



Tamannaah's philosophy

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia shares an inspiring glimpse into her personal philosophy through social media

LEISURE | P2



Attacks persist

Russia bombards Ukrainian city hours after US President Donald Trump meets European leaders in Washington

INTERNATIONAL | P10



GST overhaul

FM Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to present the Centre's proposal for rationalising GST rates at a meeting starting August 20 in Delhi

BUSINESS | P11



Itinerary rescheduled

Bangladesh and Kazakhstan have replaced Pakistan and Oman respectively for the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament

SPORTS | P12



Centre to move Bills for removal of PM, CMs held on criminal charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The government is planning to introduce three bills in Parliament Wednesday for the removal of a prime minister, a Union minister, a chief minister or a minister of a Union Territory when arrested or detained on serious criminal charges.

These bills are the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill 2025; the Constitution (One Hundred And Thirtieth Amendment) Bill 2025; and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2025.

There is a need to amend several articles of the Constitution, for providing a legal framework for the removal of the prime minister or a minister and a chief minister, according to official sources.

The objectives of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025, say there is no provision under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 (34 of 2019) for the removal of the chief minister or a minister arrested and detained in custody on account of serious criminal charges.

B Sudershan Reddy Oppn's VP candidate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: Former Supreme Court judge B Sudershan Reddy is the joint candidate of the Opposition parties for the Vice-Presidential polls, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge announced Tuesday, as he called the upcoming election for the country's second-highest office an 'ideological battle'.

Reddy is a former judge of the Supreme Court and the first Lokayukta of Goa. He is also on the Board of Trustees of the International Arbitration and Mediation Centre in Hyderabad.

Reddy would arrive in the national capital Tuesday evening and meet with various Opposition leaders. He will file his nomination August 21. The joint opposition would hold a meeting in the central hall of Samvidhan Sadan (old Parliament building) Wednesday afternoon.

"All Opposition parties have decided to have a common candidate; the decision has been taken unanimously. I am happy that all opposition parties have agreed on one name. It is a big achievement for democracy," Kharge said.



"Whenever democracy and the Constitution are under attack, Opposition parties unite to fight against it. So we have decided to field a good candidate in this election," he said.

Reading out a joint statement of the Opposition parties, Kharge, who is the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, said Reddy is one of India's most "distinguished and progressive jurists." "He is a pro-poor man, and in many of his judgments... he favoured the poor people and also protected the Constitution and fundamental rights," the Congress chief, flanked by various opposition leaders including NCP-SP leader Sharad Pawar, CPI-M's M A Babu, TMC's Derek O'Brien, DMK's Tiruchi Siva and SP's Dharmendra Yadav, said.

PROFILE -P8

Big breakthrough in Sino-Indian ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: In a major thaw in their frosty ties, India and China Tuesday unveiled a series of measures to forge a "stable, cooperative and forward-looking" relationship that included jointly maintaining peace along the frontier, reopening border trade, promoting investment flows, and resuming of direct flight connectivity at the earliest.

The announcements aimed at realising the full development potential of the two Asian giants came amid growing estrangement in ties between India and the US over President Donald Trump's policies on trade and tariff. India and China listed the measures in a joint document after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval over the last two days besides meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two sides agreed that they should earnestly implement the important common understandings reached between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping and promote sustained, sound and steady development of India-China relations.

P9

Cabinet okays 6-lane Bhubaneswar Bypass



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of a six-lane access-controlled capital region ring road (Bhubaneswar Bypass) in Odisha on Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs 8,307.74 crore, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Tuesday.

Currently, connectivity between Rameshwar and Tangi on the existing National Highway experience significant congestion due to high traffic volumes, passing through highly urbanised cities Khordha, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. To address these challenges, the 110 km-long project is proposed to be developed as a 6-lane access-controlled greenfield highway, an official statement said.

"The project will provide significant benefit to Odisha and other eastern States by diverting heavy commercial traffic away from Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Khordha Cities. This will enhance the efficiency of freight movement, reducing logistics cost and driving socio-economic growth in the region," it said.

The project alignment integrates with three major National Highways (NH-55, NH-57 and NH-655) and one State Highway (SH-65), providing seamless connectivity to key economic, social, and logistics nodes across Odisha.

The statement also said that the upgraded corridor will enhance multi-modal integration by connecting with a major railway station, an airport, a proposed multi-modal logistics park (MMLP), and two major

CM thanks Centre

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi thanked the Centre for approving the project, calling it a landmark infrastructure initiative that will decongest major urban centres and boost the economy. He said the project will also enhance logistics efficiency and open new avenues for economic growth and prosperity in Odisha and the eastern region. "I extend my sincere gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji and Hon'ble Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Shri @nitin_gadkari ji for according approval to the construction of the 6-Lane Access-Controlled Capital Region Ring Road (Bhubaneswar Bypass - 110.875 km) in Odisha at a total cost of ₹ 8,307.74 crore," Majhi posted on X.

ports, thereby facilitating faster movement of goods and passengers across the region.

Upon completion, the bypass will play a pivotal role in regional economic growth, strengthening connectivity between major religious and economic centres and opening new avenues for trade and industrial development. "The project will also generate approximately 74.43 Lakhs person-days of direct and 93.04 lakh person-days of indirect employment," it said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Only 10% ! We've cut everything by 50% just to survive

13-yr-old fights off crocodile

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajkanika, August 19: A 13-year-old boy from Khunta village in Jaynagar panchayat under this block in Kendrapara district, narrowly escaped death Tuesday after fighting off a crocodile attack.

Rakesh, son of farmer Ratnakar Mallick and a student of Class-VIII, was carrying lunch for his father working in the fields around 2:15 pm. He



went to wash a kettle at Khunta creek, a water channel linked to the Brahmani River, when a crocodile suddenly attacked him and bit his left thigh.

Rakesh screamed for help and grabbed a near-

by cane shrub to resist. Hearing cries, his father rushed to the spot and pulled him away from the reptile.

Rakesh sustained deep wounds on his left thigh, with part of the flesh below the knee torn. Villagers rushed him to the local community health center, where doctors administered him first aid before shifting him to the Kendrapara district headquarters hospital for advanced treatment.

DHARITRI
YOUTH
CONCLAVE 2025

DHARITRI
YOUTH
CONCLAVE
2025

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Inviting young people and youth organisations of Odisha deeply engaged in climate action with local communities.

Kindly send us entries of your work with simple bio description (250-300 words) with 4 high resolution photos, a video of your climate action activities & future climate action plan to get a chance to win the prestigious Dharitri Climate Grant.

You can also nominate someone else by following the same process.

Selected entries will be awarded the Dharitri Climate Grant as encouragement and impetus for their climate action work at Dharitri Youth Conclave 2025 to be held in November at Bhubaneswar.

Chosen entries will also get invited to attend the Conclave along with young climate warriors and experts in the field.

Last Date of Entry : 10th October 2025

Please send details to : dharitriyouthconclave@gmail.com

Visit : www.dharitriyouthconclave.com for details

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YOUTH FOR CLIMATE

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ARIES
Ganesha says you are going to have the time of your life; that is if you make the right plans. At work, there will be the usual ups and downs. But plan the evening well and you may surprise yourself. Try candlelights, roses, music.

TAURUS
It is quite possible that today, you will remain decisive and determined on new joint ventures, predicts Ganesha. The results may fall below your expectations in the afternoon. Fight off stress with a candlelight dinner with your sweetheart, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
It is quite probable that your sweetheart will take most of your time either in person or in thoughts, predicts Ganesha. A casual conversation with someone special in the afternoon may lead to exhilarating moments later in the day. You may fill your wardrobe with new clothes.

CANCER
Today, you will feel blessed. And blessed you are, indeed. You will have the proverbial Midas touch, albeit with a slight difference: you will not touch the people you love and turn them to gold. You will just touch their heart and make them happier.

LEO
There are good days, bad days, and then there are days like today, when Ganesha foresees a mixed bag of fortunes for you. Make your family the centre of your world, and show them the love and affection that they deserve. Early in the day, you may make an attempt to sever ties with your spouse or life partner. Proceed cautiously and deal with this in an open manner. Just make sure that the tension does not escalate within the family.

VIRGO
Handicrafts business will fascinate you today, predicts Ganesha. People will be left wondering what fuels all that dedication and commitment – at work and at home! Ganesha advises you to consummate those bonds of love and roll in the hay with your spouse.

LIBRA
Ganesha's got a feeling that today is going to be a good day for you, as you go ahead and indulge yourself and the ones around you. Chances are that you may shop till you drop, and spend a sizeable amount buying goodies for your loved ones later in the evening. In matters of business, Ganesha foresees you displaying your maturity, and setting an example for others in the team.

SCORPIO
Self-improvement is on your mind today. Self-employed people should expect good profits in business. Expenditure may be more at work today. At the end of the day, the cocktail of work and family will be a heady, pleasing mixture, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
You act responsible today, and plan a secured future for your kids. For that matter, you go for long-term investments. You will put in extra efforts at work and come out with flying colours. In the evening, you are in a mood to paint the town red. Have a lovely evening!

CAPRICORN
In total control of yourself, you will have the tendency to dominate those around you. It's a trait that keeps resurging at intervals, making you feel all powerful, says Ganesha. Later in the day, you may even enrol yourself for a personality development course to hone your communication and professional skills. But it won't be sailing smooth all throughout. An unfortunate incident at the end of the day may take you off guard, so be careful of your moves, Ganesha advises.

AQUARIUS
Time is money, and you need to understand it fast! Scrap your old schedules and plan new ones that work. Ganesha suggests that the good old planner will work wonders in organising your work. Remember the old adage? A stitch in time saves nine. So get going.

PISCES
Friends are the subject of all your activities today. You will make new acquaintances that will prove to be helpful in times of need. A loved one will make you happy like you've never been before. A candlelight dinner with your sweetheart is probably in the offing, says Ganesha.



RENEE ZELLWEGER TURNS DIRECTOR WITH *THEY*

Actor Renee Zellweger presented her directorial debut, *They*, a hand-drawn and animated seven-minute short, at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. In an interview with entertainment news outlet *The Hollywood Reporter*, the *Bridget Jones* star shared the inspiration behind her project.

FERRER ACCUSES BALDONI OF HARASSMENT

Justin Baldoni faces fresh harassment allegations from Isabela Ferrer, an actress in *It Ends With Us*, amid his legal battle with Blake Lively. Ferrer has accused Baldoni of harassing her in connection with his ongoing legal battle with Lively.



announce her next project, she continues to remain in the public eye.

AGENCIES

Tamannaah on power of audacity

Mumbai: Tamannaah Bhatia recently shared an inspiring glimpse into her personal philosophy through social media. Taking to Instagram stories, the actress posted a motivational quote originally written by mindfulness educator Case Kenny, reflecting on the power of audacity in shaping one's life. The quote read, "I have a theory that life meets you at your level of audacity."

In a follow-up slide, she elaborated on the idea of audacity, describing it as the courage to directly ask for what one wants instead of waiting for opportunities to arrive. The post highlighted the importance of confidence, decisiveness, and action, suggesting that life rewards those who embrace boldness rather than hesitation. Tamannaah's choice of message resonated strongly with her audience, offering a window into her mindset of self-belief and proactive living.

On the professional front, Tamannaah continues to maintain a busy schedule. She was most recently seen in the thriller *Odela 2* and has a series of high-profile projects lined up. These include Rohit Shetty's untitled biographical drama opposite John Abraham, the action entertainer *Ranger* with Ajay Devgn and Sanjay Dutt, and the folk thriller *Vvan – Force of the Forest*, co-directed by Deepak Kumar Mishra and Arunabh Kumar, alongside Sidharth Malhotra.

AGENCIES



Mumbai: In an era where social media often dictates how people measure their value, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan is reminding audiences to look inward. The actor and former Miss World, featured in a new video for a cosmetic brand's Lessons of Worth series, spoke candidly about the dangers of tying self-worth to online validation.

Aishwarya noted that many people today depend heavily on likes, comments, and curated images to feel accepted, but warned that true self-worth cannot

and should not be defined by digital approval. Drawing from her perspective as both a woman and a mother, she emphasised that the growing influence of social media mirrors the pressures of society, often affecting not just young people but also impressionable adults. Calling it a "grave concern," she urged individuals to stop seeking validation externally and instead recognise that worth comes from within. She ended with a powerful reassurance: "You are worth it—believe it."

The message resonated strongly with fans, who praised her authenticity and called her words powerful. On the professional front, Aishwarya was last seen in Mani Ratnam's *Ponniyin Selvan: I and II*. While she has yet to an-

Aishwarya redefines self-worth



Mrunal's part joy, part terror

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur decided to 'open a piece of her heart' by dropping some candid clicks from her camera. From a posing shadow in the sand to the beauty of the endless sea, the Sita Ramam actress has captured it all.

Her album further included a calming still of a church, along with a photo of a bartender at work.

Through her latest post, Mrunal also expressed her love for photography, saying:

"I have always believed that "A picture is worth a thousand words"... and ever since I started taking my love for photography more seriously, I feel it even more. Photography is one of my fav things and I want to know and do more. I've always had this keeda in me to learn, to explore, to pick up every little thing that sparks curiosity."

She revealed that she decided to move her passion to practice last year when she brought home her first Leica camera.

"It was part joy and part terror! I was so excited to start clicking pictures and also terrified that I would be terrible at it. But I decided to take the leap and at least try..." she added.

On the professional front, Mrunal will next be seen in *Dacoit*, opposite Adivi Sesh.

AGENCIES

John speaks up on US tariffs

ing movie President Donald Trump

The actor, who has a keen wants to soften the blow of the alternative markets

Talking about how the I would face hurdles concerned, but I want to make. We wanted to Eastern geopolitics for happens in the Mid-that matter, whatever on India". Talking with Trump 25% or



Mumbai: Bollywood actor John Abraham, who is receiving a lot of positive response for his recently released stream-*Tehran*, has spoken up on the heavy tariffs levied by US on India, and how they can be countered.

interest in geo-politics, has shared that if India the tariffs, then the nation needs to look at for its exports.

