

NATURE'S FURY



Large chunks of soil came crashing on National Highway-49 at Kanjipani Ghati in Keonjhar district due to torrential rains, blocking traffic on the stretch Sunday

OP PHOTO

Plucky Pujara says goodbye to cricket

New Delhi: Cheteshwar Pujara, the rock of Indian batting in the longest format for over a decade, Sunday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, bringing the curtains down on an exemplary Test career. The 37-year-old made the announcement on social media, having played the last of his 103 Tests in 2023. With 7,195 runs at an average of 43.60, Pujara stands at eighth place in the all-time leading run-getters from India. He also amassed 21,301 runs in first-class cricket. **P12**

Dowry murder: Hubby shot in leg

Noida: As outrage mounted over the alleged killing of 26-year-old woman for dowry in Greater Noida, police Sunday arrested her mother-in-law while her husband was shot in leg as he attempted to flee custody. The family of the victim, Nikki, who was allegedly set ablaze by her husband and in-laws, had claimed that she had been tortured since her marriage in 2016 by them for a dowry demand of ₹36 lakh, even after they had fulfilled their demand for Scorpio vehicle and a motorcycle. Disturbing videos of the incident and testimonies of Nikki's son and sister surfaced on social media on how the accused husband, Vipin Bhati and another woman assaulted the victim and dragged her by the hair. **PS**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Inflation rate is down again on news channels. Seems the grocery store owner has also stopped watching TV news

White tiger cub dies at Nandankanan zoo

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 24: Tiger population at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) on the outskirts of Capital City here has declined to 28 as a white male tiger cub died Saturday, an officer said Sunday.

The tiger cub was born June 7, 2025, to white tigress Mousumi and normal coloured tiger Rajesh, along with a female cub. "From the beginning, this male cub was very weak, underweight (650 gram), and had deformities in its forelimbs similar to swimmer puppy syndrome in dogs," said the zoo officer.

It was noticed June 11 that the cub was unable to suckle milk and was shifted to NZP's Centre for Rearing Animal Babies. It was found to be suffering from infection in the navel, low body temperature, and general



weakness, he said.

The official further said that the cub was placed in an incubator and given oxygen, infrared therapy, and reconstituted milk formula. Physiotherapy and bandage support were also given daily to improve its limb condition.

Despite continuous care and repeated check-ups by expert veterinarians, the cub could not stand and remained in a

recumbent position. Over the weeks, it also suffered from blood in stools, ear infection, and wounds on its body due to lying down all the time.

All these conditions were treated with medicines and dressings. However, on the morning of August 23, the cub died, the official said.

The other female normal-coloured tiger cub of Mousumi is also having a congenital problem in right hind limb. It has arthritis and the joint is fused (ankylosis). So it is having problems with movement, he added.

With the death of the cub, the tiger population at the zoo stands at 28 (17 males and 11 females), which includes 19 normal coloured tigers (11 males, 8 females), five white tigers (three males, two females), and four black tigers (three males, one female).

Gaganyaan: ISRO completes 1st Integrated Air Drop Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 24: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Sunday successfully carried out the first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) to validate the parachute-based deceleration system for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission.

An ISRO official told PTI that the end-to-end demonstration was conducted near Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The exercise was jointly



executed by ISRO, the Indian Air Force, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Navy

and the Indian Coast Guard.

The Gaganyaan project aims to demonstrate India's capability to send humans into space and safely return them to Earth. Planned as the country's first human spaceflight programme, it will also involve precursor unmanned missions to test systems critical for crew safety.

The parachute-based deceleration mechanism is a key component to ensure the safe recovery of the crew module during re-entry and landing.

Now, AI can predict solar flares

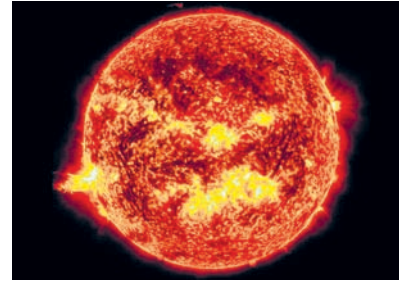
AGENCIES

Washington, August 24: A first-of-its-kind artificial intelligence (AI) system built by NASA in collaboration with IBM can predict violent solar storms threatening satellites and power grids two hours before they erupt from the Sun, scientists say.

The AI system, named Surya Heliophysics Foundational Model, was trained on nearly a decade of observations from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory. The term 'Surya' has been derived from Sanskrit.

Powerful solar storms energeise the Earth's upper atmosphere and can cause GPS errors or complete signal loss to satellite communications, as well as risks to power grids in the form of induced electric currents on land.

Predicting severe solar storms has proved difficult as they



Solar flares can

- Damage power grids
- Disrupt satellite communication
- Affect GPS and other navigation systems
- Cause disturbances in radio communications

are brewing millions of miles away on the Sun, but take just minutes to hours to reach the Earth. "Our society is built on technologies that are highly susceptible to space weather," said Joseph Westlake, director of the heliophysics division at NASA's Washington headquarters.

Such violent space weather originates in the Sun's dark spots called active regions, which increasingly speckle its surface in the lead up to the peak of its 11-year activity cycle.

"If we can predict there's a big active region forming, we can give NASA an early warning that hey, it will probably generate a lot of storms," said solar physicist Spiros Kasapis from Princeton University.

"Just as we use meteorology to forecast Earth's weather, space weather forecasts predict the conditions and events in the space environment that can affect Earth and our technologies," Westlake explained. Researchers hope the new AI

model can be used to provide early warnings to satellite operators and help scientists predict how the Sun's radiation affects the Earth's upper atmosphere.

"Applying AI to data from our heliophysics missions is a vital step in increasing our space weather defence to protect astronauts and spacecraft, power grids and GPS, and many other systems that power our modern world," Westlake said.

Early results suggest Surya – Sanskrit for the Sun – can generate visual predictions of solar flares two hours into the future, setting a new benchmark in the use of AI for space weather prediction. The open-access AI system is now available on Hugging Face, GitHub, and via IBM's TerraTorch library for researchers across the world to test and explore.

Traditional AI systems to predict such space weather disturbances require extensive labelling of data by researchers.

Floods, landslides

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Bhograi/Baliapal, August 24: Panic gripped thousands of people across several blocks in Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Jajpur districts as two major rivers in northern Odisha are in spate following days of relentless rainfall. Several villages in Bhograi and Baliapal blocks of Balasore district were cut off from the outside world after floodwaters from Subarnarekha and Jalaka rivers inundated low-lying areas Sunday. Baitarani river was flowing above the danger mark at Akhuapada, sparking further alarm among residents in parts of Jajpur and Bhadrak districts. Meanwhile, landslides were also reported from Keonjhar district leading to traffic snarls on NH-49.

Reports said heavy discharge of rainwater from 13 gates of Galudihi dam in Jharkhand has triggered floods in Subarnarekha river for the sixth time this monsoon.

At Rajghat gauge station, the water level rose above the danger mark of 10.36 metres by 7am Sunday and continued to rise. By 8pm, it had reached 11.20 metres, officials said.

Floodwaters have entered 18 panchayats in Bhograi block of northern Balasore and several panchayats in Rasgobindpur block of neighbouring Mayurbhanj district. The administration has cancelled leaves of all government employees, and deployed Fire Services personnel and ODRAF teams for rescue operations.

Balasore Collector Suryabanshi Mayur Vikas directed block development officers and tehsildars to remain alert. Villages in low-lying areas of Bhograi block including Manunagar, Rasalpur, Khalabaria, Kulha,



A flooded road in Baliapal block of Balasore district Sunday

OP PHOTO

More rain in store

Heavy rainfall is likely to lash several parts of Odisha Monday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing alerts for eight districts and warning fishermen to avoid venturing into the sea due to rough conditions. The Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre Sunday issued an 'Orange Warning' for Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts for August 25, indicating the likelihood of heavy to very heavy rainfall in isolated places. **P4**

Baunsakhana, Pantei, Kumbhiraga Nankar, Gabagaon, Barabatia, Kharida Pimpala, Chirkula, Nilapura, Kushuda, Badhia, Krushnapur and Chak Parulia have been cut off as floodwaters submerged roads and disrupted transport.

All villages in Bishnupur panchayat under Baliapal block have been cut-off from the outside world as floodwaters entered villages. Similarly, villages in Baliapal, Madhupura, Jamkunda, Nikhira and Kumbhari panchayats under Baliapal block have been inundated with floodwaters.

This marks the sixth flood in Subarnarekha within two months, compounding the misery of flood-hit residents of northern Balasore.

Chandra Sekhar Padhi, engineer-in-chief, Water Re-

sources department, said the water level in Subarnarekha and Baitarani has started rising following heavy rainfall in the upper catchment areas. "Though the water level declined this morning, it is expected to rise again as there was heavy downpour in Baitarani river's catchment areas Saturday," Padhi said.

Padhi said senior officers have been deployed in Jajpur and Bhadrak districts to monitor the situation and take necessary precautionary measures.

Meanwhile, reports of landslides came in from Keonjhar district Sunday, as large chunks of soil of over 6-feet in height came crashing on Kanjipani Ghati road, blocking the traffic on National Highway-49. Moreover, at Judia Ghati on the outskirts of Keonjhar town, two large rocks fell on the road due to torrential rain. However, no untoward incident was reported. Mobesh Gami, project director, NHAI, Keonjhar said the landslide at Kanjipani Ghati occurred due to heavy rainfall. Workers engaged in clearing the road are finding it difficult to remove the rain soaked soil from the road. However, traffic has resumed on Judia Ghati road after workers removed the rocks from the road.

DHARITRI CLIMATE
FILM FEST

DO YOU HAVE A STORY ON
ENVIRONMENT?

DHARITRI CLIMATE
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SHARE IT!

CELEBRATE CREATIVITY AND
THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE
CHANGE BY BRINGING YOUR
IDEAS TO THE SCREEN

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IS NOT PERMITTED

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ENTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION
SCAN THE QR CODE

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
If you're a sporty one, then today is positively your day! Make the most of it, as an unexpected turn of events may turn out to your advantage. You're wise and know perfectly well how to blend business and pleasure, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
You will find yourself viewing your love life with renewed vigour and understanding. A tendency to think pessimistically may make things murky. You love to play mother goose to those in trouble, but won't be quite as efficient dealing with problems of your own, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
There are indications that you will get into a deep thinking mode today, feels Ganesha. Your craving for a little pleasure will get satisfied. You'll perform well at work, but it wouldn't come close to what you will achieve back home.

CANCER
You will like to display your money power and clout. But it will be purposeless. Normally, you are me-thodical but in the afternoon you may finish a task mindlessly and you may have to repent.

LEO
Resist that urge to pop a pill and call in sick, because no matter how much you wish, escaping from reality is not the way to go, says Ganesha. Yes, there are chances that you shall remain in a pensive mood today with a multitude of thoughts fighting to occupy space inside your head. Work shall be a constant feel-good area as you share valuable moments with your peers, and progress as expected. Ganesha portends a pleasant evening in the company of the opposite sex. So cheer up, there is lots to look forward to.

VIRGO
Signs are that the day will be bright, rewarding and thoughtful as well. Keep in mind that doomsday is still a long way off. Planetary motions indicate better things to come with each new day. Keep the banners of hope flying, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Those of you who have friends and relatives abroad may get good news from them. Job interviews may not prove successful today even though you may have tried hard and put in your very best, success will not be with you today.

SCORPIO
Forget business, you are in a mood for some romantic developments in your life. You feel the passion within and would love to have someone special in your life, with whom you can live your dreams. Ganesha asks you to be patient and believe in yourself!

SAGITTARIUS
Suddenly, your wisdom is at work today. You see things in a different light and in a practical way. You are spiritually inclined today and take up meditation. Professionally, planning to take a jump? Go ahead, as the day is favourable for interviews, says Ganesha. You may just crack one. Amen!

CAPRICORN
The profundity of relationships will intrigue you, luring you to delve deeper into them, says Ganesha. Your strong persuasive power will help clear many misunderstandings that may have cut a rift in your relationship with your sweetheart in the past. At work, you will garner the support of your colleagues and subordinates for mutual goals, but at the same time, be wary of your competitors who may try to outdo you, warns Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You are at your best today. A perfect blend of commitment and competency, you will zap people by your persona. By afternoon, your adrenaline will be pumping fast, and you'll agree to complete others' work too. Hats off to you, says Ganesha.

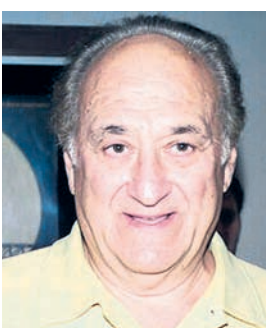
PISCES
A day where you will be on your toes, you will find yourself constantly on the move, keeping up with the numerous demands of the workplace in your quest to control the workings of your department or business. Chance encounters with remote relatives are in the offing, says Ganesha.

BLAKE LIVELY TO STAR IN THE SURVIVAL LIST



Hollywood star Blake Lively is set to star in an upcoming action romantic comedy film from Lionsgate, titled *The Survival List*. The film revolves around a highbrow reality TV producer named Annie, who is assigned against her wishes to a new show hosted by famous survival expert Chopper Lane.

THE SOPRANOS ACTOR JERRY ADLER DIES



Jerry Adler, celebrated for his roles in *The Sopranos* and *Mad About You*, has died at 96. A renowned theater director who transitioned to acting later in life, Adler's career began at 65 with *Brooklyn Bridge*. He leaves behind a legacy of memorable characters and a family deeply rooted in the world of theater and acting.

Vaani's wellness secrets

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Vaani Kapoor, admired for her charm and screen presence, recently opened up about her food habits, offering fans a refreshing perspective on balancing indulgence with health. In a candid conversation, she revealed how her love for delicious food goes hand in hand with mindful, nutritious choices.

Vaani shared that she starts her day with homemade ABC juice and a Sattu drink, where she blends sattu powder with dates for sweetness and a dash of water—an energy-packed ritual she swears by. For snacks, she opts for a creative mix of eggs blended with gluten-free oats, muesli, dried fruits, and nuts. This wholesome preparation, she explained, not only satisfies cravings but also keeps her energised through long hours of work. When it comes

to desserts, Vaani doesn't shy away from her sweet tooth but makes healthier swaps. She has embraced sugar-free ice creams and desserts, particularly praising *The Better Binge* by Juhl, which offers guilt-free indulgences without compromising on taste. Through her approach, Vaani highlights a modern philosophy—eating well without giving up on flavour. Her choices reflect how healthy food can be both nourishing and exciting, inspiring fans to find sustainable ways to enjoy food while caring for their bodies.

AGENCIES



Buzz around Manushi's latest post

Mumbai: Miss World turned actress Manushi Chhillar has once again set social media buzzing with a cryptic behind-the-scenes glimpse from what appears to be a massive production. Sharing a photo from the set, she teased fans with the caption, "It's a houseful ????????"—a line that has left her followers guessing about what's next. The picture shows a bustling crew, heavy lighting rigs, and a lavishly designed backdrop, suggesting something on a grand scale is in the works. In 2025, Manushi has already impressed audiences with her performances in *Maalik* and *Tehran*, where she portrayed strikingly different roles. Her deliberate choice of varied genres has established her as an actress willing to experiment, making her next move all the more intriguing. Speculation

is rife online: could this be a high-concept web series, a grand period drama, or even a high-budget music video? The vintage set design has also fueled theories of an international collaboration or a luxury fashion campaign with cinematic flair. Though no official announcement has been made, the mystery is working in her favour. With every teaser, Manushi is proving her knack for keeping audiences hooked, leaving fans eagerly awaiting the big reveal.

AGENCIES



Mumbai: Bollywood actress Mouni Roy recently shut down a troll who targeted her with a harsh comment about alleged cosmetic surgeries. The troll mocked her appearance, writing that her "surgeries" had put her in a poor spot and claimed that, as a public figure, she must accept criticism. The remark, clearly referencing long-circulating rumours of corrective procedures—

which Mouni has denied in multiple interviews—was later deleted. However, before it disappeared, screenshots went viral. Mouni chose not to ignore the attack and instead responded firmly. In her reply, she advised the user to focus on something meaningful, urging them to use social media to spread love or highlight their work, rather than tearing others down. Her measured yet sharp comeback won praise from fans, who quickly rallied in her support. This is not the first time the actress has dealt with such speculation. Previously, she had brushed aside questions about cosmetic procedures, stressing that she doesn't pay attention to negativity. She also pointed out the futility of trolling from behind screens. Mouni's recent response reflects her broader stance against body-shaming and online toxicity. Alongside other actors like Palak Tiwari, she has highlighted how "celebrity bashing sells," underlining the need for kinder digital spaces.

