



**Busting myths**  
Actor Parineeti Chopra, during a lively interactive session with fans on Instagram, debunks common myths about India

LEISURE | P2



**SCO Summit**  
India asks international community to "isolate and expose" those countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism

INTERNATIONAL | P10



**New peaks**  
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tick higher to close at fresh all-time high levels Thursday

BUSINESS | P11



**Gukesh holds Caruana**  
World Championship challenger Grandmaster D Gukesh plays out a draw with tournament leader and top seed Fabiano Caruana of US

SPORTS | P12



**OCEAN OF HUMANITY:** Marine Drive in Mumbai turns into a sea of people as thousands gather to welcome the bus carrying the Indian team upon their arrival Thursday

## NEW PANEL FOR RATNA BHANDAR

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** The state government Thursday formed a fresh high-level committee, headed by former judge of Orissa High Court Justice Biswanath Rath, to supervise the reopening of Srimandir Ratna Bhandar for its repair and inventory of valuables in it, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said.

Addressing media, Harichandan said that the 16-member panel has been formed in accordance with the direction of the Orissa HC in this regard. In March this year, the previous BJD government had formed a 12-member committee, led by retired judge of Supreme Court Justice Arijit Pasayat, to supervise the inventory of jewellery and other valuables stored in the Ratna Bhandar.

The BJP government has dissolved Justice Pasayat-led panel and formed the fresh committee, he said.

"A high-level committee is hereby reconstituted, under the chairmanship of Justice Biswanath Rath, to supervise the

Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee in carrying out the inventorisation of valuables including jewellery stored in the Ratna Bhandar," a notification issued by the Law department said.

The new committee will conduct its meeting in Puri July 6 to decide the date for the reopening of the Ratna Bhandar and prepare modalities for the repair of the inner chamber and inventory of valuables stored inside it, Harichandan said.

He said the panel will also decide which external agencies will be involved to examine the quality of the valuables stored in the treasury of the 12th-century shrine. As per recommendation of the committee, the state government will decide its future course of action for reopening of the Ratna Bhandar, he added.

The Chief Administrator of SJTA has been appointed a member convener of the committee, while Puri Collector, sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik, representative of the Gajapati, representatives of ASI, and former DGP Prakash Mishra are other members of the panel.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**



He heard the full speech. To remove the expunged parts, they are taking him to a brain surgeon

## Triple murder rocks Balasore

**Balasore, July 4:** Bodies of three persons, including two women, who went missing under mysterious circumstances following altercations with two neighbours over sorcery allegations in Barpada, under Oupada police limits, here Sunday, were found in the bushes on the outskirts of the village, Thursday.

Oupada inspector in-charge (IIC) Sraban Kumar Maharana said seven persons have been detained for questioning while the bodies have been sent to Soro hospital for autopsy. He said preliminary investigations suggest that the three had been murdered. The IIC identified the deceased as Sambari Singh, 45, Dampa Singh, 55, and Dalia Singh, 45, of the village.

According to the complaint filed by Sambari's son Niranjan Singh, his mother had gone to the nearby forest for collecting firewood a few days back when she injured her eyes while returning home.

When the wound did not heal, Sambari suspected neighbours Lala Singh, 35, and Pitambar Singh, 33, of having performed sorcery on her, Niranjan said.

He alleged that Sambari confronted the duo over the issue



Police personnel and villagers at the crime spot

which led to a heated exchange of words between them. The situation was pacified after neighbours— Dampa and Dalia intervened.

"Following this, Lala and Pitambar killed Sambari as well as Dampa and Dalia before throwing their bodies into the bushes on the outskirts of village Sunday night," he alleged.

Niranjan, who studies in Bhubaneswar, said he grew suspicious as Sambari was not receiving his calls since Sunday night. Upon enquiring with relatives, Niranjan found even they and other villagers were clueless about her, and the two others', whereabouts.

Worried, he went to Oupada police station and filed a complaint about his missing mother. A police team went to Barpada and enquired about Sambari from the villagers.

On the basis of their statement, police launched a search operation on the village outskirts and found the bodies.

A police official said the bodies bore injury marks and deep gashes, suspected to have been caused due to merciless beating. Seven persons who have been detained include the two prime suspects, an officer privy to the investigation, said.

## ₹200 crore plan to curb urban deluge

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Thursday asked the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to prepare a ₹200 crore action plan to mitigate urban flooding in the state capital.

The CM issued the direction to the BMC while chairing a state-level Natural Calamity Committee meeting here.

"Flood-like situation is reported in urban areas such as Bhubaneswar after light to moderate rainfall. To tackle urban flooding, the BMC has been asked to prepare a ₹200 crore proposal and submit it to the government for approval," Majhi told reporters after the meeting.

Many low-lying areas here were inundated recently after heavy rain, which also caused traffic snarl on roads.

The state government has decided to create 10 new units of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) from the present 20 to strengthen disaster management, he said.

Five regional fire hubs in different parts of the state will be set up to tackle disasters, the CM said.

The state government has taken steps to strengthen the Fire Service wing at an estimated cost of ₹394 crore from State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). It was decided at the meeting to make provision for another ₹200 crore fund in this re-

## Another student suicide in Kota

**Kota, July 4:** A 16-year-old boy from Bihar, who had been taking coaching for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), died by hanging from a ceiling fan inside his paying guest (PG) room here, police said, Thursday. This is the 13th case of suspected suicide by a coaching student here since January.

Sandeep Kumar Kurmi, a native of Bihar's Nalanda district, was taking JEE coaching here for the last two years and lived in a PG room in Mahaveer Nagar III, the police said. At around 7am, the teen's classmate went to his room. When he did not get any response, he peeped through the window and found Kurmi hanging from the ceiling fan, Mahaveer Nagar SHO Mahendra Maru said.

Kurmi's classmate informed the PG caretaker who then informed the police, he said. According to the SHO, the student died by suicide on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. No suicide note was recovered from the room.

Kurmi's brother, Sanjeet, is taking coaching for the medical entrance exam, NEET, here and lives in a separate PG room in Dadabari area, Head Constable Mahaveer Prasad said. The two brothers reportedly lost their parents four years ago and their uncle was funding for their education, he added.

During a preliminary probe, it was found that Kurmi was an average student and would often miss his coaching classes, the SHO said.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	80049.67 ↑ 62.87
NIFTY	24302.15 ↑ 15.65
DOLLAR	83.56 ↓ ₹0.02
EURO	90.21 ↑ ₹0.26
GOLD	₹72,436 ↑ ₹33
SILVER	₹ 89,898 ↑ ₹4

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	32.1°C	29.8°C
Min Temp	27.2°C	25.5°C
Humidity	95%	95%
Rainfall	7.8mm	8.6mm

**FORECAST**  
Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain

**SHORT TAKES**

**6 held over UP tragedy**  
**Hathras (UP):** Six members of the organising committee of preacher Bhole Baba's 'satsang' were arrested in connection with the stampede that killed 121 people here Tuesday, Uttar Pradesh police officials said Thursday. Those arrested were identified as Ram Ladaite, 50, Upendra Singh Yadav, 62, Megh Singh, 61, Mukesh Kumar, 38, Manju Yadav, 30, and Manju Devi, 40. IGP (Aligarh Range) Shalabh Mathur said all six persons worked as 'sevadars' (volunteers) at the satsang. "A reward of Rs 1 lakh will be announced and NBW will also be issued against key accused Devprakash Madhukar who is on the run," Mathur said. Though Bhole Baba was not named in the FIR, he will be questioned if required during investigation, a senior officer said.

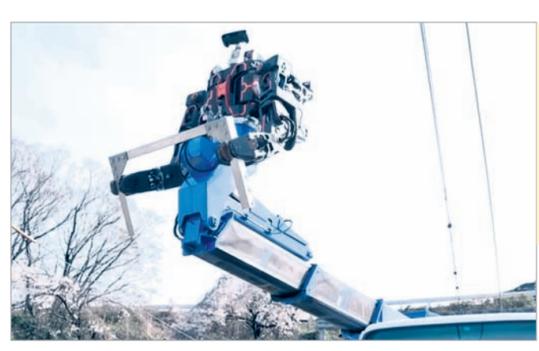
**Hemant Soren takes oath as Chief Minister**  
**Ranchi:** Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) executive president Hemant Soren Thursday took oath as the 13th Chief Minister of Jharkhand. He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor CP Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan here, an official said. Soren's father and JMM supremo Shibu Soren, his mother Rupri Soren, his wife Kalpana Soren and senior leaders of the JMM-led alliance were present at the swearing-in ceremony. Chamapi Soren, who resigned as the CM Wednesday, was also present on the occasion. Hemant was released from jail June 28 after the High Court of Jharkhand granted bail to him in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

## Humanoid robot to help maintain Japan's rail lines

**Tokyo, July 4:** It resembles an enormous, malevolent robot from 1980s sci-fi but West Japan Railway's new humanoid employee was designed with nothing more sinister than a spot of painting and gardening in mind.

Starting this month, the large machine with huge arms, a crude, disproportionately small Wall-E-like head and coke-bottle eyes mounted on a truck - which can drive on rails - has been put to use for maintenance work on the company's network.

Its operator sits in a cockpit on the truck, 'seeing' through the robot's eyes via cameras and operating its powerful limbs and hands remotely.



With a vertical reach of 12 metre (40ft), the machine can use various attachments for its arms to carry objects as heavy as 40kg (88lb), hold a brush to

**With a vertical reach of 12 metre (40ft), the machine can use various attachments for its arms to carry objects as heavy as 40kg (88lb), hold a brush to paint or use a chainsaw**

hold cables above trains, the company said.

The technology will help fill worker shortages in ageing Japan as well as reduce accidents such as workers falling from high places or suffering electric shocks, the company said.

"In the future, we hope to use machines for all kinds of main-

tenance operations of our infrastructure and this should provide a case study for how to deal with the labour shortage," West Japan Railway's president Kazuaki Hasegawa told a press conference.

According to experts, the introduction of such advanced technology in Japan's railway system is expected to have a ripple effect on the global travel industry.

"The ability to maintain infrastructure more efficiently and safely can lead to improved service reliability and reduced downtime for travellers. This, in turn, enhances the overall travel experience, making it more convenient and enjoyable," they said.



**WAHLBERG: ROMANCING BERRY  
ONSCREEN EVERY GUY'S FANTASY**

Actor Mark Wahlberg has talked about working with Halle Berry in the upcoming film *The Union* and said that romancing the actress onscreen is every man's fantasy, reports *people.com*.

**VANESSA WELCOMES FIRST BABY  
WITH HUSBAND COLE TUCKER**

Actress Vanessa Hudgens has welcomed her first baby with her MLB player husband Cole Tucker. Hudgens and Tucker were seen leaving a Santa Monica hospital July 3, which also happened to be Tucker's 28th birthday, reports *People magazine*.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

GaneshaSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
The day may start with a dilemma, but that's exactly how your skills will come into play. As evening approaches, you will be applauded for your outstanding performance. If Ganesha is particularly generous today, you may sign new agreements.

**TAURUS**  
Priorities and money matters will line up impatiently to knock on your door (and desk). Your financial constraints will get an outburst today. People may be taken by surprise with the way you get poignant. You will also enjoy the higher accountability reposed on you, predicts Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will get an opportunity to rejuvenate yourself with seamless energy. How? Ganesha's guess is that you will find – or at least you will believe that you have found – your purpose in life. It will keep you excited throughout the day, and maybe even for days to come. You may spend lavishly to improve your personal appearance.

**CANCER**  
You know how to make money, and you are even better in putting it to good use. Today, you will have your one eye on the developments in the stock market, and the other on brochures of tourism companies. Yes, you may plan to spend some money on leisure, entertainment and getting closer to your family.

**LEO**  
You are blessed with a visionary's creative streak. Perhaps, that's why, you see things differently from others. Today, thanks to the stars, your creative side will surge forth with renewed vigour. You will generate ideas effortlessly and continuously as you reach your creative peak.

**VIRGO**  
There will be dirt on your shoulder today, so dust it off, says Ganesha, because every time you fall you will get up stronger than before. Your logic and analytical skills will help you find the necessary precision to accomplish tasks at work.

**LIBRA**  
There are many kinds of worries that you must equip yourself to deal with. To do this, you may have to learn and follow the basic steps of problem-analysing techniques. The steps involve obtaining facts, analysing them and then arriving at a decision based upon your observations.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesha feels a taxing and demanding day may be at hand today. Things might baffle you so much that you might lose your ability to think clearly. The battle is not lost because your power of resilience will be the silver lining.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You will discover a flair for flirting as you puppet words to your romantic will with ease and grace. Most of today will be spent in the company of a loved one, perhaps a picnic for two, or a day-long romantic date.

**CAPRICORN**  
Like you weren't already overworked, new responsibilities will keep you occupied throughout the day, says Ganesha. The excitement with which you work every day will weaken, and eventually die down by the end of the day. This is mainly because you will burn your energy and resources in helping others.

**AQUARIUS**  
You have your head on your shoulders and feet on the ground. Congratulations! You've covered the first step to success. Step two, says Ganesha, involves an inquisitive mind and a questioning attitude. Later, you may resort to shortcuts and compromise a tad in quality.

**PISCES**  
Your fount of creativity spouts everyday like there is no tomorrow. However, you need to be organised and in position to implement all those revolutionary ideas that occur to you in a jiffy, that lesser mortals take aeons to dream up. Your oratory will win you many admirers today, so let go of your inhibitions, says Ganesha.

**Pari busts myths about India**

**Mumbai:** Actress Parineeti Chopra recently engaged in an interactive session with fans on Instagram, aiming to debunk common myths about the country.

The actress, who has 44.2 million followers on Instagram, took to the Stories section for a lively interaction with her fanbase, encouraging them to share myths about India.

In her post, she wrote: "Loved that! Let's break common myths about India... Send me videos/myths!"

One fan debunked the myth, stating, "Sardars and Punjabis don't use Balle Balle in their conversations!" Parineeti responded, "YES! And everything is not chak de phatte... Lassi is not our only beverage."

Another user wrote: "Everyone who lives in Rajasthan carries multiple pots of water on their head through the desert."

The *Ishaqzaade* actress clarified, "It's a beautiful traditional image! But Rajasthan also has commercial and modern cities."

One fan said: "Completely unrelated to what you have asked, but Raghav is the cutest husband one can get." Parineeti responded with humour, "Small break for FACTS", accompanied by a kiss emoji.

Parineeti tied the knot with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Raghav Chadha on September 24, 2023, at a private luxury hotel in Udaipur. **IANS**

**Isha's regrets from BB 17**

**Mumbai:** Actress Isha Malviya, who was seen in *Bigg Boss 17* (BB 17) last year, said that the only regret she has from doing the controversial reality show was encountering selfish people who were just 'using' her.

"I've encountered many selfish people who were just using me, and I didn't even realise it at the time. I regret those experiences. I regret forming friendships or relationships with people who didn't respect me or understand my worth," she said.

In *BB 17*, Isha was seen with her then-beau Samarth Jurel. She befriended Ankita Lokhande and her husband Vicky Jain. The actress was also seen often locking horns with her former beau Abhishek Kumar.

"I don't think I would do more reality shows in general, but if it's something related to dancing, like *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*, I would love to participate. I've been dancing since I was six years old, so why not?" Isha added.

On the work front, Isha was seen in music video *Paon Ki Jutti* by Jyoti Nooran. **IANS**

**Sherrnavaz opens up on her Mirzapur role**

**Mumbai:** Actress Sherrnavaz Jijina, who is awaiting the release of Season 3 of the superhit steaming show *Mirzapur*, has shared that in the new season, her character will be seen as a part of the drug cartel, and making drug deals.

The actress spoke about the changing trajectory of her character of Shabnam in the show and how she goes from being a reticent woman to the one calling the cards.

She told this agency: "Shabnam has never abused anyone, she's never held a gun, and she is completely far away from the whole thing. She's the only character who is so disassociated with the whole Gaddi, with the whole politics affair and now suddenly she's making drug deals and she's fighting and she's standing her ground and she's standing up against Guddu. It was fun, and was one of my favourite scenes."

She shared that be it Shweta Tripathi Sharma's character of Golu, Rasika's character of Beena or Isha Talwar's character of Madhuri, they've all done a great job and it's such a great portrayal of women. She said, "It gives them a push in a male-dominated show with women coming up in such a nice way. It's our writers who have done a fantastic job with that. It's very empowering."

