



Honest clarification
Actor Taapsee Pannu shares her reason behind skipping the grand wedding of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant

LEISURE | P2



Puja's training on hold
Centre puts on hold the 'district training programme' of controversial Indian Administrative Service officer Puja Khedkar for 'necessary action'

NATIONAL | P8



Orban in trouble
EU leaders launch protest against Hungarian PM Viktor Orban's 'misuse' of the bloc's rotating presidency

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Valuable advice
Javelin thrower Kishore Jena says he would have quit the sport last year, but did not do so due to his dad's advice

SPORTS | P12



OF BELIEF: Shia mourners participate in the 9th Muharram procession, on boats, at Dal Lake, in Srinagar, Tuesday

Lord's riches to be shifted July 18

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Two days after the inner chamber of Srimandir Ratna Bhandar was opened following a gap of 46 years, the state government Tuesday decided to reopen the much talked about chamber July 18 and transfer the valuables stored in it to a temporary CCTV-monitored storeroom on the premises of the 12th century shrine in Puri.

The decision was taken during a meeting attended by SJTA Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee, Justice Biswanath Rath (chairman of the supervisory committee for overseeing the reopening and inventory of Ratna Bhandar), Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain, and other officials in the Holy city in the morning.

"We will again open the locks and enter Bhitara Ratna Bhandar between 9:51am and 12:15pm July 18. The valuables in the inner chamber will be shifted to the temporary storeroom, and the ASI members will also assess its structural stability. The entire event will be videographed,"

Cong for white paper

The Opposition Congress Tuesday demanded that the state government publish a white paper on Srimandir Ratna Bhandar in Puri. The party said the white paper should contain details of the records of valuables of the Ratna Bhandar, which were prepared in the past, and the inventory which will be prepared this year. P3

Suna Beshha today

About 190 platoons of the police force will be deployed for the security and crowd management during Suna Beshha (golden attire) of the presiding deities of Srimandir on their respective chariots in Puri Wednesday, Puri SP Pinak Mishra said Tuesday. "About 15 lakh devotees are expected to come to Puri and witness Suna Beshha of the Trinity," Mishra said. P3

Justice Rath told reporters after the meeting. He explained that due to the logistical challenges involved in moving all the chests containing valuables, ornaments within these containers will be relocated to a temporary treasury within the temple complex. "This temporary facility has been equipped with CCTV cameras, fire safety measures, and other necessary precautions," Justice Rath added.

Padhee appealed to devotees to abide by the restrictions to be imposed on entry into the temple July 18. The inner chamber of the Ratna Bhandar was reopened by cutting open three locks July 14. The team saw boxes (sinduks)

and almirahs inside the inner chamber but decided to postpone the transfer of valuables to a designated storeroom due to the upcoming Bahuda Yatra July 15 and Suna Beshha July 17.

Justice Rath mentioned that valuables from the outer chamber have already been moved to a temporary storeroom in the 'Changda Mekap' room, where the Lord's beds are stored, on the temple premises.

Padhee said the ASI will inspect the inner chamber physically after the valuables are shifted out. "The ASI will not be given keys to the inner chamber; it will be opened as per the SOP," he clarified.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



All the political leaders were there, but RaGa let go of the opportunity and didn't attend the wedding...

NEET-UG: CBI ARRESTS 2 MORE

New Delhi: The CBI Tuesday arrested two persons including a key accused in the NEET-UG paper leak case who allegedly stole the paper from a trunk of NTA in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh. The agency has arrested Pankaj Kumar alias Aditya, a 2017-batch civil engineer from NIT-Jamshedpur, who allegedly stole the NEET-UG paper from the NTA trunk in Hazaribagh. Kumar, a resident of Bokaro, was arrested from Patna. The CBI has also arrested Raju Singh, who allegedly helped Kumar in stealing the paper, from Hazaribagh. P8

MEDICOS' STIR FROM TODAY

Cuttack: About 250 house surgeons working in the SCBMCH here called for an indefinite cease work from Wednesday, demanding action against the nursing staff who allegedly ill-treated them. SCB superintendent Sudhansu Sekhar Mishra, however, is hopeful that the matter will be resolved amicably. The confrontation between the house surgeons and nursing staff began Monday night over an argument between a doctor and a nursing officer while attending to a patient in the Medicine department. P3

Captain among 4 Army men killed in encounter

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 16: Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) seems to have become a graveyard for soldiers of late as four more Indian Army personnel, including a Captain, lost their lives in a fierce gunfight with heavily armed terrorists of Pakistan-based banned outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in Doda district Tuesday.

The incident, and a series of such casualties in the past few months, has come as a reminder of the dreadful heightened militancy period in the area. The abrogation of Article 370 was expected to bring back peace in J&K.

The fallen soldiers were identified as Captain Brijesh Thapa from Darjeeling, Naik Dokkari Rajesh from Andhra Pradesh, and Sepoys Bijendra and Ajay Kumar Singh from Rajasthan.

Opposition parties, meanwhile, attacked the Centre. Terming such horrific incidents as 'extremely sad and worrying', Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Army personnel and their families are bearing the brunt of BJP's wrong policies."

Security forces, including troops of the Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group of J&K Police, swiftly launched a joint cordon and search operation in the Desa forest belt following the encounter.

Despite the challenging terrain and weather conditions, efforts were underway to track down and neutralise the militants who have links to JeM, officials said.

In an official statement, the Army said the gunfight erupted late Monday evening in the Desa forest area, where troops from the Rashtriya Rifles and J&K Police had launched a cordon-and-search operation.

Despite challenging terrain and low visibility, the security forces engaged the hiding terrorists. "In the initial volley of fire, four Army personnel were injured. They later succumbed to their injuries. Additional troops and equipment have been inducted to flush out the terrorists, and use of drones and other technical resources is being ensured," the Army said.

The Kashmir Tigers, a JeM shadow group, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Army personnel and their families are bearing the brunt of BJP's wrong policies

RAHUL GANDHI
CONGRESS LEADER

MARKET WATCH

| INDEX | VALUE | VIATION |
|--------|----------|----------|
| SENSEX | 80716.55 | ↑ 51.69 |
| NIFTY | 24613.00 | ↑ 26.30 |
| DOLLAR | 83.60 | ↓ ₹0.03 |
| EURO | 91.19 | ↓ ₹0.04 |
| GOLD | ₹74,164 | ↑ ₹693 |
| SILVER | ₹93,890 | ↑ ₹1,318 |

WEATHER

| | BBSR | CTC |
|----------|--------|--------|
| Max Temp | 33.8°C | 33.0°C |
| Min Temp | 26.8°C | 25.5°C |
| Humidity | 95% | 91% |
| Rainfall | 8.9mm | 5.2mm |

Partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain

Remorseful thief returns valuables stolen from Maha writer's house

Narayan Surve, who died August 16, 2010 at the age of 84, was a celebrated Marathi poet and social activist

AGENCIES

Thane, July 16: A thief was overcome with remorse after realising that the house he stole valuables from belonged to a famous Marathi writer and returned the items along with an apology note, police said Tuesday.

The house from where the thief stole the valuables, including an LED TV, belonged to Narayan Surve and is located at Neral in Raigad district of Maharashtra, they said.

Surve, who died August 16, 2010 at the age of 84, was a celebrated Marathi poet and social activist. Born in Mumbai, his poems vividly depicted the struggles of the urban working class.



GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION

Surve's daughter Sujata and her husband Ganesh Ghare now live in the house. They had gone to Virar to be with their son and their house was locked for 10 days.

It was during this period that the thief entered the house and stole a few things, including the LED TV. When he returned to pick up a few more articles the next day, he noticed Surve's photo

and memorabilia in a room. The thief, who was obviously well-read, was filled with remorse and returned all the items he had picked up. He pasted a small note on a wall, asking for the owner's forgiveness for stealing from such a great literary figure's house.

Sujata and her husband found the note when they returned from Virar Sunday. Neral police inspector Shivaji Dhavle said.

The police are carrying out further investigation based on the fingerprints found on the TV set and other articles, he said.

Before Surve became a famous Marathi poet, he had grown up as an orphan on the streets of Mumbai, then survived by working as a domestic help, a dishwasher in a hotel, a babysitter, a pet dog caretaker, a milk delivery boy, a porter and a mill hand.

Through his poetry, Surve glorified labour and challenged the established literary norms in Marathi literature.

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN

DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY

20 years of Rich Legacy

Celebration of 18th Foundation Day

NIRF INDIA RANKINGS 2023

- 15th in University Category
- 16th in Medical Category
- 27th in Engineering Category
- 9th in Dental Category
- 8th in Law Category
- 57th in Management Category

Internationally Ranked by

- QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
- THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
- Stanford University

Accredited By NAAC with Highest A++ Grade

Category - 1 Graded Autonomy Status UGC 12(B) Status

Recognized as SIRO by DSIR, Govt. of India

22 Professors of SOA figure among the Top 2% scientists of the world as listed by Stanford University

STATUTORY APPROVALS

SOA Hospitals

- IMS AND SUM HOSPITAL (2200 bedded), 250 MBBS Seats
- SUM ULTIMATE MEDICARE (400 bedded)
- IMS AND SUM HOSPITAL-Campus 2 (700 bedded), 150 MBBS Seats
- IMS AND SUM HOSPITAL-Campus 3 (200 bedded)

- 20 Research centres in niche areas
- Atal Incubation Centre
- Over 400 foreign students from 30 Countries
- Diamond University rating by QS-I-GAUGE

ACCREDITATIONS & RECOGNITIONS

FACULTIES

- Engineering and Technology
- Medical Sciences
- Dental Sciences
- Management Sciences
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Nursing
- Hospitality & Tourism Management
- Legal Studies
- Agricultural Sciences
- Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

MEMBERSHIP

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN
DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY
BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA, INDIA

www.soa.ac.in

leisure



DYLAN ANNOUNCES UK TOUR DATES

Music legend Bob Dylan has announced the dates for his upcoming 10-date UK tour, which is set to take place later this year. At the age of 83, Dylan is preparing to grace the stage for three nights at the Royal Albert Hall in London, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

HALLE BERRY EXITS LEGAL DRAMA SERIES ALL'S FAIR

Hollywood actress Halle Berry has quit the legal drama series *All's Fair*. News of her departure comes just a week after it was reported that Berry had joined the series alongside Kim Kardashian, marking one of the few regular television roles in the Oscar and Emmy winner's career, reports *Variety*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You will be indecisive today, which is not usually the case with you. Ganesh says this could lead you to indulge in speculation, which is not so bad unless you risk all your money in it. Besides, when it comes to matters of the heart, you must exercise a great deal of caution.

TAURUS
All is not likely to go well during this day says Ganesh. Though you will sail smoothly most of the day, problems are very likely to come up. At the professional level you are not likely to face obstacles or difficulties. Your relations with your parents turn awkward and unpleasant.

GEMINI
You will be surrounded by conflicts today. However, you will come to realise within a short while the solutions required to troubleshoot your way out of your difficult circumstances. You will desire solitude and peace so much so that you will not find even your family members welcome company, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. And, that's a great thing to do, says Ganesh. Don't lose heart though, if despite the best efforts, the results of your efforts are not too forthcoming. Feeling dejected is only going to hamper your progress. Remember that you'll receive your due sooner or later. Spend some time with your loved ones to revive yourself.

LEO
You need to keep your temper in check and guard against being aggressive today. You need to channelise your energies towards some productive pursuits, otherwise you may make someone the target of your anger. The good thing about the day is you will make satisfactory progress on work related issues.

VIRGO
You are renowned for your leadership qualities and today they will be much appreciated for the way you manage your team. You will get a long-due promotion, and will come in for some extra cash. Ganesh says you received all this by wisely balancing work and home, so be careful not to slip up on this front.

LIBRA
Ganesh says beware of overspending today. Those of you having close ties abroad may find them beneficial. Ganesh says you should always remain optimistic.

SCORPIO
Socially, you enjoy being in limelight as all the eyes are focused on you. However, beware of evil eyes that may not have good intentions towards you. You are a good soul and never hurt anyone. But, at times, it's important to know your foe's weakness to be on the safer side.

SAGITTARIUS
Brace yourselves; the day has a lot of uncertainties today. First being financial. You may have to shell out money for unexpected expenses. But, this may also teach you to be economically independent. Always look at the brighter side, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You will be a live wire, today. With amazing exuberance you have completed mammoth tasks and have spread the energy around. It will give you tremendous job-satisfaction, foresees Ganesh. Everything seems well and good the personal front, too.

AQUARIUS
You are a strong-willed person, and during the toughest of times you remain focused. A constant smile on your face and positive attitude will help you win the hearts and minds of people at work as well as at home. Such a feeling of contentment and happiness motivate you to do your best.

PISCES
Today you will feel like sharing your innermost feelings with those that you are close to. You will find yourself communicating better and this will result in attracting intellectual people towards you. You will get an opportunity to work with very educated and well established people.

Parul: Content creation has become engineering now

Mumbai: Actress and content creator Parul Gulati, who is awaiting the release of his upcoming title *#BLUETICK*, along with Siddharth Nigam, has shared that content creation has become more about engineering the content than creatively making it.

Parul appeared on the IMDb original series *Ask Each Other Anything* along with Siddharth, and shared: "I feel content creation has become engineering right now. Because everyone wants to be a content creator, and they are so successful. Because these people have figured out that they can be a finance influencer, food influencer."

Furthering her point, she said that one can see their future on social media. "People are starting their social media agencies right now and acquiring micro, mini influencers and those who have it in them, they stick," she added.

Siddharth spoke about his learnings from the sets of *Dhoom 3*, and said that he feels very fortunate to have got a chance to work with Aamir Khan at a very young age.

He said, "I have never taken any acting classes and I never done theatre. So I think whatever I have learned about acting, theoretical knowledge, a little practical knowledge and how to be present on set, all these things I have learned on the sets of *Dhoom 3*."

'Time for cross collaborations'

Mumbai: South fame Samyuktha is all set to mark her Hindi film debut opposite Kajol and Prabhu Deva in the thriller *Maharagni - The Queen Of Queens*. Addressing certain language barriers that exist between the South and Hindi film industry, she says that it's fading away and the time is for cross collaborations now.

"I am from Kerala but I work more in Telugu. I came into cinema at a time when all the language barriers were slowly going away. Pushpa released at that time and many others big films, everyone was watching these films in other languages. So, it's more of a cross language collaboration that's been going on now. Even in Telugu, many Hindi actors are playing such good roles and our lead actors also star in Hindi films," the actor says.

The actor, who is popular for films in

Malayalam, Telugu, as well Tamil languages thinks of Bollywood as a "larger than life" cinema.

"Malayalam is a very content oriented industry. On the other hand, Telugu is a mix of everything, massy and content centric. In Hindi, I feel I will be able to tell better once I do more work here but from what I see is that people are more interested in cinema that is larger than life and has unexpected things happening," says the 28-year-old.



Taapsee on skipping Ambani wedding

Mumbai: The grand wedding of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant saw a star-studded guest list, but actress Taapsee Pannu was notably absent. In a podcast recorded recently, Taapsee shared her reason for skipping the extravagant ceremony.

In a lighthearted exchange, Taapsee laughingly responded to a question about attending the wedding. In a conversation with RJ Stutee, she clarified, "I don't know them personally," and went on to explain her preference for attending weddings with a more personal connection. "I feel weddings are very personal," she said.

"I am sure there are a lot of friends of theirs, but I prefer to go to a marriage where there is at least some kind of communication between the family and the guest."

Anant and Radhika's wedding on July 12 was a lavish celebration that drew in A-listers from Bollywood and beyond. The guest list boasted names like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, and international celebrities like Kim Kardashian, Khloe Kardashian, Rema, and Luis Fonsi.



Big B's freudian slip

Mumbai: Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan has almost confirmed that his son, Abhishek Bachchan stars in the upcoming Shah Rukh Khan-starrer film *King*.

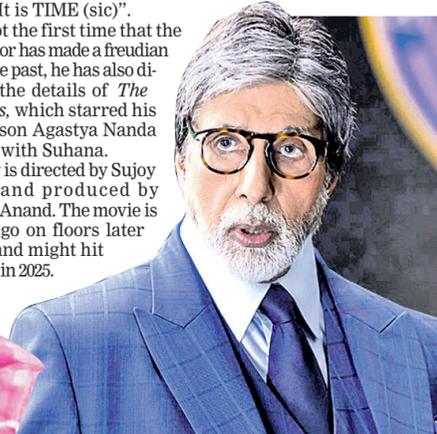
Tuesday, Big B took to his X and quoted a tweet from a fan club of Abhishek. The tweet spoke about Abhishek's side as an antagonist and shared that the actor will be seen in a negative role in *King* which also stars SRK's daughter Suhana Khan.