AGENCIES

Mouni hits back at troll

Regina talks about reinvention

Mumbai: Actress Regina Cassandra, known for her work in the period streaming series *Rocket Boys*, *Kesari Chapter 2*, *Farzi* and others, believes that storytelling is an ever-evolving art form that can never become redundant. She also stressed the importance of reinvention for the artiste community. She told this news agency, "I think content and storytelling can never become redundant. We just need to keep reinventing ourselves as artists and creators to evolve with the times".

The actress recently wrapped up the first schedule of *The Wives* helmed by Madhur Bhandarkar. The film dives deep into the glamorous yet turbulent world of Bollywood star wives,

peeling back the curtain on their hidden realities, high-profile scandals, and the extravagant lifestyles they lead. Joining Regina in this intriguing ensemble cast are Mouni Roy, Sonali Kulkarni, and other notable names, making the project one of the most anticipated in Bhandarkar's filmography. She also shed light on her upcoming projects as she said, "*Mookuthi Amman 2* in Tamizh and another Telugu and Tamizh project in the pipeline that I'm pretty excited about". Earlier, the actress reflected on her journey of the past 20 years in the field of entertainment.

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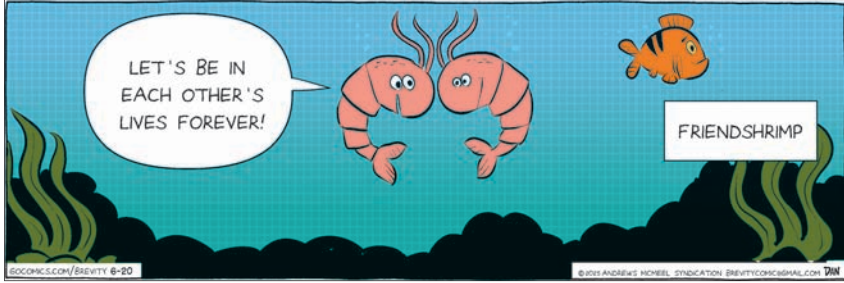
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

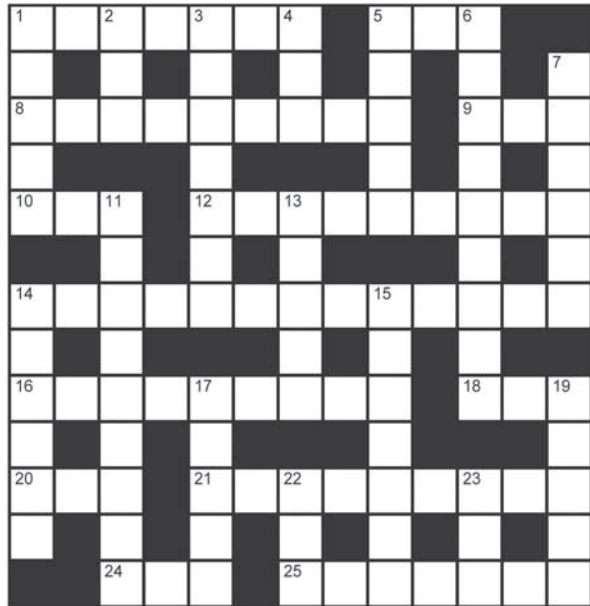


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Across | Down | |
| 1 Cargo | 1 Yarn starter | 5 Edible mushroom |
| 5 Tourist's aid item, at times (3,6) | 2 Musical ability | 6 Part of Argentina and Chile |
| 8 Storm predictor | 3 Oryx | 7 Hot dessert |
| 9 Bus. card abbr. | 4 Little squirt | 11 Gets rid of |
| 10 Capt.'s prediction | | 13 Pugilist |
| 12 It gets chewed out (6,3) | | 14 Bedroom community |
| 14 It can go up and down (5,8) | | 15 Nut tree |
| 16 Curious and whatnots (4-1-4) | | 17 Append |
| 18 Feel fluish | | 19 Kind of poem |
| | | 22 Greek consonant |
| | | 23 Race unit |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Cong slams govt over urea crisis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 24: Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) has come down heavily on the ‘double engine’ government over the acute shortage and black marketing of urea in the state, alleging gross mismanagement and betrayal of farmers.

Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhawan here Sunday, Odisha Kisan Congress president Abhay Sahu accused the state government of failing to ensure adequate and timely distribution of fertilisers despite having ample stock. “The government claims to have 7.94 lakh tonne of urea, yet farmers are struggling to get even a single bag. If this is not failure, what is?” he questioned.

Sahu alleged, urea, which is officially priced at Rs 226.50 per bag, is being sold illegally at Rs 500 to Rs 600 in Bargarh, Bolangir, Sundargarh, and even up to Rs 900 in parts of Nuapada. “This is daylight robbery,”



he added, blaming corrupt officials and private traders for diverting subsidised urea into the black market.

He alleged that MARKFED, the government’s designated distribution agency, is supplying subsidised fertilisers to private traders instead of farmers. “This is being done with full knowledge of certain officials, turning the whole system into a farce,” he alleged.

OPCC spokesperson Manisha Das Pattnaik called the urea shortage “a direct attack

on the backbone of Odisha’s farmers,” warning that the current crisis could endanger the state’s Kharif paddy cultivation. “Despite lower fertiliser use in Odisha, mismanagement and corruption have pushed our farmers to the edge,” she said.

Pattnaik also questioned the delay in Talcher fertiliser plant, whose foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018. “It was promised to be functional in 36 months, but seven years later,

it still remains non-operational,” she noted.

Senior Congress leaders Ashok Swain, Rupadipta Mahapatra, and Bibhuti Bhushan Mahapatra echoed the concerns, terming the crisis as a betrayal of farmers. “Even with the Deputy Chief Minister holding the Agriculture portfolio, the state has failed to deliver fertilisers to its farmers,” they said.

The Congress demanded immediate crackdown on black marketing and punishment of guilty dealers and officials, fertiliser distribution through cooperative societies, aadhar-based panchayat-level allocation, district-wise buffer stock creation and special relief package for affected farmers.

The party warned of intensified protests if the government fails to act. “We will gherao all agriculture offices across the state to fight for farmers’ rights,” Congress leaders declared.

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 24: The state government alerted Collectors of over 20 districts to keep the administrative machinery ready in view of a fresh low-pressure system forecast by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The IMD has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall, along with thunderstorms and lightning, across the state from August 25 to 28, due to a fresh low-pressure area likely to form over the northwest Bay of Bengal off Odisha–West Bengal coasts within the next 48 hours.

Both orange and yellow warnings have been issued for several districts till August 28. The forecast indicates heavy rain, thunderstorms with lightning, and gusty surface winds reaching 30 to 40 kmph across at least 20 districts.

In response, the Office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has advised all concerned



PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

districts to remain vigilant and keep emergency measures in place.

People have been urged to monitor weather updates and take shelter during thunderstorms to avoid lightning strikes.

District Collectors have also been instructed to submit immediate reports on any dam-

ages caused by thunderstorms, whirlwinds, hailstorms, or heavy rainfall.

Meanwhile, fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea along and off the north Odisha coast and over the north Bay of Bengal. The advisory will remain in force for the Odisha coast and the north Bay of Bengal from August 25 to 28.

OMFED achieves ₹247cr turnover, ₹1.22cr profit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 24: The Odisha State Cooperative Milk Producers’ Federation (OMFED) has recorded an unprecedented turnover of Rs247 crore in the first quarter of FY 2025 (from April 1 to June 30), marking the highest-ever Q1 performance in its history. During this period, OMFED has also registered a cash profit of Rs 1.22 crore.

This robust performance builds upon the federation’s previous fiscal achievement, where it recorded Rs 1,028 crore in turnover for FY 2024—the highest annual turnover in the outfit’s history.

OMFED attributes this growth to a series of strategic initiatives, including market expansion, introduction of new products, farmer incentives, and increased milk procurement. The organisation has outlined an ambitious target of achieving Rs 900 crore in turnover over the remaining three quarters

of FY 2025, aiming for an annual turnover exceeding the previous records. It also plans to generate a profit of more than Rs 10 crore during this period.

Looking ahead, OMFED is currently exploring opportunities to expand its footprint both within the country and abroad by exporting its high-quality dairy products. Additionally, special emphasis is being placed on increasing accessibility in rural markets.

The success is the result of the unwavering dedication of lakhs of dairy farmers and employees, the continued trust of customers, and the consistent quality of products. The federation also acknowledges the support of cooperative societies across the state, the leadership of chairman Kishore Chandra Pradhani, guidance of Minister Gokulananda Mallick, and strategic direction provided by managing director Vijay Amruta Kulange.

State to host eastern region Civil Aviation ministers’ meet today



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 24: The Capital city is going to host the Eastern Region Civil Aviation Ministers’ Conference here Monday, bringing together key stakeholders from government and industry to chart the future of civil aviation in Eastern India.

The day-long conference will cover key themes such as airport and heliport development models,

the UDAN scheme and regional connectivity, skill development in aviation, expansion of the drone ecosystem, and the future of Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS).

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will grace the occasion as chief guest. Civil Aviation Union

Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu will inaugurate the conference along with Minister of State Murlidhar Mohol.

Naidu will present the Central government’s vision for expanding regional connectivity, modernising aviation infrastructure, and fostering innovation in drones and emergency air services across Eastern India.

Delegations from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands will take part in the conference. Dedicated one-on-one sessions with participating delegates will address region-specific aviation priorities and policy support, while parallel industry interactions will explore investment opportunities, public-private partner-

ships, and collaborative initiatives in the aviation ecosystem.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Airports Authority of India (AAI), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) will also attend, making the event a comprehensive platform for dialogue and decision-making.

Ministry of Civil Aviation joint secretary Madhu Sudana Sankar will deliver the welcome address, followed by Commerce and Transport department’s principal secretary Usha Padhee sharing the state’s perspective.

The plenary session will feature opening remarks by Ministry of Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha. State’s Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena and Chhattisgarh Finance Minister Om Prakash Choudhary will deliver special addresses at the session.

‘Jay Odisha’ organises blood donation camp



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 24: ‘Jay Odisha’, a social service outfit, organised its 16th blood donation camp here Sunday, under ‘Raktadaan’ initiative, in collaboration with Rotary Club of Icons and Sushrutra Hospital and Trauma Care (SHTC).

The camp was conducted under the leadership of SHTC CEO and director Chidatmika Khatua, guided by former Red Cross chairperson Kalpana Das. Ekamra MLA Babu Singh and BJP’s Bhubaneswar district president Niranjan Mishra attended the event the day. The event saw participation of youth in large number, who came forward with enthusiasm to donate blood. Encouraging the donors, Singh lauded their effort and urged other organisations to come forward and organise blood donation camps. Such small-scale blood donation drives during festive occasions would not only receive divine blessings but also contribute significantly to social welfare, an organiser said.

Jay Odisha president Rudra Narayan Samantaray appealed groups and individuals to collaborate in taking up such initiatives, assuring support and joint efforts for the greater good of society.

Ganesh Puja goes eco-friendly with creative idols

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 24: As Ganesh Puja draws near, artisans and institutions across the state are blending tradition with innovation, presenting the deity in eco-friendly and creative forms. Building idol using clay-pots and seed-embedded idols, this year’s initiatives highlight sustainability, while preserving their grandeur.

At Dhauli College of Art and Craft, principal Panchan-



an Samal highlighted their unique initiative. “This year, students crafted Lord Ganesh idols using ‘Abhada Kodua’—the sacred clay pots traditionally used to prepare Mahaprasad for Lord Jagannath. Natural paints were used in order to ensure that idol immersion would not contaminate water or harm aquatic life. Every year, our focus is on eco-friendly and sustainable idols,” Samal said.

Schools are also embracing the eco-friendly mission.



At Bermunda High School, here, students crafted idols with a sustainable twist. Assistant teacher Sangita Ray said, “This year, students from Class VI to X created 30 eco-friendly idols using natural colours and seeds. So instead of immersion, the idols will be placed in soil after the rituals. The initiative is both a learning exercise and a step towards an eco-friendly world.”

Professional artisan Sashikant Behera, who runs a work-



shop in Mancheswar, spoke to **Orissa POST** about the growing demand for idols in industrial belts. “I am essentially a conceptual artist, but in Odisha,



PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

creativity does not find much acceptance. So, during Ganesh Puja or other festive seasons, I focus on idol-making, which is commercially viable for artists like us. To sustain, I take seasonal orders—for making lord Ganesh, Vishwakarma and Durga idols,” he explained.

This year, Behera received

22 orders for the Ganesh Puja. The idols range from 8-ft to 13-ft in height, priced between Rs 22,000 and Rs 25,000. “The most unique creation this year is of an Aghori Avatar Ganesh idol, apart from regular Shiv Avatar idols, Lalbaugcha Raja idols, and Garuda Avatar idols,” he added.

Artiste Bijaya Kumar Panda, who runs Jaga Baliya Silpa Mandir, reflected on the business side of the festival. “I have been in this line for more than 40 years. This year, I received 12 large orders and crafted 30 to 40 smaller idols for walk-in buyers. Compared to Durga and

Lakshmi idols, Ganesh idols sell well, but the demand isn’t what it used to be. The festival brings joy and business for many, but for clay artists the profit is limited—we are not paid in proportion of the artwork,” Panda said. He added that their most unique creation this year is a Bahubali Ganesh idol.

BMC’s mass cleanliness drive in Khandagiri Bari



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 24: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) continued its mass sanitation campaign with an extensive cleanliness drive in the Khandagiri Bari area Sunday morning. The drive witnessed active participation from BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, standing committee chairperson Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar, corporator Kiran Bala Majhi, local residents, and sanitation teams.

The initiative, held under the theme ‘Har Ghar Tiranga, Har Ghar Swachhata’, aims to promote community-driven cleanliness and hygiene. As part of the drive, various activities were undertaken, including wall-to-wall sweeping, spraying of mosquito repellent oil, cleaning of drainage, and repairing streetlights.

Residents from K8, K4, and K5 localities of Khandagiri Bari actively joined the campaign, appreciating the initiative and contributing voluntarily to the

efforts. Senior citizens present at the event remarked that such community-led efforts are not only impactful but also highly inspirational.

Later, BMC staff and sanitation workers extended the drive near SUM Hospital area.

Notable attendees included former corporator Dillip Majhi, additional commissioner Ratnakar Sahu, Kailash Chandra Das, and deputy commissioner N Ganesh Babu.

Speaking on the occasion, Mayor expressed satisfaction over the public response and praised the joint efforts of BMC’s sanitation division, partnering institutions, and the local community. “Public participation is a key to sustainable cleanliness, and it’s heartening to see such enthusiasm,” she said.

BMC’s mass sanitation drives continue to foster community engagement and reinforce the importance of collective responsibility for a cleaner, healthier Bhubaneswar.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	29.6°	28.4°	Light to moderate rain or
Min Temp	25.8°	23.5°	Thunder shower very likely to occur at many places
Humidity	94%	94%	
Rainfall	2.6mm	6.2mm	

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Fisheries college soon in Subarnapur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, August 24: The state government has announced that a fisheries college will be established in Subarnapur district. The announcement was made Sunday in Bhubaneswar by Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo.

Residents of Subarnapur have welcomed the decision, saying it will boost fisheries resources in the region and create employment opportunities. Along with the college, a research centre is also being planned, which officials said would generate new government positions.

Students from the district will now be able to pursue fisheries studies locally, helping produce new fisheries scientists. Fisherfolk, fish farmers, and entrepreneurs from Subarnapur and neighbouring districts

are also expected to benefit from professional guidance and training. Officials said the move will bring both direct and indirect employment to locals.

The district had no major central or state government institution until now. Locals expressed happiness over the BJP government's announcement, recalling that Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah had promised the establishment of a fisheries college during his election rally in Subarnapur.