She further mentioned that this season has been very challenging for her, even for Shabnam Lala, who is one of her favourite characters. **IANS**

**Fawad set for B-town return**

**Mumbai:** Pakistani actor Fawad Khan is expected to return to Indian cinema with a rom-com, which also stars Vaani Kapoor. Aarti Bagdi has come on board to direct the project, which will be shot entirely in the UK.

"Fawad Khan has a massive international pull given his popularity amongst South Asians worldwide. He has also been a part of the Marvel cinematic universe. Details of this project are being kept under wraps and everyone is tight-lipped about it. The producers will announce this project just before it starts its filming schedule in the UK," a trade source was quoted as saying.

The rom-com will tell the story of how two broken people come together by a stroke of luck and end up helping each other and ultimately falling in love. The yet-to-be-titled film is Eastwood Studios' first international collaboration.

On the work front, Fawad was last seen in 2016's *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*, directed by Karan Johar, which also starred Ranbir Kapoor, Anushka Sharma and Aishwarya Rai. **AGENCIES**

**PEANUTS**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

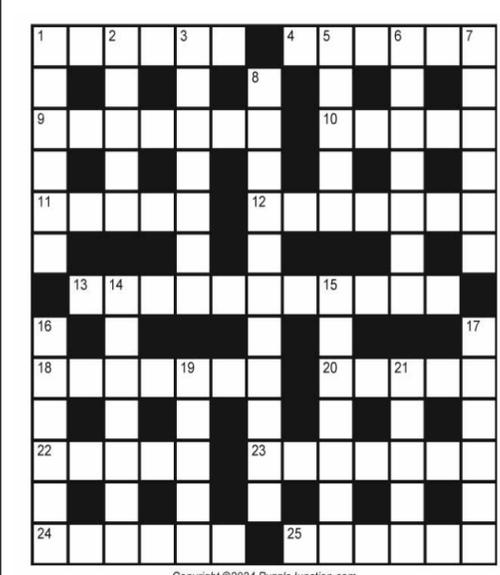


**BREVITY**



**FUN post**

**CROSSWORD**



- Across**
- 1 "O tempora! O mores!" orator
  - 4 Arctic plain
  - 9 Custodian
  - 10 Follow
  - 11 Kind of cabinet
  - 12 Bit-by-bit
  - 13 Deliberate
  - 18 Elucidate
  - 20 Coquette
  - 22 Tree branch
  - 23 Invalidated
  - 24 Avaricious
  - 25 "That's a lie!"
  - 7 Acid
  - 8 Like some close calls
  - 14 Jovian planet
  - 15 Polygonal shape
  - 16 Sleep partner (3,3)
  - 17 Be a busybody
  - 19 Orchard pest
  - 21 Hitching post?
- Down**
- 1 Sweet-talk
  - 2 Religious law
  - 3 Entourage
  - 5 Extreme
  - 6 Stoker's bat

**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.

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

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

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

**SUDOKU**

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

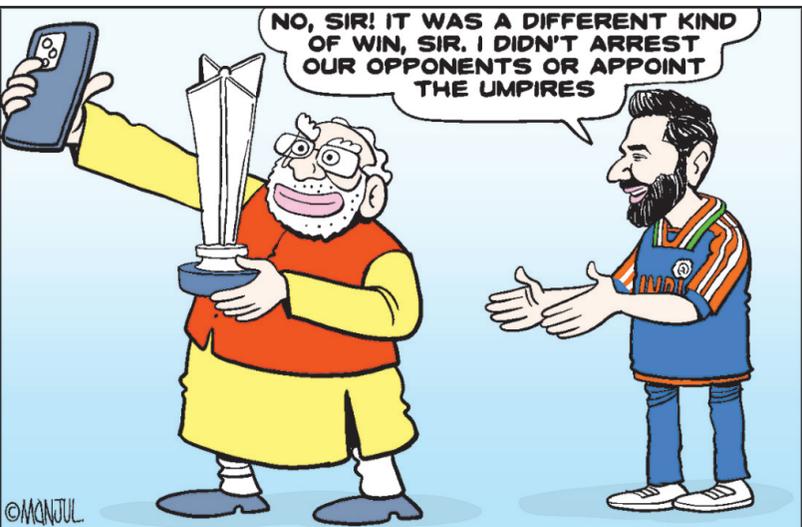
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Chief Justice of Orissa High Court Chakradhari Sharan Singh takes part in a plantation drive organised by Odisha State Legal Services Authority at Aain Seva Bhawan in Cuttack, Thursday



# downtown

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Panel to examine medical education plans in Odia



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** The state government has constituted a 22-member committee with Manash Ranjan Sahoo, Vice Chancellor of Odisha University of Health Sciences (OUHS) as its Chairman to examine plans for providing medical education in Odia language in the state.

In a notification, the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said "In view of the mandate to provide medical education in Odia language in the state, a committee is hereby constituted to examine the matter, identify the essential course books for MBBS education required to be translated in Odia language and workout timeline and budget requirement for undertaking the task."

Members of the committee include Pravash Tripathy, Additional prof Anatomy AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Archana Misra, HoD, Physiology, SCBMCH, Cuttack; Manaswaini Mangaraj, HoD, Biochem, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Niranjan Rout ex prof & HoD Pathology; Bharat Patel, asst prof Microbiology, Sundergarh Government Medical College and Hospital, Sundergarh; Pradeep Kumar Nayak, asst prof FMT, Deputy Controller Examination, OUHS, BBSR; Biswa Ranjan Padh, additional prof of Pharmacology, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Durga Satapathy, HoD, SPM, MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur; Pradipta Parida, HoD ENT, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Prasanna Ku Rathore, associate prof Medicine, PRM Medical College and Hospital, Baripada; Lachman Bag, associate prof Surgery, SJMCH Puri; Ritanjali Behera, O&G PRMCH, Baripada; Bishnu Patro, HoD, Orthopaedics, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Bhagirathi Dwibedy, prof Paediatrics, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Biswanath Behera, associate prof Dermatology, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Mihir Ranjan Nayak, prof Psychiatry, SCBMCH, Cuttack; Ranjita Mohapatra, prof

Anaesthesiology, JKMCH, Jajpur; Sudipta Nayak, additional prof Radiology, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar; Rajashree Rout, associate prof Ophthalmology, SLN-MCH, Koraput. Premananda Mohapatra Programme Advisor, Odia Bhasha Pratisthan, Bhubaneswar and Registrar of OUHS, BBSR has been appointed as a member and Convener of the committee.

The Committee will assess the volume of works to be taken up for the purpose and the timeline required for getting the work done.

The Committee will submit their proposal to the H&FW department within 15 days for taking further action in the matter, the notification added.

Meanwhile, Subasish Behera, a Dentist from Cuttack said the government's move defies simple logic. "Will students from outside states who are enrolled in medical colleges here be able understand medical terms in Odia," he asked. He said even faculties will struggle to explain concepts in Odia after learning it in English. "I'd rather suggest that they should start introducing the language in schools and colleges before implementing it in medical colleges," he added.

Amrit Pattojoshi, HoD of Psychiatry, Hitech medical college said translating the medical curriculum for MBBS students into Odia presents significant challenges. "Medicine relies on standardized terminologies and practices globally, with English serving as the common language for international collaboration. Changing these terminologies can lead to a loss of accuracy and dip in standards, affecting global acceptance and training standardisation," he said.

It is worth mentioning that the previous BJD government had planned to introduce a policy framework for promoting technical as well as medical education in Odia language in the state. It was as per a resolution passed during the First World Odia Language Conference held in the Capital City in February this year.

## Lok Seva Bhavan ASO found dead

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** The body of an assistant section officer (ASO) employed at Lok Seva Bhavan here was found hanging inside his rented house in Acharya Vihar area here under suspicious circumstances.

Investigating officer (IO) ASI Mohan Charan Murmu of Saheed Nagar police station said the deceased was identified as Mara Marandi, 26, a native of Mayurbhanj district. He was employed in the Steel and Mines department at Lok Seva Bhavan here.



The IO also said, "Mara's roommate Lalmoohan arrived at the rented house around 2pm and found the main door bolted from inside. His suspicion grew when Mara did not respond despite knocking the door several times. He went near the window at the backside of the house and spotted Mara hanging from the ceiling fan."

On being informed, cops rushed the spot and broke door open. However, by then, Mara had died.

The ASI said though the exact reason of his death is yet to be ascertained, Mara's colleagues are being quizzed to elicit more details. "Post-mortem report will reveal the details of the death," he added.

# CM's language, culture push

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** In keeping with the promises made in its election manifesto, the BJP government in the state, led by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, gave a major push to the Odia Asmita (pride) plank Thursday by announcing a slew of initiatives aimed at giving a fresh lease of life to the Odisha's cultural and linguistic heritage. Soon after stepping into his office at Lok Seva Bhawan, the CM directed all officers concerned to implement the government's vision and if needed, make amendments to the Odisha Official Language Act to streamline procedures.

The CM was working at a temporary office in the state guest house since taking oath June 12, as renovation work of his office at Lok Seva Bhawan was underway.

Majhi bowed down on his knees before entering Lok Seva Bhawan Thursday morning and then entered his office chamber amidst the chanting of Sanskrit slokas by priests.

Deputy Chief Ministers Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, along with several other ministers, were present on the occasion. Speaking to reporters, Majhi said, "Apart from tangible development, emphasis will be laid on cultural development. Importance will also be given to the promotion and preservation of Odia 'asmita' (pride)."



- | KEY TAKEAWAYS  |  |
|--|--|
| ■ Odisha Sahitya Akademi, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi will be restructured | ■ Odisha Language Bhawan and Odia Asmita Bhawan to be set up |
|  | ■ Sanskriti Bhawan to come up in all the districts           |

Majhi said he has issued instructions to the officers to ensure that all files put forth before him are in Odia language.

He said all government work would be done in Odia language. If needed, the Odisha Official Language Act will be amended.

The CM announced that a language commission will be set up for the promotion of Odia language. The Odisha Sahitya Akademi, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi will be restructured and steps will be taken to augment their working capabilities, he added.

"The Odissi Research Centre will be made effective and quality research on 'Odia asmita' will be encouraged. Efforts will be made to promote reading habits among the people by expanding the library movement," he said. A translation academy will be established for the promotion of Odia language and literature while a mechanism will be put in place for the use of technology for the development of the Odia language, Majhi said.

Odisha Language Bhawan and Odia Asmita Bhawan will also be set up, he said.

To promote the art and culture of each district, Sanskriti Bhawan will be set up in all the districts of Odisha, he said.

Special consideration will be made for the appointment of Odia teachers in high schools across the state. The work for the establishment of Paika Academy and Memorial at Barunei will be accelerated.

The state government is committed to giving importance to the development of the various heritage sites of the state. All work will be done with the co-operation and suggestion of the public, Majhi added.

He called upon the people to give suggestions as to what else needed to be done for Odia asmita. They can submit their proposals to the government in the coming days, he added.

## 4 officers reverted to GA & PG dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** As many as four senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officers, who were posted in the CMO during Naveen Patnaik's tenure, were reverted to the General Administration & Public Grievance (GA&PG) department, Thursday.

The four officers are Lala Manoj Kumar Ray, who was posted as special secretary to former chief minister, Rabindra Kumar

Sethi, who was posted as OSD at the office of the former CM, Subranshu Mishra, who worked as additional secretary to former CM with additional charge

of additional secretary of Sports and YS department, and Manoj Kumar Swain, who worked as joint secretary to the erstwhile chief minister.



**FREE RESIDENTIAL COACHING FOR STUDENTS OF**  
NUAPADA, KANDHAMAL, RAYAGADA, SUNDARGARH, BALANGIR, JHARSUGUDA, SAMBALPUR, ANGUL DISTRICTS OF ODISHA

**FREE** 2 Year Coaching for JEE  
CBSE School Enrollment  
Hostel and Food

For Class 10th Pass / Appearing Students

TEST DATE : 08.07.2024

A CSR Initiative of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited for Enlightening Generation Next.

Implementing Agency

**MOTION** @ 7008615806, 7008555744, 9351960672 • <http://motion.ac.in/mcl-super-50>

MCL Super 50 Bhubaneswar Center : Near Ram Mandira, Odisha Co-operative Housing Building, 3rd Floor, Janpath, Unit-III  
Motion Corporate Office : 394, Rajeev Gandhi Nagar, Kota (Raj.)  
Email : [info@motion.an.in](mailto:info@motion.an.in) | Website : [www.motion.an.in](http://www.motion.an.in) | @18002121799



# DIVYA KALA MELA

Unique Fair for Promoting Craftsmanship & Products of more than 50 Divyang Entrepreneurs

**05<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024**  
**11.00 AM to 6.00 PM**  
**KIIT University Campus, Patia, Bhubaneswar**



"The perseverance and vibrancy of persons with disabilities is an inspiration for all. In the last 10 years, continuous and comprehensive steps have been taken to bring a positive change in the lives of our divyang sisters and brothers."

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Exhibition & Sale of Swadeshi Products of the Divyang Artisans & Craftmen from Various States
- **Divya Kala Shakti**- A Traditional Cultural Programme by Divyang Artists on **05.07.2024 (01.00 PM onwards)**
- Assessment and Distribution of Assistive Devices to Divyangjan
- **Divyangjan Rozgar Mela**- Hiring Persons with Disabilities (As per Eligibility)



**ENTRY FREE**

SASHAKT DIVYANG, SAMARTH BHARAT

# Elaborate arrangements by ECoR for Rath Yatra

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** In view of the upcoming Rath Yatra, Ministry of Railways has decided to provide convenience to the devotees coming to Puri by trains, railway officials said Thursday.

Expecting a huge congregation, East Coast Railway (ECoR) has planned 315 special trains along with sanitation and cleanliness of station premises as well as safety and security of people, officials said.

ECoR said that special trains will run from almost all parts of the state and from neighboring Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Large number of extra coaches will be put into services. Special Trains will be run by using AI-based dynamic Scheduling System. Railways aim to carry around 15 lakh passengers to and from Puri during the festival.

Emphasis will be given on effective announcements at the stations and effortless ticketing system, by operating additional ticket booking counters, officials said.

A round-the-clock control room will be opened to look into passengers' issues as well as smooth train operations, they added.

Some of the measures to be implemented during the festival



## Coastal security beefed up

**Bhubaneswar:** In order to meet unforeseen challenges during Rath Yatra, Additional DG of Police, Coastal Security, at a preparatory meeting, instructed all the stakeholders to be on alert mode and intensify extensive patrolling from July 6 to July 19. Coastal security control room will be operational at Penthakata marine police station to assist ships and air assets deployed during the festival, an official said. All marine police stations have been instructed to intensify extensive sea/land patrolling during car festival, the official added. According to sources, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will conduct continuous patrolling with standby interceptor boats at Paradip and Gopalpur. ICG Air Wing will conduct air surveillance along the Puri coast. Indian Navy will deploy a team of life guards and medical assistants at Puri sea beach. Fisheries department trawlers will be deployed at Astaranga and Chandrabhaga to keep a watch on the movement of fishing boats and suspicious activities.

include train information system/enquiry counters, video wall displays, UTS on mobile app, waiting areas and sheds to accommodate around 15,000 pilgrims and devotees.

Other arrangements include

food catering and hospitality, medical facilities and emergency ambulance services.

Railway will ensure uncut power supply besides providing drinking water facilities and unisex toilets for the conven-

ience of passengers.

Railway officials said that in order to handle rush of pilgrims, additional booking counters will be opened at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Khurda Road, Berhampur, Balugaon, Khalikot, Paradeep, Bhadrak and Jajpur-Keonjhar Road along with other important stations in its jurisdiction. Passenger Help Desks will be set up near the buffer ends of

platforms in order to guide the passengers, they said.

A number of 'Train Timetable Boards' will be put up at strategic locations at Puri railway station.

A temporary shed is being erected at the railway station to accommodate surplus devotees. Also, CCTV cameras will be installed in and around the station to keep a close watch on anti-social activities.

