



Vani's observation

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

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**



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

PTI PHOTO

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 August 27.

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 "profit-teering" 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 Opposition 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,



Now, the people of the country will have to decide whether it is appropriate for a minister, chief minister or the prime minister to run the government while in jail

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

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 open to misuse for political reasons and threatened to turn the country into a police state.

Shah, however, battled for an enhanced standing for moral values in public life, saying, "We cannot be so shameless that we continue to occupy constitutional positions while 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.

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 Rijju 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 I 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 opportunity to give their suggestions.

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

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.

Man attacks Delhi CM

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 Parvash Verma said CM Gupta sustained injuries to her hand, shoulder and head.

Hours after the incident, the

Agni 5 ballistic missile test-fired

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi/Balasore, August 20: In a demonstration of its strategic military might, India Wednesday successfully test-fired 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 sources said.



Putin buys \$22K Russian motorcycle for Alaska man

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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,

Mark Warren, who 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

for the bike because of supply-and-demand issues.

"It went viral, it went crazy, and I have no idea why, because I'm really just a super-duper normal guy," Warren said Tuesday. "They just interviewed some old guy on a Ural, and for some reason they think it's cool."

On August 13, two days before the Trump-Putin summit to discuss the war in Ukraine, Warren received a call from the Russian journalist, who told him. "They've decided to give you a bike."

Warren said a document he received indicated the gift was arranged through the Russian Embassy in the US, which did not immediately return a message Tuesday.

Warren said he initially thought it might be a scam. But after Putin and Trump departed

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson following their three-hour summit last Friday, he got another call informing him the bike was at the base.

He was directed to go to an Anchorage hotel the next day for the handoff. He went with his wife, and there in the parking 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 joking me.'"

When he was signing the paperwork taking ownership of the motorcycle from the Russian embassy, he noticed it was manufactured 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.

POST NEWS NETWORK

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

His last rites were performed in the evening at Rajghat in Sambalpur with full state honours. His son, Biswajit Pasayat, lit the funeral pyre.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister Dharma Pradhan expressed deep grief over the demise of Pasayat. His demise is an irreparable loss to our literature and culture. I 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.

Pasayat was born December 3, 1935 in Kusmel village of Bolangir 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 Padma Shri in 2024.



leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
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 out with some friends who you've not been paying attention to.

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

GEMINI
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 something very personal, so there is nothing wrong with that, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will be in high spirits today, foretells Ganesha. It is a favourable day to engage in household activities, like gardening, cooking or even washing laundry. In the evening, work will be eclipsed by the pleasures of love.

LEO
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.

VIRGO
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.

LIBRA
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 your fortune and good luck.

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 jack-in-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are down-in-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesha.

Vaani on value of rooted stories

MUMBAI: Actress Vaani Kapoor, who is receiving positive response to her work in the recently released streaming series *Mandala Murders*, has said that the more content is local, the more global it will become.

The actress stressed upon how important it is for the stories to be rooted to make a global impact.

Talking about the same, the actress said, "Seeing *Mandala Murders* trend globally for three

weeks straight has been incredibly surreal. I never imagined the kind of overwhelming response it would receive. I'm beyond grateful to every single person who has watched and supported the show. This streaming debut marks a deeply personal milestone for me, one that I will cherish forever."

She further mentioned, "*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 identity."

Mandala Murders is a mythological-crime thriller series, and marked the streaming debut of Vaani Kapoor. It also marked her first collaboration with filmmaker Gopi Puthran, who is known for his work on the *Mardaani* franchise.

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.

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 filmmaker 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 part of the rat race?

"I believe it really depends on what you want your journey to look like. For me, slow and steady feels more organic," Saiee concludes.



Tanisha talks about her movie choices

like *Popcorn* or *Neal 'n' Nikki*, or even exploring 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: Tanisha 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.

Speaking about her journey, Tanisha shared, "Each project I have taken on has taught me something, whether it was an emotional story like *Tango Charlie*, a fun

experience like *Popcorn* or *Neal 'n' Nikki*, or even exploring 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."

