged ₹68 crore such assurance for a Reliance Group company, official sources said.

The money laundering case is against a Bhubaneswar-based company named Biswal Tradelink and its directors.

The ED case, filed under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), stems from a November 2024 FIR of the Delhi Police Economic Offences Wing (EOW). The ED, the sources said, conducted searches at three premises of the company Friday at Bhubaneswar and one “associate” entity in Kolkata.

Agency sources alleged that the company was engaged in the activity of issuance of “fake” bank guarantees against a commission of 8 per cent.

They said a bank guarantee of ₹68.2 crore submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of



India Limited (SECI) on behalf of Reliance NU BESS Limited, a subsidiary of Reliance Power, was found to be “fake”.

The company was formerly known as Maharashtra Energy Generation Limited.

The ED seized some documents related to this transaction during the last week searches against the Anil Ambani led Reliance Group companies in Mumbai, they said.

A Reliance Group spokesperson said Reliance Power has been a “victim of fraud, forgery and cheating conspiracy” in this case and it has made due disclosures in this context

to the stock exchanges November 7, 2024.

The spokesperson said a criminal complaint was lodged by them against the third party (accused company) with the Delhi Police EOW in October, 2024 and the “due process” of law will follow.

The sources said similar suspicious financial transactions with multiple companies have been traced and this was being investigated.

It was found that the Odisha-based firm was using an email domain--s-bi.co.in-- instead of the original sbi.co.in to create a “façade” of genuine-

ness that the communication is being sent by the State Bank of India (SBI), the country’s largest lender.

The fake domain was used to send “forged” communication to SECI, impersonating the SBI, the sources said.

It is understood that the ED has written to the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) seeking domain registration details of the fake email domain.

The ED’s preliminary investigation, as per the sources, has indicated that the Odisha company has also facilitated “fake” bills for commission and uses multiple “undisclosed” bank accounts. Suspicious transactions worth crores of rupees have been done through these bank accounts, they said.

The Odisha company is a “mere paper entity” as its registered office is a residential property belonging to a relative and no company records were found at the address during the searches, the sources said.

The agency sources claimed that key individuals of the company were using the Telegram app in a ‘disappearing messages’ enabled mode in order to “conceal” their communications.

Shakti Apas in all dists soon

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 1: With a view to empowering girl students, the Higher Education (HE) department has directed all District Collectors to identify and nominate “Shakti Apas” — a group of five distinguished female professionals in each district — under the state government’s flagship initiative ‘Shaktishree’.

In a letter, Higher Education Director Kaliprasanna Mahapatra Friday said the initiative is part of a broader government effort to provide mentorship, safety, and emotional support to female students in higher educational institutions (HEIs).

“Each Shakti Apa will serve as a mentor and inspiration for young girls in their respective districts. Their presence and guidance will strengthen confidence among students, especially in matters of safety, legal awareness, and career development,” Mahapatra said.

The department has suggested that Shakti Apas should ideally be chosen from those working on women safety, and child protection, former government employees (preferably from the police or armed forces), legal and cyber security experts, public health professionals and



psychological counsellors and educational leaders.

Collectors have been given the flexibility to identify suitable candidates based on their local context and needs.

Once selected, each Shakti Apa will visit designated institutions in their district (once a quarter) to interact with students. Their role includes providing guidance and mentorship, promoting awareness about legal rights, digital safety, mental health and career planning. They would act as role models for young women navigating educational and social challenges.

The travel and daily allowance (TA/DA) for Shakti Apas during their visits will be covered by the respective institutions they visit. The District Collectors have also been asked to finalise the list of five Shakti Apas from their districts and submit their profiles along with contact details to the HE department by August 20.

Aakash launches ANTHE 2025, Invictus Ace



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) launched Aakash National Talent Hunt Exam (ANTHE) 2025, offering scholarships up to ₹250 crore and cash awards worth ₹2.5 crore for Class V to XII students, marking the 16 years of its flagship scholarship exam.

The examination will be held online from October 4 to 12 and through offline mode from October 5 and 12 across 415 centres in 26 states and UTs.

ANTHE offers scholarships for several of their flagship programmes including Classroom, Aakash Digital, and Invictus courses, paving the way for aspiring doctors and engineers. In 2025, over 1 million students

have appeared the examination, out of which 22 out of top 100 in NEET and 10 out of top 100 in JEE Advanced 2025 have started their journey through ANTHE scholarship.

Alongside, AESL also announced the Invictus Ace test, scheduled August 24, 31 and September 7, for advanced JEE aspirants from Class 8 to 12. The test will be conducted both online and offline modes with an application fee of ₹300.

Speaking at the event, East regional director Ajay Bahadur Singh said, “ANTHE and Invictus Ace are part of our mission to democratise quality education. Through these initiatives, we aim to discover and nurture India’s next generation of medical and engineering talent.”

In a first, Odisha to host Isha Gramotsavam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The 17th edition of Isha Gramotsavam, India’s largest rural sports festival, will be held across six states starting August 10 in Mysore.

This year’s edition will span over 35,000 villages across Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telengana, Puducherry and new entrants Odisha. Envisioned by spiritual leader Sadhguru, Isha Gramotsavam will witness participation of over 6000 teams and more than 50,000 athletes, including 5,000 women.

The tournament will feature men’s volleyball and throwball for women, with teams progressing from cluster-level matches to divisional rounds and culminating in a grand final September 21 at the Adiyogi, Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore.

Swami Pulaka, an Isha Brahmachari and co-ordinator of Isha Gramotsavam, said the festival was aimed at reviving the rural sporting spirit of India and no professional player will be allowed to participate in it.

MITS STAR Day celebrated with fervour



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Rayagada, August 1: The Majhighariyani Institute of Technology and Science (MITS), Rayagada, hosted the prestigious MITS STAR (Scholars of Tomorrow Award and Recognition) Day in commemoration of the diamond jubilee celebration of MITS Group of Institutions (MITSGI) founder and chairman Balakrishna Panda.

The occasion was dedicated to recognising academic excellence and fostering a spirit of aspiration among the youth in which top-performing students from Class X to XII across Rayagada district, along with top-

pers from ITI, Diploma, UG, and PG programmes of MITSGI were felicitated.

In his inspiring address, Panda reflected on his remarkable journey in the field of education, sharing the vision and perseverance that led to the creation of the MITS educational ecosystem. He encouraged the young awardees to continue striving for excellence and contribute meaningfully to society.

The event was graced by key dignitaries of the MITS Group, including chief executive Sriram Panda, vice chairman Biswajeet Panda, director CV Gopinath, dean Santanu Mohanty and principal Ramanuja Nayak.

Over 200 to participate in World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: More than 200 athletes from 19 countries are expected to participate in 20 events of the prestigious World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze competition which will be hosted by Odisha, Sports and Youth Services Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said Friday.

He said the event will be held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar August 10.

“Hosting the World Athlet-

ics Continental Tour Bronze in Odisha for the first time is a matter of immense pride. We are fully prepared to organise it successfully,” Suraj said after reviewing the preparedness for the mega event.

In the review meeting, discussions were focused on ensuring a seamless event experience, from world-class sporting infrastructure to hospitality and security arrangements.

The Sports Minister said that all aspects including athlete safety, crowd management and

deployment of police personnel are being carefully planned.

He assured that adequate administrative measures are being put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the event.

“I am optimistic that athletes from Odisha will once again make the state proud with commendable performances in this upcoming event,” he added.

Sports and Youth Services department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav, Director Yeddula Vijay, Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Panda, Additional Commissioner of Police Narasingha Bhol, Hockey Promotion Council of Odisha CEO Deepankar Mahapatra and Additional Secretary Bijay Kumar Swain were present during the review.

ECoR launches Swachhata Abhiyan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has launched a fortnight-long ‘Swachhata Abhiyan’ from August 1 to 15, with a focus on ensuring cleanliness across railway stations, trains, offices, workshops, maintenance depots, hospitals, and residential areas under its jurisdiction.

The massive cleanliness drive is being carried out to create awareness and inspire collective action towards maintaining a clean and green India.

On the inaugural day, ECOR general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal administered the ‘Swachhata’ pledge to all staff and officers. The pledge emphasised the importance of personal responsibility in maintaining cleanliness, with employees committing to keep their premises clean and motivate the general public to do the same.

As part of Swachhata Abhiyan, ECOR has planned a series of large-scale cleanliness activities, focusing on engaging Railway employees, passengers, and stakeholders in sustained cleanliness efforts.

| MARKET WATCH | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| CURRENCY | | BOURSES | | COMMODITIES | |
| INDEX | VARIATION | INDEX | VARIATION | INDEX | VARIATION |
| DOLLAR | 87.59 ▼ 0.16 | SENSEX | 80599.99 ▼ 585.67 | GOLD | ₹99,121 ▲ ₹1034 |
| EURO | 100.22 ▼ 0.32 | NIFTY | 24565.35 ▼ 203.00 | SILVER | ₹110,256 ▲ ₹284 |


WEATHER

| | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|--|
| | BBSR | CTC | FORECAST |
| Max Temp | 35.2° | 35.2° | Partly cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thunderstorm |
| Min Temp | 25.6° | 24.4° | |
| Humidity | 77% | 81% | |
| Rainfall | TRACE | Nll | |

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

That which we call the Hindu religion is really the Eternal religion because it embraces all others.



SRI AUROBINDO

The CSS Crisis

The Central Secretariat Service (CSS) may not be the face of government, but it’s certainly its nervous system. And right now, it’s showing signs of paralysis.

For years, the CSS Forum has been knocking on doors asking for what basic administrative hygiene should ideally be: timely cadre reviews, fair promotions, and parity with other central services. However, the 4th cadre review, due back in 2018, remains stuck in bureaucratic molasses, despite a committee being formed nearly two years ago.

What we have is a seven-year delay in what should’ve been a routine five-yearly exercise. Promotions are in deep freeze. Under Secretaries eligible after five years are stuck for over twelve. ASOs of the 2014 batch haven’t seen a single promotion. Sounds like systemic apathy.

And this isn’t just about morale. Ministries and departments are running with a massive shortfall—RTI replies suggest a demand for 2,500 more CSS officers across just 24 departments. This has real-world consequences on governance, efficiency, and public service delivery. What adds salt to the wound is that other services get their cadre reviews wrapped up in under a year. Is CSS being singled out for indifference, these babus are questioning?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of an efficient, responsive government needs fuel. Digital India cannot be built with analogue HR processes. The DoPT, ironically responsible for personnel policy, has to ensure that CSS officers are regarded with the same respect as other members of the civil service. After all, CSS isn’t asking for privilege, just parity. It is time to listen and act before the machinery grinds to a halt.

Vice President out, staff out faster

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar’s sudden resignation may have been draped in health concerns, but it’s the quiet aftershocks that raise the real eyebrows.