## MOCK DRILL AHEAD OF CAR FEST



**Puri:** To ensure coordination among the staff of different departments and agencies during the festival, a mock drill was conducted here, Thursday. Puri district collector Siddharth Shankar Swain, at a meeting with different department officials, prepared a standard operating procedure. Thereafter, a mock drill was carried out with NDRF, ODRF, Fire Brigade, Police department, Transport department, PWD and volunteers. DGP Arun Sarangi also held a meeting with senior police officers and emphasised on providing proper security and services to devotees.

# 3-day IIMUN begins at St Xavier's Cuttack



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 4:** The India's International Movement to United Nations (IIMUN) kicked off at St. Xavier's Senior Secondary School here, Thursday. The three-day event will conclude, July 6.

The opening ceremony was a cultural amalgamation of Indian and international ideas. Olympian Dutee Chand, ADGP Lalit Das, and school Principal Priyadarshi Nayak were present at the inaugural function.

Speaking on the occasion, Nayak said the event will simulate debates and discussions for various committees and agen-

das related to state, national and international issues in the Assembly, World Health Organisation and various committees of Lok Sabha.

The event will see around 300 debating students in the school and an estimated footfall of around 400 people as an audience. The rendezvous is set to witness school/college students, their parents, teachers, principals and luminaries from different walks of life.

With the motto, 'Uniting the World the Indian Way' IIMUN has been responsible for organising 220 such conferences in as many cities across the country and in 35 countries globally every year.

# NBCC to oversee Ravenshaw varsity devt



The scope of the project includes construction and development of various key facilities with more than 45,000sqm of built-up area



AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** The National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC) has been entrusted with the task of overseeing comprehensive development of Ravenshaw University in Cuttack, one of the premier educational institutes in the state.

The project, valued at approximately ₹250crore, aims to enhance infrastructure across the university's main campus and Mahanadi campus.

The scope of the project includes construction and devel-

opment of various key facilities with more than 45,000sqm of built-up area.

At the main campus, the project will include the construction of two research scholar hostels (G+3), each accommodating 150 students and spanning approximately 8,000sqm.

Additionally, a comprehensive mess facility, equipped with dining areas, kitchens, and essential amenities to serve 1,000 students, shall be built.

The project also encompasses the construction of staff quarters (G+7), comprising 14 units

of 2BHK and 14 units of 3BHK apartments, with a total built-up area of about 4,000sqm.

Furthermore, an exclusive road tailored for the needs of visually impaired students, ensuring accessibility across the campus, shall be constructed.

The project also includes comprehensive peripheral development and the installation of essential infrastructure for the smooth functioning of academic and residential life at the university.

At Mahanadi campus, the project will include the construction of two hostel buildings (G+3) with a combined capacity of 1,000 students (700 boys and 300 girls), spanning an area of approximately 18,000sqm.

An academic block (G+2) covering 8,500sqm, equipped with furniture, seminar halls, and peripheral amenities to support academic pursuits, and a library block spanning 6,500sqm, featuring study areas and seminar halls.

A cafeteria with a capacity for 1,000 individuals and a staff recreation hall will provide amenities for both students and faculty.



**IN MEMORIAM:** Odia Language, Literature and Culture department staffers paying tributes to Swami Vivekananda on his 122nd death anniversary near Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# Retirement allowance of para-teachers hiked

**Kolkata:** The West Bengal government Thursday announced a substantial hike in the 'one-time benefit' for contractual higher secondary teachers and para-teachers upon retirement. Sharing the news on X, Education Minister Bratya Basu said following the initiative of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the school education department has decided to increase the one-time retirement allowance for all such contractual employees associated with teaching from ₹2/3 lakh to ₹5 lakh. This increase will be effective from April 2024, he said. "This benefit will cover para-teachers, academic supervisors, contractual higher secondary teachers, SSK (Shishu Shiksha Kendra), and MSK (Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra) employees associated with education," Basu said. Basu also shared an image of the school education department's circular on X, which indicated that the finance department has issued an order for enhancing "the terminal benefit from ₹2 lakh/3 lakh to ₹5 lakh in respect of contractual higher secondary teachers, para-teachers, SSK and MSK teachers, academic supervisors, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers and Anganwadi workers, upon attaining the age of 60/65 years."

# WSC's training for School of Services

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** World Skill Center (WSC) invites online applications for its School of Services 2024-25.

The centre offers market-oriented, diverse year-long advanced training programmes. Last date for application is August 30. The courses focus on preparing youths for national and global service sectors job opportunities. The School of Services provides advance course in 'Beauty & Wellness'. The course includes aspects like beauty therapy and hair-dressing. The 'Beauty & Wellness' modules cover make-up, nail services, skin care, massage therapy, head and scalp treatments, hair styling, hair-cutting, and hair colouring. Candidates with a +2 qualification or a diploma in any discipline are eligible to apply.

Candidates can apply for enrollment after registering themselves at WSC website [www.worldskillcenter.org](http://www.worldskillcenter.org). For more information, candidates can contact on the toll-free number 1800-266-6002.

# Canine weddings on the rise in China

It was a dream wedding, complete with picturesque outdoor setting, white lace gown and a delectable cake. This was the perfect day for golden retrievers - Bree and Bond - to tie the knot in front of their closest human and canine friends.

Pet weddings are on the rise in China, where government policies have had little success in encouraging more humans to wed in this fast-ageing society where the population is declining and marriage and birth rates remain low.

The popularity of pets and an increasing willingness to splurge on them are driving the trend. Spending on furry companions in 2023 rose 3.2 per cent to 279.3 billion yuan (\$38.41 billion) from a year earlier, industry figures show.

"People have weddings. Why can't dogs have weddings?" Bree's owner Rye Ling said after escorting his female pet down the aisle, where she exchanged vows promising to always share treats and play with her husband Bond. As of 2023, there were more



than 116 million cats and dogs in urban China, according to figures by research firm Acuity Knowledge Partners. If distributed evenly across China's

urban population, roughly one in eight Chinese people own a cat or a dog, with a majority of owners under 40, according to the research firm.

Ling and his girlfriend Gigi Chen, who said they're in no rush to get married themselves, meticulously planned the canine ceremony for months, arranging professional photographers, designing wedding booklets and ordering a custom-made, 800-yuan cake complete with toppers that resemble Bree and Bond.

Yang Tao, whose Shanghai-based pet bakery prepared the cake, said she was initially surprised that customers wanted wedding cakes for their dogs.

"I think there will be more and more dog weddings," Yang said, adding that she has already catered several similar ceremonies since her bakery was launched in 2022.

"We have already received an order for a few months from now ... and that's for a dog wedding." Ling said he hoped the ceremony would give Bree and Bond a 'sense of ritual'. Ling, who said he wanted only one child, also hopes to welcome puppies soon.

REUTERS

# Education fair at DPS Kalinga for Class XI, XII students



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 4:** DPS Kalinga organised a career and education fair in collaboration with 'Student Outreach' on the school premises Thursday.

The fair offered career guidance and profile building opportunities for Class XI and Class XII students who are currently at a stage of exploring their interests and tracing their future paths.

Students from more than 15 educational institutions includ-

ing Ashoka University, Alliance University, ESSEC Business School Paris and Singapore, Flame University, OP Jindal University, Whistling Woods International, MIT MPU Pune and World University of Design took part in the fair.

The school organisers conducted various interactive sessions, informative presentations and group counselling programmes to enlighten students on various career opportunities and emerging careers.

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-889550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

PMAY goes haywire in Rayagada

Many beneficiaries have received work orders but are unable to carry out construction due to unavailability of land

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, July 4: The Centre-sponsored housing scheme Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) has allegedly gone haywire in the tribal dominated Rayagada district as over 862 beneficiaries have failed to build a house despite receiving work orders.

work orders for construction of houses are issued to only those who pay bribe. Moreover, many beneficiaries have received work orders but they are unable to carry out construction due to unavailability of land.



When contacted, Nihar Ranjan Kanhar, executive officer of DRDA and Rayagada Zilla Parishad said that there were 2,868 landless beneficiaries in the district before he took charge.

Similarly, many PMAY houses are only halfway through their construction. A total of 38,180 beneficiaries have been identified and issued work orders in 11 blocks of the district in last six years from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

Chandrapur, 752 in Gudari, 870 in Gunupur, 1,206 in Kashipur, 1,510 in Kolnara, 1,530 in Muniguda, 710 in Padmapur, 550 in Ramnagda and 1,553 in Rayagada.

Couple dead, 3 injured as car rams into truck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

truck from behind.

Jajpur, July 4: A man and his wife were killed, while three others were critically injured, after the car they were travelling in rammed into a stationary truck on NH-16 in Jajpur district Thursday, police said.



The incident happened in the early hours near a petrol pump on the outskirts of Panikoiil Bazar within the limits of Panikoiil police station when the car was on its way to Balasore from Cuttack, the police said.

The deceased, identified as Binod Behari Jena and his wife Sumitra Jena, were residents of Soro area in Balasore district. Immediately after the accident, locals and fire department officials reached the spot to rescue all five occupants of the car including the driver.

Child marriages continue secretly in Mahakalapara

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, July 4: The incidence of child marriage cases has been increasing day by day in this block of Kendrapara district.

Mallik adding that over 20 child marriages have come to light in Mahakalapara in the past two years and action has been taken by the department.

Additionally, all Anganwadi workers in the block have been instructed to raise awareness among local residents to stop the unabated child marriages.

In certain communities, child marriages are conducted secretly with family consent when the girl is about 12-15 years old.

These illegal marriages, predominant among the scheduled tribes (ST), are conducted secretly, mainly due to poverty, illiteracy, and lack of awareness.

Such clandestine child marriages are particularly attempted in tribal and Bengali-inhabited villages in the area.

Similarly, another child marriage attempted by a tribal household was prevented in May this year.

Legal action will be taken against the families involved in child marriage, said

Man rapes, loots woman; arrested

PHULBANI

Phulbani: A man has been arrested for allegedly raping and looting a woman in Kandhamal district, police said Thursday.

Additionally, all Anganwadi workers in the block have been instructed to raise awareness among local residents to stop the unabated child marriages.

Such clandestine child marriages are particularly attempted in tribal and Bengali-inhabited villages in the area.

Legal action will be taken against the families involved in child marriage, said

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender No. : 92245600 Description: SET OF TPU RING CONSISTING OF 04 ITEMS (1) - TPU RING INNER FOR PRIMARY SUSPENSION, ITEM NO. 1 OF DRG. NO. CG-20049, QTY PER SET - 16 NOS. (2) - TPU RING OUTER FOR PRIMARY SUSPENSION, ITEM NO. 2 OF DRG. NO. CG-20049, QTY PER SET - 16 NOS. (3) - TPU RING INNER FOR SECONDARY SUSPENSION, ITEM NO. 1 OF DRG. NO. CG-20057, QTY PER SET - 08 NOS. (4) - TPU RING OUTER FOR SECONDARY SUSPENSION, ITEM NO. 2 OF DRG. NO. CG-20057, QTY PER SET - 08 NOS. Quantity: 100 SET. [Warranty Period : 30 Months after the date of delivery]. Inspection Agency : TPI.

OFFICE OF THE DHENKANAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DHENKANAL E-Procurement Notice Tender Call Notice No. 2451 /DKLMP/Date : 02.07.2024

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, MECHANICAL CIRCLE, BRAHMAPUR

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR

Special Trains for RATH YATRA Dedicated Service by EAST COAST RAILWAY

Table with multiple columns: TRAIN NO., NAME OF SPECIAL TRAINS, DATE OF DEP., DEP. TIME FROM ORIG. STN, ARR. TIME AT PURI. Includes sections for Special Trains to Puri for Rath Yatra (06.07.2024 to 13.07.2024), Special Trains from Puri for Rath Yatra (07.07.2024 to 14.07.2024), and other special trains during Rath Yatra.

SAIL inducted as member of LeadIT

ROURKELA: Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has recently been inducted as a member of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT). The announcement came June 25 at the 'Engaging India at Almedalen' programme held in Visby, Sweden.

goals and net-zero transition. LeadIT members subscribe to the notion that energy-intensive industry can and must progress on low-carbon pathways, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emission by 2050.

Further details can be obtained from the O/o - The Chief Engineer, Minor Irrigation, Odisha, H.O.D Building, Keshari Nagar, Bhubaneswar - 751001.

UTS ON MOBILE For Unreserved PAPERLESS TICKET ECOR YATRA APP UTS ON MOBILE Dial 139 One Number for any Help Queries & Complaint related to Train

Rath Yatra on Mobile App Visit ECoR Rath Yatra Mobile App ECOR YATRA for all information Download the app from Google Play Store



The practice of Yoga brings us face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our own being.

SRI AUROBINDO



## The Best Policy

It is easy to be pessimistic in these fraught, uncertain times. Instability is on the rise, and conflicts are unfolding on our screens everyday. The post-COVID economic recovery is proving to be uneven and inequitable, with women and the poorest benefiting the least from recent gains. Even though we can expect the global average unemployment rate to fall modestly this year, from 5 per cent in 2023 to a projected 4.9 per cent, there are still persistent deficits in decent work.

For example, only 45.6 per cent of working-age women (age 15-64) are formally employed, compared to 69.2 per cent of working-age men. Women in high-income countries still earn only 73 cents for every dollar earned by men, on average, and in low-income countries, that figure falls to 44 cents.

At the same time, the climate crisis continues to wreak havoc on the planet and vulnerable communities. The last 12 months have been the hottest on record, with far-reaching implications for billions of people's lives, livelihoods, and health. Excessive heat alone affects 2.4 billion people – representing 70 per cent of the global workforce – and kills close to 19,000 workers each year.

Moreover, owing to droughts and other factors, hunger continues to spread, and basic needs are going unfulfilled. The rewards of development increasingly appear to have been monopolised by a privileged few. And if all these developments were not bad enough, wars and conflicts that have already claimed the lives of millions of innocent people seem to have become more entrenched.

It doesn't have to be this way. A far better approach to development, climate action, and global governance would be oriented around social justice. This principle is the key to unlocking a better, more equitable world. It is the thread that binds together the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But it is usually framed in the abstract, rather than as a concrete policy objective.

That is what needs to change. Social justice must be pursued with the same urgency and level of commitment as a just energy transition and fairer trade rules. These goals are, in fact, interdependent, because making progress on each will help us make progress on the others.

We cannot achieve social justice if we do not protect workers and businesses from the deleterious effects of climate change. We cannot have sustainable trade if jobs in factories and along supply chains are not decent, with basic occupational safeguards and living wages. We cannot ensure that our societies will remain peaceful if individuals are unable to sustain themselves and their families through their work. Equally, there can be no prosperity without peace, and wars are often rooted in poverty, environmental degradation, and other manifestations of injustice.

But to make progress in any of these areas, we will need more robust policies to promote equality, rights, and inclusion in labour markets and beyond. That means ensuring equal access to decent jobs, high-quality health care and education, skills training and lifelong learning, and a safe and healthy environment.

Translating the demand for social justice into reality requires mobilising all those who believe in the power of collaboration, cooperation, social dialogue, and multilateralism. The Global Coalition for Social Justice, which held its inaugural forum in Geneva this June, is a perfect example. Over 300 partners have already joined this initiative, bringing together governments, employers' and workers' organisations, UN and regional international organisations, regional development banks, enterprises, NGOs, and academic institutions, that are convinced that genuinely inclusive policies must be implemented at all levels of governance – global, regional, national, and local.

We are at a historic juncture. Next year, the global community will have an opportunity to advance the goal of social justice when the UN convenes the Second World Summit for Social Development. The aim is to help all countries align their efforts with international commitments, including those enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments and civil-society leaders will have a chance to work toward ensuring that adequate, universal social protections reach everyone, and that all people and communities are equipped with the skills, education, and knowledge they need to navigate major economic transitions and global upheavals.

We are committed to doing our part and acting as a conduit for progress through the Global Coalition for Social Justice at the World Summit and beyond. We invite others to join us. The future does not have to be like the present; but it will be unless we adopt a new mindset geared toward policy priorities that embody the quest for social justice.