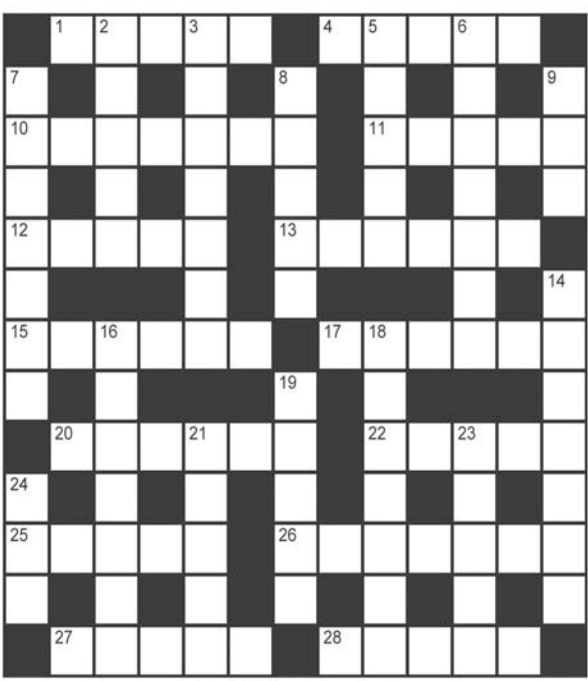
makers mounted *Tehran* he said, "I knew with the censor board and everyone ed a voice and to make the film I wanted break down the complexities of Middle our audiences and explain that what dle East has an impact on India or, for happens in the world has an impact about the tariffs, he said, "Even today, and his tariffs, a lot of us don't care about 50%, but yes, they are going to have a massive impact on India. The good news is that we are pretty sound as a country. If we have to address this tariff, we have to look at alternative markets. So, for people who think this is not going to affect our country, it is going to affect our country".

AGENCIES



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Condition
4 Certain berth
10 Type
11 Happen
12 Weeper of myth
13 Garrisons
15 Being
17 Fishing spot
20 Neutron star
22 Ring-tailed animal

- 25 Earthy colour
26 Contemplating
27 Viper
28 Lazybones

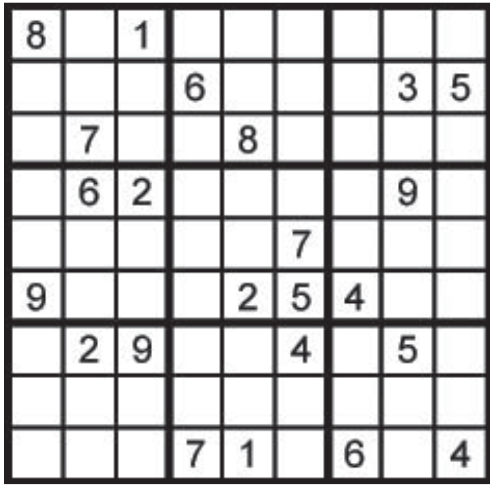
Down

- 2 Trunk
3 Spear
5 Snapshot
6 One that got away
7 Retaliator

- 8 Bring together
9 Sphere
14 Encroach
16 Strengthen
18 Undertook
19 Pulitzer Prize category
21 Kind of preview
23 Light-footed
24 Watch pocket

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Pending Ayushman Bharat dues hit patients, pvt hosps

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) are facing difficulties in availing healthcare services at private hospitals across the state as a staggering ₹2,034.6 crore dues is pending on the government.

After the fall of BJD government in the state, the BJP replaced Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) with AB-PMJAY in April 2025 which promises health insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh per family per annum. However, beneficiaries under this scheme have started

IN A NUTSHELL

«A staggering ₹2,034.6 crore owed to 40 private hospitals in Odisha has been pending since the last quarter

«Several patients alleged they are unable to access services at private hospitals that were previously available under BSKY

«It is suggested that a designated nodal officer, as existed in BSKY, should be appointed for proper functioning of AB-PMJAY

experiencing issues since then.

Several patients alleged they are unable to access services at private hospitals that were earlier available under BSKY. Some alleged that they are being asked to pay for treatments which were previously available for free. This compels them to seek treatment elsewhere, thereby increasing their financial burden.

Pramod Kumar Das, a renal cancer patient from the Capital City who is currently undergoing treatment at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, said that treatments such as immunotherapy and chemotherapy were accessible under BSKY but are now unavailable under Ayushman Bharat. “Under Ayushman

Bharat, I was sanctioned two therapies, but last month the hospital refused to provide the treatment, saying the government is no longer sanctioning immunotherapy under this (AB-PMJAY) card,” he said. Similarly, a relative of another can-



cer patient said, “Previously, my sister received all the facilities under BSKY. But after the rollout of the new scheme, we faced several issues. We had to avail paid chemotherapy, and later the hospital neglected the patient, forcing us to shift her to another hospital where we availed paid treatment.”

Meanwhile, private hospitals have expressed dissatisfaction over capped package rates and long delays in reimbursement, which they say are making it difficult to provide quality care without passing costs onto patients.

Reports suggest that bills to the tune of ₹1.21 lakh crore remain pending at the national level, while ₹2,034.6 crore owed to 40 private hospitals in Odisha has been pending since the last quarter.

As a result, many private hospitals in the state have either curtailed or denied treatment under AB-PMJAY.

Indramani Jena, director of Hillside Nursing Home in Bhubaneswar, said, “It was mentioned in the MoU that dues would be cleared within a month. However, we have not received reimbursement even after four months. Since we are

running a private hospital, we cannot continue like this. We have stopped providing services under Ayushman Bharat until the dues are cleared.”

Similarly, Debadatta Kumar Sahu, director of Shree Hospitals, said, “Apart from the payment issues, the scheme’s complex processes are creating confusion among patients.

BSKY also had issues, but they were rectified immediately when we complained. In case of Ayushman Bharat, the response is very slow. Though the scheme has its advantages, people are currently facing its drawbacks. We haven’t received any payments for the last four months. It is an uphill task for us to treat Ayushman Bharat patients with hospital funds. The government must clear the dues immediately and bring in reforms to the scheme.”

Ashwini Group of Hospitals chairman Subrat Kumar Jena said, “The long-pending dues are creating serious problems for private hospitals, and the low package rates in some cases have worsened the situation. Running a private hospital involves multiple expenses, and managing them under these circumstances is really difficult. At the same time, it is our duty to attend to patients. We hope the government clears the dues soon.”

Gouranga Mohapatra, convener of Jana Swasthya Abhiyan, emphasised the need for robust reforms to ensure smooth functioning of the scheme. “The government should clear dues on time to maintain continuity. A designated nodal officer, as existed in BSKY, should be appointed for proper functioning. The technical systems must also be stabilised and lengthy procedures streamlined.” Moreover, there should be a clear grievance redressal mechanism for both patients and hospitals, Mohapatra added.

IN MEMORIAM

Educationist Mousumi Parida being conferred with ‘Sarala Devi Saraswat Samman’ at a function organised at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack, as part of 121st birth anniversary celebrations of renowned freedom fighter Sarala Devi, Tuesday



COURTESY CALL: British Deputy High Commissioner, East & North East, Andrew Fleming shares his thoughts with **Dharitri** and **Orissa POST** Editor Tathagata Satpathy and the dailies' Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy at the twin publications' office in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

PHOTO: MANORANJAN MESHA

Portion of BMC office ceiling collapses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: A portion of the false ceiling at Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) office collapsed Tuesday morning, raising serious safety concerns about the newly built civic body building.

According to reports, the incident took place around 9am. A small portion of the ceiling collapsed inside the underground floor of the BMC building. However, nobody was injured in the incident.

A BMC staffer said they heard a loud noise and when they came to the spot saw the fallen debris of the ceiling on the floor.



Mayor Sulochana Das said, “The ceiling might have collapsed due to seepage from the air conditioner. It has been two years since the building is being used and the condition of the structure is absolutely fine. This is normal and it often happens in our houses as well.”

It is to be noted that the BMC office building was inaugurated February 16, 2023 by the then Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The building is part of Bhubaneswar Smart City project.

HC: No need to monitor BP of forest job aspirants

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 19: The Orissa High Court has ruled that there is no such requirement to monitor the blood pressure (BP) of the candidates aspiring for forest officers’ post and to disqualify them from the recruitment test solely on the basis of BP measurement.

The High Court’s direction came in the wake of a batch of writ petitions filed by at least nine candidates for the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) and Forest Ranger post who were disqualified for the physical endurance test after qualifying the written test.

Describing the petitioners’ disqualification as arbitrary and illegal, a single-judge bench of Justice Aditya Kumar Mohapatra Monday said, “The Court is of the considered view that there is no such provision to disqualify a candidate only on the basis of the measurement of blood pressure of such candidates. Therefore, this Court has no hesitation in coming to a conclusion that the Opposite Parties (government have committed a gross error of law by not adhering to the terms and conditions of the advertisement as well as the Rules, 2013 and, as such, their conduct can very well be declared as illegal and arbitrary.”

The petitioners who were disqualified from appearing the physical endurance test have already qualified the combined written test of Forest Ranger



and ACF posts.

They sought High Court’s intervention seeking a direction to the state government to allow them to participate in the next phase of recruitment test, i.e. Physical Endurance Test of Walking, and to permit them to participate in the viva voce test.

In May, 2023, the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) published an online notification for recruitment to 45 ACF posts (Group A - JB) and 131 Forest Ranger (Group-B) posts under the Odisha Forest Service Cadre.

The petitioners alleged that the digital instrument for measuring BP was a faulty one and the same did not reflect the correct reading.

The recruitment clause provided that the candidates must pass the physical endurance test of walking which has been prescribed as 25 km in four hours for male candidates and 16 km in four hours

for female candidates.

“The Court directs the Opposite Parties to allow the petitioners to participate in the physical endurance test subject to the petitioners furnishing an undertaking supported by a certificate from a registered medical practitioner/physician that their blood pressure is normal. Such physical endurance tests be conducted by the opposite parties within a period of four weeks from the date of communication of this order,” Justice Mohapatra directed the state government in the order.

It is needless to mention here that in the event the petitioners are found suitable in the physical endurance test, they shall be allowed to participate in further recruitment process, the court said. The final result of the recruitment shall depend upon the performance of the petitioners in such test, the order read.

CIVIC, POLITICAL & WILDLIFE ISSUES

3 bandhs disrupt life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Three bandhs in different areas of Odisha over various local issues Tuesday brought life to a standstill with shops remaining shut and vehicular traffic off the roads.

In Cuttack district’s Salipur, opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) observed an eight-hour bandh from 6am to 2pm demanding Notified Area Council (NAC) status for the town.

The bandh brought the town to a standstill, with markets, shops, and transport services shut during the agitation.

Salipur MLA Prasanta Behera led a blockade on the busy Cuttack-Chandbali highway at Kuanpal Square, joined by party workers and residents.

“The people of Salipur have been demanding NAC status for over 40 years. The previous BJD government had initiated the process, but the current BJP government is ignoring our rightful demand,” said Behera.

In Tarbha NAC of Sonepur district, political outfits including the BJD observed a 12-hour bandh to protest the August 12 assault on elected representatives.

A group of miscreants reportedly attacked the block chairperson, a sarpanch, and a samiti member in broad daylight when they were heading to report alleged irregularities in block administration. Widespread outrage followed the circulation of video footage of the assault.

The bandh was observed demanding action against the miscreants.

A 12-hour bandh was also been observed in G Udayagiri area of Kandhamal district from 6am demanding relocation of a wild tusker, which killed three people in the past three months and destroyed crops in the region, locals said.

The bandh, supported by several organisations and residents from eight panchayats, led to a complete shutdown of vehicular movement in the region besides markets remaining closed.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Depression: Heavy rain lashes state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Heavy rain lashed Odisha Tuesday as the low-pressure area (Lopar) over Bay of Bengal intensified

into a depression, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Among the districts that received heavy rain are Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Gajapati and Kandhamal, it said. “The depression over north-west and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and north

Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts moved north-north-westwards with a speed of seven kmph during the past six hours and crossed South Odisha coast close to Gopalpur during early morning,” the IMD said in its 9:20am bulletin.

The weather system is likely to move north-westwards across south Odisha and south Chhattisgarh, and weaken into a well-marked low-pressure area during the next six hours, it said. Rain is likely in most parts of the state till August 23, off-



Rainwater overflows on Saberi river bridge, disrupting communication between Malkangiri district in Odisha and Sukma district in Chhattisgarh

cials said.

Landslides, submergence of roads and bridges, and uprooting of trees were reported from southern districts of Malkangiri, Koraput and Nabarangpur, they said.

The weatherman said sea condition is very likely to be rough along the Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal coast during the period, advising fishermen not to venture out.

OP PHOTO

4TH CII EAST INDIA SUMMIT 2025

Dy CM Singh Deo showcases Odisha’s investment potential



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo highlighted Odisha’s vast investment potential while addressing the 4th Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) East India Summit 2025, held Tuesday in Mumbai.

The summit, a flagship initiative of CII, aims to unlock Eastern India’s economic potential through state-focused sessions, policy roundtables, and investor-government dialogues.

In his keynote address, Singh Deo said, “Odisha presents a strong investment proposition with its rich mineral resources, deep-water ports, robust rail and road connectivity, ample land, and natural resources supporting port-led industrial growth.”

He highlighted Odisha’s strategic

ODISHA IS DEVELOPING INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND EXPORT CORRIDORS WITH STRONG LOGISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND GREENFIELD PROJECTS

THE STATE HAS LAUNCHED 56 PROJECTS WORTH ₹1.78 LAKH CRORE, CREATING 1.11 LAKH JOBS, WITH A TARGET OF ONE LAKH NEW JOBS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

tegic approach in building integrated industrial ecosystems and export-oriented manufacturing corridors, ensuring strong logistics and market access. Reiterating the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, “This is the right time to invest in East India,” and invited industrialists to explore strategic partnerships in Odisha—ranging

from anchor manufacturing and advanced technology to greenfield value chains.

Showcasing Odisha’s economic progress, he said, “Our government has already grounded a record 56 projects amounting to ₹1.78 lakh crore in investments, with a job potential of 1.11 lakh. We are targeting the creation of one lakh new jobs, ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth.”

The Summit brought together key policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs to discuss the region’s developmental roadmap. Other prominent attendees included Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Samrat Choudhary, Industries Minister of Bihar Nitish Mishra, Finance Minister of Chhattisgarh OP Choudhary, Chairman of CII Eastern Region Shashwat Goenka, Chairman of CII Western Region Rishi Kumar Bagla, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of MSME department, Odisha D Prasanth Kumar Reddy, along with administrative officers, investors, and industry leaders from across Eastern India.