Even before the press had digested his exit, members of his secretariat staff, including officers on deputation, were reportedly being sent scurrying back to their parent cadres. No transition time, no soft landings. For a constitutional office of this stature, such haste isn’t just unseemly, it’s telling.

When a high constitutional functionary steps down mid-term, the system usually pauses, allows dignity to prevail, and ensures an orderly handover. But not this time. The signal was stark: not only was the man out, so were his people. And fast.

This kind of administrative muscle-flexing suggests that Dhankhar’s exit wasn’t as voluntary as the official line suggests. Add to that the deafening silence from the ruling establishment, and you’ve got all the elements of a classic quiet purge. Babudom, as always, speaks volumes through its paperwork, and the papers this time seem to have been moved in vengeance mode.

Dhankhar’s recent stances, which were occasionally at odds with the government’s line, may not have gone down well with the powers that be. But it’s the treatment of his staff that betrays just how personal this got. We’ve seen this play before. Only now, the eraser seems to work faster.

When babus get candid on podcasts

Move over celebrity exposés—now even babus are turning podcasters. A wave of state-run or insider-led podcasts features police officers and babus sharing stories that were once confined to office corridors.

Uttar Pradesh Police’s “Beyond the Badge” is a glossy narrative of Rs 100-crore insurance fraud cases and UPSC toppers, delivered by cops themselves. It’s storytelling in uniform, complete with technical forensic details and aspirational journeys. Haryana’s HSNCB chief recently launched a series unpacking drug enforcement operations, from pharmacy abuse to interstate smuggling chains.

Public interest? Check. Transparency? Partially. But with babus as narrators, it’s as much about recounting crime as it is about image crafting. The message: here’s the modern, woke babudom speaking in person, dropping jargon and drama in equal measure.

This trend taps into India’s podcast culture explosion, where brands and public figures are discovering podcasts as a celebrity-greenlighting machine. The entry of babus into this arena is especially curious. While it humanises mumbo-jumbo bureaucratic processes, it also shows them chasing ‘coolness’ and narrative control.

But not everyone’s buying it. Redditors and aspirants have long questioned whether civil servants, expected to be faceless public functionaries, should become social media influencers in khaki. When babus begin broadcasting, polishing their persona, or subtly flexing their status, the reaction has ranged from eyerolls to outright skepticism. If babus are looking for credibility, the real test isn’t in telling tales. It is in doing the real work transparently.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

- It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence.

MAHATMA GANDHI
- For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

NELSON MANDELA
- The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1830:

Charles X of France abdicated the throne, unable to resist the July Revolution.
- 1876:

Wild Bill Hickok—a frontiersman, marksman, gambler, and legend of the American West—was murdered in the city of Deadwood, in what is now South Dakota.
- 1990:

Iraq invaded Kuwait, and Saddam Hussein's subsequent refusal to withdraw his troops sparked the Persian Gulf War, in which an international force led by the United States quickly defeated Iraq.
- 1992:

At the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, American athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey, considered by many to be the greatest female athlete ever, won the heptathlon, becoming the first person to win the event in consecutive Games.

FOCUS TRADE

TRUMP’S TARIFF FALLOUT

The first six months of Donald Trump’s second presidency have been marked by a flurry of executive orders and legislative activity unparalleled in US history, with the possible exception of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first 100 days in office.

The key difference is that Roosevelt’s New Deal was a radical— and ultimately successful — effort to pull the United States out of the Great Depression. By contrast, Trump’s policy drive lacks such a clear, immediate catalyst, as the US economy was performing well before he came to office.

Rather than responding to a crisis, Trump’s policies seek to reorient the American economy by revitalizing its once-dominant manufacturing sector. Whether they will succeed is far from certain.

Weaponization of international trade is at the top of Trump’s economic agenda. Since April, he has imposed sweeping “reciprocal” tariffs on almost every country in the world, then adjusted them repeatedly— lifting some, lowering others, and reinstating or increasing many. As a result, the average effective US tariff rate has surged from 2% in 2024 to more than 16%, its highest level since the 1930s.

While many commentators have warned that sharply higher tariffs could fuel domestic inflation, the real risk lies elsewhere. By increasing the cost of imported inputs from countries like Mexico, Canada, and India, Trump’s tariffs raise US production costs and undermine America’s ability to compete globally.

Reduced competitiveness will likely lead to a decline in



Kaushik Basu

THE UNPREDICTABLE SHIFTS IN US POLICY UNDER TRUMP HAVE MADE FINANCIAL MARKETS INCREASINGLY JITTERY



If Trump continues for the next three and a half years as he has during his first six months, the US could find itself facing the kind of conditions that Roosevelt had to address, only this time the economic decline could be irreversible

US exports, squeezing working-class incomes. Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which combines tax cuts for the rich with cuts to health-care and food-assistance programs, will compound the damage by disproportionately harming low- and middle-income Americans while adding trillions to the federal deficit.

Unless these policies are reversed soon — an unlikely scenario — their impact on the US economy could be devastating. While the immediate effect on prices may be limited, high tariffs will ultimately slow GDP growth and erode wages, particularly for working-class Americans. This decline is likely to be a secular trend, potentially leading to a sharp deterioration in economic performance.

Mainstream economists often overlook a critical fact: economic performance is influenced by much more than economic-policy decisions. As Francis Fukuyama has argued, it hinges on the strength of domestic institutions and the degree of trust

within and between countries. It also depends on what Joseph S. Nye, Jr. called “soft power” — the ability to persuade rather than coerce.

Unfortunately, Trump has taken a sledge hammer to American institutions. For example, hundreds of international students at leading US universities have had their visas abruptly revoked by the Trump administration, further weakening trust in America’s long-term commitments and adding to the damage already caused by Trump’s relentless attacks on longtime US allies and contempt for the rule of law.

The greatest risk is a loss of confidence in the dollar, which, as the world’s leading reserve currency, has long been the bedrock of US economic dominance. I vividly recall August 5, 2011, when Standard & Poor’s downgraded America’s credit rating from AAA to AA+. At the time, I was serving as an adviser to the Indian government and witnessed the widespread uncertainty about the

potential impact on global financial markets.

Ironically, this downgrade triggered a flow of money into the US, as investors seeking a safe haven rushed to buy dollar assets. The prevailing belief was that the US was a country that would never default on its external debt.

That trust, built over decades, has been central to the dollar’s dominance. It has also allowed the US to accumulate an external debt of \$28 trillion — more than any other country. While this gives the US a significant strategic advantage, it also implies a major vulnerability: if confidence in the dollar were to erode, the rug would be pulled out from under the American economy.

The unpredictable shifts in US policy under Trump have made financial markets increasingly jittery. If current trends persist, the consequences could be swift and severe, leading to a historic loss of confidence in the dollar and a flight from US assets.

The only hope is that Americans will strongly oppose Trump’s harmful policies, forcing him to reverse course. Despite short-term challenges, the US economy remains resilient enough to recover and stabilize. But if Trump continues for the next three and a half years as he has during his first six months, the US could find itself facing the kind of conditions that Roosevelt had to address, only this time the economic decline could be irreversible.

The writer is a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India.

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SPECTRUM EURASIAN COOPERATION

RIC must stand up for global good



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

LET RUSSIA, INDIA, AND CHINA (RIC) CELEBRATE THE IDEALISMS OF INTERNATIONALISM TO PROTECT PEOPLE AND PLANET AND PROMOTE PEACE

Warmongering imperialist hegemony and neocolonial onslaughts against people and the planet are intensifying across the globe, with particularly severe impacts on lives, livelihoods and environment in countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. As the global power balance continues to shift with imperialist dominance over people and their resources, there is an urgent need for a countervailing force to end unilateralism and uphold peace and ensure social, political, and economic justice, as well as to democratise global politics and the economy. In this context, the revival of trilateral Eurasian cooperation between Russia, India, and China (RIC) represents a significant strategic development. The survival, effectiveness, and broader global influence of this alliance—beyond regional concerns and security architectures—will depend on the creation of a common ideological foundation that aspires not only to serve the region but also to become a force for global good.

The idea of the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral was first proposed by Ukrainian born Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in 1998 as a “counterbalance” to Western hegemony. This concept was

institutionalised in 2002 with the formal establishment of RIC. Despite various achievements over the past two decades—particularly in the realm of track-two diplomacy—RIC has not made significant progress in developing a coherent ideological framework to guide its mission, vision, and practical actions.

In 2016, during the 14th RIC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Moscow, the group, for the first time, articulated a shared objective in terms of “the development of an open, inclusive, indivisible, and transparent security and co-operation architecture in the region, grounded in universally recognised principles of international law”. However, realising this cooperative and security-oriented ideal requires resolving longstanding regional and global differences among Russia, India, and China.

The first priority for RIC needs to resolve all territorial disputes and other conflicts among its member countries through diplomacy and dialogue. The group must jointly declare that no war will occur between RIC nations and that none will act against the national interests of the others. This goal can be achieved by promoting an environment of cooperation and open communication to eliminate trust deficits.

RIC needs to adopt the politics of decolonisation and position itself as an anti-imperialist platform dedicated to promoting regional and global peace and shared prosperity. Such a stance would enable it to broaden international cooperation, especially with countries and peoples across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. RIC must actively engage in multilateral forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS to help democratise global politics and the world economy, countering capitalist hegemony and imperialist unilateralism.

RIC must revive the ethos, spirit, and framework of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in order to democratise, decolonise, and decarbonise global politics and the world economy. Above all, RIC must uphold the interests of people, peace, and the planet beyond narrow territorial considerations, and it should be committed to advancing the well-being of the global working class.

RIC must work toward establishing a common market and trade mechanisms that unite free producers and free consumers without artificial barriers, aiming to create a truly free and fair market—one that transcends the capitalist logic of profit over people.

RIC countries must establish

strategic security cooperation and sustained dialogue to uphold regional and global peace, while collectively challenging the warmongering and hegemonic agendas of American and European corporate-military interests. A potential RIC military alliance should not be viewed solely as a self-defence mechanism, but as a principled coalition committed to resisting all forms of imperialist intervention and aggression.

RIC must promote conditions that nurture indigenous, diverse, democratic and alternative knowledge traditions that empower people through the politics of secular multiculturalism and promote a deepening of distributive democracy which ensures social and economic justice for people across the globe. The promotion of peace, an unconditional commitment to shared prosperity, and the uncompromising practice of human rights, inclusive citizenship and distributive democracy can serve as the five foundational pillars of RIC. These principles can help establish lasting regional stability and make a meaningful contribution to global peace. Let RIC celebrate the idealisms of internationalism to protect people and planet and promote peace.