*Gilbert F. Hougbo is Director-General of the International Labour Organization. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is President of Brazil.*

©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Gilbert F. Hougbo & Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

The future does not have to be like the present; but it will be unless we adopt a new mindset geared toward policy priorities that embody the quest for social justice

### FOCUS ECONOMY

# RECLAIM FREE MARKET



The focus on maximising profit has resulted in practices such as monopolistic behaviours, exploitation of labour, and environmental degradation that undermine the well-being of the broader population



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

IT IS TIME TO RECLAIM FREE MARKET FROM FREE MARKETERS OF CAPITALISM AND DEFEAT ITS MARKET-DRIVEN CULTURE OF MASS CONSUMERISM AND ALIENATION

Historically, markets were established by working people to serve their everyday needs and desires. These markets were grounded in local communities they served, reflecting the economic and social realities of the time. People would come together in these markets to trade goods and services, fostering a sense of community and mutual dependence. The primary focus was on meeting the essential needs of the population, ensuring access to food, clothing, tools, and other necessities. In these early markets, transactions were straightforward, often based on barter or simple currency systems, and were characterised by direct interactions between producers and consumers. This setup allowed for greater transparency and trust, as buyers could directly engage with sellers, understand the origins and quality of the products, and negotiate fair prices. Market was an institution of solidarity and a process of cooperation for a meaningful life and mutual existence.

As societies grew more complex and interdependent economies expanded, the nature of markets evolved. However, the foundational principles of market were changed in the name of promoting free market. The so-called free market in its current form has deviated significantly from this original purpose. Today, it often controls everyday lives, functioning primarily as a tool for profit-making for a select few capitalists. Instead of serving the broader community, the modern market prioritises the interests of large corporations and wealthy individuals. These entities have the power to influence market dynamics to their advantage, often

at the expense of the average consumer and small producer. This shift has led to a situation where the market dictates the terms of economic, social and cultural life, influencing everything from job availability and wages to the prices of essential goods and services. The focus on maximising profit has resulted in practices that undermine the well-being of the broader population, such as monopolistic behaviours, exploitation of labour, and environmental degradation.

In essence, the market has transformed from a community-oriented institution into a profit-driven mechanism that primarily benefits a small elite, often leaving the majority of people with little control over their economic, social, political and cultural purposes of their everyday lives. This distortion of the market's original purpose highlights the need for a re-evaluation of how economic systems are structured and governed to ensure they truly serve the needs and de-

sires of all people, not just a privileged few.

The concept of a free market in all its forms within a capitalist system is often touted as being both free and fair. However, this notion is far from reality. The free market is intended to provide freedom to both consumers and producers, yet in practice, neither group truly experiences this freedom. In a so-called free market, consumers and producers are not provided with sufficient information about the products, their producers, or the costs involved in production. This lack of transparency leaves consumers in the dark about the reasoning behind pricing decisions. Instead of being a truly open and fair system, the free market operates as a controlled mechanism of global capitalism.

Large corporations dominate this landscape, enhancing their profits by creating disconnect between consumers and producers. They manipulate the market to establish independ-

ent pricing mechanisms that prioritise their interests, often leading to super-profits at the expense of fairness and transparency. Moreover, these corporations often engage in practices that stifle competition, such as forming monopolies or oligopolies, which further undermine the principles of a truly free market. As a result, consumers face higher prices and limited choices, while smaller producers struggle to survive in an environment skewed heavily in favour of big business. In essence, the so-called free market is less about freedom and fairness and more about strategic manipulation of economic systems to benefit a select few, exacerbating inequality and reducing the agency of both consumers and producers.

The market has historically been instrumental in converting economic activities into social ones, establishing meaningful relationships between producers and consumers. This legacy underscores the potential of markets to not only drive economic prosperity but also to build strong, connected communities. It is time to reclaim free and fair market which serves as community hubs, where people gather not just to trade, but to socialise, share news, and engage in cultural activities. These interactions helped to weave the economic fabric into the social fabric of the community, making economic activities a vital part of daily life and social cohesion. It is time to struggle and reclaim free market from free marketiers of capitalism and defeat its market-driven culture of mass consumerism and alienation.

The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# Troubled terrain of human rights



Satya Narayan Misra

ONE NEEDS HUMAN RIGHTS PRECISELY BECAUSE HISTORY HAS A DARK SIDE

From 1945, there was more attention to the idea of universal human rights than at any time in world history. The general cause was international politics and foreign policies of victors of World War-II. Individuals and NGOs also contributed to extensive attention to universal rights. The discourse on human rights accelerated after about 1970, and many new efforts at implementation occurred in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. Like the fate of national liberal democracy, the advance of the theory and practice of human rights waxed and waned. After 2016 there was clearly a period of stagnation or even decline. "There is no justice in history," wrote Israeli savant Harari. There is no reason to quibble over this statement, in the sense that history is not teleological. It does not automatically produce progress, and certainly not a steady advance for human rights. Jews know that is true, having seen the rise of Hitler and the genocide of some six million Jews in Auschwitz and elsewhere. Palestinian Arabs know that is true, having been a majority in both Ottoman and British Palestine but having been displaced from the land of their birth. Iraqi Yazidis, Native Americans, Syrian Kurds, European Roma, Myanmar Rohingya, Sri Lankan Tamils, Rwanda Tutsis, Chinese Uighurs and many other victims of his-

tory know that justice is far from guaranteed. This is precisely the reason to construct human rights, which Harari provocatively calls a myth. One needs human rights precisely because history has a dark side. Heroic examples like Nelson Mandela or Wallenberg from Sweden seem the exception rather than the rule.

While conflicts, disease, poverty and various forms of underdevelopment in the non-Western world used to be either ignored or passively accepted as normal, now there are considerable sums spent on rectifying these conditions. As a partial result, global data indicate that progress has been made in reducing polio, measles, that infant and maternal mortality has been reduced, that longevity of life has increased, that literacy has increased. Sala I Martin (2003) calculates that whereas 20% of the world's citizens were poor in 1970, it has dipped to 7% in 2000. Economic productivity has increased, though pockets of problems persist.

Furthermore, apartheid was overturned in South Africa, European communism collapsed and there was a renaissance in criminal justice. None of the advances occurred because of impersonal workings of history but because of human agency. Because Mandela, Rene Cassin and Eleanor Roosevelt and Sakharov all engaged in the tough struggle for more human rights in Russia after the fall of

communism, the tax lawyer Magnitsky exposed elite fraud.

In 1992, the respected scholar Francis Fukuyama reflected on the West's victory over Soviet-led communism and argued that ideological debates were over about the best form of government. Democratic capitalism has proven itself superior. Thus, in his view we had reached the end of political history: democratic capitalism.

In 2016 one saw political earthquakes in two of the oldest democracies - Britain and the United States. The British voted to leave the EU and Americans elected Donald Trump as President. Both votes showed similar characteristics - namely, less educated and less urban citizens endorsing radical change. In the UK, the vote for Brexit was driven to a considerable degree by the non-urban English who felt left behind economically, put upon socially by too many migrants from Eastern Europe, with too much intrusion into traditional life by a bureaucratic Brussels - the home of EU. The referendum, however, was not a rejection of democracy as such or a turn to autocratic rule.

Trump was elected President for partially the same reasons that the UK opted for Brexit. The Trump hardcore voter felt that democratic capitalism was working only for the wealthy coastal elites. The highly educated urban elites were certainly benefiting

from high tech developments and a booming stock market, but the church going heartland felt left behind. Too many benefits were seen as flowing to the foreign-born minorities, and not enough for hard working poor. Democratic capitalism, while sounding fine in the abstract, since it is based on economic and political freedom, can produce angry and frustrated voters willing to support a leader with autocratic tendencies.

Internationally recognized human rights seem fine to many in the abstract. From 1945 they were endorsed by numerous international arrangements. But they are difficult to interject in to the competitive nature of the nation state system of world affairs. The difficulties of advancing personal rights in world politics are enormous. Among the most important challenge for future generations is the proliferation of claims to human rights and the tendencies to expand rights claims to all concerns about social justice. More equality for LGBT members, more concern for those with disabilities show moral progress. Still, where is the dividing line between fundamental human rights absolutely essential to a life with dignity and broader social justice concerns interested in making the world a better place?

The writer teaches Macro Economics.

### WISDOM CORNER

People sacrifice the present for the future. But life is available only in the present. That is why we should walk in such a way that every step can bring us to the here and the now. THICH NHAT HANH

The power for creating a better future is contained in the present moment: You create a good future by creating a good present. ECKHART TOLLE

Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for. ZIG ZIGLAR

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1811: Venezuela declares independence from Spain. Under the leadership of Francisco de Miranda, Venezuela declared its independence from Spain. This started the Venezuelan War of Independence. The country gained independence 10 years later in 1821.
- 1946: The first bikini, designed by French engineer Louis Réard, made its debut in Paris; the swimsuit was named for the Bikini atoll, which, just days earlier, had been the site of the world's first peacetime atomic-weapons test.
- 1950: Israel's Law of Return passed. Passed this day in 1950 by the Knesset, the Law of Return granted Jews the freedom to immigrate to Israel and receive immediate citizenship, but it proved controversial when the question "Who is a Jew?" raised other issues.
- 1954: American singer Elvis Presley recorded That's All Right, which became his first hit and helped give rise to rock and roll music.
- 1973: Coup in Rwanda. Then Army Chief of Staff, Juvénal Habyarimana, staged a coup and overthrew the President, Grégoire Kayibanda. Habyarimana then held the post of president for 20 years.

### Alarming report

Sir, A recent WHO report published in The Lancet Global Health reveals that nearly half of India's adult population is not engaging in sufficient physical activity, posing severe health risks. The prevalence of insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has skyrocketed from 22.3% in 2000 to 49.4% in 2022. Specifically, 57.2% of women and 42% of men did not engage in enough exercise in 2022. Experts warn that if this trend continues, over 60% of India's adult population could be unfit by 2030, significantly increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Indians are genetically more prone to developing these diseases at least a decade earlier than others, and physical inactivity exacerbates these risks. WHO advises adults to do 150-300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity weekly or equivalent vigorous activity to reduce risks like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, dementia, and cancers. India ranks 12th globally for insufficient physical activity among 195 countries, with 31% of adults, about 1.8 billion people, not meeting recommended activity levels in 2022.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

### No lessons learnt

Sir, The quality of crowd management is a far cry from expected standards in India. Many past tragedies have left unmistakable imprints but stakeholders are not keen to learn. The tendency to take people for granted and a chronic lack of disaster anticipation are shocking. The stampede near Uttar Pradesh's Hathras that claimed over 120 lives of devotees, who were leaving after a "satsang," points to a callous approach of the state and the event organisers. The religious discourse is said to have taken place in a small hall with only one narrow functional exit door; the others being closed for the preacher's cavalcade to pass. Apparently, there was scarce manpower to control the sudden exodus. Was the district administration in dark about the event? Were necessary arrangements like water and food made? People rushed out due to heat and humidity says one report, so the next question is whether the hall had adequate number of fans, if at all?

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

Orissa POST  
B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

HATHRAS STAMPEDE

# SOPs to prevent future tragedies

Permissions for events will now require compliance with minimum civic amenities standards, such as sufficient toilets, water supply, and emergency exits, says Asim Arun

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hathras (UP), July 4:** A day after a stampede in Hathras claimed 121 lives, Uttar Pradesh minister Asim Arun Wednesday said the state government has started work on SOPs for granting permission for large gatherings to prevent such incidents in future.

He said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to prepare the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and permission for events would be granted only if the "basic, minimum" conditions for amenities are met.

Arun, the minister of state for social welfare, is part of a three-member committee formed by Adityanath for supervising the relief measures in the aftermath of the stampede.

Explaining how the tragedy unfolded, he said, "It appears sevadars (volunteers) who were managing things inside did something wrong in terms of crowd management and that is another lesson learnt."

"We should not leave it to sevadars or volunteers. They do a great job, of course, but the police and magistrates are more experienced," he said.

So, the Chief Minister has decided that the state will have a more detailed SOP now for any such gathering, whether it has 1,000 or one lakh people, the minister told PTI.

"It's not just this, it's about civic amenities as well, like how many toilets are required for 80,000 people or how many water tankers should be there and how many escape points should be there," Arun said.



"So, he (CM) has instructed us to make a detailed SOP and all future permissions would be granted only if these amenities are taken care of either by the organisers themselves or by a government agency," he added. "There was inadequate space for parking and hence a large number of buses were parked on the national highway. There

should be multiple entry and exit routes and I believe they were only two routes as far as I have seen. So, the organisers could certainly have done better," he said. He said if it was a smaller gathering or if it was pleasant weather, maybe it would have worked. But yesterday was a sultry day and later it rained. "I think multiple factors were

at play there. We have to improve our processes," he said.

"Whether the government is organising an event or a private person is organising an event, our SOP will be very clear on what kind of basic minimum standards have to be met for us to permit any such events to take place," he added.

In the wake of the stampede, the Hathras police have lodged an FIR in which organisers of the event have been mentioned as accused. The FIR as well as a preliminary report sent by the sub-divisional magistrate to the district magistrate also mentioned that the crowd swelled at the venue to over 2.50 lakh, much more than the permitted limit of 80,000.

Earlier Wednesday, Adityanath visited Hathras and met the injured and families of some of the deceased. He also ordered an inquiry into the matter by a judicial commission headed by a retired high court judge.

## UP gov't forms judicial commission to probe

**LUCKNOW:** The Uttar Pradesh government has set up a three-member Judicial Inquiry Commission under the chairmanship of retired Justice Brijesh Kumar Srivastava (I) of Allahabad High Court to investigate the July 2 Hathras stampede, in which at least 121 died. A notification in this regard was issued by Governor Anandiben Patel late Wednesday night. Retired IAS officer Hemant Rao and retired IPS officer Bhavesh Kumar Singh have been appointed as members of

the inquiry commission. The headquarters of the commission will be located in Lucknow. The commission is tasked with completing its investigation within two months from the date of the notification. According to an official release, any extension of this duration will require an order from the state government. The commission will investigate the prescribed points and submit the report to the state government. The prescribed points for the probe include investigating the organ-

iser's compliance with the conditions set for granting permission by the district administration. The commission will also investigate whether the incident was an accident, a conspiracy, or the result of another planned criminal act. Additionally, the commission will examine crowd control and law and order arrangements by the administration and the police during the event, along with related aspects. It will also analyse the reasons and circumstances leading to the incident.

# Transport services available at all Delhi-Meerut RRTS stations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 4:** In a bid to improve last mile connectivity, the NCRTC Thursday said that it will make rental two-wheelers, cab services, auto rickshaws and feeder bus services available at all RRTS stations from Delhi to Meerut.

In a statement, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) also said that passengers at Sahibabad and Ghaziabad stations will get a 10 per cent discount on Rapido bike taxis.

With the start of operations of Namo Bharat trains, the NCRTC is also making efforts to provide the facility of rental two-wheelers, rental bicycles at the stations so that people get last mile connectivity, the statement said.

Currently, Namo Bharat trains are running in the 34-km section of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) from Sahibabad to Modi Nagar North over eight stations.

Electric buses of Ghaziabad City Transport Services Limited have been made available to all these operational stations for last mile connectivity. These electric buses are available at Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, DPS Rajnagar Guldhar, Duhai, Murad Nagar, Modi Nagar South, and Modi Nagar North stations, it said.

Apart from this, passengers using Rapido bike taxi are being given a 10 per cent discount for those travelling in Namo Bharat trains at Ghaziabad and Sahibabad stations, the statement said.

The NCRTC announced that passengers at Sahibabad and Ghaziabad stations will receive a 10% discount on Rapido bike taxis. There will also be provision of rental two-wheelers and rental bicycles around the stations to help passengers complete short-term tasks.



Soon this facility will be available for passengers at other stations as well, it said.

The NCRTC has now invited open expressions of interest from service providers to improve last mile connectivity in the entire corridor, the statement said.

Service providers for electricCNG powered shuttle-bus service, pre-paid electricCNG powered taxi services, app-based electricCNG powered cab service, pre-paid metro electricCNG powered auto-rickshaw service, electricCNG powered sharing service, sharing e-rickshaw service, two wheeler bike taxi service for point to point mobility from stations, two wheeler rental service, rental cycle service from stations, electricCNG rental car service from stations etc. are being sought, it said.

Additionally, expression of interest has also been invited to set up at least one battery swapping

station for feeder e-rickshaw service operation at all stations of the corridor. Battery swapping station will not only promote electric vehicles but will also provide last mile connectivity to the people, the statement said.

The NCRTC has been working from the very beginning to provide last mile connectivity to maximum number of people so that people living far from the stations that may be operational in future can also reach RRTS and Meerut Metro stations without any hassle, it said.

