

Living a character
Actor Taapsee Pannu shares that she had carried her character from Pink to real life, which made her mentally fragile

LEISURE | P2

ISIL-K expands reach
Terror group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - Khorasan (ISIL-K) seeks to recruit lone actors through their handlers based in India

INTERNATIONAL | P9

Slow growth
The growth in production of eight key infrastructure sectors slows down to a 20-month low of 4 per cent in June this year

BUSINESS | P10

Aiming for gold
India's 29-strong contingent will aim to emulate some of Neeraj Chopra's success as the Olympic Games' athletics competition gets underway

SPORTS | P12



RESCUE OPS: A Bailey bridge being constructed at Chooralmala as massive rescue operations are underway in the aftermath of deadly landslides triggered by heavy rain in Kerala's Wayanad district, Wednesday

Warnings issued to Kerala a week ahead: Shah

New Delhi, July 31: The Centre had forewarned the Kerala government about possible floods and landslides but it ignored these warnings, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Wednesday in Parliament, prompting a sharp response from Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan, who refuted his remarks as "baseless" and "inconsistent". Shah said that multiple "ad-

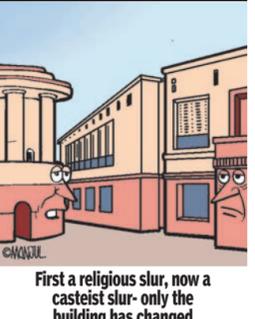
DEATH TOLL 167, LIKELY TO RISE

Wayanad: The death toll in the devastating landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district rose to 167 Wednesday, while 191 were missing even as the rescue teams intensified efforts to find survivors trapped under the debris on the second day of the search operations. Rescue operators, including Army personnel, NDRF, state emergency service personnel, and local people, were fighting against all odds to carry out the tough mission even as rain continued to lash several areas.

vanca warnings" were given to the Kerala government before the tragedy July 30. "I would like to specify that the Kerala government was given an early warning July 23 by the Central government, seven days prior (to the tragedy), then again

on July 24, and July 25. On July 26 it was informed that there would be heavy rainfall of more than 20 centimeters, there is a possibility of a landslide, there could be a rush of mud and people could even die by getting buried beneath it," Shah said. His statement came amidst criticism from the Opposition who blamed the loss of lives due to the lack of early warning systems for natural calamities such as the one in Wayanad.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



2nd vote-on-account tabled in single fiscal

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday tabled a vote-on-account in the Assembly to meet various government expenditures for August and September. Odisha Appropriation (Vote-on-Account) Bill, 2024 was presented by Majhi, who also holds the finance portfolio, for an amount of ₹95,000 crore. This is the second vote-on-account in the state in the 2024-25 fiscal.

Mamata Mohanta quits BJD, likely to jump ship

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi, July 31: BJD leader Mamata Mohanta quit her party Wednesday, hours after she resigned as a Rajya Sabha MP amid indications that she might join the BJP. In her resignation letter to BJD president Naveen Patnaik, Mohanta said she felt that there was no requirement of the service of her and her community in the party. "I sincerely express my gratitude to your goodness for giving me an opportunity to serve the people of Mayurbhanj and also to take the cause of Odisha at the national level, she said, adding that she was resigning from the primary membership of the BJD," Mohanta said. Earlier in the day, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said he received the letter of Mohanta's resignation as an MP.

"She has resigned her seat by writing to the chairman under her hand and handed personally to me. The same I find to be constitutionally in order. I have accepted the resignation of Shrimati Mamata Mohanta, member representing the state of Odisha, with immediate effect," Dhankhar said. With Mohanta's resignation, the BJD's strength in Rajya Sabha dropped to eight. It does not have any MP in the Lok Sabha. Sources in the BJD said she is likely to join the party and might get re-elected to the seat that she was vacating with the help of the party's increased strength in the Assembly. Without naming the BJP, Opposition chief whip in the state Assembly Pramila Mallik said Mohanta's resignation was part of a conspiracy hatched by a national party.

HAMAS LEADER KILLED IN IRAN

The assassination is potentially explosive amid the region's volatile, intertwined conflicts — because of its target, its timing and the decision to carry it out in Tehran

Beirut, July 31: Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed by a pre-dawn airstrike in the Iranian capital Wednesday, Iran and the militant group said, blaming Israel for a shock assassination that risks escalating the conflict even as the US and other nations were scrambling to prevent an all-out regional war. Iran's supreme leader vowed revenge against Israel. There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has pledged to kill Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders over the group's October 7 attack on southern Israel. The strike came just after Haniyeh had attended the inauguration of Iran's new president in Tehran — and only hours after Israel targeted a top commander in Iran's ally Hezbollah in the Lebanese capital Beirut. The assassination of Hamas' top political leader was poten-



There was no immediate reaction from the White House to the killing of Haniyeh. A key question was whether Israel told its top ally the US ahead of time about the strike

Asked about Haniyeh's killing during a visit to Singapore, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "This is something we were not aware of or involved in"

Israel into direct confrontation if Iran retaliates. "We consider his revenge as our duty," Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a statement on his official website. He said Israel had "prepared a harsh punishment for itself" by killing a dear guest in our home. Bitter regional rivals, Israel and Iran risked plunging into war earlier this year when Israel hit Iran's embassy in Damascus in April. Iran retaliated and Israel countered in an unprecedented exchange of strikes on each other's soil, but international efforts succeeded in containing that cycle before it spun out of control. Haniyeh's killing could also prompt Hamas to pull out of negotiations for a cease-fire and hostage release deal in the 10-month-old war in Gaza, which US mediators had said were making progress.

UPSC blacklists Puja Khedkar, gets new head

New Delhi, July 31: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Wednesday said it has cancelled the provisional candidature of probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar and debarred her from all future examinations or selections. The UPSC has examined the available records carefully and found her guilty of acting in contravention of the provisions of the CSE-2022 Rules, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) said in a statement. It said her provisional candidature for the CSE-2022 (Civil Services Examination-2022) has been cancelled and she has also been debarred permanently from all future UPSC examinations or selections. The commission said a show cause notice (SCN) was issued to Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar July 18 for fraudulently availing attempts beyond the permissible limit in the examination by faking her identity. She was to submit her response to the SCN by July 25 but she requested for time till August 4 to gather the necessary documents for her response, it said. The UPSC granted her a final opportunity to submit her response by 3:30 pm July 30 but she failed to submit her explanation within the prescribed time, the commission said. Meanwhile, the government has appointed former health secretary Preeti Sudan chairperson of the UPSC after Manoj Soni resigned from the commission's top post early this month, according to an official order. Sudan, currently a member of the UPSC, will take charge Thursday. The President has approved the appointment of Preeti Sudan, Member, UPSC for performing the duties of Chairman, UPSC with effect from August 1, 2024, till further orders or till April 29, 2025, whichever is earlier, the order dated July 29 said.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	81741.34	↑ 285.94
NIFTY	24951.15	↑ 93.85
DOLLAR	83.72	↓ ₹0.01
EURO	90.65	↓ ₹0.04
GOLD	₹69,057	↑ ₹447
SILVER	₹83,720	↑ ₹1,061

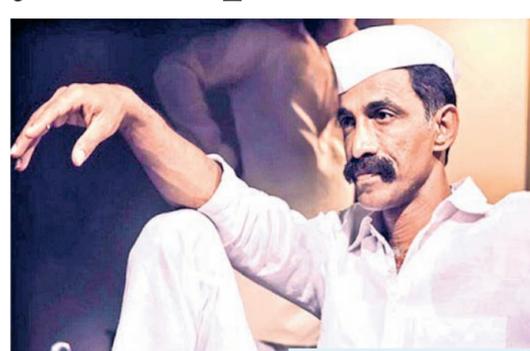
WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.8°C	31.0°C
Min Temp	27.2°C	25.0°C
Humidity	98%	94%
Rainfall	0.6mm	1.2mm

FORECAST: GENERALLY CLOUDY SKY WITH HEAVY RAIN

SC goes 'Sholay' way to keep Gawli behind bars

New Delhi, July 31: "So ja beta, nahi toh Gabbar aa jayega." Quoting the oft-remembered dialogue from the blockbuster 'Sholay', the Supreme Court Wednesday 'confirmed' its earlier order staying the premature release of gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli who is serving life imprisonment in a murder case. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta made absolute its June 3 order staying the operation of the April 5 order of the Bombay High Court's Nagpur bench and posted the appeals for hearing November 20. The high court had directed state authorities to consider Gawli's application for premature release under the 2006 remission policy. "We are not inclined to grant



any interim relief. The interim stay granted by us is confirmed. Post the appeals for hearing November 20," the bench said. At the outset, senior advocate Raja Thakare, appearing for the Maharashtra government, submitted that Gawli has over 46 cases, including around 10 cases of murder, against him. The apex court asked the senior lawyer whether Gawli had done anything in last five to eight years. Thakare replied that the gangster has been behind bars for over 17 years. Asking whether Gawli is reformed or not, the bench asked, "How society will know that when he is behind the bars? He is 72 years old."

WHO IS GANGSTER ARUN GAWLI?

Gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli, who shot into prominence from Dagdi Chawli, a neighbourhood of Byculla, is the founder of the Akhil Bharatiya Sena. He was an MLA from 2004-2009 from the Chinchpokli seat of Mumbai. Gawli is undergoing life imprisonment for the murder of Mumbai Shiv Sena corporator Kamalakar Jamsandekar. He was arrested in 2006 and put on trial for the murder of Jamsandekar. In August 2012, a sessions court in Mumbai sentenced him to life imprisonment in the case and imposed a fine of ₹17 lakh on him.

changed its remission policy (in 2015) but your lordships have held that the policy will apply which was applicable when he was convicted. The 2006 policy will apply since he was convicted in 2009. This policy allows remission on account of age and infirmity," she said. At this juncture, the bench observed, "But madam you should know that not everybody is Arun Gawli. In the movie 'Sholay', there is an iconic dialogue, 'So ja beta, nahi toh Gabbar aa jayega'. This can be a case here."

leisure



ELIZABETH BANKS NEARLY CHOKED TO DEATH

Actress Elizabeth Banks has recalled how she almost choked to death while she was alone in her vanity van during the break from shooting of her movie *Skincare*. She shared that the scary ordeal happened when she was enjoying lunch and a little green pea got lodged in her throat.

ZENDAYA AUDITIONED MANY TIMES FOR DESCENDANTS

American actress and singer Zendaya auditioned many times for *Descendants* but things didn't go her way. The *Dune: Part Two* really wanted to be part of the franchise but her numerous attempts to land a role failed to yield results.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today will be a difficult day full of action. You may not agree with your friends about trifling matters, but you will love it. You will complete all work that has been pending, which will give you relief. Ganesha says it is an optimistic day.

TAURUS

Be careful, says Ganesha. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle, benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advise you need.

GEMINI

You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work.

CANCER

Sentimentalism will be hinder your path of success. So, says Ganesha, give up too much sentimentalism. It can be quite a hazard in the future. You will win over people with the force of speech and polite approach.

LEO

You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Today you may understand the utter uselessness of your dogged efforts and feel extremely anxious about success eluding you constantly. However, Ganesha advises you not to lose hope, but to re-energise your mind, give a boost to your curiosity and pay attention to long-term goals.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

SCORPIO

You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesha. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia. However, you will soon realise that the time once gone, never comes back and so, you make up for the lost time by beginning the new chapter of your life from today itself.

SAGITTARIUS

You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

You are busy as a beaver. It is extremely difficult for you to think for yourself as you are all tied up by the demands of your work. You want to be creative, but again, the workload will not let you have that freedom, says Ganesha. You have learnt the art of time management. So, you have properly lined up your priorities and success is waiting for you.

AQUARIUS

You will hit the bull's eye, today. From the smallest to the biggest, all of your plans will turn into reality. Don't get disheartened if there are some obstacles on your path; you are fully armed to face the challenges and come out triumphant. Get yourself in the top gear, you will surely succeed, says Ganesha.

PISCES

For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated. Overall, a progressive and pleasant day awaits, says Ganesha.

Neeti to perform at Paris Olympics

Mumbai: The highly anticipated Paris Olympic Games 2024 are generating a lot of interest on social media, with people all around the world talking about it. While Indian sportsmen prepare to make their country proud with their accomplishments, artists are equally prepared to entertain them.

Among some of the biggest Indian artists, playback singer Neeti Mohan is also ready to entertain the fans and to boost the morale of Indian athletes with her melodious voice at the India House i.e. the official hub for the Indian Olympic team.

Known for her powerful vocals and agility, Neeti has thrilled millions of music fans and inspired many of them.

Expressing her enthusiasm at playing at the India House, the singer said, "It's an absolute honour to represent India at such a prestigious event. I am honoured to perform at India House in Paris for the first time! I will be singing not just for Indians, but for attendees from all nationalities. I'm excited to perform live with my band. India is truly shining in Paris this time!"

In addition to her musical contributions, Neeti has advocated for sports and youth empowerment. She has worked on a variety of initiatives to promote sports among the younger generation.



Rashami recalls being homeless

Mumbai: Popular television actress Rashami Desai has candidly shared about a tumultuous phase in her life. During a recent podcast, she revealed the harrowing experience of being homeless and burdened with a Rs 3.5 crore debt following her divorce from actor Nandish Sandhu.

Rashami described the ordeal, stating, "I had bought a house during that time. I had a loan of almost Rs 2.5 crore, and apart from that... I remember there was a total debt of Rs 3.25-3.5 crore on me. I thought everything was fine but then suddenly, my show was shut down. I was on the road for four days. I had an Audi A6 and I would sleep in that car. All my stuff was at my manager's house. I was completely cut off from my family. Those days, rickshaw valas would have a meal for Rs 20. It used to come in a plastic bag which had daal and chawal mixed and

they would give two rotis along with it. It would have some stones also but I ate that anyway. These four days were very difficult."

The Uttaran actress expressed gratitude for the support of her colleagues and team members, who stood by her during this challenging period. She also spoke about the role of yoga in her healing journey.



'I've developed a bit of thick skin'

Mumbai: Taapsee Pannu recently shared insights into the challenges of portraying complex characters. During a candid conversation with an entertainment portal, the actress discussed the lasting impact of her roles in *Pink* and *Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillruba*.

When asked if she ever carried on-screen characters into real life, Taapsee revealed a personal struggle. "It happened to me right from *Pink* where I actually had to take solid time out from work for a few weeks because I was mentally very fragile after finishing that film," she shared.

The actress realised that such intense roles would be a recurring theme in her career and that she would need to develop a stronger mental fortitude.

Despite the challenges, Taapsee has learned to cope with the demanding nature of her roles. "I have developed a little bit of thick skin for this, but it still affects me," she admitted. The actress explained how *Hasseen Dillruba* influenced her personal style, revealing a previously unexplored side of her personality. "My wardrobe changed after *Hasseen Dillruba*. Not that I didn't enjoy wearing saree before, but saree has big space in my closet now, courtesy to *Hasseen Dillruba*," she said.

Speaking of the upcoming Netflix film, *Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillruba* is slated to arrive on the streaming giant on August 9. Besides Taapsee, it also stars Vikrant Massey and Sunny Kaushal.



Suffering from leprosy landed Dimple role in Bobby

Mumbai: Dimple Kapadia was only a teenager when she made her acting debut opposite the late actor Rishi Kapoor in *Bobby* in 1973 is a well-known fact.

But what many don't know is that she was suffering from leprosy at that time. Opening up about the same recently, the actor disclosed that her father, Chunnibhai Kapadia, used to socialise with several prominent figures in the film industry and a "famous director", who was "like a family friend", said that he would get her "ostracised from school". "I was suffering from leprosy at that time. I was about 12 years old. I had it on my elbow. So this man turned



around and said, 'I'll see that you get ostracised from school'. That was the first time I heard that word. I didn't even know what that meant," she recalled in a conversation with FICCI Flo Jaipur Chapter.

The Saagar actress mentioned that her medical condition was the reason Raj Kapoor met her. She shared "Raj Kapoor wanted to meet this girl. He was told there is this beautiful girl and she is suffering from leprosy. Out of this kind of a setback, there was a lot to gain and that's how I got Bobby. It was the most fabulous time of my life. Anything that I said or wanted or desired, just happened. It was magical. Absolutely magical."

