Actor Vaani Kapoor says that the more content is local, the more global it

LEISURE | P2



Final approval

A contentious Israeli settlement plan that would cut across land which the Palestinians seek for a state receives final approval

INTERNATIONAL | P10



GST reform push

The Centre proposes GST exemption on life and health insurance policies for individuals. Currently, insurance premium attracts 18 per cent GST

BUSINESS | P11



Salah's dominance

Mohamed Salah named the PFA Player of the Year, with the Egyptian becoming first to win the award three times

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE | ₹5.00

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will become

BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY | AUGUST 21, 2025



UPPING THE ANTE: Parliamentarians of the INDIA bloc parties stage a protest over alleged 'vote theft', during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Wednesday

Agni 5 ballistic missile test-fired

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/Balasore, August 20: In a demonstration of its strategic military might, India Wednesday successfully testfired the 'Agni 5' intermediate range ballistic missile that has a range of up to 5,000 km.

The Defence Ministry said the test-firing of the missile from the Integrated Test Range in Odisha's Chandipur validated all operational and

technical parameters. The Agni-5 missile can bring almost the entire Asia including the northernmost part of China as well as some regions in Europe under its striking range.

The test-firing of the strategic asset came around three-and-half months after the military conflict between India and Pakistan. In its last trial of Agni 5 from the same test range March 11, 2024, DRDO had conducted a successful test using Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology, defence

Sanctions on India to end Russia-Ukr war: White House

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, August 20: US President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on India to bring an end to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt has said.

Trump has imposed tariffs totalling 50 per cent on India, including 25 per cent for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil that will come into effect from

Replying to a question at a press briefing Tuesday, Leavitt said that Trump has put tremendous public pressure to bring the nearly four-year war to a close.

"He has taken actions, as you've seen, sanctions on India and other actions as well. He has made himself very clear that he wants to see this war end," she said. The president wants to move and bring this war to an end as quickly as possible, Leavitt added, Earlier in an interview with CNBC, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent accused India of "profiteering" by reselling Russian oil.

Meanwhile, Russian charge d'affaires Roman Babushkin Wednesday said Russia has a "special mechanism" to confront any challenge arising out of the US slapping punitive measures against India for its procurement of Russian crude oil.

The relations between New Delhi and Washington are on a downturn after US President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent. India has called the tariffs imposed by the US "unjustified and unreasonable".

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

3 Bills moved to remove arrested PM, CMs, mins

Tempers flared, copies of Bills were torn and flung, and members of the ruling and Opposi $tion\ alliances\ came\ face-to-face$ and jostled in the Lok Sabha as Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday introduced the three draft laws with provisions for the removal of the PM, CMs and ministers arrested on serious criminal charges. If any one of them is arrested and detained in custody for consecutive 30 days for offences that attract a jail term of at least five years, they will lose their job on the 31st day. Interestingly, former Delhi CM Kejriwal and Tamil Nadu minister V Senthil Balaji had not resigned from their posts even after their arrests on different charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday introduced in Lok Sabha three Bills for the removal of prime minister, chief ministers, and ministers under arrest for 30 consecutive days on serious charges, drawing fierce protests from Opposition MPs who tore up copies of the draft law and marched close to his seat shouting slogans.

In a charged atmosphere.



several Opposition MPs spoke against the introduction of the Bills, claiming they violated constitutional principles, targeted federalism, turned the jurisprudence 'innocent until proven guilty' on its head, were

country into a police state. Shah, however, batted for an enhanced standing for moral values in public life, saving. "We cannot be so shameless that we continue to occupy constitutional positions while

open to misuse for political rea-

sons and threatened to turn the

facing serious charges. On his proposal, the Bills were sent by the House to a Joint Committee of Parliament comprising 21 members from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya

Sabha for scrutiny. The committee, whose members will soon be named, has been

asked to submit its report to the House by the last day of the first week of the next session, expected in the third week of November.

Now, the people

of the country

will have to

As soon as the Bills were introduced soon after 2pm, Opposition members trooped into the well, raising slogans and some even tore copies in front of Shah for the sight to be captured by cameras broadcasting the Home Minister's remarks.

A few BJP members, including Union ministers Kiren Rijiju and Ravneet Singh Bittu, stepped out of their seats to prevent opposition members from coming near Shah and waved them to go back to their side of the aisle.

When Congress MP KC Venugopal questioned Shah about his claim of public morality by referring to his arrest in a criminal case when he was the home

minister of Gujarat in 2010, the senior BJP leader hit back.

"What are they (Opposition) teaching us about morality l had resigned. And I want moral values to rise. We cannot be so shameless that we continue to occupy constitutional positions while facing charges. I resigned before arrest," Shah said.

Opposition MPs, including AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi and Congress' Manish Tewari and Venugopal, and RSP's N K Premachandran, spoke against the introduction, terming the proposed law against the Constitution and federalism.

The Home Minister also said that the Bills will be sent to the Joint Committee of Parliament, where members of both Houses. including those from the opposition, would get an opportuni ty to give their suggestions.

The three Bills are the Gov ernment of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill 2025; the Constitution (One Hundred And Thirtieth Amendment) Bill 2025; and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2025.

The constitutional amendment Bill will require the support of at least two-thirds of the members in both houses. The ruling alliance currently lacks such a majority on its own.

'It went viral, it went crazy,

and I have no idea why, because

I'm really just a super-duper nor-

mal guy," Warren said Tuesday

"They just interviewed some old

On August 13, two days before

guy on a Ural, and for some rea-

the Trump-Putin summit to dis-

cuss the war in Ukraine, Warren

received a call from the Russian

journalist, who told him, "They've

son they think it's cool."

Man attacks Delhi CM chief minister said the attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was attacked during a 'Jan Sunwai' programme at her camp office in the Civil Lines area Wednesday morning, with her office terming the assault a part of a "well-planned conspiracy to kill her".

The accused, Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai (41), a resident of Rajkot in Gujarat, was arrested and booked under attempt-to-murder and other charges. He is being jointly interrogated by the Intelligence Bureau and the Delhi Police's Special Cell, a senior police officer said.

The incident took place around 8.15am. Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma said CM Gupta sustained injuries to her hand, shoulder and head. Hours after the incident, the

on her was a cowardly attempt on her resolve to serve the people of Delhi and asserted that it had not broken her spirit. Gupta (51) stressed that the Jan Sunwai programme would continue as before. A senior police official, who

cident, termed the attack serious while stressing that it could have been life-threatening. Police sources said that

is privy to the probe into the in

while they are probing the en tire matter from all possible angles, initial investigation suggests that the accused was a dog lover and was upset over the recent Supreme Court order on stray dogs

They said the attack seems to be part of a bigger conspiracy. Sources said two videos of the 'Jan Sunwai' programme were recovered from the accused's mobile phone.

Padma Shri Binod PM DIALS NAVEEN Pasayat no more Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra

Modi Wednesday dialled former chief minister Naveen Patnaik, who has been hospital here, and enquired about his issued by the BID supremo. The PM suggested that the leader of opposition in the Odisha Assembly should take rest for some time, "PM Narendra Mod spoke to Naveen Patnaik today in the hospital. He enquired about his health and wished him a speedy recovery," the statement, issued by the office of the Leader of Opposition, said. It also said, "The PM suggested that Patnaik should take rest for some time, and invited him

summit last Friday, he got an-

other call informing him the

Anchorage hotel the next day

for the handoff. He went with

his wife, and there in the park-

ing lot, along with six men he

assumed to be Russians, was the

olive-green motorcycle, valued at

\$22,000. "I dropped my jaw," he

said, "I went, 'You've got to be

He was directed to go to an

bike was at the base

to come to Delhi soon.'

Sambalpur, August 20: Eminent Sambalpuri playwright. poet and lyricist, Padma Shri awardee Binod Kumar Pasayat passed away here Wednesday at

POST NEWS NETWORK

the age of 91. Pashayat, who was suffering from prostate cancer, was admitted to Sambalpur District Headquarters Hospital in the morning after his condition deteriorated. He passed away

while undergo ing treatment. His last rites were performed in the evening at Raighat in Sam

balpur with full

state honours. His son, Biswaiit Pasayat, lit the funeral pyre.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister Dhar mendra Pradhan expressed deep grief over the demise of Pasayat His demise is an irreparable loss to our literature and culture. pray to Lord Jagannath for the heavenly abode of the departed soul and to provide strength to his family to bear the loss, Majhi wrote on X.

1935 in Kusmel village of Bolangin district. His devotional composition "Hai Krushna Hai Krushna Boli Jau Mor Jibana" brought him immense popularity as a cultural icon. He had been conferred with

Putin buys \$22K Russian motorcycle for Alaska man ASSOCIATED PRESS Mark Warren, who for the bike because of sup-Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardply-and-demand issues. son following their three-hour

Anchorage (US), August 20: An Alaska man might have walked away as the biggest winner of last week's high stakes summit between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage. He rode off with a new motorcycle, courtesy of the

Russian government. Putin's delegation gifted Mark Warren, a retired fire inspector for the Municipality of Anchorage, a Ural Gear Up motorcycle with a sidecar, one week after a television crew's interview with Warren went viral in Russia

The motorcycle company, founded in 1941 in western Siberia, now assembles its bikes in Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan, complained about sanctions making it impossible to repair his Ural bike in a viral interview, was left 'speechless' after being gifted a brand new Russian

sidecar bike and distributes them through a team based in Woodinville, Washington.

Warren already owned one Ural motorcycle, purchased from a neighbour. He was out running errands on it a week before the summit when a Russian television crew saw him

and asked for an interview. Warren told the crew about his difficulty obtaining parts

not immediately return a message Tuesday.

Warren said a document he received indicated the gift was arranged through the Russian Embassy in the US, which did

decided to give you a bike.'

Warren said he initially thought it might be a scam. But after Putin and Trump departed joking me.' When he was signing the paperwork taking ownership of the motorcycle from the Russian embassy, he noticed it was man-

ufactured August 12. "The obvious thing here is that it rolled off the showroom floor and slid into a jet within

probably 24 hours," he said.

Pasayat was born December 3. Padma Shri in 2024.

When will we have a law that automatically dissolves governments for making undemocratic laws?



eisure



DAKOTA REVEALS 'WEIRD' MADONNA FRIENDSHIP

Dakota Johnson has opened up about her 'weird' bond with Madonna, who she has described as 'an energy to be near.' Dakota told *E! News:* "I really love her, we've been weird friends for a while. I met her when I was really young because she did a movie with my stepfather."

JULIA FOX COMES OUT AS PANSEXUAL

American actress Julia Fox has clarified her sexuality and revealed she could be attracted to anyone and everything. The 35-year-old actress appeared to come out as a lesbian a year ago but now she has given an update on her sexuality.



accuracy • reliability • trust

You've finally realised that diet and exercise are a must, and you especially need to take good care. Today, you may wish to eat something different. Tried Mongolian

cuisine? Ganesha suggests that you go been paying attention to.

TAURUS

There is a strong possibility of receptivity and sensitivity in your love life. On the down side, your You are a fire-fighter when it comes to others' problems, but can forget digging a well for your own home, says Ganesha

Some of your personal belongings are very dear to you. You may have to grudgingly share them with someone else. A mild pang of jealousy may kick in. But, you are merely being protective of some thing very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesha

CANCER

You will be in high spirits toa favourable day to engage in household activities. like gardening, cooking or even will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

Time is one thing that you have in short change today, says Ganesha. There is every possibility that you shall remain extremely busy. The tasks may be small — like writing a letter to revive old contacts – but it is important that you do them. Chances are that you may also end up giving a few interviews over the phone Just remember that your ability to make things work and do your best make you the prime candidate for organising and conducting urgent meetings.

Family matters will matter today. They hold more weight in your thoughts than everything else, says Ganesha. Business will be good today. Spend the evening relaxing and chilling out. On the cards is a visit to a place of worship.

Your concern for your family surmounts all else, that much Ganesha knows. Today, you will fulfil your filial duties in all that you undertake. As Ganesha rightly points out: All good things begin at home, including

SCORPIO

A healthy and hectic day is in store for you today. You are likely to finish your pending tasks with new zeal. But the chaotic day will blossom into a fabulous evening when you hang out with your sweetheart, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Be set to capture the flag and sing the victory song in whatever task you take up today. Your subordinates will be the ones needing your support and motivation. At the end of the day, the icing on the cake would be the smile you take to bed.

CAPRICORN

The achievements of the day may make you feel like you were born to succeed in life. Yes, you will be successful in whatever you do today, even if you don't try too hard for it, says Ganesha. But it's important that you at least take an initiative and not expect rewards to come for no reason. Make the most of the day for fortune may not be as favourable tomorrow. Your friends and those you socialise with will praise you for your sterling quality and powerful personality.

AQUARIUS

You will prove yourself today by staying ahead of your rivals in all ways. You will conquer your frustrations, and will soon be raring to go. Your pleasing demeanour endears you to others and you win admiration from all quarters, says Ganesha.

PISCES

You probably jumped out of bed this morning itching to talk to someone. And why not, since all your latent power of expression will spring out like a jackin-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are downin-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesha.

Vaani on value of rooted stories

poor, who is receiving positive ibly surreal. I never imagined response to her work in the rethe kind of overwhelming recently released streaming sersponse it would receive. I'm ies Mandala Murders, has said beyond grateful to every sinthat the more content is local, gle person who has watched the more global it will become. and supported the show. This streaming debut marks a deep-The actress stressed upon important ly personal milestone for me, how

it is for the

be rooted

to make a

global im-

Talking

about the

same, the

actress

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one that I will cherish forfurther men-

tioned, "Mandala Murders was made with immense heart, and to see it resonate so powerfully across borders is the most meaningful reward we could have asked for. India has always been known for its mythology and stories, and I believe it's this rootedness that allows our content to connect so deeply not just with audiences here, but also with viewers around the globe who are

curious about our culture and





Tanisha talks about her movie choices

like *Popcorn* or *Neal 'n' Nikki*, or even explor ing comedy in 123. Sarkar was a completely different challenge, letting me step into a world of political drama alongside such incredible actors. Every film has shaped me in its own way, and I've always enjoyed being part of stories that offered something unique." Tanisha is a member of the prominent

Mukherjee-Samarth family, being the daughter of filmmaker Shomu Mukherjee and actress Tanuja, and the younger sister of actress Kajol. She debuted in Bollywood in 2003 with the film Sssshhh.... She has also worked in Telugu, and

Tamil cinemas and participated in reality shows like Bigg Boss 7 and Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 7.

MUMBAI: Tani-Mukherjee has been part of several films that struck a chord with audiences back in the day. While a few movies did critically well, others did not create a huge impact at the box office. But Tanisha feels all of her professional choices have taught her something or the other in life.

her journey, Tanisha shared, "Each project I have taken on has taught me something, whether

Speak-

ing about

it was an emotional story Tangolike Charlie, a fun

Saiee: Showbiz can be very unforgiving

MUMBAI: Actor Saiee Manjrekar, who was recently seen in Telugu film Arjun Son of Vyjayanthi, came back to the big screen after a gap of almost a year. While actors these days believe in having packed schedules, the actor believes in taking a different approach.

The actor, who made her acting debut at the age of 16 with Dabangg 3 (2019), says that the film industry has taught her a lot.

"The industry can be very unforgiving because every move is under a microscope. That has taught me to mature quickly and always bring my best to the table. When I started out, I didn't pay attention to certain details that I now consider very important," says the actor who is currently shooting for a Telugu film India House. The 23-year-old actor

adds, "Over time, I've learned patience and mindfulness. You can't rush growth here and it's about being consistent, evolving with every experience, and understanding that your choices shape the career you want to build.' Daughter of film-

maker and actor Ma-

hesh Manjrekar, Saiee has been part of films like Major and Auron Mein Kaha Dum Tha. Does she ever feel insecure about not being



When Big B gatecrashed weddings for food

MUMBAI: The latest episode of Kaun Banega Crorepati 17 turned into a laughter riot after Amitabh Bachchan opened up about a quirky memory from his youth—when he and his college friends would sneak into weddings just to enjoy

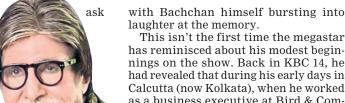
'When we were in college, we had no money to speak of-maybe a two-rupee pocket-money allowance. So, when hunger struck in the evenings, we didn't know what to do. We'd go scouting for any wedding that might be taking place..... and march right in as if we were part of the bridegroom's procession!. So the

gatekeeper would us, and we'd say, "We're with the party behind us,"slipping past him with a straight face (laughs). We'd eat, drink, and stroll

out as relaxed as

The story left audience in splits,

you please."

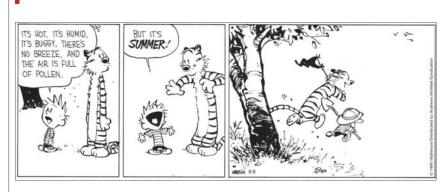


last seen in Kalki 2898 AD. IANS

PEANUTS



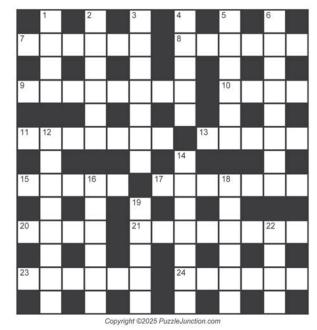
CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY



POST **CROSSWORD**



- 7 Seat of power
- 8 Portuguese

Across

- islands 9 Strong coarse
- brandy (3,2,3) 10 Red-bearded
- 11 Pride member
- (4,3)13 Danger
- 15 Venomous snake

- 17 Birds of prey
- 20 Fairy tale villain
- 21 Widespread outbreak of an infectious

disease

- 23 Curt
- 24 Advise
- 1 Three-toed
- Down
- 4 Sheik's bevy 5 Chin whiskers

2 Red Sea

3 Zeal

kingdom

- 6 A kick
- downstairs
- 12 Impoverished
- 14 Tolerant
- 16 Duty-free
- 18 Dream up 19 Shade of green
- 22 Data

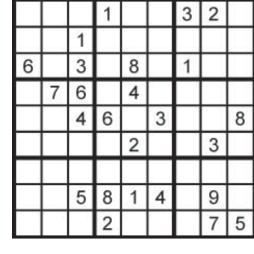
nings on the show. Back in KBC 14, he had revealed that during his early days in Calcutta (now Kolkata), when he worked

as a business executive at Bird & Com pany for just Rs 300-400 a month, he often survived solely on street-side panipuris He fondly described the phuchkas near Victoria Memorial as the finest he

had ever eaten. On movie front, Bachchan was

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

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SUDOKU

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CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



owntown

SLSWCA nod for ₹4,515cr projects

Bhubaneswar, August 20: The State Level Single Win-(SLSWCA), led by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, approved 18 investment proposals worth ₹4,515 crore Wednesday. "These projects – expected

to create 8,200 employment opportunities - are across eight districts - Angul, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Sundargarh and Jharsuguda. Through investments across diverse regions, the government is ensuring that economic growth goes hand in hand with job creation, stronger local economies, and equitable industrialisation," Ahuja said while chairing the 139th SLSWCA meeting here.