It said that there will also be provision of rental two-wheelers and rental bicycles around the stations to help passengers complete short-term tasks. The passengers will be able to avail this facility by paying on hourly basis and after the work is over, they can park their vehicle or bicycle back at the vehiclecycle point built in the stations and travel further by Namo Bharat trains.

These efforts of NCRTC will create a better and friendly transport system, which will not only reduce pollution but will also reduce road accidents, it added.

The efforts of NCRTC will create a better and friendly transport system, which will not only reduce pollution but also reduce road accidents

## Beauties from 30 countries visit Taj Mahal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Agra, July 4:** A sea of 110 beauties from around 30 countries Thursday visited Agra, Uttar Pradesh to witness one of the seven wonders of the world 'Taj Mahal'.

The Tourism Police had made strict arrangements for the safety of the world's beauties. Surrounded by security, these world beauties saw the symbol of love, Taj Mahal.

They looked quite excited after witnessing the Taj Mahal. These world beauties got lost in the beauty of Taj and its amazing architecture and could not stop themselves from saying 'wah Taj'.

They also showed special interest in knowing the mosaic and history of Taj Mahal. They learned about the history of Taj Mahal and its architecture through the help of tourist guides.

The visuals show the beauties arriving from England, Bangladesh, Botswana, Vietnam, Brazil, Fiji, Uganda, South Africa, the Dominican Republic, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and others. They were dressed in their traditional attire.

Taj Mahal is an ivory-white marble mausoleum, which is situated on the right bank of the river Yamuna in Agra. It was commissioned by Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

Meanwhile, Czech beauty Krystyna Pyszkova was crowned as the 'Miss World' March 9, 2024. Krystyna had defeated Yasmina Zaytoun of Lebanon, Ache Abrahams of Trinidad and Tobago, and Lesego Chombo of Botswana. 'Miss India' Sini Shetty had failed to make it to the Top 4.

India had hosted the coveted beauty pageant after a gap of 28 years, and it was hosted by filmmaker Karan Johar and the winner of Miss World 2013, Megan Young.



Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi meets the labourers and listened to their problems, at GTB Nagar in Delhi

PTI PHOTO

## Delhi zoo embraces ayurveda for monsoon animal care

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 4:** Delhi Zoo authorities are using ayurvedic methods, including neem oil, turmeric and quicklime, to keep the animals healthy and free from bacterial and viral infections during the rainy season.

As the monsoon season sets in, Delhi Zoo is taking innovative steps to ensure the health and safety of its animals by incorporating traditional ayurvedic methods.

"The monsoon has entered the capital and we have to take all necessary measures to keep the animals healthy and safe during this season. We will use some Indian home remedies like neem oil, which will help protect the animals from common biting insects, including mosquitoes, biting midges and fleas," Delhi Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar told PTI.

Neem oil acts as an herbal disinfectant and fly repellent, said Kumar, turmeric, known for its anti-inflammatory and healing properties, will be used

to treat itchy skin conditions, infections and wounds. Turmeric dust will be applied to lesions and foot sores to expedite healing, he said.

Heavy rains often lead to waterlogging in certain parts of the zoo which create breeding grounds for mosquitoes. To counter this, quicklime (chuna) will be sprinkled in these areas to prevent mosquito proliferation.

After the heavy rains that lashed the national capital Friday, recording 228.1 mm of rainfall in just 24 hours — the highest in June since 1936 — the Delhi Zoo was also affected.

A power failure occurred when floodwaters breached the zoo's boundary wall from the Sundernagar side, inundating the substation area and causing damage to the transformer. This incident affected animal enclosures, administrative offices and staff quarters. Referring to this situation, Kumar said that measures have been taken to prevent a recurrence.

## MAHA KUMBH 2025

# PRAYAGRAJ SET FOR MASSIVE FACELIFT

MAHA KUMBH 2025 PRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE SANATAN INDIAN CULTURE TO THE WORLD. IT WILL SERVE AS A PLATFORM FOR GLOBAL BRANDING NOT JUST OF UTTAR PRADESH, BUT THE COUNTRY AT LARGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 4:** The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is preparing to make the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, scheduled to be held early next year, a grand and divine event.

The administration is working in mission mode to ensure extensive beautification and cleanliness of the city, as well as security and convenience of the devotees and tourists.

According to the official spokesman, the state government has initiated a comprehensive plan to beautify the urban area. Prayagraj's rejuvenation will mirror the elaborate decorations seen during the 'Pran Pratishtha' of the new idol of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya.

Hundreds of pillars, green belts, horticultural enhancements, and thematic developments will be installed through-

out the city reflecting the richness of Sanatan traditions. Preparations are being made to leave the visitors awestruck by the splendour of the city immersed in religious faith.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has provided essential guidelines to various departments involved in its management.

He emphasised ensuring that the Maha Kumbh sets a benchmark for cleanliness, convenience, and security.

According to the Chief Minister, Maha Kumbh 2025 presents a significant opportunity to showcase Sanatan Indian culture to the world. It will serve as a platform for global branding not just of Uttar Pradesh, but the country at large.

He stressed the importance of contributing our best to its successful organisation, as Maha Kumbh symbolises India's an-



cient culture. "The entire city should be adorned to reflect its grandeur, depicting Kumbh stories and symbols of Sanatan culture. Kumbh logos should be installed at intersections, and efforts should be made to create theme-based gates, pillars, and lighting", he said.

In line with his vision, the beautification of 38 junctions is underway in Prayagraj. The Prayagraj Mela Authority has collaborated with an agency to develop designs based on traffic density analysis. Additionally, green belts and sculptures will be established with a five-year

The entire city should be adorned to reflect its grandeur, depicting Kumbh stories and symbols of Sanatan culture. Kumbh logos should be installed at intersections, and efforts should be made to create theme-based gates, pillars, and lighting

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER

maintenance plan.

Of the total junctions, 19 are being constructed by the Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA), 15 by the public Works Department (PWD), and two by Setu Nigam. Urban routes are also undergoing beautification, with 38 routes (totaling 75 km) being enhanced.

The Mela Authority has engaged eight architects to oversee green belt, horticulture, land-

scaping development, thematic development, and gap analysis for each route. Of these, 36 routes are beautified by the PDA and two by the PWD.

Street art and murals will also be created on approximately 1 million square feet of walls. The Prayagraj Mela Authority will fund work on 500,000 square feet from the Kumbh Mela fund, with the remaining 500,000 square feet.

There are also plans to construct four thematic gates, named Saraswati Dwar, Shiv Dwar, Ganga Dwar, and Yamuna Dwar, with the tender process currently underway.

Furthermore, 108 decorative pillars are planned for construction along river roads, thematic gates, and various sites. Specifically, eight pillars will be installed at Bhardwaj Ashram, 48 at the four thematic gates, and 52 along River Front Road.

of the day quote

Where is the issue in MUDA? They (MUDA) have occupied 3 acres and 16 guntas (one acre is 40 guntas) of our land, formed sites and layout over it and have allocated them to people. Let them give compensation, taking back the plots given to us in lieu of our land. Let them give ₹62 crore compensation for taking our 3 acres and 16 guntas

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

Four astronauts -- three Group Captains and one Wing Commander -- have been selected for India's human space mission Gaganyaan

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

The situation is very grim as water level is quite high. The gravity of the situation demands that we provide everything necessary for the benefit of those affected

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Rahul to visit Hathras today

Lucknow: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit Hathras Friday following the stampede in which 121 people were killed, party officials said Thursday. Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai told PTI that Gandhi will also meet the family members of the victims. "Our leader Rahul Gandhi will visit Hathras on Friday. He will meet the family members of the victims of the incident," said Rai. Earlier in the day, Rai blamed the state government for the incident. The stampede occurred at 'satsang' of self-styled godman Narayan Sakar Hari, also known as Bhole Baba, Tuesday. This will be the first visit of a senior opposition leader to Hathras since the incident took place.

Six kids died amid cholera outbreak

Indore: Six children lost their lives within a span of five days amid a suspected cholera outbreak at a privately-run shelter home here even as a preliminary investigation report has pointed fingers at the facility for alleged irregularities and inadequate maintenance of medical records. Initial reports had indicated that five children from the shelter home had died and nearly 50 were hospitalised due to suspected food poisoning.

Man shoots self over 'affair'

New Delhi: A 30-year-old man allegedly shot himself dead in Rohini Thursday outside of a woman's house, police said. Police sources have said that they recovered a handwritten note from the man where he mentioned that he was committing suicide over his love affair with the woman. The deceased was identified as Sunil Thakur, a resident of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, they said.

Court extends JC of Darshan

Bangalore: A court here Thursday extended till July 18 the judicial custody(JC) of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and others accused in the Renukaswamy murder case. All the 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, were produced before the magistrate through video conferencing from Bangalore and Tumakuru prisons, where they are lodged, as their judicial custody ended today.



Challenge Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, if he has guts, then dissolve the Assembly and go for elections again. Then only you will know what your position is. If the elections are held, BJP will win 140 to 150 seats

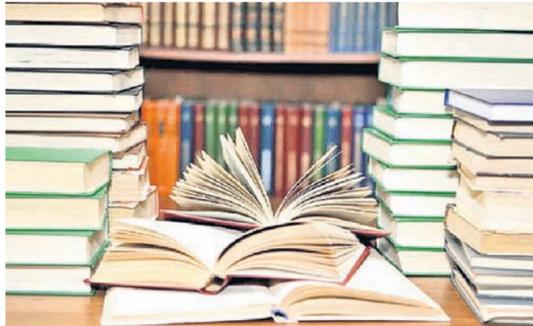
B S YEDIYURAPPA | BJP STALWART

FAULTY GENERATOR SPEWS SMOKE, 50 PUPILS FALL ILL

Several children suffered physical discomfort and were hospitalised after allegedly inhaling smoke from the generator of a hospital near their school at Kanhangad in this north Kerala district Thursday



Development of Class VI textbooks in final phase



The NCERT had an initial aim of releasing the new textbooks based on the NCF 2023 only for Classes III and VI this year

While the textbooks for Class III are available in the market, those for Class VI have been delayed

The official informed that the minister did a detailed review of the progress of the NCERT textbook development with the school education secretary, NCERT director and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) chairman.

Meanwhile, the new English language textbook for Class VI, titled "Poorvi", has a revamped content with most chapters rooted in an Indian context and with references to Indian culture, traditions and ancient knowledge.

While the old book had stories by non-Indian authors featuring non-Indian characters, the new textbook has most of its content based on Indian settings with Indian characters. "Bharat" has also been used in the chapter titled "Culture and Tradition" and is used interchangeably with "India".

According to NCERT officials, textbooks for all classes in accordance with the new curriculum will be ready by 2026. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's annual 'Pariksha pe Charcha' initiative might soon be recreated for a virtual platform, with the NCERT working on a proposal to develop a portal to host his speeches and allow students to capture selfies with him in an interactive 2D/3D environment.

The move comes against the backdrop of a raging row over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations with the Opposition raising questions on credibility of the examination processes in the country.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING (NCERT) HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED THAT NEW TEXTBOOKS FOR CLASSES III AND VI WILL BE INTRODUCED FROM THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC SESSION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

"For the academic year 2024-25, new and engaging textbooks will be introduced in Classes III and VI. The textbook development work is in the final phase and nine textbooks for Grades III and VI are already available. The remaining eight will be available very soon," a senior Ministry of Education (MoE) official said.

The NCERT had an initial aim of releasing the new textbooks based on the NCF 2023 only for Classes III and VI this year. While the textbooks for Class III are available in the market, those for Class VI have been delayed.

It was only this week that the NCERT released new English and Hindi textbooks for Class VI in the middle of the academic session.

The textbooks for the remaining subjects, such as social science, science and mathematics, are not ready yet and schools have been asked to teach the Class VI students from a bridge programme until then.

"The NEP 2020 aims at providing economically-priced, high-quality textbooks to make learning joyful and stress-free for better learning outcomes. The NCERT is constructing new textbooks for Classes I to XII to fully realise the provisions of the National Education Policy," the official said.

New Delhi, July 4: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan reviewed the development of school textbooks in accordance with the New Curriculum Framework (NCF) at a meeting here Thursday.

The meeting came in the backdrop of a delay in coming up with Class VI textbooks that were supposed to be taught from April and are yet to hit the market. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had earlier announced that new textbooks for Classes III and VI will be introduced from the 2024-25 academic session.

Cong demands 'white paper' from govt on Agnipath scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Amid a row over compensation to "Agniveer" martyrs, the Congress Thursday said the government should bring a "white paper" on the Agnipath scheme for short-term military recruitment, so that the country gets to know the reality of the ground situation.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, Congress's ex-servicemen department chief Colonel (retired) Rohit Chaudhry claimed that the family of late "Agniveer" Ajay Singh from Punjab's Ludhiana has got only ₹48 lakh from the Centre, while it has received ₹1 crore from the Punjab government and ₹50 lakh as insurance money from a private bank.

His remarks came a day after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleged that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh "lied" in Parliament about the issue of compensation to the families of martyred Agniveers and demanded an apology for it.

Ajay Singh's father purportedly said in a video shared by Gandhi on X that even though Rajnath Singh has said the families of martyrs have been given a compensation of ₹1 crore, no such assistance has been received by his family.

The Indian Army, however, later rejected claims on social media that compensation has not been paid to the next of kin of Agniveer Ajay Singh, who lost his life in the line of duty and said his family has already been given ₹98.39 lakh of the due amount.

"Rahul Gandhiji says there should be no discrimination with the soldiers and martyrs of the country," he said.

Addressing the presser along with Chaudhry, Wing Commander (retired) Anuma Acharya alleged that the Narendra Modi government is bringing out half-truths, entangling them in technical intricacies and using the Additional Directorate General of Public Information's official X handle to mislead the people of the country. "We condemn this," she added.

Hemant to be face of INDIA bloc in J'khand Assembly polls: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur, July 4: AICC executive committee member Dr Ajoy Kumar Thursday said JMM leader Hemant Soren will be the face of the INDIA bloc in the Assembly poll in Jharkhand due to be held later this year.

Soren, son of JMM supreme Shibu Soren, was sworn in as the Jharkhand Chief Minister in Ranchi for the third time during the day after senior JMM leader Champai Soren resigned as CM Wednesday. "The change of guard in Jharkhand would not affect the prospect of the INDIA bloc at all in the Assembly election. In fact, we will do much better than the 2019 polls," Kumar told PTI. The Congress is a member of the JMM-led ruling coalition in Jharkhand. Another INDIA bloc constituent RJD is also part of the alliance.

"Sending Hemant Soren to jail without any evidence for five months peeved the Dalits, Adivasis, backward classes and general caste people," Kumar claimed. Hemant Soren was released from jail June 28 after the high court granted him bail in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. He had resigned as the CM shortly before his arrest January 31 by the ED.



GRIM SITUATION: Villagers catch fish in flood water in Morigaon district, Assam

SNIPPETS IMA chief tenders apology

New Delhi: Indian Medical Association chief Dr R V Asokan Thursday issued a public apology for his remarks in an interview regarding an observation made by the Supreme Court during the hearing of a case to which the IMA was a party, saying he regrets his statement and it was never his intention to lower the court's dignity. "The IMA National President Dr R V Asokan has released an apology regretting his statement to the press regarding a comment by the Supreme Court while IMA was party to the case," the statement issued by the doctors' association said. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) was equally concerned about the issues of malpractice, Dr Asokan said in the statement referring to the April 23 order in which the apex court during the hearing of a matter related to Patanjali Ayurved Ltd's misleading advertisements case had observed that it was of the opinion that IMA also needs to put its house in order.

Assam flood: 31 wild animals dead

Guwahati: A total of 31 animals have died so far due to drowning, while 82 others have been rescued from flood waters in the worst deluge in recent years inside the famed Kaziranga National Park, a park official said Thursday. The animal mortality includes 23 hog deer due to drowning in the Park and 15 during treatment. The forest officials rescued 73 hog deer, two otters, two sambar deer, a scops owl, one rhino calf, an Indian hare and a jungle cat. Currently, 20 animals are under treatment, while 31 others have been released after treatment, the official said.