FUN post

PEANUTS



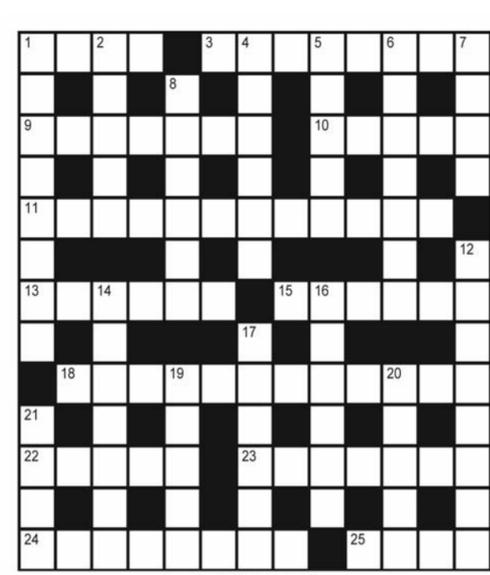
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



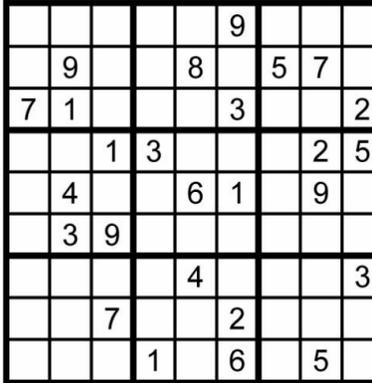
CROSSWORD



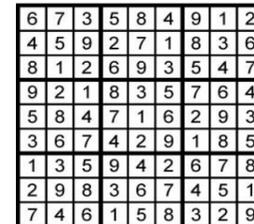
- Across**
- 1 Appropriate
 - 3 Like plays
 - 9 Nouveau-riche
 - 10 Sidestep
 - 11 Pugilist's drill
 - 13 Missile
 - 15 Medicinal shrub (5,4,3)
 - 18 Nile blocker
 - 22 Ring-tailed animal
 - 23 Paradise
 - 24 Everyday
 - 25 Road turn
 - Down**
 - 1 Wall hanging
 - 2 Destiny
 - 4 Pastry leftovers
 - 5 Card type
 - 6 News
 - 7 Twosome
 - 8 Bacterium, for one
 - 12 Ploughman
 - 14 Crème brûlée
 - 16 Sweater material
 - 17 Black eye
 - 19 Little green man
 - 20 Golden Hind captain
 - 21 Canyon effect

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

AIRING GRIEVANCES

Members of 'Odisha Krushak Sathi Sangha' stage a sit-in at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, to press for fulfilment of their demands



RAIN IN SIGHT: Dark clouds hover over Srimandir sky in Puri, Wednesday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Kerala landslide: Odisha doctor's body recovered, another missing

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The state government Wednesday said the body of one of the two missing persons from Odisha has been found in landslide-hit Wayanad in Kerala.

Two doctors from Odisha, Bishnu Prasad Chinara and Swadhin Panda, had been missing since the landslide hit the southern state Tuesday.

Odisha's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said, "The body belongs to Chinara. After formalities, arrangements will be made to bring the body to Odisha."

Pujari said Chinara's wife Priyadarshini Pal and nursing teacher Sikruti Mohapatra sustained injuries in the landslide and are currently receiving treatment at a hospital there. He added that Chinara and his wife hailed from Choudwar Housing Board Colony in Cuttack.



"I pray before Lord Jagannath that Panda and the two injured women return to the state soon," Pujari said, adding that the state government is in contact with its counterparts in Kerala for more information.

Odisha's Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) is also in touch with the disaster management authority of Kerala.

"We have contacted Odia officers there. Many people are still trapped under debris as armed forces continue rescue operations," he said.

Pujari said the state government and the district administration have reached out to the families and are providing updates on the situation.

"Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has expressed grief upon receiving the news that Dr. Bishnu Prasad Chinara's body has been recovered," the CMO said in a statement, adding that Majhi has conveyed his condolences to the family.

The Chief Minister has also directed the SRC to stay in touch with the Kerala government.

PDS: Chorus for removal of ghost beneficiaries

A total of 2.88 crore people from 80.13 lakh families have been included under National Food Security Act

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 31: Legislators cutting across party lines Wednesday demanded exclusion of ghost (dead) beneficiaries and inclusion of eligible new recipients in the public distribution system (PDS).

MLAs from the Opposition BJD, Congress, CPI(M) and ruling BJP raised the issue during Question Hour in the Assembly.

Speaker Surama Padhy also expressed concern over the issue, stating that the removal of deceased persons from PDS is crucial, as it is a widespread problem across the state.

In his reply, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said names of 16,27,920 deceased persons have already been removed from the beneficiary list under national and state food security schemes after field verification and new recipients have been added.

Additionally, the state government has initiated the

process of updating e-KYC to verify genuine beneficiaries. Rich or ineligible persons, included by the previous BJD government, will be removed during this process. However, no eligible poor person will be deprived of benefits, Patra assured.

"Biometrics, Aadhaar and other details of the beneficiaries will be verified. The names of deceased persons will be deleted and ration cards will be issued to new eligible recipients," the minister said.

A total of 6,19,000 beneficiaries have so far applied for new ration cards in the state, he added.

"Beneficiaries whose names were deleted due to political rivalry or other issues can reapply and the government will consider their applications," he said.

The minister also directed the Malkangiri Collector to distribute rations to beneficiaries at their doorstep in remote and inaccessible villages.

Providing details of beneficiaries covered under different food security schemes, Patra, in a written statement, said a total of 2.88 crore people from 80.13 lakh families have been included under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Similarly, 37.41 lakh people from 12.52 lakh families have been included under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).

Further, 10.02 lakh benefi-



IN THE HOUSE

aries from 3.15 lakh families are benefiting under the State Food Security Scheme. In total, about 80 per cent of the state's population is covered under food security schemes, he informed the House.

₹224cr cooperative bank fraud detected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The state government has detected misappropriation of funds to the tune of ₹224.61 crore in different cooperative banks across the state, Cooperation Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta told the Assembly Wednesday.

The irregularities were detected during audits of Odisha State Cooperative Bank (OSCB), 17 Central Cooperative Banks (CCBs) and 13 Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs), he said.

In response to a query from Congress legislator Tara Prasad Bahinipati, the minister detailed that 1,704 people were implicated in the financial misconduct and the government has begun surcharge proceedings to recover the funds.

He said ₹16.63 crore has been realised till date while orders have been issued for the recovery of ₹30.73 crore from 706 persons involved in the fraud.

A total of 1,704 people have been implicated in the financial misconduct and the government has begun surcharge proceedings to recover the funds

Additionally, the Odisha government has suspended the management committees of the Odisha State Cooperative Bank Ltd and Odisha Cooperative Housing Corporations Ltd under the Odisha Cooperative Societies Act, 1962.

Two orders issued Wednesday cited gross irregularities and misappropriation of public money as reasons for the suspension.

Cooperation department secretary and Subhra Mohanty, additional secretary of the department, will manage the affairs of the OSCB and Odisha Cooperative Housing Corporations, respectively.

Triple Vig convictions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 31: A junior horticulture officer of Balasore district, a junior manager of CESU in Dhenkanal district and a tax collector of Ganjam district were convicted by Vigilance courts for bribery and misappropriation of funds, respectively, Wednesday.

According to the anti-corruption wing sources, Brajendra Mishra, junior horticulture officer of Nilgiri in Balasore district, who was charge-sheeted by Vigilance under Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d)/7PC Act, 1988 for demanding and accepting bribe from a beneficiary for releasing the subsidy under National Horticulture Mission (NHM), was convicted by the Special Judge, Vigilance, Balasore.

"Mishra will undergo two-year of rigorous imprisonment (RI). The Vigilance will move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Mishra following his conviction," they said.

Similarly, the Special Judge, Vigilance, Dhenkanal awarded a two-year jail term to Trilochan Sethi, in-charge junior manager (contractual) of CESU's Hindol Section in Dhenkanal district, after finding him guilty of demanding and accepting ₹30,000 as bribe from a man to supply three-phase electric connection to his fly ash factory. The court also slapped a penalty of ₹50,000 on the convict.

The Vigilance had charge-sheeted Sethi under Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d)/7 of the PC Act, 1988.

In the third case, Special Judge, Vigilance, Berhampur awarded a two-year jail term to Jogi Behera, tax collector of Berhampur Municipal Corporation in

Asst engineer caught taking ₹50,000 bribe

A lady assistant engineer was arrested by Vigilance sleuths for accepting ₹50,000 bribe from a contractor to clear his pending bills, official sources said, Wednesday.

According to sources from the Directorate of Vigilance, Nibedita Mohanty, assistant engineer of Jatni block in Khurda district, was apprehended on the night of July 30 on charges of bribery.

Vigilance sources said a trap was laid Tuesday, during which Mohanty was caught by the Vigilance team at her residence in Khandagiri for demanding and accepting an undue advantage of ₹50,000 from the contractor.

The entire bribe amount was recovered from Mohanty's possession and seized in the presence of witnesses.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches were conducted at her residence in Rudra Vihar, Khandagiri Bari, Bhubaneswar; her in-laws' house; her paternal house in Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar; and her office.

A Vigilance case under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018, has been registered and is currently under investigation.

Ganjam, after holding him guilty of misappropriation of funds meant for pension.

"The Vigilance had charge-sheeted Behera for offences under Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of PC Act, 1988 and 409, 468 and 477A of the IPC. In this case, too, the Vigilance will move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Behera," they said.

CHINESE SHIP DETAINED IN PARADIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paradip, July 31: Paradip Port Authority has detained a Chinese cargo ship following the 'arrest' order of the vessel by the Orissa High Court over a monetary dispute, an official said Wednesday.

Under admiralty law, a ship can be arrested for the enforcement of maritime claims that arise out of the ownership, construction, possession, management, operation, or trading of any ship.

The HC order came following a monetary dispute between the owner of the ship and the company that had dispatched the cargo - low sulfur marine gasoil. The ship will remain detained at the port until further orders.

The company which sent the cargo submitted before the HC that the ship's owner failed to pay ₹99.81 lakh to it. After reviewing the submitted documents and arguments, the HC passed the arrest order Monday.

Odisha yet to clear stand on mineral tax verdict

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 31: BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan Wednesday supported the Centre's demand in the Supreme Court for prospective implementation of its verdict on royalty and taxes on mines and minerals, saying they will adopt a 'citizen-centric approach', while Odisha government did not specify its clear stand on the retrospective or prospective effect of the apex court's ruling.

The JMM-led Jharkhand government, however, opposed the Centre's demand and sought retrospective implementation of the July 25 verdict.

A nine-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud reserved its orders on the issue of whether its July 25 verdict upholding the power of states to levy tax on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land should be given retrospective or prospective effect.

In a significant verdict July 25, the bench, by a majority 8:1 verdict, had held that the legislative power to tax mineral rights vests

with the states and the royalty paid on minerals is not a tax.

The verdict had overruled a 1989 judgement in the case of India Cement versus Tamil Nadu, which held that only the Centre has power to impose royalty on minerals and mineral bearing land.

The bench also comprising justices Hrishikesh Roy, Abhay S Oka, BV Nagarathna, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that "both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan has decided to adopt a citizen centric approach and support the prospective implementation of the verdict".

He submitted making the July 25 verdict retrospective will have cascading effects on common citizens as companies will pass on the financial burden on them.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the Jharkhand government, batted for making the effect of July 25 judgement retrospective and said, "It may also be remem-



bered that mineral rich states are the poorest in the country and those challenging the imposition of tax are the richest companies in the country."

He said the states are in dire need of revenue to carry out their constitutional obligations as a welfare state and to uplift the poorest of poor - the tribals.

Dwivedi added that state's Mineral Area Development Authority is facing severe financial crisis and that it has never been able to pay its employees for the last four years nor paid retiral-cum-death benefits to its former employees.

"Due to the severe financial crisis, the authority is also un-

The SC reserved its orders on the issue of whether its July 25 verdict upholding the power of states to levy tax on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land should be given retrospective or prospective effect

able to grant compassionate appointments. It has not even paid its electricity dues. The authority is struggling to stay afloat and carry out its functions as a development authority," he said.

Odisha government Advocate General Pitambar Acharya, however, did not specify any clear stand of the state government on the retrospective or prospective effect of the July 25 verdict and said the state was committed to the welfare of its people.

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appearing for Shaktinagar Special Area

Development Authority in Uttar Pradesh, also sought retrospective implementation of the July 25 verdict.

Several senior advocates, including Harish Salve, Mukul Rohatgi, Abhishek Singhvi and Arvind Dattar, appearing for various organisations, including mining companies, supported the Centre for prospective implementation of the verdict.

The Solicitor General said in India, 55 per cent of total commercial energy production is coal reliant and 68 per cent of coal production is currently used in the generation of electricity.

"An increase in the price of coal on account of state levies would have a cascading effect on the price of every commodity or service which uses power as an input, which is virtually every commodity or service," he said.

Mehta pointed out that the inflationary impact across the nation will be significant, which requires this court's intervention by making the July 25 judgement prospective.



ENCHANTING MOVES: Artists perform at National Solo Odissi dance competition organised by Sri Sri University and Sri Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Nrityabasa at GKCM Odissi Research Centre in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. On the occasion, Sanjukta Panigrahi Award of Excellence was awarded to Shimran Zaman, Suchismita Sahoo and Dabajani Das
PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

'Paediatric blindness a matter of concern'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The surge in paediatric blindness involving various risk factors such as prematurity, hypoxia, and nutritional deficiencies are a matter of grave concerns, experts said at the midterm conference of the Odisha State Ophthalmological Society (OSOS) held at City AIIMS here, recently.

The one-day scientific programme saw the participation of 230 eye specialists, including post-graduate doctors from various medical colleges across the state.

Experts, taking part in the discussion, emphasised on the need for enhancing state-of-the-art ophthalmology services at peripheral centers and to train more ophthalmologists to address eye health issues and reduce the blindness burden.

Key discussion points included the urgent need for awareness about glaucoma, which can cause irreversible blindness and is seen in every fourth patient vis-



iting eye OPDs.

Senior ophthalmologists highlighted the importance of spreading awareness about blindness and its management.

Attendees included Professor of Ophthalmology from AIIMS, New Delhi Jeevan S Titiyal and former president of the All India Ophthalmological Society from Hyderabad Ajit Babu Majji.

On this occasion, Biswambhar Rajguru, a 97-year-old senior eye specialist and teacher, was honoured with the lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the development of Ophthalmological science and society in the state.

AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Executive Director Dr. Ashutosh Biswas, N Deep Bag and PR Mohapatra, Dean of AIIMS Bhubaneswar underscored the importance of eye health, stating, "The eye is the window to the body."

The conference featured various scientific programmes, including surgical technique demonstrations, case discussions, and competitions such as 'Teachers of Tomorrow' and 'Champions of Odisha' for post-graduate doctors.

'Address waterlogging issues immediately'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 31: Take proactive measures to address water logging concerns across all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), especially during the monsoon season, Housing and Urban Development principal secretary Usha Padhee said in a review meeting here, Wednesday.

Padhee highlighted the critical need for effective water management systems and stressed the role of community partnerships in tackling water logging issues. "Our priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents by providing an immediate and efficient response to any water logging concerns. We are committed to leveraging the collective efforts to address these issues promptly," said Padhee.

Padhee also reviewed the actions taken as per earlier SOP issued by the department and asked for establishment of dedicated rapid response teams in each ULB.

The department urged the residents to cooperate with the initiatives and report any water logging incidents immediately.

2-day workshop on 'Waste to Energy'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The department of Civil Engineering at National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research (NITTTR), Kolkata, hosted a two-day workshop on 'Waste to Energy' here, recently, sponsored by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)-VAANI.



Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR) VC Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal attended the event as chief guest and inaugurated the workshop. NITTTR, Kolkata director Debi Prasad Mishra and Naveen BP were also present on the occasion.

Speaking at the event, Mishra explained how waste-to-energy practice is a sustainable alternative rather than simply letting the trash sit in a landfill. Mishra appreciated the initiative and said such programmes play a significant role in promoting modern technologies for waste management.

Heavy rain to continue for another two days



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday said the state will continue to experience heavy rainfall for the next two days.

According to IMD's Bhubaneswar centre, heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) is expected Thursday in Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Boudh, Subarnapur, Sambalpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Bolangir, Nuapada, Nayagarh, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, and Kalahandi districts.

As per IMD forecast, heavy rain is likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Boudh, Subarnapur and Sambalpur August 1.

Friday, August 2, heavy rainfall is anticipated in Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Bargarh, Keonjhar, VAANI.

Sambalpur and Deogarh districts.

The weather agency informed that several parts of the state are likely to experience rainfall activities till August 4.

From June 1 to July 31, Odisha recorded an average rainfall of 489.5 mm, slightly below the normal 550.7 mm, the IMD said.

Malkangiri district experienced large excess rainfall, while Koraput, Nuapada, and Boudh districts had excess rainfall. Fourteen districts saw normal rainfall, and 12 districts were categorised as deficient, the weather agency said.

Currently, the water levels of all major rivers are below the danger level. Baitarani River was at 17.28 metres at Akhuapada in Bhadrak district, below the warning level of 17.83 metres. The water level of the Mahanadi River is falling, with the Hirakud Dam authorities closing two of the 20 gates previously opened to release water.

OPF opposes STA drive against underage driving

Odisha Parents' Federation requests the STA to conduct a week-long awareness in schools along with parents on traffic rules and regulations

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 31: The Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Wednesday opposed the special enforcement drive launched by the State Transport Authority (STA) to curb increasing menace of underage driving.

OPF requested the withdrawal of cases against 153 minors caught and release 60 vehicles seized during the two-day drive conducted recently.