The latest approvals highlight Odisha's focus — strengthening its traditional growth engines like steel, infrastructure, and tourism, while simultaneously advancing sunrise sectors such as green energy, electric vehicles, data centres, bio-fuels, and pharmaceuticals. This diverse mix of projects underscores the state's forward-looking strategy to build a sustainable, future-ready economy while ensuring balanced industrial growth across regions, the Chief Secretary said.

In green energy and green hydrogen sector, INOX Solar Limited will set up a 5GWh battery energy storage system assembly plant in Dhenkanal. With an investment of ₹283 crore, the unit is expected to create 51 jobs.

Jindal Stainless Limited will establish a green hydrogen manufacturing unit of 1500Nm3/hr in Jajpur with an investment of ₹90 crore. It will generate 89 jobs.

A Raipur-based green energy equipment manufacturing company will set up a 2GW



solar cell manufacturing unit in Ganjam with an investment of ₹750 crore, creating 515 jobs.

In waste management sector, Gravita India Limited's proposal to set up a comprehensive recycling unit in Angul for manufacturing refined lead, alloys and PP granules got the approval. With an investment of ₹350 crore, the unit will create 270 jobs.

In pharmaceuticals sector, Starcaps Global LLP will establish a pharmaceutical unit in Khurda. The project will involve an investment of ₹80 crore and will generate 145 jobs. Similarly, in tourism and

hospitality sector, Orissa Stevedores Limited will set up a five-star hotel in Paradip of Jagatsinghpur district with an investment of ₹211 crore. It is expected to create 350 jobs. Similarly, Padma Hospitality Pvt Limited's proposal to set up a three-star hotel in Jagatsinghpur was also approved. The facility, which will be built with an investment of ₹59.91 crore. will create 181 jobs. Moreover, SNM Hotels and Resorts Pvt Ltd will develop a four-star hotel and resort facility in Jagatsinghpur with an investment of ₹92.32 crore, creating 173 jobs.

In bio-fuel sector, the state

government approved the proposal of Vibrant Spirits Pvt Ltd to set up a compressed biogas unit with a capacity of 4,000 MTPA in Sundargarh. With an investment of ₹50 crore, the facility is expected to generate 725 jobs.

In steel and downstream industries sector, Konark Ispat Ltd's proposal to expand its capacity by adding a 0.35 MT-PA rolling mill, 0.6 MTPA pellet plant, 70 MW captive power plant, 0.54 MTPA DRI plant, and 0.50 MTPA billet plant in Jharsuguda was among the two from the sector that received the government's nod. With an investment of ₹990 crore, it will generate 2,000 jobs.

Shree Jagannath Carriers Pvt Ltd will set up a logistics park and warehousing facility in Angul with an investment of ₹111.90 crore, generating 300 jobs. It was among the two proposals in infrastructure and logistics sector that received a nod.

Among other projects, Shreetech Data Ltd's proposal in digital and IT infrastructure sector to develop a hyperscale data centre facility in Khurda with an investment of ₹501 crore. which will create 450 jobs, was also approved

Odisha Bhawans in Hyd, Ayodhya, Surat soon: CM

Majhi asked the architect to incorporate Odisha's rich cultural heritage, including traditional stonework, Ikat designs and Odia art forms in the Odisha Bhawan project at New Delhi

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi Wednesdav announced that the state government will reconstruct the Odisha Bhawan in New Delhi, renovate Utkal Bhawan in Kolkata, and build new Odisha Bhawans in Ayodhya, Hyderabad and Surat.

Reviewing the progress of the new Odisha Bhawan project at New Delhi's Chanakyapuri, Majhi instructed the architect to incorporate Odisha's rich cultural heritage, including traditional stonework, Sambalpuri Ikat designs, and Odia art forms, in the structure.

Dalit man's assault: NHRC seeks Ganjam SP's report

BHUBANESWAR: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Wednesday sought an additional and complete report within four weeks from the Ganjam SP on the brutal assault of a Dalit man from Singipur by self-proclaimed cow vigilantes allegedly affiliated

The NHRC passed the order while acting on a petition filed by rights activist Sagar Kumar Jena of Kendrapara.

According to the petition, Babula Naik, a Dalit resident of Singipur in Ganjam, was brutally assaulted by a group of cow vigilantes when he was returning home with a cow and two calves, legally purchased from a farmer in Haripur village June 22, 2025. The NHRC had earlier sought an report from the SP. In its report July 8, the SP confirmed atrocities against Naik and another villager, Bulu Naik,

The Chief Minister directed the officials to expedite the construction process and informed that the G+6 building will cover a total area of 4,761 sqm, housing 45 suites of different categories, along with a modern conference hall.

He further suggested that additional rooms will be constructed at the Mumbai Odisha Bhawan to accommodate the large number of cancer patients from Odisha undergoing treatment there.

He also stressed the need for new Odisha Bhawans in Ayodhya, given the growing number of Odia pilgrims visiting the city, as well as in Hyderabad and Surat, where a significant Odia population resides.

The renovation of Utkal

up for discussion during the meeting.

Chief Secretary Manoi Ahu ja, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satyabrata Sahu, Principal Secretary to Chief Minis ter Saswata Mishra, Principal Secretary (Finance) Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, and Principal Secretary (Works) Sanjay Kumar Singh were present at the

with the Bajrang Dal.

Majhi thanks PM for CRRR project

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, along with Council of Ministers and legislators, Wednesday extended gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for approving the Capital Region Ring Road (CRRR) project at a ceremony held at the state Guest House here.

The CRRR will be a 111km six-lane road project with an estimated cost of ₹8,342 crore.

The project is expected not only to ease traffic flow but also boost Bhubaneswar's development as a textile and software hub, thereby strengthening state's economic prospects.

Speaking at the ceremony Majhi said, "I express my heartfelt thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for granting approval to the Capital Region Ring Road project. This trans-

It was also highlighted that global steel major POSCO, which had earlier exited the state due to massive protests, is returning with the support of the 'double engine government'

formative project will ensure smoother connectivity, accelerate industrial growth, and open new avenues for trade and investment in Odisha. During the event, it was

also highlighted that global steel major POSCO, which had earlier exited the state due to massive protests, is returning with the support of the 'double The company, in a joint ven-

engine government'.

ture with a leading group, is set to establish a mega steel plant in Keonjhar district with an investment of over ₹50,000 crore. Initially, the plant will have a capacity of 6 million tonne which will later be scaled up to 12 million tonne. Keonjhar has been chosen

as the site due to its strong infrastructure facilities in cluding road, air, rail, water and power connectivity. To attract more investments, the state government has been conducting roadshows in Delhi Mumbai, and Singapore, and is planning another in Hyder abad soon. With its attractive incentive

package and investor-friendly industrial policy, Odisha is positioning itself as a preferred destination for national and international investors.

338ha land identified for new city project: Padhee

Bhubaneswar, August 20: The state government has identified around 338.436-hectare land for the proposed Bhubaneswar New City Project, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said here Wednesday.

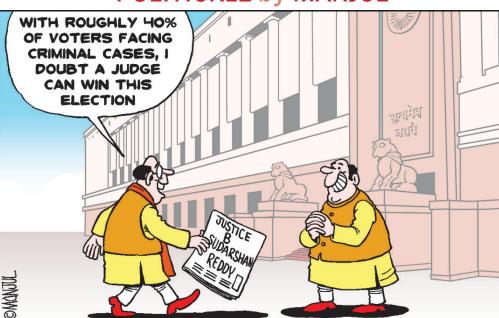
The project envisions a model city that is inclusive, vibrant, and resilient, designed to optimise land value and achieve international branding. Bhuhaneswar Development Authority (BDA) would consider JLL, a global real estate services company, to prepare a master plan and recommend the best-suited product mix for the development. Padhee said after a meeting with Surbana Jurong

South Asia Chief Executive Avinas Misra and Surbana Jurong Regional Director Abhisek Malhotra in the City

BDA and JLL have inked a pact in this regard during the visit of the President of Singapore to Bhubaneswar.

The meeting focused on urban infrastructure and managed services, with special emphasis on the Bhubaneswar New City Project, which will be proposed to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the Urban Challenge Fund. it was learnt. The Bhubaneswar New City Project is a landmark step for Odisha to shape a worldclass urban centre, reflecting inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience for future generations, Padhee concluded

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Issue stop-work order on Polavaram: BJD to CWC

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Expressing deep concern over the submergence of large areas in Malkangiri district due to Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh and its adverse impact on livelihoods of thousands of tribal people, especially those from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Wednesday submitted a memorandum to the Chairman of Central Water Commission (CWC) seeking a stop-work order on the project that would help safeguard the larger interest of the would-be-affected people in Odisha.

Demanding reassessment of the submergence levels and revision of Polavaram project to prevent any adverse impact on Odisha, BJD called upon the CWC to issue the order to Andhra Pradesh and the Union governments until Odisha's demands are addressed

Urging for initiation of a consultation process with Chief Ministers concerned through the CWC, BJD called for the prioritisation of the safety and well-being of the tribal communities in Malkangiri by conducting proper surveys and identifying the areas likely to be submerged.

Despite the recommendations of experts and Odisha government's concerns regarding the safety of tribal populations and people of Malkangiri district, CWC has refused to conduct a fresh backwater study for the revised design, the BJD pointed out.

In spite of the assurance given by CWC, no proactive step has been taken by it regarding proposal of Odisha to conduct fresh backwater studies in order to reexamine the various statutory and regulatory clearance to consider the facts



BJD said in the memorandum. The memorandum pointed out the apex court ruling in

2022 expressing reservation on the expansion of the project.

'There are some technical reports available but more may be required depending on the expansion of the project. Similarly, the issue of environmental clearances would

Central Water Commission and a meeting be called of all the stakeholders," the Supreme Court had observed in 2022 adjudicating the writ petition filed in this regard.

Apprehending the adverse impact of the project in Malkangiri, BJD said the Centre has recently sanctioned ₹17,936 crore for the completion of the Polavaram project, paying little heed to Odisha's concern.

This project was conceived under the resolution of the Godavari Water Dispute Tribunal (GWDT), which outlined agreements between Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Madhya

However, significant changes have been made to the original design flood discharge capacity, increasing the flood discharge from 36 lakh cusecs to 50 lakh cusecs, without sufficient consideration of the backwater impact in the upcaused apprehensions among the affected populations of Malkangiri, who are at the risk of losing their lands and homes. the memorandum stated.

A meeting of the Polavaram Action Committee comprising all stakeholders of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh including all tribal people and inhabitants of the affected ar ea was held February 28 last at Motu in Malkangiri district.

The convention unanimously raised grave concerns about the plausible damage to the livelihood, ecology and displacement issues in Malkangiri and adjoining areas of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The convention also expressed deep anguish over the callous attitude and apathy meted out to them by the authorities including CWC and Polavaram Project Authority.

The convention has resolved

Naveen discharged from hosp

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Leader of the Opposition in Assembly Naveen Patnaik was Wednesday evening dis charged following three days of hospitalisation.

The BJD chief was admitted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar Sunday evening due to dehydration I want to and he has been dis-

Das Burma said. Hospital sources said his health condition has improved and

he is 'now stable'.

charged after full

recovery, party

leader Sanjay

Expressing his gratitude towards people, Patnaik said, "I want to thank the people of Odisha for their prayers and good wishes for my health and, of course, to the hospital for having taken good care of me."

Earlier in the day, PM Narendra Modi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called him up, wishing him a speedy recovery. During his call, the PM suggested Patnaik to take rest for some time.

"PM Narendra Modi spoke to Naveen Patnaik today in the hospital. He enquired about his health and wished him a speedy recovery," a statement issued hv Patnaik's office said, adding that the PM also invited him to come to Delhi soon.

In another statement, his office said, "Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge spoke to BJD president Naveen Patnaik this evening. He enquired about his health and wished him a speedy recovery."

Patnaik also urged party supporters to come to his residence. thank the people of

Naveen Niwas, af-**Odisha for their prayers** ter his discharge and good wishes for my from the hospihealth and, of course, to tal. Earlier, Chief the hospital for having Minister Mohan taken good care of me

Charan Majhi NAVEEN PATNAIK | LEADER Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and others wished for his speedy recovery.

Patnaik also called up Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan and OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das and thanked them for visiting him at the hospital.

Taking to social media, Patnaik said, "Thank you, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @naren dramodi Ji for calling to inquire about my health and wishing

speedy recovery. "Thank you, Indian National Congress President Shri @ kharge Ji, for calling to inquire about my health," he added.

Pooshan Mohapatra tops NEET-PG

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Pooshan Mohapatra from Cuttack has secured All-India Rank–1 in NEET-PG 2025, the results of which were announced by National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences.

His outstanding achievement has drawn widespread appreciation, with Chief Minister Mo-

Majhi said, "Today is not just a moment of joy for Pooshan and his family, but also a proud day for the entire state of Odisha. Securing the top position in such a

is truly commendable. His achievement will serve as an inspiration to all students and the youth of the state.

challenging and highly

competitive examination

Wishing Mohapatra a bright career ahead, Majhi prayed to Lord Jagannath for his continued success and prosperity.

of the flood in Malkangiri and also have to be addressed. It is to vehemently oppose the 'arbihan Charan Maihi extending trary and anti-people proposiupstream of Polavaram as it stream states of Odisha and our suggestion that a pioneerhis warm wishes to Mohapatra was witnessed in July 2022, the ing role must be played by the Chhattisgarh. This shift has tions' and its implementation. and his parents.

OrissaPOS

AFFIDAVIT

CLASSIFIED

I. Smt. Nibedita Kalas, W/o. Shusanta Kalas, resident of Plot No. 2171, Tankapani Road, P.O.: BJB Nagar, P.S.: Badagada, Bhubaneswar - 751014, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. C.F. No. 48, Dt.11.07.25 that now onwards I shall be known as Nivedita Kalas for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dtd.15th August 2025, I Mrs. Parbati Sahoo, Address: At/P.O.: Nuaganichhapur, P.S.: Bansada, Dist.: Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN - 756132 have changed my name from 'Kaushalya Behera' to "Parbati Sahoo". Henceforth, I shall be known as 'Parbati Sahoo' for all purposes. Parbati Sahoo

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dtd.15th August 2025, I Mrs. Upasi Majhi, Address: At: Sasubhuasuni, P.O.: Nuaganichhapur, P.S.: Bansada, Dist.: Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN - 756132 have changed my name from 'Urbashi Majhi' to "Upasi Majhi". Henceforth, I shall be known as 'Upasi

Majhi' for all purposes.

Upasi Majhi

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dtd.28th March 2025, I Mrs. Mamata Mansingh, Address: At: Sananlo, Parikud, P.S.: Krushnaprasad, Dist.: Puri, PIN - 752011 Odisha have changed my name from 'Mamata Parida' to "Mamata Mansingh". Henceforth, I shall be known as Mamata Mansingh for all purposes. Mamata Mansingh

LOST The original Sale Deed of Tahsil-Bhubaneswar, P.S.: New Capital, Mouza: Bhubaneswar Sahara, Unit No.-32 Gobinda Prasad, Khata No.484, Plot No. 1026/1642, Flat No.-B 208, 2nd Floor, Apartment Name "Krishna Mansion" stands recorded in my brother-in-law's Late Gopal Krishna Basak H/o - Late Nirupama Basak, now I (Laxmidhar Sahoo) current legal heir of property, Missc. Certificate(Legal Heir Certificate) No.-E-LHC/2024/280436. FIR has been lodged Police Station-Jagatpur, Cuttack vide Register SI. No.-426 Dt.20-07-2025. Finder Information at 9078824910.

BJD, Congress demand Odisha SIR transparency

the number of polling booths

across the state will increase

from 38,000 to 45,000, ensuring

hetter accessibility and voter

"The last intensive revision

Both the BJD and the Con-

'We have no objection to SIR

gress have raised doubts over

the transparency of the exercise.

if it is conducted fairly. But a

Bihar-like exercise would force

all to think differently. There

should be clarity over the SIR

exercise," BJD spokesperson

He also said conducting SIR

of the electoral rolls is the job

of the Election Commission of

India, but a political party is

our leader Naveen Patnaik will

take a call on the matter. The

basic fact is that all genuine

voters must get the opportuni-

"When the right time comes,

Lenin Mohanty said.

the "most excited".

of the electoral rolls in Odisha

was conducted in 2002," Gopal-

convenience, he said.

an told PTI.



Bhubaneswar, August 20: The BJD and the Congress in Odisha Wednesday demanded absolute transparency in the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, an exercise which will start next month in the state after a gap of over 20 years.

Both parties also announced that they would launch protests if a "Bihar-like exercise" is conducted in Odisha

More than 65 lakh enumeration forms were "not included" in the draft electoral rolls prepared as part of the first phase of special intensive revision (SIR) by the Election Commission in Bihar, bringing down the total number of around 7.9 crore registered voters to 7.24 crore

Odisha's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) RS Gopalan has said that all political parties in the state have been informed about the SIR, and preparations are underway to start the exercise in September.

BJD MLA and former min-

ister PK Deb claimed that the party will not be silent if "there from the list in the garb of the SIR, as it has allegedly been done in Bihar". He also asked why the SIR was delayed by so many years, though there is a ercise every 10 years.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das said the party suspected that the BJP was "planning to carry out 'vote theft' in Odisha by using the SIR exercise"

"The government's intention has been exposed after the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission to provide details of voters excluded during the SIR in Bihar and forced it to publish the list," the Congress leader said. The Election Commission (EC) Monday came out with the names of 65 lakh people who were removed from the draft electoral rolls published as part of the SIR in Bihar.

'The Congress wants eligi ble voters to be included on the lists and ineligible ones to be excluded. But the working style and steps of the Election Commission, which has become a spokesperson of the BJP, are not satisfactory,' Das alleged.