PM to visit Russia, Austria from July 8 to 10

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a visit to Russia from July 8 to 9 to hold the 22nd India-Russia annual summit that will review the entire range of multifaceted ties between the two countries, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced Thursday. After concluding the trip to Russia, Modi will travel to Austria, which will be the first visit by an Indian prime minister to that country in 41 years, it said. It will be Modi's first visit to Russia in nearly five years. His last visit to Russia was in 2019 when he attended an economic conclave in the Far East city of Vladivostok.

CBI registers its 1st FIR under BNS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: The CBI has registered its first FIR under newly enforced Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against two Delhi Police officers for allegedly demanding ₹10 lakh bribe to help the release of a person lodged in Tihar Jail, officials Thursday said.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has replaced the British era Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The FIR registered Wednesday evening booking Head Constables Ravindra Dhaka and Parveen Saini both posted in Narcotics Cell, Maurice Nagar, under BNA 61(2) related to alleged criminal conspiracy and provisions of bribery under the Prevention of Corruption Act, they said.

It is alleged that the officers were demanding ₹10 lakh bribe from the complainant to help in the release of his brother lodged in Tihar Jail after the recovery of NRX drugs (which cannot be purchased over the counter without the prescription of a qualified doctor) from him.

The complainant told the CBI that medicines have been falsely shown in the possession of his brother Koshinder.

Dhaka and Saini allegedly demanded the bribe to provide the details of the NRX medicines to the complainant for preparing fake bills and to submit the same before the competent Court, which subsequently would be verified as genuine by them and it would help in release on bail of his brother from his judicial custody, the CBI has alleged.

During verification proceedings, the CBI sent the complainant with concealed recorder to ascertain the claims. Dhaka allegedly told the complainant that IO of the case would settle for ₹2.50 crore.

Cloud resources biggest targets for cyberattacks: Study

IN INDIA, NEARLY HALF (46 PER CENT) OF THE RESPONDENTS REPORTED THAT ALL CORPORATE DATA STORED IN THE CLOUD IS SENSITIVE AND 37 PER CENT OF THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS HAVE EXPERIENCED A CLOUD DATA BREACH IN INDIA WITH 14 PER CENT HAVING HAD ONE IN THE PAST YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: A study by a multinational firm has identified cloud resources as the "biggest targets" for cyberattacks in India.

Thales has announced the release of the 2024 Thales Cloud Security Study, its annual assessment of the latest cloud security threats, trends and emerging risks based on a survey of nearly 3,000 IT and security professionals across 18 countries in 37 industries, according to a statement.

"The study was based on a

global survey of 2,961 respondents, aimed at professionals in security and IT management," it said. The study "identifies cloud resources as the biggest targets for cyberattacks in India". Cloud security spending now "tops all other security spending categories", it added.

In India, nearly half (46 per cent) of the respondents reported that all corporate data stored in the cloud is sensitive and 37 per cent of the participating organisations have experienced a cloud data breach in India with 14 per cent having had one in the past year, the statement said.



Also, 35 per cent of the organisations in India recognise the importance of digital sovereignty initiatives as a means of future-proofing their cloud environments, and globally, nearly half of the organisations acknowledge that it is more difficult to manage compliance and privacy in the cloud versus on-premises, it said. Human error and misconfiguration continue to top the list of root causes of these breaches (34 per cent), followed by exploiting previously unknown vulnerabilities (32 per cent), exploiting known vulnerabilities (21 per cent) and

failure to use multi-factor authentication (11 per cent), it said. "As the use of the cloud continues to be strategically vital to many organisations, cloud resources have become the biggest targets for cyber attacks, with cloud storage (30 per cent), SaaS applications (30 per cent) and Cloud Management Infrastructure (28 per cent) cited as the leading categories of attack in India." "As a result, protecting cloud environments has risen as the top security priority ahead of all other security disciplines," the statement said.



Across the state, just because some people did not vote for the TDP and Naidu, their assets are being destroyed and false cases are being filed. They (ruling party cadres) are beating up their opponents (YSRCP supporters) and filing cases against the victims

JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSRCP CHIEF

OVER 22K COPS TO GUARD JAGANNATH RATH YATRA

The 147th edition of the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath will take place July 7 in Ahmedabad where more than 22,000 security personnel will guard the event which draws lakhs of devotees, an official said Thursday



of the day quote

During my tenure as the chief minister, equal treatment was given to all parts of the state including Hamirpur which is the citadel of the BJP. Whatever development is seen in Hamirpur today is due to the successive BJP governments

JAI RAM THAKUR | LEADER OF OPN IN HP ASSEMBLY

The BJP government has not built a single district hospital where the poor can get treatment and at such a time when there is an emergency, no one gets treatment at all

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

We brought an ordinance against use of unfair means in recruitment examinations to make the process transparent. A record 14,800 youths were recruited into government jobs over the last three years

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI | UTTARAKHAND CM

X POST OF THE DAY

40 lives lost in Pulwama - no one resigned 293 lives lost in Balasore - no one resigned 121 lives lost in Hathras

no one resigned 1 tourist died in Portugal - Health Minister resigned

SHORT TAKES

Telangana CM meets PM Modi

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister, A Revanth Reddy Thursday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and urged the Centre to release pending funds, allot coal blocks for public sector miner Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCL) and also fulfill the commitments under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. Accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the Chief Minister called on PM Modi and submitted a memorandum on 12 issues to him. According to the Chief Minister's Office, various issues pertaining to the state were discussed during the hour-long meeting.

T'gana releases 213 prisoners

Hyderabad: A total of 213 convict prisoners lodged in prisons across Telangana were granted premature release by the state government. The Telangana Prisons department conducted counselling programme and job fair for the released prisoners on the premises of the Central Prison, Cherlapalli here Wednesday, an official release said.

Advani discharged from hospital

New Delhi: BJP veteran and former deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani was discharged from the Apollo Hospital here Thursday evening, sources said. The 96-year-old was admitted to the hospital Wednesday, days after being discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) following a night-long stay there. Advani was discharged from the Apollo Hospital around 5 pm, the sources said. The sources had said his condition remained stable after being admitted to the hospital Wednesday night.

Over 50 NEET-UG candidates move SC

The fresh plea by 56 students has been filed days before a top court bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud is scheduled to hear as many as 26 petitions seeking reliefs like re-test and probe into the conduct of the examination plagued by allegations of malpractices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Over 50 successful Gujarat-based NEET-UG candidates, including several who have been ranked first, have moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction to restrain the Centre and the National Testing Agency from cancelling the controversy-ridden exam. They have sought a direction from the top court to the Union Education Ministry to probe, identify and take strict action against students and others who indulged in unfair practices like paper leak and impersonation in the NEET-UG exam conducted May 5 this year.

The fresh plea by 56 students has been filed days before a top court bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud is scheduled to hear as many as 26 petitions seeking reliefs like re-test and probe into the conduct of the examination plagued by allegations of malpractices.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. NEET-UG, 2024 was held across 4,750 centres May 5 and around 24 lakh candidates appeared in the exam.

Allegations of irregularities, including paper leaks, have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties.

The pleas seeking cancellation of the exam, re-test and



high-level probe are listed for hearing July 8 in the SC. The fresh plea of Sidharth Komal Singla and 55 other students was filed through lawyer Devendra Singh.

It said "The Hon'ble court may further direct the respondents (Centre and the NTA) not to re-conduct NEET-UG ... as that would not only be unreasonable and harsh for the honest and hardworking students but also would lead to the infringement of the Right to Education and therefore violative of Article 14 (right to equality) of the Constitution."

The plea sought a direction to the Centre and the NTA to identify and punish the examinees who adopted unfair means, identify the centres and take appropriate action where any "com-

promise to the established guidelines for NEET-UG 2024 examinations has been done."

The Petitioners are young students around 17-18 years of age, and to achieve their dream of becoming a doctor, they have given their 100 per cent and have cleared the exam after consistent hard work of more than 3-4 years, it said.

However, the continuous coverage of news regarding the cancellation of the exam and possibility of a re-test for all is creating mental pressure and causing unnecessary stress, it said. If the re-test happens as a result of "hype created due to the misleading coverage by media", the honest successful students will have to face hardship, it added. Singla, the lead petitioner, ranked 778 in the merit

Allegations of irregularities, including paper leaks, have led to protests in several cities and sparring between rival political parties

list of NEET-UG 2024, the plea said, adding, "He has always been an outstanding student who in class 12th has topped in his school with 96.60%. It is further stated that amongst the other co-petitioners, there are students who have scored even the 1st Rank..."

While hearing a plea seeking holding of the exam afresh on grounds of alleged question paper leak and other malpractices June 11 the top court had observed that the sanctity of the NEET-UG has been affected and sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on the petition. It, however, refused to stay the counselling of the successful candidates.

The Centre and the NTA had June 13 told the court that they had cancelled the grace marks awarded to 1,563 candidates. They were given the option to either take a re-test or forgo the compensatory marks awarded for loss of time.

The NTA announced the revised rank list Monday after issuing the results of the re-test held June 23.

A total of 67 students had scored a perfect 720, unprecedented in the NTA's history, with six from a Haryana centre figuring in the list, raising suspicions about irregularities in the examination held May 5.

It has been alleged that grace marks contributed to 67 students sharing the top rank.

The number of candidates sharing the top rank in the NEET-UG came down to 61 from 67 in the revised results announced by the NTA.

Petition in SC seeks audit of Bihar bridges



Ten incidents of bridge collapse have been reported in Bihar's Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, East Champaran and Kishanganj districts in over a fortnight

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 4: A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Bihar government to undertake a structural audit and set up an expert committee to identify bridges that can be either strengthened or demolished based on the findings.

Many have claimed that heavy rainfall might have contributed to the incidents. The PIL, filed by advocate and petitioner Brajesh Singh, raised concerns about the safety and longevity of the bridges in the state that witnesses floods and heavy rains during monsoon.

Besides setting up a high-level expert panel, it also sought real-time monitoring of the bridges as per the parameters of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

In the PIL, the petitioner said it was a matter of grave concern that Bihar is the most flood-prone state in India. The total

flood-affected area in the state is 68,800 square km which is 73.06 per cent of its total geographical area, the PIL stated.

"Hence such routine accrual of the incident of falling bridges in Bihar is more disastrous as the lives of people at large are at stake. Therefore the urgent intervention of this court is required to save the lives of people, as the under-construction bridges before its accomplishment collapsed routinely," the petitioner said.

In view of the bridge collapse incidents, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has directed the road construction and rural works departments to conduct a survey of all old bridges in the state and identify those that require immediate repair.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, however, claimed that 12 bridges have collapsed in Bihar since June 18.

In a post on X Thursday, he wrote, "Twelve bridges have collapsed in Bihar since June 18... Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar are silent over these incidents in Bihar. What happened to the claims of good governance and corruption-free government? These incidents show how corruption is rampant in every department of the state government."

SNIPPETS

Rashid, Amritpal to take oath today

NEW DELHI/ CHANDIGARH: Jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid are set to take oath as Lok Sabha members Friday, subject to some conditions in their parole orders. While Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, is in Delhi's Tihar jail in a terror funding case registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Singh is lodged in a prison in Assam's Dibrugarh district for offences under the National Security Act. Singh, 31, and Rashid, 56, won the recent Lok Sabha elections from Khadoor Sahib in Punjab and Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir, respectively, as Independents while being incarcerated. They could not take oath as members of the 18th Lok Sabha June 24 and 25 along with the other winning candidates.

Andhra CM Naidu meets PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here Thursday and sought support for a seven-point development agenda aimed at addressing the state's post-bifurcation challenges. During the meeting at the PMO, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief -- a key NDA ally -- highlighted the unique challenges faced by Andhra Pradesh following its bifurcation in 2014. He emphasised the need for increased central support to accelerate the state's growth trajectory, advocating for enhanced assistance in lieu of special category status. The meeting focused on key issues ranging from financial assistance to infrastructure development, an official statement said.

India, UK agree to deepen cooperation

NEW DELHI: India and the United Kingdom have agreed to deepen cooperation between their cyber agencies in order to build a safe and robust cyberspace, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Thursday. The Sixth Cyber Dialogue between the two sides was held here Wednesday. "Discussions during the dialogue included cyber-threat assessment, internet governance, data protection, protection of critical infrastructure, capacity building and cooperation in multilateral fora, including the latest developments in the cyber realm at the United Nations," according to a statement issued by the MEA. "Both sides agreed to deepen cooperation between their respective cyber agencies in order to build a safe and robust cyberspace," the statement said.



MILES TO GO: Pilgrims wait in a queue to enter a base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra in Jammu

Over 7% of daily deaths linked to PM2.5 pollution: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: On average, 7.2 per cent of all daily deaths in 10 of the largest and most polluted cities in India, including Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai, were linked to PM2.5 levels higher than World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for safe exposure, according to a study published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal.

Delhi was found to have the largest fraction of daily and yearly deaths attributable to PM2.5 air pollution, caused by particles sized 2.5 micrometres or less in diameter. Sources of such pollution include vehicular and industrial emissions.

Researchers said that daily exposure to PM2.5 pollution in Indian cities is linked with a higher risk of death, and locally created pollution could be possibly causing these deaths. The international team included researchers from Varanasi's Banaras Hindu University and

Researchers said that daily exposure to PM2.5 pollution in Indian cities is linked with a higher risk of death, and locally created pollution could be possibly causing these deaths



the Centre for Chronic Disease Control, New Delhi.

They found that an increase of 10 micrograms per cubic metre in the average of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution measured over two days (short-term exposure) was related to 1.4 per cent higher daily mortality. The death risk was found to be doubled (2.7 per cent) per a 10 microgram per cubic metre increase, when the researchers restricted their analysis to ob-

The international team included researchers from Varanasi's Banaras Hindu University and the Centre for Chronic Disease Control, New Delhi

servations below Indian standards of air quality, less stringent than WHO guidelines for safe exposure, which prescribe 15 micrograms per cubic metre of PM2.5 over a 24-hour period.

Indian air quality standards prescribe 60 micrograms per cubic metre of PM2.5 over a 24-hour period. City-wise, the authors found a 0.31 per cent rise in daily mortality per a 10 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5 in Delhi, while

CONGRESS SLAMS GOVT

NEW DELHI: Expressing concern over "unchecked air pollution", the Congress alleged Thursday that the Narendra Modi government has launched an "all-out war" on India's environmental protection norms and prioritised the "profits of the PM's friends" over the health of people. Congress general secretary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh said a new study published in the prestigious global medical journal, "The Lancet Planetary Health", shows how bad this crisis is, with 7.2 per cent of all deaths in India associated with air pollution -- about 34,000 deaths each year in just 10 cities. "Unchecked air pollution is killing tens of thousands of Indians every year," Ramesh said in a statement. Ramesh claimed that since 2017, the BJP-led Centre has continuously pushed back the deadline for coal power plants to install the pollution-controlling Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) equipment.

in Bengaluru, the rise was 3.06 per cent.

The links between daily exposure to PM2.5 pollution and locally created pollutants were found to be stronger in models which the researchers used to explore cause-and-effect relationships. Therefore, it was possible that the locally generated pollutants were causing these excess deaths, the authors said.

"The causal effects were especially strong in cities with

lower concentrations of air pollution, such as (Bangalore), Chennai, and Shimla," the authors wrote. The study, "the first multi-city, time series analysis of short-term exposure to PM2.5 and daily mortality in India," looked at roughly 36 lakh daily deaths across ten Indian cities between 2008 and 2019. Other cities included in the analysis were Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune, Shimla and Varanasi.

Heavy rains lash several parts of HP; 85 roads closed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla/Mandi, July 4: Heavy rains lashed several parts of Himachal Pradesh, leading to the closure of 85 roads for vehicular traffic.

The Shimla meteorological office Thursday issued an 'orange' alert, warning of heavy to very heavy rains accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places till Friday and warned of flash floods risk in a few areas in Mandi, Sirmour and Shimla districts.

As many as 85 roads including 59 in Mandi, 21 in Shimla, four in Mandi and one in Kangra were closed for vehicular traffic following rains and 17 transformers were disrupted in the state, according to the state emergency operation centre.

A portion of the stretch between Mandi and Pandoh of the Chandigarh-Manali four-lane highway which had developed cracks Wednesday caved in Thursday, forcing officials to allow only one-way traffic, officials said.

Locals said a retaining wall was constructed by spending lakhs of rupees but it has started sinking and has gone down by about two feet.

