



## Nargis schools troll

Actor Nargis Fakhri reminds a troll that ageing is not just natural; it is something to be embraced

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## Hasina in soup

Bangladesh's ousted and self-exiled PM Sheikh Hasina sentenced to six months in prison in a contempt of court case

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## Expensive rides

Central government allows cab aggregators to charge up to two times the base fare during peak hours

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## Unbeaten run

Indian women's football team thrashes Iraq 5-0 in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers

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## Window frame of Spicejet aircraft dislodges mid-air

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 2:** A window frame of Spice Jet's aircraft operating its flight to Pune from Goa was found dislodged mid-air but there was no impact on passengers' safety, the airline said Wednesday.

The frame was fixed once the aircraft landed at the next (Pune) airport, in accordance with standard maintenance procedures, the airline said in a statement. SpiceJet, however, did not share other details.

"A cosmetic (interior) window frame on one of the Q400 Aircraft became loose during flight and was found dislodged," the airline said in a statement.

SpiceJet also said that cabin pressurisation remained normal throughout the flight, and there was no impact on passenger safety, adding that the dislodged part was a non-structural trim component, fitted onto the window for the purpose of shade, and did not compromise the safety or integrity of the aircraft in any way.

Questioning the airworthiness of the aircraft, a passenger posted a video of the dislodged window on social media platform X, while tagging the aviation safety regulator DGCA in the post.



**ON THE EDGE:** A house damaged following cloudbursts and flash floods at Seraj in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh, Wednesday. The death toll has risen to 11, with search underway for 34 missing people (Report P8)

PTI PHOTO

## Congress slams govt over rise in per capita debt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** The Congress Wednesday slammed the Centre over the rise in the per capita debt of individual borrowers and said the government is constantly trying to hide the real shortcomings by taking the help of statistics and experts, but the debt burden on the country is at its peak in Modi Raj.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared screenshots of media reports to attack the government.

One media report stated that the average debt of every person in the country has increased by ₹90,000 in the last two years and the per capita debt of individual borrowers increased to ₹4.8 lakh in March 2025 from ₹3.9 lakh in March 2023. The other report shared by Ramesh said 25.7 per cent of the common man's disposable income is going towards paying EMIs of loans which are non-productive for him in the future.

Ramesh said the latest report of the Reserve Bank of India has revealed a worrying picture of India's economy. In 2 years, the per capita debt has increased by ₹90,000 to ₹4.8 lakh, he said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Just keep raising the fuel prices and toll tax—people will even junk their new cars!

## SHORT TAKES

### Parl Monsoon session from July 21 to Aug 21

**New Delhi:** The government Wednesday said the Monsoon session of Parliament will begin July 21 and continue till August 21, a week longer than planned earlier, signalling a heavy legislative agenda. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said President Droupadi Murmu has approved the government's proposal to convene the Session from July 21 to August 21. "In view of Independence Day celebrations, there will be no sittings on the 13th and 14th of August," Rijiju said in a post on X. Earlier, the session was to conclude August 12, but now it has been extended by a week. The longer duration of the session comes amid the government's plans to bring in key legislations, including one to facilitate the entry of the private sector in the atomic energy domain.

### 4 from Odisha killed in T'gana factory blast

**Bhubaneswar:** At least four workers from Odisha were killed and four others injured in the explosion at a pharmaceutical factory in Telangana, an officer said Wednesday. So far, 36 people were killed and several others injured in the powerful blast at a pharmaceutical manufacturing unit in Telangana's Sangareddy district. The explosion occurred Monday at Sigachi Industries' plant in Pashamylaram. The deceased were identified as R Jagannathan from Chatrapur area in Ganjam district, Lagnajit Duari from Tigiria area in Cuttack district, Manoj Rout from Simulia in Balasore district and Dolagovind Sahu from Dharmasala in Jajpur district, he said.

## OFFICIAL WORK PARALYSED ACROSS STATE

# Resume duty, govt appeals to officers

OAS Association demands immediate arrest of BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** With official work across Odisha paralysed for two days because of a 'cease work' by Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) and Odisha Revenue Service (ORS) officers, the state government Wednesday appealed to the agitating officers to resume duty.

State government officials launched the protest Tuesday; a day after BMC Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo was dragged out of his office and assaulted by a group of miscreants. Five people have been arrested so far in connection with the incident.

To resolve the ongoing deadlock, CM Mohan Charan Majhi convened a meeting with senior officials. After the meeting, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari urged the officers to end their agitation and assured that such an incident would not happen again.



He said the OAS Association has already held meetings with the CM and the Chief Secretary. "If they (officers) want, we are ready for further discussions. This is not the proper time to go on 'cease work'. I appeal to them to resume their duties. We can hold discussions on their demands," Pujari said.