The Internet user had written in his tweet, "Those Who have seen Abhishek Sir's in *Breathe into the Shadows*, Raavan and BB, will know what level of performance as a negative role he can give. Never ever doubt him. @juniorbachchan Abhishek Sir and Sujoy Ghosh. @iamsrk #SuhanaKhan #King #AbhishekBachchan @sujoy_g".

Big B, wrote in his tweet, "All the best Abhishek.. It is TIME (sic)".

This is not the first time that the veteran actor has made a freudian slip. In the past, he has also divulged the details of *The Archies*, which starred his grandson Agastya Nanda along with Suhana.

King is directed by Sujoy Ghosh and produced by Siddharth Anand. The movie is expected to go on floors later this year and might hit screens in 2025.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

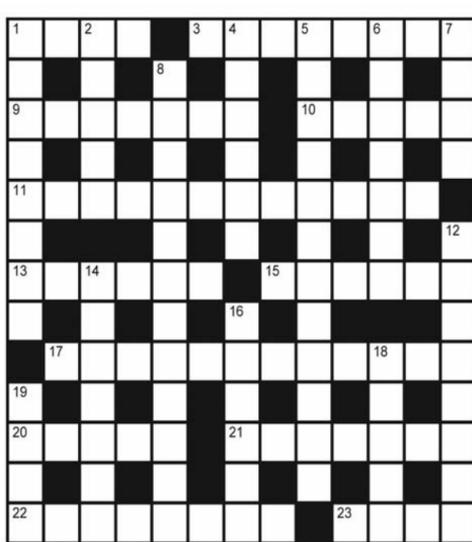


BREVITY



FUN post

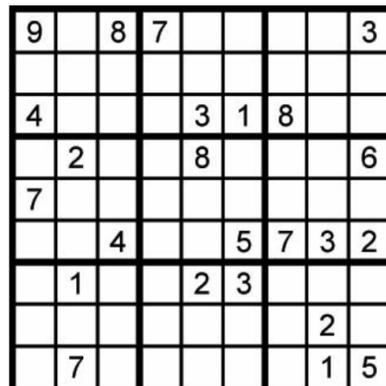
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Cordon bleu
 - 3 Measuring device
 - 9 Honorable
 - 10 Young female horse
 - 11 New Year song (4,8)
 - 13 Thin
 - 15 Vigour
 - 17 Exciting social game (8,4)
 - 20 Swivel
 - 21 Small flute
 - 22 Poker variation (4,4)
 - 23 Engrave
 - Down**
 - 1 Deep fissure
 - 2 Petrol additive
 - 3 Cockeyed
 - 4 Prison term (4,8)
 - 6 Light lager
 - 7 Some stingers
 - 8 Type of church papers
 - 12 Cuspid (3,5)
 - 14 Advent
 - 16 Coverall worn by children
 - 18 Submarine (1-4)
 - 19 Gush forth

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Members of Mahanadi Banchao Andolan and Odisha Nadi Suraksha Samiti perform 'Mahanadi Alati' at Gadagadia Ghat of the river in Cuttack Tuesday

downtown

Congress demands white paper on Ratna Bhandar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The Opposition Congress Tuesday demanded that the state government publish a white paper on Ratna Bhandar of Puri Srimandir.

The party said the white paper should contain details of the records of valuables of Ratna Bhandar which were prepared in the past and the inventory which will be prepared this year.

Addressing a press conference at the party's headquarters here, former president of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Prasad Harichandan said his party has been demanding the reopening of Ratna Bhandar for inventory and repair.

Now, the BJP government has initiated a step in this regard, he said.

The Ratna Bhandar was reopened Sunday after 46 years for preparing an inventory of valuables and the repair of its structure. However, many questions are being raised on the keys of the Ratna Bhandar because the locks of the inner chamber did not open with the duplicate keys available with the Puri district administration, the Congress leader said.

OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak said the 'unfortunate' incident during the 'Pahandi' (ceremonial procession) of Lord Balabhadra has hurt the sentiments of Jagannath devotees

Members of a special committee tried to open three locks on the doors of the inner chamber of the treasury, but not one of them could be opened with the two 'duplicate' keys available with the Puri district administration, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee had said.

"Earlier, the then Puri Collector had claimed that he had found duplicate keys of the Ratna Bhandar from the district record room. Now, it is being said that the keys were there in the district's treasury," the Congress leader said.

"Justice Biswanath Rath, the chairman of the high-level committee constituted by the government to supervise the inventory work, had clearly stated that the keys did not belong to the locks," he said.

The Congress leader asked about the original keys of Ratna Bhandar.

He urged the government to count the valuables stored inside the Ratna Bhandar while shifting those to the temporary strong room, to maintain transparency.

Further, the government should publish a white paper mentioning the inventory record of this year along with the records of 1978, 1952, 1905 and 1805, Harichandan said.

On the other hand, another ex-president of OPCC, Niranjana Patnaik said there is a need for a thorough investigation into the whereabouts of the Ratna Bhandar keys, which were, presumably, last used in 1985.

He urged the government to investigate and disclose the location of the keys as recorded in the government registrar during that period.

The Congress party has also demanded a judicial probe led by a retired judge of Orissa High Court or Supreme Court on the alleged mismanagement during the ongoing Rath Yatra in Puri.

OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak said the 'unfortunate' incident during the 'Pahandi' (ceremonial procession) ritual of Lord Balabhadra during Rath Yatra in Puri has hurt the sentiments of Jagannath devotees.

The idol of Lord Balabhadra fell on a group of servants when the deity was being carried from his chariot to the Gundicha temple July 9.

"The state government has asked the SJTA to probe the incident. As the administration is also responsible for the incident, we demand a judicial probe by a retired judge. The report should be published within a month," he demanded.



VAIDICTORY SESSION: Director of Odisha State Museum Bhagyalipi Malla speaking at an event on the concluding day of 'Pattachitrare Mahaprabhu' on the museum premises in Bhubaneswar Tuesday as dignitaries including Orissa POST and Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy, author Jatindra Kumar Nayak, artist Ramahari Jena and others look on

190 platoons of police for Suna Beshha

Drones will be deployed to monitor crowd movement from two integrated control rooms

AGENCIES

Puri, July 16: About 190 platoons of the police force will be deployed for the security and crowd management during Suna Beshha (golden attire) of the presiding deities of Srimandir on their respective chariots here Wednesday.

The deities would appear on golden attire atop their chariots parked in front of the Lion's Gate (Singhadwar) Wednesday.

Puri Superintendent of Police (SP) Pinak Mishra Tuesday said the administration is expecting a footfall of about 15 lakh devotees to witness Suna Beshha of the Trinity.

Barricades have been raised from the Municipal Market Square to Lion's Gate here as



part of crowd management strategy.

All the devotees and the visitors will go through the barricades in the queue and after darshan they will return through Badadanda, the SP said.

All the by-lanes connected with Badadanda (Grand Road) will be sealed. This apart, special traffic management will be enforced along all the routes leading to Puri. Vehicle parking

places will be regulated and drones will be used to monitor the crowd movement through two integrated control rooms.

A three-layer security cover will be laid around the three chariots during the Suna Beshha.

The SP appealed to the devotees not to bring infants and very old persons to the event. The devotees were also asked not to use their mobile phones near the chariots.

2 drug peddlers held after film-style chase

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The Special Crime Unit (SCU) of Commissionerate Police claimed to have seized 1 quintal ganja after a dramatic chase near Pitapalli Monday night and arrested two peddlers.

Two mobile phones and a four-wheeler used in the crime have been seized from the accused, said a senior police official, adding that the street price of the seized contraband is estimated to be around ₹11 lakh.

Twin city Police Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda said the peddlers were identified as Sipun Behera, 31, and Ananta Digal, 32 – both natives of Kandhamal district. The cops swung into action following a tip-off regarding a four-wheeler carrying a huge consignment of ganja from Phulbani to Jharkhand. The police team laid a trap near Pitapalli area with two vehicles, while another was stationed near Janla.

"When the peddlers saw the police team, they tried to speed away to evade arrest but two police vehicles chased the car at a higher speed. The other team was placed near Janla flyover to block the traffic from Khurda side," Panda said, adding that the vehicle was intercepted near Janla. The cops conducted a search inside the car and seized the contraband wrapped in a gunny bag from the boot space.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused are members of an interstate drug syndicate.

The SCU has booked the duo under relevant Sections of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and BNS. They were produced in a local court later in the day.

Nadda to attend BJP exec committee meeting July 19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The state BJP will hold its first executive committee meeting in Puri from July 19 after forming its government in the state and the saffron camp's national president JP Nadda will attend the event, a party functionary said here Tuesday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was expected to attend the two-day meeting but he would not be able to join the programme due to health issues, state BJP president Manmohan Samal told reporters.

"Earlier, Rajnath Singh was scheduled to attend the two-day executive committee meeting. However, BJP president JP Nadda will attend the event starting July 19, owing to Singh's un-

availability due to health issues," he said.

BJP's state vice president Biranchi Tripathy said coordinators for Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies, district presidents, officials of various fronts, Chief Minister, state ministers, all party MLAs and MPs and Union ministers from the state will be present at the meeting.

"During the meeting, we will decide on a roadmap as BJP is now a ruling party in the state. The political situation and other crucial aspects along with welfare programmes will also be discussed and a draft on the next course of action will be prepared," Tripathy said.

The BJP will "do the needful to make a 'Viksit' (developed) Odisha," he said.

SCB house surgeons call for cease work stir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, July 16: About 250 house surgeons working in SCB Medical College and Hospital here called for an indefinite cease work from Wednesday, demanding action against the nursing staff who allegedly ill-treated them.

Hospital superintendent Sudhansu Sekhar Mishra, however, is hopeful that the matter will be resolved amicably.

Mishra said that the massive workload and shortage of staff could be the reasons behind the recent faceoff between the house surgeons and nursing staff.

The confrontation between the house surgeons and nursing staff began Monday night over an argument between a doctor and a nursing officer while attending to a patient in the hos-



pital's medicine department.

Soon, other doctors and nurses joined the melee, and what appeared to be a minor issue initially, was blown out of proportion Tuesday morning when reports of the incident appeared in various local newspapers.

Claiming that the nursing staff were spreading lies and damaging the reputation of the hos-

pital and doctors in the media, the house surgeons protested in front of the office of the hospital superintendent. They demanded that the nursing association should apologise and refrain from giving false statements to the media.

Opposing this move of the House surgeons, the nursing staff also staged a protest.

When the matter was further precipitated during a meeting with the hospital committee set up to resolve the imbroglio, the house surgeons announced a cease work stir from Wednesday morning.

"We will provide emergency services only and boycott the general duties," Bibhas Kumar, secretary of the house surgeons, said.

NASA transmits first hip-hop song to Venus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 16: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Tuesday informed about transmitting first hip-hop legend Missy Elliott's song 'The Rain' (Supa Dupa Fly) to Venus via its deep space network.

The song was transmitted at 10:05am PDT Friday, July 12 from the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California.

While this is the first hip hop song to travel to outer space, the Beatles song titled 'Across The Universe', was the first song sent into deep space by NASA in 2018.

"Both space exploration and Missy Elliott's art have been about pushing boundaries," said Brittany Brown, director of the Digital and Technology Division.

NASA said the song travelled around 254 million km from Earth to Venus, the artist's favourite planet. The radio frequency signal was transmitted at the speed of light and took



THE SONG TRAVELLED AROUND 254 MILLION KM FROM EARTH TO VENUS

THE RADIO FREQUENCY SIGNAL WAS TRANSMITTED AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT AND TOOK ROUGHLY 14 MINUTES TO REACH THE PLANET

THE TRANSMISSION WAS PRODUCED VIA THE 34-METRE WIDE DEEP SPACE STATION 13 (DSS-13, ALSO KNOWN AS VENUS, IN HONOUR OF THE VENUS RADAR EXPERIMENT OF MARCH 1961) RADIO DISH ANTENNA AT THE DSN'S GOLDSTONE DEEP SPACE COMMUNICATIONS COMPLEX NEAR BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA

roughly 14 minutes to reach the planet.

The transmission was produced via the 34-metre wide Deep

Space Station 13 (DSS-13, also known as Venus, in honour of the Venus Radar Experiment of March 1961) radio dish antenna

Int'l workshop on AI begins at IIIT

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The IIIT here organised a five-day international workshop on 'Deep Learning and Artificial Intelligence' beginning Tuesday. The workshop was inaugurated in collaboration with IEEE GRSS Kolkata Chapter, APNNS and CSIR. The event is based on the theme of developing tools and strategies relevant for harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) in the recent times of digital revolution.

The event witnessed a confluence of over 70 researchers, resource persons and experts from different parts of the country as well as the world. In the welcome note, IIIT director Ashish Ghosh encouraged the participants to enthusiastically engage with the experts.

ZONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR ZONE
Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli,
Bhubaneswar-751015, Tel: 0674 - 2362251/2362246,
Email: zo.bhubaneswar@bankofindia.co.in

REQUIREMENT OF PREMISES
Detailed notification inviting offers for premises for our Zonal Audit Office is available in our website www.bankofindia.co.in. Prescribed format for submission of offer may be obtained up to **2.00 P.M. of 26.07.2024** from our office at above address. Alternatively, the format can be downloaded from our website. Last date for submission of offer is up to **5.00 P.M. on 26.07.2024** at Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar.
Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone

Shaadi, Utsav ya Tyohar... Lijjat Papad Ho Harbar...

Karram Kurram... Kurram Kurram... Karram Kurram...

Lijjat PAPAD

Website : www.lijjat.com Email : enquiry@lijjat.com

BJD, Congress demand action against Guv's son



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Opposition BJD and Congress Tuesday renewed their demand for action against Governor Raghubar Das's son Lalit Kumar over allegations that he assaulted a Raj Bhawan official July 7.

Speaking to reporters, BJD leader Lekhasri Samantsinghar accused Kumar of physically assaulting and mentally har-

assing an assistant section officer (ASO) of Raj Bhawan in Puri during President Droupadi Murmu's visit.

"The victim has been seeking justice for days, but no action has been taken against those responsible for the assault," she said and alleged lack of police action, suggesting it was due to the accused's connection with the Governor.

Congress supporters, includ-

ing students and youth wing members, demonstrated in front of Raj Bhawan, demanding Kumar's arrest.

Congress state president Sarat Pattanayak questioned why Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also oversees the Home portfolio, had not ordered Kumar's arrest.

Senior Congress leader Taraprasad Bahinipati emphasised that the physical assault of an official was unacceptable.

As of now, neither Kumar nor the Governor's secretariat has commented on the matter.

The ASO in question, Baikuntha Pradhan, had alleged that Kumar and his associates assaulted him at Puri Raj Bhawan on the night of July 7 while he was supervising the President's visit.

Meanwhile, the state government transferred Pradhan to the Home department, Monday



IN MEMORIAM: Artistes perform to pay tributes to classical dancer Guru Deba Prasad Das on his 38th death anniversary organised by Tridhara at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday
PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

1st merit list for Plus II admission to release July 20

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 16: First selection merit list for Phase-I online admissions to Plus II courses will be released July 20, School and Mass Education department announced Tuesday. The selection process is facilitated through the Student Academic Management System (SAMS) portal. A total of 4,76,074 students have applied for 5,48,313 seats in higher secondary education for 2024-25 session. The shortlisted candidates will be enrolled in Class XI across various streams, including Arts, Science, Commerce, Vocational, and Upashastri.

The online application process had concluded July 12. Selected candidates can download their intimation letters from the portal. Notifications about the assigned institutions will be sent via WhatsApp or SMS.

Admissions at the respective institutions will continue from July 22 to July 27. Candidates assigned to a lower preference institution may submit a 'slide-up request' to shift to their preferred choice between July 22 and July 30. The request will be processed based on the availability of seats after the first merit list admission concludes.

Classes for the new academic year will begin August 1. All higher secondary schools in the state have received guidelines for the admission process through SAMS.

SAMBALPUR ZOO TO DEBRIGARH SANCTUARY

Process to relocate 115 spotted deer begins



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 16: The process of translocation of 115 spotted deer from the Sambalpur Zoo to the Debrigarh Sanctuary in Bargarh district for species augmentation has already begun and will be over within a month, officials informed Tuesday.

"The initiative is being taken to increase the population of spotted deer in Debrigarh sanctuary and reduce their number in Sambalpur zoo. The process will aid in augmentation of prey in Debrigarh sanctuary and make space for new animals in Sambalpur zoo," said Hirakud Wildlife Division's DFO, and Sambalpur Zoo's Director, Anshu Pragnan Das. "Under this programme, 12 spotted deer were translocated successfully from the zoo to the sanctuary early Tuesday. As many as 12 to 16 deer will be shifted in batches during the dawn to dusk process," the DFO stated.