The CII East India Summit 2025 reaffirmed its role as a catalyst in transforming Eastern India into an economic powerhouse through collaborative policymaking, industry participation, and regional synergy.

Women empowerment a top priority, says CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Women’s empowerment remains the top priority of the state government, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Tuesday. He made the remarks while addressing the Rising Odisha Conclave as chief guest, organised by News18 Odia in association with print media partners **OrissaPOST** and **Dharitri** in Bhubaneswar.

“Schemes like Subhadra Yojana reflect our strong commitment. Within just one year, we have created 17 lakh Lakhpati Didis, ensured ₹800 additional per quintal under Samruddha Krushak Yojana, and implemented Ayushman Bharat in Odisha,” the CM said.

The CM highlighted key



achievements, including resolving 14 grievances in 14 months with over 90 per cent success, launching Shishu Batika for early childhood education, and strengthening primary education through the Godabarish Mishra Adarsha Prathamik

Vidyalaya scheme. “In just 14 months, we have come much closer to the people,” he remarked.

On industrialisation, Majhi cited the Make in Odisha and Textile Conclaves, reaffirming zero tolerance towards corrup-

tion. “Over 28,000 jobs have been given, and recruitment of 85,000 more is underway. Focusing on present-day excellence will lead us towards a Prosperous Odisha,” he added.

Appreciating News18’s role, he noted, “Its extensive coverage and programmes like Asal Katha have gained wide acceptance in every corner of Odisha.”

Earlier, Editor Narendra Jena welcomed the gathering. The conclave featured sessions with Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik, Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment department Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee, and a panel with social media influencers on youth and digital trends.

DA case: Vig nabs Angul Irrigation Div Engineer

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Vigilance sleuths Tuesday arrested Surendra Behera, Superintending Engineer of Irrigation Division, Angul, in a disproportionate assets (DA) case.

According to the Vigilance Directorate, Behera will be forwarded to the Court of the Special Judge, Vigilance, Sundargarh, for possession of DA.

Searches conducted on his properties revealed that Behera owned assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

These include two multi-storied buildings, as many flats in Bhubaneswar, four high-value plots, cash amounting to ₹2.33 lakh, and deposits of approximately ₹54 lakh, which he failed to account for satisfactorily.

In a separate case, Kumuda Chandra Pradhan, former assistant engineer (estimator) in the office of the Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Balasore, was convicted Tuesday by the Special Judge, Vigilance, Balasore.

He was sentenced to three years of rigorous imprisonment and fined ₹50,000.

Pradhan had been charge-sheeted by the Vigilance under Sections 13(2) read with 13(1)(d)/7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹10,000 from a contractor to process agreement papers related to a work order.

WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

UPC, Ketaki host photo exhibitions, workshops



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Utkala Photography Foundation Trust (UPC) and Ketaki Foundation Trust celebrated World Photography Day Tuesday in Bhubaneswar with photo exhibitions, workshops, and other activities highlighting the art and value of photography.

UPC marked the occasion at Lalit Kala Akademi with the 6th edition of its annual photo festival, Chitrabarnali 2025. The five-day festival, running until August 25, will showcase a total of 120 photographic frames as part of the exhibition.

The inaugural day was attended by Mayor Sulochana Das, Nayagarh MLA Arun Kumar Sahoo, MLA Ananta

Narayan Jena, former Mumbai Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik, and other dignitaries. Visitors admired the photographs on display and praised the photographers for their work.

Similarly, Ketaki Foundation Trust, in collaboration with Silicon University and the Silicon Photography Club, celebrated World Photography Day with a photo exhibition, Obscura 2025, held on the university campus. The event was attended by Satyabhushan Hota, trustee of Ketaki Foundation Trust, Jaideep Talukdar, Vice-Chancellor of Silicon University, renowned photographer DK Pattanayak and other dignitaries.

Pattanayak delivered a talk on “Trends in Photography”, while photographer and author Pramod Dhal showcased a curated collection of his nature and wildlife photographs. Participating students were also awarded for their work. The event saw the presence of eminent guests, acclaimed photographers, and enthusiastic students. Alongside the exhibition, discussions on photography were held, with a student photo display drawing significant attention. An interactive Q&A session allowed students to engage with expert photographers and clarify their queries.

Naveen’s health shows improvement: Hospital

BHUBANESWAR: The health condition of BJD chief Naveen Patnaik has significantly improved, the hospital where he is undergoing treatment said Tuesday. Patnaik, the former chief minister, is fully stable, talking to doctors, and doing well, it said. “There has been a significant improvement in the health condition of Shri Naveen Patnaik,” it added. Patnaik, the leader of the opposition in the Assembly, was admitted to SUM Ultimate Medicare Sunday evening due to dehydration. He was shifted from the observation room to a cabin Monday. In a video message Monday, Patnaik said the hospital staff was taking ‘wonderful’ care of him. He asked his anxious supporters to meet him at the Naveen Niwas after his discharge from the hospital. His supporters from across the state had thronged the hospital. State Congress president Bhakta Charan Das said, “Visitors were not allowed into Patnaik’s room as per the doctor’s advice. I met his close aide VK Pandian, his wife Sujata and other leaders of BJD and enquired about his health. As chief of a political party in the state, I went to the hospital to meet the former chief minister.” Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling and Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan, who visited the hospital Sunday, were also not allowed into Patnaik’s room when he was under observation.

BJD delegation meets ECI, flags poll irregularities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: A Biju Janata Dal (BJD) delegation met the Election Commission of India (ECI) in New Delhi Tuesday to submit suggestions aimed at strengthening the electoral process.

The delegation included BJD senior vice president Debi Prasad Mishra, former MP Amar Patnaik, ex-minister Sanjay Das Burma, former Speaker Pramila Mallick, MP Sulata Deo, Priyabrata Majhi, and other party leader

During the meeting, the BJD raised concerns over alleged irregularities in the 2024 simultaneous General and Assembly elections. The party highlighted unexplained differences between votes polled and counted, discrepancies in MP and MLA segment tallies, and a sudden spike in voter turnout after 5 pm.

The delegation also expressed dissatisfaction over not receiving Form 17C despite repeated

requests. The ECI reportedly acknowledged that the form should have been provided.

The delegation also raised transparency concerns in constituencies, including Jajpur, and called for reforms in electoral roll preparation to safeguard the rights of migrants and temporary workers.

Mishra stressed that while NRIs enjoy enrolment rights, denying the same to migrants could trigger socio-cultural tensions. The ECI assured flexibility in enrolment timelines.

On the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Odisha, Patnaik cautioned against a hasty exercise similar to Bihar, where genuine voters were allegedly disenfranchised. The BJD emphasised that SIR must be inclusive, transparent, and consultative, warning that the party may launch agitational programmes if voter rights and transparency concerns are not addressed.

PARTY RAISES CONCERNS OVER ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES IN THE 2024 POLLS, CITING MISMATCHED VOTE COUNTS, DISCREPANCIES IN MP-MLA TALLIES

DEMANDS INCLUSIVITY IN SIR PROCESS, THREATENS STIR OVER VOTER RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



the City Forest Division.

At Tuesday’s launch, Mayor Sulochana Das and Commissioner Chanchal Rana

were joined by Deputy Mayor Manjulata Kahur, City DFO Bishwaraj Panda, local corporators, senior BMC and Forest Department officials, residents, senior citizens, NGO volunteers, and members of women’s self-help groups.

As part of the Prime Minister’s call – ‘One Tree for My Mother’, the Mayor urged the public to plant trees in the name of their mothers. She further stated that BMC is committed to making Bhubaneswar a green, beautiful, and healthy

City. Citizens were encouraged to actively participate in the initiative and plant trees in their nearby open spaces or backyards.

Rana emphasised that if each citizen collaborates with BMC and the Forest department by planting and caring for trees around them, it would help reduce temperature and ensure cleaner air for all.

Earlier, BMC had established a Miyawaki forest on 1.5 acres of government land in Ward No. 6, Sundarpada, Pokhari-put area.

BMC launches major plantation drive in Patrapada

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 19: Aiming to make Bhubaneswar cleaner, greener, and healthier, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Tuesday launched a major tree plantation drive in the Patrapada area. Led by Mayor Sulochana Das and Commissioner Chanchal Rana, BMC plans to plant over 3,000 trees of various species at Maharaja Khela Padia (Raj Padia) within the Patrapada locality.

This tree plantation initia-

tive is part of BMC’s ongoing efforts to expand green zones and promote sustainability in the City. Last year, BMC had planted over 8,000 trees of fruit-bearing, medicinal, ornamental, and evergreen species at the same location.

These trees have shown a 100 per cent survival rate and are now gradually developing into a small urban forest. Building on this success, BMC is now creating similar urban forests using the Miyawaki method in various locations, in collaboration with

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	87.05 ▼ 0.36	SENSEX	24980.65 ▲ 103.70	GOLD	₹99,318 ▼ ₹83
EURO	101.8 ▼ 0.42	NIFTY	81644.39 ▲ 370.64	SILVER	₹113,426 ▼ ₹166

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	30.6°	29.8°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain or thundershower.
Min Temp	25.4°	23.4°	
Humidity	91%	97%	
Rainfall	4.3mm	13.2mm	


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“

If you can always smile at life,
life will always smile at you.

THE MOTHER



‘TACO’ Effect

It is interesting to note US President Donald Trump keeps changing his deadline for imposing new tariffs on goods from China, while he does not show any wavering when it comes to other countries, including India and also his European allies. In May, the US and China had averted an economic catastrophe by reducing massive tariffs they had slapped in April on each other’s products, which had reached as high as 145 per cent against China and 125 per cent against the US. Both countries seem to have struck a secret deal between themselves which others are not privy to.

Those triple-digit tariffs threatened to effectively end trade between the US and China, causing a frightening sell-off in financial markets. In a May meeting in Geneva, both agreed to back off and keep talking: America’s tariffs went back down to a still-high 30 per cent and China’s to 10 per cent. The “reciprocal tariffs” Trump initially rolled out in early April were quickly paused for 90 days. But, Trump extended a trade truce with China for another 90 days on 11 August, only a day before the earlier deadline was to expire. This was obviously to delay, once again, a dangerous showdown between the world’s two biggest economies and military powers.

The pause buys time for the two countries to iron out some of their differences, Trump’s intent seemingly being to prepare the groundwork for a summit later this year between him and Chinese President Xi Jinping which has been widely welcomed by US companies doing business with China. The pause will also give time for the two governments to negotiate a trade agreement that US businesses hope would improve their market access in China and provide the certainty needed for companies to make medium and long-term plans for agriculture and energy exports and manufacturing electronic goods.

Trump’s trade policies have turned the US from one of the most open economies in the world into a protectionist fortress. The average US tariff has gone from around 2.5 per cent at the start of the year to 18.6 per cent, the highest since 1933. The European Union, Japan and other trading partners do not have the economic muscle like China and hence had to agree to lopsided trade deals with Trump, accepting once unthinkable US high tariffs of 15 per cent on Japanese and EU imports.

China could rebuff Trump’s tariff aggression using it as a cudgel to extort concessions from trading partners because it has a cudgel of its own which is cutting off or slowing access to its rare earth minerals and magnets used in everything from electric vehicles to jet engines. The outcome is the US decision in June to pull back export restrictions on computer chip technology and ethane needed in petrochemical production, while China too agreed to make it easier for US firms to get access to rare earths.

It appears Trump has realised China is not only a hard nut to crack, but also the US itself does not have the upper hand so far as China is concerned. In this sense it is highly appropriate for a journalist from the Financial Times, Robert Armstrong, to coin the sobriquet of “TACO” to describe Trump’s politico-economic actions and erratic approach to tariffs. TACO is an acronym for “Trump Always Chickens Out.” Three months later, it is quite possible that the TACO theory truly applies to the American President’s policy toward China only.

The world, especially India, needs to learn so much from China which has not got its economic and military prowess overnight, but through hard work and discipline undergoing periodic socio-cultural convulsions. If India is forced to gravitate towards China through Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet scheduled to be held from 31 August to 1 September and other means due to Trump’s heavily tilted policy towards Pakistan at its cost and conciliatory overtures to China, New Delhi itself is to blame. It has, for far too long, been lulled into complacency for its misplaced pride in its strength among the international community and the ill conceived notion of being the Vishwaguru.

WISDOM CORNER

“

By all means let’s be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains drop out.

RICHARD DAWKINS

“

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

HELEN KELLER

“

History is an account, mostly false, of events, mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers, mostly knaves, and soldiers, mostly fools.

AMBROSE BIERCE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1741:** Danish explorer Vitus Bering, who was working for Russia, encountered Alaska.
- **1914:** The German army captured Brussels during the initial German invasion of World War I.
- **1940:** Russian revolutionary and founder of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky was attacked in his home by an undercover agent of the Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs or N.K.V.D. He died a day later due to the injuries sustained during the attack.
- **1968:** The Warsaw Pact nations (except Romania and Albania), led by the Soviet Union, invaded Czechoslovakia to put an end to the Prague Spring.
- **1975:** The robotic U.S. spacecraft Viking 1, built to explore the surface of Mars, was launched this day in 1975 and nearly one year later landed on Chryse Planitia, a flat lowland region in the northern hemisphere of the planet.
- **1988:** The Iran-Iraq War comes to an end after 7 years. The deadly conventional war between the two Middle Eastern countries began when Iraq invaded Iran on September 22, 1980.

LOL

HORSE PULLS THE CAR

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, “Pull, Nellie, pull.” Buddy didn’t move. Then the farmer hollered, “Pull, Buster, pull.” Buddy didn’t respond. Once more the farmer commanded, “Pull, Jennie, pull.” Nothing.

Then the farmer nonchalantly said, “Pull, Buddy, pull.” And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. The farmer said, “Oh, Buddy is blind, and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn’t even try!”