The writer teaches at London Metropolitan University.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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



Selective morality

Sir, Apropos “6 Indian companies sanctioned,” Orissa POST, Aug 1. The United States has once again exposed its blatant hypocrisy by imposing sanctions on over 20 global entities—including six in India—for purchasing petrochemical products from Iran, under the pretext that Iran uses such revenues to destabilize the Middle East. Yet, in a staggering display of double standards, Washington has simultaneously pursued an oil development deal with Pakistan—a nation its own President Donald Trump branded a “terror hub” and denounced for “lies and deceit.” This contradiction lays bare the West’s, especially, US’s selective morality and geostrategic opportunism. While it preaches high-minded principles to the world, the US shamelessly partners with regimes it once vilified, as long as it serves its economic or strategic interests. The move to punish India while rewarding Pakistan reeks of hypocrisy and undercuts America’s credibility as a global standard-bearer of “values.” By targeting countries engaging with Iran while cozying up to Pakistan, the US reveals it is less concerned with terrorism or peace and more obsessed with seeking economic gains and maintaining hegemony. The mask of principled leadership has slipped—exposing nothing more than ruthless, self-serving duplicity.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Rahul’s gesture

Sir, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi must be lauded for his move to adopt 22 children from the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, who lost their parents or family breadwinners in the cross-border shelling during Operation Sindoor. Rahul Gandhi’s move holds tangible benefits for the children and families affected by the conflict. With their homes destroyed, schools damaged, and families torn apart, these children now have a renewed path to education and stability. The broader impact of the initiative could also help in raising awareness about the human cost of cross-border violence. In a region plagued by years of conflict, Rahul Gandhi’s decision to adopt and educate 22 orphaned children sends a powerful message of empathy and action and stands as a rare moment of compassion in times of turmoil. Regardless of political allegiance, the truth remains that when leaders step into the role of healers, societies move closer to peace.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Himachal launches face authentication in public distribution system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, August 1: Himachal Pradesh Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena Friday launched the face authentication in public distribution system, emphasising the importance of achieving hundred per cent Aadhaar saturation across the state.

He was chairing a review meeting with all departmental heads of the state government and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) here, an official statement said.

During the meeting, officials informed that that Himachal Pradesh is leading the country in terms of Aadhaar generation of the children aged below five. The national average is 39 per cent whereas the state has achieved 56 per cent coverage.

According to the statement, Deputy Director General (UID-AI) Dhiraj Sarin was also present in the meeting.

Himachal Pradesh has made significant progress over the last three months and the pendency of mandatory biometric update has decreased from 5.5 lakh to 4.75 lakh, the statement added.

In the meeting it was also notified that the department of digital technology and governance in collaboration with the education department has arranged multiple camps in the schools to cover the mandatory biometric updates.

The chief secretary directed to cover private schools as well to reduce the pendency of mandatory biometric update, which were to be carried out on attaining the ages of five and 15 years.

He also emphasised on popularisation of Aadhaar related services and to carry out an awareness campaign through the school education department to encourage parents and guardians for mandatory biometric update of their children.

SC warns HP may ‘vanish in thin air’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The Supreme Court has flagged the ecological imbalance in Himachal Pradesh and cautioned that the entire state may "vanish in thin air" if the situation does not change.

Observing that the situation in Himachal Pradesh has gone from bad to worse, the apex court said climate change is having a "visible and alarming impact" on the state.

"We want to impress upon the state government and Union of India that earning revenue is not everything. Revenue cannot be earned at the cost of environment and ecology," a bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said.

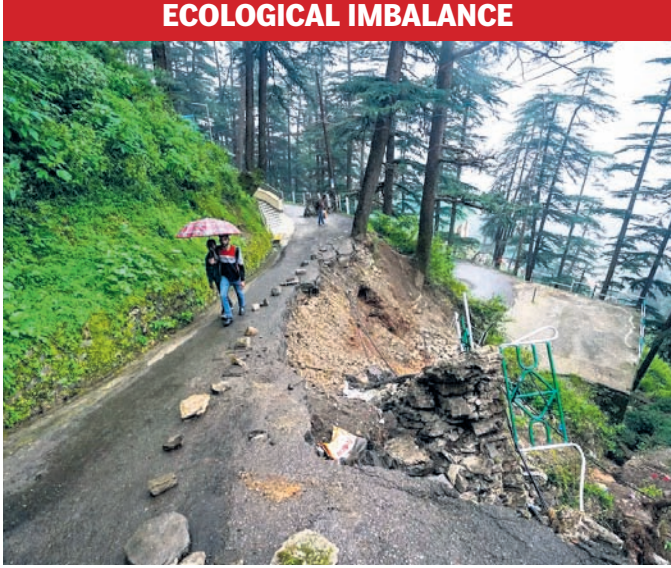
"If things proceed the way they are as on date, the day is not far when the entire state of HP may vanish in thin air from the map of the country. God forbid this doesn't happen," it said.

The top court made the observations July 28 while dealing with a petition against an order of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, which declined to entertain a plea challenging the state's June 2025 notification declaring certain areas as "green area".

While refusing to interfere with the high court's order, the apex court said the obvious reason for issuing the notification was to curb construction activities in a particular area.

"The situation in the state of Himachal Pradesh has gone from bad to worse. The severe ecological imbalance and other environmental conditions have led to serious natural calamities over a period of years," the bench said.

It noted the nature definitely is "annoyed" with the activities that are going on in Himachal Pradesh. "It is not right to blame only nature for the disaster in Himachal Pradesh. Humans, not nature, are responsible for phenome-



ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE

According to experts and various reports, the major causes of destruction in the state are hydropower projects, four-lane roads, deforestation, multi-storey buildings, etc

non such as continuous land-sliding of mountains and soil, landslides on roads, collapsing of houses and buildings, subsidence of road etc.," it said. The bench observed that Himachal Pradesh is nestled in the lap of Himalayan mountains and it is important to seek the opinion of geologists, environmental experts and locals before any development project is undertaken there.

The bench said taking advantage of the state's natural beauty, the government started constructing four-lane roads to promote it as a tourist destination. "With forests encompassing more than 66 per cent of the total land area, Himachal Pradesh is renowned for its abundant beauty and greenery. But the danger to this natural richness is growing as a result of human greed and apathy," it said. The bench said unrelenting building, tunnel and road construction, frequently done

without sufficient environmental planning, has increased the area's susceptibility to natural disasters and effects of climate change. Stating that Himachal Pradesh is often referred to as the "power state" of India due to its significant hydropower potential, the bench said, "While this form of energy is renewable and low-carbon, large-scale construction of dams, reservoirs, and tunnels comes with considerable environmental costs."

It said the state has been witnessing rising average temperatures, shifting snow-fall patterns and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

"These changes threaten not only the environment but also the livelihoods of local communities dependent on farming, horticulture, and eco-tourism deforestation and forest degradation are major concerns," it said. It also flagged forest fires, encroachments, overgrazing and

expansion of agricultural and urban areas as contributing factors. The bench said pace of infrastructure development in the state has intensified in recent years, driven by the twin goals of connectivity and tourism.

Projects like four-lane highways, ropeways, tunnels and urban expansions often bypass environmental safeguards, it said.

The apex court also said that tourism is a major source of income in Himachal Pradesh but the uncontrolled growth of tourism has strained the state's environment.

"If left unchecked, the pressure from tourism could severely undermine the ecological and social fabric of the state," it said. Referring to the peculiarities in the Himalayan region, the bench said there is a need for all the Himalayan states to collate resources and expertise so as to ensure that development plans are cognizant of these challenges. "All that we want to convey today is that it is high time the state of HP pays attention to what we have observed and starts taking necessary action at the earliest in the right direction," it said.

The bench said the Centre also owes an obligation to see that ecological imbalance in the state does not get further disturbed and natural calamities do not occur. "Of course much damage has been caused but there is a saying that 'something is better than nothing'," the bench observed, as it directed the apex court registry to register a writ petition in public interest in this regard. "We expect the state to file an appropriate reply explaining whether they have any action plan to meet with the issues we have discussed and what do they propose to do in future," it said.

The bench also said the registry shall notify the matter before it after obtaining appropriate order from the Chief Justice of India.

NE's only floating school struggles to stay afloat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, August 1: Eight years after Northeast India's first floating elementary school was set up for children of the fishing community on Loktak Lake in Manipur, the school is now battling to survive.

With the community finding no other way to keep the school running, they have sought government help.

The Loktak Floating Elementary School was set up in 2017 at Langolsabi Leikai in Champu Khangpok, a floating village of nearly 330 residents.

It was built atop thick floating masses of aquatic vegetation known as phumdis — a hallmark of Loktak Lake. These floating biomass islands, about 4 to 5 feet thick, support both huts and the school itself.

Rajen Oinam, secretary of the All Loktak Lake Areas Fishermen Union Manipur, which runs the school, told PTI, "The one-room school, measuring 24 by 15 feet, lacks even basic infrastructure such as desks and tables. We had a lot of hope when we started, but this year alone, seven students dropped out. Only 23 students are currently enrolled, up to class 2. Classes are held from 8 am to noon, twice a week."

"Children not only from Champu Khangpok but also from distant floating huts come here to learn how to read and write. However, ever since ethnic violence erupted in the state, we've been preoccupied with managing relief camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), which has taken our focus away from the school," he added. Sharing a unique feature of the huts built on floating phumdis, Oinam said, "Often, the huts drift away overnight to another location, in some cases more than 3 km away, when there are thunderstorms accompanied by strong winds. To

prevent this, huts are stabilised by anchoring bamboo poles into the lakebed. The school itself is tied with ropes to keep it from floating away."

Reaching the school is a challenge.

"It takes about one-and-a-half hours by traditional wooden canoe from Ningthoukhong Project Gate in Bishnupur district," said Oinam.

"While most huts use bamboo for flooring, the school uses wooden boards, covered with carpets. Apart from solar-powered electricity, the village has no modern amenities," he added.

Though villagers have been trying hard, the school still lacks official recognition.

"We have submitted applications to the authorities in Bishnupur district, but there has been no response. With government recognition, we could get support for infrastructure and teacher salaries. For now, the Bishnupur-based People Resources Development Association keeps the school running by supplying books, stationery, and minimal salaries for the teachers," Oinam said.

NKumar, a fisherman and resident of the floating village, explained why the school matters.

"There are schools on land in Bishnupur, but they're over an hour away. Parents have to wait for classes to finish to bring their children back. This is time-consuming and expensive. Since both men and women in our community fish to sustain the family, the floating school is more convenient," he added.

Despite being surrounded by water, residents face a scarcity of safe drinking water.

"The lake water is often contaminated due to untreated urban waste and solid plastics. We collect cleaner water from deeper parts of the lake, then boil or filter it before drinking," Kumar added.

Manipur govt goes paperless, launches official e-gazette portal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, August 1: The Manipur government Friday officially launched its e-gazette portal in a move aimed at promoting digital governance and enhancing public access to official information, a statement said.