"An area covering 1.2 hectare has been demarcated as the quarantine enclosure, with a saltlick, water pool, treatment care unit,

equipped with CCTV cameras and Backflash cameras. Also, an emergency healthcare unit, along with four machans has been erected around the enclosure," Das said.

Das said that these animals will be quarantine for around three to four weeks and will be released into the wild, only after they are acclimatised to the natural habitat of Debrigarh.

"The site of quarantine and release partially covers both grazing and browsing habitats, grassland and forest, also the adjoining Hirakud reservoir," she said.

Meanwhile, the health condition of 115 spotted deer was checked and all were found to be healthy, without any disease and no tuberculosis infection traced in any animal," Das said. Translocation is an intentional and deliberate move to shift wild animals from one place to other in a stable manner to establish, re-establish, or augment a population. Earlier this year, ten blackbucks and eight Indian hog deer were transferred to Sambalpur Zoo from Nandankanan Zoological Park.

CM orders to upgrade 14 high schools

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday asked the ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare department to upgrade at least 14 high schools into higher secondary institutions.

The direction was issued while Majhi undertook a review of the department here.

Majhi said, "There is a need to upgrade more high schools into higher secondary schools to reduce the dropout rate.

The chief minister also directed the department to improve the condition of hostels of various primary schools managed by the department, particularly in tribal-dominated districts.



As the government has taken up a programme to improve the condition of 301 such department hostels in the undivided Koraput district, Majhi advised officials to increase the capacity of these hostels to 100, as and where needed, for the convenience of the students.

Majhi also emphasised improving the food quality for the children in the hostels run by the department. He also suggested giving utmost importance to

health, safety and cleanliness.

The chief minister also advised the ministers and secretaries to visit such schools and hostels regularly and check the management of these institutions.

During the meeting, the chief minister was informed that Odisha has the highest percentage of dropouts, 27.3 per cent, at the secondary level, according to the SDG India Index 2023 released by NITI Aayog recently.

Evos Alchemy Sales Gallery launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Marking a new era of sophistication and innovation in real estate, Evos Buildcon Private Limited launched the architectural project Evos Alchemy Sales Gallery here, Tuesday.

Joining the event as chief guest, renowned architect Sanjay Puri said, "It is a pleasure to collaborate with Evos Buildcon Private Limited. The project showcases the possibilities of modern architecture and design, creating an environment that is both luxurious and functional."

Evos Buildcon Private Limited managing director Kalinga Keshari Rath said, "The event represents our commitment to excellence and customer centricity approach. We are honoured that Sanjay Puri and his team realise our vision and create a space that truly embodies sophistication and luxury."

The project provides an immersive experience with demo flats of both 3BHK and 4BHK unit types. Visitors were warmly welcomed by a dedicated team committed to their comfort and satisfaction. Each unit's unique selling points (USPs) were highlighted, offering potential buyers an experience that seamlessly blends luxury and functionality. Attendees, including walk-in visitors and those with scheduled site visits, experienced superior hospitality and personalised attention from the Evos Buildcon team, ensuring they felt valued and informed.

Event on food processing held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), in collaboration with Ministry of Food Processing Industries, organised an interaction with the food processing companies here, Tuesday.

The event was also a precursor to the upcoming mega food event 'World Food India', scheduled to take place from September 19 to 22 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. On the occasion, Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries additional secretary



Minhaj Alam invited the state government to participate in the 'World Food India' initiative.

Alam highlighted various components like exhibition, buyer seller meet and food street which will take place during the four-day event. Alam also invited entrepreneurs and startups from the food fraternity of the state to join the mega event.

Presiding over the event, ICC

Odisha state council chairman JB Pany said that the food processing sector has emerged as an important segment, boosting the country's economy in terms of its contribution to GDP, employment and exports.

"During 2015-2022, food processing sector has exhibited an Average Annual Growth Rate of around 7.3 per cent, a robust growth with highest production record. There is an urgent need for improvising research and development for the sector, to become more competitive across the states and worldwide," Pany said.

CLASSIFIED LOST

This is for public information. It is informed by Mr. Madhusudan Mishra of Village- KULIPALI, Thana- Sonepur, No.544th prison, Dist.- Sonepur that he had purchased from Kousalya Naik an area of 0.250 dec. from Khata No. 67/04 and Plot No. 215 and Registered it in his name in the Sub-registrar Office of Sonepur on 15.02.1988 (Sale deed No. 111/88 dt.15.02.1988). While he was coming from his village to Sonepur had lost all the documents on the road. If anybody got it then he requested to contact him in his Mob.No. 9437146043 or inform the Police Station at Sonepur. Madhusudan Mishra

Cave on moon could be future base for astronauts

RESEARCHERS FIND EVIDENCE FOR CAVE ACCESSIBLE FROM SURFACE WHICH COULD SHELTER FUTURE ASTRONAUTS FROM HARSH LUNAR ENVIRONMENT

Researchers have found evidence for a substantial underground cave on the moon that is accessible from the surface, making the spot a prime location for a future lunar base.

The cave appears to be reachable from an open pit in the Mare Tranquillitatis (Sea of Tranquility), the ancient lava plain where the Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin first set foot more than half a century ago.

Analysis of radar data collected by Nasa's lunar reconnaissance orbiter (LRO) revealed that the Mare Tranquillitatis pit, the deepest known pit on the moon, leads to a cave 45 me-

tres wide and up to 80 metres long, an area equivalent to 14 tennis courts. The cave lies about 150 metres beneath the surface.

Lorenzo Bruzzone, of the University of Trento in Italy, said the cave was "probably an empty lava tube", adding that such features could serve as human habitats for future explorers as they were "a natural shelter against the harsh lunar environment".

Lunar orbiters first spotted pits on the moon more than a decade ago. Many are thought to be 'skylights' that connect to underground caves such as lava tubes, giant underground tunnels that form through volcanic processes.



Such caves could form the basis for a moonbase or an emergency lunar shelter because the temperature is relatively stable inside and astronauts would be naturally shielded from harmful cosmic rays, solar radiation and micrometeorites.

Previous images taken from the LRO showed that the bottom of the Mare Tranquillitatis pit was strewn with boulders up to 10 metres wide. But it was unclear whether the pit was enclosed or served as an entry point to an underground cave, such as a lava tube whose roof had collapsed.

Writing in Nature Astronomy, the scientists describe how they used LRO data and computer simulations to show that the 100 metre-wide pit, which is bordered by vertical or overhanging walls, leads to a sloping floor and a cave that extends for tens of metres westwards.

Researchers are keen to study the rocks inside such caves as they are likely to hold clues to the moon's formation and volcanic history. The caves may also contain water ice, a resource Bruzzone said was essential for long-term lunar missions and colonisation.

At least 200 pits have been spotted on the moon and many found on lava fields could be entrances to cavernous subterranean lava tubes. "The main advantage of caves is that they make available the main structural parts of a possible human base without requiring complex construction activities," said Leonardo Carrer, the study's

first author.

In preparation for humans returning to the moon, space agencies are already wondering how to assess the structural stability of caves and reinforce their walls and ceilings. Habitats may also need monitoring systems to warn of movement or seismic activity and have separate areas for astronauts to retreat to should sections of their cave collapse.

"Lunar cave systems have been proposed as great places to site future crewed bases, as the thick cave ceiling of rock is ideal to protect people and infrastructure from the wildly varying day-night lunar surface temperature variations and to block high energy radiation which bathes the lunar surface," Katherine Joy, professor in earth sciences at the University of Manchester said, adding, "However, we currently know very little about the underground structures below these pit entrances." AGENCIES

Deliver cylinders within 48 hrs of booking: Minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 16: Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra Tuesday directed the dealers and distribution companies to ensure that LPG cylinders reach the consumers within 48 hours of booking or face action. The minister gave the direction at a crucial meeting held here with petrol, diesel and LPG dealers. "We had a meeting with the officials of the companies, dealers and representatives. There is a provision to deliver LPG cylinders within 48 hours of booking. The dealers have been directed to ensure this or else action would be taken against them," said Patra.

Patra further said that the officials and dealers of petrol and diesel have been asked to ensure focus on three aspects - quantity, quality and behaviour.

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-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, 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.

ENCROACHMENTS IN BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK

Collector issues show-cause notice to 50 persons

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, July 16: The Kendrapara Collector has issued show-cause notice to 50 persons accused of constructing illegal commercial (hotels, homestays and restaurants) and residential structures on forest land in Bankual, Durgaprasad Mauzas and Rajnagar telshil under the Bhitarkanika National Park area.

Sources in the Collector's office said the notice Saturday was issued under Section 9 of the Odisha Land Unauthorized Occupation Prevention Act, 1972, directing them to appear before the Tehsildar between July 20 and 23. A case of blockade has also been filed in the tehsil office against all the alleged violators.

"The investigation and measurement of land has been completed. A report is being prepared. After completion of the report, strict action will be taken against the violators," said Suryawanshi Mayur Vikas, Collector, Kendrapara.

A joint investigation by Revenue, Forest and Police officials was launched July 9 following complaints of encroachment and unauthorized construction of hotels in the fragile eco-sensitive national park area, home to the endangered salt water crocodile.

Rajnagar Tehsildar Ajay Kumar Mohanty, Pattamundai



Tehsildar Panchanan Naik, ACF Manas Kumar Das, SDPO Kshyamasagar Panda, IIC Ajay Kumar Jena along with police force started the investigation and surveyed the revenue and forest land.

Investigations and measurements were carried out in relation to all the hotels built near the National Park Gate in Inner Kanika to Bank Chhak. Sources said hotel Satyapriya, hotel Red Crab, hotel Bhitarkanika, and Kanika Sundari Resort were found to be built entirely on forest land during the investigation. Along with all the hotels,

survey was also conducted at residential land in Bankual Mauza of private individuals living with their families for many years.

It is pertinent to mention here that sometime back, locals had complained to the Collector about the illegal constructions during the latter's visit to Gupti to participate in the district-level Van Mahotsav.

The Collector had assured them that a joint investigation by the Forest and Revenue departments would be conducted and action would be taken based on the findings. Afterwards, he

ordered the probe.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that out of six hotels against which complaints were made, five were built on forest land.

While, 'Swad' hotel was on private land, the pond and park adjacent to it were found to have come up on government and forest land.

It was also revealed that hotel Satyapriya, hotel Red Crab, hotel Bhitarkanika, and Kanika Sundari Resort were entirely built on forest land. The investigating team found that Mangrove Pitta Homestay's en-

tire building was constructed on government land.

Since these five hotels were entirely built on government and forest land, their measurement was not required. The complete building of Bhitarkanika Mangrove Homestay was found to be constructed on its own leased land. However, the pond and park behind the hotel were found to be on government and forest land during the measurement.

Surya Narayan Lenka, who owns Swad hotel, said his hotel was built on ancestral land. He also claimed to have taken loans from a bank for its construction. He welcomed "any action" by the administration against the pond and park adjacent to the hotel as they are on forest land.

When asked about why he put up a fence around the pond if he knew it was unauthorised, Lenka said, "Crocodiles had entered the pond twice. Therefore, we were compelled to secure it for the safety of tourists."

Notably, the Bhitarkanika National Park is increasingly becoming the first choice for tourists from both within the country and abroad visiting the state. While there are resorts and cafes inside the national park managed by the Forest department for the tourists visiting Bhitarkanika, Homestays and hotels have sprung up in the periphery.

Keonjhar: Brazen road digging for gas pipeline



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 16: An alleged nexus between some civic, PWD officials and a private contractor from Delhi is said to have resulted in brazen digging on some of the arterial roads in the district headquarters town here for laying pipelines to supply natural gas.

The alleged unauthorised work is going on all over the town right under the nose of the administration, much to the inconvenience of the citizens and no action has been initiated against the violators so far.

According to reports, the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) had applied to the Keonjhar Municipality seeking license and permission to start piped natural gas supply to households for cooking purposes in the district headquarters town. After obtaining permission, the pipe laying work is being carried out through New Delhi-based contractors, Vichitra Construction Pvt. Ltd.

From the letter issued for the purpose (2129/18-3-2023), it is learnt that the contractor had deposited the estimated ₹19,55,710 and furnished bank guarantee of ₹29,33,565 with the municipality for laying of 195.571 km-long pipeline for the supply of natural gas.

However, it is alleged that the pipelines are being laid indiscriminately by throwing the conditions laid down by the municipality to the wind. According to the conditions, before laying the pipelines, the contractor should obtain necessary permission from the concerned department, prioritise protecting private and public property as well as the issues concerning the general public. Likewise, the conditions make it imperative for the firm to be held liable in case of any accident or mishap. The municipal authorities are empowered to cancel the permission to the contractor in case the conditions laid down in the agreement are violated.

However, though the pipe laying work started alongside var-

ious roads of the municipality in June 2024, no permission has been obtained from the Public Works Department (PWD) which is in charge of maintaining these roads. Sources said the action of the construction company in arbitrarily carrying out works and, thereby, damaging the roads stands in clear violation of the conditions.

Therefore, local activists have demanded the municipality to cancel permission to the firm immediately on account of its failure to abide by the terms of work.

It is alleged that because of patronage by some corrupt municipal and PWD officials to the contractor, no action against the defiance has been initiated so far.

Meanwhile, PWD Superintendent Engineer Santosh Behera, who is in charge of roads, said the company has not taken any permission from the department to lay pipelines.

"Since they don't have any permission, action will be taken against them (contractor) if at all they are carrying out the work," he said.

On the other hand, Bhupen Tandel, supervisor of the pipe laying company, claimed that no illegality has been committed. "Work at present is not being carried out on roads belonging to the PWD. The department has been informed. Work will proceed after depositing the necessary money," he said.

Municipal Engineer, Keonjhar Municipal Corporation, Sangram Behera said that though the civic body had given permission to the contractor to carry out works, "it is necessary that they should also take permission from PWD".

"Actions will be taken if there are violations," he said.

Meanwhile, Superintending Engineer (R&B) Tuesday issued a show-cause notice to BPCL for undertaking the 'unauthorised' gas pipe line works without obtaining the required permission for the purpose. He also directed BPCL to repair the damaged roads in consultation with department engineers.

Two killed in Baripada road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, July 16: Two persons were killed after a truck ramed into a scooter on which they were riding on NH-18 near Palabani bypass of Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district Monday.

The deceased were identified as Sundar Mohan Murmu, 42, and Braja Mohan Hansdah, 42 - both residents of Sirisbani village under Sadar police limits.

According to reports, around midnight the duo was returning home on a scooter on the wrong side of the highway when the driver of a speeding cargo truck coming from the opposite direction lost control over the vehicle while descending from an over bridge near Palabani bypass. The vehicle ran over the scooter, killing the rider and the pillion on the spot. The driver of the truck fled the spot along with the vehicle after the incident.

Following the accident, movement of vehicles on the national highway halted for some time.

On being informed, the police reached the accident spot and sent the bodies to PRM Medical College and Hospital at Baripada for post-mortem. An investigation has been launched into the incident.

Sources meanwhile said that the bypass cross-section has become an accident hotspot due to a foreign liquor shop, located on the roadside. People access the shop by driving in the wrong direction on the highway, leading to accidents.

Locals alleged that even after repeated demands for construction of an underpass at the entry point of Palabani for safe passage, no action has yet been taken. As a result many precious lives are being lost to road mishaps.



FIGHT FOR RIGHTS: Residents of Lakshmi Dunguri area under Sambalpur Metropolitan Corporation protesting in front of the Collector's Office demanding immediate halt of evictions during monsoons, Tuesday

Baby croc climbs utility pole

RAJNAGAR: People in this sleepy town of Kendrapara district were in for a shock to find a three-ft-long baby crocodile perched atop a utility pole on the fringes of the Bhitarkanika National Park, Tuesday evening. The unusual sight of the little reptile managing to scale the 25-ft-tall concrete pole and holding onto the cable railings to maintain balance triggered instant public curiosity. A video of the baby crocodile emerging from the Patashala river, flowing inside the national park, and climbing on the electric pole went viral on social media. In the video, it is seen that the crocodile, after emerging from the river, crossed a road and climbed the utility pole located close to it. As the reptile climbed the pole, onlookers were seen shouting and throwing stones at it. Significantly, despite the best efforts put in by locals to bring the baby saltwater crocodile down, it remained stay put when reports last came in. It is worth mentioning here that the crocodile breeding season in the mangrove marshes of the park is presently on. Saltwater crocodiles, known as 'Baula Kumbhira', have made 114 nests this year.



RSP steps up anti-dengue measures

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 16: With dengue fever raising its ugly head in Sundargarh district, the Public Health department of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has launched a comprehensive campaign to prevent the spread of the vector-borne disease in the steel township.