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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 the food.

"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 you please."

The story left the audience in splits,

with Bachchan himself bursting into laughter at the memory.

This isn't the first time the megastar has reminisced about his modest beginnings 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 & Company 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 last seen in *Kalki 2898 AD*.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

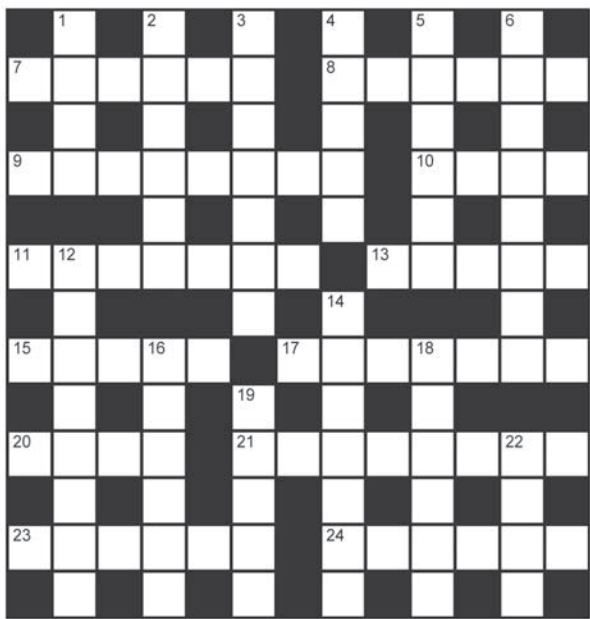


BREVITY



FUN post

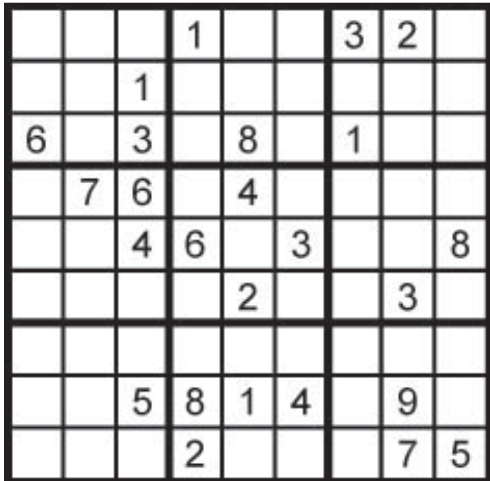
CROSSWORD



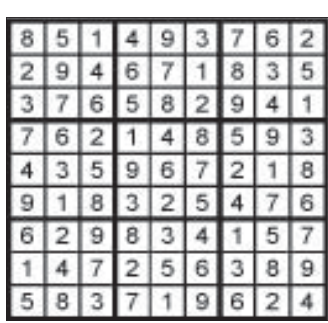
- Across**
- 7 Seat of power
 - 8 Portuguese islands
 - 9 Strong coarse brandy (3,2,3)
 - 10 Red-bearded god
 - 11 Pride member (4,3)
 - 13 Danger
 - 15 Venomous snake
 - 17 Birds of prey
 - 20 Fairy tale villain
 - 21 Widespread outbreak of an infectious disease
 - 23 Curt
 - 24 Advise
 - Down**
 - 1 Three-toed bird
 - 2 Red Sea kingdom
 - 3 Zeal
 - 4 Sheikh's bevy
 - 5 Chin whiskers
 - 6 A kick downstairs
 - 12 Impoverished
 - 14 Tolerant
 - 16 Duty-free
 - 18 Dream up
 - 19 Shade of green
 - 22 Data

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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

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: Sasubhuasani, 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



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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.

As part of the revision, the number of polling booths across the state will increase from 38,000 to 45,000, ensuring better accessibility and voter convenience, he said.

“The last intensive revision of the electoral rolls in Odisha was conducted in 2002,” Gopalan told PTI.