He warned that there would be a statewide movement if voter lists in Odisha

NSUI's 'Campus Chalo Abhiyan' for elections



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: The Odisha unit of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) on Wednesday launched the 'Campus Chalo Abhiyan' to raise awareness among students about student union elections. The NSUI alleged that the state government is planning to withhold the elections, fearing defeat in the wake of the Balasore burn case, which involved ABVP students.

The campaign was launched by NSUI National Secretary and Odisha in-charge Karan Tamsetwar at Congress Bhawan, in the presence of NSU state general secretary Bibhuti Bhusan Mohapatra, former MP candidate Sved Yashir Nawaz

and other leaders. Addressing the press conference, NSUI leaders alleged that the state government is conspiring to avoid holding student union elections in uni versities and colleges across Odisha. They claimed that the recent death of a girl student at Fakir Mohan Autonomous University in Balasore exposed ABVP's involvement, tarnishing its reputation on campuses

statewide. The NSUI further accused ABVP of fueling campus violence and criminal activities, affecting students, parents,

and intellectuals alike According to NSUI, fearing student backlash, the BJP government is deliberately planning to cancel student union elections. Through the 'Campus Chalo Abhiyan, NSUI leaders and members will visit universities and colleges across Odisha to mobilize students, demand campus elections, protest against violence, and highlight issues of student safety, especially for female students.

NSUI also raised concerns over ragging, accusing the state government of failing to act, and vowed to fight for ragging-free campuses. The student body further criticised widespread corruption in educational institutions and the poor condition of government-run universities, where nearly 65 per cent of teaching posts remain vacant.

Apart from student-related issues, NSUI said it will hold discussions on vote theft and conduct awareness campaigns for new voters.

Odisha to set up MSME parks in all districts: CM

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday directed the MSME department to fast-track the establishment of MSME parks across all districts of the state.

Reviewing MSME department activities at Lok Seva Bhavan, the CM urged the organisation of large-scale aware ness programmes to draw youth into the sector. High lighting its vast employmen potential, Majhi noted that the state government has created a supportive environment for MSMEs to flourish.

"Steps are being taken to set up MSME parks in all districts," he added. He further urged officials to provide sup port to small entrepreneurs, businessmen, and self-employed individuals to help them establish their enterprises.

The CM also emphasised the mandatory use of products manufactured by Odisha-based MSMEs in all government offices, including schools and colleges. Discussions were held on sourcing furniture garments, and other supplies from local MSMEs to provide them with assured markets and incentives.

Majhi underscored the need to enhance cargo facilities by both sea and air to promote exports and imports in the MSME sector He also directed the department to ensure that bank loans for MSMEs are disbursed in a simplified and convenient manner

The meeting reviewed the inclusion of more beneficiaries under the PM Vishwa karma Yojana and proposed additional incentives for cluster-based projects.

Guv pushes banks for wider scheme reach

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, on a two-day visit to Bhadrak district, Wednesday urged bankers to implement welfare schemes more proactively and ensure broader participation of beneficiaries.

On the second day of his visit, the Governor interacted with the lead bank manager and heads of banks at Bhadrak following a comprehensive review meeting with the district administration at the Circuit House. "The Prime Minister has launched several schemes for the benefit of the poor, including PMJJBY, PMSBY, Atal Pension Yojana, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, PM MUDRA Yojana, and PM SVANidhi. We urged bankers to proactively extend loans under these schemes to ensure wider cov-



erage," Kambhampati said.

Explaining the objective of his district tours, the Governor of a larger programme to cover all districts of Odisha, "I aim to visit every district to understand local issues, review programme implementation, and suggest improvements where needed. My focus is also to assess how Government of India schemes are being executed at the grassroots level," he said. During the review meeting with the district administration, the Governor conducted a detailed assessment



of several key sectors.

The Governor reviewed the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, under which rooftop solar systems are being installed with subsidies. He noted that while the central government provides a subsidy, the Odisha government has added further support. "I believe such state-level subsidy support for PM Surya Ghar Yojana is unmatched elsewhere in the country. Odisha has taken a lead in this regard," Kambhampati said. He held detailed discussions on the scheme's implementation, ground-level challenges, and ways to ensure maximum benefits for the people.

He further lauded the Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyog Yojana and urged people to take advantage of it to promote agribased entrepreneurship. Reviewing the Jal Jeevan

Mission, the Governor said that while some mega projects are still pending, steps are being taken to address constraints and achieve the mission's target of providing tap water to every household at the earliest.

Referring to the Subhadra scheme, he said women beneficiaries are receiving ₹5,000 every six months. So far, they have received ₹15,000 each and are investing it in economic activities instead of using it for personal expenditure. "They are also taking loans, achieving encouraging financial results and improving their economic status," he noted.

In collaboration with local

NGOs, BMC has deployed ded-

icated vehicles across all city

zones. These vehicles are as

signed for collecting flower and

organic waste from pandals. No

household garbage or non-bio-

University Law College students stage protest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: Students of University Law College staged a protest in front of the campus Wednesday, presenting a 15-point charter of

The agitated students held placards and banners, shouting slogans in support of their demands. They alleged that the campus lacks basic facilities. Key demands include increasing the capacity of the girls' hostel, construction of a boys' hostel, formation of an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), installation of CCTV cameras within six months to strengthen surveillance, and

CURRENCY

VARIATION

INDEX

DOLLAR 87.09 \$\(\phi\) 0.04 | SENSEX 81857.84 \$\(\phi\) 213.45

INDEX



rary teachers is affecting their studies, among others. "We have repeatedly urged the vice-chancellor to address our

ulty, as dependence on tempo

issues, but our demands remain unmet," said an agitated student. Another student said, "We have raised our concerns with the Higher Education Minister and even approached the Chief

Minister's grievance cell, yet our demands remain unheard. BOURSES VARIATION **INDEX VARIATION**

GOLD ₹99,240 4₹544

PH.D AWARDEE

PH.D AWARDED TO SURENDRA KUMAR DAS. Surendra Kumar Das has been awarded a Ph.D in Law by Singhania University, Rajasthan. His researchy YB topic was "An Analytical Study of Laws and Policies in the Context of Corporate Governance of Multinational Corporations in India to Combat Crime He carried out his research under the guidance of Professor Dr. Nitya Nanda Pandey and Professor Dr. S. Mukundarajan from Singhania University. Das's thesis emphasized the importance of implementing His work is a significant contribution to the field of Law, particularly in the context of multinational corporations operating in India. Das is a distinguished Advocate practicing at the Orissa High Court, Cuttack. President: Global Odia Samaj/Odisha Without Border (OWB) for Central Zone, India, Executive Member, Orissa High Court Bar Association, Cuttack, Senior Legal Advisor*: Nationalized Banks, 'Indian Railways, and Corporate.Das has extensive expertise in various areas of law, including: RailwayLaw, Banking Law Service Matters Corporate Law, Taxation, Family Law, Civil Law & Criminal Law. He is also the Head of the Eastern Zone of Indian and global operations of Law Firms India World

Waste flower to eco-friendly incense

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: In

At thousands of puja pandals,

a move to promote environmental sustainability and uphold religious sentiments during the upcoming Ganesh Puja celebration in Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has launched a special initiative to convert flower and puja waste into eco-friendly incense sticks.

which will be built across the

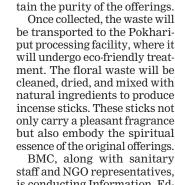


City, floral offerings in large ing the sanctity of these items but also creating a sustainable volumes are a common sight product," BMC Mayor Sulochaduring the festival. However, improper disposal of the sacred na Das said. items has often led to unhygienic conditions, clogged drains

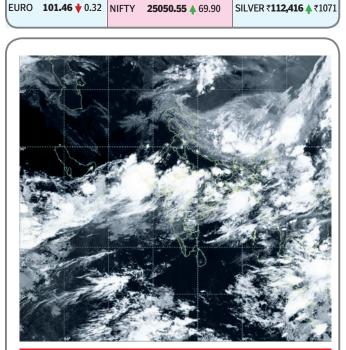
and public nuisance. This year, BMC has taken a proactive step to ensure that the flower waste finds a new, meaningful purpose.

"Religious offerings deserve respectful disposal. By process-

degradable items are allowed in these vehicles in order to maining flower waste into incense sticks, we are not only preserv



BMC, along with sanitary staff and NGO representatives, is conducting Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns to sensitise puja committees and local residents about the initiative



	WEATH	ER	
	BBSR	СТС	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.6°	30.8°	Generally cloudy
Min Temp	24.8°	23.5°	sky with possibility of rain
Humidity	83%	94%	or thundershower
Rainfall	20mm	11.6mm	

CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS ASSIFIED ADVERTISEMEN FOR CL

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488

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

NO ELECTRICITY

Darkness rules 342 Kandhamal villages

PM Surya Ghar Yojana falters with only 12 beneficiaries against a target of 10,000



POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, August 20: Darkness rules hundreds of villages in Kandhamal district once the daylight fades as electricity still eludes remote, hilly and forested pockets, forcing the residents to stay indoors when fear of wild animals and other hazards loom large

Essential activities like mobile connectivity and online services come to a grinding halt, thanks to lack of electricity. Of the 2,599 villages across 171 gram panchayats in the district, as many as 342 villages remain unelectrified. Lack of enough power grids in the district is stated to be the reason behind lack of power connection.

Moreover, the Centre's ambitious PM Surya Ghar Yojana has faltered in the district with only 12 beneficiaries getting power supply under the scheme. The progress of the scheme is quite disappointing in comparison with the demand

for power supply in the district.

The problem is severe in Baliguda, Kotagarh, Tumudibandha and Daringbadi blocks. Currently, Kandhamal has two 132-KV power grids - Phulbani and G Udayagiri. A 220-KV grid constructed at Sirtiguda near Daringbadi six years ago at a cost of about Rs 100 crore remains non-functional due to pending Forest clearance for tower construction. Once operational, it is expected to address local power crunch. However, the delay has left the villagers high and dry.

District officials said plans are underway to extend elec-

tricity to all unelectrified villages. A detailed project report (DPR) of Rs 30 crore has already been submitted to the state government. "If the proposal is approved, the electrification work will begin soon," said district chief development officer Shambhunath Nandi.

According to officials, about 1.67 lakh households under Phulbani division have been electrified. However, many areas continue to face low-voltage problems due to inadequate supply. Officials noted that setting up of new grids is necessary to resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, the progress of the Union government's ambitious rooftop solar project in Kandhamal district remains sluggish. According to Energy department sources, only 12 households across the district have joined the scheme so far, against a target of 10,000 for the division.

Officials said villagers are reluctant to apply for solar power because they already receive free or subsidised electricity under existing government schemes, making even heavily subsidised solar power less

When contacted, executive engineer of Phulbani division Manas Ranjan Maharana said the Energy department has set a target to achieve 100 per cent electrification in the district



FOR A CAUSE: Students of Jawanpalli High School at Telerai panchayat under Kalimela block of Malkangiri district take out an awareness rally on hazards of single-use plastic Wednesday

Obscene photo of minor girl goes viral; 7 arrested

Bheden, August 20: Seven youths were arrested Wednesday after allegedly circulating an obscene photograph of a 17-year-old girl under Bheden police limits of Bargarh dis-

The arrested were identified as Basant Patel, 24, Chhabil Melli, 23, Jibardhan Behera, 24, Prakash Pradhan, 24, Subrat Pradhan, 26, Tosabanta Pradhan, 26, and Prafulla Behera, 26 - all residents of Bheden area. They were produced before Bheden Judicial Magistrate

jail after their bail pleas were

A case (188/25) has been reg-

and 351(2), as well as Sections 66E, 67, 67A, and 67B of IT Act. istered under relevant Sections and Section 12 of Protection of one of the accused. After the relationship soured, the youth allegedly shared private photo graphs of the minor that he had obtained earlier, sending them via WhatsApp to several young men in her village. The images then spread further, eventually going viral. The matter came to light

es (POCSO) Act. According to

police, the victim was previ-

ously in a relationship with

after the girl's family lodged a complaint with Bheden police Tuesday. Following the complaint, police launched an investigation and arrested the seven accused.

KENDRAPARA SELF-IMMOLATION

NHRC seeks report from DGP

Bhubaneswar, August 20: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognizance of a media report on the self-immolation of a 19-year-old girl in Kendrapara district and issued a notice to the Director General of Police (DGP) seeking a detailed report within two weeks.

The commission has asked the top cop to submit the current status of the investigation. According to reports, the girl, a college student in Kendrapa-

ra, set herself afire August 6 after alleging continuous blackmail by a former male friend who allegedly threatened to post her obscene photos and videos on social media Her father claimed that de-

spite filing a complaint with the police nearly six months ago, no FIR was registered and no action was taken against the accused. Instead, a police offi-



cer reportedly advised him to block the blackmailer's phone number and discouraged further pursuit of the matter.

The apex rights body observed that the allegations, if true, point to serious violations of human rights.

It directed the DGP to submit a comprehensive report on the case within two weeks. Meanwhile, the state govern-

ment has transferred the officer-in-charge of Pattamundai Rural police station for failing to register an FIR.

The accused, Pramod Behera, the deceased girl's former friend, has been arrested for circulating her obscene photos

Probe starts into Keonjhar DMF fund irregularities

Keonjhar/Hatadihi, August 20: A two-member team of state Planning and Convergence department launched an inquiry into the alleged irregularities, misuse and misappropriation of funds of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) in Keonihar district following directions from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), a report said Wednes-

The order for a probe came after a formal complaint was lodged with the CMO earlier this month. A detailed report on the issue of irregularities was first published in Orissa POST August 6.

The team comprising deputy secretary Jyotshnamayee Khuntia and another official Anil Patra arrived in Keonjhar Tuesday and verified various papers and documents for the last two days. Officials said the investigating team has already collected several crucial docu-



The probe will be conducted on the basis of the complaint, and a report will be submitted to the CMO, Patra said.

Meanwhile, a separate case concerning alleged misappropriation of DMF funds (WP(C) PIL- 26601/2024) has been filed in the Orissa High Court. Acting on the High Court directives and recommendations of a state-level committee, a second investigation began Wednesday. Sambalpur Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC) Sachin R Yadav and Addition-

al Secretary of the Planning and Convergence department Pradvumna Kumar Mahakud visited the Keonjhar DMF office and launched a probe.

Reports said that the Keonjhar District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), through order no-4302, dated September 30, 2021, posted a junior revenue assistant (JRA) Uday Narayan Jena to the Ombudsman Cell. The order also stated that he would assist the senior revenue assistant (SRA) of DMF.

However, reports allege that without proper authorisation, Jena independently managed all DMF file-related work. He allegedly processed files, cleared projects without official sanction, and approved inflated allocations running into several crores of rupees.

including Section 126(2), 296,

It has further been alleged that despite being a government employee, Jena was paid lakhs of rupees as remuneration from DMF funds. Several irregularities in the DMF office are suspected to have been taken place using his signature.

The complaint also noted that an earlier order issued by former DMF chairperson and the then-Collector N Thirumala Naik (order no-273, dated September 7, 2017) was ignored. The complaint was formally lodged with the CMO August 1.

Acting on complaints, the CMO directed the State Planning and Convergence department to launch an inquiry into the alleged irregularities in the

Man gets 20-yr RI for raping minor girl

BARIPADA: A court in Mayurbhanj district Wednesday sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) for raping a minor girl three years ago. The sentence was pronounced by Fast Track Special Court Judge Santosh Kumar Nayak. Rauta Purty, 57, was held guilty under Section 6 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for raping a 13-year-old girl, said Special Public Prosecutor Manoranjan Pattnaik. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on the convict. The court also directed Mayurbhanj District Legal Services Authority to pay Rs 3 lakh as compensation to the survivor, Pattnaik said, According to the prosecution, the incident took place December 8, 2022, when the girl had gone to the nearby forest to collect firewood. Finding her alone, Purty raped her.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

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VEHICLE LIKE TATA 207-DI OR
EQUIVALENT ALONG WITH DRIVER
ROUND THE CLOCK FOR MOVEMENT
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ENGINEER (SIGNAL) / TALCHER,
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Tender Value : ₹42,48,000.00, <u>EMD</u> ₹85,000/-, Tender document cost

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No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes corrigendum issued for this tender. Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer

Man held for raping Ganjam girl in Surat

PNN & AGENCIES

to many.

Berhampur, August 20: Odisha Police has arrested a 26-vearold man from Surat city in Gujarat for allegedly raping a girl from Berhampur several times over the last eight months, police said Wednesday The accused Karmaraj

Dubey, also known as Subalak, 26, who hails from Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur district, was arrested by a team of Berhampur Town police station Sunday, Berhampur Superintendent of Police (SP) Saravana



Vivek M said.

The accused was an auto-rickshaw driver in Surat. He was produced before a court in Surat and then brought to Odisha on transit remand, following which he was produced before a court here Tuesday night, he said. According to the police, the girl went to Surat alone in November last year after some disputes with her family members. She met the accused at Surat railway station.

As the victim was searching for a job there, the accused enticed her for a job and took her to his house and allegedly repeatedly raped her, another police officer said.

She was one of the 55 women and children rescued by the police under the ongoing 'Operation Anweshan' launched by Odisha Police to rescue the

missing and kidnapped children and women. The drive started Monday and will continue for a week. After being rescued, the 17-year-old victim was lodged in a rescue centre here, he said.

"Till Tuesday, we have rescued around 44 victims which included 32 women and 12 children," said Ganjam Superintendent of Police Subhendu Patra.

Most of the victims were rescued from different areas of the state, he said. The Berhampur SP said they have rescued around 10 children and women during the period.

BJD block chairman resigns ahead of no-trust motion

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 20:, BJD leader Pravat Kumar Balabantaray has resigned from the post of chairperson of Dharmasala block panchayat samiti in Jajpur district Wednesday, an official said. The resignation of Balabantaray, a two-time block panchayat samiti chairperson, comes just two days before the scheduled voting on a no-confidence motion against him.

Citing personal reasons, Balabantaray Wednesday tendered his resignation and sent it to the BDO of Dharmasala to accept it at the earliest. He resigned ahead of a motion of no confidence, which is scheduled to be held August 22.

The political tussle in Dharmasala block had intensified after 38 of its members (20 sarpanches and 18 Samiti members) of various panchayats of the panchayat samiti submitted the no-confidence motion against the block chairperson to Jajpur sub-collector Tapas Ranjan Dehury August 11.