Anti-dengue drive is being carried out on war footing at present. The drive gathered steam after the entire Sector-14 area was found to be the hotspot for the dreaded disease.



To combat mosquito breeding, anti-larva sprays are being administered in water-logged areas of the city, including slums. Additionally, anti-adult sprays (indoor sprays) are being carried out at residential quarters on a proactive basis, targeting the prime affected areas. The spray has been

completed in 'A' and 'B' Blocks of Sector 14, and is currently going on in Sector-13 'A' Block.

Moreover, the captive township of RSP (Sector area) is being sanitized by clearing wild bushes and shrubs which grow rapidly with the onset of monsoon, and are found to be breeding spots for Aedes aegyptian mosquito which are carriers of dengue virus. Similarly, pruning of trees is also going on.

Meanwhile, intensive health education and awareness programs are also going on in full

swing. Leaflets on dengue and chikungunya are being distributed and announcement over public address systems are going on in both steel city and slum areas.

Awareness talks have been organised in Ispat English Medium School, Ispat Vidya Mandir; and Guru Teg Bahadur school, while plans are afoot to extend these talks to other schools as well.

At this moment, five dengue patients have been admitted to the male medical ward of Ispat General Hospital (IGH).

'Rutuka Chhatu': Traders make hay as collectors get pittance

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 16: Brazen middlemen and unscrupulous traders are making a killing from customers seeking to buy the famed 'Rutuka Chhatu' even as collectors of the rare mushroom, which grows on the forest bed in the district by braving the odds of nature and wildlife, continue to get a pittance.

According to reports, while traders are selling 'Rutuka Chhatu' at a premium of anything between ₹1,000 to ₹2,000 per kg in cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the tribals, who collect the seasonal vegetable (or fungi), end up getting only ₹20 to ₹50 for a cone (made up of leaves, with around 250 gram content) of the delicacy from middlemen.

Sources said different types of mushroom bloom in the forest during rains, 'Rutuka Chhatu' being one among those. This variety of mushroom blooms on the



forest floor after the onset of monsoon, and lasts for about a month.

During summer, dried leaves cover the forest floor. After the first few spells of monsoon shower; the leaves, aided by moisture and bacterial growth in the wet soil, form compost. This helps the spores come out of the ground, it was learnt.

Sources said among the mushrooms that grow in natural environment in the forests of Keonjhar district, 'Rutuka Chhatu' is of high demand all

over; from rural to urban areas. And middlemen as well as traders keep a close eye for the valued forest produce.

"The forest dwellers mostly collect the mushroom from forests, hills and the adjoining fields and carry the content to markets for sale. From the proceeds of the sale, they meet their family expenses, like buying cooking oil and salt. Middlemen at these markets exploit them with abysmally less price and lessening weight. Therefore, they continue to remain im-

poorished," said retired teacher Pranab Rautray.

Usually, middlemen take complete possession of the first batch of the produce and sell it for ₹600-800 per kilogram in retail. The price comes down gradually as larger quantities arrive in subsequent period. Therefore, the mushroom that remains beyond the reach of ordinary buyers initially becomes affordable when the price drops to less than ₹200 per kilogram.

However, the forest dwellers usually sell the mushroom for ₹20 to ₹50 per Chauti (cones made of leaves) as per the size of the cone. Cunning middlemen play truant and sell large consignments to traders, who in turn sell those in big towns like Cuttack, Bhubaneswar at more than ₹1,000 per kilogram.

Therefore, while the middlemen and traders make hay, poor collectors never get their due, forget profits.

The hapless collectors not just

face exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous traders and middlemen, but many a times, they face hazards from snakes, bears, elephants and other wild animals in the jungles. And after painstakingly collecting the mushrooms by braving the odds

of nature, they walk miles to distant market places with bags on the head in hot and humid weather conditions to sell it.

It is worth mentioning that the seasonal mushroom business in the district runs into crores of rupees every year.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, NUAPADA
(Central Store)
SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE
Notification No. CDM&PHO/03/GHBVT/2024-25
No.E-125: Sealed tenders are invited from registered Firms/Suppliers/Manufacturers/ Authorized Distributors for supply of GAZELLE HB VARIANT TEST MULTIPACK to the undersigned. Details regarding items with terms and conditions may be downloaded from District website www.nuapada.odisha.gov.in. The tenders should reach the office of the undersigned by Date-31.07.2024 upto 05.00 PM through Speed Post/ Registered Post/ Courier Services only. The tender will be opened on date 01.08.2024 at 11.30 AM in the office chamber/ conference hall of the undersigned.
The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Nuapada
OIPR-10055/11/0006/2425

FOCUS POLITICS

WHAT THE LEFT NEEDS



A new left must confront head-on both the new structure of the economy and the productivity imperative. Only then will it turn into the genuine political movement of the future and a credible alternative to the far right

the breakdown in social and community life that ensues when factories close or move elsewhere.

What the left needs, then, is a credible programme of creating good, productive jobs throughout the economy – especially in lagging regions and for workers with less than a university education. The representative target of such a programme is not an auto or steel worker, but a care or retail worker.

Moreover, labour-friendly innovation must be at the center of the programme. Boosting wages and jobs at the same time requires organisational and technological innovations that enhance the productivity of less-educated workers. Unlike automation and other forms of labour-saving technologies, labour-friendly innovations help ordinary workers perform a greater range of more complicated tasks. Digital tools that confer expertise are an example.

Because innovation and productivity are central to this agenda, the requisite policies look like successful industrial policies of old. We could call them industrial policies for services or, better still, productive policies for labour. They build on existing local cross-sectoral partnerships and national innovation programmes, but with a focus on labour-absorbing services and technologies that are complementary to less-educated labour. My colleagues and I have sketched variants of such programs for the US, France, and Britain.

A new left must confront head-on both the new structure of the economy and the productivity imperative. Only then will it turn into the genuine political movement of the future and a credible alternative to the far right.

The writer, Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School, is President of the International Economic Association.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Recent elections in France and the United Kingdom, together with America's current presidential campaign, reflect the dilemmas left-leaning parties confront as they try to fashion new identities and present credible alternatives to the far right. It was the far right that first capitalised on the backlash to neoliberalism and hyper-globalisation that grew in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis. A decade ago, one could justifiably complain about the "abdication of the left."

To their credit, leftist parties are in a better position today. The Labour Party in Britain has just won in a landslide, ending 14 years of Conservative rule. The left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) coalition in France has a far better chance to stop the rise of the far right than the centrist forces allied with President Emmanuel Macron. US President Joe Biden has taken his country into uncharted territory with new industrial and green policies, though he lags behind Donald Trump in the polls.

As the Democrats' difficulties in the United States indicate, there is still considerable work to be done for the left. Biden's age and evident failure to convince the public of his mental fitness is a big part of the problem. But so is the mixed message Democrats have been sending about what they really stand for and who they represent.

This is a problem that afflicts other parties of the left as well. As Thomas Piketty has shown, leftist parties have become unmoored from their traditional working-class base and veered toward the educated elite.

The left has yet to forge an identity that is fit for current realities. How should they reposition themselves? Should they focus on redistribution, as the NFP in France appears to have done? Should they uphold fiscal responsibility, like the UK's Labour Party? Should they embrace industrial policies à la Biden, and to what purpose? How should they handle issues such as immigration, the envi-

ronment, or transgender rights, on which the cultural elite hold very different views from the general public?

If the left is to regain political strength, it must return to its roots and once again represent the interests of working people. This means focusing squarely on good, secure, productive jobs for workers without a bachelor's degree. The increase in economic insecurity, the erosion of the middle class, and the disappearance of good jobs in lagging regions were at the heart of the rise of right-wing populism. Only by reversing these trends can the left present a credible alternative.

The difficulty is that old strategies will not work. Unionised workers in manufacturing formed the core of support for leftist parties in the decades following World War II. They were also the foundation of the middle class.

Today manufacturing employs an ever-smaller share of workers in the US and Europe. The bulk of the workforce is in services. When Biden took office in January 2021, the manufacturing share of US employment had already shrunk to 8.5 per cent. Today it is below 8.2 per

cent, despite all his administration's efforts to revitalise manufacturing. Some European countries, such as Germany, have higher shares of manufacturing employment, but none has managed to avoid a decline over time.

Parties of the left have not yet fully faced this fact. None of their talk about reshoring, competitiveness, digitalisation, and the green transition sounds realistic when it comes to jobs. Nor does protectionism against China. Strategies that focus on manufacturing have considerably less political appeal when most workers are not in manufacturing and have no realistic prospect of being employed there.

Redistributive policies also have problems. There is a strong argument for making tax systems more progressive and increasing tax rates on top income earners. Higher social transfers and better social insurance would help, especially in the US, where social safety nets remain weak. But income transfers do not compensate workers for the loss of dignity and social recognition that accompany the disappearance of good jobs. Nor do they repair



Dani Rodrik

IF THE LEFT IS TO REGAIN POLITICAL STRENGTH, IT MUST RETURN TO ITS ROOTS AND ONCE AGAIN REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

Mission Impossible

The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or creed or scripture or idea or philosophy.

SRI AUROBINDO



The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, self-styled advocate of "illiberal democracy," is now on a difficult and dangerous mission. He is trying to make the impossible possible by trying to reach out to Russian President Vladimir Putin, China's President Xi Jinping and Far-Right forces of Europe from his position within the European Union. Since taking over the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) recently, he is acting true to his reputation as a pro-Putin autocrat. His regime is marked by suppression of free speech and authoritarian rule. In this respect he is beholden to Russia and China. At the same time he is an admirer of former US President Donald Trump for the latter's politics of intolerance and hatred for immigrants. As the new president of the Council he has embarked on a diplomatic tour which he calls "peace mission" in Ukraine.

But, this initiative proves to be problematic for his EU partners for two reasons. First, he has no mandate for it. It is his own idea and for this very reason it is suspect. Secondly, it pays no heed to the restrictions imposed by the Western powers on Russia and on their relations with Putin for his invasion of Ukraine. Putin is also under an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes. This has made it all the more important for Putin to get international attention by being seen with leaders of friendly countries in Moscow. Interestingly, Putin cannot set foot on foreign soils that are under the ICC jurisdiction and as such are bound to execute the arrest warrant. A few weeks back he had travelled to North Korea where he was welcomed with open arms.

What has irked EU member countries is that a few days after his stopover in Kyiv, Orban showed the gumption to first meet Putin in Moscow, then Jinping in Beijing and finally Trump at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida. It was indeed a remarkable whistle-stop tour.

On July 11, as soon as the NATO summit organised in Washington by US President Joe Biden ended, Orban rushed to see Trump. He seems to have a special chemistry with Trump as is borne out by the fact that this was his second visit to Trump in the current year. He had already described the former Republican president as a "man of honour" after his conviction in one of the many legal cases he is facing.

Hungary has the distinction of being a member of both the EU and NATO. Orban has astutely used this advantage to the hilt to serve the interests of Putin and Xi, considered as more or less masked enemies and adversaries of the two institutions. As such, this tour can be seen as contrary to European interests.

Orban is also propelled by his self-interest to refurbish his image back in his own country which got dented following his party's setback in the European elections. He intends to convince the electorate at home that he is not as isolated as his detractors claim. As part of his strategy to project himself as an acceptable figure in Europe he has taken the main initiative to form a new group in the European Parliament called the Patriots of Europe. Such a bloc brings together several Far-Right parties. The group to be chaired by Jordan Bardella, the president of the Rassemblement National of France, will be the third-largest in the European Parliament.

However, members of the European Parliament have voiced their concern over the development. In a letter addressed to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and others, 63 MEPs have demanded Hungary's EU voting rights be stripped after its Prime Minister's trips to Russia and China. They have stated Orban "has already caused significant damage by exploiting and abusing the role of the Council Presidency."

The whole episode shows how the tussle between liberal and autocratic forces in the developed countries is acquiring new dimensions.

WISDOM CORNER

Treat those who are good with goodness, and also treat those who are not good with goodness. Thus goodness is attained. Be honest to those who are honest, and be also honest to those who are not honest. Thus honesty is attained.

LAO TZU

It is the greatest mistake to think that man is always one and the same. A man is never the same for long. He is continually changing. He seldom remains the same even for half an hour.

GEORGE GURDIEFF

A man can be himself only so long as he is alone, and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom, for it is only when he is alone that he is really free.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1902: American mechanical engineer Willis Carrier completed drawings for what would become the first modern air conditioner.
- 1918: The Carpathia, the ocean liner that rescued the survivors of the Titanic in 1912, was sunk by a German U-boat during World War I.
- 1918: Former Russian tsar Nicholas II and his family were executed by Bolsheviks.
- 1936: A well-planned uprising by Nationalist rebels against the Republican government of Spain began this day in 1936, sparking a bloody civil war that lasted until 1939, when the Nationalists and Francisco Franco assumed power.
- 1945: The Potsdam Conference begins. The heads of the US, the UK, and USSR met in Potsdam to discuss the terms of the German and Japanese surrenders, and to make post-war plans.
- 1955: Disneyland opens its doors for the first time. The popular theme park ("The Happiest Place on Earth") was opened by Walt Disney in Anaheim, California.
- 1976: Indonesia annexes East Timor and declares it its 27th province. This was the culmination of an 8-month long Indonesian invasion and occupation of the Southeast Asian country that began just after East Timor declared its independence from Portugal in November, 1975.
- 1996: TWA flight 800 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Long Island, killing all 230 people on board; a U.S. government inquiry determined that a mixture of fuel and air had ignited accidentally within a fuel tank, though others believe the jetliner was shot down by a missile.

LOL

Hiking trip

Sherlock Holmes and Matthew Watson were on a camping and hiking trip. They had gone to bed and were lying there looking up at the sky. Holmes said, "Watson, look up. What do you see?" "Well, I see thousands of stars."



"And what does that mean to you?" "Well, I guess it means we will have another nice day tomorrow. What does it mean to you, Holmes?" "To me, it means someone has stolen our tent."

IN JEST THIS

The pre-wedding singers

Here are three signs that you're a global superstar: (1) You have more than 100 million Instagram followers; (2) your concerts sell out in seconds; and (3) you've performed at an Ambani wedding.

The Ambanis are Asia's richest family, worth more than \$122 billion. To put that in perspective, Mukesh and Nita Ambani are rich enough to buy a copy of "Crazy Rich Asians," as well as movie popcorn, for every single person on earth. They live in a 27-story building in Mumbai, a home that has three helipads, a 160-car garage, swimming pool and movie theatre. About 600 people are employed at their home, including more chefs than Norwegian Cruise Line.

Mukesh and Nita have thrown lavish weddings for all three of their children, spending thousands of crores to ensure that celebrities and well-known figures show up, including Priyanka Chopra, Ivanka Trump, David Beckham and Hillary Clinton.

Their daughter, Isha, married Anand Piramal in 2018, and the singer at one of the pre-

wedding events was someone named Beyoncé. You may have heard of her. She and her background singers treated guests to a "mini-concert." Having Beyoncé perform a "mini-concert" at your child's pre-wedding is like getting the Pope to perform a "mini-blessing" at your child's pre-baptism.

Before the sangeet ceremony with Beyoncé, Isha and Anand had an engagement ceremony at Lake Como in Italy. Guests at the engagement ceremony, including a number of Bollywood stars, got a performance from a true LEGEND.

Yes, John Legend sang at the ceremony. "Cause all of me, loves all of you, love your curves and all your edges, all your perfect imperfections," he crooned, serenading Isha with his hit song "All of Me," while her attendants and makeup artists scrambled around to see if they had missed any "imperfections."

The following year, when Isha's twin brother, Akash, tied the knot with Shloka Mehta, the performers at a pre-wedding celebration in St. Moritz, Switzerland, included Chris Martin of

Coldplay and The Chainsmokers. For another pre-wedding ceremony in Mumbai, Maroon 5 performed some of their hits, including "Girls Like You," "Moves Like Jagger" and "Sugar."

This year, 2024, has been all about the third scion, Anant. He and pharmaceutical heiress Radhika Merchant have spent almost the entire year getting married. It began with an engagement party in January that Bollywood stars such as Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone attended. Then came a pre-wedding party in March that included choreographed dancing from Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and probably Imran Khan too. (Genghis Khan was a no-show.) Someone named Rihanna also performed.

Two months later, another pre-wedding party was held on a four-day European cruise from Palermo to Rome. Performers during the cruise and several stops included Backstreet Boys, Pitbull, David Guetta, Katy Perry and Andrea Bocelli. It was truly a historic cruise, the first time a cruise ship has permitted a

Pitbull on board. In early July, Canadian singer Justin Bieber added his name to the list of stars who have accepted bundles of cash to perform at an Ambani wedding. Singing at the sangeet ceremony, Bieber entertained guests with hits such as "Sorry," "What Do You Mean," and "Baby."