Both the BJD and the Congress have raised doubts over the transparency of the exercise.

“We have no objection to SIR 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 Lenin Mohanty said.

He also said conducting SIR of the electoral rolls is the job of the Election Commission of India, but a political party is the “most excited”.

“When the right time comes, our leader Naveen Patnaik will take a call on the matter. The basic fact is that all genuine voters must get the opportuni-

ty to exercise his or her democratic right,” Mohanty said.

BJD MLA and former minister PK Deb claimed that the party will not be silent if “there is an effort to delete voters 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 provision to undertake the exercise 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 eligible 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 were “tampered”.

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 NSUI state general secretary Bibhuti Bhusan Mohapatra, former MP candidate Syed 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 universities 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.

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 demands.

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

Odisha to set up MSME parks in all districts: CM

AGENCIES

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 awareness programmes to draw youth into the sector. Highlighting its vast employment 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 support 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 Vishwakarma 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 Kam-bhampati, 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 Samridhi Yojana, PM MUDRA Yojana, and PM SVANidhi. We urged bankers to proactively extend loans under these schemes to ensure wider cov-



erage,” Kam-bhampati said.

Explaining the objective of his district tours, the Governor said his visit to Bhadrak is part 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 grass-roots 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,” Kam-bhampati 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.

Waste flower to eco-friendly incense

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 20: In 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.

At thousands of puja pandals, which will be built across the

City, floral offerings in large volumes are a common sight during the festival. However, improper disposal of the sacred 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 processing flower waste into incense sticks, we are not only preserv-

ing the sanctity of these items but also creating a sustainable product,” BMC Mayor Sulochana Das said.

In collaboration with local NGOs, BMC has deployed dedicated vehicles across all city zones. These vehicles are assigned for collecting flower and organic waste from pandals. No household garbage or non-biodegradable items are allowed in these vehicles in order to maintain the purity of the offerings.

Once collected, the waste will be transported to the Pokhari-put processing facility, where it will undergo eco-friendly treatment. The floral waste will be cleaned, dried, and mixed with natural ingredients to produce incense sticks. These sticks not only carry a pleasant fragrance but also embody the spiritual essence of the original offerings.

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.

WEATHER

Max Temp

32.6°

Min Temp

24.8°

Humidity

83%

Rainfall

20mm

CTC

30.8°

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with possibility of rain or thundershower

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 Law (IWL) and UWL (USA).



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Date and Venue:

Friday, 22nd August 2025; 6:00 p.m. onwards.
at Hotel Stalwart Jagati, Jan Path, Master Canteen, Unit 3,
Bhubaneswar - 751 001, Odisha.

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.


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An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative

Visit [https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/very-quick-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-Know-Your-Customer-\(KYC\)-requirement-to-invest-in-Mutual-Funds-Investors-should-only-deal-with-registered-Mutual-Funds_details-of-how-it-can-be-verified-on-the-SEBI-website-\(www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html\)](https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/very-quick-how-to-know-more-about-the-process-to-complete-a-one-time-Know-Your-Customer-(KYC)-requirement-to-invest-in-Mutual-Funds-Investors-should-only-deal-with-registered-Mutual-Funds_details-of-how-it-can-be-verified-on-the-SEBI-website-(www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html)). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMCs and / or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMCs. If they are not satisfied with the resolutions given by AMCs, they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on <https://scores.gov.in>. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint directly with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMCs or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on <https://smartodr.in/login>.

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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?

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RAMANA MAHARSHI

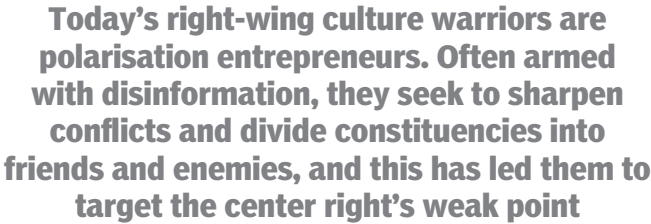
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

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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

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



(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

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

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.