They questioned the quality of the construction. The tarring work is going on at the spot on a war footing, project manager Raj Shekar had said earlier.

The meteorological department said monsoon activity is likely to intensify and spells of heavy to very heavy rainfall are likely over the next two-three days at a few places in Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Chamba, Mandi, Shimla, Solan and Sirmour districts.

The Met office also issued a 'yellow' warning for heavy rains July 6 and 7, and cautioned of damage to plantation, horticulture and standing crops, partial damage to vulnerable structures, minor damage to 'kutcha' houses and huts due to strong winds and rain, disruption of traffic and water-logging in low-lying areas. Sundernagar has received 119 mm of rainfall, the highest in the state, since Wednesday evening.

# international

## of the day quote

What we'll do is we will apply the same level of force that would allow us to defend ourselves. If a knife is used, for example, our personnel will also use a knife, nothing more, under the concept of proportionality

ROMEO BRAUNER JR | CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES, THE PHILIPPINES

ISBs (International Sovereign Bonds) account for \$12.5 billion out of the total external debt of \$37 billion. This agreement is a crucial step in our efforts to restore debt sustainability

SHEHAN SEMASINGHER | STATE MINISTER OF FINANCE, SRI LANKA

We are losing our backing in the society, because of our behaviour, high prices, our treatment of girls and because we censor the internet

MASOUD PEZESHKIAN | MEMBER OF ISLAMIC CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY, IRAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Hurricane Beryl kills 7

Kingston: Hurricane Beryl was roaring by Jamaica Wednesday, bringing fierce winds and heavy rain after the powerful Category 4 storm earlier killed at least seven people and caused significant damage in the southeast Caribbean. The US National Hurricane Center said Beryl's eyewall was "brushing the south coast of Jamaica". Prime Minister Andrew Holness said Wednesday afternoon that nearly 500 people were placed in shelters.

### Japanese sentenced to 17.5 years in jail

Kuala Lumpur: A Japanese hairstylist has been sentenced to 17.5 years in prison and 20 strokes of the cane in Singapore for what the judge described as a "brutal and cruel" assault and rape of a drunk student five years ago, his lawyer said Thursday. Kita Ikko, 39, pleaded guilty Monday to one charge of rape, one charge of sexual assault by penetration, and one charge of making an obscene film, defence lawyer Adrian Wee told The Associated Press.

### Attack on France's govt spokesperson

Paris: Just days before a high-stakes legislative election, French government spokesperson Prisca Thevenot was attacked on the campaign trail, officials said Thursday. Thevenot, a candidate for the Macron-led centrist alliance Ensemble, her deputy and a party activist were putting up electoral posters near Paris Wednesday night ahead of the July 7 legislative election when a group attacked them, Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said on the social media platform X. Sweden says three citizens given death sentences in Iraq over shooting.

### Death sentence to 3 Swedish citizens

Stockholm: Three Swedish citizens have been sentenced to death in Iraq over their involvement in a shooting and a fourth may also face the same punishment over a separate crime, the Swedish foreign ministry said Thursday. The government summoned Iraq's charge d'affaires last month to protest the death sentence against one of the three involved in the shooting. Sweden does not have the death penalty and opposes its use in all circumstances.

## SCO SUMMIT

# India talks tough on terrorism

### 'ISOLATE AND EXPOSE' COUNTRIES THAT HARBOUR TERRORISTS, PROVIDE SAFE HAVENS AND CONDONE TERRORISM, SAYS INDIA

ASTANA, July 4: India Thursday asked the international community to "isolate and expose" those countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism, underlining that if left unchecked, terrorism can become a major threat to regional and global peace, in a veiled jibe at China and its all-weather ally, Pakistan. Delivering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State Summit in the Kazakhstan capital Astana, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who was physically present at the meeting, recalled that one of the original goals of the SCO is to combat terrorism. "Many of us have had our experiences, often originating beyond our borders. Let us be clear that if left unchecked, it can become a major threat to regional and global peace. Terrorism in any form or manifestation cannot be justified or condoned," he told the summit, which was attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and



Russian President Vladimir Putin among others. He said that the international community "must isolate and expose those countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism", in an apparent reference to Pakistan and its all-weather ally China which has often put on hold proposals in the United Nations to blacklist the Pakistan-based terrorists. "Cross-border terrorism requires a decisive response and terrorism financing and recruitment must be resolutely countered. We should also take proactive steps to prevent the spread of radicalisation among

our youth," he said, adding that the joint statement issued during India's Presidency last year on this subject underlines New Delhi's shared commitment. "Delivered India's statement at the Summit of SCO Council of Heads of States on behalf of PM Shri @narendramodi ji. Thank the leaders present for conveying their best wishes to Prime Minister @narendramodi on his re-election for a third successive term," Jaishankar posted on X. Later, Jaishankar delivered Prime Minister Modi's remarks at the extended format Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State where he spoke about challenges, saying terrorism would surely

With nine member states, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the Beijing-based SCO has emerged as an influential economic and security bloc and one of the largest trans-regional international organisations. Belarus joined as the 10th member

rank foremost for many of us. "The truth is that it continues to be used by nations as a tool of destabilisation. We have had our own experiences with cross-border terrorism. Let us be clear that terrorism in any form or manifestation cannot be justified or condoned. Harboring terrorists must be strongly condemned," he said. "Cross-border terrorism requires a decisive response and terrorism financing and recruitment must be effectively countered. The SCO must never waver in its commitment. We

cannot have double standards in this regard," he added. He also said that the SCO extended family shares a commitment to reform the current international order. "This is only possible when those efforts extend to the United Nations and its Security Council. We hope that in the near future, we can develop a strong consensus on the way ahead," he said. "It must also be respectful of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and be built on the foundation of non-discriminatory trade and transit rights to neighbours," he said and pointed out the progress made on Chabahar port in Iran. He also spoke on Afghanistan, saying "We have a historical relationship between our peoples that is the bedrock of our ties." India remains sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the Afghan people, he added. "Enhancing education, training, and capacity-building are key pillars of India's international cooperation. We are committed to further building on them, be it with the C5 partners, or those of 'Neighbourhood First' or the extended neighbourhood," he said.

## Hezbollah launches 200 rockets in Israel



Beirut, July 4: The Lebanese Hezbollah group said it launched over 200 rockets Thursday at several military bases in Israel in retaliation for a strike that killed one of its senior commanders. The attack by the Iran-backed militant group was one of the largest in the months-long conflict along the Lebanon-Israel border, with tensions escalating in recent weeks. The Israeli military said "numerous projectiles and suspicious aerial targets" had entered its territory from Lebanon, many of which it said were intercepted. There were no immediate reports of casualties. It said about 200 "projectiles" were launched toward the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and over 20 drones into Israeli territory, but that it had intercepted some of them. Israel after Hezbollah's attack struck various towns in southern Lebanon. The Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah's "military structures" in the southern border towns of Ramleh and Houla. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported an Israeli drone strike of Houla killed at least one person. Israeli jets also broke the sound barrier over the Lebanese capital and other areas in the country. Israel Wednesday acknowledged that it had killed Mohammad Naameh Nasser, who headed one of Hezbollah's three regional divisions in southern Lebanon, a day earlier. Hours after the killing, Hezbollah launched scores of Katyusha rockets and Falaq rockets with heavy warheads into northern Israel and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. It launched more rockets Thursday and said it had also sent exploding drones into several bases. Nasser was of great importance to Hezbollah, which said he took part in battles in conflicts in Syria and Iraq from 2011 until 2016 and fought in the group's last war with Israel in 2006. Two other senior Hezbollah commanders have also been killed.

## Future of Sunak, his party hangs in balance



LONDON, July 4: The future of Rishi Sunak as Britain's first Prime Minister of Indian origin and the leader of the Conservative Party, fighting anti-incumbency of 14 years, hangs in the balance as millions cast their ballots in a historic general election Thursday. The British Indian leader and the man who wants his job, Labour leader Keir Starmer were among the early voters from an estimated 46 million registered voters as around 40,000 polling booths opened across the country at 7 am local time. Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty walked hand-in-hand to their local polling booth on a sunny day in his constituency of Richmond and Northallerton in Yorkshire, northern England. A little later, Starmer and wife Victoria were at their polling station in Camden, north London, sporting Labour red colours. "Today, Britain can begin a new chapter," Starmer told voters in a statement. "We cannot afford five more years under the Conservatives. But change will only happen if

you vote Labour," he said. Sunak, meanwhile, took to social media to drive home his message. "Polls are open. It's time to stop the Labour supermajority that would mean higher taxes for the rest of your life." Sunak, 44, is up against voter angst towards the incumbent Tories after 14 years in power and has had to contend with trailing far behind 61-year-old Keir Starmer-led Labour Party throughout the six-week campaign. Earlier, both leaders wrapped up their six-week-long campaign with contrasting messages, Sunak urging voters not to hand "tax-raising" Labour a "supermajority" and Starmer playing down the prospect of a landslide win for fear of a low turnout impacting the final outcome. Candidates are being fielded for 650 constituencies across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with 326 required for a majority in the first past the post system. Polling experts have forecast a low turnout, which stood at 67 per cent in the last general election in December 2019 when Johnson won a solid majority on his get Brexit done message. If opinion polls are to be believed, the incumbent Tories are in line to win anywhere between 53 and 150 seats, with Labour projected to win a landslide. This will lead to Starmer taking over as Prime Minister, the first Labour leader after Gordon Brown to enter 10 Downing Street since 2010.



Patients and their family members stage a rally demanding doctors to end the ongoing walkout that has disrupted public health services in Seoul, South Korea

## Ukraine pulls back from key strategic town

RUSSIAN ASSAULT

Kyiv, July 4: Ukraine's military said Thursday its troops had pulled back from part of Chasiv Yar in the eastern Donetsk region, a day after Russia said its forces had taken control of a district in the strategic town. Chasiv Yar stands on high ground. If Russian forces establish full control over the town, they could potentially use it as a staging post to advance westwards towards the Ukrainian cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk.



Russia's Defence Ministry said Wednesday its forces had taken control of the "Novyi" district, which lies to the west of Siverskyi Donets-Donbas canal

The command decided to pull back to more protected and prepared positions, but even there the enemy does not stop its active combat actions. NAZAR VOLOSHYN | KHORYTISIA MILITARY UNIT SPOKESMAN, UKRAINE

ened the lives and health of our servicemen and the positions of our defenders were destroyed," military spokesman Nazar Voloshyn told Ukrainian television. "The command decided to pull back to more protected and prepared positions, but even there the enemy does not stop its active combat actions," he said. Russia's forces, which launched their full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, have been slowly advancing in the Donetsk region for several weeks and tried to open a new front near the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

## To save spotted owl, US plans to eradicate its cousins

THE NOTION OF KILLING ONE BIRD SPECIES TO SAVE ANOTHER HAS DIVIDED WILDLIFE ADVOCATES AND CONSERVATIONISTS

WASHINGTON, July 4: To save the imperiled spotted owl from potential extinction, US wildlife officials are embracing a contentious plan to deploy trained shooters into dense West Coast forests to kill almost a half-million barred owls that are crowding out their cousins. The US Fish and Wildlife Service strategy released Wednesday is meant to prop up declining spotted owl populations in Oregon, Washington State and California. The Associated Press obtained de-

tails in advance. Documents released by the agency show up to about 450,000 barred owls would be shot over three decades after the birds from the eastern US encroached into the West Coast territory of two owls northern spotted owls and California spotted owls. The smaller spotted owls have been unable to compete with the invaders, which have large broods and need less room to survive than spotted owls. Past efforts to save spotted owls focused on protecting the forests where they live, sparking bitter fights over logging but also helping slow the birds' decline. The proliferation of barred owls in recent years is undermining that earlier work, officials said. "Without actively managing barred owls, northern spotted owls will likely go extinct in all or the majority of their range, despite decades of collaborative conservation efforts", said Fish and Wildlife Service Oregon state supervisor Kessina Lee.

The notion of killing one bird species to save another has divided wildlife advocates and conservationists. It's reminiscent of past government efforts to save West Coast salmon by killing sea lions and cormorants that prey on the fish, and to preserve warblers by killing cowbirds that lay eggs in warbler nests. Some advocates grudgingly accepted the barred owl removal strategy, others said it's reckless diversion from needed forest preservation. "The Fish and Wildlife Service is turning from



protector of wildlife to persecutor of wildlife," said Wayne Paccelle, founder of the advocacy group Animal Wellness Action. He predicted the program would fail because the agency won't be able to keep more barred owls from migrating into areas where others have been killed. The shootings would likely begin next spring, officials said. Barred owls would be lured using megaphones to broadcast recorded owl calls, then shot with shotguns. Carcasses would be buried on site. The birds already are being killed by researchers in some spot-

ted owl habitats, with about 4,500 removed since 2009, said Robin Bown, barred owl strategy leader for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Those targeted included barred owls in California's Sierra Nevada region, where the animals have only recently arrived and officials want to stop populations from taking hold. In other areas where barred owls are more established, officials aim to reduce their numbers but acknowledge shooting owls is unlikely to eliminate them entirely. Supporters include the American Bird Conservancy and other conservation groups. Barred owls don't belong in the West, said American Bird Conservancy Vice President Steve Holmer. Killing them is unfortunate, he added, but reducing their numbers could allow them to live alongside spotted owls over the long term. "As the old forests are allowed to regrow, hopefully coexistence is possible and maybe we don't

need to do as much" shooting, Holmer said. The killings would reduce nationwide barred owl numbers by less than 1%, officials said. That compares with potential extinction for spotted owls should the problem go unaddressed. The barred owl plan follows decades of conflict between conservationists and timber companies, which cut down vast areas of older forests where spotted owls reside. Early efforts to save the birds culminated in logging bans in the 1990s that roiled the timber industry and its political supporters in Congress. Yet spotted owl populations continued declining after barred owls started showing up on the West Coast several decades ago. Across study sites in the region, at least half of spotted owls have been lost, with losses topping 75% in some areas, said Katherine Fitzgerald, who leads the wildlife service's northern spotted owl recovery program.



The more you see the surge in the stock market, the greater the role, I believe, for SEBI and SAT, as institutions which will exercise caution, celebrate the successes but at the same time, ensure that the backbone is stable

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

## RUSSIAN TANK ROUNDS TO BE MADE IN INDIA

Russia's vast state-owned Rostec corporation said Thursday that its weapons export unit had organised the production in India of armour-piercing rounds for Russian-made battle tanks. Rostec issued its statement ahead of a July 8-9 visit to Russia by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will hold talks with President Vladimir Putin



## of the day quote

The air cargo sector has a bright future and the number of freighters in the country is expected to rise



PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA | SENIOR ECONOMIC ADVISOR, MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

We are in talks with government and cooperatives to deploy up to 6,000 drones next year. These will mainly focus on agriculture spray. We plan to invest ₹140 crore in manufacturing of drones and expects revenue to be in the range of ₹600-900 crore in 2025



Companies are allocating a substantial portion of their budgets for office redesigns. Although specific figures vary, investments in office aesthetics are seen as strategic moves to improve employee morale and productivity



KARTIK NARAYAN | CEO (STAFFING), TEAMLEASE SERVICES

# D-St ends at new peaks

SENSEX, NIFTY CLOSE AT FRESH LIFETIME HIGHS ON GAINS IN ICICI BANK, INFOSYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 4: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ticked higher to close at fresh all-time high levels Thursday, following buying in market heavyweights ICICI Bank, Infosys and TCS amid a largely positive trend in global equities.

The 30-share BSE Sensex scaled an intraday record high of 80,392.64 in early trade. The index pared most of the gains later due to volatility and profit-taking by investors at record levels. Sensex closed 62.87 points or 0.08 per cent higher at 80,049.67, its all-time closing high.

The broader Nifty also hit an intra-day record high of 24,401 in early trade before closing almost flat. The 50-issue index rose by 15.65 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at a record 24,302.15 with 23 of its shares closing higher and 27 with losses.

"The defensive bet on large caps like IT and pharma gained momentum due to the dimming US inflationary pres-

sure, improvement in QoQ earnings outlook and a resultant sharp fall in the US 10-year bond yield. The buoyancy in government spending and the green shoots in corporate earnings are now supporting the premium valuation. Return of FIIs to the domestic market and expectation of a rate cut in September are supporting market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among Sensex shares, HCL Technologies, ICICI Bank, Tata Motors, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Mahindra and Mahindra were the gainers.