In a letter, OPF chairman Basudev Bhatt urged Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena



and STA to reconsider their move against the juveniles while agreeing the issue existed. "This issue arose after a tragic accident caused by a juvenile driver in Pune that created a nationwide uproar. Subsequently, the parents of the minor driver were sent to jail. Accidents involving juvenile drivers continue to be a significant concern. But tak-

ing sudden action without discussing the matter with parents is not justified," he said.

"The STA was silent over the issue in the state till recently. They took action without creating proper awareness among parents, educational institutions and prime stakeholders. This enforcement will harass students and parents in the coming days," the letter said.

Bhatt said that a provision to impose a fine of ₹25,000 and in some cases three-year imprisonment to parents without committing any crime is violation of human rights. The schools share the equal responsibility on this issue. How can they provide parking facility for students in schools? Why do they allow students to park their vehicles in the campus?

In such a scenario, the parents and schools share equal amount of penalty and jail term, he argued.

Training on integrated farming by KVK-Khurda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 31: As a part of the Schedule Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) scheme, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)-Khurda, under the administrative control of ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), here organised a training programme on integrated farming system, Wednesday.

ICAR-CIFA director Pramoda Kumar Sahoo graced the occasion as chief guest and delivered the inaugural address. In his address, Sahoo applauded the

efforts by KVK-Khurda in promoting integrated farming system for enhancing the income and providing nutritional security among the farmers in the district.

He also advised the farmers and farmwomen to adopt scientific practices and use technologies for increasing the productivity of the crops.

On the occasion, senior scientist and head of KVK-Khurda Harapriya Nayak provided an overview of the training programme to the participants.

A demonstration on use of



drone for aquaculture was also organised for the trainees.

The programme included knowledge sharing and discussion on various agricultural practices, including Azolla cultivation for backyard poultry, community fish culture, mushroom cultivation and finger millets cultivation among the women

SHGs and SC farming community.

Notably, under SCSP, KVK-Khurda and ICAR-CIFA undertake various programmes, including training of the farmers, exposure visits, farmers farecum-exhibition and kisan mela for strengthening the livelihood support to the Schedule Caste (SC) farming community and women self help groups (SHGs) in the district.

In addition, KVK-Khurda works for the development of the farming community in agriculture and allied sectors.

Eating processed red meat could up risk of dementia

Adiet rich in processed red meat is linked to an increased risk of dementia, according to a new research that tracked more than 100,000 people over four decades.

Processed red meat has previously been shown to increase the risk of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Now US researchers say they have uncovered a potential link to dementia.

The study also found that replacing processed red meat with healthier foods such as nuts, beans or tofu could help reduce the risk of dementia. The findings were presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in the US.

The number of people living with dementia globally is forecast to nearly triple to 153 million by 2050, and studies looking at diet and risk of cognitive de-

cline has become a focus of researchers.

The participants were asked how often they ate processed red meat including bacon, hot dogs, sausages, salami and other sandwich meat.

They were also asked about their consumption of nuts and legumes including peanut butter, peanuts, walnuts and other nuts, string beans, beans, peas, soy milk and tofu.

More than 11,000 cases of dementia were identified during the follow-up period.

Consuming two servings of processed red meat each week appeared to raise the risk of cognitive decline by 14 per cent compared with those eating about three servings a month, the researchers reported.

The study also suggested that replacing one daily serving of



processed red meat for a daily serving of nuts, beans or tofu every day could lower the risk of dementia by 23 per cent.

The lead author of the study, Yuhan Li, an assistant professor at the Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston, said: "Study results have been mixed on whether there is a relationship

between cognitive decline and meat consumption in general, so we took a closer look at how eating different amounts of both processed and unprocessed meat affects cognitive risk and function."

"By studying people over a long period of time, we found that eating processed red meat

could be a significant risk factor for dementia."

Li, who conducted the study while at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in Boston, added, "Dietary guidelines could include recommendations limiting it to promote brain health."

The study also found that every additional daily serving of processed red meat was linked to an additional 1.6 years of cognitive ageing, specifically in the area affecting a person's language ability and executive function, which includes mental skills that control behavior.

Heather Snyder, of the Alzheimer's Association, said, "Prevention of Alzheimer's disease and all other dementia is a major focus, and the Alzheimer's Association has long encouraged eating a healthier diet -

including foods that are less processed."

Richard Oakley, of the Alzheimer's Society in the UK, said, "In this study more people who ate processed red meat went on to develop dementia and had worse memory and thinking skills."

However, he urged caution because the research found only an association between processed red meat and dementia - and did not prove cause and effect.

"It's important to remember that this doesn't mean that eating processed red meat is directly related to developing dementia. It may be that people who avoid processed red meat are generally more health conscious and avoid other unhealthy habits that increase dementia risk."

AGENCIES

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Rourkela-Panposh 3rd line within 18 months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 31: CGM of South Eastern Railway Sanjay Mishra recently took stock of various developmental works...

Mishra informed the media that the third and crucial railway line between Rourkela and Panposh stations, being undertaken here.

To a question, the CGM said, "It is the state government that will take care of the rehabilitation of those who are going to be displaced by the project."



Mishra also said, "Rourkela-Panposh section is a little difficult one which requires massive earth cutting for which it will take a little longer time for completion."

Regarding Panposh underpass he said, "The railway underpass should be straight and we will look into it."

A section of BJP leaders also met the CGM and apprised him about some of the problems and necessities of the Rourkela station.

Balimela hydel project revamp fails

POST NEWS NETWORK

Korukonda, July 31: Balimela hydroelectric project is running through troubled times as technical snags continue to cripple six of its power units...

The hydropower project has been producing 33 per cent electricity and supplying it to various parts of the state since 1973.

However, trouble started when the initially established six units very often developed technical snags and power production came to a grinding halt.

Later, the state government decided to fix the problem for good and sanctioned ₹300 crore for renovation of the old units in financial year 2016-17.



Power production from unit no-2 continued for three years and nine months after the repair work undertaken by Central PSU BHEL, but the old unit again developed snags March 15, 2024, halting power generation

2 at a cost of ₹50 crore from December 18, 2017 and completed it December 29, 2021.

The unit was then handed over to Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) December 29, 2021. Power production from unit no-2 continued for three years and nine months but it again went kaput March 15, 2024.

Observers have now raised doubts about the fate of the remaining five units which are currently undergoing repairs.

Official sources said Balimela hydroelectric project authori-

ties handed over unit-1 and unit-2 for renovation to BHEL December 12, 2017. Similarly, unit no-3 was handed over to BHEL August 17, 2022 and unit no-4 August 10, 2022.

However, BHEL took four years and 11 days to complete the renovation of the unit no-2.

As per the contract, BHEL has been tasked with mainte-

nance of the unit for a period of one year. The project authorities have written to it to take up the maintenance of the unit.

It was learnt that BHEL rushed in two experts for repairing of unit no-2. Meanwhile, BHEL has completed the renovation of unit 1, 3 and 4.

Ota said that penalty will be collected from BHEL as it failed to meet the deadline.

When contacted, engineer S Shiva Prasad, senior general manager of Balimela project said that the higher authorities have been apprised of the development and they will take a call.

Alliance Air cancels flight; 126 stranded

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, July 31: At least 126 passengers were stranded at the airport here and Bhubaneswar as the connecting flight of Alliance Air was cancelled at the last moment Wednesday.

The flight that was supposed to take off from Bhubaneswar airport to Rourkela got cancelled reportedly due to technical snag.

The cancellation of the flight caused utter inconvenience to 62 passengers in Bhubaneswar and 64 here as the company could not provide an alternate arrangement - arranging another plane. This is for the second time this month that the flight between the two cities got cancelled.

The flight from Kolkata to Bhubaneswar returned back to the West Bengal capital just 20 minutes before landing. Then Alliance Air declared that flight on Kolkata- Bhubaneswar-

Rourkela route was cancelled due to technical issues.

Sachetan Nagarik Manch president Bimal Bisi, who was supposed to go to Bhubaneswar in that flight, said, "When I came to know about the cancellation, I immediately spoke to the CEO of Alliance Air who said that the flight had to go back to Kolkata just 20 minutes before landing because of hydraulic issues."

When Bisi demanded that an alternative flight should have been arranged, the CEO said he has 19 planes in different routes at his disposal and that he cannot withdraw any flight from any route.

Bisi, who had a crucial meeting in Bhubaneswar Wednesday evening, said, "This is what we are getting after electing a double-engine government. No one is really serious about flight services to Rourkela which is a profitable route."



Bhitarkanika National Park to reopen today

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, July 31: After a three-month ban, Bhitarkanika National Park will be reopened for tourists and visitors August 1.

Raj Nagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Division had imposed a three months ban from May 1 last to July 31 on the entry of tourists and visitors into Bhitarkanika National park for the safety of tourists and to provide a congenial atmosphere for the estuarine crocodiles during the nesting process of the reptiles.

The park authorities have also made it mandatory for the tourists to wear life jackets and possess lifebuoy, if they reach

Bhitarkanika National Park authorities had spotted 114 crocodile nests in Kanika, Gahirmatha, Mahakalapada and Rajnagar wildlife forest ranges, Jadav said.

To attract the tourists, selfie points have been set up, fibre boats deployed along with the Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and wildlife division recently.

A 600-metre long wooden canopy bridge will be inaugurated Thursday, for the tourists to have a better view of fauna and flora of Bhitarkanika National Park from the bridge.

A ban has been imposed on tourists carrying liquor, polythene and plastic bags inside the Bhitarkanika National park.

The incident occurred when the victim, a Plus II student of a local college, was alone at home as her father and brother were away, and her mother had gone to the village pond to take bath.

When her mother reached home, she saw a youth pressing the nose of her daughter and force feeding her poison. The woman raised an alarm but the accused attacked her and fled the scene.

Meanwhile, the condition of the girl became critical due to the impact of the poison. The woman informed her husband and son who ran back home and admitted the girl to Losingha community health centre. After preliminary treatment, doctors shifted her to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir where the victim succumbed, said the police.

While some termed the incident as the fallout of a one-sided affair, the girl's family rubbished the allegation. Investigation is on.

Youth poisons girl to death in Bolangir



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, July 31: In a shocking incident, a minor girl was allegedly killed by a youth by forcibly feeding her with poison when she was alone at her Banjipali residence under Agalpur police limits in Bolangir district, Wednesday.

The accused was identified as Pranay Pradhan, a native of neighbouring Insa village. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem after the girl's mother lodged a complaint at Agalpur police station, IIC Basudev Bhoi said.

The incident occurred when the victim, a Plus II student of a local college, was alone at home as her father and brother were away, and her mother had gone to the village pond to take bath.

When her mother reached home, she saw a youth pressing the nose of her daughter and force feeding her poison. The woman raised an alarm but the accused attacked her and fled the scene.

Meanwhile, the condition of the girl became critical due to the impact of the poison. The woman informed her husband and son who ran back home and admitted the girl to Losingha community health centre. After preliminary treatment, doctors shifted her to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir where the victim succumbed, said the police.

While some termed the incident as the fallout of a one-sided affair, the girl's family rubbished the allegation. Investigation is on.



AGAINST ENCROACHMENT: Residents stage a demonstration outside Jajpur Collectorate at Jajpur Town over alleged encroachment of land meant for Maa Biraja modern tourism project, Wednesday

UTP jumps police custody, arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, July 31: An under-trial prisoner (UTP) Babaji Chhuriya, 23, who was trying to escape police custody near Bargarh court gate Wednesday, was apprehended by the cops from the roof of a local private school.

According to sources, a case (no-204/21) was lodged against Babaji of Sayan village under Bargarh Sadar police station August 3, 2021 on charge of raping a minor girl.

The police brought 15 UTPs, including Babaji, in a vehicle to produce them in the court Wednesday. To beef up security, a 12-member police team was also deployed near the court. However, a clever Babaji kicked the police and stormed out of the court gate. After a long search, police caught him hiding on the roof of a local private school and arrested him.

The incident has exposed the lack of readiness of the cops to meet such eventualities.

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To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism



THE MOTHER

Rebooting SDGs

It is a truism in the business world that vision without execution is a hallucination, and execution without vision is futile. The same principle applies to global policy: ambitions without solutions are just hopes, while solutions without ambition lead to stagnation.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 are a case in point. These 17 objectives and 169 underlying targets were unanimously adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015. They constitute an ambitious agenda to address global challenges like poverty, health, gender equality, labour, education, and climate change.

With six years remaining until the 2030 deadline, the world is far from achieving most of these goals. Despite significant improvements in some areas – such as a million more children reaching their fifth birthday each year – progress has been too slow in many others.

While financing gaps are often cited as a key factor, the biggest obstacle to achieving the SDGs is the lack of systematic approaches to creating scalable solutions. Slow and steady gains can lead to significant advances over time, but if progress becomes too slow, the sense of achievement and hope for the future can dissipate.

Achieving systemic gains requires boldness. In 2015, the SDGs were launched with a call for transformation. But calling for transformative solutions is easier than developing them. Although markets are powerful drivers of innovation, we need solutions capable of tackling broader public interests. Progress often requires new forms of collaboration between public, private, scientific, and civil-society institutions, or even the creation of new ones. But many organisations have difficulties updating their goals or building partnership strategies. Siloed professional communities are difficult to unite, leaving vested interests and the forces of inertia to crowd out innovation. Consequently, partnership remains more an aspirational value than a skills-based discipline, and policy debates often prioritise ideology over practical solutions.



John W. McArthur & Zia Khan

With six years remaining until the 2030 deadline, the world is far from achieving most of these goals

Against this backdrop, achieving the SDGs by 2030 requires new approaches that are audacious enough to inspire but also practical enough to be viable – concepts that capture the imagination while steering implementation debates toward tangible results. This could mean anything from a new global fund designed to ensure that digital cash transfers reach the world's poorest communities, or an "interspecies money" mechanism that leverages artificial intelligence to provide animals with a say on how digital currencies can be spent on their own protection. It could also mean developing a public data tool to help investors identify and avoid companies that use forced labour.

New technologies, institutions, and approaches all have the capacity to mobilise energy and expertise to achieve common, quantifiable objectives. Crucially, the fresh approaches we have in mind must convince people to abandon current practices and pool their creativity and resources toward a greater goal.

But big ideas rarely emerge on their own. Our respective professional experiences and collaborative efforts have taught us that innovative SDG solutions must be encouraged, cultivated, and supported. As co-chairs of 17 Rooms, a partnership between the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation, we have worked with several dozen groups of extraordinary professionals around the world on initiatives related to all 17 goals. Having watched them experiment with various approaches, we have learned a few lessons about how to drive positive change.

First, venues for cross-sector cooperation on sustainable development remain too rare. We have been struck by the sense of novelty leaders from all sectors frequently express when encouraged to craft bold actions together to achieve even individual SDG targets.

Second, how ideas are shaped matters. To create platforms for the best ideas to emerge, the world needs tools, processes, and systems that can bring together diverse views, and yet the lack of available tools for developing multi-stakeholder solutions is startling.

Third, the development and adoption of big ideas should be interlinked. Too often, experts devise new solutions without understanding the realities faced by those who would be responsible for implementing them. Conversely, policymakers often fail to seek out innovative ideas and are rarely held accountable for not doing so.

A fourth lesson concerns the need to determine early on who will pay and how. Regrettably, the SDGs were launched without sufficient agreement on funding, making even small amounts of money difficult to secure. Without adequate financing, big ideas will remain just that – ideas.

Fifth, there is no substitute for leadership. Institutions and systems are crucial for large-scale deployment, but the passion and dedication of individuals championing big ideas are much more important than a perfect strategy or project. Since roadblocks are inevitable in an age of technological disruption, policy entrepreneurs must be as agile as their counterparts in the business world in navigating constantly shifting terrain.

To be sure, some people may argue that the current geopolitical climate is too challenging to pursue big ideas or develop systematic approaches to achieving the SDGs. We disagree. If anything, today's heightened tensions underscore the need to chart a better path forward. When the world seems stuck or off course, policy tweaks are unlikely to have a significant impact. New ideas, on the other hand, can foster a sense of opportunity and combat despair.

Lastly, private-sector and civil-society leaders are just as vital to generating big ideas as public officials. Big ideas can drive change at every level, from local councils to international forums. But achieving the SDGs requires new platforms that can foster innovation across sectors and empower relevant actors to advance solutions independently.

At 17 Rooms, we have learned from our successes and missed opportunities. With six years remaining until the 2030 deadline to achieve the SDGs, we are actively seeking big ideas. We hope others will adopt a similar approach and help all of us build platforms to facilitate innovative solutions.

John W. McArthur is Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at the Brookings Institution. Zia Khan is Senior Vice President for Innovation at The Rockefeller Foundation.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

We're all going to die, all of us; what a circus! That alone should make us love each other, but it doesn't. We are terrorized and flattened by trivialities. We are eaten up by nothing

CHARLES BUKOWSKI

Morality is not the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness

IMMANUEL KANT

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies

ROBERT FROST

FOCUS DEFENCE PRODUCTION

LANDMARK STRIDES

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh should be more than satisfied. The defence budget has got the highest allocation of ₹621,940.85 crore, which is 12.9% of total Budget 2024-25 and the highest among the ministries. The capital outlay of ₹1,72,000 crore is expected to further strengthen the capabilities of Armed Forces and provide impetus to 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

INDIA PLANS TO ACHIEVE THE MILESTONE OF ₹3 LAKH CRORE IN DEFENCE MANUFACTURING AND ₹30,000 CRORE OF DEFENCE EXPORTS BY 2028-29

It is also heartening to note that the defence sector announced the highest ever growth in the value of its production in the last fiscal, reaching ₹126,887 crore in 2023-24 which is 16.8% higher than the value of production of the preceding fiscal. Though India continues to be the world's largest arms importer, there can be no denying that much attention is being given to increasing production in this sector as well as boosting exports of defence equipment.