After the BJP came to power in Odisha, people's hopes for the institution grew. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi visited Subarnapur June 7 for the first time, when intellectuals and conscious citizens submitted a memorandum urging the establishment of the college. Majhi had assured them at the time that the demand would be fulfilled.

Mangroves, casuarinas to be planted along 575-km coast

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 24: Odisha's 575-km coastline is highly vulnerable to various natural calamities like floods and cyclones. It has witnessed repeated devastation over the past seven years from major cyclones, including Titli in 2018, Fani in 2019, Amphan in 2020, Yaas and Jawad in 2021, and Dana in 2024. These cyclones have caused widespread damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and ecosystems, while traditional defences such as embankments and sea dykes have suffered severe damage.

With conventional measures proving inadequate, the state Water Resources department has drawn up a new plan to restore ecological balance and reduce cyclone impact through large scale plantation drives. At an emergency meeting held December 20, 2024, the department had decided to plant tropical mangrove and casuarina saplings along the vulnerable coastline of the state.

In this backdrop, Subrat Kumar Nayak, Additional Secretary, state Water Resources department has instructed senior scientists of the state Forest, Environment, and Climate Change department to take necessary steps, August 6, 2025.

According to the department, mangrove forests act as natural shields against high winds and tidal surges, absorbing storm energy and reducing wave height. They also help control coastal erosion, recharge groundwater, enhance biodiversity,



and provide livelihood opportunities such as fishing, honey collection, and animal husbandry. Moreover, plantations support the conservation of wetlands like Bhitarkanika National Park and Chilika, absorb excess rainfall, and mitigate flood peaks.

The initiative is also expected to curb saltwater intrusion and storm surges as well as water conservation and recharge of groundwater. Officials noted that adequate financial resources will be required and the Revenue department will survey suitable land for the plantation drives.

Funds for such plantation drives can be sourced from the State Disaster Mitigation Fund, officials said.

In this regard, the managing director of the Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) was asked to provide feedback on planting mangrove saplings along the Odisha coast, stretching from the West Bengal border in the north to the Andhra Pradesh border in the



DESPERATE MEASURES: Two persons from flood-hit Sungamuhan village wade through knee-deep water to buy essentials from Baliapal market in Balasore district Sunday

OP PHOTO

Man performs delivery sans medical degree; held for killing 2

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 24: The proprietor of a nursing home in Ganjam district was arrested Sunday for allegedly conducting a delivery without holding any medical qualification, which resulted in the death of both the mother and her newborn, police said.

According to police, Mangulu Charan Pradhan (35) of Dengausta in the district, along with two ANMs, conducted the botched up delivery of the woman in the nursing home May 11 in the absence of any registered medical practitioner.

Digapahandi police station Inspector In-Charge DSP Pras-



ant Kumar Patra said Pradhan was arrested from his village

following a complaint by the deceased's husband Babu Nayak of Korakhandi.

Both the ANMs, Madhusmita Pattanayak of Berhampur and Pramodini Gamango of Gajapati district, were arrested May 19 and August 10, respectively, for their alleged involvement in the incident, police said.

Police said the nursing home had misled the family, assuring them it had all necessary facilities for a safe delivery.

Based on this assurance, Roji Nayak of Singpur village, who was in labour, was admitted May 11.

After four hours of labour, the delivery was conducted by the accused without any qual-

ified doctor present. The newborn was declared dead shortly after birth, and Roji herself died en route to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, a police officer said.

Following a complaint by her husband, police registered a case (174/25). Roji's father later lodged another complaint, alleging Pradhan and his aides threatened him to withdraw the case. A second case was then filed.

Sahara Nursing Home was sealed on the orders of the Ganjam district collector June 8. Authorities also disclosed that in 2013, another woman had died there under similar circumstances.

Woman beheaded in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, August 24: A woman was brutally beheaded by a miscreant Saturday night at Deogaon area under Tiring police limits in Mayurbhanj district. The victim was identified as Suhagi Goipai, 35, wife of Mothai Goipai in the village. Police said the assailant attacked the victim with a sharp-edged weapon while she was cooking and severed her head before absconding.

On being informed, police and a forensic team reached the spot, collected blood samples



and launched an investigation.

According to sources, Suhagi's husband, Mothai Goipai, had gone to a nearby village Saturday afternoon to watch a football match. Taking advantage of her being home alone, the accused committed the crime. When Mothai returned at night,

Minor girl jumps into Mahanadi; rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 24: A teenage girl was rescued Sunday after she jumped into the Mahanadi River from the Chaunrpur bridge in Sambalpur, police said Sunday.

The spot is locally known as a suicide-prone zone. Witnesses said the Class IX student of a local girls' high school rode her bicycle to the bridge around 6am. She left her schoolbag and cycle near the railing, and jumped into the river.

Alert morning walkers and passersby immediately informed police. Fire services and Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) personnel launched a search operation and rescued her within two hours.

The girl, who lives in Bheemabhoi Nagar with her family, reportedly took the step after being unable to bear scolding from her father over her studies, according to preliminary police investigation.

The rescue team spotted a teenager clinging to a rock near the Gobindatola bridge, about a kilometre from the Chaunrpur bridge, during the search operation and safely pulled her out before handing her over to police.

She was first admitted to the district headquarters hospital and later shifted to VIMSAR in Burla. Family members rushed to Burla after receiving the news.



YouTuber swept away at Duduma waterfalls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, August 24: A tragic mishap at the Duduma waterfalls in Koraput has left locals and tourists shocked as a young YouTuber went missing after he was swept away by the gushing waters.

The incident occurred Saturday around 4pm when two vloggers Sagar Kundu of Berhampur and Abhijit Behera of Cuttack were shooting drone footage of the waterfall. According to eyewitnesses, the sudden opening of gate number 7 of the Machhkund dam caused the water level in the stream to rise unexpectedly. The surge created strong currents that swept through the area, forcing tourists to scramble for safety.

While Abhijit managed to escape, Sagar was caught in the torrent. Eyewitnesses reported that he was pulled into the powerful current and dragged nearly 550 feet down the falls.

Following the incident, police, fire service and ODRAF personnel, and local rescue teams rushed to the spot and launched an extensive operation. The strong currents and the deep gorge, however, made the task extremely challenging.



Speaking about the incident, Abhijit Behera, who narrowly escaped the tragedy, expressed his anguish and blamed the lack of precautionary measures.

"We were completely unaware that the dam gates would be opened. There was no warning system, no signboards, nothing to alert tourists. If there had been even a single announcement or signal, this tragedy could have been avoided," he said, urging the authorities to implement strict safety protocols at Duduma waterfalls.

Authorities are now facing questions over the lack of precautionary arrangements even as the search continues for the missing YouTuber. Despite passage of more than 24 hours, nothing except a camera bag belonging to the YouTuber has been recovered, sources said.

4 more held in Berhampur diamond heist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 24: Police have arrested four more suspects in the shooting and robbery of jeweller S Balakrishna Achari alias Runa in Shastri Nagar, bringing the total number of arrests to eight.

The newly arrested suspects are Mustakim Khan, 24; Jalaluddin Khan, 28; Sheikh Arfan, 26;

and Akhil Ran Mohanty, 39. Police said they had fled the state after the crime but were captured in raids outside Odisha. A Mauser pistol used in the attack, four live rounds, a car and three mobile phones were seized.

Earlier, police had arrested four others, including alleged mastermind Arun Kumar Upadhyay alias Malay, 50, of Vetnai Pandrasahi near Aska,

along with Saroj Kumar Mohanty, 59, Sheikh Raju, 23, and Sahil Khan, 21, of Jadupur in Bhubaneswar. Achari, a diamond trader, was targeted after learning of a 9.96-carat diamond owned by Visakhapatnam businessman Prem Kumar. Police said Malay and his associates plotted to rob the diamond by luring Kumar and Achari into a fake deal.

Pvt hostel owner held for sexual harassment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, August 24: The owner of Monalisha Academy, a day-cum-residential coaching centre, at Udala in Mayurbhanj district has been arrested on charges of sexually harassing the female boarders.

The arrest came two days after several students of the private hostel lodged a written complaint with the police, accusing the owner of repeatedly subjecting them to inappropriate physical contact.

Sources said, some students had informed their families about the harassment by owner Bishikeshan Gochhayat at Monalisha Academy located in Ward No. 3 under Udala police limits.

Following this, the family members enquired into the allegations from their wards at the private hostel and sought to meet Gochhayat. However, he had already absconded. The victims' families then approached Udala police and filed a written complaint against him.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case (348/25) and launched an investigation. During the probe, officers attempted to apprehend Gochhayat on several occasions, but he managed to evade arrest. The investigation also revealed that the accused had a prior criminal record. In 2015, he had been arrested in another sexual harassment case (19/15) registered at Badasahi police station.

Tribal woman delivers on roadside as ambulance fails to reach village



POST NEWS NETWORK

Lanjigarh, August 24: In yet another case highlighting poor road connectivity in remote tribal areas, a woman gave birth on the roadside in Kalahandi district Saturday after an ambulance could not reach her village.

Officials said Janani Majhi of Podapadar village in Bijepur panchayat went into labour Saturday evening. Her family called an ambulance, which arrived promptly but was forced to stop about a kilometre away from Bijepur Bazar Pada, as there is no motorable road to the village.

Around 7pm, while being carried by relatives and local women along a narrow trail, Janani delivered a baby boy near a stream after walking about 500 metres. She and the newborn were later taken to the waiting ambulance and shifted to Kalyansinghpur hospital in neighbouring Ray-

agada district.

The incident occurred barely six weeks after a similar case in Bhawanipatna block, where villagers had to carry a woman on a cot for 4 km to reach an ambulance. On August 19, another woman from Melbahali Bondel village in the same panchayat was also forced to walk a kilometre to reach an ambulance due to the absence of a road.

Residents said Podapadar village has 12 tribal families who have lived there for decades without proper roads, electricity, or schools. "For serious patients and pregnant women, we have to carry them on cots to the main road. Even government housing schemes cannot be implemented here because there is no road," a villager said.

Locals claimed over 60 villages in Lanjigarh block are still not connected with proper road and urged the district administration to act immediately.

One mighty deed can change the course of things; a lonely thought becomes omnipotent

SRI AUROBINDO



Laws For Vindictiveness

Three new Bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister Amit Shah shortly before Parliament adjourned last week. These bills propose a legal mechanism for the automatic removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and other ministers if they are jailed for 30 days on charges that carry a minimum sentence of five years. The three Bills -- 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 -- propose that the President would have the authority to remove the Prime Minister, while the Governor or Lieutenant Governor of the respective state or Union territory would be responsible for removing Chief Ministers and state cabinet ministers. Everyone knows who appoints the President and the Governors, so the use of the words ‘Prime Minister’ is intended to only misguide the gullible and those incapable of understanding the mal-intention behind these proposed laws.

The Bills have been sent by the House to a Joint Committee of Parliament comprising 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha for scrutiny.

Justifying the Bills, the government claims that they are important for promoting integrity and probity in public offices. However, the Bills have drawn strong criticism from the Opposition as several MPs tore copies of the drafts and marched close to Shah’s seat shouting slogans as the latter tabled them in the House. A number of Opposition MPs said that the Bills went against constitutional principles, challenged federalism, flipped the concept of ‘innocent until proven guilty’ upside down, could be misused for political gain, and posed a risk of turning the country into a police state. No other party than the Congress is better equipped to understand this aspect. Laws like Prevention of Terrorism Act 2002 was given life by the earlier BJP government to be replaced by the older Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (1967) or UAPA which was amended and strengthened by the Congress in 2004. Now the present BJP government at the Centre is merrily using UAPA against those same Congress and other non BJP governments in different states. The Opposition’s concerns are not unfounded if the developments over the past decade are any indication. Central investigative agencies are increasingly being utilised to target exclusively Opposition politicians. Several sitting Chief Ministers (CMs) and ministers in the states have faced extended periods of incarceration. Later most were released without any conviction. Glaring examples being Arvind Kejriwal of Delhi and Hemant Soren of Jharkhand. They both were arrested when they were CMs. Both today are free men as they have not been convicted of a single allegation or charge framed against them. In fact, Hemant Soren is back as the CM of Jharkhand after he and his party won the recent election to the state legislature. This amply proves that in a democracy it is the people’s will that reigns supreme. Leaders may be punished in the short term by vengeful adversaries in power, but in the absence of conviction by Courts, they may return to power if they enjoy people’s support. This was also the case with former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister late J Jayalalithaa. Though she was convicted in a disproportionate assets case by a lower court and sentenced to four years in prison, the Karnataka High Court subsequently acquitted her. This acquittal allowed her to resume her position as Chief Minister. She had been singled out by the BJP to teach her and others a lesson for opposing the party at the Centre. Currently also, many DMK ministers of the Tamil Nadu government are being harassed and intimidated by Central agencies which are working simply to wreak political vendetta. Interestingly in Orissa however, the invaluable contribution by and internal understanding along with bonhomie of the BJD has managed to keep the misdeeds of the former government out of public eye since the Central agencies have been instructed to stay away.



It is also pertinent to note that with an abysmally low rate of conviction, such laws can only be intended to be misused by the party in power. As a matter of fact, between 2015 and 2025, the ED has registered 193 cases against Opposition politicians, but only two of them ended up being convicted. There are growing concerns that these Bills’ provisions could be misused to selectively target Opposition leaders, potentially destabilising elected state governments. Opposition parties such as the Congress, the Samajwadi Party, and the Aam Aadmi Party have long alleged that Central agencies like the CBI, IT and the ED unfairly focus their investigations only on Opposition politicians. Critics also point out that the Bills allow for the removal of ministers based solely on their arrest, without the need for a conviction. This departs from existing laws, which already mandate the disqualification of lawmakers only after they are convicted of certain offenses.

The Centre framed the Bills as a step toward upholding integrity, citing the inclusion of the Prime Minister within its scope. However, critics argue that this is just to camouflage the true purpose. The real intent is more strategic than principled. There exists no police or investigative agency or force in India which has the legal authority to arrest a sitting Prime Minister, not withstanding what the charges are. Therefore, the proposed legislations appear to function as a political weapon rendering elected CMs susceptible to pressure from Central agencies and partisan governors. If enacted, these laws could mark a significant erosion of India’s federal structure. They would empower unelected Governors to remove CMs based on mere allegations and without the need for a court conviction. As a result, the political party in power at the Centre will use the Governors to operate more like Viceroys, effectively turning state governments into subordinate branches of the Central executive.

In Indian jurisprudence, the principle of ‘innocent until proven guilty’ remains a cornerstone of justice. The proposed Bills pose a serious threat to this principle. Also, democracy is an ever changing form of government where people decide who should rule when. Leaders and parties that are in power today may be relegated to the Opposition tomorrow, and this could not only leave them at the receiving end of these very same stringent laws they themselves have created but such malafide laws will start unhealthy oppression or vindictive seeking by different political parties at different times. The nation and the voters will be the ultimate losers.

WISDOM CORNER

Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious

STEPHEN HAWKING

If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn’t part of ourselves doesn’t disturb us

HERMANN HESSE

All fixed set patterns are incapable of adaptability or pliability. The truth is outside of all fixed patterns

BRUCE LEE



Manal A. Jamal

AS OF MARCH 2025, 147 OF 193 UN MEMBER STATES HAD ALREADY RECOGNISED A PALESTINIAN STATE

In response to Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza and its escalating human-rights violations in the West Bank, the international community has revived the push for Palestinian statehood. At the end of July, France and Saudi Arabia co-chaired a high-level meeting in New York, attended by representatives from more than 100 countries, to generate momentum toward this goal. Since then, Canada, Australia, and several Arab countries have joined the calls for recognition, while the United Kingdom has said it intends to do so if Israel does not agree to a ceasefire.

Although widely welcomed as a significant diplomatic initiative, advancing the idea of Palestinian statehood at a time when nearly 2.2 million people face a systematic starvation campaign orchestrated by Israel is nothing more than political theatre. The version of a “Palestinian state” currently being promoted by the international community will neither end the genocide in Gaza nor deliver a genuine sovereign state.

The revival of Palestinian statehood at this particular moment serves only one purpose: to grant Israel legitimacy and diplomatic cover for its atrocities in Gaza and ongoing assaults in the West Bank. As of March 2025, 147 of 193 UN member states had already recognised a Palestinian state. Yet an international community unwilling – or unable – to end the deliberate starvation of Gaza will never be able to force Israel to make the types of concessions required for a truly sovereign Palestinian state.