He also pointed to the ongoing flood situation in parts of northern Odisha and the Rath Yatra festival as reasons why the agitation is untimely.

In their memorandum to the Chief Secretary, the agitating officers demanded the arrest of BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan for his alleged involvement in

the attack, adequate security for all field-level executive officers to discharge their duties, and public condemnation of the incident by the government.

On OAS Association's demand for arrest of Pradhan, Pujari said, "Police are investigating the incident from all angles. Once they complete the investigation, it can be ascertained who was behind the assault. It will not be right to arrest someone without an investigation. So, let's allow the law to take its course."

Meanwhile, Pradhan stated that he had a meeting with party president Manmohan Samal Wednesday and that he would accept whatever decision the party takes. Samal said the party would take a decision after conducting a review.

Due to the absence of sufficient field-level and district officers, government and public service works have almost come to a standstill, an officer said.

## Landslide disrupts train services

Normal life in Koraput thrown out of gear due to heavy rainfall

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, July 2:** Train services on the Koraput-Kirandul route were completely disrupted Wednesday afternoon after a massive landslide near Jarati village blocked the railway tracks.

According to Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Shak Sandeep, the landslide, which occurred around 3:15pm near Jarati station in Koraput block, led to the cancellation of three express trains for the day.

Due to the blockage, the Jagdalpur-Rourkela Express narrowly escaped the affected zone and is now stranded at Maliguda station. Similarly, the 18448 Hirakhand Express from



Jagdalpur to Bhubaneswar has been halted at Jeypore station.

The Kirandul-Visakhapatnam Express, along with two other trains scheduled to run Wednesday, has been cancelled due to the obstruction.

A rescue team has been dispatched from Koraput to the site of the incident. The landslide occurred around the 208-km mark between Jarati and

Maliguda stations on the KK (Kirandul-Kottavalasa) rail line.

Normal life in Koraput district was thrown out of gear Wednesday due to heavy rainfall triggered by a low-pressure system. Meanwhile, the heavy downpour has led to a sharp rise in water levels of several rivers and streams, submerging roads and disrupting vehicular movement, officials said.

A temporary bridge near Bangalaguda under Koraput block was submerged early Wednesday, with nearly two feet of water flowing over it. Road connectivity between Koraput and Rayagada was also snapped due to water flowing over stretches of the highway.

## Chit fund scam: CM orders compensation to 5L more

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday directed authorities to compensate an additional 5 lakh small depositors who were duped by different chit fund companies in the state.

The depositors will get back their money within three to

four months, a release by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said. The CMO stated that the new government has disbursed ₹47.07 crore to 1,26,137 small investors over the past year.

Between 2014 and 2024, the previous BJD government had refunded only ₹119 crore to 2,79,109 small investors, officials claimed.

## LADY TEACHER HELD FOR RAPING STUDENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 2:** A 40-year-old woman teacher from a prominent school in Mumbai has been arrested for allegedly repeatedly sexually assaulting a 16-year-old male student, a police official said Wednesday.

The English language teacher, who is married, took the minor to luxury hotels where she allegedly abused him, the official said.

The woman, who was taken into custody last week, was so obsessed with the minor that she tried to contact him even after he passed out of school this year, police said.

According to the police official, the accused became attracted to her student during various meetings in connection with the school's annual function in December 2023. She allegedly made her first sexual advance in January 2024.

Soon after the accused teacher started taking the teenager to expensive hotels to sexually assault him, the student developed acute anxiety. She then allegedly gave him some anti-anxiety pills, the official said. The boy cleared his Class X exam a few months ago and left the school, but slipped into depression, said the official. His family decided to speak up when the accused again sent the boy a message, through their domestic staff, to meet her, the official said.

# Dalai Lama says he will be reincarnated

The Dalai Lama's affirmation that his spiritual lineage will continue after his death has reignited tensions with China, which insists it holds the sole authority to approve reincarnations of the Tibetan Buddhist leader. By declaring that the Gaden Phodrang Trust alone will oversee the identification of the 15th Dalai Lama, he directly challenges China's long-standing claim of control over Tibetan religious succession. The Dalai Lama's move, just days ahead of his 90th birthday, reinforces Tibetan autonomy in spiritual matters and sends a clear signal to exiled communities and international supporters. It also undercuts China's attempts to manipulate religious traditions for political gain, particularly in its efforts to name a rival Dalai Lama in the future, a prospect many Tibetans fear and reject.

REUTERS

**Dharamshala, July 2:** The elderly Dalai Lama assured his followers Wednesday that upon his death he would be reincarnated as the next spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and spelt out a succession process that sets up a renewed clash

with China.