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Tribal girl's journey from KGBV to med college

Hospital, Sundargarh. Bhubaneswar, August 20: Leeza, belonging to Kisan Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidy-(ST) community, joined KGBV alaya (KGBV) has once again Bamra-IV in 2021 and stayed at brought pride to the state by the hostel when she was studynurturing a bright talent whose ing in Class IX and X. The safe, supportive, and empowering success story is an inspiration environment of the residen-Leeza Majhi, daughter of tial school laid the foundation Lalit Mohan Majhi, a small for her academic growth and farmer, and Padmini Majhi, future aspirations. After completing her matriculation from homemaker, of Uchkapat under Bamra block in Sambalpur dis-Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya (OAV), Bamra in 2022-23 with trict, has successfully cleared an impressive 82 per cent, she NEET-2025 and secured admission to the MBBS programme at was selected to pursue Plus II



Science at OAV (Iconic) Bhubaneswar, where she secured 81.6 per cent.

Her perseverance and dedication bore fruit in 2025 when she qualified the NEET and fulfilled her dream of becoming a doctor. Leeza expressed gratitude to KGBV for providing free residential education, mentoring, and holistic support that helped shape her academic path. KGBVs, an initiative of the

Speaking about her journey,

Union government, are special residential schools established to provide quality education to underprivileged and out-ofschool adolescent girls from disadvantaged communities. Odisha has been at the forefront of this mission, and the inspiring stories of KGBV alumnae like Leeza stand as proof of its

School authorities expressed

immense pride, stating, "Leeza's success is not just an individual triumph, but a symbol of hope for countless girls across rural Odisha. Her journey from KGBV to the medical college shows that education is the most powerful tool of empowerment." This achievement marks yet another milestone for KGBV and is expected to inspire many more girls from marginalised communities to dream big and pursue their ambitions.

AWARENESS INITIATIVE

Date and Venue:

For registration, please contact: Shagun Sahni, Mobile: 87639 83099. Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m No walk-ins will be allowed.



with the AMCs or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on https://smarto



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Timothy Snyder

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Russia the

the other

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right to decide

foreign policy

encourages

aggression

further

undoes the

world order.

legally change

Trump's Ultima Thule

n the ancient world, people spoke of "Ultima Thule," a mythical land in the extreme north, at the end of the earth. By venturing north to Alaska to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, US President Donald Trump reached his own Ultima Thule, the arctic endpoint of a foreign-policy dreamworld.

For Trump, foreign leaders can be dealt with like Americans, with fantastic promises and obnoxious bullying. But the fantasies do not function beyond America's borders. The empty offer of a "beautiful" future does not move dictators who commit crimes to advance their own visions, or affect people who are defending their families from a criminal invasion stealing their land and wealth, abducting their children, and torturing and murdering civilians.

Putin has no reason to prefer Trump's vision of a beautiful future to his own: a Ukraine with a puppet government, a population cowed by violence, patriots buried in mass graves, and resources

 $Like\ Trump's\ fantasizing, his\ bullying\ also\ does\ not\ work\ abroad.$ To be sure, many Americans are afraid of Trump. He has purged his own political party, with threats of violence helping to keep Republican members of Congress in line. He is deploying the US military as a police force, first in California and now in Washington, DC.

But foreign enemies apprehend these intimidation tactics differently. The very moves that shock Americans delight America's foes. In Moscow, deployments of soldiers inside the United States

Tough talk may resonate in America, where we confuse words with action. But for Russian leaders, it covers a weak foreign policy. Trump has made extraordinary concessions to Russia in exchange for nothing at all. Russia has repaid him by continuing the war in Ukraine and **Accepting that** mocking him on state-controlled television.

What are those concessions? Just by meeting Putin in Alaska, Trump ended more than three years of Western diplomatic isolation of the Kremlin. By shaking hands with an indicted war criminal, Trump signaled that the killings, the torture, the abductions in Ukraine do not matter.

Even the choice of Alaska was a concession, and an odd one. Russians, including major figures in state media, routinely claim Alaska for Russia. Inviting people who claim your territory inside your main military base on that territory to discuss a war of aggression they started without inviting anyone representing the country they invaded – well, that is just about as far as a foreign-policy fantasy can go.

It was the very end because Trump had already conceded the more fundamental issues. He does not speak of justice for Russian war criminals or of the reparations Russia owes. He grants that Russia can determine Ukraine's

and America's foreign policy on the crucial point of NATO membership. And he accepts that Russia's invasions should lead not only to de facto but also de jure changes in sovereign control over territory. Accepting that invasion can legally change borders undoes the world order. Granting Russia the right to decide the other countries' foreign policy encourages further aggression. Abandoning the obvious legal and historical responses to criminal wars of aggression – reparations and trials - encourages war in general.

Trump speaks loudly and carries a small stick. The notion that words alone can do the trick has led Trump to the position that Putin's words matter, and so he had to go to Alaska for a "listening exercise." Trump's career has been full of listening to Putin, and then

Both men are moved by the future perception of their greatness. Putin believes that this can be achieved by war, an element of which is the manipulation of the American president. Trump believes his legacy can be secured by being associated with peace, which, so long as he is unwilling to make policy himself, puts him in the

Putin is not moved to end the war when his own propaganda is repeated by the US president. He cannot be enticed by a vague vision of a better world, since he has in mind his own very specific atrocity.

In Alaska, Trump reached his personal Ultima Thule, the limits of his own personal world of magical talk. He faced a very simple question: Would Putin accept an unconditional ceasefire or not, as he had demanded?

Putin has refused any such thing, and he did so again in Alaska. The Russians propose an obviously ridiculous and provocative counter: Ukraine should now formally concede to Russia territory that Russia does not even occupy, lands on which Ukraine has built its defenses. And then Russia can of course attack again, from a far better position. Putin knows that Trump wants the Nobel Peace Prize, so his obvi-

ous move is to suggest to Trump that the war will end someday, and Trump will get the credit, if the two of them just keep talking - "Next time in Moscow?" he asked before leaving Alaska – while Russia keeps

Now that Trump has failed to secure an unconditional Russian ceasefire, there are two paths he can take. He can continue the fantasy, though it will become ever more obvious, even to his friends and supporters, that the fantasy is Putin's. Or he can make the war harder for Putin, and thereby bring its end closer.

The US has not formalised its outlandish concessions to Russia, and Trump could rescind them in one press conference. The US has the policy instruments to change the direction of the war in Ukraine, and could employ them.

Trump has threatened "severe consequences" if Putin did not accept an unconditional ceasefire. Those are words, and thus far, the consequences of Trump's words, for Russia, have been more words. This all becomes clear now, at Ultima Thule. Trump has reached the border of his fantasy world. Where will he go next?

> The writer is a permanent fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna.

WISDOM CORNER

When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation.

The more unintelligent a man is, the less mysterious exis-

tence seems to him.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

FOCUS POLITICS

FAR-RIGHT CULTURE WAR

omething just broke in Germany. A highly respected jurist whom the governing Social Democratic Party (SPD) nominated to sit on the country's constitutional court has withdrawn herself from consideration after a relentless smear campaign by right-wing journalists and politicians. Worse, it was the SPD's own coalition partner, the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU), that suddenly shifted from supporting Frauke Brosius-Gersdorf's candidacy to deeming her unacceptable.

This sabotage of a hitherto consensual procedure is a test run for bringing US-style culture-war politics to Germany. The goal is to peel away ever more members of the center right that former Chancellor Angela Merkel once led, and to move toward the arrangement that already was put in place in some other European democracies: an alliance of the center right and the populist far right.

True, Germany's constitutional court, though one of the world's most respected and influential, has not always been above controversy. In the mid-1990s, it drew conservatives ire when it ruled that Bavarian non-denominational schools may not display crucifixes on their walls. But the process of appointing judges has always been spared from the spectacle that is all too familiar from the United States. Rather than holding highly publicised, televised, and reliably polarising hearings, parties meet behind closed doors to propose a balanced ticket of nominees, each of whom then must win super-majority support in the lower house.

As with so much else in European politics, this process has been complicated by the success of far-right populists. The Alternative for Germany



Today's right-wing culture warriors are polarisation entrepreneurs. Often armed with disinformation, they seek to sharpen conflicts and divide constituencies into friends and enemies, and this has led them to target the center right's weak point

(AfD), now the second-largest group in parliament, has been demanding its "own judge," objecting to the fact that smaller German parties the pro-market Free Democrats and the Greens - hold the right to nominate members of the court. In one federal state, Thuringia, where the AfD won the last elections, the party has effectively blocked the appointment of new judges as a protest against what it sees as its unjustified exclusion.

But it was not primarily the far right that brought down Brosius-Gersdorf, Rather, she faced a wider campaign of criticism that sought to paint her as a left-wing radical who supposedly wants to liberalise abortion completely and introduce mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations. Not only did a fellow law professor alter her Wikipedia entry to make her look like an "activist," but the archbishop of Bamberg attacked her in a sermon – only to admit, after a personal conversation with the candidate, that he had been 'misinformed."

Germany has never had the

equivalent of Fox News (whereas France now has CNews, one of whose leading journalists even stood as a prominent candidate for the French presidency in 2022). However, relatively small far-right startups claiming to be "the voice of the majority" - have increasingly gained influence within the CDU. One CDU member recently declared, in effect, that anyone not subscribing to natural-law doctrines cannot serve as a judge. Suddenly, the supposed mainstream is echoing the populist talking point that courts should primarily "represent the people" (as opposed

to upholding the constitution). The CDU has been in an intellectual crisis for some time. Hardly anyone can today articulate the party's core principles. True, like the Conservatives in the United Kingdom, German Christian Democrats long prided themselves on their pragmatism, cultivating an image as the competent default party of government. Moreover, natural-law thinking was indeed prominent among Christian Democrats

in the postwar period. But precisely because they were interested in power, Christian Democrats - like British Tories – carefully adapted to a changing society. The ironic result is that they are now maligning as "radical" a jurist who actually does seem to represent "the people" - insofar as she generally holds views that command majority support.

Christian Democrats traditionally pursued a political strategy of seeking to mediate among different groups and interests, pursuing what Catholic social doctrine had long held out as a vision of social harmony. In this sense, Merkel - always eager to balance and compromise - was still practicing the traditional model.

But today's right-wing culture warriors are polarisation entrepreneurs. Often armed with disinformation, they seek to sharpen conflicts and divide constituencies into friends and enemies, and this has led them to target the center right's weak point. Feeling pressure from the far right, Christian Democrats think they must prove to their constituencies that they are still genuinely conservative - unlike the supposedly über-liberal Merkel, who eventually even went along with re-

Despite CDU leaders' claims to be democracy's last defence against the rising far right, the party is falling into the culture-war traps the far right has set for them. It is not inevitable that the last major country with a firewall to contain the far right will go the way so many other European democracies have gone already. But that scenario is becoming more realistic.

forms like same-sex marriage.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM

Jan-Werner Mueller

IT IS NOT

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INEVITABLE

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ALREADY

SOCIETY

Reactionaries & the scientific mind



Bhabani Shankar Nayak **DESPITE BEING** THE FIFTH-**LARGEST** ECONOMY, **INDIA SPENDS THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF ITS GDP ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMPARED TO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES**

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

requested to send their contact

address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and

suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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numbers and full postal

columns (between 600-1000

t is the constitutional duty of every Indian citizen "to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform, as stated in Article 51A(h) of Part IVA of the Constitution on Fundamental Duties. Despite the 42nd Amendment of 1976. which enshrined the ideals of scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform, successive governments have continued to undermine scientific education and have failed to implement policies that nurture scientific consciousness. Religious, political, social, and cultural reactionaries-along with their allies in electoral politics who pander to them-erode both the Constitution and the constitutional duties of Indian citizens.

A stagnant culture serves to protect the conservative ideals and interests of the elites. The Eurocentric theory of cultural relativism continues to legitimise various stagnant and primitive forms of reactionary practices in the name of protecting cultural identity in India. Similarly, community-based laws safeguard practices that are fundamentally reactionary and neo-traditional. Such legal provisions weaken the constitutional promise of reform in India. These democratic and

constitutional contradictions call for progressive reform. However, political parties and their leaders exploit social, cultural, linguistic, religious, and regional identities to mobilise voters and secure electoral victories to govern the country and hinder progressive reforms.

Scientific temper means cultivating democratic knowledge traditions and consciousness through debates, disagreements, dissent, and the questioning of all forms of power and governance. It involves democratising and diversifying dominant knowledge traditions, dismantling authoritarianism in every form, and advancing scientific understanding among all the people in India. Scientific temper can emancipate people from blind beliefs and reactionary thoughts and practices in the country. It also requires expansion of investment in science and scientific education. which can accelerate the realisation of the constitutional promise of promoting a culture of scientific temper among all sections of Indian society.

In a diverse country like India, reactionary forces across different spheres of society hinder the growth of scientific temper and obstruct the path of progressive transformation in politics, culture, and the economy. These

constitutional duties are further weakened by the budgetary priorities of both state and Central governments, particularly in areas such as education, educational infrastructure, teaching and learning environments, training, and research. For instance, the University Grants Commission, which shapes policies and allocates funds for research and teaching in higher education, experienced a 61 per cent budget cut in 2024. Despite being the fifth-largest economy, India spends the lowest percentage of its GDP on science and technology compared to many other countries.

Indian society, the state, and successive governments continue to remain hostages to various reactionary and regressive forces. These forces oppose the culture of critical inquiry and reform, as any progressive change threatens the power. privileges, property and authority of both ruling and non-ruling reactionary groups in the country. Reactionary ideals and practices—such as caste, patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, and social, political, and economic discrimination and exploitation on the basis of class, gender, caste, region, and religion—continue to persist in India. These practices stand in direct opposition to the constitutional ideals of scientific temper and humanism.

The working class has consistently embraced progressive reforms and radical change as a means to fulfil their constitutional duties-duties that are systematically obstructed by the elites in India. Working people have long supported bold reforms and progressive policies aimed at social, political, and economic transformation. Yet capitalist classes have eroded the spirit of humanism through the processes of marketisation, commercialisation, and the commodification of human labour, nature, and relationships.

Therefore, opposing all reactionary forces is central to upholding the spirit and promises of the Indian Constitution and to deepening scientific, secular, and democratic consciousness among all people in India. It is essential to promote democratic, decolonial, decarbonised, and non-Eurocentric knowledge traditions to empower citizens by ensuring a culture of scientific and secular ethos—an ethos that can guide India and its people toward a progressive path of inquiry, reform, humanism, peace and prosperity.

> The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University

In the soup

Sir, It is clear as daylight that the CEC has shot himself in the foot in the belatedly called presser. Permit to cite an analogy to substantiate my point. If a student is not satisfied with his scores and wants his teacher or professor to justify the marks given, the evaluator is duty bound to set all the student's doubts at rest. If the evaluation has been done sincerely, the student will be shown his answer sheet so that not a speck of doubt remains about the correctness of the valuation exercise. However, if the evaluation has been done in a ham handed manner, the student is told not to question the honesty and / or accuracy of the marks allotted to him/her. Further, he is snubbed for casting aspersions on the evaluator, and is told bluntly that only a written request for re-evaluation of the score will be entertained. The student is given the impression that asking for a revaluation is an act of indiscipline, and the marks awarded brook no scrutiny. The CEC has behaved like the errant professor/teacher in addressing the claims of Rahul Gandhi and the entire Opposition.

Avinash Godboley, DEWAS

Terror survivors

Sir, When the terror affected speak, the international community must listen with rapt attention. Victims of terrorism have to live a life filled with fear, disgust, trauma and apathy. They are the State's responsibility though the tendency to provide lip service to protect the dignity and right of the individual and injured still exists. Immediate impact and long term scars of terror have to be fully addressed by the nations without fear or favour. The kith of the terror-affected have the right to be heard throughout, and not in a piecemeal manner. The "International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism," on 21 August, entrusts the responsibility on the member nations to alleviate the suffering of the unfortunate victims of terror. Support portals of the United Nations are vital to lift the terror-hit from the pit.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES





India's 22nd IIM to come up in Guwahati K'taka borrowing jumps ₹37K-cr YoY

The establishment of an IIM in Assam has long been a demand from students, academia, and civil society, who have argued that the state requires premier management education infrastructure to match its growing economic potential

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday hailed the passage of the IIM (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the Rajya Sabha as a "historic day" for the state, saying it has paved the way for Assam's first Indian Institute of Management to be established in Palasbari, near Guwahati. Taking to social media plat-

form X, Sarma credited the achievement to the "unwayering commitment" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside the support of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. He also extended gratitude to Mem-



Rs 550 crore as capital

assistance for the project. The

upcoming institute will be the

second IIM in the Northeast,

Tuesday gave its nod to the In-

dian Institutes of Management

(Amendment) Bill, 2025, clear-

ing the decks for a new Indian

Institute of Management (IIM)

The Centre has earmarked

Rs 550 crore as capital assis-

tance for the project. The up-

coming institute will be the

second IIM in the Northeast,

joining IIM Shillong, and will

to come up in Guwahati.

joining IIM Shillong

bers of Parliament who backed the bill, calling it a milestone in Assam's developmental

iourney.

expected to not only cater to

potentially boosting the region's

tudents from the Northeast but also

attract talent from across the country

educational and industrial ecosystem

The new campus at Palasbari is expected to not only cater to students from the Northeast but also attract talent from across the country, potentially boosting the region's educational and industrial ecosystem.

Notably, the Lok Sabha

of national importance.

resentatives of the United Lib-

Assam had pressed for such

Until a formal Board of Governors is constituted for IIM Guwahati, the draft law auto appoint individuals to discharge the Board's functions.

At present, 21 IIMs across the IIM Act as institutions of national importance. With the addition of Guwahati, the network of premier management schools will further expand

Education Minister Dhar-

mendra Pradhan, who piloted the bill, saw it through the House by a voice vote. The proceedings, however, were marked by noisy protests from the Opposition over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar. Soon after the passage, the session was adjourned.

The new IIM forms part of a Special Development Package (SDP) for Assam, laid down under a Memorandum of Settlement signed by the Centre, the state government, and reperation Front of Assam (ULFA).

an institute, citing its geographical significance and the need to spur regional growth.

thorises the Union government

India are recognised under into the Northeast.



Women farmers from Banjara community stage a protest against the Karnataka government over various issues, at Freedom Park, in Bangalore,

Orphaned Asiatic black bears find new home in Kaziranga

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, August 20: Two orphaned Asiatic black bear cubs, rescued from Dissoi Reserved Forest in Assam's Jorhat district, have been translocated to Dehing Patkai National Park and released in the wild, a forest official said Wednesday.