Ian Bremmer

AS AI SPREADS, BOTH TIGHTLY CLOSED AND HYPER-OPEN SOCIETIES WILL BECOME RELATIVELY MORE FRAGILE THAN THEY WERE

Digital technology was supposed to disperse power. Early internet visionaries hoped that the revolution they were unleashing would empower individuals to free themselves from ignorance, poverty, and tyranny. And for a while, at least, it did. But today, ever-smarter algorithms increasingly predict and shape our every choice, enabling unprecedentedly effective forms of centralised, unaccountable surveillance and control.

That means the coming AI revolution may render closed political systems more stable than open ones. In an age of rapid change, transparency, pluralism, checks and balances, and other key democratic features could prove to be liabilities. Could the openness that long gave democracies their edge become the cause of their undoing?

Two decades ago, I sketched a “J-curve” to illustrate the link between a country’s openness and its stability. My argument, in a nutshell, was that while mature democracies are stable because they are open, and consolidated autocracies are stable because they are closed, countries stuck in the messy middle (the nadir of the “J”) are more likely to crack under stress.

But this relationship isn’t static; it’s shaped by technology. Back then, the world was riding a wave of decentralisation. Information and communications technologies (ICT) and the internet were connecting people everywhere, arming them with more information than they had ever had access to, and tipping the scales toward citizens and open political systems. From the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union to the colour revolutions in Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring in the Middle East, global liberalisation appeared inexorable.

That progress has since been thrown into reverse. The



Every previous technological revolution – from the printing press and railroads to broadcast media – destabilised politics and compelled the emergence of new norms and institutions that eventually restored balance between openness and stability. The question is whether democracies can adapt once again, and in time, before AI writes them out of the script

decentralising ICT revolution gave way to a centralising data revolution built on network effects, digital surveillance, and algorithmic nudging. Instead of diffusing power, this technology concentrated it, handing those who control the largest datasets – be they governments or big technology companies – the ability to shape what billions of people see, do, and believe.

As citizens were turned from principal agents into objects of technological filters and data collection, closed systems gained ground. The gains made by the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring were clawed back. Hungary and Turkey muzzled their free press and politicised their judiciaries. The Communist Party of China (CPC), under Xi Jinping, has consolidated power and reversed two decades of economic opening. And most dramatically, the United States has gone from being the world’s leading exporter of democracy – however inconsistently and hypocriti-

cally – to the leading exporter of the tools that undermine it. The diffusion of AI capabilities will supercharge these trends. Models trained on our private data will soon “know” us better than we know ourselves, programming us faster than we can programme them, and transferring even more power to the few who control the data and the algorithms.

Here, the J-curve warps and comes to look more like a shallow “U.” As AI spreads, both tightly closed and hyper-open societies will become relatively more fragile than they were. But over time, as the technology improves and control over the most advanced models is consolidated, AI could harden autocracies and fray democracies, flipping the shape back toward an inverted J whose stable slope now favours closed

In this world, the CPC would be able to convert its vast data troves, state control of the economy, and existing surveillance apparatus into an even more potent tool of repression. The US would drift toward a

more top-down, kleptocratic system in which a small club of tech titans exerts growing influence over public life in pursuit of their private interests. Both systems would become similarly centralised – and dominant – at the expense of citizens. Countries like India and the Gulf states would head the same way, while Europe and Japan would face geopolitical irrelevance (or worse, internal instability) as they fall behind in the race for AI supremacy.

Dystopian scenarios such as those outlined here can be avoided, but only if decentralised open-source AI models end up on top. In Taiwan, engineers and activists are crowdsourcing an open-source model built on DeepSeek, hoping to keep advanced AI in civic, rather than corporate or state, hands. (The paradox here is that DeepSeek was developed in authoritarian China.)

Success for these Taiwanese developers could restore some of the decentralisation the early internet once promised (though it could also lower the barrier for malicious actors to deploy harmful capabilities). For now, however, the momentum lies with closed models centralising power.

History offers at least a sliver of hope. Every previous technological revolution – from the printing press and railroads to broadcast media – destabilised politics and compelled the emergence of new norms and institutions that eventually restored balance between openness and stability. The question is whether democracies can adapt once again, and in time, before AI writes them out of the script.

The writer, Founder and President of Eurasia Group and GZERO Media, is a member of the Executive Committee of the UN High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

IN JEST THIS



Melvin Durai

IT’S COMMON COURTESY TO USE EARPHONES AROUND OTHER PEOPLE, WHETHER YOU ENJOY LISTENING TO DRAKE OR HAVE GOOD TASTE IN MUSIC

If you do a lot of flying, you already know this: flying can be challenging. Not only do you have to arrive at the airport early, you have to stand in a long line to get through airport security. And then you have to sit at your boarding gate for an hour or more, waiting for the announcement that your flight has been cancelled. “Sorry, we’re having a software glitch,” the airline says. Eventually, the problem is fixed and you’re sitting on a plane. That’s when the real challenge begins: spending a few hours or more with hundreds of people, some of whom have no clue how to behave around other people.

Many people, unfortunately, have not been exposed to flying etiquette. That’s why, in the interest of public decorum, I’ve decided to compile a list of 10 rules everyone should follow.

1. Use earphones or headphones. This rule applies even if you’re listening to Drake. Wait, this rule applies especially if you’re listening to Drake. The Ca-

nadian rapper and singer is very popular, but his music isn’t for everyone, which is why I keep reminding my daughter Divya to use earphones. It’s common courtesy to use earphones around other people, whether you enjoy listening to Drake or have good taste in music.

2. Don’t introduce your feet to the passengers around you. You may be tall, but that doesn’t give you the right to put your foot on the armrest in front of you. Just the other day, someone on social media shared a photo of a foot that had appeared next to them on a flight and asked what they should do. The options, as it turns out, are numerous, including: (1) sneeze on it; (2) tickle it; and (3) alert the flight attendant, so they can make an announcement: “Your attention please. We have found a foot beside Seat 17E. If this is your foot, please come to Seat 17E to claim it. If you do not claim it within five

minutes, we will have to remove it and store it in the overhead bin.”

3. Don’t expose yourself to anyone. If you managed to get through the airport by keeping a part of your body covered, don’t think you are now free to expose it. (Feel free to take off your hat, but please keep your shoes on.)

4. Don’t do too much touching. Touching strangers is always unwise, but getting too romantic with a partner can also make people uncomfortable. How are they supposed to focus on the movie they’re watching?

5. Don’t clip your fingernails. Don’t clip your toenails either. In fact, don’t do any clipping whatsoever on a flight. This includes clipping your eyebrows, mustache or nose hairs. In general, clipping should be done in a salon or barber-shop – or in the privacy of your home.

6. Follow the arm rest rule: the person in the middle seat gets two arm rests, the person in the window

seat gets the window, and the person in the aisle seat gets to run to the restroom faster.

7. Take a shower or bath before your flight. It’s not always possible to do this, especially if you’ve been stuck in airports for days, but in general, please remember this: To help everyone cope, use lots of soap.

8. Try to smell your best, but don’t douse yourself in perfume. A little goes a long way. When your plane is over the Indian Ocean, do you really want your Uber driver to still smell you?

9. Don’t get drunk before your flight. It may be fun to drink at the airport, but nobody wants to sit next to a drunk passenger, especially if he’s in the window seat and keeps pointing out clouds that look like his ex-wives.

10. Recline your seat gently. The person sitting behind you will appreciate it. To show their gratitude, they may even pull their foot back from your arm rest.

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



Sir, This refers to “EAM holds meet with Wang Yi,” **OrissaPOST**, August 19. The Chinese Foreign Minister’s visit to New Delhi comes at a time when India is under unusual pressure from its traditional partners, making this engagement a crucial step in recalibrating its strategic choices. For both countries, the visit reflects recognition that while competition persists, cooperation on shared challenges is vital. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar underscored the importance of ensuring stability along the contested border and reiterated the idea of a multipolar Asia — an implicit call for China to recognise India’s role as a regional pole of influence. Meanwhile, the US continues to push for closer ties with India, viewing it as an essential counterweight to Chinese dominance in the Indo-Pacific. Yet, trust in Washington has eroded significantly after Donald Trump’s punitive tariffs — 50% on Indian imports and 25% on oil from Russia. The fact that China, despite importing far more Russian oil, has avoided similar penalties has only reinforced India’s belief in pursuing an independent course. Prime Minister Modi’s upcoming participation in the SCO summit in China and Russian President Vladimir Putin’s planned visit to India later this year underline New Delhi’s effort to diversify partnerships and demonstrate its strategic autonomy.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Strategic autonomy

Transparency protocol

Sir, Thanks to the Supreme Court for directing the Election Commission to implement a comprehensive transparency protocol for the SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar, which emphasises the principles of procedural fairness and the sanctity of the right to vote. The SC’s intervention fortifies and restores voter confidence in the politically charged environment of the poll-bound state. It also reinforces the judiciary’s role as a guardian of fundamental rights and ensures that administrative exigency does not overrule the procedural safeguards essential to a functioning democracy. The right to vote is not just a statutory right, but is linked to a citizen’s constitutional identity, the deprivation of which demands the highest standards of fairness and transparency. The efficacy of this judicially mandated transparency will be a critical test of the resilience and fairness of India’s electoral machinery.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI



HARIYALO CAMPAIGN

Over 10cr saplings planted in 2025, claims Rajasthan CM



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 19: Rajasthan has achieved a historic milestone under the Hariyalo Rajasthan campaign, with the state crossing the target of planting 10 crore saplings this year.

Minister of State for Forest and Environment (Independent Charge) Sanjay Sharma met Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma at his residence and congratulated him on this achievement Tuesday.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister released a campaign poster, while the Forest Minister presented a sapling to him.

Taking inspiration from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative, the state government launched Hariyalo Rajasthan under the Chief Minister's Plantation Mahabhiyan on Hariyali Teej last year.

The government has set a goal of planting 50 crore saplings in five years, ensuring their survival through geo-tagging and systematic monitoring.

The Chief Minister said that last year the target of 7 crore saplings was surpassed by planting 7.5 crore saplings, and this year's goal of 10 crore has also been exceeded, with 10.21 crore saplings planted so far.

He urged the department to continue motivating citizens to participate actively, as the monsoon season still offers opportunities for plantation.

Sharma emphasised that this success reflects the collective awareness and commitment of the people of Rajasthan towards environmental conservation.

He noted that the plantation is not merely symbolic but a concrete step towards securing a greener future for the coming generations. The Chief Minister also appealed to the public to take an active part in plantation drives under 'Hariyalo Rajasthan'.

So far, 37.5 lakh saplings have been planted individually and 9.83 crore at the block level, covering nearly 20 lakh hectares of land across 2,74,920 plantation sites.

Various departments have also contributed significantly - Education Department (3.25 crore), Rural Development (2.65 crore), Forest Department (2 crore), and Pollution Control Board (50 lakh).

Relentless showers batter Maha

Ten persons have died, hundreds displaced, crops spread across 12 to 14 lakh acres of land suffered damages due to heavy rains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 19: Rains pummelled most parts of Maharashtra Tuesday, leaving 10 persons dead, bringing Mumbai to a near standstill, damaging properties and crops, and prompting the authorities to shift hundreds to safer locations.

Apart from paralysing Mumbai and its metropolitan region, where train services and flight operations were affected, heavy rainfall battered Gadchiroli in Vidarbha region and Nanded in Marathwada region, among other districts.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who reviewed the flood situation with the disaster management department, said the next 48 hours would be crucial for Mumbai, Thane,

Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, which remain on high alert.

Eight persons have died in Maharashtra's Nanded district which witnessed flooding due to a cloudburst-like situation, while Mumbai received a record rainfall of around 300 mm, the CM said.

He said crops spread across 12 to 14 lakh acres of land suffered damages due to heavy rains.

Coordination was being done with neighbouring states for the management of discharge from dams. "The uncontrolled catchment areas are a worry," he said.

The district collectors have been authorised to take decisions on financial aid to the affected persons for cattle loss,



A Monorail train after it came to a halt between Mysore Colony and Bhakti Park stations amid rainfall, in Mumbai, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

house damage and loss of lives, as per the NDRF rules. The administration has been asked to conduct panchnamas (spot inspection) for crop losses, he added.

As heavy downpour continued overnight, the low-lying areas were inundated in Mumbai, affecting the suburban train service, prompting the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation to declare a holiday for all government and semi-government offices.

The Bombay High Court, which operates from 11 am to 5 pm, functioned only till 12.30 due to heavy rains.

Schools and colleges were also shut in view of the 'red alert' warning issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which forecast extremely heavy showers at isolated places in Mumbai and neighbouring dis-

tricts Tuesday. The Directorate of Higher Education declared a holiday for all senior colleges in the Konkan region, applicable to institutions in Palghar, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts.

The downpour affected the aviation sector as at least eight flights were diverted and many were delayed.

Local train services were delayed, and the public transport buses in Mumbai were diverted at a few locations due to submerged roads, as per officials.

The Central Railway suspended its local train services on the Harbour Line between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and Kurla stations due to submergence of tracks in a section after heavy rains.

It also suspended services on its main line between Kurla and Sion stations as the

rail tracks got waterlogged, they said. The Mithi river in Mumbai reached the danger-level mark and 400 to 500 persons had to be evacuated, Fadnavis said.

Several parts of Mumbai received more than 200 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, with Vikhroli in the eastern suburbs reporting the highest downpour at 255.5 mm, the IMD said.

More than 1,100 people were moved to safer locations in Maharashtra's Thane and Palghar after torrential rains disrupted normal life and inundated parts of the two adjacent districts.

More than 290 people were rescued from the flood-hit villages of Nanded district over the last two days, with the State Disaster Response Force and the Army deployed in the region.

Over 700 rescued from 2 stranded Monorail trains

As many as 782 passengers were rescued Tuesday evening after two overcrowded Monorail trains on elevated tracks got stuck between stations in Mumbai on a day of torrential rains, leading to panic and frantic rescue efforts. More than a dozen passengers complained of suffocation with a couple of them reportedly fainting as electricity and air-conditioning shut down, though only one passenger had to be hospitalised and her condition was said to be stable. Overcrowding by passengers, who had no other option left with the downpour crippling the suburban local train services, led to the power failure as the Monorail system is not capable of handling a sudden rush, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) said. As many as 582 passengers were rescued from the Monorail train stuck between Mysore Colony and Bhakti Park by deploying snorkel ladders, as the train could not be towed back. Whereas 200 passengers were evacuated from another Monorail train which was successfully towed back to the nearby Wadala station, officials said.