"This visionary initiative marks a significant step to-

wards paperless administration and greater public access to official government information," it added.

With the launch, the government has discontinued all physical printing and sale of hard copies of the Manipur Gazette, effective August 1.

"The purpose of the e-gazette portal is to publish the Manipur Gazette exclusively in electronic format on the official portal, and physical printing and sale of hard copies of the gazette stands discontinued from August 1," the statement added.

The directorate of printing and stationary shall maintain official records of all e-published notifications and make them available as and when required for reference, it added.



An excavator being used to assist people to cross a stream, in Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Friday

Youths restore hope in Arunachal's West Siang

Across the state, young people are stepping up to drive change, tackling a wide range of challenges from drug awareness and waste management to infrastructure development

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, August 1: In a powerful display of grassroots leadership, youths in Arunachal Pradesh's West Siang district have taken it upon themselves to revive incomplete infrastructure projects and address long-standing civic issues, without waiting for government support.

A notable instance of this spirit is unfolding in West Siang, where two youths have spearheaded the redevelopment of the long-pending Aalo Indoor Stadium, while another young entrepreneur has repaired a vital bridge connecting remote villages. The Aalo Indoor Stadium project, sanctioned under the 2014-15 Special Plan Assistance (SPA) with an estimated cost of Rs 35.28 crore, was awarded to M/s TK Engineering Consortium Limited.

Construction began in June 2018 with a 36-month deadline, yet the project remains incomplete.

In contrast, other stadiums sanctioned in the same period at Chimpur, Pasighat, Yupia, and Ziro have already been completed and are regularly hosting sports events.

By 2024, the delay had tested the patience of local communities. Multiple appeals from community-based organisations, students, and senior citizens to expedite construction or have the firm vacate the site went unheard.

Frustrated by the prolonged inaction, two men in their early 40s, Nyatam Bagra and Kento Ete, decided to act.

On June 30, the West Siang District Olympic Association, under the leadership of its president Bagra, began redeveloping the abandoned ground to make it suitable for hosting football and volleyball tournaments, without any government funding or logistical support.

"We were concerned by the lack of sports activities for almost a decade due to the construction of the stadium," said Bagra.



"Young people, due to stadium construction and lack of other facilities, were left with no option and were going astray, indulging in alcohol and drugs," he pointed out.

Bagra noted that West Siang, once a sporting powerhouse in Arunachal, had lost its edge.

The legacy of sports in the district includes the Ramakrishna Mission School, Aalo, which reached the finals of the prestigious Subroto Mukherjee Cup in 1988 and 1990, and footballer-turned-coach Gumpe Rime, who hails from the district.

Kento Ete, general secretary of the West Siang District Football Association, echoed similar sentiments.

"A generation has lost the opportunity due to government apathy," Ete remarked, adding

that the state government, district administration, and the sports department had failed the community.

With a group of volunteers, they began clearing the overgrown field, removing shrubs, debris, and discarded construction materials. However, the gallery, rostrum, and equipment left by the construction firm were left untouched.

The initiative drew overwhelming public support, with contributions from the Football Players' Union, Tractors Union, senior citizens, and even manual labourers (mutias).

Community service

In another inspiring act of community service, Gotum Gangkak, a 31-year-old entrepreneur and SRCC Delhi Uni-

versity B.Com graduate, took it upon himself to renovate a steel bridge over Himak River, which connects Darak circle with the rest of West Siang.

"I was moved by the dangers faced by the people of Darak to cross the bridge," Gangkak said. Despite being a vital lifeline for around 1,000 residents, the bridge had remained neglected for decades.

With no help in sight, he hired JCB machines, fabrication equipment, a generator, and labourers, funding the entire operation himself.

He spent Rs 5-6 lakh to procure materials from outside the state and completed the bridge repair. Jumba Loyi, a health department worker in Darak, praised the effort.

"Now people can use the bridge without being worried," Loyi said, noting that previously, even trucks and dumpers engaged in construction in nearby Belo village could not use the bridge safely.

As both the stadium redevelopment and the bridge repair came to fruition, the residents of West Siang have expressed gratitude to the young change makers whose actions reflect the power of initiative and community spirit.

Littering triggers ban on picnics in East Khasi Hills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, August 1: Faced with the growing mess of beer bottles and plastic wrappers strewn across scenic spots in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, the authorities Friday imposed a ban on roadside picnics and littering in the district.

Officials said the decision was taken after repeated complaints and observations of tourists leaving behind waste at viewpoints, roadsides, and near tourist hotspots, turning once-pristine locations into eyesores.

"In every nook and corner, we're seeing the same story - plastic bottles, food waste, beer cans. It's not just unpleasant, it's damaging the environment and the image of the district,"

an official said.

The administration has now prohibited tourists and visitors from cooking or picnicking by the roadside.

Police have been directed to take action against such violations.

The order comes shortly after the Deputy Chief of Hima Sohra voiced similar concerns over the condition of tourism corridors in Sohra.

Last week, the traditional administrative office have directed that all vehicles entering Sohra area has to mandatorily have dustbins in their cars.

Police have been directed to keep a close watch, and tourists have been advised to enjoy Meghalaya's beauty without turning it into a dumping ground.



ODISHA POLICE RECRUITMENT BOARD
BHUBANESWAR

Corrigendum Advertisement for CPSE-2024

No. D-154: (https://odishapolice.gov.in) Date. 31.07.2025
No.05/OPRB Ref: Detail Advertisement No.02-CPSE-2024/OPRB Dt.17.01.2025
Sub: Fresh application for CPSE-2024 on the basis of 3 years of age relaxation granted for all categories of candidates as per orders of Hon'ble High Court of Orissa, dtd.24.07.2025 and Government of Odisha dtd. 24.07.2025.
Pursuant to the orders of Hon'ble High Court Orissa WP© No. 3015 of 2025 filed by Amit Kumar Biswal & Others State of Odisha & Others dtd.24.07.2025 & as per orders of Government of Odisha vide letter no.31444/D&A dtd.24.07.2025, fresh applications are being invited from candidates with age relaxation as reflected in the table below for CPSE-2024 for recruitment of S.I. of Police and its equivalent rank as per above referred original advertisement.
N.B.: For details Visit Odisha Police website (www.odishapolice.gov.in)
Sd./- DG-Prisons-Cum-Chairman
Odisha Police Recruitment Board,
Bhubaneswar
OIPR-12179/11/0005/2526

It is a misconception that politics is all about telling lies or using flattery. Even late Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray used to be truthful in his speeches. He used to speak his mind

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

It was a moment of immense pride that the sons of Himachal Pradesh are achieving new milestones in the service of the nation through their talent, dedication and commitment

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL CM

I met Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji Thursday (in Delhi). The PM has given his consent for the inauguration of (Bhopal) metro train and laying the foundation stone of PM Mitra Park in Dhar district, which will generate over one lakh jobs. Very soon he will let us know the date for these programmes

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

SHORT TAKES

Nurse case: We continue to closely follow it, says MEA

New Delhi: India Friday said it continues to render all possible assistance in the case of Nimisha Priya, an Indian nurse on death row in Yemen. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is also in touch with some friendly governments as part of efforts to reach a solution in the case. The nurse, hailing from Kollengode in Kerala's Palakkad district, has been found guilty of murdering a Yemeni citizen in July, 2017. The 38-year-old Indian national's execution was scheduled for July 16, but it was postponed following intervention of Indian officials.

4 people killed in elephant attacks

Ambikapur/Korba: Four people, including a father-daughter duo, were killed after being attacked by wild elephants in separate incidents in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district, forest department officials said Friday. These elephant attacks took place in the last two days. In a separate incident, an elephant died of electrocution after it came in contact with a live wire illegally laid by three persons to operate a borewell in neighbouring Korba district, they said.

Oppn protests rock RS

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day Friday amid vociferous protests by Opposition members over the issue of Special Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar. The House could not function and both the Zero Hour and Question Hour were washed out. The House was earlier adjourned soon after laying of papers within minutes. When the House reassembled at 12 noon, there was no let up in the protests forcing the Chair to adjourn for the day.

Street vendors protest

Shillong: Street vendors, mostly women, staged a protest outside the Shillong Municipal Board (SMB) office here Friday, alleging arbitrary revocation of vending licences and biased allotment of stalls at the newly designated vending zone. The protesters, under the banner of the Meghalaya and Greater Shillong Progressive Hawkers and Street Vendors Association (MGSPHSA), demanded a review of the relocation process carried out by the SMB and the Urban Affairs department.

The Goa government will design a scheme providing financial assistance to wark-aris. Either the Art and Culture Department or Social Welfare department will be made a nodal agency to implement this scheme

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

378 KILLED IN TIGER ATTACKS FROM 2020-24: GOVT REPORT

India recorded 378 human deaths in tiger attacks between 2020 and 2024, with Maharashtra reporting the highest toll, according to government data presented in Parliament. Responding to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh said that 110 people were killed in tiger attacks in 2022, the highest in the five-year period



ONLINE BETTING BAN PETITION

Top court seeks states' responses



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The Supreme Court Friday said the growth of online betting and loan applications is an issue of paramount public importance and sought responses of all states on regulating them.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said it will hear the PIL filed by K A Paul, a Hyderabad-based businessman, which claimed that many children have died by suicide after using online betting and gambling applications, and sought interim direction to restrain celebrities from endorsing them and the media from giving them publicity.

The bench said it is listing the matter for hearing on priority on August 18 and asked the states to respond to the plea expeditiously. Paul contended that the main issue of regulation of these betting applications can be adjudicated in due course, but what was required in the interim is that celebrities, including cricketers, be restrained from endorsing them as many youngsters who consider them role models start using these applications. "These celebrities should

be immediately restrained and the media be asked not to show these endorsements as over 30 million teens are affected by using them. One Mahadev application was banned by the government, but there are several other applications," Paul, who appeared in person, submitted.

Justice Kant agreed with the submission and said if the government bans one application, another application with another name but the same profile surfaces online the next day.

The counsel appearing for the Centre, which was issued notice May 23, said another top court bench is hearing the same issue where the moot question to be decided is whether these applications can be considered as online gambling and betting applications or whether these are games of skill. "The issue which is being heard for the last 30 days will have a direct bearing on the question raised in the PIL whether these are online betting and gambling applications," the counsel said, and sought deferment of hearing or tagging the matter with the pending petitions heard by a bench headed by Justice J B Pardiwala.

India ready to lead space race: Shuks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla Friday described his journey to space as the beginning of India's "second orbit" with the aim to lead in the area of human spaceflight.

Addressing a virtual press conference, Shukla and his co-travellers of the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station shared their experiences of living in microgravity and conducting experiments that would help humanity.

"In a realm like space exploration, in decades of global collaboration, the moment in this mission that stood out for me was speaking to the prime minister of Bharat while the Indian flag floated behind me," Shukla said. He said that moment symbolised India's re-entry into the conversation, not as a spectator but as an equal participant.