Defence exports touched a record high of ₹21,033 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a growth of over 32% over the last fiscal when the figure was ₹15,920 crore. India produces a raft of weapons and systems, including the Tejas light combat aircraft, various kinds of helicopters, warships, tanks, artillery guns, missiles, rockets and a range of military vehicles. There is a huge demand in the global market for these items while a lot of these are also needed internally for our defence forces.

India plans to achieve the milestone of ₹3 lakh crore in defence manufacturing and ₹30,000 crore of defence exports by 2028-29. The planned modernisation of Su-30MKI fighter fleet along with additional procurement of aircraft, acquisition of engines for the existing MiG-29 fleet and purchase of



Though the Ministry target of 70% self-reliance in weaponry by 2027 may be difficult to achieve, huge prospects are being created for industry players

transport aircraft C-295 and LCA Mark 1A Docks fighter will be funded out of the Budget. Other major deals include three additional submarines from Mazagon Dock, purchase of 26 Rafale Marines from France and long-range drones from the US.

While these are laudable, the question being asked is whether the Indian manufacturers keep the target deadlines of delivery to the armed forces? Apparently, the IAF is facing a shortage of fighter aircraft and there is delay in the delivery of 83 nos. of indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft being manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Pointing this out, Air Marshal AP. Singh, Vice-Chief, Indian Air Force stated recently that self-reliance is definitely needed, but this Atmanirbharta cannot be at the cost of the nation's defence. "The nation's defence comes first and foremost," he observed at a recent seminar organised by the IAF think tank, Centre for Air Power

Studies. It is understood that the IAF had given out defence contracts worth ₹112,000 crore and another ₹375,000 crore worth of contracts were in the pipeline. Most of these contracts were with Indian partners and industries.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been playing a crucial role in defence research. However, the challenge before it is to replace and upgrade the larger fleet of Russian-origin tanks that are reaching the end of their life cycles soon. The Army plans to produce combat vehicles to replace T-72s from 2030. This will be done in three stages if all goes as per plan. However, the Army has 2400 T-72s and, as per reports, it plans to upgrade a significant number of these with more powerful engines and better fire detection and suppression systems. But many of these tanks won't be upgraded, creating a deficit in tank numbers in near future. The Ministry plans to put 101

defence items (artillery guns and assault rifles) under import embargo to offer potential military hardware manufacturing opportunities to the Indian defence industry. India is also developing high-altitude long-endurance unmanned aircraft for surveillance and reconnaissance applications.

Though the Ministry target of 70% self-reliance in weaponry by 2027 may be difficult to achieve, huge prospects are being created for industry players. The defence ministry estimates a potential contract worth ₹4 lakh crore for the domestic industry in the next five years.

According to experts, over the next few years, the government plans to spend around \$130 billion for fleet modernisation across all armed services. Meanwhile, estimates suggest that India has the world's third-largest defence expenditure in recent times and expects to export equipment worth \$15 billion by 2026. In tune with the government thinking, there has been a lot of focus in the last two-three budgets towards R&D in defence as around 25% has been earmarked for private industry and start-ups which will pave the way for innovation of new defence technologies in India.

Collaborations with countries like Russia and Israel for manufacture of defence equipment and technology transfer appear quite encouraging. Such significant government initiatives have led to the expenditure on defence procurement from foreign sources being reduced from 46% to less than 35% in the last four years.

Finally, it needs to be stated that while indigenous manufacturing is indeed a welcome sign, the production targets must be met.

INFA

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Problems galore, no solutions

In her Budget speech laden with ornamental words, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman resorted to self-patting and supercilious exaltation of the successive Modi regimes. However, the Budget is said to be contractionary as the budgetary outlay of ₹48,20,512 crore is only 7% more than revised estimate of ₹44,90,486 crore in previous fiscal, as nominal GDP is estimated to rise 10.5%.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

WHEN THE SIZE OF THE BUDGET DOES NOT INCREASE, EXPENDITURES IN REAL TERMS (FACTORING INFLATION) DO NOT INCREASE

The budgetary outlay in the revised estimate of 2023-24 has been shrunk by ₹13,000 crore. Nominal GDP is estimated to rise from ₹326.4 lakh crore in 2023-24 to ₹327.7 lakh crore indicating that the size of budget as percentage GDP is 14.7%, lower than 17.7% in 2020-21. This is abysmal when compared with the size of the budget as percentage of GDP in the US (36.26%); France (58.34%); Japan (44.09%); UK (44.3%); and Sweden (47.32%). When the size of the budget does not increase, expenditures in real terms (factoring inflation) do not increase.

It is publicised that capital expenditure that rose from ₹7,40,025 crore in 2022-23 to ₹9,48,506 crore in 2023-24 and is estimated to rise by 11% to ₹11,111 lakh crore in 2024-25 reflect the government's commitment to bolstering the nation's infrastructure. But many roads, especially in cities

and villages are in a decrepit condition. Worryingly a total of 448 infrastructure projects with investments of over ₹150 crore or more, experienced cost overruns of more than ₹5.55 lakh crore in December 2023, as per the Quarterly Project Implementation Status Report (QPISR).

In an agrarian economy like India where farmers are forced to commit suicide due to distress sale, there is need for providing more fertiliser subsidy to reduce the cost of production. Similarly, there is an imperative for enhancing food subsidy as 74.1% of Indians are unable to afford a healthy diet and 16.6% are undernourished, according to FAO. But both food and fertiliser subsidies have been cut.

In order to improve the living standards, it is imperative to provide education and health facilities free of cost. However, expenditure on education has shrunk from ₹1,16,417 crore in 2023-24 (BE) to ₹1,08,878 crore in revised estimates of the same year. It has budgeted to increase marginally ₹1,25,638 crore in 2024-25. This amounts to 0.38% of GDP, which is lower than 0.44% in 2014-2024 (NDA regime) and 0.61% during the UPA regime.

The overall expenditure on

education by Centre and states combined together as percentage of GDP revolves around 2.9%, which is much less than the outlay by developed countries such as the US (6%) and the UK (4.2%). Therefore, there is scope for India to increase its budgetary allocation in education from a mere 2.9% of GDP to 6% as envisaged by the Kothari Commission.

The budget notes an increase in health allocation from ₹79,221 crore in 2023-24 to ₹89,287 crore in 2024-25, reflecting a 12.70% rise. However, health allocation has shrunk from ₹88,956 crore in 2023-24 (BE) to ₹79,221 crore in 2023-24 (RE). This represents only 0.4% increase and negative in real terms. Centre's health expenditure revolves around 0.27% of GDP and the Centre and states combined together it is around 1.35% of GDP, which falls short of the target set by the National Health Policy 2017 to allocate at least 2.5% of GDP to healthcare.

In the name of addressing unemployment, the budget resorts to gimmickry. The employment subsidies are either directly or indirectly given to employers. It is more than likely that the availability of these benefits would influence the compensation package offered by companies attempting

to garner that subsidy.

Sitharaman said the Budget carries an allocation of more than ₹3 lakh crore for schemes benefitting women and girls across, which signals the government's commitment to enhance women's role in economic development. The total budget for the ministry stands at ₹26,092 crore in current fiscal, up from previous year's revised allocation of ₹25,448 crore. However, a marginal increase of 2.5% is negative in real terms.

The biggest problem confronting people is consumer inflation especially food inflation and hike in prices of essential commodities. In the last few years, prices of essential commodities have doubled, eroding the purchasing power of people. Further household debt has increased to 40% of GDP while financial savings has declined to multi-decade low of 5.3% of GDP. Private investment has ebbed. The budget does not address these problems. Though the budget talks about improving the conditions of the poor, farmers, youths and women, none of these are addressed efficiently.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

Eco hazard

Sir, This refers to "123 buried in sleep," Orissa Post, July 31. For years, it has been clear that the Western Ghats were prone to disasters. The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel chaired by ecologist and academic Madhav Gadgil, recommended that 75 per cent of the Western Ghats – spanning Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa and Kerala – be declared an environmentally sensitive area because of its dense, rich forests and large number of endemic flora and fauna. The panel's recommendations were not implemented as they were considered too extreme. Instead, each of the states seem to have engaged in a familiar but worrying race for development that often revolved around large construction projects. These projects required cutting into mountains, adding to the existing problem of illegal quarrying that is rampant in many parts of the Western Ghats. The climate crisis has only made things worse. The governments should rethink their existing development paradigm in ecologically-sensitive zones.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Shooting glory

Sir, The 22-year-old Manu Bhaker became the first athlete from Independent India to win multiple medals at a single edition of the Olympics. The shooter's unprecedented achievement took the spotlight on the fourth day at the Paris 2024 Olympics. She paired up with Sarabjot Singh to bag the 10m air rifle bronze, India's first shooting team event medal at the Summer Games. Bhaker has shown exemplary performance in the Games.

Dimple Wadhawan, KANPUR NAGAR

Another mishap

Sir, This refers to "Trains derail: Two from Rourkela dead," Orissa Post, July 31. I cannot suppress my anger to see the Railway Minister getting all the time protected by the government in spite of his poor performances in running the railway administration leading to repeated train accidents. The indifferent attitude of the Railway Minister in addressing the safety and security of train passengers has assumed so much serious proportions that the people want the present Railway Minister not to continue his office any more to bring further misery to railway users. This drastic step is imperative and cannot be kept pending in the interest of passengers.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

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

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national

of the day quote

We must not become complacent and over confident...I dare say that if we perform well, reflecting the trend that we witnessed in the Lok Sabha elections, national politics will undergo a transformation

SONIA GANDHI | CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY CHAIRPERSON

Private investment - domestic and foreign - in India, so very vital for accelerating India's economic growth, is still very sluggish and refuses to boom. This is inspite of steep corporate tax cuts and aggressive PR by the non-biological PM and his cheerleaders and drumbeaters

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

By asking the caste of people, the Congress has conspired to divide the country, and when there was talk about Rahul Gandhi's caste, there was so much protest

KIREN RIJUJI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

2 dead as school van overturns

Jaipur: Two persons, including a 12-year-old boy, were killed and 27 children were injured when a van carrying school students overturned in Rajasthan's Churu district Wednesday, police said. The accident took place on the Meghsar-Jhansar Ghazia road, they added. According to the police, the deceased were identified as Krishna Meena (50) and Aditya (12). The 27 injured children were taken to various medical facilities in the district.

Fallen electric wire claims two lives

Budaun: A woman and her son were electrocuted when an electric wire fell on the iron fence around their house in Dataganj area here, officials said Wednesday. According to Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Dharmendra Kumar Singh, Rajendra Devi (58) accidentally touched the fence late Tuesday night. When her son, Umesh (37), came out to save her, he was also electrocuted along with his mother, he said. The deputy district magistrate said the Electricity department will provide compensation to the family of the victims.

Road crash leaves 3 dead

Bareilly: Three men returning from a birthday party were killed when their car collided with a truck here, police said Wednesday. They said Sonu (22), Kamran (23), Tajim (22) and Junaid (22) were returning from Bareilly city Tuesday night when the accident took place. Passersby informed the police which rushed the four to a nearby hospital, where three persons were declared dead while another person was seriously injured.

5-yr-old carries gun to school

Supaul (Bihar): A five-year-old boy in Bihar reached his school with a handgun Wednesday and opened fire on another child, leaving the Class III student injured, police said. The shocking incident took place in the north Bihar district of Supaul where the boy, a nursery student, had gone to school with the firearm hidden in his bag. According to Superintendent of Police, Shaishav Yadav, "The student fired at a 10-year-old boy, who studies in the same school in Class III. The bullet hit his arm. The injured boy has been rushed to a hospital."



There is a well established system of inspection of railway bridges on Indian Railways. All the railway bridges are inspected twice a year, one before the onset of monsoon and one detailed inspection after the monsoon

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAYS MINISTER

AIR EXERCISE 'TARANG SHAKTI' TO BE HELD IN AUG-SEPT

Exercise 'Tarang Shakti', the largest multilateral air exercise in the country, will be held in two phases and it will showcase India's defence prowess and provide a platform to participating militaries to foster interoperability, a senior IAF official said Wednesday. First phase of the exercise will be held at Sulur in Tamil Nadu from August 6-14, and the second phase from August 29-September 14 at Rajasthan's Jodhpur



THAKUR SPEECH ROW

Cong moves privilege motion against Modi

BJP says Rahul is always asking about others' caste



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The row over BJP MP Anurag Thakur's remarks in Lok Sabha escalated Wednesday with the Congress submitting a notice to move a privilege motion against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for posting on 'X' a video that allegedly also contained expunged portions of Thakur's speech.

Thakur's remark, during the discussion on the Union Budget Tuesday, that "whose caste is not known talks about caste census", triggered an uproar, with the Opposition slamming the comment ostensibly directed at Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi as "insensitive" and "abusive".

The Lok Sabha was adjourned till noon amid protests by Opposition members over Thakur's remarks in the House and their demand for a caste census.

The BJP hit back at the Congress, saying what was wrong

I hereby give notice to move a privilege motion under Rule 222 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha against the Prime Minister for having tweeted on 'X' a portion of remarks which were expunged from the proceedings of the House by the Chair

CHARAJIT SINGH CHANNI | MP

in asking about Gandhi's caste as he had been asking about the caste of others, including government officials, judges, soldiers and even journalists, an apparent reference to the Congress leader's remarks in the past when he batted for caste census.

At the same time, the ruling party stressed that Thakur did not name anyone and wondered why the Leader of Opposition took offence and called it an insult to him.

"You are demanding caste cen-

sus. If it is an insult to ask about caste in Lok Sabha, how can a caste census be done in the country? How will the enumeration be done?" party MP and national spokesperson Sambit Patra said.

While certain remarks of Thakur were expunged from the proceedings, his apparent reference to Gandhi's caste during the discussion was not.

Charajit Singh Channi, a Dalit MP of the Congress in Lok Sabha, submitted a notice to Speaker Om Birla seeking to move a privilege motion under Rule 222 of the Rules of Procedure against the prime minister.

"I hereby give notice to move a privilege motion under Rule 222 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha against the Prime Minister for having tweeted on 'X' a portion of remarks which were expunged from the proceedings of the House by the Chair," the former Punjab chief minister said in his communication, without elaborating on the remarks.

"The prime minister's tweeting of the remarks which had been expunged from the proceedings of Lok Sabha clearly amounts to a breach of privilege and contempt of the House. I, therefore...move a privilege motion against the prime minister and request you to please admit my motion and permit me to move the same. Request that privilege proceedings may be initiated against the prime minister," the Congress leader said.

Ransomware attack hits C-Edge, disrupts banking services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad/Mumbai, July 31: Customers of around 300 small-sized lenders across the country have not been able to access payments services like withdrawing cash at ATMs or using UPI due to a ransomware attack at technology service provider (TSP) C-Edge Technologies.

The impact was felt by customers of cooperative banks and regional rural banks which depend on C-Edge, a joint venture between SBI and TCS, officials said, adding that other banking services were functioning normally.

The issues are being faced for the last two days after the discovery of a breach of the system at C-Edge, they said, adding that necessary precautions starting with isolating the C-Edge system had to be taken to protect the larger payments system.

There has, however, not been any report of financial loss be-

cause of the breach, they said.

"C-Edge Technologies...has been possibly impacted by a ransomware attack impacting a few of their systems," the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said in a late evening statement, adding that it had to temporarily isolate C-Edge from accessing the retail payment systems operated by NPCI.

Restoration work is being undertaken on a war footing along with C-Edge Technologies and a necessary security review is in process, it added. A senior industry official, meanwhile, said a ransomware has been found in the system and isolated, following which a third party audit was conducted. If all goes to plan, the system should be running by Thursday morning or afternoon, he added.

The impacted banks account for less than 1 per cent of the overall payment system volume in the country, the official stressed.



School students wade through a waterlogged road following heavy monsoon rains, in Prayagraj, Wednesday

Panel forms to regulate coaching centres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena Wednesday formed a committee headed by the chief secretary to frame guidelines to regulate coaching centres in the city and redress issues faced by students, Raj Niwas officials said.

The move comes in the wake of a tragedy that claimed the lives of three civil services aspirants in a flooded basement library of Rau's IAS coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar.

Saxena directed for various steps after a meeting Tuesday with student representatives, managements of over 20 coaching centres, senior Delhi government officials and DDA vice chairman. At the request of the LG, the federation of coaching institutes in the city agreed to offer a fair compensation to the families of the three students who drowned in the basement of the coaching centre that was flooded after rain Saturday evening.

The federation also offered to give discount in the fee to their enrolled students in the wake of mental agony and disruption in studies due to the incident, the officials said.