The cubs, estimated to be between four and six weeks old at the time, were discovered alone by a local youth in February this year and handed over to the Na-Kachari Beat Office under Jorhat Forest Division.

As subsequent surveys found no trace of their mother, they were transferred to the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Kaziranga, for specialised care, the official said.

The cubs were treated at CWRC for mild dehydration and nurtured in the small mammal nursery under the close supervision of veterinarian Bhaskar Choudhury and his team. They were reared on a canine milk replacer and gradually introduced to conditions that would prepare them for survival in the wild. Chud-

hury said. The rehabilitation of or-



phaned Asiatic black bear cubs in CWRC focused on ensuring proper nutrition, maintaining natural behaviours, and minimising human imprinting to secure their chanc-

es of successful reintegration.

A scientific survey was subsequently undertaken to determine a suitable release

The Dissoi Reserved Forest was initially considered, but its proximity to human settlements and high disturbance made it unsuitable for bear rehabilitation

A systematic evaluation based on natural cover, distance from habitation, prev availability, and local community awareness identified Dehing Patkai National Park as the most suitable release site.

Offering rich vegetation, abundant natural resources. minimal human interference, and committed support from forest staff and local communities, the park emerged as the ideal new home for the cubs, the official said.

Formal permission to proceed with this site selection and release was granted on June 4 by the Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam.

Following this approval, the CWRC team successfully translocated the cubs to Dehing Patkai National Park August 17, giving them a genuine chance to thrive in the wild.

CWRC, established in Kaziranga in 2002, is a joint initiative by the Assam Forest Department, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IF-AW), and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).

The financial deficit of the state increased from ₹46,623cr in 2022-23 to ₹65,522cr in 2023-24

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 20: The Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report has revealed that the five guarantee schemes implemented by the government of Karnataka accounted for 15 per cent of Revenue Expenditure for the year 2023-24. It further underlined that to finance the guarantees the state government availed Rs 37,000 crore loan more than the previous year and reduced capital expenditure (Capex).

The central auditor's report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly Tuesday and the details have surfaced Wednesday.

The CAG stated, "Implementation of the schemes resulted in the increase in growth of expenditure (12.54 per cent from the previous year) which was the contributing factor of Revenue Deficit of Rs 9,271 crore. Consequently, fiscal deficit of the state also increased from Rs 46,623 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 65,522 crore in 2023-24.

The state in order to finance the guarantee schemes and the deficits arising thereof, availed net market borrowing of Rs 63,000 crore which was Rs 37,000 crore more than last year's net borrowings. The guarantee schemes also reduced the Capex towards infrastructure by around Rs 5,229 crore when compared to previous year, the CAG stated.

The CAG report also gave details of five guarantee schemes implemented during 2023-24. A total budget of Rs 36.537.96 crore was allotted. Under Gruha Laxmi, which provides Rs 2,000 every month to woman head, Rs 16,964 was spent. Under Gruha Jyothi, free power scheme, Rs 8,900 crore was spent. Anna Bhagya free rice scheme (Rs 7,344.68 crore), Shakti free travel for women scheme Rs 3,200 crore was spent and for Yuva Nidhi scholarship scheme Rs 88.88 crore was spent.

Resting facilities for Cachar tea workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Silchar, August 20: Assam's Cachar district administration has stepped up an initiative to implement the Cha Shramik Aashray Yojana (CSAY) to provide resting facilities with toilets for tea workers, a release

said Wednesday. District Commissioner Mridul Yadav held a review meeting here to identify suitable land across tea estates and ensure that construction work can begin without administrative delays, it said.

The scheme for developing resting facilities for tea labourers, a flagship initiative of the Assam government's Tea Tribes and Adivasi Welfare Department, is a direct step towards improving the daily lives of the plantation workers.

"The government has designed this project to address a long-standing need of the tea community, and the Cachar administration is fully committed to implementing it swiftly and transparently", Yadav said.

The district administration will keep a close watch on every stage of the process to ensure quality and timely implementation, he said.

Each shelter will be built at a cost of Rs 5.16 lakh, with the number of shelters to be determined by the size of the estate. One facility will be set up for gardens up to 500 hectares, two for those between 500 and 700 hectares, and three for estates above 700 hectares.

These facilities will offer hygienic resting spaces for workers, addressing a long-felt gap in the welfare infrastructure of tea gardens.

Construction committees will be formed and bank account details finalised for the quick fund transfer from the state government, Yadav said.

"By putting these mechanisms in place early, the district administration aims to prevent procedural hurdles that often slow down welfare projects," he added.

Tea cultivation has long been central to Cachar's economy. with its estates providing livelihoods for thousands of families.



guarantee schemes accounted for 15 per cent of revenue expenditure for the year 2023-24. During the year 2023-24, while the state's revenue grew by 1.86 per cent over last year, its expenditure grew by 12.54 per cent. The increase in growth of expenditure was mainly on the account of the guarantee schemes which was the contributing factor for revenue deficit of Rs 9,271 crore, according to the CAG report.

The report further underlined, "This mismatch of receipt and expenditure during the current year had resulted in state witnessing revenue deficit of Rs 9,271 crore after its recovery during 2022-23 from the Covid-19 economic slowdown.

Consequently, the financial deficit of the state also increased from Rs 46,623 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 65,522 crore in

To finance the guarantees and deficits thereof, the state availed net market borrowing of Rs 63.000 crore which was Rs 37,000 crore more than last year's net borrowings. This would not only increase repayment burden in the near future but also would enormously increase burden of the state, the

CAG report warned.

The state has also reduced the Capex towards infrastructure by around Rs 5,229 crore when compared to the previous vear. This has an impact on the increase in incomplete projects by 68 per cent when compared to the previous year. This compression in gross capital forma tion may prove to be detrimental to future growth prospects. the CAG underlined.

Thus, implementation of the guarantee schemes without ra tionalising existing subsidies/ financial assistance or the benefits would place a pressure on state's resources and have an influence on fiscal deficits and debt level as already discussed the CAG report underlined.

The government in Medium Term Fiscal Plan 2024-28 has projected a revenue deficit of Rs 27,354 crore and thereby in creasing its borrowings to Rs 1,05 lakh crore, the CAG report

It also said, state finance department, while accepting the facts during Exit Conference held in January 2025, stated that the five guarantees boosted the local economy, reduced economic disparities and support ed human capital development.

Karnataka plans special edu quota for orphans

There are 712 government, aided and unaided orphanages or child care institutions in the state, housing 17.049 children—9.175 boys and 7.874 girls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 20: The Karnataka government is considering creating a "special category" for orphaned children to provide them with reservation in education, state Women and Child Development Minister Lax-

mi Hebbalkar said Wednesday. Responding to a question by Congress MLA Nayana Motamma during Question Hour in the assembly, Hebbalkar said the move would be on the lines of the reservation provided to persons with disabilities.

"To provide reservation in education for orphaned children, they will be considered under a special category. They cannot be brought under SC/ ST as that has to be decided by the central government. So, the state will do whatever is possible within its powers. Since their number is not very large, a separate category will be created," she said.

The minister said her department would make every effort to extend all possible assistance to such children to help shape their future.



Khader asked the Women and Child Development Minister and the Social Welfare Minister (HC Mahadevappa) to hold discus sions with Chief Minister Sidda ramaiah to arrive at a solution, and decide on recommendations

to be sent to the Centre. Hebbalkar said there are 712 government, aided and unaided orphanages or child care institutions in the state, housing 17,049 children-9,175 boys and 7,874 girls. Aadhaar cards are being provided to all of them, she noted

The minister added that her department had earlier requested the Social Welfare Department to include orphaned children under SC, ST or Backward Classes, but the proposal was turned down.

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Date and Venue: Friday, 22nd August 2025; 6:30 p.m. onwards. at Hotel Radhika Regency, Bisra Road, Rourkela - 769 001, Odisha. For registration, please contact: Ranjit Mallik, Mobile: 99370 88035. Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



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national



The 130th Constitutional **Amendment is not reform** this is a Black Day and this is a Black Bill. I strongly condemn this Bill, which strikes at the very root of democracy, and I call upon all the democratic forces to unite against this attempt to turn India into a dictatorship

'DGCA STAFFING CRISIS EXISTENTIAL THREAT FOR AVIATION SAFETY SYSTEM'

A Parliamentary panel Wednesday suggested a time-bound plan to grant administrative as well as financial autonomy to DGCA and flagged that the staffing crisis at the regulator is an "existential threat to the integrity of India's aviation safety system"





Hyderabad to compete with the world's top cities and not just Bengaluru and Chennai



A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

Our growth model should focus on creating human capital that can contribute significantly to economic growth



manoj sinha | j&k lt governor





SHORT **TAKES**

Goa minister Sequeira quits

Panaji: The BJP government in Goa is set for a reshuffle with minister Aleixo Sequeira resigning Wednesday and former chief minister Digambar Kamat likely to be inducted in the cabinet along with Ramesh Tawadkar. currently assembly Speaker. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant who is in Delhi to attend the GST council meeting is expected to return at night. Sequeira told reporters at the government headquarters Mantralaya in Porvorim that he was resigning due to personal reasons.

6 children drown in pit while swimming Aspari (Andhra Pradesh):

Six boys drowned when they went to swim in a pit filled with rain water here in Kurnool district Wednesday. According to police, a group of seven children studying in a local school went to the pit located about one km from their village. "Six school boys drowned in the rainwaterfilled gravel pit in Aspari

Building collapse kills three workers

mandal of Kurnool district today," an official told PTI.

New Delhi: Three workers were killed after a portion of a building that was being demolished collapsed near Sadbhavna Park in central Delhi's Daryaganj Wednesday, officials said. The deceased were identified as Zubair (24), his uncle Taufiq (32), and Gulsagar (30). As many as 15 people were working there when the incident occurred. All three were pulled out of the debris and taken to a hospital, where doctors

Man kills parents, brother; probe begins

declared them dead.

New Delhi: A man killed his elder brother and parents in south Delhi's Maidangarhi area Wednesday, police said. A call regarding the murder of three family members in Maidangarhi was reported Wednesday, he said.

8 Naxals surrender

Narayanpur: Eight Naxalites, including two women, carrying cumulative rewards of ₹30 lakh on their heads, surrendered before the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district Wednesday, police said. The Naxalites turned themselves in, citing "inhuman and hollow" Maoist ideology. They said they were also impressed by the police's rehabilitation drive and the state government's new surrender and rehabilitation policy, he added.



Students during an awareness campaign on World Mosquito Day in Agartala

Have mechanism to deal with US sanctions on India, says Russia

New Delhi, August 20: Russia has a "special mechanism" to confront any challenge arising out of the US slapping punitive measures against India for its procurement of Russian crude oil, Russian charge d'affaires Roman Babushkin said Wednesday. The relations between New

Delhi and Washington are on

a downturn after US President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent including a 25 per cent additional duties for India's purchase of Russian crude oil. At a media briefing, Babushkin projected the rapid upswing in his country's ties with New Delhi in several critical areas and said Russia has been a "partner of choice" for India's requirement of various military platforms and hardware. The Russian charge d'affaires described as "unjustified" the unrelenting American pressure on India to stop buying Russian oil and said such an approach as well as sanctions are detrimental to the global economic stability and energy security.

"It is a challenging situation for India. We are enjoying trust in our partnership with India and we are committed to address challenges that may come in the energy ties between the two counties," Babushkin asserted, exuding confidence that India-Russia energy coop-



eration will continue to grow. Russian officials acknowledged that a 5 per cent swing is possible in oil import prices in view of the Western tariffs and sanctions, though this will be subject to negotiation. Last week, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent warned that the Trump administration may increase secondary tariffs on India if it continues to procure Russian crude oil.

Though the US imposed an additional 25 per cent tariff on India for its energy ties with Russia, it has not initiated similar actions against China, the largest buyer of Russian crude oil. Defending its purchase of Russian crude oil, India has been maintaining that its energy procurement is driven by national interest and market dynamics. India turned to purchasing Russian oil sold at a discount after Western countries imposed sanctions on Moscow and shunned its supplies over its invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. Consequently, from a mere 1.7 per cent share in total oil imports in 2019-20, Russia's share increased to 35.1 per cent in 2024-25, and it is now the biggest oil supplier to India.

Govt approves procurement of 97 Tejas jets for IAF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: The government has approved the proposed procurement of 97 Light Combat Aircraft Tejas fighter iets and six advanced airborne early-warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft for the Indian Air Force at a cost around ₹85.000 crore, people familiar with the matter said Wednesday

The two procurement projections ects were learnt to have been given the green light by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they said.

The Tejas jets will be prothe indigenously-built jet.

In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a ₹48,000 crore deal with HAL for the procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF. The single-engine MK-1A will be a replacement for the IAF's MiG-21 fighters. The IAF is looking at inducting the warplanes as the number of its fighter squadrons have gone down to 31 from the officially sanctioned

cured at a cost of around ₹67,000 crore while the AEW&C project will cost the exchequer around ₹18,000 crore, it is learnt. Second-hand Airbus-321 planes bought earlier from Air India by the defence ministry will be used for the AEW&C project that is aimed at enhancing the IAF's surveillance and signal intelligence systems. The procurement of the 97 LCA Tejas (MK-1A) comes nearly four years after the defence ministry sealed another deal involving

LS passes Bill to ban online money games

New Delhi, August 20: The Lok Sabha Wednesday passed a Bill to ban the operating, facilitating and advertising of online games played with money, with a view to checking rising instances of addiction, money laundering and financial fraud.

Piloted by Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025 was passed without a debate as Opposition members raised slo gans demanding a discussion on the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar by the Election Commission.

Once the legislation is passed by both Houses of Parliament, offering or facilitating online money gaming will be punishable by imprisonment of up to 3 years and/or a fine of up to ₹1 crore. The Bill also seeks to prohibit advertisement related to online money games and bars banks and financial institutions from transferring funds for any of such games.

Advertising of money games can attract imprisonment up to two years and/or fine up to ₹50 lakh. Facilitating financial transactions related to money games can lead to imprisonment up to three years and/or fine up to ₹1 crore.

Repeat offences attract enhanced penalties, including 3-5 vears' imprisonment and fines up to ₹2 crore. Offences under key sections are sought to be made cognizable and non-bailable. Online money game is one played by a user by depositing money in expectation of winning monetary and other enrichment. The Bill outlaws all online betting and gambling (satta and jua) activities -- from online fantasy sports to online gambling (like Poker, Rummy and other Card games) and online lotteries

Talking to PTI after passage of the Bill by the Lower House, Vaishnaw said online money gaming has become a serious social and public health issue. with proven significant negative impact on society.

The minister said so far as digital technologies go, online gaming has emerged as a 'major sector" with three main segments. "Two segments, eSports and online social gaming, are good for society. We are promoting two out of three segments... These two will get



Gaming bodies urge Shah to intervene against proposed ban New Delhi: Industry bodies represent-

ing India's online skill-gaming sector have written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking his "urgent inter vention" against a reported draft Bill that proposes to ban all real-money games, including those based on skill that such a blanket prohibition would be a "death knell" for the industry, destroying jobs and pushing crores of users towards illegal offshore betting and gambling platforms.

legal recognition and they will be promoted. And this bill will create an authority which basically creates programs and schemes which promote eSports and online social gaming," Vaishnaw said. The third segment, online

money gaming, is causing harm to the society, he said, adding that this has emerged as a major social and public health problem. Endorsements by top cricketers and film stars have incited interest in real money gaming apps such as fantasy sports betting games offered by Dream11, Games24X7, and Mobile Premier League. There is a realisation that

online gaming has become a major problem for the society, a senior official said, adding that the government has decided to keep the welfare of people above revenue loss from its ban. According to the Bill there will be a regulator for eSports, educational platforms, and social games. It seeks to completely ban offering, operating, or facilitating online money games irrespective of whether based on skill, chance, or both.

The Bill seeks to "ensure the responsible use of digital technologies", "maintain public order and protect public health and "safeguard the integrity of financial systems and the securi ty and sovereignty of the state" Additionally, online money gaming platforms are often misused for financial fraud, money laundering, terror financing and messaging activities that compromise national security.

The legislation aligns digital domain with existing laws for corresponding activities in the physical world, wherein betting and gambling are restricted or punishable -- such as in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 as well as various state government legislations.

The bill recognised e-sports as a legitimate form of competitive sport in India, for which the Ministry of Sports will frame guidelines and standards for conduct of such events.

For online social games, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) will extend support to online games that foster educational and cultural values skill development and social engagement.

Citing "psychological and financial harm" that can be caused by such games, the bill says that no person "shall offer, aid, abet, induce or otherwise indulge or engage in" the offering of online money games and such services. Industry bodies representing real money game players -- India Gaming Federa tion (AIGF), the E-Gaming Fed eration (EGF), and the Feder ation of Indian Fantasy Sports (FIFS) -- in a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah raised concerns over the Bill saving the online skill gaming indus try is a sunrise sector with an enterprise valuation of over Rs 2 lakh crore and annual rev

Accused has criminal past, booked in 5 cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: The man who assaulted Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has a history of criminal activities and was earlier booked by Gujarat Police in five cases, in-CM cluding a knife attack, ATTACK police sources said. Police said the accused.

Sakariya Rajeshbhai Khimiibhai (41), from Gujarat's Ra jkot, was immediately detained after the incident, and his past record was verified.

"We got to know that he was previously booked in five different cases at Bhaktinagar police station in Gujarat," a source said. He was earlier booked

under sections related to voluntarily causing hurt, causing hurt by dangerous weapon or means and causing grievous hurt, among others.

Sakariva was taken into

custody and shifted to the Civil Lines police station, where he is being interrogated. Delhi Police are verifying his personal details with the help of Guiarat authorities. "We have registered an FIR

under sections 109 (attempt to murder), 132 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of duty) and 221 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions). Further probe is underway,' Deputy Commissioner of Police



(North) Raja Banthia said in a statement.

According to the police, the accused had reached Delhi two days earlier and was captured on CCTV cameras conducting reconnaissance near the Chief Minister's residence. He was also seen talking on the phone in the area. The Special Cell of Delhi Police has been roped in for further investigation.

'The accused will be produced before the court, and we are planning to seek at least five days' remand. He came to Delhi by train and we have seized his mobile phone, which contains some videos of 'Jan Sunwai' - one at the CM's residence in Shalimar Bagh and another at her camp office." the source added.