"After 41 years, a Bharatiya returned to space. But this time, it was not a solitary leap, it was the beginning of India's second orbit. And this time, we are ready, not just to fly but to lead," Shukla said. Shukla became the second Indian to travel to space after Rakesh Sharma's sojourn as part of the Soviet Russian mission in 1984.

India plans to launch its own human space-flight mission - Gaganyaan - in 2027. He thanked the government, ISRO, Indian Air Force and NASA for their unwavering support, coordination and belief in the mission that made it possible for him to travel to space as a messenger for what is now possible for the nation.

Shukla said he was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support from across the country. "Nothing could have prepared me for the love and support that came through," he said.



EC's draft electoral rolls out in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, August 1: The Election Commission Friday came out with the much-anticipated 'draft electoral rolls' in Bihar, enlisting 7.24 crore voters but knocking off more than 65 lakh names, claiming that most of the persons concerned had died or migrated.

The draft electoral rolls, prepared as part of the special intensive revision (SIR), which has caused much controversy as the exercise was ordered with just a few months left for assembly polls, are available for voters online.

The EC has also said it was making available printed copies, district wise, to representatives of political parties so that anomalies, if any, could be flagged during the 'claims and objections' phase, which would continue till September 1 before the 'final rolls' are published.

However, the main opposition party, the RJD, was unhappy with the system and in a memorandum, submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar, it demanded an 'assembly segment-wise' break-up conveniently downloaded "in a pen drive or on a CD".

The Congress, which is the second-largest constituent of the INDIA bloc in the state, also challenged the EC to disclose "how many foreign nationals" were found to have been included in the voters' list prior to SIR and whether they have been dropped in the 'draft electoral rolls'.

Notably, the BJP-led NDA, which rules the Centre as well



Govt may not discuss Bihar SIR in Parliament

NEW DELHI: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju Friday cited a ruling by former Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar that Parliament cannot discuss the functioning of Election Commission, amid the Opposition's demand for a debate on SIR in the two Houses. Another day of the Monsoon Session was washed out over the Opposition's demand that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls be discussed in Parliament. Though Rijiju stressed that it was for the chairs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to take a call on the issue, indications emerged from official quarters that the government is unlikely to yield to the Opposition over an issue that has united the INDIA bloc parties in protest.

as the state, has been alleging that "a large number of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas" were living in Bihar, especially in the Kosi-Seemanchal region bordering Nepal and Bangladesh.

Leaders of the ruling coalition have also been claiming that many such "illegal immigrants" had been registered as voters and the deletion of their names was being opposed by the INDIA bloc because of "vote

bank" concerns.

The EC also came out with a district-wise break-up of the number of voters registered prior to the commencement of SIR June 25 and the "status" in the draft electoral rolls.

Patna, which houses the state capital, accounted for the highest number of 50.04 lakh voters registered "as on 24.06.2025" and the district also saw submission of 46.51 lakh "enumeration forms", the maximum in the state.

Unsurprisingly, the district also accounted for the highest number of 3.95 lakh enumeration forms that remained unreceived, after being handed over to the voters, or were not included in the draft rolls. Most of the enumeration forms were handed over to voters at their doorsteps by booth-level officers who were assisted in the mammoth exercise by booth-level agents of political parties, besides volunteers.

Also, as per the EC, 16 lakh voters obtained and submitted their enumeration forms online.

SNIPPETS

UP: Muzaffarpur-Sabarmati Express derails near Kanpur

NEW DELHI: Two coaches of the Muzaffarpur-Sabarmati JanSadharan Express derailed between Kanpur and Tundla in Uttar Pradesh Friday afternoon, Railway Ministry officials said. "No injury has been reported so far. Two coaches, including one trolley coach, derailed in the loop line," the official said. He said that the fifth and sixth coaches from the engine derailed at Bhaupur Yard at 4.20 pm. Restoration work has been initiated immediately, and railway officials from Kanpur have reached the site. The general manager of North Central Railway Zone and the divisional railway manager have also proceeded to the site, the official said.

Punjab and Haryana HC dismisses Kangana's plea

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Friday dismissed a plea of BJP MP Kangana Ranaut seeking quashing of a defamation complaint against her and the summoning order by a court in Bathinda. The actor-turned-politician had challenged the defamation case which stemmed from her retweet consisting of her own comment about the complainant during the 2020-21 farmer protests against the now repealed farm laws. The complaint was filed by Mahinder Kaur (73) of Bahadurgarh Jandian village in Punjab's Bathinda district in 2021. She had alleged that Ranaut defamed her in the tweet by identifying her wrongly as Bilkis Bano of Shaheen Bagh fame.

Yavat in Pune witnesses mob violence over Whatsapp post

PUNE: An irate mob vandalised properties and indulged in arson in Yavat in Pune's Daund tehsil Friday afternoon over an objectionable post allegedly uploaded on social media by a youth from a different community, police officials said. A motorcycle was set ablaze and a bakery was damaged, the officials said, adding teargas shells had to be lobbed to bring the situation under control amid large mobs taking to the streets to vent their ire. There is heavy police presence in the village at the moment and peace and order has been restored, these officials said.

Delhi HC bats for safe digital space for kids

The court made the observations while dismissing a man's plea challenging his conviction and five-year jail term in a case of sending obscene messages and morphed photographs of a girl, a Class XI student, on her mobile phone and threatening to circulate them online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The Delhi High Court has held that creating a safe environment for children cannot be restricted to physical spaces and the modern world demands that equal protection be extended to digital spaces where minors spend considerable time, often for educational purposes.

The court made the observations while dismissing a man's plea challenging his conviction and five-year jail term in a case of sending obscene messages and morphed photographs of a girl, a class 11 student, on her mobile phone and threatening to circulate them online.

The high court expressed deep concern over the use of technology to commit cyber-bullying, an act which, while



faceless and silent, can be as mentally traumatic and scarring as physical violence, especially when directed towards children.

"This court is also of the view that creating a safe environment for children cannot be restricted to physical spaces

alone. The modern world demands that equal protection be extended to digital spaces, where children are now spending considerable time, often for educational purposes," Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma said in a judgement passed July 28.

The court noted that tablets,

mobile phones and internet access have become essential tools for learning, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the present case demonstrated the dark side of such access, that is, where a child's electronic device was misused as a medium of abuse, it said.

Upholding the man's conviction, the court said the prosecution has succeeded in proving the case beyond reasonable doubt through the consistent and corroborated testimonies of the victim and her mother, supported by expert evidence and the FSL report.

The court observed that threats extended in cyberspace can never be taken lightly and that the harm caused is not mitigated by the fact that there was

no physical contact.

The case reflected a textbook example of cyberbullying, where an adolescent girl, who was pursuing her studies, became a victim of a targeted assault on her privacy and dignity. It said the act of morphing her face onto an obscene image and coupling it with threatening messages not only sought to shame her but was intended to coerce her into submission through fear.

While refusing to reduce the convict's sentence, the court said his plea for leniency stood on a fragile footing and that the law must send a "clear message that crimes committed in cyberspace against children are taken with utmost seriousness" and will attract consequences that reflect the gravity of the impact on the victim.

international

of the day quote

Russia has started production of its newest hypersonic missiles and reaffirmed its plans to deploy them to ally Belarus later this year

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

The bond between Pakistan and China is unique, time-tested and exceptionally resilient

ASIM MUNIR | ARMY CHIEF, PAKISTAN

Thanks to the U.S. commitment, Germany can initially support Ukraine with launchers and then with additional Patriot system components

BORIS PISTORIUS | GERMAN DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Slovenia bans arms trade with Israel

Ljubljana (Slovenia): Slovenia has announced that it will ban the import, export and transit of all weapons to and from Israel in response to the country's actions in Gaza. Slovenia, which often criticised Israel over reported atrocities in Gaza, called the ban, announced late Thursday, "the first such move by a European Union member state." Early in July, Slovenia banned two far-right Israeli ministers from entering the country, accusing them of inciting "extreme violence and serious violations of the human rights of Palestinians" with "their genocidal statements."

Indonesia to release hundreds of prisoners

Jakarta: Indonesia is set to begin releasing hundreds of convicts from its notoriously overcrowded prisons after parliament approved the first stage of President Prabowo Subianto's wide-ranging clemency plan. The first group of 1,116 will begin leaving prisons next week, and include prominent rivals of previous President Joko Widodo who were jailed during his term, as well as Papuan independence activists. The announcement was made late Thursday by the House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Sufmi Dasco Ahmad and Law Minister Supratman Andi Agtas after a consultation between the government and party factions in the legislature.

Amusement park ride in Saudi collapses

Riyadh(Saudi Arabia): The collapse of an amusement park ride in western Saudi Arabia has left more than 20 people injured and prompted authorities to close the park and order an investigation, state media said. The accident occurred in the Al-Hada area of the city of Taif Wednesday, when the "360 Big Pendulum" ride snapped in two, sending the part carrying people crashing to the ground. Video footage posted on social media showed the pendulum swinging riders, who were strapped into their seats, in a wide arc several times before the pendulum arm snaps, sending the passenger section crashing to the ground.

Collapse at Chile's copper mine kills 1

Santiago(Chile): A collapse at a copper mine in Chile killed one worker and left five trapped underground, authorities said Friday, forcing Chile's state mining company to suspend operations in the affected area of the world's largest underground copper deposit. Nine other mine workers suffered injuries.

I have given serious thought to asking the people of California for the privilege to serve as their governor. I love this state, its people and its promise. It is my home. But after deep reflection, I've decided that I will not run for Governor in this election

KAMALA HARRIS | FORMER VICE PRESIDENT, US

CROATIA HOLDS MILITARY PARADE

Thousands watched a military parade in Croatia's capital Thursday marking 30 years since a key war victory as the country looks to further boost its forces with a possible loan from a new European Union defence fund. A flyover in Zagreb by French-made Rafale jets was a highlight of the show that included 3,400 army personnel along with police units, emergency service teams and war veterans



Trump unleashes tariffs war

REUTERS

Zurich/Washington, August 1: US President Donald Trump's latest wave of tariffs on exports from dozens of trading partners sent global stock markets tumbling Friday and countries and companies scrambling to seek ways to strike better deals.

As Trump presses ahead with plans to reorder the global economy with the highest tariff rates since the early 1930s, Switzerland, "stunned" by 39% tariffs, sought more talks, as did India, hit with a 25% rate.

New tariffs also include a 35% duty on many goods from Canada, 50% for Brazil, 20% for Taiwan. Taiwan said its rate was "temporary" and it expected to reach a lower figure.

The presidential order listed higher import duty rates of 10% to 41% starting in a week's time for 69 trading partners, taking the US effective tariff rate to about 18%, from 2.3% last year, according to analysts at Capital Economics.