Seven persons travelling in an autorickshaw and a car got swept away on a flooded Mukhed-Udgir Road around 1.40 am. Local rescue teams have managed to save three men, while a search is underway for a man and three women, an official said.

Cabinet okays proposal for building new airport in Kota

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 19: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tuesday approved the proposal of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for the development of a greenfield airport at Kota-Bundi in Rajasthan at an estimated cost of Rs 1,507 crore.

The Rajasthan government has transferred 440.06 hectares of land to AAI for the development of a greenfield airport, suitable for the operation of A-321 type aircraft.

The project includes the construction of a terminal building spanning an area of 20,000 sqm capable of handling 1,000 peak hour passengers (PHP) with an annual capacity of 2



million passengers per annum. A runway 11/29 of dimensions 3,200m x 45m, an apron with 7 parking bays for A-321 type aircraft, two link taxiways, an ATC cum technical block, a fire station, a car park, and allied works also form part of

the project, according to an official statement issued after the CCEA meeting.

Kota, situated on the banks of the Chambal River, is recognised as the industrial capital of Rajasthan. In addition, it is renowned as the educational

coaching hub of India for students aspiring to join the IITs, engineering institutes and medical colleges across the country.

Kota's prominence in educational and industrial sectors makes the greenfield airport a critical infrastructure project, aimed at addressing the anticipated traffic growth in the region, the statement said.

The existing Kota Airport is under the ownership of the Airports Authority of India (AAI). It comprises a runway (08/26) of dimensions 1,220m x 38m, suitable for Code 'B' aircraft (such as DO-228), and an apron capable of accommodating two such aircraft. The terminal building spans an area of 400 sqm and is capable of handling 50 passengers during peak hours.

Maha waives stamp duty for cancer hospital

As part of the project, 10 hectares of government land at Tambati in Khalapur taluka has been allotted to the Tata Memorial Centre on a 30-year lease at a nominal rent of ₹1 per year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 19: In a move aimed at expanding healthcare infrastructure in Maharashtra, the state cabinet Tuesday approved a complete stamp duty waiver for a proposed cancer hospital by Tata Memorial Centre in Raigad district.

As part of the project, 10 hectares of government land at Tambati in Khalapur taluka has been allotted to the Tata Memorial Centre on a 30-year lease at a nominal rent of Rs 1 per year.

The stamp duty of Rs 38.99 lakh applicable on the lease agreement has been fully waived, it was stated.

The centre is establishing an Integrated Ayurvedic Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, which will include a 100-bed facility.

At least 12 per cent of beds at the facility will be reserved at subsidised rates under Central and state government health schemes for poor and economically weaker sections.

Additionally, accommodation for one attendant per patient will be provided at minimal cost.

The decision to waive the stamp duty was taken under provisions of the Maharashtra Stamp Act, with necessary notifications to be issued after consultation with the Law and Judiciary Department.

Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, in a statement, said that the waiver will facilitate the expansion of cancer research and treatment services by Tata Memorial Centre and provide quality healthcare access to the general public, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.

In another decision, the cabinet approved the regularisation of encroachments at Vengurla Camp Gawaliwada in Sindhudurg district.

At least 42 families, most of them from the Gawli community, have been residing on this land since the British era, with structures dating back to 1905, as per a resolution passed by the Vengurla Municipal Council.

The residents have been demanding legal ownership of the land and their homes.

Under the approved policy, encroachments of up to 1,500 sq ft per household will be regularised free of cost.

For any area above 1,500 sq ft, occupants will be required to pay as per the 1989 government valuation rates, to which residents have already consented in meetings with the Sub-Divisional Officer of Sawantwadi.

The land will be granted under Occupant Class-2 tenure, meaning it cannot be sold or transferred without the government's permission.

The total area under encroachment includes 0.69.32 hectares of built-up land and 2.23.88 hectares of open land, totalling 2.93.20 hectares, excluding religious structures.

The move overturns earlier rules from 2002, which mandated payment of 2.5 times the market rate plus interest for regularisation.

Bawankule said this decision brings long-awaited justice to generations of the Gawli community, who have lived on this land for decades. It not only resolves a long-pending issue but also sets a precedent for similar cases across the state, he said in a statement.

Alarm raised over ageing safari vehicles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 19: In the wake of tourists getting stranded inside the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (RTR) after their safari vehicle broke down, tourism stakeholders are raising an alarm over the growing number of ageing diesel-powered canters operating in the park, many of which are more than a decade old.

The incident that occurred in Zone 6 of the park Saturday evening saw 20 tourists, including a seven-month-old child, stranded in the jungle for more than an hour after their safari canter broke down, nearly four kilometres from the park's exit.

The situation was further exacerbated by a guide who allegedly abandoned the group, leaving the tourists in panic as darkness descended. However, park authorities said the guide had gone to seek help. With darkness falling, heated exchanges broke out between the tourists and the guide, parts of which were recorded. The tourists were finally escorted out of the park after they were stranded for more than an hour.

Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Pramod Dhakad said three canters, their drivers and the guide have been barred from entering the park till further orders.

Meanwhile, an audio clip



Canterers are popular for tiger safaris due to their capacity to accommodate more tourists compared to smaller vehicles like Maruti Gypsies, making them a cost-effective option for the operators

Many of the canterers in the RTR, which are still operating on BS-III-compliant engines, do not meet the latest emission standards (BS-VI)

has surfaced on social media in which a woman tourist is explaining the ordeal, telling an officer how they managed to reach the exit gate to seek help and a canter with no working headlight eventually came with the help of a torchlight to rescue them.

The incident has raised concerns about the safety and reliability of the park's ageing safari vehicles.

Ranthambore is home to around 70 tigers and the breakdown highlights the challenges regarding the park's tourism infrastructure, including the condition of the safari vehicles.

According to officials, the canter that broke down was one of the older models running on outdated BS-III engines.

The fleet of safari vehicles, which includes both Maruti Gypsies and canterers, plays a

pivotal role in tiger safaris at the famed park.

There are 287 canterers and 269 Maruti Gypsies are engaged in tiger safaris. They are made available for tourists on a roster basis. "When canterers are used for more than eight to 10 years, maintenance issues typically begin to surface. Although their registration with the transport department is valid for up to 15 years, it is generally advisable to replace them before they demand high maintenance and service to avoid escalating problems and ensure reliability," an official source said.

The canterers used in tiger

safaris are large, open-top, diesel-powered vehicles specifically designed for group wildlife tours. These vehicles are typically modified to carry multiple passengers (up to 20 people), allowing them to explore the park's wilderness in a safe and comfortable manner.

Canterers are popular for tiger safaris due to their capacity to accommodate more tourists compared to smaller vehicles like Maruti Gypsies, making them a cost-effective option for the operators.

Many of the canterers in the RTR, which are still operating on BS-III-compliant engines, do not meet the latest emission standards (BS-VI).

"This is a significant concern about the environmental impact of tourism in the park, especially given the growing demand for sustainable practices in wildlife tourism," an environmentalist said.

"The impact of these old diesel vehicles cannot be ignored. Switching to BS-VI-compliant canterers has crucial benefits as these vehicles reduce emissions, can help parks like Ranthambore meet stricter environmental standards and appeal to eco-conscious tourists," Himanshu Jangid, an activist based in Jaipur, said.

Ranthambore attracts thousands of domestic and international visitors annually.



of the day **quote** HERE, NOW

That devotee decided to give back to the deity. Now he is giving 121 kg gold to Venkateswara Swamy

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

Those who have lesser stakes after retirement can speak more boldly, more candidly. Their observations help us course-correct our policies and ensure better service delivery

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

The opening of Goldman Sachs' new facility is a matter of pride for the state. It reaffirms Maharashtra's skilled workforce, robust markets, and investor-friendly environment. This also underlines the state's leadership in the financial sector

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

SHORT TAKES

J&K: Properties of 2 terrorists attacked

Srinagar: Properties of two active terrorists were attacked in Anantnag and Baramulla districts of Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday, police said. In Anantnag, the police attacked the land belonging to active terrorist Adil Hussain Thoker, while an orchard of designated terrorist Asif Maqbool Dar, who is presently operating from across the border, was attacked in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, a police spokesman said.

Suspended IAS officer Vinay Choubey gets bail

Ranchi: Suspended IAS officer Vinay Kumar Choubey was granted bail Tuesday by a court in Ranchi in a liquor scam case, after the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) failed to file the charge sheet within the stipulated time. However, Choubey will not be released from jail immediately as he is also an accused in a land-related case in Hazaribagh.

T'gana: Four electrocuted

Hyderabad: Four people died and two others sustained injuries due to electrocution in separate incidents in Hyderabad and Kamareddy district of Telangana over the past 24 hours, police said. The incidents occurred during activities related to Ganesh festival, as people were either transporting idols on vehicles or settling up pandals. Two persons died from suspected electrocution and another suffered injuries when a Lord Ganesh idol being transported in a vehicle came in contact with a high-tension wire in the Bandlaguda area here early Tuesday, they said.

PM Modi to inaugurate highway project in Bihar

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Friday inaugurate a highway project connecting Aunta (Mokama)-Simaria (Begusarai) that includes a 1.865-km bridge over the Ganga, according to an official statement. The project will provide direct connectivity between Mokama in Patna district and Begusarai.

CRPF launches 'BMI campaign'

New Delhi: Country's largest paramilitary force, the CRPF, Tuesday launched a 'BMI campaign' to improve the overall health of its more than 3 lakh personnel and keep them combat-ready.



The crack forced the Axiom-4 mission (Ax-4) to be postponed from June 11 to 25 of the same month

V NARAYANAN | CHAIRMAN OF THE ISRO

VETERAN ACTOR ACHYUT POTDAR DIES

Actor Achyut Potdar, best known for his roles in TV shows and films like "Bharat Ek Khoj", "Pradhan Mantri", "3 Idiots", has died at a hospital here due to heart related issues. He was 90



Sudershan Reddy held constitutional courts for over 16 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: Former Supreme Court judge B Sudershan Reddy, who was named as INDIA bloc's candidate for Vice-Presidential election, presided over country's constitutional courts for over 16 years.

Born in July 1946, Justice Reddy was appointed as a permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court May 2, 1995 and was later appointed as the chief justice of the Gauhati High Court December 5, 2005.

He became a Supreme Court judge January 12, 2007 and



retired July 8, 2011. He was enrolled as an advocate in Hyderabad with the Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh December

27, 1971. The former top court judge worked as a government pleader in the high court during

1988-90 and also as additional standing counsel for Central government for six months during 1990.

He was a legal adviser and standing counsel for Osmania University. Justice Reddy became the first Lokayukta of Goa in March 2013 but resigned within seven months citing personal reasons.

He is also in the Board of Trustees of International Arbitration and Mediation Centre,

Hyderabad.

Justice Reddy is the joint candidate of the Opposition parties for the Vice-Presidential

polls, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge announced Tuesday. "All INDIA bloc parties has decided to have a common candidate, the decision has been taken unanimously. I am happy that all opposition parties have agreed to one name. It is a big achievement for democracy," Kharge said.

JUSTICE REDDY IS THE JOINT CANDIDATE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL POLLS. CONGRESS PRESIDENT MALLIKARJUN KHARGE ANNOUNCED TUESDAY

No change in India's position on Taiwan, says govt sources

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: There is no change in India's position on Taiwan and New Delhi's relationship with it focuses on economic, technology and cultural ties, government sources said Tuesday.

The clarification came after the Chinese foreign ministry misquoted External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as saying during his talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, that Taiwan is part of China.

The Jaishankar-Wang talks took place Monday evening, shortly after the Chinese foreign minister landed in Delhi on a two-day visit. There is no change in India's position on Taiwan, the sources cited above said.

"We stressed that like the rest of the world, India has a relationship with Taiwan that focuses on economic, technology and cultural ties. We intend to continue it," one of the sources said.

At Monday's meeting, Wang called upon the Indian side not to deal with Taiwan, another source said. In his response, Jaishankar wondered how is it possible when China itself is dealing with Taiwan in the same areas as India, it added.

The sources said the Chinese foreign ministry misquoted Jaishankar. In the past, India had endorsed the "one-China" policy but the formulation has not featured in any bilateral document since 2011.

China has often urged India to adhere to the "one-China" policy.

Though India and Taiwan do not have formal diplomatic ties, the bilateral trade relations have been on an upswing.

In 1995, New Delhi set up the India-Taipei Association (ITA) in Taipei to promote interactions between the two sides and facilitate business, tourism and cultural exchanges.

Centre plans ban on online money games

Sources said that the decision has come following observations from the government that online money gaming provides means to facilitate money laundering, fraudulent financial transactions, and cyber crime, among others



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: Union Cabinet has approved a Bill related to promotion and regulation of online gaming, and the government is likely to bar platforms offering any online money gaming service, a source said Tuesday.

The Bill is likely to be tabled in Parliament Wednesday, the source added.

"The Cabinet has approved the Bill to regulate online gaming platforms that involve real money. The government is trying to table the Bill in Parliament Wednesday," the source said on condition of anonymity.

The Bill has taken into account significant mental health issues among users of online games, particularly those involving monetary incentives.

Sources said that the decision has come following observations from the government that online money gaming provides means to facilitate money laundering, fraudulent financial transactions, and cyber crime, among others.

As per the present legal framework in place, states and Union Territories are primarily responsible for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes, including action on illegal betting and gambling.

Several real money gaming firms masquerading themselves as "game of skills" to differentiate themselves from betting or gambling platforms

and avoid ban.

In June, Madras High Court had dismissed a petition filed by real money gaming platforms Play Games 24x7, Head Digital Works, Jungle Games and others challenging the ban imposed by the Tamil Nadu government.

The court rejected arguments of the real money gaming firms challenging jurisdiction of the state to regulate digital platforms as well as their argument to differentiate "games of chance" from the "game of skills".

The Tamil Nadu government, citing an expert committee report, said that online games involving real money have posed serious mental and physical health risks to the citizens, including suicides by some, in the state.

The court upheld that the state has full competence to pass legislation to govern matters affecting public health and rejected arguments challenging its power to ban game of skills involving real money.