The committee formed by the LG will comprise five to six representatives of coaching institutes and students, and officials of the departments concerned.

The Raj Niwas officials said the panel will comprehensively address all issues related to regulation, exorbitant rentals, fire clearances, desilting of drains and other immediate needs of students.

The panel shall prepare a long-term as well as a short-term action plan for gradually shifting the coaching institutes from various locations to a well-planned area in Narela and Rohini, they said. The chief secretary will take up the matter of formulation of guidelines/regulatory framework for coaching institutions and tuition classes, in line with the guidelines framed by the Centre, with the Delhi education minister, the officials said.

Indian students win laurels at 4 academic Olympiads

THE PARTICIPATING TEAMS WENT THROUGH THE HOMI BHABHA CENTRE FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION OF THE TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH AND BAGGED SEVERAL MEDALS AND HONOURS FOR THE COUNTRY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 31: Indian student contingents have emerged with flying colours at prestigious international Olympiads in Biology, Maths, Physics and Chemistry held this month, earning plaudits from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other bigwigs, officials said here Wednesday.

The participating teams went through the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE) of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) here and bagged several medals and honours for the country, including seven won by Maharashtra students.

It started with the 35th International Biology Olympiad (IBO - July 7-13) held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. The Indian team bagged one



gold (Vedant Sakre of Mumbai) and three silvers (Ishan Pednekar of Ratnagiri; Shrijith Sivakumar of Chennai and Yashaswi Kumar of Bareilly).

This was followed by the 65th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO - July 11-22) held

in Bath, United Kingdom.

The Indian contingents bagged four golds (Adhitya MV Ganesh of Pune; Kanav Talwar of Greater Noida; Rushil Mather of Mumbai and Anando Bhadur of Guwahati), while Arjun Gupta of Delhi got a silver medal and

The Mumbai-based HBCSE - a national centre of the TIFR - is a premier institution for research and development in science, technology and mathematics education

It is also India's nodal centre for Olympiad programmes in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and junior sciences which attract the participation of students from across the country

Siddharth Choppara of Pune secured an Honourable Mention.

Next was the 54th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO - July 21-29), held in Isfahan, Iran.

The Indian team secured 2 golds (Rhythm Kedia of Raipur and Ved Lahoti of Indore), plus 3 silvers (Akarshraj Sahay of Nagpur; Bhavya Tiwari of

Noida and Jaiveer Singh of Kota).

Finally, the 56th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO - July 21-30) was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The Indian contingent secured a gold (Devesh P Bhaiya of Jalgaon), 2 silvers (Avaneesh Bansal of Mumbai and Harshin Posina of Hyderabad) while Kashyap Khandelwal of Mumbai got a bronze medal.

The Mumbai-based HBCSE - a national centre of the TIFR - is a premier institution for research and development in science, technology and mathematics education.

It is also India's nodal centre for Olympiad programmes in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and junior sciences which attract the participation of students from across the country.



After Hyderabad, Secunderabad city, Cyberabad city, we are going to establish a 'fourth city' at Mucharla
A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

'INDIA NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIMATE CRISIS'

India is not historically responsible for the climate crisis, but it should not emulate polluting practices of the West from the 19th century during its development, Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland has said



of the day quote

Honoured to call on PM Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam during his State visit to India. Appreciate his guidance on our bilateral relationship and on regional and global issues of mutual interest



S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA

I am asking you. You file a case if it is wrong. Rahul Gandhi, it is good that you want caste census. What is your caste and religion, the country wants to know



GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER

MLAs should review the schemes of Centre and state government every 15 days and the ministers every week to ensure their implementation on the ground



BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

XPOST OF THE DAY

Absolutely fire Manipur MP Alfred K Arthur slammed Narendra Modi for his deliberate negligence. His questions are genuine & uncomfortable but needs to be answered by the NDA government. Please watch and retweet because Godi channels will never show this.

@BhavikaKapoor5

SHORT TAKES

Kataria takes oath as Punjab Governor

Chandigarh: BJP veteran Gulab Chand Kataria Wednesday took oath as the Governor of Punjab and Administrator Chandigarh and asserted that these posts were not just decorative but for serving people. Speaking to reporters after taking oath, Kataria, who replaces Banwarilal Purohit, also said that he will visit border areas and also review the works of the state government. Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu administered the oath of office to Kataria, 79, at a ceremony in Raj Bhavan.

HC gives relief to Arijit Singh

Mumbai: Granting relief to composer-singer Arijit Singh, the Bombay High Court has said AI tools generating content using a celebrity's voice, image or other attributes without consent violate his or her "personality rights". Celebrities are particularly vulnerable to unauthorised generation of content through AI tools, the court said. Hearing a petition filed by the famous singer, Justice R I Chagla in his interim order July 26 restrained eight online platforms from using Singh's "personality rights", and directed them to remove all such content and also voice conversion tools.

DKS meets Khattar

New Delhi: Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar discussed Wednesday several issues related to the state such as traffic decongestion, solid waste management and extension of the Bengaluru suburban rail project. During a meeting with Shivakumar here, Khattar assured full support for Karnataka's development, offering assistance in various initiatives, according to a statement.

WAYANAD LANDSLIDES

Over 150 dead, hundreds missing

EXTREMELY HEAVY RAIN TRIGGERED THE LANDSLIDES IN THE HILLY AREAS OF WAYANAD EARLY TUESDAY, LEAVING AT LEAST 167 PEOPLE DEAD AND 191 MISSING



AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 31: The construction of a Bailey bridge to connect the landslide-hit areas, where several people are believed to be stranded, alongside the deployment of sniffer dogs and over 1,000 rescuers from Central and state emergency response teams conducting massive search operations, constitutes one of the largest rescue efforts in the Wayanad, devastated by a deadly calamity.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Wednesday said that the coordinated and extensive rescue operations by the NDRF, Army, and other agencies ensured that over 1,500 people were saved from the landslide-hit areas of Wayanad district, where as many as 167 people died and 191 are still missing. Vijayan said the scenes in the Mundakkai

and Chooralmala areas of the district were devastating. "These areas have been completely destroyed," he said. Rescue personnel from the Army, NDRF, state emergency services personnel and local people fought against the adverse weather conditions and tough terrain to look for people who might be trapped under the debris of destroyed homes, mud, and rocks. "In the two-day rescue operation, 1,592 people were rescued. This is the achievement of a coordinated and extensive mission to save so many people in a short span of time," Vijayan said at a press conference here.

He said that in the first phase, 206 people from 68 families in the nearby areas of the disaster

were shifted to three camps. "This includes 75 men, 88 women, and 43 children," the Chief Minister said. Following the landslide, 1,386 people who were stranded and those who were trapped in their homes were rescued as a result of the ongoing rescue mission.

Vijayan said that in Wayanad district, there are currently 8,017 people in 82 relief camps. This includes 19 pregnant women.

"A team of 1,167 personnel has been deployed for the rescue operation. This includes 645 firefighters led by 10 station officers, 94 NDRF personnel, 167 District Sainik Welfare Centre personnel, 153 personnel from the Madras Engineer Group, and Coast Guard personnel who ar-

AIADMK announces ₹1cr relief materials

Chennai: Tamil Nadu's main opposition AIADMK Wednesday said it would provide ₹1 crore to neighbouring Kerala, reeling under the impact of massive landslides in Wayanad district in which the death toll has increased to 167. AIADMK general secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said his party would contribute ₹1 crore to Kerala to support people affected by heavy rainfall and landslides. The AIADMK would also send relief materials to the neighbouring state, he added.

rived Tuesday," Vijayan said.

Meanwhile, rescue teams comprising the Army, Navy and NDRF are collectively looking for survivors by unearthing the debris and breaking into the remains of houses destroyed or covered with mud in the landslides. According to a Defence statement, army units deployed in the area rescued around 1,000 people from the affected areas until Tuesday night. Additionally, the Air Force is carrying out aerial reconnaissance of the affected areas to coordinate search and rescue operations and is using helicopters to airlift people stranded in various places in the landslide affected areas.

In Mundakkai, which was cut off from the rest of the district, makeshift bridges and pulleys were erected over gushing rivers to transport people stranded there to safety and shift bodies recovered from destroyed homes to ambulances.

As the majority of houses were flattened, rescuers broke open the roofs using hammers

and pickaxes, as heavy machinery could not be brought there due to lack of proper roads or bridges, to enter the collapsed structures and search for any people trapped inside.

Rescue agencies resumed their operations early in the morning to trace people suspected to be trapped following the landslides triggered by heavy rains.

The CM said that efforts were on to bring materials to build a 190-foot-long Bailey bridge to connect the worst-affected areas of Mundakkai and Chooralmala and intensify rescue operations there. The bridge will be constructed by Thursday, he said.

Besides that, sniffer dogs, trained by the army to detect people buried under soil, are also being brought there, he further said, adding that an intelligent buried object detection system will also be used for that purpose. Vijayan also called upon everyone to contribute to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund (CMDRF) in order to help those affected by the landslides.

Delhi government enforces new safety guidelines for schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The Delhi government Wednesday issued guidelines for safety and security of school students in the aftermath of the Rajinder Nagar coaching centre flooding incident, which claimed the lives of three UPSC aspirants.

According to the guidelines issued by the Directorate of Education (DoE), the schools -- both private and government run -- have to follow the provisions of Master Plan for Delhi, 2021 regarding use of basement in public buildings. The school authorities have to ensure all necessary steps at their level to avoid water logging in and around the school premises. "Delhi has recently experienced an unfortunate incident in which three Civil Services aspirants drowned in the basement of a coaching institute and one aspirant has lost his life due to electrocution. It is imperative that all the schools in GNCT of Delhi shall ensure safety and security of students and shall have proper requisite infrastructure in place to avoid any untoward incident," read the circular.

The guidelines mandated that the principals should ensure the basements, if any in school buildings, shall be used only for permissible activities as per provisions of the Master Plan and as per the sanctioned plan.

LANDSLIDES ISSUE

Cong, BJP members spar in LS

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi also urged the government to extend all possible help to the people of landslides-hit Wayanad and look into the 'ecological issue' there

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Congress and BJP members indulged in a war of words in the Lok Sabha Wednesday during a Calling Attention Motion Wayanad landslides issue.

BJP MP Tejaswi Surya attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who has represented Wayanad, alleging that he never raised the issue of landslides in his constituency.

Participating in a Calling Attention Motion on the loss of lives and property due to landslides and floods in various parts of the country, Surya also claimed that despite recommendations by the Kerala disaster management body, illegal encroachments were not removed in Wayanad due to alleged pressure from religious organisations. His remarks led to protests by Congress members forcing Speaker Om Birla to briefly adjourn the proceedings.

When the House resumed proceedings, Congress MP KC Venugopal asserted that as Wayanad MP, Gandhi had raised the issue of eco-sensitive Wayanad on several occasions. He claimed that Surya was trying to sabotage the debate and he

will have to apologise for making "false claims" about Gandhi. "House records will prove that Rahul Gandhi has raised the issue several times," Venugopal said.

Leader of Opposition Gandhi also urged the government to extend all possible help to the people of landslides-hit Wayanad and look into the "ecological issue" there. He also urged the Centre to come up with a high-tech solution for preventing such tragedies in the future.

Rahul Gandhi said a "huge tragedy" had taken place in Kerala's Wayanad, and lauded the military's efforts there. "I think it is very important that we support the people of Wayanad, that we give them as much support as possible and I request the government to help the people of Wayanad in this difficult time," the former Congress chief said.

"I think this is the second time this tragedy has taken place, it took place five years ago and it is quite clear that this area has an ecological issue, so this

should be looked into. Whatever high-tech solution can be brought forward, that would be good," Gandhi said. The devastating series of landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district has claimed the lives of at least 132 people and injured more than 200, with the toll expected to rise as rescuers search through the debris.

The Calling Attention Motion was taken up as the House was discussing Demands for Grants for the railway ministry Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai in his open remarks for the motion said disaster management has improved in the last ten years and the loss of lives and property has also been reduced. He also said timely warnings were issued to the Kerala government about possible floods and landslides.

Revolutionary Socialist Party MP NK Premachandran appealed to the Speaker to discuss with political parties and direct grant from MPLAD funds, citing example of the Tsunami rehabilitation measures in 2004.



India, China hold diplomatic talks

New Delhi: India and China Wednesday held "constructive and forward-looking" diplomatic talks to resolve the lingering border standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The talks were held in Delhi under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides reviewed the current situation along the LAC with a view to finding an early resolution of the outstanding issues. "Restoration of peace and tranquillity, and respect for the LAC are an essential basis for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations," the MEA said.

SNIPPETS

Rain hits Delhi: 10 flights diverted

New Delhi: At least 10 flights that were to land at the Delhi airport were diverted Wednesday evening due to heavy rains in the national capital. An official said that at least 10 flights were diverted at the airport after 1930 hours due to bad weather. The national capital witnessed heavy rains that also caused waterlogging and traffic congestion in several areas. On social media platform X, airlines said that flights might get affected due to the bad weather. Vistara said flight UK998 from Pune to Delhi has been diverted to Lucknow due to bad weather at the Delhi airport. Flights to and from Delhi may get affected due to bad weather this evening. "Guests are advised to start early for the airport, as slow traffic and waterlogging may delay movement", Air India said.

Chained to tree: US woman visited Mumbai in June

Mumbai: A 50-year-old American woman, who was found tied to a tree with an iron chain in a forest in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, had visited Mumbai in June but the motive behind it is still unclear, police said Wednesday. Police are also looking for clues through three pairs of locks and keys found at the spot, an official said. The Sindhudurg police have got some information about the woman, Lalita Kayi, including the region in the US from where she hails. Teams are verifying the information and police will arrive at some conclusion once it is done. Police have "very strong clues" about her, he said.

Pvt sector to build communication satellite in India

THE INDIAN NATIONAL SPACE PROMOTION AND AUTHORIZATION CENTRE (IN-SPACE) RELEASED AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MAKING AVAILABLE INDIAN ORBITAL RESOURCES TO THE NON-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES (NGES)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: India's space regulator Wednesday offered an orbital slot to private sector companies to build and operate a communications satellite to provide services in diverse sectors such as telephone, television, radio and internet.

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE) released an Announcement of Opportunity for making available Indian Orbital Resources to the Non-Government Entities (NGEs).

INSPACE Chairman Pawan Goenka said the initiative underscores the government's com-

mitment to empower talented Indian NGEs with the resources and support they need to succeed and contribute to India's journey to leadership in the global space economy.

The announcement of opportunity aims to identify an applicant with Indian management and control and having the requisite technical and financial capabilities to own, establish and operate a Geostationary Orbit satellite for providing communication services.

"This Announcement of Opportunity is a game-changing opportunity for NGEs to participate in the global space econ-



omy and establish a world-class communication satellite sys-

tem," Goenka said. The last date for submission

of the application is September 15, 2024. Recently, the INSPACE also asked the private entities to come forward to build and manage a space-based Earth Observation (EO) system under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

The proposal encompasses NGEs to design, build and establish a constellation of satellites in Low Earth Orbit having a combination of sensors, including panchromatic, multispectral, hyperspectral and microwave.

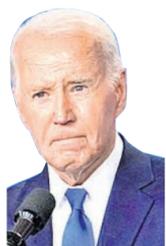
It will also involve NGEs launching the satellites onboard Indian launch vehicles, monitoring and controlling the spacecraft health, and payload data

download by establishing and operating their own ground stations or through Ground Stations as a Service (GSaaS) provider.

The IN-SPACE has also granted authorization to Azista BST Aerospace Private Limited, Hyderabad, for the establishment and operation of a ground station in UHF frequency bands.

With this authorization, Azista BST Aerospace Pvt Ltd will support its own satellites and provide Ground Station as a Service (GSaaS) for Telemetry, Tracking, and Command (TT&C) operations and data reception from remote sensing satellites to both Indian and international customers.

international



Still, far too many of our fellow Americans continue to lose loved ones toentanyl. This is a time to act, and this is a time to stand together — for all those we have lost, and for all the lives we can still save

GERMANY ACCUSES CHINA OF CYBERATTACK

An investigation has determined that “Chinese state actors” were responsible for a 2021 cyberattack on Germany’s national office for cartography, officials in Berlin said Wednesday. The Chinese ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Ministry for a protest for the first time in decades



of the day quote

The #Searchfor-LostSpecies in Madagascar’s Makira Natural Park successfully rediscovered 21 species that were lost to science, including flowering ant-like beetles, three small iridescent fish, five jumping spiders, and a giant millipede that had not been documented since 1897

LEONARDO DICAPRIO | HOLLYWOOD STAR, ENVIRONMENT ACTIVIST

The martyrdom of Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran will strengthen Iran’s “deep and unbreakable bond with Palestine and the resistance

NASSER KANAANI | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

We will remain in constant contact with Lebanon’s friends and Arab brothers to prevent the escalation of the situation, which will have major repercussions

NAJIB MIKATI | LEBANESE PM

ISIL-K expands reach despite setbacks: UN report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, July 31: Terror group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K) seeks to recruit lone actors through their handlers based in India, despite not being able to conduct large-scale attacks in the country, a UN report has said.