Global shares stumbled, with Europe's STOXX 600 down 1.8% on the day and 2.5% on the week, on track for its biggest weekly drop since Trump an-



nounced his first major wave of tariffs April 2. Wall Street also opened sharply lower Friday.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 1.5%, bringing the total loss this week to roughly 2.7%. In commodity markets, oil priced continued to fall after a 1% plunge Thursday.

Trump's new tariffs have created yet more uncertainty, with many details unclear. They are set to take effect Aug 7 at 0401 GMT, a White House official said.

The new tariffs will kick in at what has become a perilous moment for the US economy, with US data Friday showing employment growth was weaker than thought previously.

- Markets down after new wave of tariffs
- Switzerland stunned, seeks new talks
- Brazil, Canada, India, among countries hit by steep tariffs
- Trump administration teases additional trade deals

Trump's tariff rollout also comes amid evidence they have begun driving up prices.

CANADA, INDIA

Trump has tapped emergency powers, pressured foreign leaders, and pressed ahead with trade policies that sparked a market sell-off when they were first announced in April. His order said some trad-

US envoy visits aid op in Gaza rejected by UN as unsafe

REUTERS

Cairo/Jerusalem, August 1: President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy became the first high profile US official to visit Gaza since the war began, touring a US-backed aid operation Friday that the United Nations says is partly to blame for deadly conditions in the enclave.

Steve Witkoff visited a site run by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in Rafah in what he said was a bid to put together a new aid plan for the war-shattered territory.

Hours after his visit, Palestinian medics reported Israeli forces had shot dead three Palestinians near one of the group's sites in the city on Gaza's southern edge. Reuters could not immediately verify whether it was the same location.

The Israeli military said it was still looking into the incident, in which soldiers had fired warning shots at what it described as a "gathering of suspects" approaching its troops, hundreds of meters from the aid site.

The United Nations says more than 1,000 people have been killed trying to receive aid in Gaza since the GHF began operating there in May, most of them shot by Israeli forces operating near GHF sites.

The UN has declined to work with the GHF, which it says distributes aid in ways that are inherently dangerous and violate humanitarian neutrality principles, contributing to the hunger crisis across the territory.

The GHF says nobody has been killed at its distribution points, and that it is doing a better job of protecting aid deliveries than the U.N.

REUTERS

Bangkok, August 1: Thailand's army sent home two Cambodian soldiers from a group of 20 Friday, ahead of a key meeting in Malaysia next week where defence ministers and military commanders will hold talks aimed at maintaining a ceasefire along their disputed border.

Long-simmering tensions on the Thai-Cambodian border exploded into clashes last week, including exchanges of artillery fire and jet fighter sorties, the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in over a decade.

The clashes claimed at least 43 lives and left over 300,000 people displaced.

A truce was achieved Monday, following a push by Ma-



laysia and phone calls from US President Trump who threatened to hold off tariff negotiations with both countries until fighting stopped.

Thailand and Cambodia previously faced tariffs of 36% for sending goods to the US, their largest export markets. Following further negotiations, they will now pay a 19% tariff, the White House announced Friday.

In Bangkok, Thai government spokesperson Jirayu Houngsub

- Thai army detained 20 Cambodians troops after they intruded - official
- Cambodia asks Thailand to return them all soldiers swiftly
- Defence ministers scheduled to meet for talks next week in Malaysia
- Monday truce announcement ended heaviest fighting in over a decade

Thailand returns some Cambodian soldiers

REUTERS

Kyiv, August 1: Ukrainian rescuers recovered more than a dozen more bodies from the rubble of a collapsed apartment block in Kyiv overnight, bringing the death toll from Russia's worst air strike of the year on Ukraine's capital to 31.

A two-year-old was among the five children found dead after Thursday's sweeping Russian drone and missile attack, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Friday, announcing the end of a more than 24-hour-long rescue operation.

A total of 159 people were wounded in the multi-wave strike, in which Russia launched more than 300 drones and eight missiles early Thurs-



day, the latest in a campaign of fierce strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities.

The worst damage was to an apartment building that

told reporters Friday that two Cambodian soldiers had been sent back, and the remaining 18 were being processed for violating immigration law.

"The Cambodian soldiers intruded on Thai territory and the army took them into custody, treating them based on humanitarian principles," he said.

In a statement, the Cambodian defence ministry asked Thailand to return all the detained soldiers.

South Africa makes rhino horns radioactive to fight poaching

South Africa has the largest population of rhinos, with an estimated 16,000, but the country experiences high levels of poaching, with about 500 rhinos killed for their horns every year

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mokopane, August 1: A South African university launched an anti-poaching campaign Thursday to inject the horns of rhinos with radioactive isotopes that it says are harmless for the animals but can be detected by customs agents.

Under the collaborative project involving the University of the Witwatersrand, nuclear en-

ergy officials and conservationists, five rhinos were injected in what the university hopes will be the start of a mass injection of the declining rhino population.

They're calling it the Rhisotope Project.

Last year, about 20 rhinos at a sanctuary were injected with isotopes in trials that paved the way for Thursday's launch. The radioactive isotopes, even



at low levels, can be recognised by radiation detectors at airports and borders, leading

to the arrest of poachers and traffickers.

Researchers at Witwa-

Embassy in Ireland issues safety advisory after attacks on Indians



The advisory follows a brutal attack on a 40-year-old Indian man at Parkhill Road in the Tallaght suburb of Dublin July 19, described as 'mindless, racist violence' by locals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 1: The Indian Embassy in Ireland Friday issued an advisory expressing safety concerns following recent attacks in and around the capital Dublin and urging Indian citizens to take safety precautions.

"There has been an increase in the instances of physical attacks reported against Indian citizens in Ireland recently," states the advisory issued online.

"The embassy is in touch with the authorities concerned in Ireland in this regard. At the same time, all Indian citizens in Ireland are advised to take reasonable precautions for their personal security and avoid deserted areas, especially in odd hours," the statement reads.

It also added emergency embassy contact details as 0899423734 and cons.dublin@mea.gov.in.

The advisory follows a

brutal attack on a 40-year-old Indian man at Parkhill Road in the Tallaght suburb of Dublin July 19, described as "mindless, racist violence" by locals.

The Gardai, as the police are known in Ireland, had opened an investigation into the case and Indian Ambassador to Ireland Akhilesh Mishra was among those who took to social media to express shock over the attack.

"Regarding the recent incident of physical attack on an Indian national happened in Tallaght, Dublin, Embassy is in touch with the victim and his family. All the requisite assistances are being offered. Embassy is also in touch with the relevant Irish authorities in this regard," the embassy said in a social media post days after the incident.

A Stand Against Racism protest was also held by the local community in condemnation of what was described as a "vicious racist attack" and to express solidarity with migrants to the region.

Earlier this week, a Dublin resident Dr Santosh Yadav took to his LinkedIn account online to post details of a "brutal, unprovoked racist attack" near his apartment.

Yadav, an entrepreneur and AI expert, stressed that it was not an isolated incident and called for "concrete measures" from the governments of Ireland and India to ensure Indians feel safe to walk the streets of Dublin without fear.

ment building, said she did not place much faith in Trump's tough rhetoric.

"Trump just says, 'I'm upset with President Putin's behaviour'. And what? No results," she said.

'WILL PUTIN LISTEN?'

On Friday, mourners laid flowers and lit candles at the wrecked apartment block, where rumbling excavators hoisted heavy pieces of rubble. The makeshift shrine included brightly coloured stuffed animals.

Oksana Kinal, 43, who was placing flowers to honour a co-worker who had been killed alongside a son, said she hoped Trump would follow up on his threat but also expressed doubt.

tersrand's Radiation and Health Physics Unit say that tests conducted in the pilot study confirmed that the radioactive material was not harmful to the rhinos.

"We have demonstrated, beyond scientific doubt, that the process is completely safe for the animal and effective in making the horn detectable through international customs nuclear security systems," said James Larkin, chief scientific officer at the Rhisotope Project.

"Even a single horn with significantly lower levels of radioactivity than what will be used in practice successfully triggered alarms in radiation detectors," said Larkin.

The tests also found that horns could be detected inside

full 40-foot shipping containers, he said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates that the global rhino population stood at around 500,000 at the beginning of the 20th century but has now declined to around 27,000 due to continued demand for rhino horns on the black market.

South Africa has the largest population of rhinos, with an estimated 16,000, but the country experiences high levels of poaching, with about 500 rhinos killed for their horns every year.

The university has urged private wildlife park owners and national conservation authorities to have their rhinos injected.

business

of the day uote

Recyclers have taken bold steps, investing in world-class food-grade compliant r-PET plants. But if enforcement remains weak and brand owners keep defaulting, we fear the entire circular economy framework could collapse

SHAILENDRA SINGH | DIRECTOR GENERAL, APR BHARAT

India recorded a 59.1 manufacturing PMI in July, up from 58.4 during the prior month. This marked a 16-month high for the Indian manufacturing sector

PRANJUL BHANDARI | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC

With Aadhaar-based face authentication, we are ensuring that no customer is left behind due to limitations in biometric fingerprints or OTP verification

R VISHVESVARAN | CEO, IPPB

SHORT TAKES

Apple hits record India revenue

New Delhi: iPhone-maker Apple clinched revenue records in over two dozen markets, including India, in June quarter earnings that topped street expectations. For the June quarter, the tech titan reported revenue of \$94.04 billion, the 10 per cent year-on-year growth topping Wall Street expectations, while net profit came in at \$23.42 billion, up 9.2 per cent from a year ago.

One MobiKwik loss widens

New Delhi: Fintech firm One MobiKwik Systems has reported its consolidated loss widening to Rs 41.9 crore in the June quarter, compared to a loss of Rs 6.6 crore in the same period last year. The Gurgaon-headquartered firm's revenue from operations stood at Rs 271.3 crore, a 20.7 per cent decline from Rs 342.2 crore in Q1 FY25, as per a regulatory filing.

GSK Pharma net rises

New Delhi: GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals Friday said its consolidated net profit increased 12 per cent year-on-year to Rs 279 crore for the June quarter. The drug firm had reported a net profit of Rs 249 crore for the June quarter of the last fiscal.Total income declined marginally to Rs 849 crore for the first quarter as compared with Rs 850 crore in the year-ago period, GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals said in a regulatory filing.

Tata Power profit up

New Delhi: Tata Power Friday posted over 6 per cent on-year rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,262 crore in June quarter mainly due to higher revenues from the renewable as well as transmission and distribution business. The company had a net profit of Rs 1,189 crore in the quarter ended June 30, 2024, a statement stated.

ITC posts profit

New Delhi: Diversified entity ITC Ltd Friday reported a consolidated profit of Rs 5,343.41 crore for the June quarter. The company had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 19,807.88 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing from ITC. ITC's revenue from operations was at Rs 23,129.35 crore in the June quarter. It was Rs 20,376.36 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year.