The real money platforms had cited IT Rules 2021 of the Centre, saying that it has adequate safeguard for online games to defend themselves, but the court observed that it has not come into effect till then.

The Centre has also been taking a series of measures to block online betting and gambling platforms. It issued 1,524 orders from 2022 till June 2025 to block online betting and gambling platforms.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 19: A day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced a scheme to rehabilitate migrant labourers from West Bengal allegedly harassed outside the state, Governor CV Ananda Bose put forward a set of recommendations to address the challenges faced by these workers, a well-placed source in the Raj Bhavan said Tuesday.

The recommendations, sent to both the Centre and the state government, came amid growing concerns over alleged incidents of exploitation, lack of social protection, and poor living conditions that many Bengali migrant workers endure in the states where they work, he said.

Bose, in his recommendations, sent to the Centre, has stressed the creation of a 'West Bengal Migrant Workers' Registration Portal', signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with major destination states, and appointing labour welfare officers (LWOs) in key

migrant hubs, he said.

PTI has a copy of the recommendations made by the governor.

"He also recommended developing affordable hostels for the migrant labourers, introduction of the 'One Citizen One Ration Card' in lieu of the 'One family One Ration Card' scheme, alongside establishing 'skill training centres in high migration districts," the official told PTI.

Bose sought facilitation of certification of informally acquired skills, creation of a 24x7 multilingual helpline, legal aid and mediation services, and special monitoring of the



A cremation ground inundated due to an increase in the water level of a nearby stream following heavy rains, at Adawal in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh

PTI PHOTO

Tree planting in tropics offers best climate cooling: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: Planting trees in the tropics, rather than in higher latitudes, could be more rewarding in terms of cooling the planet, according to a new study on regional effects of afforestation.

Researchers, including those from the University of California Riverside, US, said that planting trees provides an overall positive effect for the world's climate by pulling out warming carbon from the atmosphere.

However, local effects on temperature not related to carbon varied significantly by region. For instance, trees at higher latitudes could have a slight heating effect, while the opposite is true in the tropics, they said.

"Our study found there is more cooling from planting trees in warm, wet regions, where they grow year-round. Tropical trees not only pull carbon dioxide from the air, they also cool while releasing water vapour," first author James Gomez, a graduate student at the University of California Riverside, said.

Using global climate models, the team found that adding trees yield weak global mean cooling of 0.01 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 17.77 degrees Celsius), which translate to a significant cooling of about 0.1 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 17.72 degrees Celsius) in the tropics.

Regions, such as those in central Africa, can experience a cooling of up to 0.8 degrees



Fahrenheit (minus 17.33 degrees Celsius), the team said.

"It's not that planting elsewhere doesn't help. It does, but the tropics offer the strongest returns per tree," Gomez said.

In a previous research, the

team had looked at chemical effects resulting from trees interacting with the atmosphere and found that planting trees could cool the surface of the planet more than expected.

This study, published in the

Our study found there is more cooling from planting trees in warm, wet regions, where they grow year-round. Tropical trees not only pull carbon dioxide from the air, they also cool while releasing water vapour

JAMES GOMEZ

journal 'npj Climate and Atmospheric Science', helps understand the physical effects of tree planting which include evapotranspiration - or tree sweating - similar to how humans sweat to cool their body, the authors said.

Roots of a tree pull out water from soil, which then travels up through the trunk and into the leaves. Pores of the leaves open up so the tree can take in carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, and that is when part of the

water pulled up from the soil evaporates into the air, they explained.

"It's just like the way sweating cools your body. In the tropics, there is constantly water available for trees, and that increases transpiration," Gomez said.

The researchers said trees can also lower the amount of sunlight reaching the planet's surface. Trees give off water vapour and make the air more humid. More humidity can mean more clouds, and water vapour itself can soak up some sun, thereby reducing sunlight reaching the ground and providing a cooling effect, they said.

The researchers also found that, in some cases, trees can have a fire suppression effect.

of the day

quote

I have decided to join the August 24 'Hal Joto, Ropa Ropo' (plough field, plant saplings) protest by farmers, whose land was forcefully acquired by the government. The farmers were stopped from tilling their land by fencing it

CHAMPAI SOREN | EX J'KHAND CM



The Nitish Kumar-led government has become 'khattara' (rickety) and it needs to be urgently replaced. The young should now get a chance... We have a vision for Bihar. The youth have resolved that they will remove from power this old and rickety government, and ensure that Rahul Gandhi is the PM after the next Lok Sabha polls

TEJASHWI YADAV | RJID LEADER



We will not tolerate any fundamentalist activities or politics on sensitive issues, whether they come from Kerala, Mumbai or Delhi. These are fundamentalists who promote and protect activities of certain sections

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM



X

POST

OF THE DAY

What should normal retail investors actually do?

- 1) Buy Index (if you don't know any investing).
- 2) Decide how much you wish to buy between Large vs Small/Mid caps (I would say keep 60-40%).
- 3) Don't buy debt products. They are taxed at highest slabs in India.
- 4) Invest in direct stocks in high growth industries. Eg. Tech stocks in the US. You don't need to be a genius to understand this.
- 5) But only at discount (eg. an Index).
- 6) Do not do blind SIPs (when the market is crazy high, wait. There is no bus you are missing).
- 7) Follow people who invest their own money. And, show results.
- 8) Avoid storytellers & podcasts.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

Man kills wife with sleeping pills

New Delhi: A 47-year-old house painter allegedly killed his wife by lacing her sleeping pills with weedicide over suspicion of infidelity and buried her body in a graveyard in south Delhi, police said Tuesday. The body of the woman, whose name was not shared by police, was exhumed August 15 – eleven days after she was buried.

Delhi govt to launch app for receiving complaints

New Delhi: Delhi government Tuesday announced the launch of the "Delhi Mitra" app, enabling people across the city to register their grievances with various departments and agencies. The decision was made in a cabinet meeting chaired by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The new system is expected to be implemented within the next two months. Following its launch, the existing Public Grievance Monitoring System (PGMS) will be integrated into this new platform, consolidating all grievance redressal tools in one location.

Constable injured after fall near Rahul's convoy

Nawada (Bihar): A police constable was injured after falling in front of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's vehicle Tuesday while the latter was passing through Bhagat Singh Chowk in Bihar's Nawada district during the ongoing Voter Adhikar Yatra, a senior official said.



Kishtwar situation is before you. With every passing day, the hope for the survival of the 70 missing persons is fading away. Our focus will now be on retrieving the bodies and handing them to their families so that they can perform the final rites

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

CABINET CLEARS NEW AIRPORT AT KOTA-BUNDI IN RAJASTHAN

The Union Cabinet Tuesday cleared a proposal to set up a new airport at Kota-Bundi in Rajasthan at an estimated cost of ₹1,507 crore



Top court asks U'khand HC to decide over Haridwar temple receiver plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Uttarakhand High Court to decide the plea of "sevayat" of the Maa Chandi Devi Temple in Haridwar, seeking a stay on an order directing the Badri Kedar Temple Committee to appoint a receiver for overseeing the temple management.

A "sevayat" is a priest actively involved in the daily rituals and management of a temple. A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and S V N Bhatti directed the Haridwar district magistrate (DM) to submit a report after hearing all the parties concerned on whether there was any mismanagement in the temple administration.

The top court directed the official to consider the overall situation and involve other parties in its investigation if need be to get a broad-based response with regard to the actual ground situation.

"He is also at liberty to suggest what should be the interim arrangement with regard to managing of the affairs of the Math, till the matter is finally decided by the high court. He shall focus on the best interest for the Math and its devotees," the bench added.

The top court asked the high court to take up the matter on priority and finally decide the issue to put in place a permanent or regular arrangement instead of an adhoc arrangement.

While disposing of the plea, the top court asked the DM to submit a report in the high court, deferring the matter by six weeks.

The court, however, did not express opinion on the merits of the matter.

BLUE DRUM HORROR

Wife, lover held for man's murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 19: A woman and her lover were arrested in connection with the murder of her husband in Kheirathal Ti-jara district here, police said Tuesday.

Laxmi Devi, the wife of Hansram, and her lover Jitendra Sharma, the son of the married couple's landlord, were nabbed Monday night, they said.

The two, who had decamped after dumping Hansram's body in a plastic tank, confessed to the crime during questioning, police said.

The incident that took place in the Kishangarhbas Police Station area came to light Sunday. Superintendent of Police Manish Chaudhary said the two were detained from a brick kiln in Alwada village of Alwar district. "Initial investigations indicate that Laxmi and Jitendra plotted the murder in a bid to conceal their affair. The victim, Hansram, was killed on the night of August 15. The body was later found inside a blue plastic drum on the roof of their rented accommodation," he said. Laxmi had borrowed the drum from her landlord, saying she needed it to store water. The couple's three children, whom Laxmi and Jitendra had taken away with them, were restored to their grandfather, the SP said.

BIG BREAKTHROUGH IN SINO-INDIAN TIES



Doval and Wang held the 24th round of talks under the framework of the Special Representatives mechanism, a day after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his visiting Chinese counterpart

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: In a major thaw in their frosty ties, India and China Tuesday unveiled a series of measures to forge a "stable, cooperative and forward-looking" relationship that included jointly maintaining peace along the frontier, reopening border trade, promoting investment flows, and resuming of direct flight connectivity at the earliest.

The announcements aimed at realising the full development potential of the two Asian giants came amid growing estrangement in ties between India and the US over President Donald Trump's policies on trade and tariff.

India and China listed the measures in a joint document after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval over the last two days besides meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two sides agreed that they should earnestly implement the important common

understandings reached between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping and promote sustained, sound and steady development of India-China relations.

Wang landed in Delhi Monday on a two-day visit and his trip is largely seen as part of ongoing efforts by the two neighbours to rebuild their relationship after it came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in 2020.

The Doval-Wang talks under the framework of the Special Representatives dialogue Tuesday produced five concrete outcomes that included setting up an expert group, under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) to explore an "early harvest in boundary delimitation".

In the meeting, Doval and Wang agreed on the need to take a political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship while seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable framework for settlement of the boundary question in accordance with the agreement on political parameters and Guiding Principles for Settlement of the boundary question signed in 2005.

They also agreed on setting up a working group, under the WMCC, to advance effective border management in order to maintain peace and tranquillity in India-China border areas.

Both sides also agreed to create a "general level mechanisms" in Eastern, and Middle sectors, in addition to the simi-

lar mechanism in Western sector, and holding an early meeting of the the mechanism in the Western sector, according to a joint statement.

The two sides also agreed to use the border management mechanisms at diplomatic and military levels to carry forward the process of border management, and discuss de-escalation, beginning with the principles and modalities.

The talks between Jaishankar and Wang Monday produced a total of 12 outcomes that included a decision to explore and resume various official bilateral dialogue mechanisms and exchanges, to enhance cooperation and address each other's concerns and properly manage differences.

The joint document said both sides agreed to reopen border trade through the three designated trading points, namely Lipulekh Pass, Shipki La Pass and Nathu La Pass.

India and China also agreed to facilitate trade and investment flows between the two countries through "concrete measures", it said.

Both sides agreed to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas through friendly consultations, it added.

India and China also agreed to resume direct flight connectivity between Chinese mainland and Indian cities at the earliest, and finalise an updated Air Services Agreement.

They also agreed on the facilitation of visas to tourists, businesses, media and other visitors in both directions, the joint document said.

"Both sides agreed to continue and further expand the scale of the Indian pilgrimage to Mount Kailash/ Gang Renpoche and Lake Manasarovar/ Mapam Yun Tso in Tibet Autonomous Region of China starting 2026," it said.

The two sides exchanged views on trans-border rivers cooperation and agreed to give full play to the role of India-China expert level mechanism on trans-border rivers and keep communication on renewal of the relevant MoUs.

PRESIDENTIAL REFERENCE

SC questions Centre, AG over pendency of Bills with Guvs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The Supreme Court Tuesday questioned the Centre and the attorney general over the long pendency of Bills passed by assemblies with governors, underscoring the limitations of constitutional courts in situations where legislation has been pending since 2020.

The query from a five-judge Constitution bench led by Chief Justice B R Gavai came while hearing a presidential reference seeking clarity on whether fixed timelines could be imposed on governors and President while dealing with bills passed by the state legislatures.

The bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P S Narasimha and A S Chandurkar, said it would be expressing its views only on the law and not on the April 8 decision in the Tamil Nadu case, fixing a timeline for governors and President for acting on bills passed by state legislatures.

The bench, while responding to the preliminary objections raised by Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments on maintainability of the presidential reference, said it would exercise its advisory jurisdiction as it was not sitting in the appellate jurisdiction.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, whose assistance was sought by the top court, said courts cannot exercise its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to rule the bills pending with Governor, are deemed to have been passed.

Justice Kant asked Venkataramani whether bills were pending before Tamil Nadu Governor since 2020.

The AG said those facts were not before the court and the court had to examine the "lis" before it.

"The court has to look at the law, whether such an order can be passed. Even if it is factually correct...there were explanations given for that. There was



NDRF personnel carry mortal remains of a victim during search and rescue operation at cloudburst-hit Chisoti village in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

How Election Commissioners can be removed



(Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

"... no court shall entertain or continue any civil or criminal proceedings against any person who is or was a Chief Election Commissioner or an Election Commissioner for any act, thing or word, committed, done or spoken by him when, or in the course of acting or purporting to act in the discharge of his official duty or function," the clause reads.

-Clause 11(2) of the Act states that the CEC cannot be removed from his office except in like manner and on like

grounds as needed for the removal a Supreme Court judge.

Supreme Court and high court judges can be removed only through a motion passed by both houses of Parliament.

A motion supported by 50 MPs of the Lok Sabha or 100 MPs of the Rajya Sabha has to be moved in Parliament and passed by the House with a two-thirds majority of those present.

The law says the other ECs cannot be removed from office except on the CEC's recommendation.

-According to Clause 11(1) of the Act, the CEC or an EC can,

at any time, by writing under his hand addressed to the president, resign from his office.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has threatened "stern action" against Kumar and the two ECs over allegations of "vote chori" (vote theft) through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, when the INDIA bloc comes to power.