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Reactionaries & the scientific mind

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

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

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 religion—continue to persist in India. These practices stand in direct opposition to the con-

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*

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

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

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 reevaluation 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 Godbole, DEWAS

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

India's 22nd IIM to come up in Guwahati

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 platform X, Sarma credited the achievement to the "unwavering 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-



KNOWLEDGE BOOST

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

The Centre has earmarked Rs 550 crore as capital assistance for the project. The upcoming institute will be the second IIM in the Northeast, joining IIM Shillong

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

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

Tuesday gave its nod to the Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2025, clearing the decks for a new Indian Institute of Management (IIM) to come up in Guwahati.

The Centre has earmarked Rs 550 crore as capital assistance for the project. The upcoming institute will be the second IIM in the Northeast, joining IIM Shillong, and will

hold the status of an institution of national importance.

Education Minister Dharmendra 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 representatives of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

Assam had pressed for such an institute, citing its geographical significance and the need to spur regional growth.

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

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



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

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, Choudhury 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 chances of successful reintegration.

A scientific survey was subsequently undertaken to determine a suitable release site.

The Dissoi Reserved Forest was initially considered, but its proximity to human settle-

ments and high disturbance made it unsuitable for bear rehabilitation.

A systematic evaluation based on natural cover, distance from habitation, prey 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 (IFAW), and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).

FINANCING GUARANTEES

K'taka borrowing jumps ₹37K-cr YoY

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.



The 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 2023-24.

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 year. 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 formation may prove to be detrimental to future growth prospects, the CAG underlined.

Thus, implementation of the guarantee schemes without rationalising 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 increasing its borrowings to Rs 1,05 lakh crore, the CAG report stated.

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 supported human capital development.

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.

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 Laxmi 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.



Intervening, Speaker UT Khader asked the Women and Child Development Minister and the Social Welfare Minister (HC Mahadevappa) to hold discussions with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah 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 Malik, Mobile: 99370 88035.

Registration is compulsory. The registration time will be from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

No walk-ins will be allowed.

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of the day quote

Our goal is to position 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

The attack on me during this morning's public hearing was not just an attack on me, but a cowardly attempt on our resolve to serve Delhi and work for the welfare of the people



REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

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 rainwater-filled gravel pit in Aspari mandal of Kurnool district today," an official told PTI.

Building collapse kills three workers

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 declared them dead.

Man kills parents, brother; probe begins

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.

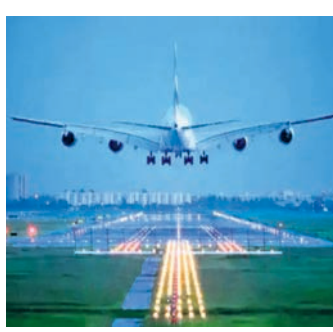


The 130th Constitutional Amendment is not reform — this is a Black Day and this is a Black Bill. I strongly condemn this Bill, which strikes at the very root of democracy, and I call upon all the democratic forces to unite against this attempt to turn India into a dictatorship

M K STALIN | TN CM

'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"



LS passes Bill to ban online money games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 slogans 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 years' 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 on-line 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, on-line 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 representing India's online skill-gaming sector have written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking his "urgent intervention" against a reported draft Bill that proposes to ban all real-money games, including those based on skill. In a joint letter, the federations warned 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 or-

der and protect public health" and "safeguard the integrity of financial systems and the security 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 Federation (AIGF), the E-Gaming Federation (EGF), and the Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports (FIFS) -- in a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah raised concerns over the Bill saying the online skill gaming industry is a sunrise sector with an enterprise valuation of over Rs 2 lakh crore and annual revenue exceeding ₹31,000 crore.



Students during an awareness campaign on World Mosquito Day in Agartala

PTI PHOTO

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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.

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, including a knife attack, police sources said.

Police said the accused, Sakariya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai (41), from Gujarat's Rajkot, 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.