Anant and Radhika got married on 12 July, and performers at the celebration included AR Rahman, Sonu Nigam and Shreya Ghoshal. Soon they'll be off on their honeymoon, and it might finally be Anant's turn to perform. Perhaps he will serenade Radhika with his rendition of "Sugar."

Bieber was reportedly paid about \$10 million to perform at the sangeet ceremony.

"Name your price, Justin." "\$10 million."

"Done. The money is on its way."

"Wait, did I say \$10 million? I meant to say \$20 million. India is a long flight away."

"Sorry. We had a deal."

"But I..."

"Sorry, Justin. Is it too late to say I'm sorry?"

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

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

Unanswered questions

Sir, Less than a week since Donald Trump's right ear was grazed by a gunman's bullet at a campaign in Pennsylvania, a complete picture of the 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, who tried to assassinate the former president, is yet to emerge, and details of what led to the stunning event remain ambiguous. But there are some intriguing and engrossing questions that arise: 1) Why did a nursing home aide try to kill Trump when he had no criminal record, no known history of any mental illness and was not known to the FBI prior to this incident? 2) Why the building, which is only around a few hundred yards away from where Trump was speaking, wasn't monitored strictly? 3) How and why was the shooter permitted to ascend to the roof of a building just outside the rally perimeter, but still close enough to allow a clean shot at Trump? These are crucial questions that naturally will linger in everyone's mind. Meanwhile, the US law enforcement will certainly have a tough time, drilling down into the precise motive of the dead gunman, who had a soft and unsuspecting look with his eye-glasses.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Shifting political winds

Sir, The recent Assembly bypolls may not have been critical for the survival of state governments in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. However, the results were highly anticipated as a potential indicator of the shifting political winds, especially after the national elections where the BJP saw a reduced tally and the Congress-led INDIA bloc significantly increased its presence in the Lok Sabha. In these by-elections, the Congress and its allies achieved significant victories, winning 10 out of 13 seats. The BJP secured only two seats, with an independent candidate winning in Bihar. While these results do not necessarily signal a nationwide trend, the BJP's below-par performance should be a concern for the ruling party at the Centre. The Congress and its partners in the INDIA bloc celebrated their success. Congress won two seats each in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, the TMC secured all four seats in West Bengal, AAP won in Punjab, and DMK in Tamil Nadu.

Bishal Kumar Saha, MURSHIDABAD

national

of the day quote

In 1980, (the then Prime Minister) Indira Gandhi put the Mandal Commission in cold storage. In 1990, when it was accepted, Rajiv Gandhi gave a two-and-a-half-hour speech and opposed OBC reservation



Our decision is that whenever the road (highway) is opened, we will move towards Delhi



Neither the provisions of the reservation will remain nor social justice will prevail under the BJP government



SHORT TAKES

5 dead as bus hits tractor

Mumbai: At least five persons were killed and 42 injured when a bus carrying 'warkaris' or pilgrims headed for Pandharpur hit a tractor on Mumbai-Pune Expressway, police said Tuesday. The bus was ferrying 54 warkaris, devotees of Lord Vitthal, on their way to Pandharpur in Solapur district for Ashadhi Ekadashi celebrations from Dombivli near Mumbai. Notably, tractors are not allowed on the expressway. The accident took place around midnight near Parvel in Navi Mumbai, deputy commissioner of police Vivek Pansare said.

Two more kids die of Chandipura virus

Ahmedabad: Two more children died of suspected Chandipura virus infection in Gujarat Tuesday, taking the number of fatalities recorded in the state so far to eight, Health Minister Rushikesh Patel said. With this, the number of persons infected from the virus has gone up to 14, and eight of them have died, he told reporters.

Docs call off strike

New Delhi: The Resident Doctors' Association of the GTB Hospital which was on an indefinite strike to demand better security measures in the wake of a shooting incident Tuesday called off its stir following an assurance from the Delhi government. In a development aimed at addressing security issues, a meeting was held with Danish Ashraf, Special Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, GNCTD, along with RDA members, the MD of GTBH, and other officials.

Kavitha hospitalised

New Delhi: BRS leader K Kavitha, who is lodged in Tihar jail here in connection with a money laundering case, was taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital after she developed some gynaecological problem and high fever Tuesday, officials said. The 46-year-old Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader was brought back to prison after undergoing some tests at the hospital, they said.

AP CM meets Shah

New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu met Union Home Minister Amit Shah here late Tuesday night, urging for a substantial fund allocation in the upcoming Union Budget to address the state's financial challenges, sources said. During the meeting at Shah's residence, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president emphasised that Andhra Pradesh continues to face the aftermath of the "unjust bifurcation" in 2014 and the previous administration's "miserable governance," according to sources.



Under this, the road from Ashram to Bhairon Road T-point on the major road stretch of the Ring Road will be upgraded and strengthened. This initiative is a part of the vision of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to provide a better commuting experience to the people of the national capital while increasing the overall connectivity of various areas

ATISHI MARLENA | DELHI PWD MINISTER

LANDSLIDE HITS K'TAKA'S UTTARA KANNADA DISTRICT

Three persons were killed and four others feared dead after a massive landslide near Shirur village in Karnataka's Uttara Kannada district Tuesday, officials said. Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said seven persons, including four members of a family, were feared killed in the landslide on National Highway 66



Puja Khedkar's IAS training put on hold

While Khedkar, whose disability as well as OBC certificates are under the scanner, maintained that she was a victim of misinformation and "fake news", Pune Police said they would check the authenticity of the disability certificates she had submitted to the UPSC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 16: The government Tuesday put on hold the 'district training program' of controversial IAS officer Puja Khedkar as she was summoned back to the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration for "necessary action".

A letter by Maharashtra additional chief secretary Nitin Gadre said the Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri academy had decided to put her district training programme on hold, and immediately recalled her.

"You are hereby relieved from the district training programme of the state government of Maharashtra. You are instructed to join the academy at the earliest but not later than 23rd July 2024 under any circumstance," the letter addressed to Khedkar said.

When contacted, Washim collector Bhuvaneshwari S said Khedkar was immediately relieved as 'super-numerary' assistant collector.

Khedkar, 34, came under the spotlight after reports about her alleged demands for a separate office and official car and unauthorised use of a beacon on her private car emerged. She was subsequently transferred to Washim from Pune. Earlier in the



day, a senior government doctor said she had obtained a "locomotor disability" certificate in August 2022.

"She applied for disability certification about her left limb knee joint back in 2022. She visited here for medical examinations and was assessed by multiple departments," said Dr Rajendra Wable, dean of the government-run Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Hospital at Pimpri near Pune. "It was found that she has a seven per cent locomotor disability," he added.

The certificate, issued August 24, 2022, stated that she had seven per cent disability in the knee. Khedkar had earlier submitted two certificates, provided by the Ahmednagar District Civil

Hospital in 2018 and 2021, to the UPSC under the Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwBD) category.

Additionally, she had applied for a disability certificate from the Aundh government hospital in Pune in August 2022, but after medical tests her application was rejected.

Speaking to reporters in Washim, Khedkar said she had been the victim of a misinformation campaign.

Fake news was being published about her every day, she said.

"Misinformation is being spread and I am facing a lot of defamation. I want to request the media to behave responsibly and not to spread misinfor-

mation," she said. She had called women police personnel to her residence Monday night as "she had some work," the official said while responding to a question, without elaborating further.

Khedkar was transferred from Pune, where she was posted as assistant collector, to Washim as a supernumerary assistant collector after she was first accused of demanding perks and facilities to which she was not entitled as a trainee official.

A police official in Pune, meanwhile, said they had received a letter from the office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. Last week, the Union government set up a one-member committee "to verify the candidature" of Khedkar and submit a report in two weeks.

Pune Police has also been searching for her parents in a criminal case. A First Information Report was registered against the couple and five others after a video showed Puja's mother Manorama Khedkar, a village sarpanch, allegedly threatening some persons with a gun over a land dispute.

The Pune police Sunday also confiscated a luxury car used by Puja Khedkar for allegedly installing a red beacon light on it without any authorisation.

PM CARES FOR CHILDREN SCHEME

Half of applications rejected in 3 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Only half of the applications received under the PM CARES for Children scheme for COVID orphans were approved in the three years of its launch, according to data.

In the three years since the launch of the scheme, about 49 per cent applications were approved, while others were rejected, according to official data. Launched at the peak of COVID-19 cases in India, the PM CARES for Children Scheme is aimed at supporting children who lost their parents, a legal guardian, adoptive parents, or a surviving parent to the pandemic between March 11, 2020 to May 5, 2023.

According to official data, a total of 9,331 applications from 613 districts across 33 states and

Union Territories (UTs) were received under the scheme.

However, only 4,532 applications from 558 districts in 32 states and UTs were approved, while 4,781 applications were rejected, according to the data.

Among the states, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of applications, with 1,553, 1,511, and 1,007 applications, respectively.

Approval rates in these states stand at 855 applications from Maharashtra, 210 from Rajasthan and 467 from Uttar Pradesh.

The scheme's objective is to ensure comprehensive care and protection of these children in a sustained manner, providing health insurance, educational empowerment and financial support until they reach 23 years of age.



ASMITA to create 22,000 books in Indian languages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) launched a project Tuesday to develop 22,000 books in Indian languages in the next five years.

The project, titled ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing), was launched by Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Higher Education. It is a collaborative effort of the UGC and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, a high-powered committee under the ministry, to promote Indian languages in education.

"Launch of three landmark initiatives -- ASMITA, Bahubhasha ShabdKosh and Real-time Translation Architecture, will give momentum to imparting learning in Bharatiya Bhashas, empowering learners in their academic pursuits and preserving and promoting India's language traditions," Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan wrote on X. According to UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar, the project aims at creating a robust ecosystem for translation and original book writing in Indian languages across various disciplines within higher education. "The goal is to produce 1,000 books in 22 languages within five years, resulting in 22,000 books in Bharatiya bhasha," Kumar said.

NEET-UG PAPER LEAK

Key accused among 2 more held by CBI

With the two arrests, the total number of persons arrested in connection with cases pertaining to leakage, impersonation and other irregularities in the medical entrance exam has now reached 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The CBI has arrested two more persons including a key accused in the NEET-UG paper leak case who allegedly stole the paper from a National Testing Agency's trunk in Hazaribagh in Jharkhand, officials said Tuesday.

The agency has arrested Pankaj Kumar alias Aditya, a 2017-batch civil engineer from the National Institute of Technology Jamshepur, who allegedly stole the NEET-UG paper from the NTA trunk in Hazaribagh, the officials said. Kumar, a resident of Bokaro, was arrested from Patna, they said. The CBI has also arrested one Raju Singh from Hazaribagh who allegedly helped Kumar in stealing the paper, they said.

Singh was arrested after detailed questioning, the officials said, adding the agency also "temporarily sealed" one Raj Guest House in Hazaribagh in connection with the case.

The agency has already arrested from Hazaribagh Jamaluddin Ansari, a journalist with a Hindi newspaper, and Oasis School's principal Ehsanul



DAILY GRIND: Porters carry a vegetable sack for delivery at a wholesale vegetable market in Kolkata, West Bengal

HC restrains Mamata from defaming Governor

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court Tuesday restrained West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and three others from making any defamatory or incorrect statement against Governor CV Ananda Bose. In an interim order, Justice Krishna Rao said the matter will be heard again August 14. Bose had filed a defamation suit against Banerjee, two newly-elected TMC MLAs Sayantika Banerjee and Reyat Hossain Sarkar and party leader Kunal Ghosh. Speaking on an imbrolio over oath-taking of the two new MLAs, Banerjee had made certain comments, over which the governor moved the defamation suit before the high court. He also prayed for an interim order restraining them from making any further comment in connection with alleged incidents at Raj Bhavan. A row had triggered over the venue of the swearing-in ceremony of two newly elected TMC MLAs last month, as they wanted to be taken oath in the Assembly, while the governor was in favour of holding it in Raj Bhavan.



Haque and vice principal Intiaz Alam. Haque and Alam were reportedly designated as coordinators by the NTA in the district. The Economic Offence Wing (EOU) of Bihar Police had earlier said in a statement that the leaked NEET-UG question paper was allegedly obtained from Oasis School in Hazaribagh by the notorious Sanjeev Kumar alias Lutan Mukhiya solver gang.

It had said investigators matched a partially burnt question paper recovered from the Patna safe house with the reference question paper provided by the NTA, confirming the leak's origin. However, it could not clearly establish who was behind the alleged leakage of the paper, the officials said.

NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. More than 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the test.

Kanchanjunga train mishap was waiting to happen: Probe

Considering various lapses on part of the rail administration, the CRS said, "Due to improper authority and that too without adequate information, such an incident was an "accident-in-waiting"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The Commissioner of Railway Safety has said the Kanchanjunga Express accident involving a goods train was "waiting to happen" due to lapses at multiple levels in managing train operations in automatic signal zones, and "inadequate counselling" of loco pilots and station masters.

In its probe report into the June 17 accident in West Bengal's Darjeeling district that left 10 persons dead, including the loco pilot of the goods train, the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) also recommended im-

plementation of the Automatic Train-protection system (KAVACH) on top priority.

The CRS said wrong paper authority or T/A 912 to cross defective signals was issued to the loco pilot of the goods train involved by authorities concerned. Further, the paper authority didn't mention the speed that the goods train driver was supposed to follow while crossing the defective signal.

The CRS, in its probe, found that besides the Kanchanjunga Express and the goods train, five other trains entered the section from when the signals turned defective until the accident hap-



pened on that day. The CRS noted that only the Kanchanjunga Express followed the norm of moving at a maximum speed of 15 kmph and stopping for one minute at each defective signal while the rest of the six trains, including the goods train involved in the accident, didn't follow this norm.

This shows that "action to be taken when T/A 912 is issued to them is not clear. Some of the loco pilots have followed the 15 kmph rule while most of the loco pilots did not follow this rule. The absence of proper authority and that too without adequate information created misinterpretation and misunderstanding

about the speed to be followed."

It said the large number of signalling failures in automatic signalling territory is a cause of concern and should be taken up with those concerned to improve the reliability of the system.

The CRS also said that there was a shortage of walkie-talkies in the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) Zone under whose jurisdiction the accident took place and hence the goods train crew was not issued the "critical safety equipment".

In case of multiple signal failures, the CRS said there were three options left with the rail administration but they followed none of them in total.

The first option was to let the drivers follow the general rule under which the loco pilot has been instructed to stop the train for one minute at the defective signal and then proceed with great

caution till the next stop signal.

The second option was that the drivers should have been issued a T/A 912 form with a caution order (mentioning the speed that the driver should have maintained). In the Kanchanjunga tragedy, the T/A 912 issued to the goods train crew didn't mention the speed aspect.

The third option was that authorities should have treated that as a "major signal failure" and followed Automatic Block System. Under the provision, only one train is allowed to enter between two stations and till the time the proceeding train crosses the next station, no train is permitted to enter from the first station.

According to the CRS, the control office at the divisional level has to be manned by one Senior Section Engineer, one Junior Engineer and one helper round-the-clock in an 8-hour shift.

of the day **quote**

It is a complete failure of the Modi government...they are not able to control terrorism

ASADUDDIN OWAISSI | AIMIM CHIEF

Inland waterway is a new thing for Nagaland and we have to fully participate to avail the benefit

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS MINISTER

The BJP will form a double-engine government again in Jharkhand by uprooting the current dispensation

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

XPOST OF THE DAY

The entire point of formal education in India was to get jobs. Even IITs/IIMs are struggling to place. When people can't find reliable jobs, they take gap years-- start preparing for exams. Hoping that their formal degree certificates would help in interviews. Now, it turns out even these exams are rigged. And, people with fake certificates are winning. Honestly, as a common person you can't do much. What can however be done is: that if you are a hardworking middle class student, you should start building money making skills. On top of this: get degrees in professions where you can make a source of income as a 1 person business. Example would be: CA, Lawyer etc (for Engineers it is tough). This is my personal take. Now everyone is entitled to their opinions.

@Akshat_World

SHORT TAKES

Mihir Shah sent to judicial custody
Mumbai: A Mumbai court Tuesday sent Mihir R Shah, the prime accused in the BMW hit-and-run case in which a fisherwoman was killed July 7, to 14 days judicial custody. Shah, 24, the son of ruling Shiv Sena leader Rajesh Shah, was produced before a court after his six-day police custody ended, and now he has been sent to judicial custody till July 30.

Chargesheet filed against Bibhav
New Delhi: The Delhi Police Tuesday filed its 500-odd page chargesheet against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar in the alleged assault of AAP MP Swati Maliwal. The charge sheet was filed before Metropolitan Magistrate Gaurav Goyal who also extended the judicial custody of Kumar till July 30. Kumar is accused of assaulting Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Maliwal May 13 here at the Chief Minister's official residence.