The eagerly awaited statement, made days before the frail Nobel peace laureate turns 90, puts to rest speculation, started by the Dalai Lama himself, that he may be the last of Tibet's spiritual leaders, ending a line that stretches back centuries.



Speaking during a week of celebrations in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamshala to mark his birthday, the Dalai Lama said a non-profit institution he has set up will have the sole authority to identify his reincarnation, countering China's insistence that it will choose his successor.

Beijing reiterated Wednesday that it had to approve the reincarnation and that it had to be done in China through a centuries-old ritual.

Beijing views the Dalai Lama, who fled to India from Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule, as a separatist. The Dalai Lama

has said his successor will be born outside China and urged his followers to reject anyone chosen by Beijing. In previous years, he had also said it was possible that there might be no successor at all.

"I am affirming that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue," the Dalai Lama said in a video message, setting off claps and cheers from more than 100 monks in maroon robes who had gathered in a library in Dharamshala.

The event was also attended by journalists from around the world and long-time supporters including Hollywood star Richard Gere, who sat in the audience in a hall that had ornate paintings of the Buddha and photographs of the Dalai Lama on the walls.

# leisure



## SIMONE'S ANXIETY AFTER BRIDGERTON SUCCESS

*Bridgerton* actress Simone Ashley suffered a lot of anxiety after the Netflix series catapulted her to global fame, so much so she didn't want to leave the house for fear of being recognised. The 30-year-old actress plays Kate Bridgerton in the Netflix megahit.

## AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CANCELS KANYE'S VISA

The Australian government has revoked Kanye West's visa. The country's Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke told *ABC*: "He's been coming to Australia for a long time. "He's got family here and he's made a lot of offensive comments that my officials looked at again."



## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesha warns you not to take rash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advice of experienced people.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesha predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
It is better for you to swim with the current in all of today's dealings, suggests Ganesha. This will help you effortlessly deal with even the most morbid state of affairs. No need to be a hero, today. Pleasure is the key word for you. Your performance will be satisfying at work, and more than satisfying back home.

**CANCER**  
You will not only make plans, but will also act on them. So you can save money, time and energy for creative pursuits. The quality of your work and accomplishments will be high. Your creativity plays a key role in your accomplishments in career or business.

**LEO**  
Today, Ganesha advises you to keep the Bhagavad Gita's verses in mind, and persist in fulfilling your duties without bothering about the fruits of your labour. Put in some extra effort to finish off whatever you undertake today. Patience bears its fruits and they are always sweet. Also, Ganesha reminds you that anybody can enjoy pleasure.

**VIRGO**  
You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions, feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything - from play to colleagues to family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesha predicts that the artist in you will flourish beginning today.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that today in your office you should be very careful in your work. It is likely that your superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are businessmen should try and delay sending off tenders today. Those who have given their job interviews may not get a favorable response to it. There may be a delay in getting your call letters.

**SCORPIO**  
It is likely that you shall learn an important lesson in life today. Remember that spite and envy beget enemies. Ganesha advises you to display some errors so as to make you seem more human and approachable.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today, find yourself driving all your thoughts and actions towards your family. You will also spend some superb time with your dearie and discuss intimate matters. A relaxing day today as you spend time with your friends and family, chilling out and having a good laugh or two.

**CAPRICORN**  
It's time to prove your extraordinary skills as a professional, says Ganesha. You will go out of your way, and even double your efforts to accomplish set goals, and chances are that you might succeed. Family and friends will be glad that could take out time to spend some happy hours with them. You will also let them know that they mean the world to you, and no matter what, you will be there whenever they need you.

**AQUARIUS**  
The day begins on high note. You work hard, put your best foot forward and at the end get the final output as per your requirements. Romantic and beautiful, the setting Sun will bring the softer side of your personality to the fore as you will spend the evening with your sweetheart, predicts Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
For you, today will be all work and no pay, says Ganesha. This, however, will not stop you from putting in extra efforts to finish your pending projects and to meet your deadlines. Who else but a Virgo to handle the pain nonchalantly without bemoaning the lack of pleasure?

## Shahana on making personal lives public

**Mumbai:** Versatile actress Shahana Goswami shared her opinion on actors putting their personal lives on social media these days.

When asked "Do you think actors should share their personal lives on social media?" during an exclusive interaction with this agency, she said that this is everyone's personal choice.

Speaking to *IANS*, Goswami said, "Some people keep their lives private and only post work-related content—I completely respect that. For me, I'm not very active, but I post things I genuinely enjoy—photography, thoughts, and work. It's my way of expressing myself, like a form of personal PR."

"I've built real connections through Instagram, even with people I've never met. There's a balance—I share some personal aspects, but mostly things that reflect who I am authentically. Everyone should do what feels right to them," she added.