The finance ministry is doing weekly capital review of all public sector undertakings and is working on strategies that can insulate the Indian economy from geo-political risks

ARUNISH CHAWLA | SECRETARY, DIPAM

BSNL ROLLS OUT ONE MONTH 4G SERVICE PLAN OFFER FOR RE 1

State-run telecom firm BSNL Friday rolled out 4G service plan offer for Re 1 with one month validity in an attempt to draw more customers. The company has recently completed rollout of its 4G network across India. This initiative marks BSNL's celebration of India's Independence Day. The plan includes unlimited voice calls (localSTD), 2 GB high-speed data per day, 100 SMSday and a free BSNL SIM



UPI transactions hit record 19.47bn in July

CASHLESS CURVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The number of transactions through the popular Unified Payments Interface (UPI) touched a record high of 19.47 billion in July, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

In terms of value, it was Rs 25.08 lakh crore, the second highest after Rs 25.14 lakh crore recorded in May.

In terms of volume, the last highest number was 18.67 billion reported in May, which declined to 18.39 billion in June with transaction amount Rs 24.03 lakh crore.

NPCI said the value of the transactions worked at Rs 25.08 lakh crore in June against Rs 20.64 lakh crore in the same month a year ago, registering a growth of 21 per cent growth on an annual basis. On a month-on-month basis, the growth was 4.3 per cent in terms of value.

"This surge signals a critical shift in nanpreneurs, local retailers, and last-mile users are increasingly embracing digital payments, reducing their dependence on cash and gaining access to the formal financial ecosystem. As platforms like UPI evolve, they are becoming the digital backbone of an inclusive economy," Spice Money CEO Dilip Modi said.



Friday, UPI accounts for 85 per cent of all digital transactions in India. Its impact goes beyond national borders, powering nearly 50 per cent of global real-time digital payments. UPI is already live in seven countries, including the UAE,

Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, and Mauritius. Its entry into France is a milestone because it is UPI's first step in Europe. This allows Indians travelling or living there to pay seamlessly without the usual hassles of

foreign transactions.

NPCI, an initiative of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks' Association, is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India (IBA).

It runs the UPI used for real-time payments between peers or at merchants' end while making purchases. NPCI has brought in fresh limits aimed at reducing system load, cutting down on failed transactions and improving reliability -- especially during peak hours.

Users can now check their account balance via UPI apps up to 50 times a day from Friday. Previously, there was no limit. The cap is meant to

ease network load and keep systems running smoothly, according to experts. Besides, the feature that displays all linked bank accounts via the 'List Account API is capped at 25 requests per user, per app, per day. This aims to reduce unnecessary API load on banking infrastructure.

Any UPI ID tied to a mobile number that has been inactive for more than 12 months will be automatically disabled to prevent misuse after number reassignment while new bank accounts added to UPI will undergo enhanced verification, including stronger user authentication and validation checks.

TRUMP TARIFF TO HIT HALF OF \$86BN EXPORTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: The imposition of a 25 per cent US tariff will impact about half of India's over \$86 billion worth of exports to America, government sources said Friday.

The sectors which could bear the brunt of 25 per cent duty include textiles/ clothing (10.3 billion), gems and jewellery (12 billion), shrimp (\$2.24 billion), leather and footwear (\$1.18 billion), animal products (\$2 billion), chemicals (2.34 billion), and electrical and mechanical machinery (about \$9 billion).

They said that about half of the goods exported from India to US are in the exemption category (such as pharma and electronic goods), so, the impact will be only on the remaining half.

In 2024-25, the bilateral trade between India and US stood at \$131.8 billion (\$86.5 billion exports and \$45.3 billion imports).

According to think tank GTRI, 25 per cent tariffs will not be applicable on the exempted categories, including finished pharmaceutical drugs, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), and other key drug inputs; energy products such as crude oil, refined fuels, natural gas, coal, and electricity; critical minerals; and a wide range of electronics and semiconductors, like computers, tablets, smartphones, solid-state drives, flat panel displays, and integrated circuits.

According to an exporter, apparel sector that exports \$5.33 billion worth of goods to US will be the most impacted.

Sudhir Sekhri, Chairman,



AEPC, said: "We request immediate government intervention to offset this huge setback. Exporters have their back against the wall and will have to sell below cost to keep their factories running and avoid mass layoffs."

Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said that US order provides relaxation for goods in transit and those loaded on ship for final sailing to US by August 7.

US President Donald Trump unveiled sweeping new tariffs on dozens of countries, including 25 per cent duties for goods from India, marking a new era of American protectionism that triggered fresh tensions and concerns over a much wider disruption in the global trade landscape.

Trump signed an executive order that raised tariffs for over five dozen countries, with Washington's negotiations for trade deals going down to the wire ahead of the August 1 deadline.

In the Executive Order titled 'Further Modifying Reciprocal Tariff Rates', Trump announced

tariff rates for nearly 70 nations. With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of \$41 billion in 2024-25. It was \$35.32 billion in 2023-24 and \$27.7 billion in 2022-23.

In 2024, India's main exports to US included drug formulations (\$8.1 billion), telecom instruments (\$ 6.5 billion), precious and semi-precious stones (\$5.3 billion), petroleum products (\$4.1 billion), vehicle and auto components (\$2.8 billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (\$3.2 billion), ready-made garments of cotton, including accessories (\$2.8 billion), and products of iron and steel (\$2.7 billion).

Imports included crude oil (\$4.5 billion), petroleum products (\$3.6 billion), coal, coke (\$3.4 billion), cut and polished diamonds (\$2.6 billion), electric machinery (\$1.4 billion), aircraft, spacecraft and parts (\$ 1.3 billion), and gold (\$1.3 billion).

India's merchandise exports to US rose 22.8 per cent to \$25.51 billion in the April-June quarter this financial year, while imports rose 11.68 per cent to \$12.86 billion.

ATF price hiked 3%; commercial LPG rate cut by ₹33.50

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were hiked 3 per cent Friday, while the price of commercial LPG cylinders was reduced Rs 33.50, in line with fluctuations in international benchmark rates.

Jet fuel (ATF) price was increased by Rs 2,677.88 per kilolitre, or 2.9 per cent, to Rs 92,021.93 per kl in the national capital -- home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase comes on back of a steep 7.5 per cent (Rs 6,271.5 per kl) hike last month, adding to operating cost of airlines.

The hike in July came after three monthly reductions starting April. In all, prices had been cut Rs 12,239.17 per kl in the three reductions. The subsequent increases (Rs 8,949.38 per kl) has wiped away almost three-fourths of the gains. The increase in ATF price is in line with the spurt in international oil rates that followed geopolitical tensions and trade wars.

The ATF price in Mumbai was hiked to Rs 86,077.14 per kl from Rs 83,549.23, while those in Chennai and Kolkata were increased to Rs 95,512.26 and Rs 95,164.90 per kl, respectively.

Rates differ from city to city, depending on incidence of local



taxes such as VAT.

Alongside, oil firms reduced the price of commercial LPG by Rs 33.50 per 19-kg cylinder. Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,631.50 in the national capital.

This is the fifth straight reduction in commercial LPG rates. Prices were last reduced by Rs 58.5 per 19-kg cylinder July 1. Prior to that, prices were reduced by Rs 24 on June 1, by Rs 14.50 cut May 1, and a Rs 41 per cylinder reduction was effected April 1. In all, prices have been cut by Rs 171.5 per bottle since April.

While oil prices have been on the boil, benchmark LPG rates have softened because of low demand during summer months. Prices of ATF and LPG differ from state to state, depending on the incidence of local taxes, including VAT.

The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 853 per 14.2-kg cylinder. The price of the domestic LPG was hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder in April.

Bank retirees on strike

BHUBANESWAR: The Lower PMG Dharnasthal witnessed an unusual spectacle as hundreds of bank pensioners and retirees joined en masse' in a day long strike and token hunger strike, at the call of their apex body, the Coordination of Bank Pensioners and Retirees Organizations (CBPRO), to protest against their grievances and sufferings remaining unaddressed for decades, and to press for fulfillment of their long-pending, legitimate and implementable demands including Revision of pension, health/ medical insurance of retirees should be borne by the employers, special allowances component, grant to retirees. The eventful gathering was addressed by Upendra Kumar Dash and Niranjana Jogania (Joint convenors of CBPRO, ODISHA), Ganesh Chandra Mishra (President of SBIPA, Odisha) and Amit K Motayed (President of AIBPARC, Odisha).



PV sales drop in July amid softening demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Amid softening demand in the domestic market, Maruti Suzuki India Friday reported a marginal increase in vehicle dispatches to dealers in July while Tata Motors and Hyundai Motor India saw their sales dip.

Other major players Mahindra & Mahindra and Kia India reported double digit and single digit year on year growth respectively in vehicle dispatches last month.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI), the country's largest carmaker, reported dispatch of 1,37,776 passenger vehicles in July, a marginal increase from 1,37,463 units in the year-ago period.

The company said sales of

mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 6,822 units against 9,960 units in July 2024.

Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Dzire, Ignis, and Swift, however increased to 65,667 units from 58,682 units a year ago.

Utility vehicles, consisting of Grand Vitara, Brezza, Eriga and XL6, clocked sales of 52,773 units last month over 56,302 units in July last year, a dip of 6 per cent.

In a virtual press meet, MSI Senior Executive Director (Service) Partho Banerjee noted the company is recalibrating dispatches to manage sales network stock levels.

He also said that sales growth in the rural areas has slowed



down to 2-3 per cent as compared with around 10 per cent last year. On sales outlook, Banerjee noted that the upcoming festival season is expected to be positive with early indicators showing booking growth in Kerala.

Hyundai Motor India said its dispatches in the domestic market declined 10 per cent year on year to 43,973 units in July.

Mahindra & Mahindra said it sold 49,871 utility vehicles in the domestic market, a growth of 20 per cent, as compared to 41,623 units in July last year.

Tata Motors said its total passenger vehicle dispatches in the domestic market declined 12 per cent year on year to 39,521 units in July.

Kia India reported an 8 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales to 22,135 units in July. "Our steady sales performance reflects the trust Indian customers continue to place in Kia. This consistency is driven by our commitment to delivering high-quality and

feature-rich vehicles that meet evolving customer needs," Kia India Chief Sales Officer Joonso Cho stated.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor said its sales increased 3 per cent year-on-year to 32,575 units in July.

The Japanese automaker sold 29,159 units in the domestic market.

In the two wheeler space, Bajaj Auto said its total domestic sales (including commercial vehicles) declined 13 per cent to 1,83,143 units in July compared to 210,997 units sold in the corresponding month last year.