The attack on Chief Minister Rekha Gupta took place during a public hearing at her camp office in Civil Lines around 8.15 am on Wednesday. Her office described it as part of a "wellplanned conspiracy to kill her" Police officials said the assault was serious and could have been life-threatening

NDA's Radhakrishnan files nomination for vice prez poll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: NDA papers for the vice presiden-Prime Minister Narendra Mo-Singh, Home Minister Amit

Modi, flanked by Radhakrishnan and senior NDA leaders, handed over four sets of nomination papers to Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody. who is the returning officer for the vice presidential election. The four sets of nomination papers have Modi, Singh, Shah

enue exceeding ₹31,000 crore.

candidate C P Radhakrishnan Wednesday filed his nomination tial election in the presence of di, Defence Minister Rajnath Shah and other senior leaders.

and JD(U) leader Rajiv Ranjan Singh as lead proposers.

A prospective vice-presidential candidate is required to get his nomination paper sub scribed to by at least 20 electors as proposers and at least anoth-

er 20 electors as seconders. The NDA has ensured representation of all its constituents as proposers and seconders in the four sets of nomination papers that were filed. The returning officer examined the nomina tion papers following which Radhakrishnan signed a regis ter. The returning officer then handed over an acknowledge ment slip of the nomination papers to the Prime Minister

Daughters of deceased govt staff eligible for family pension: Centre

In terms of these rules, where a deceased government employee or pensioner is not survived by a spouse or son eligible for family pension or if they die or cease to fulfill the eligibility conditions for family pension, the family pension shall be granted or continued to be payable to an unmarried or widowed or divorced daughter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: Unmarried, widowed or divorced daughters of deceased government employees are entitled

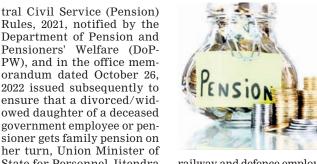
to family pension provided they meet certain prescribed conditions, the Lok Sabha was informed Wednesday.

Various provisions have been incorporated in the Cen-

Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoP-PW), and in the office memorandum dated October 26, 2022 issued subsequently to ensure that a divorced/widowed daughter of a deceased government employee or pensioner gets family pension on her turn, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply.

Rules, 2021, notified by the

The same provisions are provided under separate rules for



railway and defence employees and pensioners, he said. In terms of these rules, where

a deceased government employ-

ee or pensioner is not survived by a spouse or son eligible for family pension or if they die or cease to fulfill the eligibility conditions for family pension, the family pension shall be granted or continued to be payable to an unmarried or widowed or divorced daughter, the minister said, and mentioned other conditions for such pensions. The pension will be contin-

ued until "she gets married or is remarried or until she starts earning her livelihood, whichever is the earliest, subject to the conditions like the unmar ried or widowed or divorced daughter was dependent on her parent or parents when he or she or they were alive", the ministet said. 'Further, in the case of a

widowed daughter, the death of her husband and in the case of a divorced daughter, her di vorce took place or the divorce proceedings filed in a compe tent court during the lifetime of the government servant or pensioner or his or her spouse, Singh said.

national



To provide reservation in education for orphaned children. they will be considered under a special category. They cannot be brought under SC/ST as that has to be decided by the central government. So, the state will do whatever is possible within its powers. Since their number is not very large, a separate category will be created

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES REMAIN SHUT IN PARTS OF HIMACHAL

Heavy rains disrupted normal life in several parts of Himachal, prompting closure of schools and colleges in some areas of Una, Kullu and Mandi districts, officials said Wednesday



Former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Presi dent of Samajwadi Party Shri Akhilesh Yadav ji will join

the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Sitamar hi, Bihar 28 August

K C VENUGOPAL | CONG GENERAL SECY

We will be the first to support the bills. In fact, we urge the government to reduce the iail term of ministers from

30 days to 15 days, as proposed ABHISHEK BANERJEE TMC'S NATIONAL GENERAL SECY

The process of treating sewage water from drains through Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) before

releasing it into the river has been significantly accelerated NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

SHORT **TAKES**

Patanjali gets relief

New Delhi: The Supreme Court of India has closed the Indian Medical Association's (IMA) petition against Pataniali Ayurveda regarding misleading ads for its traditional medicine products. With this, the top court also cancelled its earlier order that had put stricter checks on advertisements. While giving the verdict, Justice BV Nagarathna said that once the government allows a company to manufacture a product, advertising it becomes a natural part of business.

U'khand: Assembly passes eight Bills

Gairsain: Eight Bills and supplementary demands for grants were passed in the Uttarakhand Assembly amid din Wednesday as Congress MLAs protested in the House alleging rigging in the state panchayat elections and "deterioration" of the law and order situation. The Bills included the Uttarakhand Minority Education Bill, the Religious Freedom (Amendment) Bill, and the **Uttarakhand Democracy** Fighters Honour Bill.

Sanjay Kumar booked for posts on Maha polls

Nagpur/Mumbai: Two FIRs were registered against psephologist and CSDS professor Sanjay Kumar on charges of "false statement in connection with an election" over his claims regarding the number of voters in two assembly segments in Maharashtra polls compared to the 2024 general elections. Kumar's post had claimed a significant dip in voter numbers in two assembly seats compared to the 2024 general elections, which were held nearly six months apart.

Tribal groups take out candlelight march

Ranchi/ Godda: Tribal organisations in Jharkhand took out a candlelight march in Ranchi Wednesday evening to protest against the death of Surya Narayan Hansda, who was wanted in several criminal cases, in an alleged encounter with security personnel. The march was taken out from Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium and it culminated at Ranchi's Albert Ekka Chowk, where protestors demanded a CBI probe into the alleged encounter.

Nine armed poachers held

Latehar: Nine armed poachers were arrested in Jharkhand's Palamau Tiger Reserve Wednesday, an official said. Among the items seized from them were eight country-made guns, 400 gram of gunpowder, 14 gram of sulfur, a tiger trap, a noose, an axe, and animal parts, he said.

Student murdered by his classmate

ON WEDNESDAY

MEMBERS OF THE SINDHI

COMMUNITY, STORMED

THE PREMISES OF THE

SCHOOL AND DEMANDED

ACTION AGAINST THE

ADMINISTRATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 20: A Class X student of a private school in Ahmedahad was allegedly fatally stabbed by his classmate following an altercation, triggering a massive protest and vandal-

ism by parents and MORNING, HUNDREDS locals Wednesday, OF PEOPLE, COMPRISING police said. FAMILY MEMBERS OF Police detained THE VICTIM, PARENTS OF OTHER STUDENTS, AND

the accused teenager following the attack while the victim succumbed to his injuries Tuesday night, an officer said. Police clarified that both the attacker and the victim were students of

Class X. State education minister

Praful Pansheriya had earlier said that a class 10 student was stabbed by his junior studying in Class IX

"A Class X student stabbed his classmate at Seventh Day School yesterday. The victim died during treatment in the night. Police have registered an FIR and detained the juvenile accused," said Joint Commissioner of Police Jaipal Singh

On Wednesday morning, hundreds of people, comprising family members of the victim. parents of other students, and members of the Sindhi community, stormed the premises

of the school and demanded action against the administration. situation

soon escalated into chaos, with the mob damaging school buses, two-wheelers. and four-wheelers parked at the institute. They assaulted the school staff, police said.

Police personnel initially struggled to bring the situation under control and pushed the mob out of the school premises.

Protesters staged a sit-in on the road, blocking traffic. They shouted slogans against the police, demanding action against the school administration.

The incident took communal colour as the accused student belongs to a minority community and the victim is a member of the Sindhi community.



Indian Secular Front (ISF) Chairman Naushad Siddiqui being detained during an agitation over the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, in Kolkata, West Bengal

TERRORISM THREAT

INDIA WILL RESPOND WITH FULL FORCE: GOVT

New Delhi, August 20: Anticipating future warfare scenarios through "predictive technologies" and creating precise, targeted systems for counter-action are among the three-fold goals when it comes to India's futuristic defence programme, Sudarshan Chakra Mission, the government said Wednesday. In a broad synopsis of the

country's security scenario, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) Wednesday shared some data and a summary of various defence-related developments in the past 11 years, titled 'Transformation of India's Defence and Internal Security Posture'.

"Unlike in the past, India under the present government has become a global force to reckon with, a nation that speaks on issues from a position of strength," it says.

The government said India has adopted a "firm and clear approach towards cross-border terrorism", adding that the pattern of action over the last decade reflects this policy

The most recent and defining operation came in May 2025 with Operation Sindoor. In response to the killing of civilians in Pahalgam, "India gave its armed forces full freedom of action", the synopsis says.

Using drones and precision munitions, they struck nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and



Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir. More than 100 terrorists were eliminated, including individuals linked to the IC814 hijacking and the Pulwama attack. Pakistan attempted retaliatory strikes through drones and missiles, but Indian counter-drone systems neutralised them, it adds. In his 79th Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Operation Sindoor as "a new normal", making it clear that "India will respond with full force whenever terrorism threatens its citizens," the synopsis says

Beyond immediate responses, the Modi government is preparing for "long-term threats," the government said.

In his Independence Day speech, Modi had announced the Sudarshan Chakra Mission, a futuristic defence programme. "Its goals are threefold

- to ensure the entire system is researched, developed, and manufactured in India; to anticipate future warfare scenarios through predictive technologies; and to create precise, targeted systems for counter-action. By 2035, the aim is to provide a comprehensive national security shield for both strate gic and civilian assets," it says. In the last eleven years, India's defence and internal security posture under the government of PM Modi has undergone a "profound transformation". it says. The shift has been marked by "greater clarity of purpose, stronger deterrence, and a sustained drive for self-reliance," the synopsis says. This government has consistently underlined that "national security is non-negotiable", and to ensure this security, India will build its own capacity and preparedness.

Heavy rains lash Thane, Palghar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane/Palghar, August 20: Heavy rains affected the normal life in Thane district Wednesday, cutting off villages, inundating houses, and triggering landslides, officials said.

A man died after falling into a water-filled quarry while an inundated bridge in Kalyan area was closed amid downpours.

The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) recorded 186.91 mm rainfall in the past 24 hours ending 8:30 AM Wednesday.

The neighbouring Palghar district also witnessed heavy overnight showers, flooding low-lying areas and disrupting movement at several locations they said.

"Due to the rise in the water level of the Bhatsa river, the bridge leading to Ju village (Thane district) has been completely submerged, cutting off the village from the outside world," a district offi-

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel rescued 42 workers trapped in floodwaters with the help of an excavator on a highway near Raite village. In Devgaon of Murbad, two persons who had gone to a temple in the early hours of Wednesday remained stuck amid water accumulation due to heavy rain, leading to deployment of drones to deliver food packets. They were rescued using nylon ropes.

At Shivnagar in Bhiwandi taluka, nine persons trapped in a closed company premises were safely rescued. Landslides were reported at two spots in Shahapur taluka of Thane.

Guv can't send Bills to Prez after 2nd return from Assembly: SC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: The Supreme Court Wednesday said Governor cannot send Bills to President for consideration when presented to him for the second time after the state assembly has cleared it. The top court made the re-

mark while questioning the Centre over the powers of Governor when it comes to granting assent to bills. Under Article 200 of the

Constitution, Governor has to either assent to a Bill passed by the Assembly or he can withhold assent or he can send it for the consideration of President.

Under the scheme, Governor also has the power to send back the Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration provided it is not a money Bill. The observation of a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai comes in the wake

can exercise his power to send the Bill to President even after the Assembly puts it before him for the second time. "If the fourth option (of re-

of Centre's stand that Governor

turning the Bill to the assembly for reconsideration) is to be exercised (by Governor) with a message for reconsideration to the Assembly, then the option of withholding assent or sending the Bill to President becomes defunct...," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was representing the Centre. During the hearing on the presidential reference over the assent to Bills. the bench also comprising Justices Surva Kant, Vikram Nath, PS Narasimha and AS Chandurkar said if Governor decides to simply withhold assent to bills without returning them to the legislative Assembly for reconsideration, it would place the elected governments at the "whims and fancies of Governor". "If Governor can indefinitely withhold assent, governments formed by majority support would be at the mercy of an unelected appointee," the bench said. It added, "Under Article 200, Governor has four options - either he assents or that he withholds assent or that he reserves the Bill for the con sideration of President. Exercis-

Experts warn of rising cyber threats from China, Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 20: Cybersecurity experts have cautioned against "growing intrusions" from China and Pakistan and recommended that the country urgently strengthen its digital infrastructure

The experts participated in a three-day seminar to deliberate on issues related to cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, genome mapping, genealogical databases, and forensic justice at the Uttar Pradesh Institute of Forensic Sciences (UPSIFS) here.

At the event that concluded Wednesday, the experts likened the cyber kill chain to a "Raktabeej" and called for coordinated global action to dismantle it.

"Cyber experts have cautioned against growing intrusions from China and Pakistan, recommending that the country rapidly build secure digital infrastructure. They likened the cyber kill chain to Raktabeej, demanding coordinated global action to dismantle it," an offi-

Experts agreed that India needs to rapidly develop a secure digital infrastructure to counter the

offensive strategy of **China and Pakistan**

cial statement issued here said. Maharashtra Principal Secretary Brajesh Singh highlighted that even small incidents can trigger massive disruptions, citing the Hezbollah pager attack and the malware strike that shut down the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust -- India's largest port -- for three months. He stressed that cybercrime

cannot be countered by traditional policing, as its modular chain -- reconnaissance, weaponisation, delivery, and exploitation -- requires international cooperation, noting that breaking the ransomware group Lockbit took the combined efforts of 11 countries.

Singh called for real-time

tody protocols for digital evidence, tracking illicit money flows through blockchain and wallets, seizing criminal inassistance.

frastructure, and swift victim He praised the RBI's cyber framework, emphasised digital sovereignty, and noted that cybersecurity "is like agriculture—it cannot be im-

ported, it must be cultivated

within the country.'

Joining virtually from Auscrisis mapping, chain-of-custralia, cyber expert Robbie

Abraham traced the evolution of cyberattacks -- from worms like "I Love You" (causing \$8.7 billion in losses) and Conficker (\$9 billion across 190 countries) to modern ransomware and phishing-based intrusions targeting browsing data, crypto wallets, and confidential information.

He stressed preventive measures such as regular security training, MFA, antivirus use, and heightened caution with emails and messages.

While cyber expert Vivek Sood further discussed advanced security management in the global supply chain, Australia's Shantanu Bhattacharya explained how mixed DNA analysis using advanced algorithms aids pattern recognition and separation of victim and accused profiles, citing the

Nirbhaya and Gudia rape cases. Dr. Madhusudan Reddy Nandineni from the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (Hyderabad) presented insights on next-generation sequencing, rapid DNA, and

portable forensic devices. The Executive Director of Project 39A (NALSAR, Hyderabad) stressed strengthening national forensic labs and educating judges and lawyers to effectively interpret scientific evidence.

UPSIFS founding director G K Goswami said forensic science carries ethical responsibility.

Sena (UBT)-MNS panel loses BEST credit society poll

MUMBAI: In a jolt to the Shiv Sena

ing power under proviso he can

return the Bill to the legislative

Assembly for reconsideration.

(UBT) and the MNS, their panel has lost all 21 seats in the election to the BEST Employees Cooperative Credit Society Ltd, a platform where the two parties came together amid a buzz about a pan-Maharashtra alliance. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis accused the Sena (UBT)-MNS of politicising the credit society polls around the "Thackeray brand". The defeat prompted the BJP to mock the "Thackeray brand", saying it has turned to 'zero'. Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut downplayed the defeat, saying he had no information about the results. "The Thackeray brand can never fail. The credit society election is neither a final exam nor a unit test (for the upcoming local body polls)," Raut said. Suhas Samant, president of the BEST Kamgar Sena, aligned with the Sena (UBT), told PTI on Wednesday that the "defeat of all its 21 candidates was shocking". The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and the Sena (UBT), headed by cousins Raj and Uddhav Thackeray, respectively, came together on one platform to contest the election, seen as a precursor to a possible alliance between the two parties.

international



The analysis that France's decision to recognise the state of **Palestine in September** explains the rise in antisemitic violence in France is erroneous. abject, and will not go

PAK'S MONSOON DEATH **TOLL REACHES NEAR 750**

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir Wednesday visited northwest Pakistan's worst flood-ravaged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the death toll due to torrential rains has risen to 380 since August 15. Across Pakistan, 43 people were killed in the last 24 hours in rain-related incidents, taking the total deaths to 750



History will Albanese for what he is: A weak betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU PRIME MINISTER, ISRAEL

The government is moving forward with all preparations for the election. The polls will be held in February, and the government's stance on this remains unwavering

ASIF NAZRUL | LAW ADVISER, BANGLADESH in the West

States they under stand perfectly well that seriously

discussing security issues without the Russian Federation is a utopia, it's a road to nowhere

SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER. RUSSIA

SHORT TAKES

Xi makes second-ever visit to Tibet as prez

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa Wednesday for his second-ever visit as China's leader to mark the 60th anniversary of Tibet's founding as an autonomous region. Six years after the 14th Dalai Lama fled into exile in India following a failed uprising, China's ruling Communist Party established the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1965, the country's fifth and final autonomous region after Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Guangxi

Pak, China, Afghanistan agree to extend CPEC

Islamabad: The foreign ministers of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan Wednesday agreed to expand their cooperation in multiple fields, including extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Kabul. Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishag Dar, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Afghanistan acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttagi took part in the 6th Trilateral Foreign Ministers Dialogue in Kabul which focused on political, economic and security cooperation.

Myanmar's military retakes strategic town

Bangkok: Myanmar's military has regained control of a strategic town in eastern Kayah state from the opposition's armed forces after nearly two years, state media reported Wednesday. The recapture of Demoso in Kayah state - also known as Karenni – came as the military has stepped up activity in recent months, on the ground and with airstrikes, to retake areas controlled by the resistance ahead of elections it has

India hands over two

promised to hold December 28.

modular bridge to Nepal Kathmandu: India and Nepal Wednesday jointly inaugurated two bridges built under grant assistance from New Delhi in Koshi province. "India has promised to provide 10 prefabricated steel bridges to Nepal under grant assistance for rebuilding critical road infrastructure disrupted by rains and for bolstering connectivity following the September 2024 floods," a press release by the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu said. Ambassador of India to Nepal Naveen Srivastava and Nepalese Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Devendra Dahal jointly handed over the 48.8-metre span modular bridge over Puwa Khola river in Ilam district in Koshi Province at a programme here.