The 34th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team about ISIL (Da’esh), al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities, released here Tuesday, said that member states registered ongoing concern that terrorism emanating from Afghanistan will be a driver of insecurity in the region and fur-

ther afield in most scenarios. “Despite not being able to conduct large-scale attacks in India, ISIL-K seeks to recruit lone actors through their India-based handlers and released a booklet in Urdu magnifying Hindu-Muslim antagonism and outlining its strategy as regards India,” the report said. It said that ISIL-K remains the most serious threat in the region, projecting terror beyond Afghanistan, while “al-Qaeda exercises strategic

patience”, prioritising its relationship with the Taliban. It further said there is increased support and collaboration between Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Taliban and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), sharing manpower and training camps in Afghanistan and conducting more lethal attacks under the banner of Tehrik-e Jihad Pakistan (TJP). “Therefore, TTP could transform into an umbrella organisation for other terrorist groups.

Despite not being able to conduct large-scale attacks in India, ISIL-K seeks to recruit lone actors through their India-based handlers and released a booklet in Urdu magnifying Hindu-Muslim antagonism and outlining its strategy as regards India

NASA clears path for Sunita Williams’ return from space

AGENCIES

Washington, July 31: In a crucial step towards the safe return of astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore to Earth, NASA and Boeing have successfully completed a hot fire test of the Starliner spacecraft.

The test, conducted while the spacecraft was docked at the International Space Station (ISS), evaluated the performance of the spacecraft’s thrusters and helium systems.

During the test, 27 of the spacecraft’s 28 jets were fired in short bursts, and preliminary results indicate that all tested thrusters performed at preflight levels. The test also assessed the helium supply and leak rates, with the helium system remaining stable throughout. The successful hot fire test marks a significant milestone in preparing the Starliner spacecraft for its return journey to Earth. NASA and Boeing teams are currently reviewing data from the test and recent ground testing to inform the agency’s return readiness review.

With the primary focus on bringing Wilmore and Williams home safely, the results of the recent tests will play a crucial role in determining the exact timing of their return. Potential undocking dates are available throughout August, and a target return date will be set after the return readiness review.

The Starliner CST-100 has been docked at the ISS since June 6, following its launch on an Atlas V rocket. This launch came after an earlier attempt was cancelled due to a detected helium leak. Subsequently, two more leaks appeared post-liftoff, and another two were found after docking at the ISS.

KILLING OF HANIYEH BIG BLOW TO HAMAS

AGENCIES

Dubai/London, July 31: Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas leader who was killed in Iran, was the tough-talking face of the Palestinian group’s international diplomacy as war raged back in Gaza, where three of his sons were killed in an Israeli airstrike.

But despite the rhetoric, he was seen by many diplomats as a moderate compared to the more hardline members of the Iran-backed group inside Gaza.

Appointed to the Hamas top job in 2017, Haniyeh moved between Turkey and Qatar’s capital Doha, escaping the travel curbs of the blockaded Gaza Strip and enabling him to act as a negotiator in ceasefire talks or to talk to Hamas’ ally Iran. Israel’s response to the strike has been a military campaign that has killed more than 39,000 people inside Gaza so far, and bombed much of the enclave into rubble, according to health authorities in the territory.

In May, the International Criminal Court prosecutor’s office requested arrest warrants for three Hamas leaders, including Haniyeh, as well as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for alleged war crimes. Israel and Palestinian leaders have dismissed the allegations.

During the decade in which Haniyeh was Hamas’ top leader in Gaza, Israel accused his leadership team of helping to divert humanitarian aid to the group’s military wing. Hamas denied it. When he left Gaza in 2017, Haniyeh was succeeded by Yahya Sinwar, a hardliner who spent more than two decades in Israeli prisons and whom Haniyeh had welcomed back to Gaza in 2011 after a prisoner exchange.



Palestinians attend a protest after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran in Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

Israeli leaders, military remain silent on Haniyeh assassination

Iran, Hamas have threatened to retaliate

Uncertainty in Israel on how it could impact hostage deal negotiations

Gazans fear killing will further complicate Gaza truce efforts

Fears of broad conflict in the Middle East are rising

“Haniyeh is leading the political battle for Hamas with Arab governments,” Adeeab Ziadeh, a specialist in Palestinian affairs at Qatar University, said before his death, adding that he had close ties with more hardline figures in the group and the military wing. “He is the political and diplomatic front of Hamas,” Ziadeh said. Haniyeh and Meshal had met officials in Egypt, which has also had a mediation role in the ceasefire talks. Three senior officials told Reuters that Khamenei had told the Hamas leader in that meeting that Iran would not enter the war having not been told about it in advance. Hamas did not respond to requests for comment before Reuters published its report, and then issued a denial after its publication. As a young man,

China warns of deeper chaos

Beijing: Strongly condemning the assassination of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, China -- which brokered a unity deal between various Palestine groups last week -- Wednesday warned that the killing could plunge the region into deeper chaos. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here that Beijing strongly opposed the assassination of Haniyeh, whose Hamas group took part in the unity talks along with 14 Palestine factions in Beijing sponsored by China. “China has always advocated resolving regional disputes through negotiation and dialogue,” Lin said, adding that China was “deeply concerned” that the incident could lead to further turmoil in the region. He also reiterated China’s call for a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Gaza to avoid further escalation of the conflict.

completely paralysed Hamas founder’s ear so that he could take part in a conversation. Yassin was assassinated by Israel in 2004. Initially overruled by the Hamas leadership, it was later approved and Haniyeh became Palestinian prime minister after the group won Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006 a year after Israel’s military withdrew from Gaza. The group took control of Gaza in 2007. In 2012, when asked by Reuters reporters if Hamas had abandoned the armed struggle, Haniyeh replied “of course not” and said resistance would continue “in all forms - popular resistance, political, diplomatic and military resistance”.

SHORT TAKES

Boeing appoints Kelly as new CEO

Chicago: Boeing lost more than \$1.4 billion in the second quarter and said a longtime industry executive will take over as chief executive of the troubled aircraft manufacturer next week. Robert “Kelly” Ortberg, 64, a former CEO at Rockwell Collins, will succeed David Calhoun as CEO, the company said. Boeing’s loss was wider and revenue lower than Wall Street expected. Revenue fell 15 per cent from a year earlier, and both its commercial-airplanes business and defense unit lost money.

Ex-BBC presenter pleads guilty

London: Huw Edwards, the BBC’s former top news presenter, pleaded guilty Wednesday to three counts of making indecent images of children. The offenses he pleaded guilty to at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in central London during a 26-minute hearing involved images shared on WhatsApp between December 2020 and August 2021 by a man who had initially contacted Edwards via social media. Edwards, who was the lead anchor on the BBC’s nighttime news for two decades and led the public broadcaster’s coverage of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, has been remanded on bail until a pre-sentencing hearing September 16.

Myanmar extends state of emergency

Yangon: Myanmar’s National Defence and Security Council (NSDC) Wednesday extended the state of emergency in the country for six more months, the state media reported. At the NSDC’s meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw Wednesday, all NSDC members present agreed to extend the emergency period, Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) said.

Ukraine receives 1st F-16 fighter jets

Washington: Ukraine has received the first F-16 fighter jets that it has sought for months to fight back against an onslaught of Russian missile strikes, a US official confirmed to the Associated Press. Ukraine has been pushing its Western allies for F-16s for Ukraine for months, saying they were critically needed to fight back against the onslaught of missiles Russia has fired against it. The F-16 is specialised in suppressing enemy air defences.

RUSSIA VS UKRAINE

The biggest war of fake news era

Disinformation and propaganda, long mainstays of war, have been digitally supercharged in the battle for Ukraine, the biggest conflict the world has seen since the advent of smartphones and social media

REUTERS

Kharkiv, Ukraine, July 31: In early April, some residents of Kharkiv received a series of chilling text messages from government officials telling them to flee the city before Russian forces surrounded it.

“Due to the threat of enemy encirclement, we urge the civilian population of Kharkiv leave the city by April 22,” said one alert, which bore the logo of the State Emergencies Service of Ukraine and mapped out safe escape routes on a slick infographic.

It was fake. Volodymyr Tymoshko knew immediately. He’s the police chief of Kharkiv region and would have been one of the first to find out about any official evacuation plans. Tymoshko said he received about 10 similar messages via SMS and Telegram messenger in April and early May, the weeks leading up to Russia’s offensive in northeastern Ukraine that began May 10 and opened up a new front in the war.

A Ukrainian security official, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said the

Russians frequently sent large numbers of text messages from devices attached to an Orlan-10 long-range reconnaissance drone which can penetrate dozens of kilometres into Ukrainian airspace. The devices, known as Leer-3 systems, imitate cellular base stations that phones automatically connect to in search of coverage, he added.

The average number of social media posts classed as disinformation about the war by Ukrainian authorities spiked to over 2,500 a day when the Kharkiv offensive began in May, up from 200 a day in March, data compiled by the CCD shows.

Moscow has accused Ukraine and the West of unleashing a sophisticated information war against Russia, using the West’s major media, public relations and technology assets to sow false and biased narratives about Russia and the war. The Ukrainian security official acknowledged his country used online campaigns in an attempt to boost anti-war sentiment among Russia’s population, although he characterised this effort as “strategic communications” to spread accurate



information about the conflict. TikTok said its guidelines prohibited false or misleading content, adding that it had closed down 13 covert influence networks operating from Russia in recent years.

“We prohibit and constantly work to disrupt attempts to engage in covert influence operations by manipulating our platform and/or harmfully misleading our community,” a spokesperson said.

Disinformation networks are groups of accounts controlled by the same entity, and often used to push a coordinated narrative. Telegram said it was de-

veloping a tool to add verified information to posts.

AIRSTRIKE TAKES OUT TV TOWER

Ukrainians are particularly vulnerable to digital disinformation; more than three-quarters of the population get their news from social media, far more than any other source of information, according to a study commissioned by USAid in 2023.

That is considerably higher than in any of the 24 European countries surveyed by a 2024 Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism report, which averaged a rate of 44%.

In late April, as Moscow’s forces massed on the border near Kharkiv, a Russian airstrike took out Kharkiv’s main television tower, hindering the city’s access to information.

Dramatic footage obtained by Reuters showed the main mast of the television tower breaking off and falling to the ground.

Despite the near-daily missiles and bombs falling on the city - attacks that intensified this May - 1.3 million people remain, according to Kharkiv Mayor Terekhov, roughly the same as before Russia’s latest military incursion in the region.

Harris to hold 1st rally with VP pick August 6

REUTERS

New York, July 31: Vice President Kamala Harris will hold her first rally with her new Vice Presidential nominee Tuesday August 6 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, launching a four day battleground tour that includes Michigan and Arizona, the campaign said.

The location of the first stop suggests Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro has moved to the top of a short list of running mates, and that the Harris campaign had decided the state that Democrats won back from Republicans in 2020 is a must-win once again.

After Philadelphia, Harris and her vice presidential pick will travel to six other locations including western Wisconsin, Detroit and Las Vegas, the campaign said in a statement late Tuesday night, adding a “strong reminder” that Harris has “made no decision on a running mate.”

The high-stakes decision on who will run with Harris has taken center stage since she became the Democratic frontrunner for the November 5 election, when US President Joe Biden ended his White House bid just over a week ago. Harris is expected to announce the decision as soon as Monday, ahead of

Bangladesh PM seeks cooperation from UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, July 31: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wednesday sought cooperation from the United Nations and other international organisations to conduct a proper investigation into the recent nationwide violence during the anti-quota agitation to punish the real culprits involved in the attacks.

Bangladesh witnessed violent clashes between the police and mostly student protesters demanding an end to a controversial quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh’s War of Independence in 1971.



“We’re seeking UN and other international organisations’ cooperation for a fair and proper investigation into the matter,” Hasina said, adding that the people involved in the violence must be brought to justice.

“Because I know I have no negligence to this end,” she was quoted as saying by the Dhaka Tribune newspaper.

Speaking at an event, she came down heavily on those who were involved in damaging public properties alongside killing many people and thus tarnishing the country’s image.

“My question is who has gained what (through the mayhem)? Why was there bloodshed?” she asked.

The Prime Minister said they have already formed a one-member judicial probe commission with an apex court justice before raising any such demand to investigate the matter.

“We have formed the commission with a judge (of the High Court). I have given the order to include two more as manpower and enhance the periphery of the investigation,” she said.

“You (countrymen) have to find out the people involved in the conspiracy to push the country backwards through fishing in troubled water by launching such an incident,” she said.

The conspiracies being hatched by the collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces pushed Bangladesh back time and again, she added.



Tuesday’s event, the sources said. The short list of candidates under consideration include Shapiro, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, US Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg.

Shapiro’s stock among Democrats rose after he swamped his Republican opponent for governor, Doug Mastriano, winning over 56 per cent of the vote in a state known for tight elections. Shapiro would also become the second Jewish nominee for vice president on a major ticket in US history, following Joe Lieberman’s failed 2000 bid with Al Gore a handful of US states, often called battlegrounds, have decided the presidential election in recent years, including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

of the day quote

I would like to underline our unflinching commitment to cooperative federalism. The total resources proposed to be transferred to the states in 2024-25 are estimated at ₹22.91 lakh crore. This actually entails an increase of ₹2.49 lakh crore over 2023-24

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

As we transverse from 'illness to wellness' our preventive health check-ups, vaccinations and wellness programmes have grown exponentially and will be the cornerstone of our customer-centric approach. Our focus on customer centricity and innovation has allowed us to offer comprehensive, tailored solutions, addressing the specific needs of our diverse customers

ANAND ROY | STAR HEALTH AND ALLIED INSURANCE COMPANY LTD MD AND CEO

Our customers recognise our supply chain transformation capabilities, tech-led solutions and the ability to deploy AI-driven solutions resulting in our participation in more large deals

RAVI VISWANATHAN | TVS SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS LTD MD

Q1 RESULTS CORNER

Maruti Suzuki profit jumps 47%

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Wednesday reported 47 per cent rise in net profit to ₹3,650 crore for June quarter FY25, riding on the back of cost reduction efforts, favourable commodity prices and foreign exchange gains. The auto major had logged a net profit of ₹2,485 crore in April-June FY24. Net sales increased to ₹33,875 crore in June quarter as compared with ₹30,845 crore in the year-ago period, according to an exchange filing.

BoB net profit surges 6%

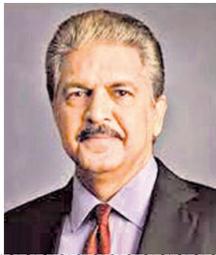
Mumbai: Bank of Baroda Wednesday reported a 6.19 per cent growth in June quarter consolidated net profit at ₹4,727.81 crore, as the state-run lender calibrated loan growth. On a standalone basis, the public sector bank's net profit grew 9.5 per cent to ₹4,458 crore. Bank of Baroda said its core net interest income grew 5.5 per cent on the lower advances growth of 8.1 per cent and the net interest margin narrowing by 0.09 per cent to 3.18 per cent.

Tata Steel net profit jumps 75%

New Delhi: Steel major Tata Steel Wednesday reported a 75 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit at ₹918.57 crore in June 2024 quarter as the company managed to reduce its expenses. It had reported a net profit of ₹524.85 crore during the April-June period of preceding 2023-24 fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing. The total income fell to ₹55,031.30 crore in the reporting period from ₹60,666.48 crore a year ago.

Mahindra net profit rises 20%

Mumbai: Mahindra & Mahindra Wednesday said its consolidated net profit increased by 20 per cent to ₹3,283 crore in the April-June quarter of the current financial year. The Mumbai-based company had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹2,745 crore in the year-ago period. Revenue rose 10 per cent year-on-year to ₹37,218 crore as compared to ₹33,892 crore in the June quarter of last fiscal.



While India stands to benefit from the re-orientation of global supply chains in the post-pandemic world, our growth and prosperity must be driven by job creation. It is a collective responsibility, and the Indian private sector has always partnered with the government in nation-building

ANAND MAHINDRA | MAHINDRA GROUP CHAIRMAN

ROW OVER ROYALTY

The Centre Wednesday opposed in the Supreme Court a demand by states for refund of royalty levied on mines and minerals since 1989, saying it will impact citizens and the PSUs will have to empty their coffers by ₹70,000 crore according to initial estimates



Key infra sectors growth slows to 4%



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The growth in production of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed down to a 20-month low of 4 per cent in June this year due to a decline in the output of crude oil and refinery products, according to official data released Wednesday.

The core sectors' production grew by 6.4 per cent in May 2024. The growth of core sectors --

coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- was 8.4 per cent in June 2023.

The previous low level of growth was recorded in October 2022 at 0.7 per cent.

During April-June this fiscal, the output of core sectors rose by 5.7 per cent against 6 per cent in the same period last fiscal.

The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

which measures overall industrial growth.

Crude oil, and refinery products' output contracted by (-) 2.6 per cent and (-) 1.5 per cent, respectively, in June.

The growth rate in the production of natural gas, fertiliser, steel and cement slowed down to 3.3 per cent, 2.4 per cent, 2.7 per cent and 1.9 per cent, respectively, during the month under review.