In reality, the moment for Palestinian statehood has already passed. For decades, Israel has worked systematically to render this prospect nearly impossible. Territorially, institutionally, financial-



The revival of Palestinian statehood at this particular moment serves only one purpose: to grant Israel legitimacy and diplomatic cover for its atrocities in Gaza and ongoing assaults in the West Bank

ly, and legally, any such entity would bear little resemblance to a sovereign nation-state.

For starters, the territory under discussion is fragmented, broken into disconnected enclaves, and would at most comprise 40% of the West Bank – likely excluding Gaza altogether. Will the international community compel Israel to relinquish control of Area C, the 60% of the West Bank that remains under full Israeli military and administrative authority? Will it pressure Israel to yield control of the Gaza Strip?

Since 1967, every Israeli government has expanded settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and systematically encouraged Jewish citizens to move to the West Bank by offering financial benefits and infrastructure development. Each settlement hosts a civilian security unit funded and armed by Israel’s Ministry of Defense and effectively backed by the Israeli military. Will the international community pressure Israel to dismantle these settlements, or to establish a single legal system that subjects Palestinians – both Christian and Muslim – and Jewish Israelis

to the same laws?

Under the 1995 Oslo II interim agreement, Israel retains full control over all water resources in the occupied territories. This arrangement provides Palestinians with access to only 20% of the water from the West Bank’s mountain aquifer, a resource shared by Israelis and Palestinians. Will the international community force Israel to establish a fairer distribution of resources between Palestinian communities and Jewish-Israeli settlements in the West Bank?

At present, Israel controls virtually all of the occupied territories’ external borders. Every Palestinian – including Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas – must obtain Israeli permission to enter or leave, and often even to travel within the territories themselves. Will the international community make Israel relinquish control over borders and crossings?

The PA, established in 1994 to administer Palestinian affairs in the West Bank and Gaza, has functioned less as a government than as a subcontractor for Israel’s military occupation. Israel even reserves the power to approve

its election results. Will the international community demand that Israel and its allies allow genuinely free and fair elections – and accept the results?

Under the 1994 Paris Protocol, Israel controls the transfer of value-added tax revenues to the PA, which constitute a major source of its income. Will the international community force Israel to allow a Palestinian government to manage its own revenues?

These questions barely begin to address the numerous territorial and administrative obstacles standing in the way of any future Palestinian state. Importantly, they do not even touch on the historic injustices to which the Palestinians have been subjected, including the rights long denied to millions of refugees.

Any talk of Palestinian statehood that does not address these issues serves to distract from Israel’s ongoing atrocities. History shows that no genocide has ever been stopped by appealing to the perpetrators’ reason. Only measures such as sanctions and an arms embargo will compel Israel to rein in its brute force.

Instead of engaging in meaningless political gestures, world leaders must confront three fundamental questions: Should international law apply to Israel? Should Palestinians’ human rights be upheld? And is the international community truly committed to safeguarding the postwar global order? The answers to these questions will determine not only the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also the credibility of the rules-based system itself.

The writer is Professor of Political Science at James Madison University.

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SPECTRUM TAXATION

GST 2.0: Expectations & reality

The “One nation, one tax” dream is about to get a big shake-up. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Independence Day announcement of a revamped GST 2.0, with a bold new 40% slab, has set off expectations of cheaper goods and simpler compliance.

Like its predecessor, GST 2.0 risks becoming less about rationalisation and more about revenue protection. The new GST structure proposes four slabs – 0%, 5%, 18% and 40% — scrapping the existing 12% and 28% categories for process simplification. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman professes that the new regime would mark the beginning of lower prices in consonance with the government’s move to keep inflation under check.

Merging the 28% slab into 18% will make items like air-conditioners, washing machines, dishwashers, and small cars cheaper. Tractors and some construction contracts may also move to the 5% bracket, providing relief to farmers and infrastruc-

ture. Similarly, services like insurance, already burdened with 18% GST, may find reprieve though the government is keen on zero tax on health and life insurance policies.

The government wants to be revenue-neutral, but insiders admit the move is also designed to prevent a loss of up to ₹80,000 crore annually, according to government estimates, if 12% goods shift to 5%. That shortfall could be plugged by a punitive 40% slab on so-called “sin goods” and luxury consumption — tobacco, aerated soft drinks, pan masala, luxury cars, and online gaming.

The states are not sanguine about the losses they would incur. In reality, many items could be put into the higher brackets due to the insistence of states. While prices of many items moving to the lowest slab would cheer up the consumers, it has a flipside too. Many goods that once were in 12% slab could now be more expensive. Consumers may soon feel the pinch on butter,

ghee, packaged foods, processed fruits, jams, jellies, umbrellas, and packaging boxes.

The GST Council is likely to do many cosmetic adjustments. Sources indicate that the shortfall will be partly compensated by the highest 40% – the sin good slab. At present, these attract additional cess of up to 15% over the maximum slab of 28%, almost 43%. Meanwhile, liquor remains outside the GST, yet continues to get costlier due to cascading input taxes — an irony that GST 2.0 may have little to fix.

Petrol and diesel, the country’s biggest revenue earners, are still outside GST. Both Centre and states resist their inclusion because of the heavy excise and VAT collections they fetch. Petrol remains a contentious issue since the implementation of the GST law. In the 53rd GST Council meeting press conference, Sitharaman mentioned that it is the intent of the Central government to bring petrol and diesel under GST, however it can be made

a reality only once the states agree.

Hypothetically, if petrol were taxed even at 40% under GST, prices could fall from ₹96 to about ₹78 per litre in Delhi or about ₹20 anywhere— but such consumer relief seems politically unlikely. Beyond rates, the compliance regime is still seen as complex. Business owners argue that every tax-filing businessman is treated with suspicion under GST, while procedural complexities make filing onerous. The GST 2.0 should address these structural irritants else simplification will remain a slogan.

GST 2.0 is expected to mark a fresh chapter of simplification and relief. Instead, if it risks becoming a reshuffle of burdens, where cheaper goods remain a promise and the middle class continues to pay more, it would deviate from its goal. The real question: will the GST Council choose economic growth through rationalisation, or stick to fiscal caution through high rates?

INFA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Racial violence

Sir, A series of attacks on Indians recently in Ireland has prompted significant outrage and brought attention to an increasingly hostile atmosphere for immigrants and people of colour in the “Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes” - a phrase that symbolises Ireland’s global reputation for warmth and hospitality. But, sadly just not for Indians. Hate crimes have been on the rise in Ireland in recent years, and these are far from the first instances of racist violence against immigrants. Reportedly, in March this year, a Croatian man was beaten to death in the street for not speaking English. And in November, a Nigerian architect was assaulted and robbed off his phone in broad daylight. Incidents like these undermine the social fabric by spreading fear and mistrust among communities. While Ireland broadly embraces diversity, the persistence of racial harassment indicates ongoing challenges. The Irish government must act decisively against racially motivated violence and ensure the safety and dignity of all its residents, regardless of origin..

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Energy dependence

Sir, Ukraine’s strike on the Druzhba oil pipeline pumping station in Russia’s Bryansk region has disrupted supplies to Hungary and Slovakia, the only EU nations still dependent on Russian crude. The attack, which Kyiv calls a response to Moscow’s onslaught, sparked outrage in Budapest, where leaders warned of risks to national energy security. Hungary, receiving over half its oil via Druzhba, accused Ukraine of trying to drag it into war. This disruption highlights Europe’s fragile energy dependence despite its broader shift away from Russian fuels. For India, the episode carries dual implications. On one hand, reduced Russian exports to Europe could expand India’s access to discounted oil, strengthening its energy security. On the other, heightened geopolitical friction may complicate India’s balancing act between Moscow, Washington, and Brussels. With energy prices volatile, India must diversify import sources while leveraging its neutrality to safeguard long-term economic interests.

RS Narula, PATIALA

GANESHOTSAV AS 'STATE FESTIVAL'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 24: The Maharashtra government has accorded a 'state festival' status to 'Ganeshotsav', but a coordination committee of the public Ganesh mandals says it would have been better if their suggestions had also been considered.

The 10-day Ganesh festival will begin from August 27.

The Brihanmumbai Sarva-janik Samanvay Samiti, which has been overseeing the festival in the metropolis for the last 44 years in coordination with the civic body, police and traffic

Govt should've taken it on board: Committee

department, has 12,000 public mandals registered with it.

Talking to PTI, the samiti president, Naresh Dahibavkar, claimed the ₹11 crore allocation to the state festival was not enough.

Dahibavkar felt the mandals, which are more than 25 years' old, should have been taken on board.

The mandals work round-the-clock and not just for the Ganesh festival. They run libraries and social and financial aid is provided to the needy, he said. Nearly 1,800 'bhajani mandals' (devotional music troupes)

will be given an assistance of ₹25,000, as per the government.

'A mandal has to spend at least ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore (on organising the festival) and gets income from donations and advertisements. The revenue depends on the prevailing circumstances...suppose if it rains, the inflow of devotees may be less all ten days,' he pointed out."

The government also gets revenue in the form of GST and other taxes during the festival, he added.

Meanwhile, the government has announced multiple activities, including various

programmes, celebrations and competitions, during the festival.

As part of these initiatives, a special portal -- ganeshotsav.pldmka.co.in -- has been created to ensure people can witness the grandeur of both household and public festivities.

An anthem, "Aala re aala... Rajya Mahotsav aala", along with the portal was launched recently.

Maharashtra Rajya Sarva-janik Ganeshotsav Mandal competition has been extended to the taluka level, with the prize money significantly

increased to encourage wider participation.

The first prize at the state level will now be ₹7.5 lakh, at the district level ₹50,000, and at the taluka level ₹25,000 along with a certificate. To make the process seamless, entries have been opened through an online application system.

Maharashtra Culture Minister Ashish Shelar on Friday said the state government will provide a capital grant of ₹25,000 each to 1,800 'bhajani mandals' to purchase instruments for the upcoming Ganesh festival.

Call to make Kerala global hub for aviation industry



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The two-day summit, attended by policymakers and industry leaders, also suggested turning Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) into a transit hub

Kochi, August 24: The Kerala Aviation Summit 2025 concluded Sunday with a call for transforming the state into a global aviation hub by integrating its tourism and aviation sectors for sustainable growth.

The two-day summit, attended by policymakers and industry leaders, also suggested turning Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) into a transit hub, a CIAL statement said.

The event was organised with an aim to chart a sustainable growth path to elevate Kerala as a top-tier global destination, it said.

"The central theme of the summit was the sustainable growth achieved by integrating aviation, tourism, and logistics. Experts noted that these sectors, by working together, can boost economic growth, enhance the traveller experience, and attract more international tourists."

"The need to implement innovative ideas was also emphasised. Discussions covered improving airport infrastructure, increasing international flight connectivity, promoting regional air travel, and implementing sustainable practices," the statement said.

The slogan of the summit was 'Giving Wings to Kerala' and panel discussions on the final day focused on the topics of 'Tourism Potential and the Aviation Sector' and 'Air Cargo Logistics, Innovation, Infrastructure, and Future Potential'.

During one such discussion, experts emphasised the need to fully leverage CIAL's immense potential to become a destination hub, the statement said.

Activist Jarange gives 'Chalo Mumbai' call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, August 24: Activist Manoj Jarange Sunday urged the members of the Maratha community across Maharashtra to join his 'Chalo Mumbai' march August 27, calling it their "last" fight to seek reservation.

Addressing a rally at Manjar-sumba in Beed district, he said the turnout should unsettle the government. "If not, it will feel the real pressure when we reach Mumbai. The fight will now shift to Mumbai," he said.

Jarange has called for a protest at Azad Maidan in the country's financial capital from August 29, demanding reservation for the Maratha community in education and government jobs under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.

The activist said he would set out from his native place Antarwali Sarati in Jalna district August 27.

"We will go to Mumbai and hold our agitation peacefully. This is our last fight, and we will not return without the Maratha quota," he said.

Jarange also accused Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of provoking the Maratha community by creating "minor" hurdles. "Fadnavis should not use the police to trouble us. I'm coming to Mumbai and we will meet there," he said.

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's "Environment Status Report 2024-25", Mumbai's vehicle population crossed the 50-lakh mark in 2024-25, a gradual rise from 45,37,211 in 2023 and 47,59,976 in 2024 to 50,54,907 as of March 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 24: Private vehicles continue to dominate the roads of Mumbai, with two-wheelers and cars accounting for nearly 88 per cent of the city's 50 lakh-plus vehicle population, while public transport buses make up less than a per cent, as per a report.

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's "Environment Status Report 2024-25", Mumbai's vehicle population crossed the 50-lakh mark in 2024-25, a gradual rise from 45,37,211 in 2023 and 47,59,976 in 2024 to 50,54,907 as of March 2025.

The report, released earlier



this week, stated that of these, two-wheelers (59.34 per cent) and cars, jeeps, and station wagons (28.72 per cent) together make up nearly 88 per cent of the city's vehicles.

The remaining vehicles included 5.02 per cent autorickshaws, 3.27 per cent taxis, 0.42 per cent goods vehicles, 0.02 per cent tractors/trailers, and 2.72 per

cent vehicles categorised as other.

At least 2.94 lakh new vehicles were registered in Mumbai between April 2024 and March 2025, reflecting a significant rise of 6.2 per cent in registration.

Of the newly registered vehicles, 60.87 per cent were two-wheelers, followed by cars, jeeps, and station wag-

ons at 23.94 per cent, taxis and cabs made up 6.26 per cent, autorickshaws 3.06 per cent, and goods vehicles 4.43 per cent.

Buses accounted for 0.73 per cent of the total, with tractors/trailers and other vehicles contributing just 0.09 per cent and 0.6 per cent, respectively.

As per the report, the highest number of 39.83 lakh (78.79 per cent) vehicles run on petrol, followed by 5.63 lakh (11.15 per cent) on diesel and 4.36 lakh on CNG.

Mumbai has just 48,854 electric vehicles, followed by 11,418 that run on LPG and 10,832 on other fuels.

The report also pointed out that the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking was operating a total of 2,731 buses till the end of March. These buses include 612 owned by the BEST and 2,119 operating under the wet-lease model.

Notably, 91 per cent of the total fleet of BEST consists of environment-friendly CNG and electric buses.

"By the end of 2027, the entire BEST fleet will comprise electric buses. This will help to reduce the pollution of Mumbai city as 3,18,296 tonnes of CO2 per year will be reduced by these buses," the report stated.



People carry an idol of Lord Ganesh ahead of the 'Ganesh Chaturthi' festival in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

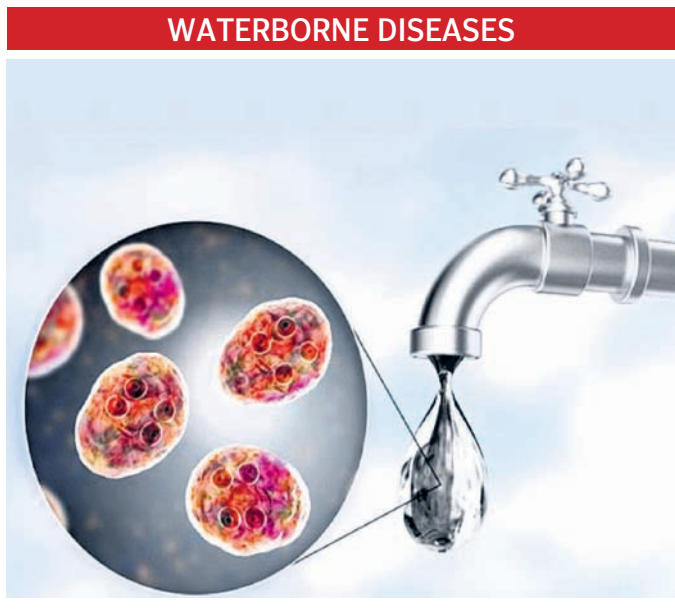
HKM launches state-wide campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, August 24: In the wake of instances of deadly water-borne diseases like amoebic encephalitis, caused by free living amoeba in freshwater sources, the Haritha Keralam Mission (HKM) has organised a state-wide campaign to prevent such illnesses.