Pak rights body flags rise in minority violence

There has been persistent forced conversions and underage marriages of Hindu and Christian girls in Punjab and Sindh province exposing the systematic failure to enforce child marriage restraint laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, August 20: There has been an alarming rise in violence against religious minorities during the last year apart from forced conversions and underage marriages of Hindu and Christian girls, Pakistan's top human rights body has said.

'Streets of Fear: Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2024/25. a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) released here Tuesday documents a "deeply troubling year" for religious freedom and minority rights" referring to the Ahmadis, Hindus and Christians in the country.

There has been an alarming rise in violence against religious minorities, including targeted killings of the Ahmad is and the demolition of their protected places of worship,' the report said.

There has been persistent forced conversions and underage marriages of Hindu and



Christian girls in Punjab and Sindh province exposing the systematic failure to enforce child marriage restraint laws, the HRCP said.

The HRCP said that there has been a trend of mob lynching of those especially minority members accused of blasphemy. 'Now the most chilling account is that of extra-judicial killing of minority members accused

of blasphemy," it said.

Two individuals accused of blasphemy were extra-judicially killed by police while seeking protection from hostile mobs, it said and added that such incidents underscore the urgent need for reform within law enforcement and accountability mechanisms.

The report also pointed out the rise in hate speech ranging India slams Pakistan on gross sexual violence against women

United Nations: India has slammed Pakistan at a UN debate by drawing attention to the "heinous crimes of gross sexual violence" against womer in erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971, add ing the pattern continues "with impuni ty to this day." Briefly addressing what he called as the "baseless allegation" raised by the Pakistan delegate during the debate Tuesday, Eldos Mathew Punnoose, India's Counsellor and Charge d'Affaires said that the 1971's women is "a matter of shameful statement at the open debate on 'In-Life-Saving Services and Protection for Survivors of Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones.' "The utter impunity with which the Pakistan army perpetrated heinous crimes of gross sexual violence against 1971 is a matter of shameful record. he said. He was apparently referring to a series of massacres and rapes in Bangladesh, "This deplorable pattern to this day," the Indian diplomat said.

from threats against the chief justice of the Supreme Court to public vilification of elected representatives. This is because of shrinking civic space and emboldened extremist elements, the report added.

It said it is shocking to see the increasing tilt of the bar associations towards positions aligned with extremist religious extremist groups. "This trend undermines the independence of the legal profession,' the report said even as it documented allegations of collusion by the state institutions in cases where several hundred young men and women were entrapped in accusations of blasphemy and extorted. This is one of the most alarming trends.'

The report asked the Pakistan government to establish an inquiry commission based on the findings of the National Commission for Human Rights with respect to entrapment in allegations of blasphemy.

Bus crash kills more than 70 Afghans returning from Iran

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, August 20: A bus crash in northwestern Afghanistan killed at least 79 people returning from Iran, including 19 children, an official said.

Two people were also injured in the crash, Ministry of Interi or spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani told The Associated Press

Tolo News, citing the official said the accident happened Tues day around 8:30 pm local time in Herat province. The bus collided with a truck and a motorbike, causing a massive fire that killed many on the spot, the outlet reported. Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, main ly due to poor road conditions and driver carelessness. Nearly 1.8 million Afghans have been forcibly returned from Iran in the past few months. A further 184.459 were sent back from Pa kistan and more than 5,000 were deported from Turkiye since the beginning of the year. Ad ditionally, nearly 10,000 Afghan prisoners have been repatriated

mostly from Pakistan.

Israel approves West **Bank settlement project**

Jerusalem, August 20: A widely condemned Israeli settlement plan that would cut across land which the Palestinians seek for a state received final approval Wednesday, according to a statement from Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

The approval of the E1 project, which would bisect the occupied West Bank and cut it off from East Jerusalem, was announced last week by Smotrich and received final go-ahead from a defence ministry planning commission Wednesday, he said.

Restarting the project could further isolate Israel, which has watched some Western allies frustrated by its continuation and planned escalation of the Gaza war announce they may recognise a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly in September.

"With E1 we are delivering finally on what has been promised for years," Smotrich, an ultra-nationalist in the ruling right-wing coalition, said in a statement. "The Palestinian state is being erased from the table, not with slogans but with

The Palestinian foreign ministry condemned the announcement Wednesday. saying that the E1 settlement would isolate Palestinian communities living in the area and undermines the possibility of a two-state solution.

A German government spokesperson commenting on the announcement told reporters Wednesday that settlement construction violates international law and "hinders a



solution and an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not commented on the

announce-However Sunday,

during a visit to Ofra, another West Bank settlement established a quarter of a century ago, he made broader comments, saying, "I said 25 years ago that we will do everything to secure our grip on the Land of Israel, to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, to prevent the attempts to uproot us from here. Thank God, what I promised, we have delivered.'

The two-state solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict envisages a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, existing side by side with Israel.

Western capitals and cam-

Project opposed the settlewas previously ment project due frozen after US, to concerns that **European objections** it could undermine a future

Restarting construction could further isolate Israel

The plan for E1, located adcould begin within a jacent to Maale Adumim and frozen in 2012 and 2020

> amid objections from the US and European governments, involves construction of about 3,400 new housing units. Infrastructure work could begin within a few months,

with the Pal-

estinians.

and house building in about a year, according to Israeli advocacy group Peace Now, which tracks settlement activity in the West Bank. Most of the international

community considers Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal under international law.

Israel disputes this, citing historical and biblical ties to the area and saying the settlements provide strategic depth and security.

US may provide air support to back a Ukraine peace deal

Washington/London/Kyiv, August 20: US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he had ruled out putting US troops on the ground in Ukraine, but said the United States might provide air support as part of a deal to end Russia's war in the coun-

A day after Trump pledged security guarantees to help end the war at an extraordinary White House summit, the path to peace remained uncertain as the US and allies prepared to work out what military support for Ukraine might include.

'When it comes to security. (Europeans) are willing to put people on the ground. We're willing to help them with things, especially, probably by air." Trump said in an interview with the Fox News "Fox & Friends" program.



Trump did not elaborate. Later, in an interview with radio host Mark Levin, Trump characterized his negotiating style in trying to end the war as "probably instinct more than process.

Hours after Zelenskiy's meetings in Washington, Russia launched its biggest air assault in more than a month on Ukraine, with 270 drones and 10 missiles launched the Ukrainian air force said. The energy ministry said the strikes caused big fires at energy facilities in the central Poltava region, home to Ukraine's only oil refinery.

India, China reach new border understanding

Wang visited India from August 18-19, where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attended the 24th round of Special Representatives (SRs) talks with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, and held discussions with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, August 20: India and China have reached a new understanding on the management and control of their frontier during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent visit to New Delhi, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

Wang visited New Delhi August 18 and 19, where he held extensive discussions with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. The meetings were part of ongoing efforts to stabilise relations between the two countries amid ongoing border tensions.

Summarising the outcomes, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the two sides agreed to resume dialogue mechanisms across various fields, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, uphold multilateralism, jointly tackle global challenges, and oppose unilateral bullving.

"On the boundary question. the two sides reached new common understandings, agreeing to conduct normalised management and control, maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas, properly address

boundary negotiations where conditions permit," Mao said at a media briefing in Beijing.

Mao added that during his meetings, Wang highlighted the growing strategic significance of China-India relations under current global circumstances apparently alluding to geopolit ical shifts and tensions such as US tariff threats.

A press release from the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Wang conveyed warm greetings from Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang to Prime Minister Narendra Mo di. Wang also extended an invitation for Modi to attend the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin, scheduled for August

31 and September 1. According to the statement, Wang said the meeting between Modi and Xi in Russia last year had laid the foundation for improving bilateral ties. He noted that both nations had been ear nestly implementing the leaders' consensus, helping bilater al relations enter a new phase

"This progress has not come easily and should be cherished," Wang was quoted as saving. His visit also aimed to prepare for future high-level exchanges between the two countries.

of stability and development.

Wang stressed that despite past ups and downs, the lessons learned should guide both nations forward.

Ventina glacier melted so much geologists can only monitor it remotely

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, August 20: Italy's Ventina glacier, one of the biggest in northern Lombardy, has melted so much due to climate change that geologists can no longer measure it the way they have for the past 130 years.

After this year's hot summer, geologists discovered that the simple stakes used as benchmarks to measure the glacier's retraction each year are now buried under rockslides and debris that have made the terrain too unsteady for future in-person visits.

The Lombardy Glaciological Service said Monday that it will now use drone imagery and remote sensing to keep track of the ongoing shrinkage on the glacier, which is located near Sondrio, in the same general

area of northeast Lombardy that is hosting some 2026 Winter Olympics events.

Geologists say that the Ventina glacier has already lost 1.7 km in length since the first measuring benchmarks were positioned at the front of the glacier in 1895 The melting has accelerated

in recent years, with the glacier losing 431 metres in the last 10 years, nearly half of that since 2021, the service said. It's another example of how accelerating global warming is melting and shrinking Europe's glaciers, causing a host of environmental and other impacts 'While we could still hope un-

til the 1980s that there would be normal cycles (of retraction) or at least a contained retraction. in the last 40 years something truly striking has occurred,"



said Andrea Toffaletti, a member of the Lombardy Glaciological Service.

Italy's mountain glaciers, which are found throughout the Alps and Dolomites in the



Apennines, have been receding for years, thanks to inadequate snowfall in the winter and record-setting hot summers. Glaciers always melt some in sumGeologists say that the Ventina glacier has already lost 1.7 km in length since the first measuring benchmarks were positioned at the front of the glacier in 1895

he melting has accelerated in recent years, with the glacier losing 431 metres in the last 10 years, nearly half of that since 2021, the service said

t's another example of how accelerating global warming is melting and shrinking Europe's glaciers, causing a host of environmental and other impacts

mer, with the runoff fuelling mountain streams and rivers.

But the hot summers are "no longer able to guarantee the survival of the winter snowpack that keeps the glacier intact," Toffaletti said.

remain in balance, a certain amount of residual snow from the winter must remain on the glacier's surface at the end of the summer. And this is hap pening less and less frequently," said Toffaletti. According to the Lombardy

"In order to regenerate and

service, the Alps represent a climate hotspot, recording double the global average of temperature increases since pre-industrial times, resulting in the loss of over 64% of the volume of Alpine glaciers.

In February, the journal Nature reported on a study show ing the world's glaciers lost ice at the rate of about 255 billion tonnes annually from 2000 to 2011, but that quickened to about 346 billion tonnes annu ally over about the next decade.

business



India can transform from being an energy importer to a global exporter if it can cut the cost of hydrogen production to one dollar per kilogramme

FLIPKART EXPANDS FOOTPRINT IN NORTHEAST

Flipkart unveils its first grocery fulfillment center (FC) in Tripura and will provide delivery slots as per consumers' choice. The facility will supplement and strengthen the company's existing supply chain delivery infrastructure in the Northeast, reducing delivery timelines across other states, including Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland

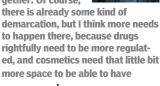


rare diseases are in the pipeline expected to be launched soon tions for seven illnesses have already been introduced in the market alleviating suffering of patients VK PAUL | NITI AAYOG MEMBER (HEALTH)

The Reserve Bank is gradually shifting towards principle and outcome-based regulations that will give operational flexibility to

regulated entities (REs) and tailor M RAJESHWAR RAO | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RB

In the space that we are in personal care, it is sometimes looked at as drugs and cosmetics together. Of course,



GEETIKA MEHTA | CEO, NIVEA INDIA

SHORT **TAKES**

Gold drops ₹400 silver plunges ₹1,500

New Delhi: Gold prices dropped Rs 400 to Rs 1,00,020 per 10 grams in the national capital Wednesday due to continuous selling by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,00,420 per 10 grams in the previous market close. In the local market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 350 to Rs 99,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) Wednesday. It had closed at Rs 1,00,050 per 10 grams Tuesday. Additionally, silver prices plunged Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,12,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. The white metal had ended at Rs 1,14,000 per kg Tuesday.

NTPC arm activates

New Delhi: State-owned NTPC Wednesday said that its arm NTPC Green Energy has commissioned 212.5 MW of solar and 52.5 MW of wind capacities, taking the group's installed and commercial capacity to 83,242MW. According to a regulatory filing, NTPC Green Energy has declared commercial operation (COD) of the fourth part capacity of 212.5 MW out of 1255 MW Khavda-I Solar PV Project in Gujarat of NTPC Renewable Energy from August 20, 2025. NTPC Renewable Energy is a step down subsidiary of NTPC. NTPC Green Energy has also declared COD of part capacity of 52.8 MW (Wind) by a group company of our subsidiary NTPC Green Energy Ltd from August 21, 2025, With this, the total installed and commercial capacity of the NTPC group will become 83,242 MW, it stated.

Tata Motors re-enters **South African PV mkt**

New Delhi: Tata Motors Wednesday said it has reentered the South African passenger vehicle market. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV), a subsidiary of Tata Motors, has launched four models -- Harrier, Curvv, Punch, and Tiago -- in the country. This strategic re-entry is underpinned by a strong alliance with Motus Holdings, South Africa's foremost automotive group, the Mumbai-based auto major said in a statement."Our return to South Africa marks a significant milestone in Tata Motors' global journey," **TMPV Managing Director** Shailesh Chandra stated.

EPFO registers record growth

New Delhi, August 20: Retirement fund body The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation EPFO recorded a 13.46 per cent year-on-year growth in net member addition of 21.89 lakh in June, according to the latest payroll data released Wednesday.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) provisional payroll data for June 2025 showed a net addition of 21.89 lakh members, marking the highest recorded addition since payroll data tracking began in April 2018, a labour ministry statement said.

On a month-on-month basis, net payroll additions increased 9.14 per cent, it added.

The year-on-year analysis reveals a growth of 13.46 per cent in net payroll additions in June 2025 compared to June 2024, signifying increased employment opportunities and heightened awareness of employee benefits, bolstered by EPFO's effective outreach initiatives, the statement said.

EPFO enrolled around 10.62 lakh new subscribers in June 2025, representing a 12.68 per cent increase over May 2025 and a 3.61 per cent growth year-onvear. This rise in new subscribers can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's successful outreach programmes

A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25

EPFO added 6.39 lakh new subscribers in the 18-25 age

group, constituting a significant 60.22 per cent of the total new subscriber addition in June 2025.

New subscribers in the 18-25 age group added in the month show an increase of 14.08 per cent compared to the previous month of May 2025.

The net payroll addition for the 18-25 age group in June 2025 is approximately 9.72 lakh, reflecting an increase of 11.41 per cent from the previous month of May 2025 and a 12.15 per cent year-on-year growth.

This is in consonance with the earlier trend, which indicates that most individuals ioining the organised workforce are youth, primarily firsttime job seekers.

Approximately 16.93 lakh members, who had exited earlier, rejoined EPFO in June 2025. This figure depicts a 5.09

per cent increase over May 2025, and a significant 19.65 per cent year-on-year growth. These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement, safeguarding longterm financial well-being and

extending their social security

protection. Around 3.02 lakh new female subscribers joined EPFO in June 2025. It reflects an increase of 14.92 per cent compared to the previous month of May 2025 and a 1.34 per cent year-on-year rise.

Further, the net female payroll addition in June stood at around 4.72 lakh, with a monthon-month increase of 11.11 per cent and a 10.29 per cent yearon-year rise. The growth in female member additions is indicative of a broader shift towards a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

State-wise analysis of payroll data denotes that the top five states/ UTs constitute around 61.51 per cent of net payroll addition, registering a total of around 13.46 lakh net payroll

Of all states, Maharashtra is leading the pack by adding 20.03 per cent of the net payroll during the month.

The states/UTs of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana individ ually added more than 5 per cent of the total net payroll in June.

The month-on-month comparison of industry-wise data displays significant growth in the net payroll addition of people working in establishments engaged in various sectors, such as school, expert services, building and construction industry, university, college, electrical, mechanical or general engineering products, trading-commercial firms, and financing companies.

Out of the total net membership, around 42.14 per cent ad dition is from expert services, where manpower suppliers con stitute around 51.31 per cent.

The payroll data is provisional since data generation is a continuous exercise, as updating employee records is a continuous process, the statement stated. From April 2018, EPFO has been releasing payroll data covering the period September 2017 onwards

In monthly payroll data, the count of members joining EPFO for the first time through Aadhaar-validated Universal Account Number (UAN), existing members exiting from coverage of EPFO and those who exited but re-joined as members, is taken to arrive at net monthly payroll, it stated.

NCLT defers Vedanta hearing

Mumbai, August 20: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Wednesday deferred the hearing on Vedanta Ltd's proposed demerger to September 17, as market regulator, Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is yet to complete the scrutiny of the proposal, while the central government has raised certain objections.

The matter, which was partheard earlier, had been adjourned to August 20.

July 2, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had objected to Vedanta's proposed demerger before the NCLT Mumbai bench. Meanwhile, the tribunal was informed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) that it has no further comments on the proposed demerger scheme and is verifying Vedanta's compliance with applicable regulatory norms.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) legal counsel also confirmed that a no-objection certificate has been issued for the demerger. However, the legal representative from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas requested additional time to present the ministry's observations on the scheme at the next hearing.

In a statement, Vedanta said the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has filed its representation before NCLT Mumbai and the company has filed its response.

"Vedanta's counsel couldn't conclude his arguments today and even the tribunal commented that these arguments



cannot be concluded in a single hearing and after discussion with all parties fixed the next date... September 17," it

The company said Seb has issued an administrative warning letter regarding a procedural lapse on the mod ification of the Scheme, with out prior written consent This letter is cautionary and does not impose any financial or operational restrictions.

"The Company has already disclosed this development and is fully cooperating with Sebi. Corrective actions have been undertaken, and the Board's comments will be shared with Sebi as advised, the statement added.

Vedanta further clarified on the SC judgment dated August 19, stating that it pertains to a legacy contractual matter and has no bearing on Vedan ta's demerger process.

In September 2023, Vedanta had announced its demerger plan, proposing to create four independent listed companies focusing on aluminum, oil and gas, power, and base metals to streamline operations, improve management focus, and unlock shareholder value.

Sensex climbs 213 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 20: Benchmark BSE Sensex closed higher by 213 points Wednesday, extending its rally to the fifth consecutive day on heavy buying in IT and FMCG shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 213.45 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 81.857.84 with 15 of its constituents ending higher and the rest with losses. During the day, it jumped 341.23 points or 0.41 per cent to The 50-share NSE Nifty edged

higher by 69.90 points or 0.28 per cent to 25,050.55.