However, the production growth of coal and electricity rose by 14.8 per cent and 7.7 per cent, respectively.

Commenting on the data, Ipra Ltd Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said that the core sector expansion slid to a 20-month low due to a moderation in growth or deepening contraction in five of the eight constituents, barring coal, fertilizers and cement, compared to May 2024.

"With the dip in the core sector growth, we expect the IIP (index of industrial production) to post a rise of 3.5-5 per cent in June 2024," she said.

Vedanta receives BSE, NSE clearances for proposed demerger

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd Wednesday said it has received clearances from leading exchanges BSE and NSE for its proposed demerger.

The development assumes significance as it will pave the way for Vedanta's plan to split into six independent listed companies, including oil and gas and aluminium.

"... BSE and NSE, vide their letters dated July 31, 2024 and July 30, 2024 respectively, have conveyed that they have 'no objections/no adverse observations', on the proposed scheme," Vedanta said in a regulatory filing.

The company said that it will soon file an application with the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

"The scheme remains subject to receipt of other applicable statutory and regulatory approvals including inter alia from the National Company Law Tribunal and the respective shareholders and creditors, under applicable laws," the filing said.

Tuesday, Vedanta Ltd said it has received approvals from majority of its creditors for a proposed demerger of businesses, marking an important step in the company's plan to split into six independent listed companies.

Markets rise for 4th day; Fed policy decision in focus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 31: Benchmark BSE Sensex rose by nearly 286 points to close at a record high while Nifty settled above 24,950 level Wednesday, extending their winning run to the fourth day on gains in metal, power and select auto shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 285.94 points or 0.35 per cent at 81,741.34 -- its all-time closing high -- with 20 of its components advancing and 10 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 372.64 points or 0.45 per cent to hit an intra-day high of 81,828.04.

The NSE Nifty rose 93.85 points or 0.38 per cent to close at an all-time high of 24,951.15. During the day, it surged 127.3 points or 0.51 per cent to hit a high of 24,969.35.

"The domestic market is attempting to cross above the psychological threshold of 25,000, as subdued Q1FY25 earnings and stretched valuations are curbing the challenge, while positive global trends and sector rotation are supporting the traction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Positive global sentiment driven by expectations of an easing interest rate cycle by the US Fed and the RBI in the medium term, owing to benign inflation, ignited the rally, he added.

As expected, the BoJ raised



its interest rate while all eyes are on US Fed policy to be announced later in the evening.

Among the Sensex stocks, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Maruti Suzuki India, NTPC, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Bharti Airtel, ITC and Tech Mahindra were the major gainers.

Maruti Suzuki rose by 2.28 per cent as the auto major reported a 47 per cent jump in its net profit for the June quarter.

Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, Infosys, Mahindra and Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank were the laggards.

Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities, said Nifty ended comfortably

RBI proposes more options to authenticate digital payments



REUTERS

Mumbai, July 31: India's central bank Wednesday proposed to allow a wider set of alternatives, including fingerprints and passwords, as additional factors of authentication for all digital transactions.

An additional factor of authentication requires two or more ways of verifying the identity of the user, typically used to reduce fraud and cyber crime.

Currently, India does not have any rules for how to authenticate digital payments, but the industry has primarily adopted text-based one-time passwords for authorisation.

The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday proposed to allow other options like fingerprints, passwords or personal identification numbers as additional factors of authentication, according to a draft circular.

It has also said passphrases, card hardware or software tokens could be used for authenticating digital transactions.

Fiscal deficit at 8.1% of full-year target

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of the first quarter touched 8.1 per cent of the full-year target, government data showed Wednesday.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit -- the gap between expenditure and revenue -- was ₹1,35,712 crore as of June-end, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

The deficit stood at 25.3 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) in the corresponding period of the financial year 2023-24.

In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to 4.9 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current 2024-25 financial year. The deficit was 5.6 per cent of the GDP in 2023-24.

In absolute terms, the government aims to contain the fiscal deficit at ₹16,85,494 crore during the current fiscal.

Unveiling the revenue-expenditure data of the union government for the first three months of 2024-25, CGA said the net tax revenue was



₹5,49,633 crore or 21.1 per cent of the BE for the current fiscal. The net tax revenue collection was 18.6 per cent at end-June 2023.

The central government's total expenditure in the first quarter stood at ₹9,69,909 crore or 20.4 per cent of BE. The expenditure had just crossed 23 per cent of the BE in the year-ago period.

Of the total expenditure, ₹7.88 lakh crore was on the revenue account and ₹1.81 lakh crore was towards the capital account.

Of the total revenue expenditure, ₹2,64,052 crore was on interest payments.

Fiscal deficit is the difference between the total expenditure and revenue of the government. It is an indication of the total borrowings that are needed by the government.

NCLAT defers hearing on Byju's-BCCI settlement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Insolvency appellate tribunal NCLAT Wednesday deferred its decision on the settlement between Byju's and cricket board BCCI after its US-based creditor alleged 'round-tripping' of the money by the edtech firm's founder.

The Chennai bench of NCLAT has asked the now-suspended promoters of Byju's to furnish an undertaking by Thursday, that over ₹158 crore to be paid by Riju Raveendran (brother of Byju's founder Byju Raveendran) is not tainted and not against the order passed by a US-based court.

Meanwhile, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has also directed the interim resolution professional (IRP) of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, which owns Byju's, not to constitute Committee of Creditors (CoC) till August 1, the next date of hearing.

During the proceedings, lawyers appearing for Byju's handed over a draft memorandum of settlement between Byju's and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

According to the terms and conditions, the money will be paid in two instalments of ₹50 crore each and the rest in the third instalment. One tranche has already been paid on Tuesday.

The payment is being done by Riju, who is also one of the largest shareholders in the company.

Sebi's proposal on F&O to bring down volatility: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 31: Markets regulator Sebi's proposal on tightening rules for index derivatives if implemented may result in erosion of volumes from Futures & Options (F&O), experts said Wednesday.

At the same time, it will enhance investor protection and promote market stability in derivatives markets, they added.

In its consultation paper Tuesday, the regulator has proposed seven measures, including increasing minimum contract size and upfront collection of option premiums, intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin.

One of the proposals is to rationalise weekly expiry and restrict it to one per week on the benchmark index per exchange. This change will likely impact volumes, as the recent volumes in the equity derivatives segment have been driven by weekly expiries, HDFC Securities MD &



CEO Dhiraj Relli said.

"Reducing volumes in F&O will bring down the realised daily volatility and also intra-day volatility in Nifty induced because there is an expiry practically on all days. This happens because large weights are common across most indices. For example, HDFC is a part of Fin Nifty, Bank Nifty, Nifty and Sensex," Anand Rathi Wealth

Ltd Deputy CEO Feroze Azeez said.

Additionally, these measures are likely to lead to a reduction in monthly option prices, particularly for OTM options, resulting in lower implied volatility and a more balanced skewness in option pricing. This shift will make the market more accessible and less risky for investors, he added.

One of the proposals is to rationalise weekly expiry and restrict it to one per week on the benchmark index per exchange. This change will likely impact volumes

Furthermore, concentrating volumes at fewer strike levels will not only maintain but potentially enhance liquidity at these strikes, thereby reducing the impact cost for large traders.

Overall, these measures are expected to foster a healthier trading environment, promoting sustainable growth in the derivatives market.

PHDCCI Chair-Capital Market & Commodity Market Committee B K Sabharwal believes "if all the seven proposals are implemented as suggested in parallel, this could result in erosion of volumes from derivatives in a significant manner."

drop of similar concerns. However, the market there never recovered despite many attempts by the regulators to revive business activity and even 10 years later the volumes are lower than in 2014, Sabharwal said.

"It would be therefore important for Sebi to implement changes only in a phased manner so that the overall vibrancy of the market is not impacted by too many hard measures at one time," he added.

The consultation paper comes days after the government in the Union Budget raised the securities transaction tax (STT) on both futures and options trade from October 1 to allay concerns about hyperactive interest in the derivative segment.

Before that, the Economic Survey flagged concerns over rising retail investors' interest in derivative trading. The survey stated that speculative trade has no place in a developing country.

It also pointed out that the sharp increase in retail investor participation in F&O trading is likely driven by humans' gambling instincts.

"With the realignment of ex-

OLYMPICS TIDBITS

DRONE SPYING: Canada appeal over points cut dismissed

Canada lost its appeal Wednesday against being docked six points by the International Federation of Association Football in a drone-spying scandal in the Paris Olympics women's soccer tournament. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said its panel of three judges dismissed Canada's appeal and confirmed the six-point deduction imposed Saturday by FIFA. Two assistant coaches used drones to spy on opponent New Zealand's practices last week before their opening game. The urgent verdict came less than eight hours before defending Olympic champion Canada plays Colombia in Nice in Group A's final round of games. Canada stays third in the standings with zero points despite winning both its games, against New Zealand and France. Canada can still advance to the quarterfinals with a win on Wednesday. Head coach Bev Priestman and her two assistants were banned by FIFA for a year after being removed from the Olympics by Canadian officials.

DOPING DISPUTE: IOC asks for dialogue between US, WADA

The International Olympic Committee has asked for talks between the World Anti-Doping Agency and the United States, including the country's anti-doping agency USADA, to resolve a dispute over jurisdiction in doping matters, it said Wednesday. A bipartisan group of US lawmakers Tuesday threatened to cut US funding for WADA, accusing it of failing to properly investigate alleged doping by Chinese Olympic swimmers. The US, the largest single country funder of WADA, has accused the global anti-doping body of not disclosing that 23 Chinese swimmers tested positive for performance-enhancing trimetazidine (TMZ) in China months before the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

WATER WOES: France spared blushes

Olympians dived into the River Seine Wednesday after a pre-dawn notice informed teams that its murky waters were at last safe enough to proceed with the triathlon, sparing France the embarrassment of a central Paris 2024 promise being swept away. The pledge had been that the river would be transformed from a waterway frequently laden with sewage to one clean enough to swim in. Authorities spent 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 million) modernising the capital's antiquated sanitation works.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SINDHU, SEN sizzle in Paris

Shuttlers march into pre-quarterfinals with dominant wins

Yes, definitely (gold is in sight). I think the last few months the form has been really good

LAKSHYA SEN

Paris, July 31: Indian badminton heavyweights PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen entered the pre-quarterfinals of the women's and men's singles events, respectively, with dominant wins at the Paris Olympics here Wednesday.

Chasing an unprecedented third Olympic medal, Sindhu did not have to toil much before getting past Kristin Kuuba of Estonia 21-5 21-10 in her second and last Group M match, while Sen was simply sensational in his 21-18 21-12 thrashing of Indonesia's world number 4 Jonatan Christie, the reigning All England and Asian champion.

"I think it was a tough match today, happy with the way I played," world number 22 Sen said.

"There has been ups and downs, but overall, I was in good shape in the last few months, and especially while playing here in the French Open, I found my momentum and from. I was just trying to build up for a good event and I'm really pumped up to fight every match and every point."

While Sen is expected to face world number 13 HS Prannoy in an all-Indian contest, Sindhu is likely to be up against world number 9 Chinese He Bingjiao, against whom she has lost 11 times and won on nine occasions.

It must be mentioned that Sindhu had beaten the Chinese on way to her bronze medal in Tokyo Games.

Prannoy will face Vietnam's Le Duc Phat later in the day. The only time Sen had defeated Christie was four years ago at the Badminton Asia Team

Championships and came into this match with a dismal 1-4 head-to-head count.

However, the 22-year-old from Almora, a 2021 world championships bronze medalist, showed great maturity and tactical acumen as he went about his business Wednesday.

He tried to keep the shuttle flat and target the weak forehead of Christie, who looked to slow down the rallies and used his cross-court shots at the corners to trouble the Indian, albeit without much success.

In the first game, Christie opened up a 5-0 lead and soon moved to 8-2. However, Sen regrouped quickly, kept the shuttle flat and waited for his opponent to make mistakes.

It worked as he moved to 7-8 before a thunderous smash earned the Indian a slim one-point advantage.

Sen engaged Christie in fast and flat exchanges to move

over Kuuba, ranked 73rd in the world, in 33 minutes.

"It was important for me to top the group. I would be playing against He Bingjiao mostly. I hope I take this confidence and go forward. It's not going to be easy, especially in the next coming rounds, so I have to be prepared and be 100%," said Sindhu, who won a silver medal in the 2016 Rio Games and a bronze in the Tokyo edition.

The winner of each of the 16 groups qualifies for the round of 16.

The gulf in class between the two players was evident as Sindhu pocketed the opening game in 14 minutes with the Estonian looking completely out of sorts.

The 27-year-old Kuuba gave a fight in the second game, making a lot of retrievals, but Sindhu was just too good for her ultimately.

Kuuba took a 2-0 lead but Sindhu quickly seized the initiative and levelled the score. Kuuba did not throw in the towel and engaged the Indian

in longer rallies. There was one rare moment when Sindhu was stretched to the full near the net and Kuuba smashed the shuttle beyond the reach of the Indian.

But the vastly experienced Sindhu was in her elements soon after. Two cross-court smashes gave Sindhu a 15-6 lead and from there on, it was all over for the Estonian, who saved two match points before surrendering.

Earlier, Sindhu, who is seeking to become the first Indian to win three Olympic medals, topped the group following her facile win

Lovlina writing her own legacy

Confident boxer advances to quarters; one win away from second Olympic medal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris: Tokyo Olympics bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) began her quest for a second successive Games medal confidently as she out-punched Norway's Sunniva Hofstad in her opening bout here Wednesday.

Borgohain prevailed 5-0 in the contest and she is now just one win away from adding to her Tokyo bronze, which was claimed in the 69kg category, and achieve a feat that is unprecedented in Indian boxing.

But her path is not an easy one as she will take on top-seeded Chinese Li Qian in the last-eight stage on August 4. A win in this bout would ensure at least a bronze medal for her.

Her performance on the day was an assured one. While her rival seemed keen to draw her into a slugfest, Borgohain kept her composure and distance to land clean blows on counter-attack. The Indian also had to deal

with plenty of clinching by Hofstad, who came across busier of the two boxers, complete with a perilously low guard.

But the Assam-boxer didn't fall into the trap and attacked the Norwegian with precision by drawing her in.

Borgohain has been handed a tough draw but the wiry pugilist has shown the ability to rise above it in her past performances, most notably in Tokyo where she defeated world champion Chen Nien-Chin in the quarterfinals to secure herself a bronze.

Her opponent August 4, Qian, is a silver-medallist from the Tokyo Games in the middle-weight (75kg) division.

The Indian boxing campaign at the Games has been mixed so far with three of the six in contention, already out of the competition.

Those ousted early include former Asian Games champion Amit Panghal (51kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Jaismine Lamboria (57kg).

GAINS AND PAINS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DEEPIKA, KAUR IN PRE-QFS, RAI OUT

Archery ace Deepika Kumari advances to the Round of 16 after beating Netherlands Quinty Rooffien 6-2 in the women's individual event, here at the Invalides arena Wednesday. After dropping the first set, a four-time Olympian Deepika won by 6-2 (29-28, 27-29, 25-27, 28-23) and went on to join compatriot Bhajan Kaur in the Round of 16. Kaur notched twin victories to advance to the women's individual quarterfinals but compatriot Dhiraj Bommadevara exited the men's event after losing in the shoot-off at the Paris Olympics Tuesday. Continuing her fine form, the 18-year-old, who had shot exceptionally well in the team event albeit in a losing cause, defeated Indonesia's Syifa Nurarifah Kamal and Wioleta Myszor of Poland in her opening two rounds. Deepika, playing her first Olympics since becoming a mother, began the match impressively, scoring 29 points in her first set and narrowly defeating Rooffien by one point to secure opening set. Veteran Indian archer Tarundeep Rai crashed out of the Paris Olympics after losing his individual men's recurve round of 32 clash to Tom Hall of Great Britain here Wednesday. Rai lost 4-6.

MANIKA BEATEN, SREEJA SHINES

Manika Batra's splendid run at the Paris Olympics came to an end following a meek surrender against higher-ranked Japanese Miu Hirano, hours after Sreeja Akula had made the Indian table tennis players' historic run at the Games better by making the women's singles pre-quarterfinals on her birthday. The seasoned Manika had become the first Indian to progress to the Round of 16 at the Olympic Games Monday and Sreeja, who turned 26 Wednesday, joined her senior colleague in the pre-quarterfinals with a 4-2 win over Singapore's Jian Zeng. Earlier, Sreeja rallied to enter the pre-quarterfinals after a hard-fought 4-2 win over Singapore's Jian Zeng in a women's singles round of 32 match as Indian table tennis continued to make history at the Games. Sreeja won the match 9-11 12-10 11-4 11-5 10-12 12-10 to join compatriot Manika Batra in the pre-quarterfinals, an unprecedented feat in the history of Indian table tennis.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agarwalla's historic dressage moment despite elimination

AGENCIES

Paris: At the pristine Château de Versailles, Anush Agarwalla made history and carved a niche for himself at the Olympic Games in Paris Wednesday.