Sakariya 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 Gujarat 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 "well-planned conspiracy to kill her". Police officials said the assault was serious and could have been life-threatening.

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-

tral Civil Service (Pension) Rules, 2021, notified by the 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.

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 continued until 'she gets married or is remarried or until she starts earning her livelihood, whichever is the earliest, subject to

the conditions like the unmarried or widowed or divorced daughter was dependent on her parent or parents when he or she or they were alive', the minister said.

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

of the day

quote

Former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and President of Samajwadi Party Shri Akhilesh Yadav ji will join the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Sitamarhi, 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 jail 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 Patanjali 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.

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

LAXMI HEBBALKAR |

KARNATAKA WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

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



Student murdered by his classmate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 20: A Class X student of a private school in Ahmedabad was allegedly fatally stabbed by his classmate following an altercation, triggering a massive protest and vandalism by parents and locals Wednesday, police said.

Police detained 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 Commis-

sioner of Police Jaipal Singh Rathore.

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.

The 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

PTI PHOTO

TERRORISM THREAT

INDIA WILL RESPOND WITH FULL FORCE: GOVT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 strategic 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.

Experts warn of rising cyber threats from China, Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 20: Cyber-security 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 cyber-security, 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 "Rakta-beej" 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



crisis mapping, chain-of-custody protocols for digital evidence, tracking illicit money flows through blockchain and wallets, seizing criminal infrastructure, and swift victim assistance.

He praised the RBI's cyber framework, emphasised digital sovereignty, and noted that cybersecurity "is like agriculture—it cannot be imported, it must be cultivated within the country."

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 official said.

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 remark 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

of Centre's stand that Governor 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-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 Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P S Narasimha and A S 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 consideration of President. Exercising power under proviso he can return the Bill to the legislative Assembly for reconsideration."

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

MUMBAI: In a jolt to the Shiv Sena (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 Fadnis 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.

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 Bhat-tacharya 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.

of the day

quote

History will remember Albanese for what he is: A weak politician who 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

I am sure that in the West and above all in the United States they understand 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 and Ningxia.

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 Ishaq Dar, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Afghanistan acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi 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 promised to hold December 28.

India hands over two 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.



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 unanswered

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

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



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 Ahmadis 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 women in erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971, adding the pattern continues "with impunity to this day." Briefly addressing what he called as the "baseless allegation" raised by the Pakistan delegate during the debate Tuesday, Eidos Mathew Punnoose, India's Counsellor and Charge d'Affaires said that the 1971's instances of sexual violence against women is "a matter of shameful record." Punnoose was delivering his statement at the open debate on 'Innovative Strategies to Ensure Access to 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 women in erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971 is a matter of shameful record," he said. He was apparently referring to a series of massacres and rapes in 1971 in East Pakistan, in what is today's Bangladesh. "This deplorable pattern continues unabated and with impunity to this day," the Indian diplomat said.

US may provide air support to back a Ukraine peace deal

REUTERS

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 country.

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 Zelenskii'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.

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.

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 bullying. "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

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 Interior spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani told The Associated Press. Tolo News, citing the official, said the accident happened Tuesday 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, mainly 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 Pakistan and more than 5,000 were deported from Türkiye since the beginning of the year. Additionally, nearly 10,000 Afghan prisoners have been repatriated, mostly from Pakistan.

Israel approves West Bank settlement project

REUTERS

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 actions."

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



negotiated two-state solution and an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not commented on the E1 announcement.

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-

paign groups have opposed the settlement project due to concerns that it could undermine a future peace deal with the Palestinians.

The plan for E1, located adjacent 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, 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.

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 until 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



north and along the central Apennines, have been receding for years, thanks to inadequate snowfall in the winter and record-setting hot summers. Glaciers always melt some in sum-

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

tact," Toffaletti said.

"In order to regenerate and 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 happening less and less frequently," said Toffaletti.