Gandhi's threats came days after the CEC served him a seven-day ultimatum to submit a signed affidavit to back his vote-theft claims and said or else, his allegations will be considered invalid.

business

of the day quote

India is aiming to become a global hub for green hydrogen exports, eyeing nearly 10 per cent of the worldwide demand by 2030

SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK | UNION MINISTER

On our platform, searches for national parks have doubled over the past two years, a clear sign of the growing interest among travellers. By making it easier to discover and book stays around these destinations

ANKIT KHANNA | CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, MAKEMYTRIP

India cannot build an inclusive Digital India if the very device that enables it remains unaffordable for millions. 5 per cent GST classification will restore affordability, stimulate demand, and accelerate India's journey towards universal digital access

PANKAJ MOHINDROO | CHAIRMAN, ICEA

SHORT TAKES

TCS opens AI-led centre overseas

New Delhi: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has opened an AI-driven operations centre in Mexico City, as the company affirmed its commitment to accelerating innovation in Mexico and Latin America. The new office in Mexico City is TCS' eighth operations centre in Mexico, where the company has built a workforce of over 11,000 skilled associates in the past two decades. The facility will be staffed with AI specialists and software engineers with expertise in emerging enterprise technologies. "Establishing this new office is a key component of TCS' growth strategy in Latin America and is expected to generate employment opportunities within the country over the next two years," it said. TCS' new office in Mexico City is designed to drive innovation and collaboration with local and international clients, offering a variety of solutions from its portfolio, including AI, cloud, cybersecurity, IoT, IT infrastructure, application development and cognitive business operations, the release said.

IOC to supply SAF to Air India

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed a landmark agreement to supply sustainable aviation fuel to Air India, representing a significant step towards a greener and cleaner aviation in India. IOC plans to begin production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) from used cooking oil starting December this year at its Panipat refinery, according to Chairman Arvinder Singh Sahney. The facility is expected to produce 35,000 tonne of green fuel annually, using waste cooking oil sourced from hotel and restaurant chains such as ITC and Haldiram's. SAF is an alternative fuel made from non-petroleum feedstocks that reduces emissions from air transportation. It can be blended up to 50 per cent in conventional aviation turbine fuel (ATF or jet fuel), depending on availability. India has mandated 1 per cent SAF blending in jet fuel sold to international airlines from 2027. The MoU was signed by Shailesh Dhar, Executive Director (Aviation), IOC, and P Balaji, Group Head - Governance, Regulatory, Compliance (GRC) and Corporate Affairs, Air India, in the presence of Sahney and Air India CEO Campbell Wilson.



The proposed 2-tier GST structure could lower effective tax-ation rate and boost fiscal revenues over the longer term

YEEFARN PHUA | DIRECTOR, S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

WABAG SECURES REPEAT ORDER FROM BAHRAIN GOVT

Water technology solutions provider VA Tech Wabag Tuesday said it has secured a repeat order worth about 5.12 million Bahraini dinars (about Rs 118 crore) from the Bahrain government for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of 40 MLD Madinat Salman Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) and Long Sea Outfall for a period of five years. Wabag was earlier awarded the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of the 40 MLD STP and Long Sea Outfall in October 2015, by the Bahrain govt



Strict limits for equity derivatives

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 19: A top panel of India's market regulator is meeting Tuesday to consider placing stricter limits on positions in index derivatives in the Indian markets, two sources said.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is looking at the rules on equity derivatives after the regulator temporarily banned US high frequency trading firm Jane Street from the Indian markets saying some of its trading strategies were manipulative and left retail investors with losses.

SEBI's secondary market advisory committee, tasked with framing equity market policies, will discuss and make recommendations on intraday limits for index derivatives to prevent large traders and trading firms from accumulating significant exposures, the sources said.

In February, SEBI proposed an intraday limit of 10 billion Indian rupees (\$114.89 million) for positions taken in index derivatives but scrapped the plan following opposition from the large market making firms. Instead, SEBI asked exchanges to



monitor trading firms' intraday positions.

The panel will also discuss the maximum allowable exposure an individual trading member can hold in equity derivatives and the exchange monitoring mechanism, sources said.

Its recommendation will be put to the market regulator's board before a final decision is made.

SEBI did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

In May, SEBI set the total option exposure for a firm across its entire portfolio at the

SEBI panel meeting Tuesday
Regulator considering stricter position limits on equity derivatives
India looking to curb activity of large firms in equity derivatives
India's equity derivatives markets account for nearly 60 per cent of global trading volumes

Markets rally for 4th day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 19: Rising for the fourth consecutive day, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Tuesday following gains in oil major Reliance Industries and Tata Motors amid prevailing optimism over sweeping GST reforms and easing geopolitical worries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped by 370.64 points or 0.46 per cent to settle at 81,644.39. During the day, it spurted by 482.13 points or 0.59 per cent to 81,755.88.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 103.70 points or 0.42 per cent to 24,980.65.

Optimism prevailed in the market, buoyed by plans for big bang reforms in the GST regime by Diwali and easing geopolitical worries, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Motors rose the most by 3.5 per cent while Adani Ports gained 3.16 per cent. Reliance Industries rose by 2.82 per cent. Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever and Maruti were also among the gainers.

However, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid, Mahindra & Mahindra and HCL Tech were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap and small-cap indices jumped 0.97 per cent each. All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. Oil & Gas climbed 1.49 per cent, followed by energy (1.48 per cent), auto (1.45 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.25 per cent), services (1.12 per cent) and telecommunication (1.04 per cent).

India curbs solar power output to ease congestion

India's renewable energy generation, mainly solar, rose at a record pace in the six months ended June as previously awarded projects came online, while overall power generation growth was largely flat

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 19: India is curbing solar output during periods of low demand to keep its power grid stable and to ease congestion in power lines as green energy supply rises, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) said Monday

Congestion in power lines due to some new plants coming into operation ahead of schedule and delayed transmission projects have also forced power output curbs, also known as curtailment.

The curtailments are the latest setback to India's renewable power developers, who are increasingly languishing without supply contracts as demand for power slows.

The National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI) said in a July 24 letter to the ministry that solar power producers in Rajasthan, the top green power producing state, were facing prolonged and frequent curtailments, which had touched nearly 50 per cent of output during peak generation hours.

The producers have lost more than \$26 million in revenue since April due to the curbs, NSEFI said.

NSEFI, whose members include the green energy arms of Indian conglomerates and Tata, Amazon Web Services, Dutch



investment firm SHV and Malaysia's Gentari, said curtailments undermined project viability and future investments.

"Projects in the state had been deferred by 18-20 months to accommodate for the delays in the transmission system, but are still unable to be commissioned due to even further delays," NSEFI said.

NSEFI has asked the government to accelerate transmission and battery storage projects, some of which face up to two years of delay. The federal power ministry has said it is fast-tracking interstate transmission lines to support renewable energy.

Worst affected areas

While Rajasthan is the worst affected by curtailments, other major green energy producers such as the southern Tamil Nadu state, and Gujarat and Maharashtra in the west are

also curbing output, according to four industry officials and analysts.

Data compiled by Tamil Nadu's Renewable Energy Producers Association showed solar output was 10 per cent lower than forecast in the quarter ended June.

J Radhakrishnan, a spokesman for the Tamil Nadu energy department said solar was being curbed as a "last resort" measure, and that coal power was also being curtailed amid low demand.

India's renewable energy generation, mainly solar, rose at a record pace in the six months ended June as previously awarded projects came online, while overall power generation growth was largely flat compared with an increase of nearly six per cent in 2024.

However, solar projects awarded in the three months ended June fell 75 per cent annually and tenders for new projects declined 65 per cent, according to Mercom.

The decline reflects a "temporary recalibration rather than a slowdown," MNRE said, adding that bids were being issued in line with national targets and demand.

Government data shows the usage rate of solar capacity fell to 21.4 per cent in May and 19.5 per cent in June.

Duty free cotton import till Sept 30



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The government has allowed duty-free import of raw cotton till September 30 to improve the availability of the key raw material for the textile sector, to help US.

Cotton was a subject to an 11 per cent import duty along with the Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC). According to a finance ministry notification dated August 18, the duty exemption will take effect from August 19 and shall remain in force till September 30.

The scrapping of the import duty is expected to ensure raw material availability at globally competitive rates for the textile sector. Domestically, the sector also faces duty inversion under the GST regime.

The import duty relief by India comes at a time when Indian exporters, including the textile sector, face a steep 50 per cent duty in US.

The US tariff comprises an existing 25 per cent with an additional 25 per cent, which will take effect from August 27, imposed as a penalty for India's purchases of Russian oil.

Commenting on the decision, think tank GTRI said India has suspended import tariffs on raw cotton for 40 days to tackle tight supplies and stabilize prices ahead of the harvest season.

Cotton imports have surged 107.4 per cent, rising from \$579.2 million in FY2024 to \$1.20 billion in FY2025. Major suppliers last year included Australia (\$258.2 million), the United States (\$234.1 million), Brazil (\$180.8 million), and Egypt (\$116.3 million).

Since February 2021, imports were subject to an 11 per cent duty including 5 per cent Basic Customs Duty and 5 per cent AIDC.

"The waiver is expected to help mills facing high input costs and support yarn and fabric exporters struggling with competitiveness, particularly ahead of India's festival season," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that the government limited the relief to 40 days to avoid sustained downward pressure on domestic cotton prices, which could hurt farmers.

"The measure is a time-bound stopgap to stabilize markets before the new crop arrives," he said adding almost all (99 per cent) of \$1.20 billion cotton imported in FY2025 was of fibre staple length of 28 mm or above.

Under India-Australia trade pact, India already allows duty free import of 51,000 tonne cotton of fibre staple length of 28 mm or above. "This means, the largest beneficiary of the duty-free import will be US, the second largest supplier to India," Srivastava said.

BOI organises Re-KYC saturation camp

Bhubaneswar: Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone organised Re-KYC saturation camp at Balipada Panchayat, Chandanpur, Puri. RBI General Manager Anita Pattnaik, Bijoy Kumar Malik, Zonal Manager, Bank of India, and Balipada Panchayat Sarpanch Namita Mishra attended the programme. The purpose of the camp was to promote Re-KYC, PMJJBY, PMSBY, Atal Pension Yojana and RBI ombudsman Facility. RBI General Manager narrated the importance of Re-KYC and other schemes to the villagers.



India Post's APT project for modern services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The India Post has rolled out Rs 5,800-crore Advanced Postal Technology across the country that will transform it into world-class public logistics organization by enabling mobile-ready services and real time decision making, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Tuesday.

The Advanced Postal Technology (APT) based infrastructure gives India Post access to new technology layers like modern logistics companies.

"Elated to announce the nationwide rollout of Advanced Postal Technology (APT) by @IndiaPostOffice, a historic leap in Bharat's digital journey. Backed by an investment of Rs 5800 crore under IT 2.0, APT will transform India Post into a world-class public logistics organization," Scindia said on



social media platform X.

The technology platform will enable India Post to support fully fledged digital transactions and accept Unified Payment Interface (UPI) payments for services from customers of any bank.

Earlier, UPI transactions of only India Post Payments Bank accounts were supported at post offices for purchase of services and other payments due to technical issues.

Scindia said the APT is a fully indigenous platform driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Digital India and Make in India.

FinMin likely to place GST rate proposal on August 20

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 19: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to present the Centre's proposal for rationalising goods-and-services-tax (GST) rates before a Group of Ministers (GoM) at a two-day meeting starting August 20 in the national capital.

The GoM, headed by Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, is slated to meet in person at Vigyan Bhawan on August 20 and 21, with proceedings beginning at 12 noon, as per the report.

A six-member state panel expected to deliberate on the Union government's plan to move to a simplified two-slab GST structure.

The GST Council is expected to meet on September 18-19 to



take a final call on the proposal.

The proposed GST revamp comes at a time when global investment house Morgan Stanley has flagged tax reforms, along with other policy measures, as crucial in supporting India's consumption story.

In its latest report, Morgan Stanley said a likely overhaul of GST rates, together with income-tax cuts, policy easing, rising job growth and improving real wages, brightens the

outlook for domestic demand.

The report added that while there could be some short-term slowdown in volume growth as consumers wait for clarity on the new tax rates, demand is expected to bounce back once the revised GST system comes into force.

Lower indirect taxes, it noted, tend to improve affordability for low-income households since indirect taxes are regressive. According to the analysis, the proposed GST overhaul could amount to a stimulus of about 0.5-0.6 per cent of GDP annually, with the potential to lift GDP growth by 50-70 basis points.

It also projected a possible downside of 40 basis points in CPI inflation, although both the Centre and states may face short-term revenue pressures due to lower collections.

Icra pegs Q1 GDP growth rate at 6.7%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The Indian economy is expected to grow at 6.7 per cent in April-June period of current fiscal, higher than 6.5 per cent a year ago, on the back of higher government capex and exports, rating agency Icra said Tuesday.

This projection also outpaces the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC's) forecast of 6.5 per cent growth in the June quarter. India's economy grew 7.4 per cent in March quarter of FY25.

Official data for FY26 Q1 GDP is scheduled to be released August 29.

Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said investment activity held up in Q1 FY2026 was boosted by the front-loading of government capex. She mentioned that this came amidst the heightened uncertainty owing to geopolitical tensions and tariff-related developments.

INDIA'S ASIA CUP SQUAD

Gill as vice-captain, Shreyas misses out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 19: Test skipper Shubman Gill was Tuesday appointed India's T20 vice-captain for next month's Asia Cup where Jasprit Bumrah will also be there to bolster the team's bowling attack even as a strong contender like IPL-winning captain Shreyas Iyer missed out due to abundance of talent in the format.

The 25-year-old Gill's last T20 International match was against Sri Lanka at Pallekele in 2024 and he has now replaced Axar Patel as the deputy of skipper Suryakumar Yadav in the 15-strong squad.

Asia Cup begins September 9 and India is placed in Group A of alongside Pakistan, Oman, and the UAE.

Gill's inclusion was hardly a surprise after a stupendous run in the recent Test rubber against England where he scored four hundreds in the drawn five-match series.

"Gill's form in England was something we expected but he exceeded it all," chief selector Ajit Agarkar said during the squad announcement press conference here.

However, the management will have to ponder over Gill's batting slot during the continental showpiece because Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson have forged an effective pair at the top.

Agarkar looked at it as a delightful problem of plenty rather than a headache.