Search op launched in Poonch, Rajouri, Samba
Jammu: A ground and aerial search operation was launched by the security forces following suspected movement in the Poonch, Rajouri, and Samba districts here Tuesday, officials said. Troops are already on high alert along the border. A search operation was launched by the Indian Army and Special Operation Group, or SOG, after information was received about the spotting of suspicious movement of two people near the Betera River. Backed by drones, a search operation involving police, CRPF and the army was launched in the border area of Nowshera in Rajouri district.



I think he (Rahul) is a much more mature person (now). I knew him as a young man during his days at Trinity College... the college where I studied and later became its Master. He (Rahul) visited me at that time and he came across as someone who was unclear about what he wanted to do. Politics didn't seem to appeal to him then

AMARTYA SEN | NOBEL LAUREATE ECONOMIST PROFESSOR

PUC CENTRES IN DELHI REMAIN SHUT

PUC centres at petrol pumps in Delhi remained shut for the second consecutive day Tuesday as part of a strike by petrol dealers to express dissatisfaction over the proposed hike in the pollution certificate charges



All-party meet July 21, TMC to skip meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The government has convened an all-party meeting July 21 ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament which will start next Monday, the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry said.

The meeting, which will be held at 11 am Sunday, has been called by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, the ministry said in a statement.

This will be Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's first time at the customary session-eve meeting of floor leaders from all parties if he attends it. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) said no representatives of the party will attend the meeting as July 21 is observed by the party as Martyrs' Day.

TMC's Parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien wrote to Rijiju and informed him that his party will not be able to attend the meet.

"For 30 years now, 21st July has been observed as 'Martyrs' Day' in Bengal in honour of our 13 colleagues who were unlawfully killed in a police firing on the day in 1993.

"In this context, all MPs of the All India Trinamool Congress including myself will be in our home state to mark the day along with other party colleagues. Therefore, no MP will be able to attend the meeting," he said.

The July 21 Martyrs' Day is observed in memory of 13 Congress supporters who were shot dead in firing by the Kolkata



This will be Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's first time at the customary session-eve meeting of floor leaders from all parties if he attends it

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) said no representatives from the party will attend the meeting as July 21 is observed by the party as Martyrs' Day

TMC's Parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien wrote to Rijiju and informed him that his party will not be able to attend the meet

mark the day by holding a rally every year even after forming the TMC January 1, 1998.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is scheduled to begin July 22 and will conclude August 12. The Union Budget will be presented July 23.

The first Parliament session after the formation of the 18th Lok Sabha witnessed the Opposition INDIA bloc raising issues like the recent NEET controversy, Manipur situation, and price rise among others, resulting in up-rosars and adjournments.

Protests were also witnessed in both Houses during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address. In the Lok Sabha, Opposition MPs raised slogans demanding a statement on Manipur during the Prime Minister's reply, while in the Rajya Sabha, the Opposition had staged a walkout.

Police in 1993 during a march to the state secretariat -- Writers Buildings -- when the CPI(M)-led Left Front was in power in West Bengal. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was the state Youth Congress chief at that time and she continued to

Exam reform panel receives suggestions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: No normalisation of marks, proper communication in case of schedule changes and infrastructure checks at exam centres are among thousands of suggestions the Centre's high-level exam reform panel has received in response to its call for recommendations.

Tasked with reviewing the functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA), the panel headed by former ISRO chief R Radhakrishnan has received over 37,000 suggestions from stakeholders, including students, parents, coaching institutions, school teachers, academic institutions

and even career counsellors. According to sources, a majority of the suggestions came from students.

The panel has been tasked with recommending reforms in the examination process, enhancing data security protocols and reviewing the structure and operations of the NTA. It has two months to file its report.

"Some aspirants have suggested laying down of clear norms in case of any lapse. Like the grace marks issue, aspirants want to know what will happen in a given scenario, what the options will be and what formula will be used. There are also complaints about some centres being too far off and not having the required infrastructure," a source said.

According to sources, a majority of the suggestions came from students



BUNDLES OF JOY: Farm workers plant paddy saplings at an agricultural field in Kamrup district of Assam PTI PHOTO

OT Marathon: 24 plastic surgeries in 24 hours

THE OT MARATHON, WHICH BEGAN AT 9 AM MONDAY AND CONTINUED FOR 24 HOURS, SAW BOTH NEW AND PENDING SURGERIES GETTING DONE WITHOUT AFFECTING EMERGENCY CASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Twenty-four plastic surgeries were conducted at the RML Hospital in as many hours as part of an OT Marathon organised to mark the World Plastic Surgery Day.

The OT Marathon, which began at 9 am Monday and continued for 24 hours, saw both new and pending surgeries getting done without affecting emergency cases that needed immediate attention which were dealt with by a separate team of doctors simultaneously, Dr Ajay Shukla, medical superintendent of the hospital said.

The World Plastic Surgery Day is observed July 15. Dr Samik Bhattacharya, Department of Burns, Plastic, Maxillofacial and Microvascular Surgery at the hospital said patients whose surgeries were postponed and cases needing immediate care were chosen.

"The premise was to reduce the waiting time of surgery," said Dr



Bhattacharya. The surgeries performed included those for deformities due to trauma and burns, acute injuries leading to skin loss and congenital anomalies like cleft-lip and palate, removal of large size birthmarks and bed sores.

There has been at least 25-30 per cent increase in the number of people opting for plastic surgeries with men forming a

sizeable proportion among them because of increased awareness. The self-awareness of the population has increased in both genders in urban areas.

"Because of exposure, movies and social media, people have become more conscious about how they look and appear. So besides plastic reconstructive surgeries for trauma and cancer

and burns, these days people approach for cosmetic improvements which include procedures such as liposuction, facelift, breast augmentation, rhinoplasty. The most common procedure for which men come is the removal of male breasts and for hair transplant," he said. With improved training and availability of technology, the safety in plastic surgery has improved a lot, which is another reason for more people opting for it now, Dr Bhattacharya said.

"From TV shows to social media, from movies to advertisements, the public is bombarded with information regarding cosmetic surgery and its impacts." "And all such information may not be based on facts and many are far from reality. This builds misconceptions and unrealistic expectations. And it's imperative to filter facts from fictions and present a realistic picture of

cosmetic surgery based on scientific knowledge," Dr Bhattacharya said.

The plastic surgery OT marathon was also a training exercise. Such training improves capacity to handle disasters and mass casualty. "On an average, six cases are performed in a day," Dr Bhattacharya said. Plastic surgery is the broad full body speciality which deals with both reconstruction of any defect or loss of body parts and cosmetic surgery.

The speciality includes reconstruction of body parts lost due to cancer surgery or trauma, restoration of normal appearance in cases of deformities by birth or acquired due to trauma or burns. Specific trauma like facial fractures and hand injuries are dealt with by plastic surgeons.

Cosmetic surgery is a sub-specialty of plastic surgery, which pertains to augmentation or betterment of appearance focusing on aesthetics of beauty, he explained.

The World Plastic Surgery Day is observed July 15

MURDER OF VIP CHIEF'S FATHER

Cong demands strict action against culprits



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Condemning the brutal murder of Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahani's father, the Congress Tuesday urged the Bihar government to ensure severe punishment to the culprits and provide justice to the Sahni family.

Jitan Sahani, father of party chief Mukesh Sahani, was found murdered at his ancestral home in Bihar's Darbhanga district, police said Tuesday.

Jitan Sahani's body, with several stab injuries and cut marks on his chest and stomach, was found inside his room at his house in the Biral area this morning. In a post in Hindi on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The brutal murder of Shri Jitan Sahni, father of Shri Mukesh Sahni, founder of Vikasheel Insaan Party in Bihar and former state minister, is extremely sad and condemnable."

"We demand that strict action be taken against the culprits at the earliest and that our INDIA bloc partner, Sahani ji, should get justice," the Congress chief said. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and former Congress pres-

ident Rahul Gandhi said the news of the brutal murder of Jitan Sahani is "extremely painful".

"It is expected from the Bihar government that it should take immediate action and give severe punishment to the murderers and provide justice to the Sahni family," Rahul Gandhi said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the murder is highly condemnable. "My condolences are with Mukesh Sahni ji and his family in this hour of grief. May God give peace to the departed soul. This horrific incident shows that law and order has completely collapsed in Bihar and no one is safe in this jungle raj," she said in a post in Hindi on X.

There should be prompt and strict action against the culprits, Priyanka Gandhi said.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the district police has been constituted to investigate the matter; the Darbhanga Police said in a statement. A former minister in the Bihar government, Mukesh Sahani heads the VIP, which is an alliance partner of the INDIA bloc. Cutting across party lines, leaders of all political parties condemned the incident.

CAUVERY ROW

TN all-party meet decides to move SC if needed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 16: A meeting of the legislative party leaders in the Tamil Nadu Assembly Tuesday decided to approach the Supreme Court, if necessary, to get Cauvery water for the state from Karnataka and Chief Minister M K Stalin vowed to take all necessary steps and protect the interests of farmers.

Addressing an all-party meeting at the Secretariat, Stalin assured that the state government would uphold the rights of farmers of the Cauvery delta region.

The government said July 16 that the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) had directed the release of one TMC ft everyday from July 12, 2024 to July 31, 2024. Karnataka had said that it is ready to release 8,000 cusecs of water and not one TMC ft (1,500 cusecs).

The CM deplored that Karnataka does not even release a decreased quantum of water stipulated by CWRC.

He said since the Karnataka government did not release Cauvery water last year in compliance with a verdict of the Supreme Court, farmers were severely affected.

"We secured water only by approaching the Supreme Court. This year, despite the southwest monsoon being favourable, the Karnataka government behaving in this way cannot be accepted."

Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan, DMK's P Wilson (Rajya Sabha MP and senior advocate), R S Bharathi (party organisation secretary), AIADMK's SP Velumani and OS Manian, (both former ministers) took part. Furthermore, the Chief Minister read out the resolutions, which he said are based on unanimous decisions, "on the basis of views expressed in this meeting."

A resolution adopted at the meeting strongly condemned the Karnataka government for refusing to release water as per the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's directive of one TMC ft every day.

international

of the day quote

This (discovery of natural gas) marks the beginning of a new chapter for the northern sub-Andean region, offering hope of maintaining our country as an important gas exporter

India's ties with Mauritius have blossomed into a robust and multifaceted partnership. The bilateral relation with Mauritius serves as a role model for India's successful development collaboration abroad

The situation seemed to be becoming unacceptable. Again I give you a stern warning. You will have to face devastating and horrible consequences

SHORT TAKES

Srivastava meets Nepal's Foreign Min

Kathmandu: India's Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava paid a courtesy call to the Himalayan nation's newly-appointed Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Tuesday and discussed bilateral issues and cooperation between the two neighbours. Srivastava was amongst the first visitors to the Foreign Minister's office a day after Rana assumed charge Monday soon after the Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli-led coalition government of Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and Nepali Congress was sworn in.

Somali militiamen loot convoy

Mogadishu: At least five people were killed when militiamen ambushed a convoy in central Somalia and seized heavy weapons, the local government and residents said Tuesday, seven months after a decades-long arms embargo was lifted. The convoy was travelling Monday with a security escort near the town of Abudwaq when militiamen from a local clan attacked and overpowered security forces, four residents told Reuters. They said the arms, which included machine guns, anti-aircraft weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, originated in neighbouring Ethiopia.

North Korea envoy defects to SK

Seoul: South Korea's spy agency says a North Korea diplomat based in Cuba has defected to South Korea. The National Intelligence Service said Tuesday that media reports on the defection of a North Korean counsellor of political affairs in Cuba are true. But it gave no further details. South Korea's mass-circulation Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported earlier Tuesday that the North Korean diplomat, named Ri Il Kyu, fled to South Korea with his wife and children in November last year.

Landmine blast in Pak kills 2 children

Peshawar: At least two children were killed on the spot in a landmine explosion in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. The tragic incident occurred Monday in the Bangi Wala area of Sararogha tehsil of the tribal South Waziristan district. The explosion took place when the children were playing near their house in the village. It was not immediately clear who planted the landmines in the area.



Conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine, and beyond are causing a devastating loss of life and diverting political attention and scarce resources from the urgent work of ending poverty and averting climate catastrophe

AMINA MOHAMMED | UN DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

'WHAT AN HONOR'

JD Vance, a Republican US Senator from Ohio, expressed gratitude for being picked as the running mate of US presidential candidate Donald Trump and called it an "honour" to run alongside him



Students protest against quota system

THE PROTESTERS DEMAND AN END TO A QUOTA RESERVED FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS WHO FOUGHT IN BANGLADESH'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1971, ALLOWING THEM TO TAKE UP 30 PER CENT OF GOVT JOBS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dhaka, July 16: Police fired tear gas and charged with batons during violent clashes between a pro-government student body and student protesters overnight, leaving dozens injured at a public university outside Bangladesh's capital, authorities and students said Tuesday.

The violence spread early Tuesday at Jahangir Nagar University in Savar, outside Dhaka, where protesters demanded an end to a quota reserved for family members of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971, allowing them to take up 30 per cent of government jobs. While job opportunities have expanded in Bangladesh's private sector, many find government jobs stable and lucrative. Each year, some 3,000 such jobs open up to nearly 400,000 graduates. Protesters argue such quota appointments are discriminatory



and should be merit-based. Some even said the current system benefits groups supporting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Some Cabinet ministers criticized the protesters, saying they played on students' emotions.

Hasina said Tuesday war veterans, commonly known as "freedom fighters", should receive the highest respect for their sacrifice in 1971 regardless of their current political ideologies. "Abandoning the dream of their own life, leaving behind their families, parents and everything, they joined the war with whatever they had," she said during an event at her office in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, Protesters gathered in front of the University's official residence of the vice-chancellor early Tuesday when violence broke out.

Demonstrators accused the Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student wing of Hasina's ruling Awami League party, of attacking their "peaceful protests".

According to local media reports, police and the ruling party-backed student wing attacked the protesters.

But Abdullahil Kafi, a senior police official, told the country's leading English-language newspaper Daily Star that they fired tear gas and "blank rounds" as protesters attacked the police. He said up to 15 police officers were injured. On Monday, violence also spread at Dhaka University, the country's leading public university, as clashes gripped the campus in the capital. More than 100 students were injured in the clashes, police said.

On Tuesday, protesters

blocked railways and some highways across the country, and in Dhaka, they halted traffic in many areas as they vowed to continue demonstrating until the demands were met.

Swapon, a protester and student of Dhaka University who only gave his first name, said they only want the "rational reformation of the quota system." He said after studying for six years, if he can't find a job, "it will cause me and my family to suffer".

A ruling party-backed student activist, who refused to give his name, told The Associated Press the protesters with the help of "goons" of the opposition's Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami party vandalized their rooms at the student dormitories near the Curzon Hall of the Dhaka University.

The family of the veterans' quota system was halted following a court order after mass student protests in 2018. But last month, Bangladesh's High Court nullified the decision to reinstall the system once more, angering scores of students and triggering protests.

Last week, the Supreme Court halted the High Court's order for four weeks and the chief justice asked protesting students to return to their classes, saying the court would issue a decision in four weeks. However, the protests have continued daily, halting traffic in Dhaka.

The quota system also reserves government jobs for women, disabled people and ethnic minority groups, but students have only protested against jobs reserved for veterans' families.

Hungarian PM in soup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budapest, July 16: Some European Union leaders protested Tuesday what they see as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's misuse of the bloc's rotating presidency, with many including those in the EU's executive commission boycotting an informal meeting hosted by Hungary in response to Orban's actions.

Officials are angry that Orban, a nationalist populist who is seen as having the warmest ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin among EU leaders, made unannounced trips to Moscow and Beijing earlier this month on what he called a "peace mission" aimed at brokering an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Orban said he was seeking the quickest path to peace in Ukraine and portrayed himself as uniquely positioned to communicate with both warring parties. He also met last week with former US President Donald Trump and expressed confidence that Trump would quickly "solve" the conflict.

But Orban's EU partners were startled by the appearance that he was acting on behalf of the 27-member bloc during his meetings with Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, and worried that he was undermining EU unity on support for Ukraine. Hungary holds the rotating presidency of the EU Council from July to December 2024.

In response, some nations including Sweden, Finland and the Baltic countries, as well as the Commission, said their top officials would boycott meetings in Budapest and send civil servants instead.



A group of 63 European Parl lawmakers has asked the EU to withdraw Hungary's voting rights in the bloc

But not all EU members joined the boycott. The energy ministers of Austria, Belgium and Bulgaria attended an informal meeting on energy Tuesday in Hungary's capital, with one downplaying the boycott.