Among Sensex firms, Infosys surged the most by 3.88 per cent, followed by Tata Consultancy Services, which climbed 2.69 per cent. Hindustan Unilever, NTPC, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Eternal and HCL Tech were also among the gainers.

However, Bharat Electronics, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors and Trent were among the laggards.

Reliance Industries dropped over half a per cent, capping gains in the key index. The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.39 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.30 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT jumped 2.70 per cent, IT (2.61 per cent), teck (2.22 per cent), FMCG (1.36 per cent), realty (1.04 per cent) and telecommunication (0.68 per cent).

Starlink partners with UIDAI



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: Billionaire Elon Musk-led Starlink will use Aadhaar authentication for customer verification in the country before onboarding them, an official statement said Wednesday.

The government has given approval to Starlink to start providing satellite-based broadband services in the country.

"The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has onboarded satellite-based internet provider Starlink Satellite Communication Pvt Ltd. Starlink will use Aadhaar Authentication for customer verification, which will make the entire process smooth, secure and very easy," the statement said.

Starlink can onboard around 20 lakh customers in India at present capacity, according to

an official estimate.

"Starlink's onboarding with Aadhaar authentication signifies a powerful synergy: India's trusted digital identity joining hands with global satellite technology. Aadhaar e-KYC will facilitate the onboarding of users seamlessly, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements while delivering high-speed internet to households, businesses, and institu-

tions," the statement said. The appointment of Starlink Satellite Communication as a sub-authentication user agency and sub-eKYC user agency was done in the presence of UIDAI CEO Bhuvnesh Kumar, UIDAI Deputy Director General Manish Bhardwaj, and Starlink India Director Parnil Urdhwareshe.

Starlink has partnered with Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio to sell its services in

Govt proposes GST exemption on life and health insurance

New Delhi, August 20: The Centre has proposed exempting life and health insurance policies for individuals from GST, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and convenor of insurance GoM Samrat Choudhary said Wednesday.

Currently, health and life insurance premium attracts 18 per cent GST.

The 13-member state Group of Ministers on insurance held a meeting Wednesday.

Almost all states were in favour of the proposal, but they asked the GST Council to device a mechanism by which the GST rate cut benefits are passed on to the customer, said Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, a member of the GoM.

"We made it clear that the GST reduction benefit should go to policyholders and not companies, some mechanism has to be developed.

"States wanted it (tax rate) to be brought down or exempt. At the same time many states told the (GoM) meeting that some mechanism must be developed so that rate cut benefit reaches the people. The GST Council will decide a mechanism," Vikramarka said. About Rs 9.700 crore annual



revenue loss is estimated on account of GST exemption to individual insurance policies,

The GoM will submit its report to the GST Council. The report will also include views and concerns expressed by some state finance ministers, Choudhary said.

'The Centre's proposal is clear that individual insurance policies should be exempt from GST. This has been discussed and the GoM report will be presented to the Council," Choudhary told reporters here after the meeting of the

"All members have given their approval for lowering rates. Some states have given their own views," he said, adding a final call on rates will be taken by the Council.

The Centre's proposal on

insurance is part of the over all next-Gen GST reform pro posal under which goods and services tax will be levied at 2 rates -- 5 and 18 per cent -- based on categorisation of products

as merit and standard. The GoM on health and life insurance was set up in September to suggest tax rates.

The panel, which includes ministers from Uttar Pradesh Rajasthan, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Megha laya, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, has been mandated to submit its report to the GST Council by October end.

In 2023-24, the Centre and states collected Rs 8,262.94 crore through GST on health insurance premium, while Rs 1.484.36 crore was collected on account of GST on health reinsurance premium.

Reduce reliance on neighbours: GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: China's decision to ease restrictions on exports of rare-earth minerals and fertilisers to India is a positive signal, but India must work to reduce its dependence on the neighbouring country, with which it runs an alarming \$100 billion trade deficit, economic think tank GTRI said Wednesday.

It said that between 2014 and 2024, China's dominance over India's import landscape only widened. Its share in India's telecom and electronics imports reached 57.2 per cent, while machinery and hardware accounted for 44 per cent. Chemicals

and pharmaceuticals followed

closely at 28.3 per cent, it said.

For India, the Global Trade



Research Initiative (GTRI) said, the only real safeguard is to build strength at home by cutting dependence, investing in deep manufacturing, and becoming a true product nation.

"A stronger, more self-reliant India will be better placed to engage China on equal terms, while keeping relations steady and pragmatic rather than hostage to sudden shifts," GTRI

India's trade deficit with China, which hit a record \$100 billion in FY2025, is not just alarming in scale but also in structure, it said. 'What makes it more serious

is that China now dominates India's import baskets across virtually every industrial category -- from pharmaceuticals and electronics to construction materials, renewable energy, and consumer goods," it added.

Citing examples, the think tank said in antibiotics like erythromycin, China supplies 97.7 per cent of India's needs; in electronics, it controls 96.8 per cent of silicon wafers and 86 per cent of flat panel displays; in renewable energy, 82.7 per cent of solar cells and 75.2 per

cent of lithium-ion batteries

come from China.

Everyday products such as laptops (80.5 per cent share), embroidery machinery (91.4 per cent), and viscose yarn (98.9 per cent) are sourced from China. Srivastava said this overwhelming dominance gives Beijing potential leverage against India, turning supply chains into a tool of pressure in times of political tension.

The imbalance is deepening as India's exports to China continue to decline, reducing India's share in bilateral trade to just 11.2 per cent today from 42.3 per cent two decades ago. Such structural dependence exposes India to serious geopolitical risks and highlights the urgent need for domestic production capacity and resilient supply chains," he added.

Central Bank of India organises financial incluson campaign

Sambalpur: Central Bank of India successfully organised a financial inclusion saturation campaign at Sundargarh, with the objective of spreading awareness about government-sponsored financial schemes and



Head, Sambalpur, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his address, he elaborated on flagship schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), REKYC, encouraging the public to take full benefit of these initiatives. The program concluded with remarks by Nidhi Sharma, Chief Manager, who sensitised participants about the importance of Financial Inclusion in building a financially empowered society. She also expressed her heartfelt gratitude to customers and participants for their active cooperation in making the campaign successful. The event witnessed active participation from customers, self-help groups, Business Correspondents (BC), BC supervisors, BC co-ordinator and local residents, reaffirming Bank's commitment towards society.

SHOOTING SPARKLE

India soar to top of medal tally

The country now has a total of 19 medals, nine of them gold, five silver and bronze medals each in Asian Shooting Championship

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shymkent (Kazakhstan), August 20: Olympian Anant Jeet Singh Naruka, was third time lucky, as he turned his silver from last year to gold, overcoming former Asian Games champion Mansour Al Rashidi's challenge 57-56 in the process. in the men's skeet final of the 16th Asian Shooting Championship in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

Shooting on Day Three at the Shymkent Shooting Plaza, Naruka first finished third in qualifying with a score of 119 over two days, before shooting a confident final from the very first shot of the 60-shot decider, to land the biggest medal of his

He shot 29 of the first 30 targets, then took the lead for the first time in the match, shooting 35 of the first 36, and went into the final 10 shots, one hit ahead of the champion Kuwaiti. He held on gamely as both missed one in the final round, erasing memories of his silver to another legendary Kuwaiti in Kuwait



India also picked up two more gold medals on the day in the 10m air pistol mixed team iunior and vouth events, while also winning bronze in the senior air pistol mixed team through Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary, with the senior women's skeet trio of Maheshwari Chauhan, Ganemat Sekhon and Raiza Dhillon, combining for a bronze in the team

Among the seniors, the pair of Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary began the day with a bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team competition. They



cation (Suruchi 292, Saurabh the Chinese Taipei pair of Liu 286) to qualify for one of the two Heng-Yu and Hsieh Hsiangbronze medal matches against

confirmed the day's second bronze when their combined qualification score of 329 (Maheshwari 113. Ganemat 109. Raiza 107) landed them the bronze behind China and Kazakhstan

Olympian Maheshwari was the only one to make the individual final, finishing fourth, which was how she ended the final as well, shooting 35 of the first 40 targets to miss out by one lost bird, as the Kazakh who edged her had a higher bib number.

Also on Day Three, the junior and youth shooters continued their gold rush, winning both the 10m air pistol mixed team junior and youth competitions, helping lift India in the stand-

. Vanshika Chaudhary and Jonathan Gavin Antony won the 10m air pistol mixed team junior event, defeating Koreans Kim Yejin and Kim Dooyeon 16-14 in a tight final. The pair held their nerve when it mattered most to finish strong and register a come-from-behind win. Also, it was the young Jonathan's third medal of the championship, having won an individual bronze and team silver in the earlier days.

Later, the pair of Ganesh Gupta and Gamberya Gowda defeated Iran 16-14 in the gold medal match to clinch the air pistol mixed team youth crown. They had earlier topped the

Young Tigresses thrash Nepal 7-0



With the tournament adopting a double round-robin format this year, it was imperative for India to begin on the front foot, and they did so in sensational style

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thimphu, August 20: A clinical India thrashed Nepal 7-0 in their opening match of the SAFF U17 Women's Championship, with three players scoring a brace each, here Wednesday.

Nira Chanu Longjam (25th, 56th), Abhista Basnett (16th. 41st), and Anushka Kumari (37th, 62nd) scored twice, while captain Julan Nongmaithem (45+1) struck once to ensure a flawless start to India's campaign.

The Young Tigresses raced to a commanding 5-0 lead by halftime, leaving Nepal no room for recovery in what was a one-sid-

From the first whistle, India asserted their dominance. Their cohesive structure, the result of months of joint training since January, was evident in every phase of play.

The midfielders dictated tempo, finding incisive passes and carving through Nepal's defence with sharp distribution, while the forwards constantly found pockets of space to create havoc.

The backline, though tested early, remained compact and resilient. Goalkeeper Munni pro duced a solid display, securing a clean sheet and marshalling her defence with confidence.

Set-pieces proved to be a significant weapon for India. The breakthrough came in the 16th minute after a poor backpass resulted in a corner.

Shveta Rani swung in a dangerous delivery from the left and Nepal custodian Jharna Dumrakoti fumbled under pres sure. Basnett was quickest to react, slotting home from close

SINQUEFIELD CUP

Gukesh bounces back

with crushing victory

St Louis, August 20: World

champion D Gukesh put his

opening-round blues behind

him and scored an excellent victory over former world rap

id champion Nodirbek Abdu-

sattorov of Uzbekistan in the

second round of the Sinquefield

On a day when R Pragg

nanandhaa played a quiet

game to draw with Fabiano

Caruana of the United States.

Alireza Firouzja of France gave

a perfect endgame lesson as he

crashed through the defense of

Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland

in the other decisive game of

Levon Aronian of the United

States played out a draw with

compatriot Samuel Sevian

to remain in joint lead while

another American Wesley So

drew with Maxime Vachier-La

grave of France in the 10-player

\$3,75,000 prize-money tourna-

With seven rounds still to

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cup here.

the day.

Odisha's Divya bags silver



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: The 64th National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships started on a positive note for Odisha athletes at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai Wednesday.

On the opening day, Divya Shandilya of Odisha captured the silver medal in Women Hammer Throw event. She covered 59.58 metres to secure the medal while Tanya Chaudharv of Uttar Pradesh secured the gold medal with 63.91 metres throw. The bronze medal

Debutants Diamond

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harbour beat East Bengal

to reach Durand Cup final

Kolkata, August 20: Sec-

ond-half strikes from Mikel

Idiakez and Joby Justin fired

debutants Diamond Harbour

FC to a 2-1 win over East Ben-

gal Wednesday, sealing a spot

in the 134th Durand Cup final

Anwar Ali had drawn parity

for the Red & Golds moments

after Idiakez's spectacular

back-volley had given the Dia-

of exchanges in the first-half

and nearing 20 minutes, Joby

had a first shot at goal from

close but was easily thwarted

by Prabhsukan Gill in the East

Bengal goal. Anwar then also

had his first strike at goal in the

East Bengal did finish the

half the stronger of the two,

with a Mahesh cross getting

Diamantakos to head one

which went out and then again

the Manipuri's shot hitting the

bar in the second minute of ex-

Against the run of play, Dia-

mond's Idiakez scored a wonder-

ful goal. Paul took the free-kick

from the left, only for Anwar to

try and clear with his head.

tended time.

22nd minute, but just missed.

The Diamonds had the better

monds the lead.

against NorthEast United FC.

was awarded to Maya of Rajasthan with a throw of 57.57

Astik Pradhan was in the men's 400 metres and qualified for the final which will take place tomorrow.

Srabani Nanda finished 8th in women's 100 metres final while DM Jayram and Sarun Payasingh finished 6th and 7th respectively in men's 100 metres final.

Odisha contingent consists of 23 athletes with 14 men and 9 women athletes participating in the event which will end

No surprises as Lakra, Dilpreet in squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 20: There were no major surprises in the 18-member Indian men's hockey team picked for the upcoming Asia Cup in Rajgir, Bihar with mid-fielder Rajinder Singh, and forwards Shilanand Lakra and Dilpreet Singh retaining their places in the squad, announced Wednesday.

The tournament is scheduled to be held from August 29 to September 7 and the winner will earn direct qualification to next year's FIH men's World Cup to be co-hosted by Belgium and Netherlands from August

Ace drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will continue to serve as captain of the team.

The trio of Rajinder, Lakra and Dilpreet was also part of the jumbo squad for the preceding tour of Australia. Rajinder came in for Shamsher Singh, Lakra is filling in for the recently-retired Lalit Upadhyay, and Dilpreet was preferred over Gurjant Singh who was ignored for the matches against Austra-

Striker Lalit Upadhyay had



ASIA CUP

hockey after the European leg of the FIH Pro League in June.

The selection largely reflected the established core of players, with focus on the forthcoming World Cup.

The squad overall features a strong group of experienced campaigners, with depth and

The World Cup qualifying tournament places India in Pool A with Japan, China, and Kazakhstan. Hosts India will

Japan August 31 and Kazakhstan September 1. Speaking on the team selec-

begin their campaign against

China August 29, before facing

tion, head coach Craig Fulton said, "We've gone with an experienced squad that understands what it takes to perform in high-pressure situations. The Asia Cup is crucial for us because qualification for the World Cup is at stake, so we needed players who have the composure, resilience, and know-how to deliver."

"I'm very pleased with the balance and quality across the squad. We have leaders in every line — defence, midfield. and attack — and that collective strength is what excites me the most. I think the way this team can play together will be our strongest asset," he added.

Indian squad:

GOALKEEPERS: Krishan B Pathak,

DEFENDERS: Sumit, Jarmanpree Singh, Sanjay, Harmannreet Singh Amit Rohidas, Jugraj Singh

MIDFIELDERS: Rajinder Singh, Raj Ku-Vivek Sagar Prasad

FORWARDS: Mandeep Singh, Shilanand Lakra, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Dilpreet Singh

ALTERNATE ATHLETES: Nilam San-

come, Praggnanandhaa, Aronian and Firouzja share the lead on 1.5 points.

Gukesh moved to joint fourth place alongside Caruana, Wesley So, Sevian and Vachier-Lagrave. Duda stands on ninth spot on half a point while Abdusattorov is yet to open his account after losing his second

game on the trot. Gukesh faced the open Sicil ian, popularised by the legendry Viktor Korchnoi in the last century. There have been many takers of the variation at the top level, including Caruana, but these days the opening is not a favourite among elite players.

Gukesh played one of the testing variations and did not shy away from mainstream the ory. Abdusattorov got a passed pawn in the middle of the board supported by another pawn but his king was always under the hammer as Gukesh's imaginative manoeuvres proved.

The Indian ace won a rook for a knight endgame, and even though the counter-play remained for the Uzbek, it was hard to find the exact moves with the clock ticking. Gukesh wrapped the issue with some timely exchanges leading to a won endgame.

Praggnanandhaa decided to give Caruana a taste of his own medicine by going for the Rossolimo Variation that onship match against Magnus

Salah clinches third PFA Player of the Year award

The 33-year-old had already clinched the Premier League Player of the Season award, the Golden Boot for most goals scored and the Playmaker award for most assists, making him the first player to win all three awards in the same season

REUTERS

Manchester, August 20: Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah was named the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Player of the Year Tuesday, with the Egyptian becoming the first player to win the award three times.

Salah, who joined Liverpool in 2017, was the Premier League's top scorer last season, with his 29 goals, along with 18 assists, playing a key role in the club winning the league title, finishing 10 points ahead of runners-up Arsenal.

Salah first won the PFA award in 2018 after his first season at Liverpool, and again in 2022, and this year came out on top of a six-man shortlist, voted for by PFA members from the 92 Premier League and Football League teams.

That shortlist included his Liverpool teammate Alexis Mac Allister, along with Newcastle United's Alexander Isak. Manchester United's Bruno

Fernandes, Arsenal's Declan Rice and Chelsea's Cole Palm-

Salah signed a two-year contract extension with Liverpool in April, ending months of speculation linking him with a move to the Saudi Pro League.

Aston Villa and England midfielder Morgan Rogers was voted Young Player of the Year, after the 23-year-old scored eight league goals in his 37 starts last season and netted four goals in the Champions League including a hat-trick against Celtic.

Arsenal midfielder Mariona Caldentey was named Women's Player of the Year. The Spaniard scored nine league goals in her first season with the club along with eight goals in the Champions League where Arsenal beat her former club Barcelona to win the trophy.

Canadian 21-year-old forward Olivia Smith, Liverpool's leading scorer last season across all competitions with nine goals. picked up the Young Player of



hits different when trophy to go along with it. **Being champions is what** matters and we will fight to do it again this season. I am

players who voted for me MOHAMED SALAH | STRIKER, LIVERPOOL

incredible grateful to the

the Year award.

Smith has since joined Arsenal for a reported fee of one million pounds (\$1.35 million), making her the first female player to break the seven-figure barrier.

Liverpool had four players from last season, including Salah, named in the Premier League team of the year, along with new signing from Bournemouth, Milos Kerkez.

Premier League Team of the Year: Matz Sels (Nottingham Forest); Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool), Milos Kerkez (Bournemouth), William Saliba (Arsenal), Gabriel Magalhaes (Arsenal); Declan Rice (Arsenal), Ryan Gravenberch (Liverpool), Alexis Mac Allister (Liverpool); Mohamed Salah (Liverpool), Alexander Isak (Newcastle United), Chris Wood (Nottingham Forest)

the American had used extensively in his World Champi Carlsen.

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