Royal Enfield reported a 25 per cent year on year increase in domestic sales at 76,254 units last month as against 61,208 units in the year-ago period.

Siraj, Prasidh tear Eng apart

India lead by 52 runs after fiery pacers lead fightback



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 1: Mohammed Siraj produced a lion-hearted spell and Prasidh Krishna cleaned up the tail to script India's spirited comeback after a brutal assault from England openers on day two of the fifth and final Test here Friday.

After a forgettable opening session where Siraj and Co were taken to the cleaners by Ben Duckett (43 off 38) and Zak Crawley (64 off 57), the Indian pacers redeemed themselves by bowling out England for 247 in the final session, giving the hosts only a slender 23-run lead.

Both Siraj and Prasidh ended with four-wicket hauls.

India lost the reliable KL Rahul (7 off 28) in their second innings to a rare loose shot from the opener. At close, India were 75 for two in 18 overs, leading England by 52 runs.



Yashasvi Jaiswal (51 batting off 49) batted with aggressive intent despite being dropped twice while Sai Sudharsan (11) was trapped in front by Gus Atkinson shortly before stumps.

Jaiswal had got going with three fours in Atkinson's opening over including a sublime straight drive before being given a chance on 20 ad 40. He brought up his third fifty of the series with a ramp off Jamie Overton that went all the way.

Close to stumps, a third catch was dropped when Zak Crawley grassed a regulation chance offered by Sudharsan at third slip.

Before that, England was bowled out in the final session following Harry Brook's belligerent 53 off 64 balls. The highlight of his effort was a falling sweep off Siraj that went all the way for six.

In the afternoon session, Sir-

aj struck thrice in a fiery eight over spell. At tea, England were 215 for seven, effectively eight down with Chris Woakes not available to bat due to a shoulder injury.

The wickets to fall were England's batting mainstay Joe Root (29 off 45), Zak Crawley (64 off 57), stand-in captain Ollie Pope (22 off) and Jacob Bethell (6 off 14).

A heated exchange of words between Root and Prasidh was also among the talking points of the session.

After being blown away by the England opener in the opening session, Indian pacers found their lengths post the break. Prasidh sent back Crawley who mistimed a pull to be pounced at midwicket.

Siraj got rid of Pope and Root with a nip backer before firing an inswinging yorker into Bethell's pads. The pitch

Bumrah's Test future: No show at The Oval triggers debate

The 31-year-old Bumrah bowled 119.4 overs across three Tests and took 14 wickets including two five-wicket hauls at Leeds and Lord's. India's only win of the series thus far came at Edgbaston where Bumrah was rested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 1: India's premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah not taking part in the series decider against England at The Oval has sparked a debate over his Test future.

Considering his injury-ravaged body, it is highly unlikely that Bumrah would ever be fully available for a five-match series in the foreseeable future. The next such assignment isn't until 2027, at home against Australia.

He made himself available for three Tests out of five in England and stuck to his side of the bargain but the followers of the game including greats like Anil Kumble were left wanting more

with the series on the line in the final Test. Him being released from squad on Friday also had the tongues wagging.

India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate called the subject of Bumrah's availability a complex one but considering the risks associated with his fragile back following two surgeries, the team management decided to honour the pace spearhead's decision that he took before the start of the series.

In the near future, India play only two-match Test series against the West Indies and South Africa while the important white ball commitments include the Asia Cup in September and the T20 World Cup at home early next year.

"There is an Asia Cup around the corner, the T20 World Cup is also there. He would want to play those events. Considering his body, he can't play every game. He needs to be managed with extra care. Playing him at The Oval would have been a huge risk. Going forward, there needs to be a clear plan on how to manage Bumrah's Test career," said a BCCI source.

Without a doubt, he figures among the world's best but considering the risks involved, should he be allowed to pick and choose games? Is that fair on the other Indian fast bowlers?

For context, workhorse Mohammed Siraj has featured in all five games of an intensely-fought series.

"I don't think picking and choosing is a fair comment to Bumrah, he did say he was going to play three games, he left it up to us which three he played. We've tried to manage the situation, it's not ideal I guess giving those guys attention, the guys who aren't playing particularly when you're carrying 18 is important," Doeschate said.

The 31-year-old became a household name with his exploits in the shortest format but it did not take him long to gain respect of the opposition after making his Test debut in 2018.

Post the England series, the Indian team selectors will sit down and review the tour. On top of their agenda would be Bumrah's red-ball future. Should he continue to be used sparingly in an important series or sacrifice one format for the other? The picture should be clearer soon.



OFC suspend ops while women's team remain functional, confirms owner

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: Odisha FC has suspended operations amidst the uncertainty regarding the future of the Indian Super League 2025/26 season. Club owner Rohan Sharma took to social media to confirm that while the headlines suggest the club has shut down, that is not entirely the case.

Odisha FC's women side will continue their pre season plans for the upcoming season, with the Indian Women's League 2025-26 season set to begin in September. He also hopes with more and more clubs being forced to suspend their operations, a solution for the future will be taken more efficiently.

"We haven't shut down the club despite the headlines. Key staff members are retained, our women's team will be operational. However, it becomes harder to justify to my stakeholders to sink Crs upon Crs with nothing to show for it, and no end in sight.

"We have -No Clarity when



the League will Start - Nowhere to practice/play/work in Odisha - No way to get sponsorship since there's no season - No way to engage investors with an expiring participation agreement. We hoped something would give, but sadly it hasn't."

"We didn't go into this offseason planning to take this step. In fact we had made 5 signings until it became clear things are delayed. We desperately hope the above issues get resolved; maybe doing this will prompt people to fast-track solutions so we can get back to work," read the thread by Sharma on 'X'.

Lakshya, Mannepalli enter semifinals

SATWIK-CHIRAG CRASH OUT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Macau, August 1: Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen and promising Tharun Mannepalli advanced to the men's singles semifinals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament after registering hard-fought wins here Friday.

Taking the court first, the 23-year-old Mannepalli, ranked 47th in the world, showcased speed and a versatile shot selection to edge out China's 87th ranked Hu Zhe 21-12 13-21 21-18 in a 75-minute battle.

Later in the day, Lakshya, a Commonwealth Games gold medalist and second seed here, eked out a tough 21-14 18-21 21-14 victory over Xuan Chen Zhu of China in his quarterfinal that lasted one hour and three minutes.

Lakshya will be up against fifth seed Alwi Farhan of Indonesia while Mannepalli will



take on Malaysia's Justin Hoh in the last-four round.

This marks Mannepalli's maiden semi-final appearance at a BWF Super 300 event. He had reached the quarterfinals at the German Open in February.

However, Satwiksairaj

Pullela Gopichand Academy four years ago, has focused on improving his fitness, agility, and movement over the past two years. His hard work paid off this week as he also stunned top seed Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong in the last eight.

The Indian, who won gold at the 37th National Games, was trailing 4-7 in the first game before rallying to 12-9. He then took control and scored six straight points from 15-11 to seal the game.

Lakshya had to work hard to get past world number 77 Chen.

The Indian produced a dominating show in the opening game, building on an early 9-4 lead to quickly move to 15-8 and pocketing the game.

However, Chen made a spirited comeback in the second game, erasing a 5-10 and 14-17 deficit to take the match to the decider.

Lakshya got back his bearing in the third game, surging to 7-1 early on and even though Chen made it 9-11, the Indian managed to stay ahead to come up trumps.

Indian teams qualify for London 2026 WTTC



New Delhi: The Indian men's and women's table tennis teams have booked their places for the prestigious World Table Tennis Championships (WTTC) in London after a stellar show at the 2025 South Asia Regional Championships held in Kathmandu. Only 16 coveted Asian quota spots were available per gender. Four regional champions from Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, and West Asia secured direct qualification for the WTTC -- one of the most prestigious events in the international calendar. Both the Indian teams emerged undefeated in the five-nation round-robin format, reaffirming their supremacy in the South Asian region.

Suman shines in U-19 Asian Boxing Championships



Bangkok: Suman Kumari gave India a winning start even as three other boxers were knocked out of the U19 Asian Boxing Championships here Friday. Competing in the women's 48kg category, Suman outclassed Chinese Taipei's Meng-Sin Cheng to record a commanding and unanimous decision win in the morning session and advance to the next round. However, the momentum did not continue for the rest of the Indian contingent. In the men's 50kg division, Aakash Badhwar went down 1:4 in a hard-fought bout against Uzbekistan's Odilshoh Khalimov. Sarthi Saini (70kg) was unable to get past Haosheng Zhang of China, suffering a defeat in his opening bout. The day ended on another disappointing note for India as Lokesh (80kg) lost to Norbek Abdullaev, also from Uzbekistan, in the evening session.

From reluctance to passion: Jamil takes over the reins of Indian football

JAMIL NAMED INDIAN MEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM COACH, TENURE LIKELY TO BE 'TWO OR THREE' YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Khalid Jamil's rise can't exactly be termed as meteoric but the last eight years has been nothing less than extraordinary for the 48-year-old, who Friday took over reins of the national men's football team.

If he decides to take a pause and look back to that summer of 2008, he might have a chuckle about his reluctance and anger after Mumbai FC management wanted him to coach the U-19s despite him being an active senior team player.

What if he would have rejected club's request outright? He didn't and thankfully August 1, once an accidental coach is now at helm of country's national team.

From carrying Aizawl FC to an emotional I-League triumph

Jamil becomes first Indian in 13 years to occupy the coveted post. The last Indian who was the national men's team head coach was Savio Medeira from 2011 to 2012

sons, having made a name for himself for helping teams punch above their weight both in the I-League and the Indian Super League. The unassuming Mumbaikar is a quintessential hard-worker known for meticulous planning before matches. His philosophy has been 'train hard and play harder'.

If one compares Jamil with coaches of yesteryears, closest comparison would be Syed Nayeemuddin, another firm believer in slogging hard at training and enjoying the fruits of labour during matches.

An AFC Pro License Diploma holder, Jamil has long been a trailblazer in Indian football.

Accidental coach

While playing for the Mumbai FC senior team, he was asked to coach the junior side in 2008 and he reluctantly did that, and that changed his life.

"I was in the Mumbai FC senior team but one day I was asked to coach the U19 team. I had the hunger to play in senior team and did not want to coach. I was angry but agreed to coach the junior team," he had said.

"The U19 team did very well, won the league. Since David

Booth has left the senior team, I was asked to take charge of the senior team (in 2009)."

Herculean Task ahead

Jamil will have the tough task of reversing India's poor performances in recent past.

After losing 0-1 to lower-ranked Hong Kong in an away match of the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers June 10, the country has been left in danger of missing out on qualifying for the continental showpiece in 2027.

After the CAFA Nations Cup in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan beginning August 29, India play their AFC Asian Cup qualifying round games Oc-



tober 9 and 14 -- against Singapore home and away.