The Haritha Keralam Mission, a state-run initiative to ensure cleanliness, water abundance and security and safe food production, has launched the campaign - 'Water is Life' - to ensure the availability of safe drinking water and to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases, a government release said Saturday.

The new initiative was organised in the wake of a meeting of various departments and missions convened recently by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan following instances of water-borne diseases in the state, the release said.



A nine-year-old girl died earlier this month due to amoebic encephalitis, a rare brain infection, in Kozhikode district of the state.

It was probably the fourth case of the rare brain infection reported from the district

this year, according to health officials.

The new campaign to prevent such diseases will begin on August 30-31 with chlorination of wells and will conclude by November 1.

Thereafter, awareness pro-

grammes will also be organised through schools under the leadership of the General Education Department from September 8 to 30, it said.

Besides that, extensive water testing will be conducted using the water quality testing system set up by the Haritha Keralam Mission in collaboration with the chemistry labs in higher secondary schools and remedial activities will be carried out based on the results, it said.

From September 20 to November 1, activities -- like cleaning all ponds and water sources used by the people and blocking the channels through which waste enters them -- will be carried out with public co-operation, the release said.

The campaign will be carried out in collaboration with local self-government institutions and various departments, it added.

Bleaching powder and chlorine tablets required for chlorination will be made available through local self-government bodies, it said.

KERALA LAUNCHES ICT TEXTBOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, August 24: Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), a wing under the Department of General Education, Sunday launched its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) textbooks for schools in the state.

The revised ICT textbooks, integrating Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC), provide a unique learning opportunity by aligning with the AVGC-XR (Extended Reality) policy introduced by the state government last year, an official statement said. Earlier, KITE had introduced a curriculum incorporating Artificial Intelligence,

Robotics, and Fact-Checking. According to KITE officials, the new curriculum introduces students to digital arts and music from a young age.

"In the Class III chapter titled 'Songbox', children learn to identify basic musical notes through a trial-and-error method. By Class IV, through chapters like 'Play the Piano' and 'Utsav Mela', students begin composing their own songs..."

"The journey culminates in Class VIII, where students explore the potential of digital music by composing background scores for their own animation films using the Digital Audio Workstation software LMMS (Linux Multimedia System)," the statement said.

Govt launches pilot project to aid Kuttanad fish farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, August 24: Union Fisheries Minister George Kurian Saturday announced a pilot project in the Kuttanad region aimed at improving the livelihoods of local fish farmers.

The programme, discussed at a consultative meeting at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), will introduce both modern and traditional aquaculture practices to help revive the local economy, according to an official release.

Plans include integrated and cage fish farming, the eco-friendly "one fish, one paddy" method, and biofloc fish farming.

Fish Farmers Producers' Organisations (FFPOs) will also be set up to give local com-



munities greater control and improve operational efficiency, the release said.

"Enhancing the livelihoods of the region's farmers is the primary goal of this initiative," Kurian was quoted as saying.

Under the pilot project, ex-

tensive training programmes will be conducted to equip farmers with skills in aquaculture and related practices.

The initiative will also encourage start-ups in the sector, focusing on post-harvest activities such as processing, clean-

Plans include integrated and cage fish farming, the eco-friendly "one fish, one paddy" method, and biofloc fish farming

Fish Farmers Producers' Organisations (FFPOs) will also be set up to give local communities greater control and improve operational efficiency

ing, packing, and fish trade, thereby creating employment opportunities and adding value to the produce, it added.

Given the diverse aquatic environments of Kuttanad, the project will be divided into separate freshwater and brackish water farming practices, tailored to the distinct conditions of Upper and Lower Kuttanad.

The expertise of premier re-

search institutions, including ICAR institutes, central agencies, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), will be tapped to provide technical and scientific support.

Kurian noted that a detailed project report would be prepared immediately to ensure swift and effective implementation of the initiative, which is expected to bring significant and sustainable economic benefits to the region.


Former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Fisheries Development Commissioner Dr Mohammed Koya, CMFRI Director Dr Grinson George, CMFRI Principal Scientist Dr Imelda Joseph, and representatives from various ICAR fisheries institutes, central government agencies, and KVKs attended the meeting.

It's unfortunate (but not surprising) to see BJP-affiliated handles obsess over




D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DY CM

We told the Opposition that Manisha was our daughter, there should be no politics over her death. This is unfortunate. We have said we are ready for a discussion and the government will give a reply to every point raised... But the opposition is repeatedly raking up the matter, which is unfortunate



NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

Due to inclement weather, I could not go to the cloudburst affected areas of Kishtwar today. Reviewed the situation at Chisoti from Jammu, via video conferencing facility



RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Army Chief leaves for Algeria

New Delhi: In his first foreign trip following Operation Sindoor, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi Sunday left for Algeria on a four-day visit to explore ways to expand bilateral defence and security ties. The visit comes nearly 10 months after India inked a pact on defence cooperation with the North African nation. Gen Dwivedi will hold talks with top defence and military brass of Algeria focusing on ways to enhance bilateral defence cooperation, especially between the two land forces, officials said.

3 peddlers held, drugs worth ₹7 crore seized

Guwahati: Three suspected drug peddlers have been arrested and contraband items, including morphine and Yaba tablets worth over ₹7 crore, have been seized from them in separate operations across Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The operations, two in Sribhumi district and one in Karbi Anglong, were carried out Saturday, he said.

Rains force closure of 484 roads in HP

Shimla: A total of 484 roads, including two national highways, were closed for vehicular traffic in Himachal Pradesh as moderate to heavy rains continued to lash parts of the state, officials said Sunday. Of the roads that were closed, 245 were in Mandi district and 102 in adjoining Kullu. National Highway 154A (Chamba-Pathankot) and NH 305 (the Aut-Sainj road) are also closed, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) here said.

Railway employee kills self while on video call

Kota (Rajasthan): A 27-year-old Indian Railway employee allegedly took his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan while on a video call, the police said Sunday.

SSB exams cancelled

Srinagar: Allegations of a paper leak ahead of a recruitment test emerged in Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, with political parties criticising the ruling National Conference (NC) for “wrecking the future” of the youth, prompting the cancellation of the examination. The Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) announced the cancellation of the written test and said they would be held afresh.



For many years, our best minds were solving problems of other countries. It is a good thing. Time has now come when we must use our intelligence to help our people

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

NOIDA DOWRY MURDER

Husband shot in leg while trying to flee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, August 24: As outrage mounted over the alleged killing of 26-year-old woman for dowry in Greater Noida, police Sunday arrested her mother-in-law while her husband was shot in leg as he attempted to flee custody.

The family of the victim, Nikki, who was allegedly set ablaze by her husband and in-laws, claimed that she had been tortured since her marriage in 2016 by them for a dowry demand of ₹36 lakh, even after they had fulfilled their demand for Scorpio vehicle and a motorcycle.

Disturbing videos of the incident and testimonies of Nikki's son and sister surfaced on social media on how the accused husband, Vipin Bhati and another woman assaulted the victim and dragged her by the hair. Another clip showed Nikki, severely burnt, walking down a staircase before collapsing. She had succumbed to burns while being taken to a hospital Thursday night.

Vipin Bhati, who was arrested Saturday, was being escorted by the police to recover evidence around 1.30 pm when he tried to flee, according to the Gautam Buddh Nagar Police PRO.

The accused husband's mother, identified as Daya (55) and wife of Satyaveer, has also been arrested. She had been absconding since the incident and has been named in the FIR filed by the victim's



The family of the victim, Nikki, who was allegedly set ablaze by her husband and in-laws, claimed that she had been tortured since her marriage by them for a dowry demand of ₹36 lakh, even after they had fulfilled their demand for Scorpio vehicle and a motorcycle

family, the PRO said.

The FIR was lodged Friday under BNS sections 103(1) (murder), 115 (2) (voluntarily causing hurt) and 61 (2) (attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life or others) at Kasna Police Station in Greater Noida. The case was registered August 22, the police said.

CISF to have 1st ever all-women commando unit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has decided to create an all-women commando team for conducting specialised counter-terrorist operations, officials said Sunday.

A group of 100 female personnel deployed across the country as part of the aviation security group (ASG) guarding civilian airports are the first to be trained for the task.

The about 1.70 lakh-strength CISF is primarily tasked to guard 69 civil airports, the Delhi Metro and a number of other vital installations in the government and private domain. “The training for the first batch of the women personnel in commando skills has been started at a training centre located in Barwaha, Madhya Pradesh.”

“This eight-week advanced commando course will prepare women personnel for quick reaction team (QRT) and special task force (STF) duties at high-security establishments and plants,” a CISF official said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, August 24: Indian envoy Vinay Mohan Kwatra discussed “fair, balanced and mutually beneficial trade ties” with US lawmakers amid ongoing tariff tensions between New Delhi and Washington.

The Indian Ambassador has met four US lawmakers in the last 24 hours and 23 since August 9, as revealed by his social media posts.

Kwatra met Congressman Rep Joe Courtney, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, Saturday (local time) and thanked him for supporting the bilateral partnership between the two countries.

“Highlighted our perspectives on trade and economic cooperation, including the need for fair, balanced and mutually beneficial trade ties,” Kwatra posted on social media.

He also had a “productive discussion” with Congressman Gabe Amo, Vice Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Democrats.



◀ The series of meetings comes amid strain in India-US relations after US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs totalling 50 per cent on India

◀ This includes 25 per cent for New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil that will come into effect from August 27

He appreciated Amo's support for the bilateral ties and “shared perspectives on the importance of fair, balanced and mutually beneficial trade engagements,” said his social media post.

He also had a similar conversation with Congressman Jared Moskowitz, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Intelligence (HFAC).

Shubhanshu Shukla's journey comes full circle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: IAF's Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla grew as a “shy and reserved” person, hearing stories of the 1984 spaceflight of Rakesh Sharma in his childhood days.

On Sunday, Shukla, India's second astronaut to travel to space after Sharma, was signing autographs for school students and obliging fellow air warriors queuing up to get clicked with him.

Life, like his recent space sojourn in a spacecraft orbit, has indeed come full circle for Shukla.

The occasion was the felicita-

tion of Shukla and three other chosen Gaganyaan astronauts by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the Air Force Auditorium in Subroto Park here.

During the event, Shukla, who goes by the callsign ‘Shux’,

shared his journey of joining the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the experiences and challenges he faced while

being part of the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

Shukla credited the IAF for the transformation it brought in him, saying the “IAF in general, and cockpit in partic-



ular”, have been “great teachers” in his life.

Amid all the accolades and admiration lavishly showered upon him, both on and off the stage, the caring family man in

BIHAR SIR: DOCUMENTS OF OVER 98 PER CENT ELECTORS RECEIVED

The Election Commission Sunday said documents of 98.2 per cent electors have already been received with eight more days left for people to file claims and objections to the draft electoral roll of Bihar published as part of the intensive revision of voters' list



A child during the 'Guru Granth Sahib Parkash Utsav', in Amritsar, Punjab

PTI PHOTO

Man murders pregnant wife, chops body parts, throws them in river



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, August 24: A five-month pregnant woman was brutally murdered allegedly by her husband, who then chopped her body parts at their house in Medipally near here, and threw the pieces in the Musi river, police said Sunday.

The incident occurred at about 4.30 pm Saturday when the 27-year-old accused, who works as a driver with a ride hailing company, murdered his 21-year-old wife by throttling her over frequent quarrels due to family disputes.

In order to conceal the evidence, he chopped the body into pieces using a hexa blade, disposed of the head, hands, and legs by throwing them into the Musi river at Prathapsingaram, and retained the headless and legless trunk in his room, DCP (Malkajgiri Zone) P V Padmaja told reporters.

The accused then packed the body parts separately in small plastic covers and went to the river three times to throw the pieces, the DCP said.

Later, the accused called his sister informing that his wife went missing, who then raised suspicion and informed a relative, who took him to a police station. Based on his confession, a case under relevant

BNS sections on charges of murder and causing disappearance of evidence of offence was registered and the accused was taken into custody, she said.

The dismembered was found in the house and sent for post-mortem, she said, adding “We have to ascertain the deceased (is wife of the accused) and a DNA test will be conducted”.

Asked if the chopped body parts were recovered, the police official said personnel of NDRF besides swimmers of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), took up searches, but so far they did not find the body parts.

The accused and the victim, both natives of Vikarabad district, who were neighbours, were married through a love-cum-arrange marriage in January 2024 at Arya Samaj here, police said. After marriage, they moved to Hyderabad and resided in a rented house at Boduppall. They lived happily for about one month, thereafter frequent quarrels arose between them due to family disputes. In April 2024, the woman lodged a complaint with police in Vikarabad, accusing her husband of domestic violence and a case was registered.

Subsequently, village elders held conciliatory talks, and a compromise was arrived at. The deceased worked for three months at a Call Centre in Punjagutta in the city. However, due to suspicion over her movements, the accused stopped her from continuing her job.

In March 2025, she conceived. Even then, frequent quarrels continued between them, police said.

SC directs boundary demarcation of wetlands in 2 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: Noting that state wetland authorities are moving at a snail's pace, the Supreme Court has directed States to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation of wetlands within two months.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjara said the exercise carried out by the authorities reflects the sorry state of affairs and the directions issued have not yielded positive results.

“We direct these States to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation expeditiously and at any rate within an outer limit of two months from today, failing which, the secretaries of the concerned States of the Department of Environment and Ecology will have to personally remain present before this court on next date of hearing,” the bench said.

The top court made clear that inaction on the part of these State Wetland Authorities would compel it to pass coercive orders against those States which have failed to comply with the direction issued earlier.

The apex court said the Union of India shall coordinate with the State Level Wetland Authorities and expedite the issuance of notifications for which the draft notifications are already in place.

“The statistics furnished would also reflect that wetlands, which are less than 2.25 hectares, are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant rules and the affidavits of the state governments of wetland authorities shall also delve upon as to the manner and method in which steps have been taken or being taken to protect these wetlands which are less than 2.25 hectares, which according to the statistics is around 5,55,557 as mentioned in the Wetland Atlas,” the bench said while posting the matter for hearing October 7.

spaceflight programme.

The IAF officer also shared some humour-laced anecdotes from his “microgravity challenges” while in the orbit, of objects which got lost as they floated away in the spacecraft.

Shukla shared a video clip of a night view of the Earth from his spacecraft, which also gave a glimpse of parts of India, saying it is probably “one of the most beautiful sights” one could ever see.

Shukla's space odyssey as part of the commercial mission to the ISS has set the stage for achieving India's own ambitions of human spaceflight - Gaganyaan - and building the Bharat Antariksha Station soon after.

More than 100 students from three Delhi schools under the IAF attended the event.

of the day

quote

We, all Assamese and Indians, have to be united to defeat this conspiracy

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

Opposition should always be restrained. But in the name of Opposition, if the House is not allowed to function day after day or session after session, it is not good. The country has to ponder over it, the people have to ponder over it, and elected representatives have to ponder over it

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

It is clear that the Assam government of Himanta Biswa Sarma is engaged in every kind of lawless and illegal activity, particularly illegally pushing out citizens to Bangladesh and outside this country, illegally evicting people from their land, illegally demolishing their homes

PRASHANT BHUSHAN | SENIOR ADVOCATE

POST OF THE DAY

A huge leading indicator of a society becoming wealthy is them valuing their time a lot. You'll never find a society that's wealthy but isn't extremely conscious of their time. Wealthy societies treat time as finite resource. Non wealthy think there's infinite time left.

@kunalb11

SHORT TAKES

Man held for scaling Parl wall released

Bhadohi (UP): Ram Shankar Bind (20) who was arrested for attempting to scale a wall of the Parliament complex in Delhi has been released. According to his family members, Ram was handed over by the Delhi Police Sunday after questioning by central agencies. Ram from Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district attempted to scale a wall of Parliament Friday morning but was caught by security personnel and handed over to the police.

Cong MLA sent to ED custody till Aug 28

Bangalore/New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate is probing multiple "shell" companies and casinos in countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal and Georgia in a money laundering case against arrested Karnataka Congress MLA K C Veerendra 'Puppy', according to official sources. A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Bangalore Sunday sent Veerendra to ED custody till August 28 after he was arrested by the central agency Saturday.