"There are more options (for top order) now and Shubman has been in a great form anyway. When they get to Dubai, they can decide on the playing XI according to the opposition



and the conditions," said the former India pacer.

But the team think tank has the option of pushing Samson

Squad for Asia Cup:

Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Shubman Gill (vice-captain), Abhishek Sharma, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Jitesh Sharma, Shivam Dube, Arshdeep Singh, Sanju Samson, Harshit Rana, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Varun Chakravathy, Kuldeep Yadav.

Standbys: Prasidh Krishna, Washington Sundar, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Yashasvi Jaiswal.

down to the middle-order, where the Kerala batter batted quite often in the past, and gave Gill the opening slot.

WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP

Renuka picked in squad, no room for Shafali

Mumbai: Fit-again pacer Renuka Singh Thakur was Tuesday included in India's squad for the Women's ODI World Cup at home along with top-order batter Pratika Rawal but the big-hitting Shafali Verma was left out. The squad will be led by Harmanpreet Kaur with Smriti Mandhana, who was also present at the selection meeting here at the BCCI headquarters, as her deputy in the ICC event which begins September 30. The selectors also announced the squad for the three ODIs against Australia which precedes the World Cup with only one change in both the sides. The series begins September 14. Rawal, who has done exceptionally well in 14 ODIs, was chosen ahead of hard-hitting opener Shafali as the latter was excluded from both, with chairperson of selectors Neetu David saying the right-hander remains in their focus. Besides Renuka, India have the young seamer Kranti Goud and Arundhati Reddy in the pace attack, which could also feature Amanjot. It is a largely settled squad which has been on a winning spree, and the selectors also stuck with young spinner Shree Charani, who grabbed 10 wickets in five T20Is against England to make a strong mark. Charani made her international debut only in April this year and has played eight ODIs and five T20Is since. Goud, whose aggression and attitude has impressed skipper Harmanpreet, took six wickets in the third ODI against England to tilt the result of the series in India's favour. On expected lines, the India squad is spin-heavy with Charani teaming up with senior pros Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana and Radha Yadav in the department which would be expected to do the heavy lifting for the home team. "Spinners have always done well for the team even when we played in England, which is why we kept (most of them) in the playing XI. This is the best team we can have (for WC)," Harmanpreet said.

Women's squads:

For World Cup: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Renuka Singh Thakur, Arundhati Reddy, Richa Ghosh (wk), Kranti Goud, Amanjot Kaur, Radha Yadav, Shree Charani, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Sneha Rana.

For ODIs against Australia:

Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Renuka Singh Thakur, Arundhati Reddy, Richa Ghosh (wk), Kranti Goud, Sayali Satghare, Radha Yadav, Shree Charani, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Sneha Rana.

East Bengal face debutants Diamond Harbour FC in semi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 19: A re-invigorated East Bengal will fancy their chances when they face tournament debutants Diamond Harbour FC in the semifinals of the 134th Durand Cup football tournament here Wednesday.

The match will be played at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan. East Bengal qualified for the semifinals after their 2-1 quarterfinal derby victory over arch-rivals Mohun Bagan, while debutants Diamond Harbour FC stunned ISL side Jamshedpur FC with a commanding 2-0 victory to book their spot in the last-four stage.

Under head coach Oscar Bruzon, East Bengal have transformed from a side that struggled in recent derbies to one brimming with confidence and tactical sharpness.

The Spanish tactician finally broke the jinx of not winning a Kolkata Derby since his appointment and now sets his sights on extending this remarkable journey.

Bruzon acknowledged the unique challenge that awaits his team, understanding that Diamond Harbour's fearless approach and tournament momentum make them dangerous opponents. "We face Diamond Harbour, a team that has shown incredible spirit throughout this tournament," Bruzon emphasised during his pre-match briefing.

"They are debutants, but they play without fear, and that makes them very dangerous. We've had a good result in the quarterfinals, but now we must show the same intensity and focus."

East Bengal's journey to the semifinals has been nothing short of spectacular. In the group stage, the Red and Gold brigade remained unbeaten, demolishing South United FC 5-0, edging past Namdhari FC 1-0, and crushing Indian Air Force 6-1 to top Group A with a perfect record of nine points.



The quarterfinal against Mohun Bagan was their ultimate test, and substitute Dimitrios Diamantakos rose to the occasion with a memorable brace after replacing the injured Hamid Ahadad, helping East Bengal claim their first senior derby victory in over 18 months.

Diamond Harbour FC's Durand Cup debut has been the stuff of dreams. They started their group stage campaign with a stunning 2-1 victory over former champions Mohammedan Sporting, thanks to Luka Majcen's injury-time winner, before running riot against Border Security Force with an emphatic 8-1 triumph.

Though they suffered a 1-5 defeat to eventual group winners Mohun Bagan, their goal difference of +4 was sufficient to secure qualification as one of the best second-placed teams.

In the quarterfinals in Jamshedpur, they delivered a masterclass performance, winning 2-0, courtesy of Sairuatkima's first-half brace. The tournament has been a remarkable vindication for Diamond Harbour's head coach Kibu Vicuna, the Spanish tactician who previously guided Mohun Bagan to I-League glory.

For Bruzon's East Bengal, the challenge lies in maintaining the emotional high from their derby triumph while adapting

NorthEast United reach final

Shillong: Redeem Tlang's first half goal was enough for defending champions NorthEast United to beat Shillong Lajong 1-0 and book their place in the final of the 134th Durand Cup football tournament here Tuesday. NorthEast United had beaten Shillong Lajong 3-0 at the same venue in the semifinal in 2024. The first half saw Shillong Lajong restrict NorthEast United from playing their free flowing attacking game, keeping Ajarale and Jithin MS quiet which saw chances coming at premium. The only attempts on goal were Chema Nunez's header and Andres Rodriguez's long range effort which were straight at the goalkeeper. On the other end, the home side showcased their pace on counter attacks but the final decision making was flawed, with most attempts coming through long range shots. Striker Everbrightson Sana was especially lively upfront troubling the Highlanders' defence on multiple occasions. NorthEast United used their experience to hold on to their slender lead until the end of regulation time and six added minutes to book their spot in their second straight finals.

to face a completely different tactical setup.

SINQUEFIELD CUP

Praggnanandhaa outplays Gukesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

St. Louis (USA), August 19: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa outplayed World Champion D Gukesh in the opening round of the Sinquefield Cup Chess tournament to rise to the third position in live world rankings.

He now shares the lead with the unstoppable Levon Aronian of United States, who outsmarted Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan after the opening round Monday.

In other games of the first round Fabiano Caruana of USA played out a draw with Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland while wild card Samuel Savian split the point with American country-mate Wesley So while Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France also drew with another Frenchman Alireza Firouzja.

With eight rounds still to come in the USD 350,000 prize money tournament, as many as six players share the third spot behind Praggnanandhaa and Aronian while Gukesh and Abdusattorov are at the bottom of the heap hoping to open their respective accounts in the next round.

Praggnanandhaa faced the Queen's gambit accepted by Gukesh who played with black pieces. The solid approach was under the scrutiny early as Gukesh spent a lot of time in a known position and went for a dubious set-up that involved early exchange of queens.

Praggnanandhaa had the Bishop pair as playing with white pieces gave him a distinct advantage. Making things worse for himself, Gukesh also fell short of time and had to find some really difficult moves to stay in the game. Relentless, as he is, Praggnanandhaa did not let the position slip out of hand as he won a pawn by force and the rest was easy. The game lasted just 36 moves. "I don't really know what happened today. I think he was a bit off," said Praggnanandhaa after the game.

Incidentally with this victory, Praggnanandhaa also restored parity with Gukesh in classical format in which both have three wins each.

ASIA CUP MEN'S HOCKEY Bangladesh, Kazakhstan replace Pakistan, Oman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rajgir, August 19: Bangladesh and Kazakhstan have replaced Pakistan and Oman respectively for the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament to be held here from August 29 to September 7 as per the schedule released Tuesday.

Hosts India have drawn China, Japan and Kazakhstan in Pool A, while Pool B comprises defending champions Korea, Malaysia, Chinese Taipei and Bangladesh. The winner of the eight-team tournament will qualify for the 2026 World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands. Malaysia and Bangladesh will get the continental tournament underway with their opening fixture August 29 before Korea begin their title defense against Chinese Taipei. India will play China in the first day's last game in front of the home crowd.

The pool stage will be followed by the Super 4s from

September 3 to 6. The sequence of Super 4s matches will be confirmed after the completion of pool stage. The final will be held September 7 between the teams finishing first and second in the Super 4s. The third-place match -- between the teams finishing third and fourth in the Super 4s -- and 5/6th classification games are also scheduled September 7.

The Indian government had said that it would provide visas to the Pakistani players for the tournament, but the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has refused to travel, citing security concerns. The organisers had in advance approached Bangladesh to fill up Pakistan's place in the tournament.

Korea are the most successful side in the tournament, having won the title five times in the past. India and Pakistan have been champions three times each. India's last title win was in 2017 when they beat Malaysia 2-1 in the final in Dhaka.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shymkent (Kazakhstan), August 19: India's double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol competition and Rashmika Sahgal was crowned champion in the junior women's air pistol event of the Asian Shooting Championship here Tuesday.

Bhaker shot 219.7 in the eight-woman final to finish in third position. China's Qianke Ma claimed the gold medal with 243.2 after pipping Korean Jiin Yang who settled for the silver with 241.6. Rashmika then struck gold, India's third individual yellow metal of the competition, displaying amazing career consistency to score 241.9 and finish a massive 4.3 points ahead of silver winning Korean Han Seunghyun.

It was double delight for Rashmika (qualification score 582), as she combined with Vanshika Chaudhary (573) and Mo-



hini Singh (565) to win the team gold in the event.

Bhaker (583) also won a team bronze in women's air pistol, alongside reigning Asian Games champion Palak (573) and Suruchi Singh (574). Both Palak and Suruchi, however, missed out on the individual final by three and two points respectively.

In the final, Bhaker was fifth after the first five-shot series and fourth after the second, but a 10.5 on the 11th single shot took her up to second behind eventual winner Ma Qianke of China.

From then on, with Ma out

of reach, it was a battle of attrition between Korean 25m pistol Olympic champion Yang Jiin, experienced Iranian Haniyeh Rostamiyan and Bhaker. The Indian though managed to fire the big shots when it mattered the most, to settle for bronze, with Haniyeh finishing fourth.

In the junior women's final, Rashmika was involved in a battle for supremacy from the get go with Korea's Han. However, the Indian crept past her opponent for first time after the 13th single shot and from there never looked back, a 10.9 on her 15th being the icing on the cake.

Badminton staring at shuttle crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 19: The humble shuttlecock, the lifeline of badminton, has become the sport's biggest worry with prices of imported feather shuttles more than doubling in the past year amid an acute shortage of raw material in China.

A recent article in French newspaper L'Equipe attributed the crisis to changing food habits in China, where preference for pork over duck and goose meat has reduced poultry farming, and to a global surge in badminton's popularity.

The squeeze has forced India's top stakeholders to admit the sport can no longer depend solely on goose and duck feathers.

"Sooner or later, we have to move away from feathers as a natural product. The sport has grown exponentially, and between China, Indonesia and

India alone, we account for nearly two-fifths of the world's population consuming shuttles," chief national coach Pullela Gopichand told PTI.

"The scarcity isn't just about fewer ducks or geese being reared, it's also because more people are playing badminton. That's a good sign, but unless we find lab-grown or synthetic options, we will have a problem. I am confident a breakthrough will come in the next five years." While reports suggested Gopichand's academy in Hyderabad was left with less than two weeks of shuttle reserves, BAI secretary Sanjay Mishra said supply to national camps will stabilise this week but admitted the long-term challenge remains.

"Yonex has assured us shipments after August 20, so there's no immediate panic. The shortage hasn't affected the camp or any tournament.



But these shuttles are made of goose and duck feathers, and as demand rises globally, we have to think of alternatives."

"I had a discussion with BWF

during a meeting, they have been experimenting with plastic shuttles but somehow they didn't have the same control or accuracy." Karan Dhar, Manag-

ing Director of Yonex India, also assured to fast-track deliveries.

"We are working to address the immediate concerns. Shipments are expected shortly, and in a day or two, we will be sending shuttles to Hyderabad and the national camps" he said.

The price of a tube of high-quality shuttles has soared from Rs 1,200 at the end of 2023 to nearly Rs 3,000 now. GST adds 12 per cent to already inflated imported prices, prompting calls for government intervention.

India has a few production units in Kerala and West Bengal, but they are limited in scale and quality and have struggled to compete with mass-produced Chinese imports.

Asked what role India can play, Gopichand said, "Shuttle costs are already a big reason why badminton is so expensive. If we can bring them down, the sport will grow even bigger."

J&K athletes eye glory at Dal Lake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 19: The Jammu and Kashmir contingent has undergone a 21-day camp to prepare for the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) here and the 17-strong group is hopeful of securing national spotlight with a strong performance in the event starting August 21.

The Festival will run till August 23 and feature three medal sports -- rowing, canoeing and kayaking. More than 400 athletes from the 36 states and Union Territories of the country are here to compete at the iconic Dal Lake, an established world famous tourist spot.

Muhammad Abbas Kand of Rainawari in Srinagar downtown has been preparing hard for the upcoming Games. He will take part in rowing doubles in the light weight category.

"I am hopeful of fetching a gold medal for Jammu and Kashmir. I am also elated that the Games are being held inside Dal Lake. It will give a boost to water sports in the region and also bring the much-needed limelight to water sports athletes like me," said Abbas.

Abbas, who has won nine state and district level medals and participated in seven national events, including the 37th National Games in Goa, is among the 17 water sports athletes from J&K here. Abbas and other water sports athletes from J&K have been training under the guidance of water sports coaches Parvez Ahmad Shagu of the J&K Police team and Waseem Raja of the J&K Sports Association.

Like Abbas, Irtiza Ali and Muntazir Ali are also looking forward to their participation in the rowing Pairs event.

Irtiza, who hails from the Saida Kadal area of Srinagar and won a bronze medal in the 43rd junior national rowing championships at Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh, wants to improve his performance and fetch gold this time around.

Zahid Hussain is another J&K water sports athlete who is keen to make a splash in KIWSF. Zahid, a national bronze medal winner, has also won 25 district and state medals.