When Agarwalla dismounted his horse after the individual qualification round, he became the first Indian to complete a routine in the dressage event at the Summer Olympic Games.



Placed in Group E, Agarwalla was the fourth rider to start his routine and when he completed it, he was awarded a total of 66.444 by the judges. When all the riders in his group of ten had completed their respective routines, Agarwalla was placed in 9th position.

Given that just the top 2 athletes from each group progressed to the Individual Final (Grand Prix Freestyle), Agarwalla was unable to move ahead. But despite the outcome, his mere participation was a momentous occasion for the sport in the country. His partner on this Parisian adventure was a 17-year-old horse, Sir Caramello Old.

In the dressage event, the rider and the horse execute a set of movements within the confines of an area cordoned off by railings. Through the course of the routine, the rider and the horse must perform within the said area.

Agarwalla is the only rider at the Paris Olympics. India has had participants in equestrian previously. Fouaad Mirza donned Indian colours in equestrian at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Biles, Team USA earn "redemption"

THE MOST DECORATED GYMNAST, SIMONE BILES, LEAVES PAINFUL MEMORIES OF TOKYO BEHIND TO WIN GOLD IN PARIS OLYMPICS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 31: Simone Biles, Jordan Chiles and Sunisa Lee spent the night before perhaps the biggest gymnastics meet of their lives restless.

There was a tension in the air. They'd all been in the Olympic spotlight before, experiences that left them with medals but also the kind of scars — be they physical, psychological or both — that heal but never really go away.

And here they were in Paris, the leaders of a star-laden US team everyone expected to finish atop the medal stand, and something wasn't right.

In a different time, in a different era, it might have festered. Might have followed them onto the floor at Bercy Arena and into the history books, too.

This is not a different time. This is now. So the oldest team the US has ever sent to the Olympics, including a trio that has spent their respective careers breaking barriers about what a female gymnast can and can't do, what they can and can't be, did something they never used to do.

They talked, with Biles — three years removed from a



Biles now has a staggering 38 medals in major international competitions. Eight of those have come in the Olympics, moving her past Shannon Miller for the most by an American gymnast

and married — was back again with Jade Carey (24), Chiles (23), Lee (21) and teenager Hezly Rivera at her side.

"We don't have to be put in the box anymore," Biles said about a group that has dubbed itself "The Golden Girls."

No, they don't.

With Biles at her show-stopping best, the Americans' total of 171.296 was well clear of Italy and Brazil and the exclamation point of a yearlong run in which Biles has cemented her legacy as the greatest ever in her sport, and among the best in the history of the Olympics.

"She's the greatest of all greats," said Chiles, who now has gold to go with the team silver she, Lee and Biles earned in Tokyo, when Biles removed herself from the team final to protect herself.

And over two hours in front of a crowd that included everyone from tennis great Serena Williams to actor Natalie Portman, Biles left little doubt about anything.

Her status as the sport's greatest of all time. Her ability to move past the "twisties" that derailed her in Japan. Her spot in the pantheon of the US Olympic movement.

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Kusale seals rare Olympic final spot

The shooter fans nation's hope of an unprecedented third medal in shooting



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chateauroux: Swapnil Kusale, the first Indian shooter to reach the 50m rifle three positions final at the Olympics, draws inspiration from MS Dhoni as he too is a railway ticket collector like the cricket icon was early in his career.

The 29-year-old from Kambalwadi village near Kolhapur in Maharashtra has been competing in international events since 2012 but he had to wait another 12 years to make his Olympics debut at the Paris Games.

A top-three finish in the 50m rifle three positions final here Thursday would certainly put Kusale in the list of high achievers in Indian sport.

"I don't follow anyone specific in the shooting world.

Outside of that, I admire Dhoni for the person that he is. My sport requires me to be as calm and patient as he is on the field. I also relate to his story as I am a ticket collector like he was," Kusale told PTI shortly after finishing seventh in a tightly contested qualification.

The job is half done in his debut Games and Kusale is fully aware of that. Manu Bhaker's unprecedented two medals here has also provided an extra dose of motivation.

"It has been a great experience so far. I love shooting and I am glad that I have been able to do it for so long. Seeing Manu do well gives us a lot of confidence. If she can do it, we can do it too," said Kusale.

Javelin giant eyes new gold

Chopra to rely on consistency to defend Olympic gold as Indian athletes begin campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 31: Neeraj Chopra's broad shoulders will carry a weight of massive expectations when his fabled consistency is put through a trial by fire, while the lesser known names in India's 29-strong contingent will aim to emulate some of his success when the Olympic Games' athletics competition gets underway here Thursday.

A nagging injury forced Chopra to compete in very few events in the build-up to the Games, but the star javelin thrower is still among the favourites to finish on the podium and per-

haps clinch an unprecedented second successive gold medal.

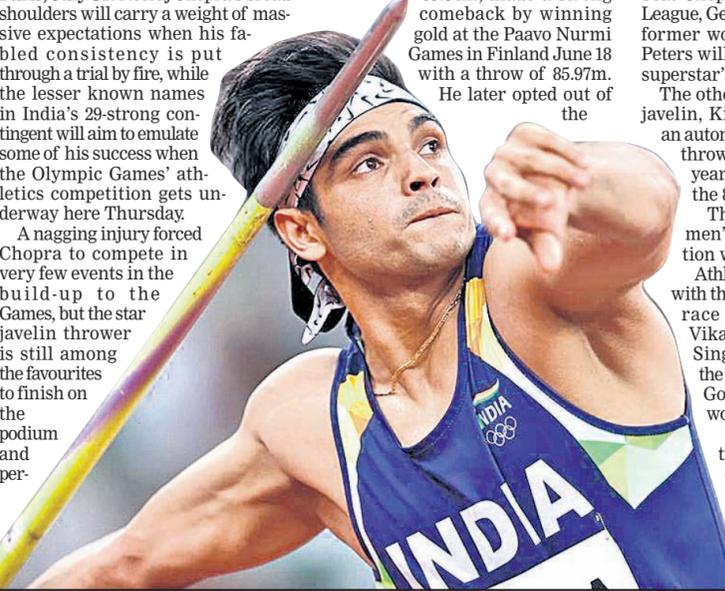
A top podium finish August 8 for Chopra will make him only the fifth man in Olympics history to defend his title and the first Indian to win two gold medals in an individual event in the multi-sporting spectacle.

Eric Lemming (Sweden; 1908 and 1912), Jonni Myrta (Finland; 1920 and 1924), Jan Zelezny (Czech Republic; 1992, 1996 and 2000) and Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway; 2004 and 2008) are the only ones to have defended the men's javelin gold medals in the Olympics.

He has competed in just three events this year but the 26-year-old world champion is back in full flow in a season where none of his global competitors have done exceptionally well.

After finishing second in the Doha Diamond League in May with a throw of 88.36m, which is his season's best, Chopra withdrew from Ostrava Golden Spike May 28 as a precautionary measure after he felt "something" in his adductor (group of muscles located on

inner thighs). Chopra, who has a personal best of 89.94m, made a strong comeback by winning gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland June 18 with a throw of 85.97m. He later opted out of the



Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Czech thrower Jakub Vadlejch, who beat Chopra in the Doha Diamond League, Germany's Julian Weber and former world champion Anderson Peters will once again be the Indian superstar's main rivals.

The other Indian in fray in men's javelin, Kishore Jena, who booked an automatic berth with his 87.54m throw in the Asian Games last year but has struggled to cross the 80m mark after that.

The qualification round of men's javelin throw competition will be held August 6.

Athletics competition will begin with the men's and women's 20km race walk. Akshdeep Singh, Vikash Singh and Paramjeet Singh Bisht will compete in the men's event while Priyanka Goswami will feature in the women's event.

Among others in the contingent, men's 3000m steeple-chaser Avinash Sable and the men's 4x400m relay team have the potential to push for a place in the top five.

Sable recently broke his own 3000m steeplechase national record at the Paris Diamond League, clocking 8 minutes and 9.91 seconds, bettering his earlier mark by one and a half seconds.

But he still finished sixth at the prestigious meet, a fair indicator of how difficult it will be for the Indian to win a medal in the Olympics.

Two of the best runners in the event, world record (7:52.11) holder Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia and reigning Olympic and world champion Soufiane El Bakkali of Morocco were not there in the Paris Diamond League.

The same is true for the men's 4x400m relay team though the return of key member Rajesh Ramesh from an injury lay-off is good news.

The likes of Jyothi Yarraji (women's 100m hurdles), Parul Chaudhary (women's 3000m steeplechase), Annu Rani (women's javelin throw), the women's 4x400m relay team, Tajinderpal Singh Toor (shot put), triple jumpers Praveen Chithravel and Abulla Aboobacker can aim for at least final round qualifications.

A top podium finish August 8 for Chopra will make him only the fifth man in Olympics history to defend his title and the first Indian to win two gold medals in an individual event in the multi-sporting spectacle

Paris Diamond League July 7, insisting that the event was never a part of his competition calendar this year. His coach later dismissed concerns surrounding Chopra's fitness, telling PTI that his adductor has no issues now and his ward has been in high intensity phase of training. One of the most consistent javelin throwers in recent times, Chopra has sent his spear below 85m mark just twice out of his 15 competitions since winning gold in Tokyo Olympics.



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 quizmaster **Ajay Poonia**. There will be prizes for the daily winners too. So buckle up your seatbelts and get set for some brainstorming.

TODAY'S QUESTION

One of the major changes in the Indian Army post independence was the dropping of a term derived from a Persian word meaning 'infantry soldier' and replaced with an Urdu word meaning 'young'. What was the original word and what is the new word?

ANSWER TO WEDNESDAY'S QUESTION

Basketball

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

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS



Others who answered correctly are
Alok Ranjan Sahoo, Rajendra Das, Jitendra Nath Pradhan, Debadatta Tripathy, Arghyashree Jena, Asit Kumar Satpathy, Omm Swarup Das, Sibananda Dash, Ashish Agarwalla, Atish Kumar Parida, Sunil Kumar Nayak, Sandeep Rout, Santanu Kumar Nanda, Abhijit Raychaudhuri, Harish Chandra Tudu, Saswat Sourabh, Prithiviraj Padhy, Harapriya Reddy, Pratyaksh Rastogi, Debasis Parida

SHORT TAKES

Gaekwad no more

Baroda: Former Indian cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad breathed his last Wednesday, after a long battle against cancer. Gaekwad was undergoing treatment in London but had returned here a month back to continue his treatment. The former India coach represented the country in 40 Tests and 15 ODIs from 1975 to 1987. He scored 1,985 runs in Tests, with his highest score of 201 coming against Pakistan. More than anything he was renowned for his gutsy approach to batting even against the fastest of bowlers. Gaekwad was appointed as India coach in October 1997 and he continued till September 1999. It was during this tenure Anil Kumble took all 10 wickets in an innings against Pakistan in 1999.

Mbappé acquires Caen

Paris: French soccer great Kylian Mbappé took his first step into club ownership Wednesday when his company completed a takeover of second-division team Caen. Interconnected Ventures, a company founded by the Real Madrid striker, bought a majority stake in the French club based in Normandy through its investment arm, Coalition Capital.

PRE-SEASON CLASH

Barcelona defeat Manchester City

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Orlando, July 31: Manchester City were beaten 1-4 on penalties after playing out an entertaining 2-2 draw with Barcelona in front of a sell-out crowd at the Camping World Stadium.

Barcelona took the lead through Pau Victor's low finish, with Nico O'Reilly's equaliser then canceled out by Pablo Torre on the stroke of half-time. City deservedly drew level, though, when Jack Grealish found the top corner after great work from Mateo Kovacic before the hour mark.

Pep Guardiola's men pressed for an advantage until the end, but would ultimately fall to the lottery of a shoot-out in their second pre-season friendly in the United States.

Pre-season is the perfect opportunity for the teams to figure out how they are going to set up in the coming season. Alongside that it also provides an opportunity to the academy players to give a chance to impress.



"We're blessed to have these players (youngsters). It's nice because the other young players look up to senior players. If you aren't ready another will be ready because look at them, they want to become footballers and show they want to be there. As a manager it's really good and that's why having this period before the season is good," said Guardiola to reporters in the post-game interview.

City's opening two fixtures in the United States had ended in defeat, but those results didn't reflect the positive performances Pep Guardiola's men had put on. It was down to the lottery of a penalty shoot-out, with Phillips and Wright both seeing their penalties saved by substitute keeper Ander Astralaga while Barcelona made no mistake with their three kicks to seal the victory.

Ex-Pak pacer's explosive challenge to BCCI, India

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 31: Former Pakistan fast bowler Tanvir Ahmed has launched an explosive dare towards Team India in response to former spinner Harbhajan Singh's comment that there is a "safety concern" in Pakistan.

Tanvir has asked India and the BCCI to tour Pakistan, saying that it is only the Pakistan cricket team who keep touring India without refusal.

The row comes after reports have stated that the BCCI do not want to tour Pakistan for the 2025 Champions Trophy.

On the other hand, Pakistan toured India for the 2023 ODI World Cup. "We are lions. We have come to your den and played

We are lions. We have come to your den and played you. If you have the courage, come here and play
TANVIR AHMED | FORMER PAKISTAN PACER



you," said Tanvir. "If you have the courage, come here and play," he continued. "We will give you security, we'll give you everything. Come for once!" added Tanvir. The last time India toured Pakistan was in 2006, with the BCCI refusing to allow the national side to tour post the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Now, with Pakistan hosting the 2025 Champions Trophy, reports have stated that the BCCI have asked for a separate venue for them.

OLYMPICS: INDIA SCHEDULE - DAY 6

- Golf:** Men's Individual Finals: Gaganjeet Bhullar and Shubhankar Sharma -- 12.30 pm
- Shooting:** Men's 50m Rifle Three Positions (Medal round): Swapnil Kusale -- 1.00 pm
- Women's 50m Rifle Three Positions (Qualification): Sift Kaur Samra and Anjum Moudgil -- 3.30 pm
- Hockey:** India vs Belgium (Group stage): 1.30 pm
- Boxing: Women's Flyweight (Pre-quarterfinal): Nikhat Zareen vs Yu Wu (China) -- 2.30 pm
- Archery:** Men's Individual (1/32 eliminations): Pravin Jadhav vs Kao Wenchao (China) -- 2.31 pm
- Men's Individual (1/16 Eliminations): 3.10 pm onwards
- Table tennis:** Women's Singles (Quarterfinals): 1.30 pm onwards
- Sailing:** Men's Dinghy Race 1: Vishnu Saravanan -- 3.45 pm
- Men's Dinghy Race 2: Vishnu Saravanan -- After Race 1
- Women's Dinghy Race 1: Nethra Kumanan -- 7.05 pm
- Women's Dinghy Race 2: Nethra Kumanan -- After Race 1

Gambhir praises India's tenacity after SL triumph

NEW HEAD COACH CALLS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT ON TURNING PITCHES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pallekele, July 31: Head coach Gautam Gambhir praised India for pulling off a tenacious Super Over win in the low-scoring third T20I against Sri Lanka for a series whitewash, but called for consistent improvement on pitches assisting sharp turn.

In a contest delayed by an hour due to rain here Tuesday, India struggled against both spin and pace on a fresh pitch to make a mere 137/9.

But the Suryakumar Yadav-led side showed doggedness in the second half despite Sri Lanka's domination to force the contest into a Super Over, restricting the hosts to 137/8 from 129/4 after 18 overs, and eventually winning the match to seal a 3-0 win.

"Guys, congratulations on a great series win. Congratulations to Surya as well, outstanding



captaincy and with the bat as well. I asked for something before the start of the game and you absolutely delivered it. This is what happens when you keep fighting, (and when) you don't give up," Gambhir told the team in a dressing room chat shared by BCCI on X. "These kind of games happen and the only way these key games can happen (in favour)

Surya joins elite list

Displaying consistency and skill, Suryakumar Yadav, the India T20 Internationals captain, has joined the elite list of cricketers with the most Player of the Series awards in T20Is. This achievement places him just behind Virat Kohli, who leads the pack with six awards, showcasing Yadav's remarkable rise in the shortest format of the game. With his fifth such accolade, Yadav now stands shoulder to shoulder with Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan and Australia's cricketing giant David Warner. Yadav's journey to this milestone has been nothing short of spectacular. His aggressive batting style, coupled with his ability to play under pressure, has made him a crucial asset for the Indian cricket team.

better on playing on wickets like these, because we might end up getting these kind of wickets (in future). So we should first assess the situation and conditions really quickly and what is the par score as well," he said. Gambhir urged players, who are not a part of the three-match ODI series starting Friday, to enjoy their break but at the same time, keep working on their fitness. "Some of the guys will not be a part of the 50-overs format

will have a longer break, so make sure when you come back for the Bangladesh series...you can take a break. You absolutely deserve it, but more importantly, keep your skills and especially the fitness levels high. You don't want to come for that series thinking that 'okay, I can just turn up, probably deliver for the team'. So make sure that from the fitness point of view, the fitness levels are right up there," he said.



SIGHT ON ODIs: India's Virat Kohli plays a shot during a practice session ahead of the first ODI cricket match of a series between India and Sri Lanka, at R Premadasa International Stadium, in Colombo