"I think that we have a good representation," Vladimir Malinov, Bulgaria's caretaker energy minister, said as he entered the meeting. "Having in mind that this is an informal meeting, it's not an issue. Maybe on the formal level we will have much more high representation."

Hungary's finance minister, Mihaly Varga, was more subdued, saying in Brussels Tuesday that Hungary's EU presidency "remains committed to sincere cooperation with all member states and institutions".

Varga said ministers "are free to decide to take part in our events or not. But I am absolutely sure that there will be a high-level participation in the events".

French Prez accepts PM's resignation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, July 16: French President Emmanuel Macron accepted the Prime Minister's resignation Tuesday but kept him on as head of a caretaker government.

Macron's office said in a statement that Macron "accepted" the resignation of Prime Minister Gabriel Attal and other ministers Tuesday.

Attal and other government members are "to handle current affairs until a new government is being appointed", the statement said. There is no firm timeline for when Macron must name a new Prime Minister.

France is about to host the Paris Olympic Games at the end of the month. Attal offered his resignation last week after a chaotic election result left the government in limbo. Macron asked him to remain temporarily as the head of the government pending a further decision, with France about to be under an international spotlight as it hosts the Paris Olympics.

French media said the Prime Minister's resignation is ex-



pected to be formally accepted by Macron by Tuesday evening.

The move would allow Attal to take up his seat as a lawmaker in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of government, and lead the group of Macron's centrist allies. It would also prevent him from being exposed to a potential no-confidence vote in Parliament.

The opening session of the National Assembly is scheduled for Thursday. The caretaker government led by Attal would focus only on handling day-to-day affairs.

France has been on the brink of government paralysis since elections for the National Assembly earlier this month resulted in a split among three major political groupings, the New Popular Front leftist coalition, Macron's centrist allies and the far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen.

US urges India to 'utilise' ties with Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Milwaukee, July 16: Observing that India has a longstanding relationship with Russia, the US has said that it has encouraged New Delhi to utilise that relationship with Moscow and urge President Vladimir Putin to end the illegal war against Ukraine.

These remarks were made by State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller at his daily news conference Monday.

"India has a longstanding relationship with Russia. I think that's well-known. And we have encouraged India to utilise that relationship with Russia, that longstanding relationship and the unique position that they have, to urge President Putin to end his illegal war and to find a just peace, a lasting peace to this conflict, to tell Putin to respect the UN Charter, to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty," he said.

"That's what we'll continue to impress upon the Government of India, which is an important partner of ours when it comes to their relationship with Russia," Miller said in response to a question.

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill more than 60 Palestinians

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir Al-Balah, July 16: Israeli airstrikes killed more than 60 Palestinians in southern and central Gaza overnight and into Tuesday, including one that struck an Israeli-declared "safe zone" crowded with thousands of displaced people.

The day's deadliest strike came in the afternoon, hitting near a gas station outside the southern city of Khan Younis in Muwasi, a coastal region that's part of the humanitarian "safe zone" where the Israeli military has told Palestinians to take refuge to escape offensives elsewhere.

Officials at Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital said 17 people were killed. Nearby areas are packed with tent camps.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the strike. It occurred in the same area where Gaza health officials said more than 90 Palestinians, including children, were killed by a strike Saturday that Israel said was targeting



Hamas' top military commander, Mohammed Deif. His status remained unclear.

The new airstrikes came as Israel and Hamas continued to weigh the latest cease-fire proposal. Hamas has said talks meant to wind down the nine-month-long war would continue even after Israel targeted Deif.

International mediators are working to push Israel and Hamas toward a deal that would halt the fighting and free about 120 hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

Other strikes hit in the Nuseirat and Zawaida refugee

camp of central Gaza. Strikes on four houses killed at least 24 people, including 10 women and four children. Another hit a school-turned-shelter in Nuseirat, killing at least nine. An Associated Press journalist saw the bodies, some wrapped in blankets and a floral sheet, as they were taken to Al Aqsa hospital in the nearby town of Deir al-Balah, where hospital officials provided the death count.

Israel's military said it "conducted targeted raids on terror targets" in central Gaza, without elaborating. It did not immediately provide details on the targets.

Taliban's terrorist tolerance threatens neighbouring states

AFGHANISTAN CONTINUES TO BE PERCEIVED AS PERMISSIVE OR FRIENDLY TERRITORY BY TERRORIST GROUPS, WHICH ALSO ASPIRE TO PROJECT THREATS GLOBALLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, July 16: The Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) remained the largest terrorist group in Afghanistan and greater collaboration between al-Qaeda and the terror group could transform it into an "extraregional threat", according to a UN report.

The 15th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities

said that the TTP remained the largest terrorist group in Afghanistan, with an estimated strength of 6,000-6,500 fighters.

The report said that one member state expressed concern that "greater collaboration between TTP and al-Qaeda could transform TTP into an 'extraregional threat'." It said that al-Qaeda's support of TTP includes the sharing of Afghan fighters for its tashkils, in this context, military staffing or a formation and training camps in Afghanistan. Training provided by al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) has resulted in TTP shifting tactics and high-profile attacks against hard targets.

"One interlocutor noted the role of an individual connected to Sirajuddin Haqqani in weapon transfers to TTP, as well as arranging for ISIL-K prisoners to be released provided they join TTP," the report said.

Haqqani, a designated global terrorist, is the Interior Minister in the Taliban regime in



Afghanistan.

The report added that notwithstanding continuing assertions by the Taliban that there are no foreign terrorist groups in Afghanistan other than ISIL-K, member states reported that over two dozen groups still operate in the country, enjoying freedom of manoeuvre under the de facto authorities with oversight from the General

Directorate of Intelligence."

"Many member states expressed concern that in most scenarios, Afghanistan will remain a source of insecurity for Central Asia and the region. Continued Taliban tolerance of a range of terrorist groups, based across many Afghan provinces, sets the conditions for terrorism to project into neighbouring States, causing large loss of life,"

the report said.

The country continues to be perceived as permissive or friendly territory by terrorist groups, which also aspire to project threats globally. In addition, the increasing importance of the management of water rights in the region, and an ongoing humanitarian crisis, mean that stability does not yet mean broader security, it added.

"The Taliban do not conceive of TTP as a terrorist group the bonds are close, and the debt owed to TTP significant. Member states continue to detail ad hoc support to, and tolerance of, TTP operations, including the supplying of weapons and permission for training and support from al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in particular," it said.

The report further said that AQIS, with a strength of 180-200 fighters, is located in Farah, Herat, Helmand, Kandahar and Nimroz Provinces. It assists TTP in conducting terrorist attacks inside Pakistan, with Tehrik-e

Jihad Pakistan claiming responsibility so as to relieve pressure on the de facto authorities.

"The group publishes high-quality digital magazines highlighting the AQIS version of Islam focusing on Bangladeshi and Rohingya issues, with a view to recruitment. Reportedly AQIS fighters and their families received some financial support from the de facto authorities," it said.

The report further said that member states reiterate that North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) calibre weapons, especially night vision capability, that have been provided to TTP since the Taliban takeover, add lethality to TTP terrorist attacks against Pakistani military border posts.

The report said that despite some success in operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), that group poses a manifest and serious threat within Afghanistan, the immediate region and further afield.

of the day quote

Given the good news on inflation, it's very natural that the Federal Reserve is now starting to look at what's happening in the labour market and wanting to make sure that they don't overdo it" with tight monetary policy

PIERRE-OLIVIER GOURINCHAS | IMF CHIEF ECONOMIST

The market sentiment is quite positive in both rural and urban areas. Our expectation is that the two-wheeler market should grow around 6-8 per cent this year

RAKESH SHARMA | BAJAJ AUTO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we move forward, we are exploring opportunities to raise fresh funds to further bolster our growth plans and take advantage of the burgeoning demand in the Indian aviation market

AJAY SINGH | SPICEJET CMD

SHORT TAKES

Bajaj Auto PAT rises 18%

New Delhi: Bajaj Auto Tuesday said its consolidated profit after tax increased 18 per cent to ₹1,942 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2024, aided by robust sales across domestic and export markets. The Pune-based automaker had reported a profit after tax of ₹1,644 crore in the April-June quarter of last fiscal. Total revenue from operations rose to ₹11,932 crore for the first quarter as compared with ₹10,312 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing. On a standalone basis, the company reported a PAT of ₹1,988 crore, an increase of 19 per cent as compared with 1,665 crore in the same period of last fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to ₹11,928 crore as against ₹10,310 crore in the June quarter of FY24.

Jio, Airtel gain mobile users

New Delhi: Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel cumulatively raised their wireless subscriber tally by 34.4 lakh users in May, while Vodafone Idea continued to witness a fall in its user base, data released by TRAI showed Tuesday. India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio gained 21.9 lakh wireless users, and Bharti Airtel added 12.5 lakh mobile customers in May, even as Vodafone Idea lost 9.24 lakh wireless users during the month. The gains pushed Reliance Jio's mobile subscriber tally to 47.46 crore in May from 47.24 crore in April, according to the latest telecom subscription data by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). Vodafone Idea continued to register a decline in mobile subscribers as its wireless subscriber count fell by 9.24 lakh to 21.81 crore users in May.

Air passenger traffic grows 6%

Mumbai: India's domestic air passenger traffic grew 5.76 per cent to 1.32 crore in June from 1.24 crore in the same month last year, aviation regulator DGCA's monthly data showed Tuesday. During the reporting month, budget carrier IndiGo carried 80.86 lakh passengers, clocking a market share of 60.5 per cent, followed by Tata Group-run Air India and Vistara, which flew 17.47 lakh and 12.84 lakh travellers, respectively. The market share of Air India during June stood at 13.1 per cent, while that of Vistara at 9.6 per cent, as per the Directorate General of Civil Aviation data.



I hope that, starting with the Union Budget this month, the government will turn its attention to the welfare of ordinary citizens and not just to climbing up the chart of aggregate GDP

KAUSHIK BASU | FORMER WORLD BANK CHIEF ECONOMIST

GEMS, JEWELLERY EXPORTS DIP 13.44% IN JUNE: GJEP

India's overall gems and jewellery exports witnessed an on-year decline of 13.44 per cent in June at ₹15,939.77 crore (USD 1,909.57 million) amid muted demand in overseas markets, according to data by Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEP). The total gems and jewellery exports stood at ₹18,413.88 crore (USD 2,240.77 million) during June 2023, the GJEP data added.



Sebi mulls new asset class

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Markets regulator Sebi Tuesday proposed introducing a new asset class to bridge the gap between mutual funds and portfolio management services (PMS) by looking to tap investors having investible funds between ₹10 lakh and ₹50 lakh.

The new asset class will provide a regulated product featuring greater flexibility, higher risk-taking capability, and a higher ticket size, to meet the needs of the emerging category of investors, Sebi said.

On minimum investment, Sebi has proposed that the minimum amount for investment under the new asset class should be ₹10 lakh per investor.

"This threshold shall deter retail investors from investing in this product while attracting investors, with investible funds between ₹10 lakh and ₹50 lakh, who are today being drawn to unauthorised and unregistered PMS providers," Sebi said in its consultation paper.

The proposed new asset class is aimed at curbing the proliferation of unregistered and unauthorised investment products.

"The new asset class is proposed to be introduced under the mutual fund (MF) structure, with relaxations in prudential norms for such new asset classes to be adequately effective," it said.

"While such relaxations may enhance the risks associated



with the product, the same can be mitigated by putting a higher limit on minimum investment size," the paper said.

Investors may also have an option of systematic plans such as systematic investment plan (SIP) for investment strategies under the new asset class.

Further, the investment strategies under the new asset class can invest in derivatives or derivative strategies as a way of taking exposure in the market.

Sebi said the proposed asset class should have a distinct nomenclature for the new asset class to distinguish it from traditional mutual funds and other investment products already available in the securities market such as PMS, AIF (alternative investment funds), REITs, INVTs, among others.

To facilitate existing and newly registered Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to offer products under the New Asset Class, Sebi has suggested two routes of

eligibility criteria - strong track record or alternate route.

On a strong track record, an MF should be in operation for a minimum of three years and have an average Asset Under Management (AUM) of at least ₹10,000 crore in the preceding three years and no action should have been taken against the sponsor or AMC in the last three years, as per Sebi.

Further, MFs not fulfilling the requirement of strong records should also be eligible to launch the new asset class. This is subject to compliance with the certain requirements such as AMC should appoint chief investment officer (CIO) for the new asset class with an experience of fund management of at least 10 years and managing AUM of at least ₹5,000 crore and an additional fund manager for the such asset class with experience of at least seven years and managing AUM of at least ₹3,000 crore.

Sebi said the trustees or spon-

sor of an MF needs to file an application with the regulator and submit required undertakings and documentation.

The registration process for new asset classes should be a two-stage process, consisting of in-principle and final approvals, similar to the registration process currently followed for MFs.

"While the sponsor may not be required to maintain segregated net worth or infrastructure specifically for the new asset class, the new asset class shall represent a new arm/service offered under the broader umbrella of mutual fund," Sebi said.

It has been proposed that the new asset class should be positioned as a product distinct from the traditional MFs, both from branding and advertisement perspectives.

Under the new asset class, the AMC can offer investment strategies under pooled fund structure, akin to MF schemes. This nomenclature has been proposed to differentiate between the MF schemes being managed by AMCs and the schemes under the new asset class.

The redemption frequency of these 'investment strategies' can be tailored based on the nature of investments to allow the investment manager to adequately manage liquidity without imposing undue constraints on investors.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought comments from the public till August 6 on the proposals.

IMF raises India's GDP forecast to 7% for FY25



AGENCIES

Washington, July 16: The International Monetary Fund Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for 2024-25 to 7% from 6.8% on the back of improving private consumption, particularly in rural India.

The IMF left unchanged its estimate for a 6.5% growth in Asia's third largest economy's gross domestic product in the 2025-26 financial year, it said in the World Economic Outlook.

The IMF had raised its forecast for India's GDP growth to 6.8% from 6.5% in April.

Overall, the IMF said that it still expects the world economy to grow a lacklustre 3.2 per cent this year, unchanged from its previous forecast in April and down a tick from 3.3 per cent growth in 2023. From 2000 through 2019, before the pandemic upended economic activity, global growth had averaged 3.8 per cent a year.

The IMF, a 190-nation lending organisation, works to promote economic growth and financial stability and reduce global poverty. In a blog post that accompanied the latest update to its World Economic Outlook, the IMF's chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, wrote that China and

India would account for nearly half of global growth this year.

The IMF said that the "shoots of recovery materialised in Europe," which had been battered by high energy prices and other economic damage from Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Citing a rise in Europe's services businesses, IMF raised its 2024 growth forecast for the 20 countries that share the euro currency by a tenth of a percentage point from its April forecast, to 0.9 per cent. In 2023, the eurozone grew 0.5 per cent. But a weak first quarter in the United States led the IMF to downgrade its forecast for US growth this year to 2.6 per cent from the 2.7 per cent it had predicted in April.

Likewise, the IMF lowered its outlook for 2024 growth in Japan to 0.7 per cent from the 0.9 per cent it had envisioned in April and from 1.9 per cent in 2023. Japan's first-quarter growth was disrupted by the shutdown of a major automobile plant, the IMF said.

After surging to 8.7 per cent in 2022 as the global economy rapidly recovered from the pandemic recession, worldwide inflation is expected to continue easing — from 6.7 per cent in 2023 to 5.9 per cent this year and 4.4 per cent in 2025.

Byju's faces insolvency proceedings for default

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore/New Delhi, July 16: Edtech company Byju's, which was once India's most valuable start-up worth an estimated USD 22 billion, will face insolvency proceedings for failure to pay ₹158.9 crore to cricket board BCCI.

The Bangalore bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Tuesday allowed bankruptcy proceedings against the firm and appointed an interim resolution professional, suspending the company's board of directors and freezing its assets.

Founder and CEO Byju Raveendran will report to the resolution professional. NCLT has appointed Pankaj Srivastava as the interim resolution professional.

Byju's had previously sponsored the Indian cricket team.

While Byju's said it is hopeful of reaching 'an amicable settlement' with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), sources said the company plans to challenge the order before the appellate tribunal, NCLAT.

When contacted, a Byju's spokesperson said: "As we have always maintained, we wish to reach an amicable settlement with BCCI and we are confident

that, despite this order, a settlement can be reached. In the meantime, our lawyers are reviewing the order and will take necessary steps to protect the company's interests."

Byju's was once valued at USD 22 billion but reopening of schools after easing of pandemic restrictions led to its unraveling. BlackRock recently slashed its valuation of USD 1 billion.

The company's troubles began when it missed financial reporting deadlines two years ago and fell short of revenue projections by more than 50 per cent.