Mamkoottathil apologises to public

Pathanamthitta (Kerala): Palakkad Congress MLA Rahul Mamkoottathil Sunday apologised to the public and party workers amid rumours that he may resign from his legislator post following allegations of "misbehaviour" by multiple women.

If the youth are skilled today, there are several employment possibilities for them. They become self-reliant, this gives them the power

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

ARMY OPENS CAFÉ AT MAYUDIA PASS

The Indian Army's Dao Division has opened the first-ever café at the scenic Mayudia Pass in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Dibang Valley district, marking a milestone in civil-military relations and community development



States in north, east face rain fury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu/Kota, August 24: Moderate to heavy rains battered parts of northern states including Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, triggering a flood-like situation in several low-lying areas and causing damage to roads, bridges and other structures.

Jammu recorded 190.4 mm rainfall in the past 24 hours ending 8.30 AM Sunday, the second-highest downpour this month in a century. The highest rainfall for August remains 228.6 mm, logged on August 5, 1926, while the previous second-highest was 189.6 mm on August 11, 2022.

Among the eastern states, heavy rain continued to lash Jharkhand, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an alert for more downpour in several districts till Tuesday morning. Major rivers, including Subernarekha, Kharkai, Barakar and Damodar, were flowing above the danger level in various parts of the state.

The IMD also warned of widespread rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms in Arunachal Pradesh till August 28.

Officials said water levels in major rivers and streams in J&K, including Basantar in Samba, Ujh and Ravi in Kathua, Chenab in Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban and Jammu and Tawi in Udhampur and Jammu, rose sharply, prompting the administration to put disaster



Jammu recorded 190.4 mm rainfall in the past 24 hours ending 8.30 AM Sunday, the second-highest downpour this month in a century

The highest rainfall for August remains 228.6 mm, logged August 5, 1926, while the previous second-highest was 189.6 mm August 11, 2022

response teams and local police on alert. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has directed all departments concerned to remain on high alert amid heavy rains.

So far, there have been no immediate reports of casualties, but the rains have led to water-logging in many residential areas and triggered landslides in Rajouri and Poonch in the Jammu region and Gurez in north Kashmir, the officials said.

All government and private schools will remain closed in the Jammu division Monday owing to the inclement weather, while the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) announced the postponement of class 10 and 11 examinations. The weather office has forecast moderate to

intense rainfall with the possibility of cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides in high altitude areas till August 27.

Authorities have issued advisories asking people to stay away from water bodies and landslide-prone areas.

In Rajasthan, Bundi, Sawaimadhopur, Tonk and Kota districts were facing a flood-like situations where rescue and relief works were underway.

Heavy to very heavy rain continued in various parts of the state in the last 24 hours, with Dausa recording the highest rainfall at 29 cm, officials said Sunday.

Low-lying areas were undated, disrupting road and rail connectivity in eastern Rajasthan, which has received

SIR institutionalised theft of votes: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Araria (Bihar), August 24: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday charged the Election Commission with having a "partnership" with the ruling BJP at the Centre, and vowed to thwart "institutionalised theft of votes" in the guise of special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar.



A week into the fortnight-long 'Voter Adhikar Yatra', Gandhi also seemed delighted at the response, claiming that people were taking part "organically, without being asked to do so", and that the slogan 'vote chor, gaddi chhod' (vote thief, vacate your seat of power) was now on the lips of "even six-year-old children".

The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha wound up the second leg of the yatra, which will now resume on Tuesday, with a press conference in Araria district, where he reached from adjoining Purnea in an impromptu

motorcycle rally.

The Congress leader deftly side-stepped a pointed question about the reluctance to declare RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, seated by his side, as the chief ministerial candidate even though the latter had recently made an open pitch for making Gandhi the Prime Minister after the next Lok Sabha polls.

"All INDIA bloc partners are working together in a spirit of mutual respect, without any tension. We will contest the polls together and the results will be good," Gandhi said. He also disclosed that a "manifesto committee" was at work for the upcoming assembly polls, which would focus on providing security to farmers who were in need of better storage facilities and relief from the burden of debt. "Votes were stolen in Maharashtra, Haryana and Karnataka, and the Election Commission was quick to demand an affidavit from me. Just a few days later, BJP leader Anurag Thakur made allegations which were of a similar nature, but no affidavit was sought from him. Also, in Bihar, where names of 65 lakh people have been deleted from the draft electoral rolls, the BJP has not made a whimper. All these point to a clandestine partnership between the BJP and the Election Commission," Gandhi alleged.



Congress workers burn an effigy during a protest against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged 'vote theft' in Kolkata, West Bengal

AAP: Won't join JPC examining Bills to remove PM, CMs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: After the TMC and the Samajwadi Party, AAP Sunday announced that it will not join the joint parliamentary committee (JPC) to look into three bills seeking removal of the prime minister and chief ministers, alleging that the purpose of the proposed legislations is to "bring down" Opposition governments.

Meanwhile, Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader in Rajya

Sabha Derek O'Brien said on Sunday that the JPC is "valueless".

"More parties calling out Modi coalition's stunt to form a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). Valueless JPC," O'Brien said on X. AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said his party has decided not to nominate any members to the JPC.

"How can the leader of the corrupt bring a bill against corruption? Trapping leaders

in fake cases and putting them in jail, bringing down governments — this is the objective of this bill," Singh said in a post in Hindi on X.

"That is why @ArvindKejriwal ji and @AamAadmiParty have decided not to join the JPC," he said.

The TMC had announced Saturday that it would not nominate any member to the JPC to look into the Constitution 130th Amendment Bill, and had called the panel a "farce".

Ex- CM Champai Soren under house arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, August 24: Former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren, a leader of the Opposition BJP, was placed under house arrest Sunday in view of a protest by tribal outfits against land acquisition for a state-run health institute in Ranchi, police said.

The protesters alleged that police lathi-charged and fired tear gas shells to disperse them from the site of the proposed project in Nagri area of the city.

Police said tear-gas shells were used to disperse the crowd in view of the prohibitory orders imposed in the area. Soren's son Babulal, along with supporters who were on their way to Ranchi, were also detained, they said.

"Champai Soren is under house arrest as a preventive measure to maintain law and order in view of the tribal outfits' protests," Deputy Superintendent of Police (City) KV Raman told PTI.

Soren, however, described his house arrest as undemocratic. Protesters on their way to the capital from districts such as Seraikela-Kharswan, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Giridih, Gumla, Simdega and Khunti districts were stopped by the police, he alleged.

Over 20 tribal groups, along with farmers and landowners, called the 'Hal Joto, Ropa Ropo' (plough field, plant saplings) demonstration at the site where



the Rs 1,074-crore RIMS-2 project will be developed.

The new hospital has been planned on 207 acre of land as an expansion of the state's apex healthcare facility, the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS).

Crossing barricades, people from different places gathered at the site with placards having photos of former CM Shibu Soren along with his message, 'Harwa toh joto na yaar... kaise bachega?' (plough the field... else how will you survive?).

Many protesters were also wearing masks of Shibu Soren, whose son Hemant is the chief minister of the state.

Despite the heavy security, some protesters could reach the site and plant saplings.

Meanwhile, the barricades put up to stop the demonstrators caused trouble for commuters.

Health Minister Irfan Ansari had said last month that RIMS-2 will have 2,600 beds for patients, and 100 undergraduate and 50 postgraduate seats for medical students.

Delhi CM attack case: 2nd accused nabbed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: The Delhi Police Sunday arrested another accused in connection the recent attack on Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, officials said.

Tahseen Syed, a friend of prime accused Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimji (41), was brought to Delhi from Gujarat's Rajkot Friday night for further questioning and was made to confront Khimji to verify facts, police said earlier.

Tahseen was taken into custody Sunday, according to the police. Khimji had allegedly sent a video of Gupta's Shalimar Bagh residence to Tahseen, while the latter had sent him Rs 2,000 and was in constant contact with him before the alleged attack on the chief minister during a "Jan Sunwai" programme at her Civil Lines camp office Wednesday.

Khimji, an autorickshaw driver, has five cases of assault and possession of liquor against between 2017 and 2024 at Rajkot's Bhaktinagar police station and multiple preventive actions were also taken against him, they said. These actions were taken in 2017, 2020 and twice in 2022 under various sections of the Gujarat Prohibition Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). Khimji was also arrested once in 2021 under section 56 of the Bombay Police Act.

J&K: Authorities probe radicalisation of youths in schools

The concerns also extend to the alleged widespread use of narcotics, a problem flagged as being particularly rampant in some private schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 24: Security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir are intensifying their surveillance on several educational institutions, particularly private schools, due to growing concerns over the alleged radicalisation of young minds, especially among female students, officials said here.

The concerns also extend to the alleged widespread use of narcotics, a problem flagged as being particularly rampant in some private schools.

Officials familiar with the developments spoke about disturbing information coming from some private schools forcing authorities to quietly warn them against the spread of radical ideologies among

youngsters.

The initiative is part of a larger effort to fight back against the transmission of extremist narratives at the ground level.

Apart from security authorities, the surge in radicalisation has even startled some ex-separatist groups as they are concerned that another religious extremism wave, forced from the other side of the Line of Control (LoC), will destabilise the valley's centuries-old "Sufi" tradition. There is a palpable concern that radicalisation is still taking place in certain institutions and "unofficial" madrasas.

The sources indicate a sudden surge in pan-Islamist thought among youths, including girls, in the valley as intelligence reports suggest



that fanatical clerics are indoctrinating them with a rigid interpretation of Islam that rejects traditional Kashmiri practices, such as visiting and paying obeisance at the shrines of Sufi saints and Rishis.

These customs are being condemned as violations of Islamic teachings, a trend that has been worrying the ex-separatists who did not wish to be named.

The abuse of social media by terrorists has aggravated the is-

sue, creating new challenges to the security of the state.

The educational system of the Valley has been irrevocably harmed, repeatedly proving incapable of presenting students with a future vision and thus resorting to a strict interpretation of Islam as a refuge, officials said.

Three decades of terrorism and geopolitical turbulence have immensely impacted the psychology of the youths in Kashmir, the weakness of which is also usually manifested when incidents of stone-pelting are analysed, they said.

Some people nurturing the pro-Pakistan sentiment are also utilising fake images to target "victimhood," depicting crimes against innocents to incite fury and revenge. Parallel but no

less worrying is the drug abuse menace that has been observed to be a serious issue in some of these schools. Security authorities believe that a comprehensive solution must be found to combat the double menace of ideological indoctrination and drug addiction in order to shield the youths and ensure the region's long-term stability.

The Srinagar district police has declared a comprehensive offensive against drug abuse and trafficking, and the last three-month campaign has led to the arrest of 97 people and the registration of 73 cases.

Following intensified police crackdowns that have made heroin more difficult to obtain, addicted youth in Srinagar are increasingly turning to medical opioids as a substitute.

international

of the day quote

Those who threaten us to have direct negotiations with the US only see appearances in my opinion ... the issue is unsolvable

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN



Migration could, in principle, play a crucial role in easing labour shortages as native populations age. But political economy pressures may increasingly limit inflows

CHRISTINE LAGARDE | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK



I hope the delegation will open the door to normalising South Korea-China relations, which have been strained in recent years

PARK BYEONG-SEUG | FORMER ASSEMBLY SPEAKER, SOUTH KOREA



SHORT TAKES

Rain havoc in Pak

Peshawar: At least 11 people, including three children, died and 47 injured Sunday as torrential rains and windstorms battered parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwest Pakistan, officials said. The NDMA warning comes as the country reels from earlier monsoon spells from June 26 to August 20, that claimed over 788 lives and 1,018 injuries as of Saturday. Heavy rains, accompanied by strong winds, hit Dera Ismail Khan district and adjoining areas early Sunday, leaving eight people dead and over 45 hurt in various incidents, mainly roof collapses, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) spokesperson Bilal Faizi told PTI. Faizi added the injured were shifted to two different hospitals and over two dozen were discharged after treatment.

Kim's missile mania

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of two types of new antiair missiles, state media said Sunday, displaying his expanding military capabilities as the South Korean and US militaries carry out joint drills. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the test Saturday proved the missiles effective in countering aerial threats such as drones and cruise missiles, and that Kim assigned unspecified "important" tasks to defense scientists ahead of a major political conference expected early next year. The test coincided with new South Korean President Lee Jae Myung 's trip to Tokyo for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, where they vowed to strengthen bilateral cooperation and their trilateral partnership with the United States to address common challenges, including North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Teen, man held over arson attack on Indian restaurant



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 24: A 15-year-old boy and a 54-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of arson on Sunday after an Indian restaurant in east London went up in flames, seriously injuring five people. The Metropolitan Police said officers were called to the Indian Aroma restaurant in Ilford Friday night. Three women and two men, believed to be diners at the eatery, suffered burn injuries

and were treated at the scene by paramedics from the London Ambulance Service before being taken to the hospital. Two of them – a man and a woman – remain in a life-threatening condition, the police said. “While we have made two arrests, our investigation continues at pace so we can piece together what happened on Friday evening,” said Detective Chief Inspector Mark Rogers of the Met Police's Central Specialist Crime North unit. “I know the community members are concerned and shocked by this incident. I would urge anyone with any information or concerns to come forward and speak to police,” he said. The restaurant suffered extensive damage in the blaze, with neighbours recounting loud screams on Friday night. There are some reports of the CCTV footage showing a group of people wearing face coverings walking into the restaurant and pouring liquid on the floor before it was engulfed in flames.

Israel hits Yemen's capital

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES HIT SANAA TARGETING IRAN-BACKED HOUTHIS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, August 24: Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen's capital Sunday, just days after the Houthi rebels fired a missile toward Israel, the rebels said, the latest Israeli attack targeting the Iranian-backed group. The Houthi media office said the strikes hit multiple areas across the capital of Sanaa, including a power planet and a gas station. Residents reported hearing loud sounds of explosions in different areas, including close to the presidential palace. The reported strikes were the first to hit Yemen since a week ago, when Israel said it targeted energy infrastructure it believed was used by the rebels. Israel did not immediately confirmed Sunday's attack. The Iran-backed Houthis have launched missiles and drones toward Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea for more than 22 months. They say they are carrying out the attacks in solidarity with the Palestinians amid the war in the Gaza Strip. Sanaa residents told The Associated Press they heard loud explosions close to a closed military academy and the presidential palace. They said they could see smoke plumes

IN RETALIATION

For the first time Friday, the Houthis launched a cluster bomb at Israel since the militant group began launching rockets towards Israel in 2023

The Iran-backed Houthis have launched missiles and drones toward Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea for more than 22 months

near Sabeen Square, a central gathering place in the capital. “The sound of explosions were very strong,” said Hussein Mohamed, a Yemeni resident, who lives close to the presidential palace. Ahmed al-Mekhlafy, another resident, also said he felt the sheer force of the strikes. “The house was rocked, and the windows were shattered,” he told the AP over the phone. The strike comes after the Houthis claimed they launched newly equipped missiles toward Israel, including targeting the country's largest airport, Friday. There was no reported damage or injuries in Israel from that attack. Israel's military said it fragmented mid-air after several attempts to intercept it. An Israeli Air Force official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with military



India must take Trump's point over Russian oil seriously, and work with the White House to find a solution. The sooner the better

NIKKI HALEY | REPUBLICAN LEADER, US

NEPAL JOINS BIG CAT LEAGUE

Nepal has officially become a member of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA). “Nepal has formally joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) by signing the Framework Agreement,” announced the IBCA Saturday. The IBCA was established with a view to fostering international cooperation for conservation of seven big cats, including tiger, leopard and snow leopard



Firefighters battle the Pickett Fire burning in the Aetna Springs area of Napa County, California in US

AP/PTI PHOTO

B'desh calls for apology during Dar's visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, August 24: Bangladesh Sunday raised pending issues, including an apology for the 1971 war, with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who is the most senior leader from his country to visit Dhaka since 2012.

Dar, who arrived in Dhaka Saturday on a two-day visit aimed at rebuilding ties with Bangladesh following the ouster of longtime prime minister Sheikh Hasina, held talks with the interim government's Foreign Adviser M Touhid Hossain.