According to the Lombardy 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 showing 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 annually over about the next decade.

of the day

quote

Four new drugs for rare diseases are in the pipeline expected to be launched soon while five medications 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 their activities to their unique needs

M RAJESHWAR RAO | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

In the space that we are in, personal care, it is sometimes looked at as drugs and cosmetics to gether. Of course, there is already some kind of demarcation, but I think more needs to happen there, because drugs rightfully need to be more regulated, and cosmetics need that little bit more space to be able to have

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 renew energy

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 re-entered 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.



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

NITIN GADKARI | ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

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



EPFO registers record growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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-on-year. 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 age group.

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 1.34 per cent year-on-year rise.

Further, the net female payroll addition in June stood at around 4.72 lakh, with a month-on-month increase of 11.11 per cent and a 10.29 per cent year-on-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

ishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement, safeguarding long-term 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 month-on-month increase of 11.11 per cent and a 10.29 per cent year-on-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

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 81,985.62.

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 institutions," 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 Urdhwarese.

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

Govt proposes GST exemption on life and health insurance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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, he said.

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 GoM.

"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

NCLT defers Vedanta hearing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



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 part-heard 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 added.

The company said Sebi has issued an administrative warning letter regarding a procedural lapse on the modification of the Scheme, without 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 Vedanta'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.

Central Bank of India organises financial inclusion 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 strengthening inclusive banking services. Divyendu Kumar, Regional 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 career.

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



City last time around.

India also picked up two more gold medals on the day in the 10m air pistol mixed team junior and youth 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 event.

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 shot a combined 578 in qualifi-



cation (Suruchi 292, Saurabh 286) to qualify for one of the two bronze medal matches against

the Chinese Taipei pair of Liu Heng-Yu and Hsieh Hsiang-Chen. They won the bronze

match with a 17-9 margin.

The women's skeet team then 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 standings.

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 qualification with a score of 575.

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 Julian 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 half-time, leaving Nepal no room for recovery in what was a one-sided affair from the outset.

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 produced 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 Durnakoti fumbled under pressure. Basnett was quickest to react, slotting home from close range.

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 Chaudhary of Uttar Pradesh secured the gold medal with 63.91 metres throw. The bronze medal

was awarded to Maya of Rajasthan with a throw of 57.57 metres.

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 August 24.

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 14 to 30.

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 Gurbant Singh who was ignored for the matches against Australia.

Striker Lalit Upadhyay had



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 begin their campaign against China August 29, before facing Japan August 31 and Kazakhstan September 1.

Speaking on the team selec-

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, Suraj Karkera

DEFENDERS: Sumit, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Jugraj Singh

MIDFIELDERS: Rajinder Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Hardik Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad

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

ALTERNATE ATHLETES: Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Selvam Karthi.

Debutants Diamond Harbour beat East Bengal to reach Durand Cup final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 20: Second-half strikes from Mikel Idiakez and Joby Justin fired debutants Diamond Harbour FC to a 2-1 win over East Bengal Wednesday, sealing a spot in the 134th Durand Cup final against NorthEast United FC.

Anwar Ali had drawn parity for the Red & Golds moments after Idiakez's spectacular back-volley had given the Diamonds the lead.

The Diamonds had the better of exchanges in the first-half and nearing 20 minutes, Joby had a first shot at goal from close but was easily thwarted by Prabhshukan Gill in the East Bengal goal. Anwar then also had his first strike at goal in the 22nd minute, but just missed.

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 extended time.

Against the run of play, Diamond's Idiakez scored a wonderful goal. Paul took the free-kick from the left, only for Anwar to try and clear with his head.

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 Palmer.

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



This very special award hits different when we have an important trophy to go along with it. Being champions is what matters and we will fight to do it again this season. I am incredibly grateful to the players who voted for me

MOHAMED SALAH | STRIKER, LIVERPOOL

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)

Gukesh moved to joint fourth place alongside Caruana, Wesley So, Sevan 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 Sicilian, popularised by the legendary 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 theory. 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 the American had used extensively in his World Championship match against Magnus Carlsen.