In contrast, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards.

Analysts said that stock markets traded within a narrow range and ended nearly unchanged.



The Nifty has approached its immediate target of 24,500 and appears slightly overextended. It would be prudent to take some profits and wait for a potential dip before considering new long positions in the index

AJIT MISHRA | SVP (RESEARCH), RELIGARE BROKING

## FPI buying in financials at 6-month high in June

FPI OUTFLOWS FROM DOMESTIC EQUITIES HIT A RECORD HIGH JUNE 4



REUTERS

Bangalore, July 4: Foreigner portfolio investors (FPI) snapped a two-month selling streak in India's financials and turned net buyers in June, hitting a six-month high.

The heaviest-weighted sector, financials, garnered FPI inflows worth ₹91.7 billion (about \$1.1 billion) during the month, the highest since December 2023, according to data from the National Securities Depository (NSDL).

The FPI buying in the sector came after two months of outflows worth ₹182 billion, boosting the financials index, private banks and banking stocks 6.9%-8% higher in June.

"Once the concerns on the national elections-related uncertainty were over, the government was formed and ministries were allocated, the FPIs were assured of policy continuity," said Ajit Banerjee, chief investment officer at Shriram Life Insurance.

FPI outflows from domestic equities hit a record high June 4, the election results day that

showed a surprise weaker mandate for the ruling National Democratic Alliance.

"It appears the FPIs have realised that selling in the most-performing market would be a wrong strategy," Banerjee said.

"Once the interest rate cut starts in the US, which is expected by the end of the year, it could trigger bigger FPI inflows into emerging markets like India as the arbitrage will open up between the two countries," said Viraj Gandhi, chief executive of SAMCO Mutual Fund.

Information technology companies led Indian shares higher Thursday, in line with Asian peers, after softer US labour data boosted hopes for a rate cut in September.

Telecommunication, consumer services, capital goods and health-care sectors saw FPI inflows worth between ₹27 billion and ₹80 billion in June.

SAMCO's Gandhi said investor interest will likely continue in capex-linked themes like manufacturing, infrastructure, defence as well as consumption-linked themes including telecommunication and real estate sectors.

## SHORT TAKES

### Cement industry grows 2-3% in Q1

New Delhi: The cement sector has witnessed a muted growth of 2-3 per cent in the first quarter of current fiscal on account of a slowdown in construction activity because of the Lok Sabha polls, according to a report from rating agency Icria. However, the overall volumes for the FY2024-25 are likely to expand by 7-8 per cent driven by a healthy demand from the infrastructure and housing sectors. "Nevertheless, the government's focus on infrastructure projects, sanction of additional houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), and the industrial capex is expected to meaningfully improve cement volume offtake in H2 FY2025," it said.

### BoM logs 19% loan growth in Apr-June

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Friday reported a 19 per cent growth in credit to ₹2.09 lakh crore for the April-June quarter. The outstanding credit was ₹1.75 lakh crore at the end of June 30, 2023, BoM said in a regulatory filing. The Pune-headquartered lender reported a 9.44 per cent increase in total deposits to ₹2.67 lakh crore as against ₹2.44 lakh crore at the end of the first quarter of the previous financial year. During the quarter, it said, Current Accounts and Savings Accounts declined to 49.86 per cent of the total deposits as against 50.97 per cent. The Credit Deposit ratio increased to 78.18 per cent at the end of June 30, 2024, as against 71.89 per cent in the year-ago period.

### Housing sales up 11% in H1 to hit 11-yr peak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Indian real estate market remained buoyant in January-June this year, with housing sales hitting an 11-year high at 1.73 lakh units and office demand at a record 34.7 million square feet across eight major cities, according to Knight Frank.

On an annual basis, housing sales rose 11 per cent to 1.73, 241 units while leasing of office space grew 33 per cent to 34.7 million square feet during January-June this year across eight major cities.

Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India, said, "India's real estate market has been buoyant in the last few quarters owing to the strong economic fundamentals and stable socio-political conditions."

As a result, the residential and office segments have recorded decadal-high numbers, he told reporters in a virtual press conference Thursday.

He noted that premium housing formed 34 per cent of all sales in the first half of 2024.

"Concurrently, India's status as one of the fastest-growing large economies has positively impacted office demand. India faces businesses and GCCs taking the lead positions in transactions. Based on our expectation of continued stability in the socio-economic and political conditions and the current trajectory of growth, we anticipate a strong finish to the year 2024 with both residential and commercial office transactions noting record highs."

## SLOWEST PACE IN SIX YEARS

# Solar output growth falters in H1

REUTERS

Singapore, July 4: India's solar power generation grew at the slowest pace in six years in the first half of 2024, an analysis of data from the federal grid regulator showed, as the country further stepped up reliance on coal to address surging power demand.

Electricity generated from coal grew 10.4% during six months ended June 30, a review of daily load despatch data from Grid-India showed, outpacing overall power generation growth of 9.7% during the period.

Solar power generation in the



third-largest producer of electricity from the sun rose to 63.6 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in the first half of 2024, the data showed, up 14.7% compared with the same period last year and 18.5% in the calendar year 2023.

The world's fastest growing major economy has prioritised coal to address a surge in power demand in recent years, with

coal-fired power output last year outpacing renewable energy output for the first time since the Paris accord in 2015.

The south Asian nation's fuel use patterns since emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic have largely been in line with trends in the region, with Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Bangladesh all firing up coal for generating inexpensive power.

The share of the fossil fuel in power output rose to 77.1% in the first half of 2024, compared with 76.6% in the same period last year, putting it on track to rise for the fourth straight year.

## 4 years after ban, China's Shein set to return to India with Reliance's help

Bangalore: Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambanis Reliance Retail Ventures will launch Chinese fast fashion label Shein in the coming weeks, selling the latter's products on its app and brick-and-mortar stores, as per reports Thursday. The retail unit of Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries reportedly teamed up with the IPO-bound fashion brand last year and is likely to tap former Meta director Manish Chopra to head Shein's operations in India, the newspaper said, citing executives aware of the development. The partnership is the latest in a string of deals by Reliance Retail, which has brought international brands such as American jewellery maker Tiffany & Co and British online retailer ASOS to India. This move comes four years after Shein was banned from India as a part of a wider crackdown on some Chinese applications following border conflicts between the two Asian neighbours. The India operations will be run by a company entirely owned by Reliance Retail and Shein is expected to be paid a license fee as a share of profit of the Indian firm. All relevant and sensitive data will be hosted and stored in India with Shein having no access or rights over them, according to the report. Once launched, Shein will compete directly with Walmart-backed online shopping site Myntra and the Westside brand of Tata-owned Trent in India's \$10 billion fast fashion market.



BIZ BUZZ

## Raymond to demerge real estate biz

New Delhi: Textile major Raymond Ltd Thursday said it will demerge the real estate business to unlock the value for shareholders and harness growth potential in the Indian property market. In a regulatory filing, the company informed that its board has approved the scheme of arrangement of Raymond Ltd (demerged company) and Raymond Realty Ltd (resulting company) and their respective shareholders. As per the scheme of arrangement, each Raymond Ltd shareholder will receive one share of Raymond Realty for every one share held in Raymond Ltd. The standalone operational revenue of the real estate division stood at ₹1,592.65 crore in the last fiscal, accounting for 24 per cent of the total revenue of Raymond Ltd. This will be subject to the requisite approvals and sanction of the jurisdictional bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and subject to the approval of shareholders and/or creditors, central government, or such other competent authority as may be directed by the NCLT. Upon the scheme coming into effect on the effective date, on demerger, Raymond Realty would issue 6,65,73,731 equity shares of Raymond Realty Ltd having a face value of ₹10 each to the equity shareholders of Raymond Ltd. The shares issued by Raymond Realty Ltd would be listed on BSE Ltd and the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE). Explaining the rationale, Raymond Ltd said it seeks to reorganise the real estate business carried on by itself and through its subsidiaries. To exploit the growth potential of the real estate business and attract a fresh set of investors/strategic partners to participate in the real estate business, it is proposed to consolidate the entire real estate business of the Group under one single entity, the company said.



## India among most active nations for Threads

GLOBAL MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS COUNT HITS 175MN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: India is one of the most active countries for Threads, which has notched over 175 million monthly active users globally, according to social media giant Meta.

"With a 175 million actives, we're seeing Threads become a place where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. India is one of the most active countries for Threads globally," Meta said in a release.

In India, some of the most popular tags and topics on Threads are centred around film, TV and OTT content, celebrity-related conversations and sports.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that Threads has over 175 million monthly active users as the social media giant



The update assumes significance as it marks the completion of nearly one year since Meta officially launched rival to Twitter (now X)

asserted that Threads was launched with the belief that "everyone has something valuable to say".

"It's been a year now, and we're seeing it become a place where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. In fact, India is one of the most

active countries for Threads globally," the release said.

Among the other major takeaways are creation of 50 million topic tags on Threads till date, globally.

"Cricket has been reigning on Threads in India, with players from the current Indian

squad like Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja, to former cricketers like Akash Chopra and Suresh Raina, experts like Ridhima Pathak and international cricketers like AB de Villiers sharing their passion for the game," Meta said.

The T20 Cricket World Cup, IPL, and Women's Premier League 2024 have been some of the moments that have sparked cricket conversations on Threads this year, it further said, adding that over 200 creators shared updates about the concluded IPL season on Threads.

Threads scaled highs immediately after it was unveiled in July 2023 - it snapped up 100 million user sign-ups within a week of its launch.

The initial euphoria, however, wore off and according to industry watchers, the app struggled subsequently with steady decline in engagement metrics.

## SECTOR SEEKS SUPPORT

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST CENTRE FOR CUTTING AND POLISHING DIAMONDS, ACCOUNTING FOR NINE OUT OF 10 DIAMONDS POLISHED GLOBALLY

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 4: India's cut and polished diamond exports have been faltering due to weak demand from the key market, China, and they are unlikely to stabilize unless the government provides support to the industry, the head of a leading trade body

## Weak Chinese demands diamond exports



said Thursday. India is the world's largest centre for cutting and polishing diamonds, accounting for nine out of 10 diamonds polished globally.

"We're battling weak demand, particularly due to China's slow recovery from Covid-19. As a result, demand continues to fall," Vipul Shah, chairman of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), told Reuters.

We're battling weak demand, particularly due to China's slow recovery from Covid-19. As a result, demand continues to fall

VIPUL SHAH | CHAIRMAN, GJEPC

China accounts for around a third of India's cut and polished diamond exports and primarily buys through Hong Kong.

The economic slowdown, shifting consumer preferences from diamonds to gold jewellery and fewer weddings have been squeezing the demand for diamonds in China.

India's cut and polished diamond exports fell nearly 15% in the June quarter, compared with a year earlier, following a 27.5% decline in the 2023/24 marketing year that ended March 31, Shah said.

# Mumbai halts to salute Team India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 4:** The victory parade of the T20 World Cup winning Indian team commenced after a two-hour delay as complete crowd chaos along the stretch of South Mumbai brought the traffic to a halt after Rohit Sharma and his men touched down little after 5.00pm here Thursday.

As per the itinerary shared by the officials here, the two-hour open bus parade started from the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Nariman Point till the Wankhede Stadium started little after 7:30pm in the evening as the Maximum City's stretch along the Marine Drive was drowned in an 'Ocean of Humanity'.

The Indian team left could only fly from New Delhi around 3:42 pm after a breakfast meeting with the Indian PM Narendra Modi, having returned from Barbados in the wee hours of morning.

The Wankhede Stadium here was thrown open to fans who filled up the stands within minutes to celebrate the Indian cricket team's title triumph last Saturday. After arriving in the city, Rohit's team and their support staff made their way to the southern tip of the city which houses the Wankhede Stadium. But not before their aircraft — a Vistara flight — got the famous 'Water Salute' after arriving here at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's Terminal 2.

The players walked out of the airport with a sea of fans and media waiting for them for last several hours. Meanwhile, at the iconic Wankhede Stadium which witnessed India's last ODI World Cup triumph in 2011, the stands got filled to the brim by passionate fans as thousand others waited outside the gates which were closed around 5:00pm.

As the gates closed amid intermittent rain, extreme humidity and chaos of several thousand people arriving in the vicinity, those fortunate ones who were able to find their places inside Wankhede remained fixated to their seats even if there was scarcity of food and water. As the fans ran in all directions to take their

places in the stands amid a heavy burst of rain, several pairs of footwear got left behind in the rush while debris of all kind was also thrown around along the way. While the wait extended, rain kept pelting down with breaks but it could not force the fans off their seats inside the stadium.

The DJ kept entertaining with songs of all genres and at one instance it felt like Wankhede was hosting a rain-dance party with the stadium's speakers blurring out Vengaboys' party hit 'To Brazil' and the country's unofficial sports anthem Chak de India. Soon after, Wankhede came alive with its customary chants of 'Sachin... Sachin' followed by 'Mumbaicha Raja, Rohit Sharma' and 'India... India'.

## PARIS OLYMPICS

### Athletics: Chopra to lead contingent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 4:** Defending champion Neeraj Chopra will headline a 28-member Indian athletics contingent at the Paris Olympics starting July 26.

The 26-year-old Tokyo Games gold medallist and reigning world champion in javelin throw has decided to skip the last Diamond League this weekend in Paris in order to prepare for the quadrennial extravaganza as almost all the selected names are on expected lines.

The squad comprises 17 men and 11 women athletes with some of the other prominent names being Asian Games champions Avinash Sable, Tejinderpal Singh Toor along with sprint hurdler Jyothi Yarraji, to name a few.

The 4x400m men's relay team, featuring Muhammed Anas, Muhammed Ajmal, Amoj Jacob and Rajesh Ramesh, which had created quite a stir by leaving behind the USA team in one of the heats at the last World Championships, will also be followed with keen interest.

### Deepanshi fails dope test, suspended

**New Delhi:** NADA has suspended India's top woman 400m runner Deepanshi for flunking her dope test during the recent National Inter-State Championships, where she won a silver medal. The 21-year-old Deepanshi had clocked 52.01 seconds to finish second behind Kiran Pahal (50.92) in the women's 400m final in Panchkula Friday. This was the first dope positive case from the National Inter-State Championships (June 27-30), which was the final qualifying event for the Paris Olympics.

## SUPERBET CLASSIC CHESS

### Gukesh holds Caruana; Praggnanandhaa draws



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bucharest (Romania), July 4:** World Championship challenger Grandmaster D Gukesh played out a draw with tournament leader and top seed Fabiano Caruana of United States in the seventh round of the Superbet classic chess tournament here.

On another all-draws day, R Praggnanandhaa signed peace with Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia leaving the lead positions intact like the previous round.

Caruana on 4.5 points remains in front with two victories and five draws, he is followed by Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Alireza Firouzja of France, who are all half a point behind the American.

Nepomniachtchi shares the fifth spot with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France with a fifty percent score, a half point ahead of the trio of American Wesley So, Dutch Anish Giri and Uzbekistan's first son in chess Nodirbek Abdusattorov. Just

two rounds remain in the \$350,000 prize money tournament.

Gukesh's choice of Italian opening gave him an optical advantage against Caruana. After the initial tussle, the players reached a middle game wherein the Indian had an edge thanks to better placed forces but Caruana was up to the task in finding the defense to maintain the balance.

The pieces got traded at regular intervals in this encounter and the players arrived at a Queen and rook endgame where neither side had a real chance. The game was drawn after 62 moves.

Praggnanandhaa had a relatively easy day against Nepomniachtchi despite playing black. Years of working with World number one Magnus Carlsen and his own expertise as the two-time world championship challenger has made Nepomniachtchi a leading theoretician but in the seventh round the Indian surprised him with what looked like a sensational preparation.

# ROUSING HOMECOMING FOR THE T20 CHAMPS



- 1 The Indian team with the T20 World Cup trophy at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai
- 2 Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses with the T20 World Cup trophy along with Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid
- 3 Man of the tournament Jaspreet Bumrah poses with the trophy
- 4 Suryakumar Yadav and his wife are all smiles as they arrive with the Cup in New Delhi
- 5 The crowd goes wild as Virat Kohli holds aloft the trophy on the bus taking the team to the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai
- 6 Hardik Pandya obliges by posing for a selfie with security personnel at the Delhi Airport