“We have raised unresolved issues such as an apology or expression of regret for 1971, claims over assets, and the matter of stranded Pakistani citizens (with Dar),” Hossain told reporters after talks with Dar. It would be wrong to expect

problems of 54 years to be solved in a single day, he said. “Both countries have presented their respective positions on these issues,” the foreign adviser said at a press conference. Dar, who is also the deputy prime minister, said the unsettled issues over 1971 were resolved twice – first in 1974 in tri-partite talks involving New Delhi in India. “Later, the then president Pervez Musharraf settled the issues of genocide again during his Dhaka visit when he talked in public with an open mind,” Dar added.

Nigerian military frees 76 hostages

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Abuja, August 24: At least 76 hostages, including children, have been freed after Nigeria's military targeted militants with precision airstrikes in the country's northwest, local authorities said.

The airstrikes were launched on targets around Pauwa Hill, located in the Kankara area of Katsina state, in the early hours of Saturday, Nasir Mu'azu, the state's commissioner for internal security said. The rescued hostages include some of those kidnapped during an attack on a mosque in Unguwan Mantau that led to the death of at least 50 people, the commissioner said. In recent months, there has been an uptick in attacks on communities in the northwest and north-central regions of Africa's most populous country, where farmers often clash over limited access to land and water. An attack last month in north-central Nigeria killed 150 people. The conflict has become deadlier in recent years, with authorities and analysts warning that more herdsmen are taking up more sophisticated arms.

Ukraine strikes Russian nuclear plant on I-Day

Despite talk of peace by Russia and Ukraine, the deadliest European war since World War Two is continuing along the 2,000 km front line accompanied by missile and drone attacks deep into both Russia and Ukraine

REUTERS

Moscow, August 24: Ukraine launched a drone attack on Russia Sunday, forcing a sharp fall in the capacity of a reactor at one of Russia's biggest nuclear power plants and sparking a huge blaze at the major Ust-Luga fuel export terminal, Russian officials said. Russia's defence ministry said at least 95 Ukrainian drones had been intercepted across more than a dozen Russian regions August 24, the day that Ukraine celebrates its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The Kursk nuclear power plant, just 60 km (38 miles) from the border with Ukraine, said that air defences shot down a drone that detonated near the plant just after midnight, damaging an auxiliary transformer and forcing a 50% reduction in the operating capacity at reactor No 3. Radiation levels were normal and there were no injuries from the fire which the drone sparked, the plant said. Two other reactors are operating without power generation and one is undergoing scheduled repairs. The United Nations' nuclear agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said it was aware of reports that a transformer at the plant caught fire due to military activity and stressed that every nuclear facility should be protected at all times.

A thousand km north, on the Gulf of Finland, at least 10 Ukrainian drones were downed over the port of Ust-Luga in Russia's northern Leningrad region, with debris sparking fire at the Novatek-operated terminal - a huge Baltic Sea fuel export terminal and processing



complex, the regional governor said. Unverified footage on Russian Telegram channels showed a drone flying directly into a fuel terminal, followed by a huge ball of fire rising high into the sky followed by a plume of black smoke billowing into the horizon. **Zelenskyy marks Independence Day** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy marked Independence Day Sunday alongside Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, who said Ukraine would receive more than C\$1 billion (\$723 million) in military aid from a previously announced package next month. Three and a half years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy is facing pressure from Washington to make concessions to Russia as US President Donald Trump seeks to broker a peace deal. “We are all working to ensure that the end of this war would mean the guarantee of peace for Ukraine, so that neither war nor the threat of war are left for our children to inherit,” Zelenskyy told a crowd of dignitaries in Kyiv's Sophia Square, against the backdrop of an 11th century cathedral.

UK criminals face travel, sports, concert & pub bans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 24: Criminals will be barred from pubs, concerts and sports matches under new sentencing powers widening the scope of punishments unveiled by the UK government Sunday. Judges in the country will be able to curtail offenders' freedoms with driving limits, travel bans and restriction zones confining them into specific areas as part of the new measures. The changes will toughen up community punishments to deter reoffending and force offenders back onto the straight-and-narrow, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) said. “Widening the range of punishments available to judges is

part of our Plan for Change to cut crime and make streets safer,” said UK Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood. Offenders coming out of prison and supervised by the Probation Service will also face similar restrictions and an expanded mandatory drug testing regime. In future, criminals without known drug habits will face this scrutiny, not just those with a history of substance misuse, the MoJ said. Offenders who break the rules face being brought back to court or hauled back to prison as punishment depending on the sentence they are serving. “Rightly, the public expect the government to do everything in its power to keep Brit-



ain safe, and that's what we're doing,” said Mahmood. Currently, judges in Britain are able to give out limited bans for specific crimes, for example football bans for crimes committed inside a stadium on match day, to prevent further antisocial behaviour.

When criminals break society's rules, they must be punished. Those serving their sentences in the community must have their freedom restricted there too. These new punishments should remind all offenders that, under this government, crime does not pay

SHABANA MAHMOOD | JUSTICE SECRETARY, UK

The MoJ said it will change the law shortly so such bans can be handed down as a form of punishment for any offence in any circumstance. It will form part of wider reforms to sentencing to ensure punishments cut crime and prisons never again run out of places for dangerous offenders, the ministry said. “Over 2,400 prison places

of the day

quote

The data centre industry is entering a phase of unprecedented growth as AI, cloud, and digital connectivity redefines lives and work, the underlying infrastructure, too, must be future-ready technologically, operationally, and environmentally

ASHISH ARORA | CEO, NXTRA

Companies that proactively address this low participation rate of women in their workforce will not only access a wider talent pool, but also benefit from diverse perspectives that fuel innovation and better consumer understanding

ADITYA NARAYAN MISHRA | CEO, CIEL HR SERVICES

If you look at the world of data in India, we have a lot of headroom to expand, not only Snowflake, but most players in this space, there's a massive headroom to expand

VUJAYANT RAI | MD, SNOWFLAKE INDIA

SHORT TAKES

PSUs Q1 performance

New Delhi: State-owned fuel retailers reported bumper profits in the June quarter, as a freeze on retail prices boosted petrol and diesel margins, offsetting earlier inventory losses. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) reported a combined profit of Rs 16,184 crore in April-June, the first quarter of FY26 - more than two-and-a-half times higher year-on-year, according to regulatory filings by the companies. Among the three, BPCL led with a Rs 6,124 crore profit, surpassing IOC's Rs 5,689 crore, despite being nearly half its size. HPCL posted a net profit of Rs 4,371 crore in Q1. BPCL also fared well on refining margins, earning \$4.88 in turning every barrel of crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel. This was better than the \$2.15 per barrel gross refining margin of IOC and the \$3.08 of HPCL. Its refinery run rate at 118 per cent (of installed capacity) was higher than 107 per cent of IOC and 10.9 per cent of HPCL. At 153 kilolitre per month, BPCL sold more fuel per pump than its other public sector rivals. IOC had a throughput of 130 per kl per retail out in Q1.HPCL had an inventory loss of about Rs 2,000 crore in the quarter. The companies registered profits despite the unpaid LPG subsidy. While the government has announced Rs 30,000 crore as a subsidy to cover the losses the three firms suffered on selling cooking gas at rates lower than their cost, the modalities of payments are yet to be announced. In the absence, the three booked losses on LPG - Rs 3,719 crore by IOC, Rs 2,076 crore by BPCL and Rs 2,148 crore by HPCL.

WinZO enters US mkt

New Delhi: Homegrown online gaming platform WinZO Sunday announced its launch in the US, and said the latest debut marks its presence in three of the world's four largest mobile gaming markets. The US launch, coupled with the introduction of ZO TV -- a new short-form video content format - comes just days after the platform had to suspend its real-money gaming offerings in India following the passage of the Online Gaming Bill, 2025. Indian game developers will now be able to access the US gaming market through WinZO's plug-and-launch distribution model, the company said in a statement. WinZO will continue to serve its Indian audience with multiple offerings lined up through its platform, while withdrawing limited services impacted by evolving regulations, the company said.



The modern workforce is not resistant to change; they seek fairness, empathy, and dialogue. Pushing longer hours without thoughtful planning will only widen the gap between management and employees.

RP YADAV | CHAIRMAN, GENIUS HRTECH

E20 PETROL CAN REDUCE FUEL EFFICIENCY: EXPERTS

The usage of 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol in vehicles could lead to a 2-5 per cent drop in fuel efficiency, depending on the type of cars, according to automotive industry experts.In the midst of social media debate over the impact of E20 fuel on vehicles. Automotive engineers working with some of the major automakers, said that in older vehicles, which are not E20 compliant, there could be erosion of gaskets, fuel rubber hoses and pipes in the long term, but not immediately



CII for more reforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: Industry lobby The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Sunday unveiled a reform roadmap to accelerate India's economic transformation, pitching for a simplified GST structure, expanded coverage to petroleum and real estate, rationalised tariff structure, national employment and gig economy policies. CII in its report "Policies for a Competitive India", presents over 250 actionable recommendations across 14 critical reform areas. Developed through wide-ranging consultations with industry leaders, economists, and policy experts, the blueprint is aligned with the government's Viksit Bharat vision, it said.

CII President Rajiv Memani said, "These recommendations are closely aligned with the government's reform trajectory and are in support of the Prime Minister's call for bold and transformative change. As a live document, policies for a Competitive India will continue to evolve, bringing fresh ideas to support policymakers."

The reform areas include fiscal prudence, inflation management, and modernised statistical systems; privatisation of non-strategic PSEs, creation of a sovereign wealth fund; decriminalisation of minor violations, time-bound approvals, single-window clearances, and second-generation IBC reforms; streamlined labour codes, minimum wage framework, and fast-track dispute resolution.



As India moves rapidly towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, it must now add greater pace and depth to this reform agenda to be globally competitive. With Free Trade Agreements opening new opportunities and India's economic engagements expanding worldwide, Indian industry must be prepared to compete with the best

SANJIV BAJAJ | EX- PRESIDENT, CII AND CHAIRMAN, TASK FORCE

The industry lobby has also recommended energy policy reforms, including competitive tariffs, elimination of cross-subsidisation, stronger transmission networks, private participation in nuclear energy, and a green hydrogen roadmap.

Besides, it calls for faster dispute resolution through expanded commercial courts, arbitration councils, and strengthened tribunal oversight.

Sanjiv Bajaj, Past President, CII and Chairman, Task Force on Reciprocal Tariffs, observed, "As India moves rapidly towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, it must now add greater pace and depth to this reform agenda to be globally competitive. With Free Trade Agreements opening new opportunities and India's economic engagements expanding worldwide, Indian industry must be prepared to compete with the best."

Among other reforms, CII has suggested a dedicated e-commerce export strategy; manufacturing push through capital support, industrial corridors, and freight connectivity; phased compliance for MSMEs; and integration of industry into climate adaptation, digitised climate data, and sustainability-linked procurement.

Together, these reforms will drive growth, job creation, resilience, and sustainability, positioning India to achieve its goal of Viksit Bharat and global leadership, CII said.

Mcap of 8 most valued firms jumps ₹1.72L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,72,148.89 crore last week, with Reliance Industries leading the pack with the maximum gain, in line with a bullish trend in domestic equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 709.19 points or 0.87 per cent. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Bajaj Finance were the gainers.

However, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India faced erosion in their valuation.

Reliance Industries added Rs 48,107.94 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 19,07,131.37 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever jumped Rs 34,280.54 crore to Rs 6,17,672.30 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation surged Rs 33,899.02 crore to Rs 11,02,159.94 crore, and that of Bajaj Finance zoomed Rs 20,413.95 crore to Rs 5,55,961.39 crore. The mcap of Infosys edged higher by Rs 16,693.93 crore to Rs 6,18,004.12 crore, and that of TCS climbed Rs 11,487.42 crore to Rs 11,04,837.29 crore.

ICICI Bank added Rs 6,443.84 crore to its market valuation, which stood at Rs 10,25,426.19 crore. The market valuation of LIC went up by Rs 822.25 crore to Rs 5,62,703.42 crore. However, the mcap of HDFC Bank eroded by Rs 20,040.7 crore to Rs 15,08,346.39 crore.

LIC to be reclassified as public shareholder in IDBI Bank



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 24: In an important step towards the privatisation of IDBI Bank, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the reclassification of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as a public shareholder, the bank informed stock exchanges.

This means LIC will now be treated like any other public investor in IDBI Bank. As per SEBI's rules, LIC's voting rights in the bank will be limited to 10 per cent of the total voting power.

"The voting rights of LIC shall not exceed 10 per cent (ten per cent) of the total net effective voting rights of the IDBI Bank," the company said in its regulatory filing.

The insurer will also not take part in the bank's management, will not have any special rights, and will not be represented on the board of directors.

LIC, which still holds a significant stake in the bank, will outline its plan for reclassification.

cation in the letter of offer that will be shared with shareholders during the open offer process by the new buyer.

The insurer is also required to bring down its stake to 15 per cent within two years from the completion of the government's strategic disinvestment in IDBI Bank.

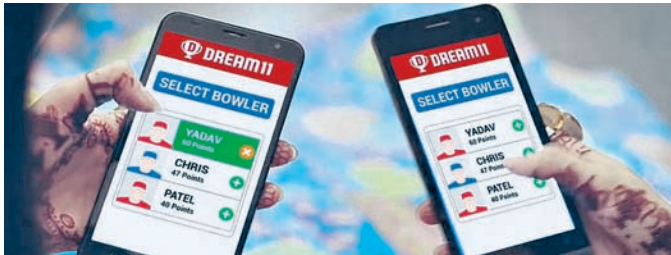
Following SEBI's approval, the bank will now approach stock exchanges to formally complete LIC's reclassification.

The move is being seen as a major milestone in IDBI Bank's privatisation process, as it brings the lender's ownership structure in line with regulatory requirements.

August 21, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Arunish Chawla told NDTV Profit that the expression of interest process for IDBI Bank's stake sale has been completed, and due diligence is in progress.

The government is likely to invite financial bids for the stake sale in the third quarter of the current financial year.

Dream11 parent forays into wealth tech post ban



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: Fantasy gaming platform Dream11's parent firm Dream Sports is testing a new app, Dream Money, to foray into the financial services sector, sources aware of the development said Sunday.

Dream Sports has been a major real-money gaming player in India, but it has to close its money-based games after the government banned all forms of online money games.

"Dream Money has been under pilot for the last few months. The platform has not been launched yet," a source aware of the development said.

As per information available on Google Play Store, the app

will offer gold purchase service on a daily basis, starting from Rs 10 per day and fixed deposits starting from Rs 1,000.

The app has been published by a Dream Sports entity, Dreamsuite.

The website of DreamSuite shows that DreamSuite Finance will be launched soon to offer "seamless financial services".

While Dream Sports has closed its online money-based games, it continues to operate sports experience and travel platform Dream Set Go, sports event ticketing and merchandise platform FanCode, game development unit Dream Game Studios and non-profit organisation Dream Sports Foundation.

After SBI, Bank of India tags RCom, Anil Ambani as fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: After the State Bank of India, Bank of India has classified the loan account of insolvent Reliance Communications as fraudulent and named its former director, tycoon Anil Ambani, citing alleged fund diversion in 2016, according to a regulatory filing.

State-owned Bank of India granted Rs 700 crore loan in August 2016 to Reliance Communications for its ongoing

capital and operational expenditure and repayment of existing liabilities. Half of the sanctioned amount disbursed in October 2016 was invested in a fixed deposit, which was not permitted as per the sanction letter, according to the bank's letter that RCom disclosed in a stock exchange filing.

RCom said August 22 received a letter from Bank of India dated August 8 stating the bank's decision "to classify the loan accounts of the company,

Anil Dhirajlal Ambani (promoter and erstwhile director of the company), and Manjari Ashok Kacker (erstwhile director of the company), as Fraud".

Previously, SBI had done the same in June this year, alleging misappropriation of bank funds by entering into transactions that violated the terms of the loans.

Following a complaint by SBI, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday searched premises linked to Reliance Communications and

Ambani's residence.

CBI said it has registered a complaint after the State Bank of India claimed a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore, resulting from the alleged misappropriation by Reliance Communications and Ambani, the younger sibling of Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani.

Anil Ambani's spokesperson, in a statement, "strongly denied all allegations and charges" and said he "will duly defend himself".