In February, a group of investors in Byju's parent company Think & Lean (T&L), including Prus and Peak XV, voted to remove Raveendran as CEO during an extraordinary general meeting (EGM), citing allegations of "mismanagement and failures". Raveendran has denied allegations and disputed the vote's validity.

The investors and founders are separately engaged in a legal battle.

Founders have been battling investors in recent months even as the company saw job cuts and shrinking business.

NCLT invited creditors, employees and vendors to file claims against Byju's.

Blue-chips close at fresh record highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 16: Continuing the record-breaking run for the third straight day, benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed at record high levels Tuesday following buying in FMCG, telecom and select IT shares and FII inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 51.69 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at a new lifetime high of 80,716.55. During the day, it advanced 233.44 points or 0.28 per cent to hit a fresh record high of 80,898.30.

The NSE Nifty rose by 26.30 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,613, extending the gaining streak to the third day. Intraday, it rallied 74.55 points or 0.30 to hit a new record peak of 24,661.25.

Stock markets opened on a firm note and benchmark indices hit intra-day record high levels in the first half. However, losses in Reliance Industries and Kotak Bank restricted gains and dragged indices from the day's highs.

Sensex and Nifty have been on a record-breaking run since Friday as foreign investors have turned net buyers in the Indian equities amid growing hopes of a rate cut by the US Fed by September. Encouraging quarterly results by blue-chips have also supported the rally despite



high valuation concerns, according to analysts.

US Federal Chair Jerome Powell said that the Fed is becoming more convinced that inflation is headed back to its 2 per cent target and there could be a rate cut before the pace of price rise actually reached that point.

Among Sensex shares, Hindustan Unilever rose the most by 2.7 per cent. Bharti Airtel (2 per cent), Tech Mahindra (1.13 per cent), Infosys (1.09 per cent), Mahindra & Mahindra 0.95 per cent) were among the lead gainers. ICICI Bank, ITC and Asian Paints also advanced.

On the other hand, Kotak Bank

fell the most by 2.11 per cent. Reliance Industries, NTPC, UltraTech Cement and Power Grid were among the laggards.

As many as 18 Sensex shares advanced while 12 declined.

The domestic market failed to uphold the opening gains as investor concerns about current valuations and subdued expectations for Q1FY25 earnings, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"With the earnings season set to fully commence this week, investors are likely to gain a broader sectoral perspective," he added.

In the broader market, the

BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.32 per cent while midcap index dipped 0.29 per cent.

Among the indices, realty jumped 1.62 per cent, FMCG by 0.89 per cent, telecommunication by 0.89 per cent, teck by 0.85 per cent and IT by 0.56 per cent.

Financial Services, utilities, bank and capital goods were the laggards.

A total of 2,005 stocks advanced while 1,908 declined and 95 remained unchanged on BSE.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹2,684.78 crore Monday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher, while Hong Kong ended lower amid dovish comments from the US Fed Chair Jerome Powell bolstering hopes of a rate cut by September. European markets were trading lower.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.80 per cent to USD 84.13 a barrel. Oil prices edged lower due to concerns about a slowing Chinese economy impacting demand. However, expectations that the US Federal Reserve might begin cutting its key interest rate as early as September limited the declines, Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities said.

Markets will remain closed Wednesday for Muharram.

Taiwan firms shift supply chains to India from China

TRADE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA DROVE UP TAIWAN'S FDI IN INDIA TO MORE THAN \$665 MILLION IN THE FIVE YEARS TO 2023

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 16: Taiwan firms are shifting supply chains to India from China, as Taipei and New Delhi strengthen economic ties, the head of the island's key trade body told Reuters, as global trade tension rises among major economies.

Trade conflict between the United States and China drove up Taiwan's foreign direct investment (FDI) in India to more than \$665 million in the five years to 2023, said James Huang, chairman of the Taiwan External Trade Development

Council. That compared with democratically-ruled Taiwan's FDI of nearly \$277 million in India during the decade from 2006 to 2017, Huang said in an interview Monday.

"It is evident that more Taiwanese companies are moving supply chains out of China and are establishing them in India," he added.

Like most countries, India has no formal ties with Chinese-claimed Taiwan, but the two have established a close business relationship, with India keen on more investment from



the major chip-producing nation to aid its efforts to boost

manufacturing. China claims Taiwan as its

own territory, a claim Taiwan rejects. India also has difficult re-

Odia javelin thrower was about to quit sport due to poor performance



NEERAJ CHOPRA'S OLYMPIC GOLD MADE ME FEEL DEJECTED AS I WAS PLAYING THE SAME SPORT WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY
KISHORE JENA

DAD'S ADVICE CHANGED JENA'S LIFE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Asian Games silver medallist javelin thrower Kishore Jena has said he was on verge of quitting the sport in 2023 after a string of poor performances but he heeded to his father's advice. It paid off and led to the revival of his career.

Jena admitted that Neeraj Chopra's Tokyo Olympics gold medal motivated him to achieve more in his sport but he found it difficult to get the big throws and thought of quitting the sport in July

last year just before the World Championships.

"When Neeraj won at the Olympics, we celebrated and enjoyed his victory. But honestly, the victory also left me dejected because I too was playing the same sport. I felt it was time for me to achieve something in sports," Jena said on the show *The Dreamers* on 'JioCinema'.

"I participated in the Lebanon National Championships after a dip in my rankings and produced a throw of 78m. Despite giving it my all, I couldn't

achieve much. I started doubting if all the hard work was worth it. I called my father, who encouraged me to participate in next competition in Sri Lanka," Jena added.

Jena won in Lebanon (July 21) with a throw of 78.96m, which by any standards was a modest performance. In fact, Jena could not breach the 80m mark till the end of 2022. His first 80m-plus throw came in March 2023 during the Indian Grand Prix in Thiruvananthapuram where he came up with an

81.05m effort. "I decided the event in Sri Lanka (July 30) would be my last attempt, after which I would quit and go back to prioritising work and family. With God's grace, I performed well, producing a throw of 84.38m which led to my qualification for the World Championships," Jena said.

Jena qualified for the Budapest World Championships in August 2023 through the world ranking quota. He could not breach the automatic qualification mark of 85.20m. "I performed well in the World Championships as well, achieving a personal best of 84.77m," said Jena who finished fifth while Chopra won the gold by hurling the spear to a distance of 88.17m.

"I followed it up with another personal best of 87.54m at the Asian Games (in Hangzhou, China where he won a silver behind Chopra) securing my ticket to Paris 2024. I now want to give my best at Paris. I am quite confident. While I haven't set any particular targets, I am aiming to improve my personal best," the Odia javelin thrower stated.

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

METTLE MEET 2024

HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

QUIZ Extravaganza

It's time for **METTLE MEET** – an initiative by the state's only homegrown English daily to revive quizzing in Odisha. This year, the **Preliminaries** will take place **August 3** and the **Grand Finale August 4**. Like in previous years, most of the top educational institutions of Odisha – both schools and colleges will be competing for the **Grand Prize of ₹1,00,000** in the Junior and Senior segments.

As a reader of **Orissa POST**, this is a great chance for you to be part of the exciting **Grand Finale** if you can predict the correct answer. There will be one question on each day for you to answer till July 31, 2024. Every day there will be two winners. If there are more than two correct entries, then the winners will be decided by draw of lots. All the winners will be invited for the **Grand Finale** which will be conducted by nationally acclaimed quizzmaster **Ajay Poomia**. There will be prizes for the daily winners too. So buckle up your seatbelts and get set for some brainstorming.

- RULES & REGULATIONS**
- Everyone will have to mail their answers to mettlemeet@orissapost.com
 - Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.
 - Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.
 - Orissa POST's** decision on all entries will be final. No complaints will be entertained.
 - Participants must send their entries with a **passport size photograph, mobile numbers and residential address**. Otherwise the entries will be rejected.
 - There can be only one winner from one family.
 - Invitation cards to the winners will only be issued on presentation of **Valid ID proof – Voter Card, Aadhaar Card, Driving License, Passport, School ID card** (In case of students till Class XI)
 - No employee of **Orissa POST** or their family members can be part of the competition

TODAY'S QUESTION

In 2016, the AYUSH department of Uttarakhand set up a four-member committee to infuse life into the search for something in the Dronagiri Range of the Himalayas. Some of the possible candidates were *Selaginella bryopteris*, *Dendrobium plicatile* and *Cressa cretica*. What were they looking for?

ANSWER TO TUESDAY'S QUESTION

Entrepreneur

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS



RASHMI REKHA SAHOO
ANUP MAHAPATRA
Others who answered correctly are
Jaba Dasgupta, Shoumik Jena, Ashish Agarwalla, Debasish Mohanty, Akankshya Pradhan, Jignesh Kumar, R Sekhar Rao

SHORT TAKES

Nagal starts well

Bastad (Sweden): India's top singles player Sumit Nagal finally got the better of Elias Ymer to make a winning start at the Nordea Open tennis tournament here Tuesday. Nagal had lost both his previous matches to Ymer. However, he played well to defeat the talented Ymer 6-4, 6-3. Nagal, who will represent India at the Paris Olympics is playing this tournament as part of his preparations. Tuesday turned out to be good for Nagal as he achieved his career-best ranking of 68 in the men's chart.

Medal assured

New Delhi: India's Shaurya Bawa guaranteed himself a medal as he moved to the semifinals with a hard fought 3-2 win over Malaysian Low Wa-Sern in the World Junior Squash Championships in Houston. The 18-year-old from Delhi, thus, becomes only the second Indian male to reach the semifinals after Kush Kumar, who reached the last four stage in 2014. In a thrilling clash that lasted 80 minutes, Bawa was down 6-9 and 7-10 in the fifth game but remarkably saved three match balls to eke out a 2-11, 11-4, 10-12, 11-8, 12-10 victory in the boys' quarterfinals.

PFC keep 5 players

Mohali: Punjab FC (PFC) announced retaining five Indian players, including mid-fielder Ashish Pradhan and goalkeeper Ravi Kumar, on multi-year deals for the upcoming ISL season. The other players retained are Ricky Shabong, Manglenthang Kipgen and Suresh Meitel. "They were key players for the club in the previous season and the club has kept their faith in these players," the club said in a release.

Support guaranteed

New Delhi: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) said Tuesday that Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has assured government support on the national body's request covering four key areas. The AIFF said the assurance was given by Mandaviya when federation president Kalyan Chaubey, acting Secretary General M Satyanarayan and treasurer Kipa Ajay met him Monday.

Don't write us off, says Bopanna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: Ageing like fine wine, Rohan Bopanna is all fired up for his last hurrah at the Olympic Games. Not the one who would rail against circumstances or crib about not having the strongest of partners, the veteran Indian tennis player said Tuesday that his comrade N Sriram Balaji has enough firepower and the scratch pairing is potent enough to test the big teams in Paris.

The 44-year-old Bopanna had to make a choice between Balaji and Yuki Bhambri and after consulting his coaches – Scott Davidoff and Balachandran Mannikkath – he eventually settled for the more 'athletic and agile' Balaji.

"I really believe that when we go out there, we genuinely have a chance to win every match, whoever we play against. It's not like we're just going to be written off, I feel," Bopanna stated.

Bopanna has reason to have that confidence in Balaji's ability to rise to the occasion. He had a chance to test Balaji at the French Open where Bopanna was pushed along with Matthew



Every athlete who goes into Olympics wants to win a medal and everybody wants to do better than the previous time
ROHAN BOPANNA

Ebden by the Tamil Nadu player and his Mexican partner Miguel Reyes-Varela.

Not only this, Balaji had a consistent run on the ATP Tour where he scalped a few big names such as Americans Rajeev Ram and Austin Krajicek – both top-

10 in doubles -- at the Houston ATP 250 event on clay. With his German partner Andre Begemann, Balaji also defeated Austria's top-50 players Alexander Erlinger and Lucas Miedler. "The idea is to go prepared, at least believe in as a team. That is what we're trying to do. With Balaji, he definitely has the firepower to do well," Bopanna said. He also gave his reason for picking Balaji over Bhambri. "I felt Balaji, depending on

the surface we're playing with, which is clay, would have been the ideal partner. Currently, even if you look at (Matthew) Ebden, who I'm playing with, he's somebody who's more agile, more explosive on that surface. And for clay, especially, I need a partner who would suit me better in terms of going by the surface. If it was a hard court or a grass court, maybe Yuki would have been the preferred choice," Bopanna explained.

Coach, selectors favour SKY

SURYAKUMAR MAY BE APPOINTED CAPTAIN OF T20 SQUAD TILL 2026 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: The big-hitting Suryakumar Yadav has emerged as the dark horse to become India's T20 captain till the 2026 World Cup and might just pip top contender Hardik Pandya, whose elevation from the vice-captain's position was being seen as a natural progression up until now.

Pandya made himself available for the shortest format games against Sri Lanka this month but it has emerged that Suryakumar, popularly called 'SKY', who captained India in eight T20Is against Australia and South Africa last year, is the preferred choice of new head coach Gautam Gambhir and chairman of selectors Ajit



Agarkar: It is learnt that both Gambhir and Agarkar spoke to Pandya about this change of plan earlier Tuesday evening and explained to him that a long-term option was being finalised to ensure stability. The T20 leadership role fell vacant after Rohit Sharma bid adieu to his international career in the shortest format.

"Hardik Pandya was India's T20 vice-captain under Rohit. He is completely fit and available for the three-match T20I series and was supposed to lead the side but there is a very strong feeling that SKY would be the potential leader not only for the Sri Lanka series but till the 2026 World Cup," a senior BCCI source told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

The 33-year-old Suryakumar is believed to be one of the most popular players in the Indian dressing room. It was under Gambhir's captaincy at the Kolkata Knight Riders that he made a name for himself as a T20 player and got nicknamed 'SKY' by the then skipper. The source said that Gambhir's backing will help SKY pip Pandya.

FINALLY MBAPPÉ'S DREAM COMES TRUE

AGENCIES

Madrid, July 16: Kylian Mbappé finally put on a Real Madrid jersey Tuesday, fulfilling his childhood dream in front of a packed Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Nearly 80,000 fans were in hand at the Bernabeu to welcome the 25-year-old France star during his official presentation as the club's newest player.

Wearing the No. 9 jersey, Mbappé smiled broadly and waved to the fans who chanted his name, then embraced former Madrid player and coach Zinedine Zidane, who invited Mbappé to visit the Spanish club for the first time when he was just a teenager. "It's incredible day for me," Mbappé told the crowd, in

England manager Southgate quits

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 16: After eight years, four tournaments and two finals, Gareth Southgate announced Tuesday he was stepping down as England manager. He said it was 'time for change'. Sunday's 1-2 loss to Spain in the European Championship final proved to be his last game in charge of the national team. "As a proud Englishman, it has been the honour of my life to play for England and to manage England. It has meant everything to me, and I have given it my all," Southgate said. "But it's time for change, and for a new chapter."

Southgate's contract was due to expire this year and his announcement comes after months of uncertainty surrounding his future.

Mikel Oyarzabal's 86th-minute winner in Berlin was a painful way to end his reign after he transformed the fortunes of England's underperforming national team. Hired in 2016, he led England to back-to-back finals at the Euros and to the semifinals of the World Cup in 2018.

"Gareth has made the impossible job possible and laid strong foundations for future success. He is held in the highest regard



by the players, the backroom team, by everyone at the FA and across the world of football," said Mark Bullingham, chief executive of the English Football Association (FA).

Southgate said before the European Championships that it would likely be his last tournament if England did not win. During it, he faced fierce criticism for the team's early performances and some fans threw plastic beer cups towards him at the end of the 0-0 draw with Slovenia in the group phase. But he achieved what no other England manager has by leading his team to two finals, including the first on foreign soil.

Before Southgate's arrival England had won only seven knockout games at tournaments since 1966. The team won nine during his tenure. England were also in the top five of FIFA's rankings for six years under Southgate. Previously their longest run had been seven months.

Lalit remembers his hard times

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 16: From being a hapless victim of a sting operation to becoming an Olympic medallist, men's hockey team striker Lalit Upadhyay has worked hard to rebuild his career. At the age of 17, Lalit's fledgling career came to a sudden halt when he was embroiled in a scandal for no fault of his.

Posing as an agent, a reporter from a TV channel offered then Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) secretary K Jothikumar a sponsorship deal only if a player of their choice was taken into the team, and Lalit's name was taken as a bait. Lalit was unaware of such a 'deal' and shaken by the incident, he almost quit hockey. "I was immature and almost quit hockey. However, the incident made me stronger," Lalit said.



Spanish. "Since being a kid I dreamed about playing for Madrid and today I'm here. It means a lot to me," the Frenchman added. "I will do anything, if required lay down my life to achieve success for the club. This is what I have been working for all these years," he added.