BIZ BUZZ

14th Cottonfab begins in City

BHUBANESWAR: Cottonfab-2025- an exhibition cum sale of quality hand crafted & handlooms fabrics organised by Samiti society has started in city. This is the 14th edition of exhibition cum sale happening in Bhubaneswar. Total 122 artisans from 12 states are here displayed their product which Lucknowi Chikan work Dress Material, Sarees, Kurta Payjama, Tops, Gujrat ethnic Print Kurties, Dress Material, Rajasthan block printed, Kota Doria dress material, ladies kurta, lehnga-choli, Malmal, Bandhej suits, skirts-top, salwar & dupatta's, Punjab Phulkari Dress Material from Patiala, Madhya Pradesh Chanderi, Maheshwari, Baagprint, Batik print dress material, W Bengal Shantiniketan Tant, Khamtha, Dhakai Jamdani sarees, dressmaterial in tasser, shifon & crape, Odisha Sambhalpuri Ikkat Sarees, Dress Material, Andhra Pradesh Kalamkari Vegetable dyed, Mangalgiri, Gadwal Zari Border Dressmaterial, Tamilnadu Madurai Sarees, Dressmaterial, Parda & Bedcovers, Himanchal Pradesh cotton Kurties & Tops, Uttar Pradesh's famous Banaras silk & cotton sarees, suit materials Chattisgarh silk & cotton and Khadi dress materials, Jharkhand Tussar Silk Dress and Sarees, Delhi chikan embroidery dress material & sarees , Sitapuri export quality dari (satanrji), mats, runner and rugs, many type jewellery Rajasthan Stone & Metal jewellery, Delhi artificial jewellery) and many more textiles items of varied designs from various parts of country.



Regulated pre-IPO trading platform to bring transparency: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: Market regulator Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) plan to introduce a regulated pre-IPO trading platform could reshape how investors buy and sell unlisted shares, bringing transparency to a space long dominated by the opaque grey market and reducing risks for retail investors, market experts said.

Moreover, for employees, especially those holding ESOPs (employee stock options), the framework could be a game-changer.

Rajesh Singla, founder and CEO of Planify, which deals in buying and selling of unlisted shares, explained that a large portion of ESOPs remains unutilised today as employees lack access to liquidity options before an initial public offering (IPO). With SEBI proposed system, they would finally have an avenue to monetise their holdings in a regulated environment.

Friday, SEBI chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey hinted at introducing a regulated platform for pre-IPO share trading, potentially replacing existing grey market practices.

The move, if implemented, may also allow investors to trade shares in a transparent environment during the three-day gap between allotment and listing. At present, this window is dominated by the unregulated grey market, which could be replaced by a formal mechanism.

Currently, the grey market functions as an informal over-the-counter network, where brokers and investors negotiate deals based on the expected listing price. The Grey Market Premium (GMP) often emerges as the key sentiment indicator.

While GMP doesn't guarantee outcomes, it frequently shapes retail investor decisions on whether to apply for an IPO, said Trivesh, COO of Tradejini.

Experts believe that the regulated platform would bring structure and supervision to



a segment that has so far operated outside formal oversight.

"A regulated platform will create defined standards and boundaries, reducing market anomalies and enabling transactions to happen transparently under SEBI supervision," Planify's Singla said.

Feroze Azeez, joint CEO of Anand Rath Wealth, said the proposal could significantly reduce grey market activity by shifting pre-IPO trades into a transparent ecosystem.

Beyond transparency, he noted that proper disclosures and structured settlement mechanisms will help investors evaluate companies more accurately and transact with greater confidence. This, in turn, could increase retail participation in the unlisted space, which has been limited due to risks of fraud and price manipulation.

The growing scale of India's IPO market makes the case for such a platform even stronger. In 2024 alone, 337 companies

went public -- 91 on the mainboard and 241 on SME -- raising nearly Rs 1.67 lakh crore, with average listing gains of 29 per cent.

On the unlisted side, estimates suggest that more than 1,300 profitable companies collectively hold around Rs 150 lakh crore of value waiting to be unlocked.

"A formal mechanism could tap this liquidity and allow wider participation beyond select circles," Trivesh said.

On the other hand, experts said existing grey market offers no such protection. Retail participants remain exposed to fraud, default, and unfair practices, with transactions often driven by short-term speculation rather than informed, long-term investment.

The system also encourages reliance on speculative indicators, such as Kostak and Sauda rates -- terms that reflect premiums on IPO applications irrespective of allotment, respectively, Azeez said.

While GMP is widely followed as a gauge of demand, its reliability is questionable. Operators can manipulate premiums to sway investor behaviour, creating both opportunities and risks for retail investors.

A recent study by Anand Rath Wealth in July 2025 underlines this point -- of 19 IPOs on the mainboard, more than 60 per cent were listed below their GMPs, 40 per cent below Sauda rates, and 26 per cent at or below the issue price. This shows that GMP often mirrors speculative sentiment rather than true fundamentals.

The mismatch between pre-listing hype and actual performance has been evident in several high-profile IPOs, including Paytm, Zomato, Nykaa, Policybazaar, and Brigade.

In many of these cases, strong grey market premiums failed to translate into sustained listing gains, with stocks witnessing sharp corrections soon after debut, Anand Rath's Azeez said.

The last of India's Test purists

Cheteshwar Pujara's contribution to Indian cricket is not measured in sixes or strike-rates, but in time, grit, and unyielding defiance against the world's best attacks. Those who swore by the virtue of patience that Test cricket always stood for, he was that slice from the bygone days when T20 wasn't even an idea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 24: Cheteshwar Pujara never had a cover drive like Virat Kohli. Neither he took your breath away with a falling hook shot like Rishabh Pant nor did he play a short-arm pull with the finesse of Rohit Sharma that could send the fans into raptures.

But in the era of uber-stylish batters, Pujara was that glue that held the Indian batting together for a decade between 2013-14 till 2023 over a period of 100 plus Test matches.

If Virat Kohli was the structure of the beautiful edifice that was Indian Test batting, Cheteshwar Pujara was definitely the foundation.

An obsessed father Arvind, a small time first-class cricketer with limited means but with big dreams, and a mother, who was a silent rock, made Pujara a man with a tunnel vision.

He never knew the incorrect way of batting, which after the advent of T20 cricket is understandably termed as unconventional. Copybook cricket was like his second skin as father Arvind instilled in him that real cricket was Test cricket.

In fact, the most unconventional character trait about Pujara was that he remained boringly conventional in his philosophy -- both in cricket and in life.

the Gabba en route a 211-ball-56 was everything that he epitomised -- Man of Substance, Body of Steel and Runs of context.

In a team filled with flamboyance, Pujara's scars became his badge of honour.

For Pant's 'tour de force' act at Gabba, you needed a piece of resistance from Pujara.

A spiritual person, he never believed in celebrations rather a quiet retreat to the confines of the Ashram of his Guruji, seeking his blessings was his way of joy. Pujara has always been like that no frills, no fuss, just matter of fact.

A fast, full ball would be defended right below the eyeline and short and wide one would be ferociously square cut and one on the legs would be either flicked or on-driven as per length.

In an era obsessed with strike-rates and IPL franchise contracts and weird celebrations by one-season IPL wonders, Pujara's value system felt almost outdated.



Nightmare for Aussies

Pujara's greatness cannot be measured only in numbers. In 2018, Pujara scaled a peak that no Indian cricketer had reached. He single-handedly trounced the mighty Aussies at their home. He scored three hundreds, compiled 521 runs and faced 1,258 balls to be the Man of the Series in India's first-ever Test series triumph Down Under. It took a boy from Rajkot to do what no Indian team had done for 71 years and 11 tours. Among the many innings that defined him, his 56 off 211 balls during India's historic win at the Gabba in 2021 stands out, but not just for the runs, but for the sheer physical punishment he withstood. On the final day in Brisbane, as Australia's fast bowlers launched a relentless barrage, Pujara was struck 11 times on his body. Each strike was a painful blow, but Pujara refused to flinch. His 211-ball vigil blunted Australia's pace attack and set the stage for Rishabh Pant to script one of India's most famous Test victories.

RICH TEST CAREER

Matches - 103

Runs - 7,195

Average - 43.60

100s/50s - 19/35

Highest score - 206*



Pujara, it was always reassuring to see you walk out at No.3. You brought calm, courage, and a deep love for Test cricket every time you played. Your solid technique, patience, and composure under pressure have been a pillar for the team. Congratulations on a wonderful career. Good luck for the next chapter. Enjoy your second innings

SACHIN TENDULKAR



From the time I first saw Pujara and his potential, it was brilliant to see that potential translating into performance. His courage, grit and determination stood out and the body blows that he took in the Gabba Test we won against Australia symbolised Pujara the cricketer for me, willing to give everything he has for his country. Well done and wish you a happy and joyous second innings

VVS LAXMAN

LEGENDS HAIL PUJI



Congratulations on a fantastic career! You have been a great ambassador of this wonderful game. We are all proud of all your achievements on the cricket field. You gave it your all for the team! It was a privilege to have worked with you and may you continue to shine in your second innings! Best wishes to you, Puja, Aditi and your Dad. Well Done

ANIL KUMBLE



A real warrior. He was instrumental in my stint as coach for India being the No1 side for 5 years on the trot and the 2 back to back series wins in Australia where he was simply brilliant. Well done Puji. God bless

RAVI SHASTRI



Congratulations on a fabulous test career Cheteshwar. Your grit, determination and hardwork was inspiring and you can be very proud of what you have achieved. Best wishes for a memorable second innings

VIRENDER SEHWAG



Someone who always put his mind, body and soul for the country! Many congratulations on an outstanding career Puji! See you on the other side

YUVRAJ SINGH

ASIAN SHOOTING C'SHIP

INDIAN SHOOTERS RULE THE PODIUM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shymkent, August 24 :India's Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, won the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) individual gold at the ongoing 16th Asian Shooting Championship Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Sunday with a score of 462.5 in the final.

This was the former junior world champion's second career individual gold at the continental championship to go with a silver and bronze each. China's Zhaon Wenyu won silver and Japan's Naoya Okada won bronze. Also winning the junior men's 3P gold was India's Adriyan Karmakar with an Asian junior record effort of 463.8 in the final.

Till last count, India with 25 gold, 10 silver and 10 bronze medals were sitting pretty on top of the medal tally with China a distant second on 10 golds.

Earlier, all three Indian contenders in the men's 3P made the finals with Aishwary qualifying highest in third with a

India with 25 gold, 10 silver and 10 bronze medals were sitting pretty on top of the medal tally with China a distant second on 10 golds

tally of 584 over 20 shots each in the Kneeling, Prone and Standing positions.

The seasoned Chain Singh was fifth in the pecking order with an effort of 582 while world championship bronze medalist Akhil Sheoran, rallied brilliantly to clinch the seventh qualifying spot with

a 581. China's all three shooters also qualified with the other two spots going to Japan and Korea respectively.

The team gold eluded India by three points as their tally of 1747 fell three short of the Chinese total.

Aishwary then bossed it in the individual final, taking a healthy

lead after the first five shots of the first Kneeling position itself and then going from strength to strength to bag gold, leaving Zhao 0.5 short in the end.

The closest the two came was after the 13th shot when they were just 0.3 apart, but a 10.8 by Aishwary for his 14th got him back to an above one-point advantage, which was enough in the end.



Young Tigresses continue flying run

EVES THRASH BHUTAN 8-0 IN SAFF U17 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thimphu, August 24: Anuskha Kumari scored a hatrick as India thrashed hosts Bhutan 8-0 for their third consecutive win at the SAFF U17 Women's Championships here Sunday.

Besides Kumari's (53rd, 61st, 73rd) stellar performance, Abhista Basnett (23rd, 89th) scored a brace while Pearl Fernandes (71st), Divyani Linda (77th), and Valaina Jada Fernandes (90+2) were on target. India led 1-0 at half-time.

With this dominant result, the Young Tigresses have now scored 17 goals in three matches without conceding once, tightening their grip on top spot in the table and edging closer to the trophy.

Bhutan, still without a point, were simply overwhelmed by a side firing on all cylinders.

India wasted no time asserting themselves. In just the fifth minute, Shveta Rani's curling corner from the left nearly



swung in directly, but Bhutan's alert goalkeeper Kelzang Wangmo collected it safely.

Minutes later, Divyani Linda burst down the right wing and fired in a teasing low cross which found Nira Chanu Longjam at the near post, only for Wangmo to again deny the visitors.

Shots rained in as India pushed forward relentlessly. Anuskha Kumari, Longjam, and Julian Nongmaithem all tested Wangmo, who made a string of saves that drew loud cheers from the home fans.

But Bhutan's resistance cracked in the 23rd minute. Abhista Basnett, unmarked

OCA unveils stars for Odisha Pro T20 League

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 24: The Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) today announced the marquee players for the highly anticipated Odisha Pro T20 League, exclusively managed by Arivaa Sports.

The unveiling of these top cricketers marks a major milestone as the league prepares to showcase the best of Odisha's cricketing talent on a professional platform.

The six players named as marquee players for the inaugural season are - Subhranshu Senapati, Swastik Samal, Govinda Poddar, Sandeep Pattnaik, Aashirwad Swain and Suryakant Pradhan.



These cricketers have consistently demonstrated their skill, determination, and leadership on the field, making them icons for aspiring players across the state. Each franchise in the Odisha Pro T20 League will be anchored around these marquee stars, ensuring a balance of experience, star value, and competitive spirit.

Speaking on the announcement, Sanjay Behera, Secretary of the Odisha Cricket Association, said, "We are proud to introduce our marquee players, who have carried the flag of Odisha cricket with distinction. Their inclusion sets a strong foundation for the league and will inspire young talent to dream bigger. The Odisha Pro T20 League is a stepping stone to take Odisha cricket to greater heights, and these players will play a central role in that journey."

The Odisha Pro T20 League aims to provide a professional structure that nurtures emerging players, raises the standard of competition, and offers fans an electrifying cricketing spectacle.

India now have nine points from three matches, ahead of Bangladesh and Nepal, who have three points each

at the near post, met another well-flighted corner from Rani and calmly slotted home to give India the lead.

After the break, India came out with greater purpose and pumped in seven more goals.

India doubled their advantage in the 53rd minute. Anuskha Kumari stepped up for a free-kick from 20 yards and unleashed a thunderbolt into the top corner, giving Wangmo no chance. It was the moment that broke Bhutan's spirit.

In the 61st minute, Kumari added her second. Picking up a pass on the right flank, she cut inside, beat her defender with ease, and drilled a low shot into the far bottom corner.

SHORT TAKES

Mirabai returns to action

Ahmedabad: Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Mirabai Chanu will return to competitive action on Monday after a year-long hiatus, leading the home challenge at the Commonwealth Championships where Indian weightlifters are expected to bag a rich medal haul. Chanu, who has battled injuries in recent years, was last seen at the Paris Games in last August, where she missed the podium by a kilogram. With the new Olympic weight categories in force for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, the 31-year-old has decided to move down from the 49kg division to 48kg, a weight class in which she won her world championship title and two Commonwealth Games medals, but hasn't competed in it since 2018.

Oz destroy Proteas

Mackay: Australia's top three batters bossed an understrength South Africa pace bowling attack with blazing centuries to hand the tourists their largest ever ODI defeat in the third and final game Sunday. It is the biggest margin of defeat suffered by South Africa in their ODI cricket history, which dates back to 1991. Travis Head (142), captain Mitchell Marsh (100) and Cameron Green's (118 not out) maiden ODI hundred powered Australia to its second-best ODI total of 431-2 after the home team failed to cross the 200-run mark while chasing in the two earlier games of the series. Earlier, Australia fell just short of its highest-ever ODI total of 434-4, also made against South Africa in 2006, and had the first three batters score hundreds in an ODI innings for just the second time.

Sharapova, Bryan Brothers enter Tennis Hall of Fame



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Newport (US), August 24: Serena Williams made a surprise — and early — appearance at the International Tennis Hall of Fame, emerging from behind the stage to introduce "former rival, former fan and forever friend" Maria Sharapova for her induction.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam champion who will be eligi-

ble for her own enshrinement in 2027, drew gasps and shrieks from the crowd at the Newport shrine.

The Bryans Brothers shared a speech as if they were taking turns hitting on a court, alternating at the microphone as they thanked coaches, friends and Davis Cup teammates from a career in which they won 119 ATP titles, including 16 Grand Slams, and an Olympic gold medal.