IANS



## Nargis schools ageist troll

**Mumbai:** Actor Nargis Fakhri recently responded powerfully and gracefully to an ageist comment on her latest social media video, reminding fans and trolls alike that ageing is not just natural; it is something to be embraced.

The *Rockstar* actor recently shared a playful and stylish reel on Instagram on the latest viral song *Dame Un Grrr* by Fantomel and Kate Linn. Nargis can be seen transitioning from a no-makeup, tank top and jeans casual look into a stunning, body-hugging grey dress.

While many fans showered her with love, one user decided to point out signs of ageing. The comment read, "Damn she looks old.. we really are growing up". Rather than ignoring the remark, Nargis addressed it head-on, with confidence and fun. Nargis replied to the comment, "Yes u are LOL (laughing emoji) embrace it (sic)"

Many fans came in support of Nargis under the comment and gave their piece of mind. One user said, "She looks pretty young for 45 wdm (sic)". A second comment read, "Are you kidding, she freaking GORGEOUS (sic)". A third fan wrote, "Ageing like fine wine (fire emoji) (hear emoji)". Another fan went on to say, "She does NOT look her age, totally looks in her 30s. She's ageing like fine wine (sic)." Another fan commented, "What!!!! She looks extremely amazing for her age, though. Anyways, everyone ages."

## Two Lord-inspired movies to celebrate Bahuda Yatra



**Bhubaneswar:** As the state prepares to celebrate Bahuda Yatra, the return journey of Lord Jagannath and His siblings, two Odia films inspired by the Trinity are set to hit screens July 4, offering audiences a devotional cinematic experience deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual identity.

The first film, *Shree Jagannathanka Nabakalebara*, is a grand cinematic adaptation of the deeply spiritual ritual of Nabakalebara, where the wooden idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra are ceremonially replaced. After the success of its stage show, Sai Shradha Production Trust is bringing this revered story to the big screen. Directed by Saubhagyalaxmi Jena (Bini) and co-produced with Dilip Kumar Jena, the film is based on the book *Nabakalebara* by Shankar Tripathy. The movie features an ensemble cast including Siddhant Mohapatra, Suryamayee Mohapatra, Jyoti Ranjan Nayak, Sivani Sangita, Pinky Pradhan, Sritam Das, Kuna Tripathy, Meghna Mishra, and Navpreet Arora,

among others. The second release, *I Am Kalia*, takes a more intimate approach to devotion, focusing on the unwavering faith of Lord Jagannath's devotees in modern times. Directed by and starring Harihar Mohapatra, the film is presented under the banner of Lee Bliss Entertainment and portrays the enduring spiritual bond that people continue to share with Lord Jagannath. The



film also features a unique cast, including renowned Russian theatre actress Aniya, along with Kuna Tripathy, Pushpa Panda, and Satwaki Mishra. The story is written by Monalisa Mahapatra, while Subash Sahu is the producer of the movie.

PNN

## Huma talks about being boxed

**Mumbai:** Actor Huma Qureshi is currently garnering praise for her dance number, *Dil Thaam Ke* in Rajkummar Rao's film *Maalik*. In an interview with Bollywood Bubble, Huma spoke about how she has been boxed into doing serious roles in Bollywood.

Huma thinks that her choice of serious and intense roles at the beginning of her career stopped filmmakers from giving her a full-fledged dance number in films. She further talked about getting stereotyped and said, "I think why should people box me that you can only do intense film, you are only good or doing this. I am like, who made this rule? Why should I adhere to your idea of what I am good for? I can do this also and that too, and choose when I want to do what."

Talking about the criticism surrounding item songs, Huma said, "There are some songs that are clearly male gaze-driven. Where you know there is objectification of women, and it's being done for a purpose. And as a woman, you get that feeling 'I've ended up in the wrong place'. But as far as you are talking about the song which is celebrating the female form, her sensuality and glamour, there's nothing wrong with it."

AGENCIES

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

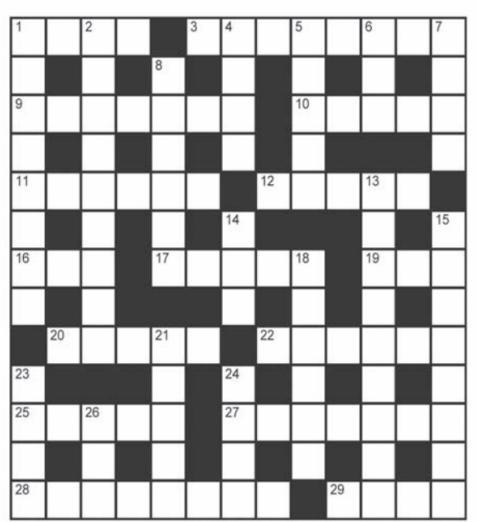


## BREVITY



## FUN POST

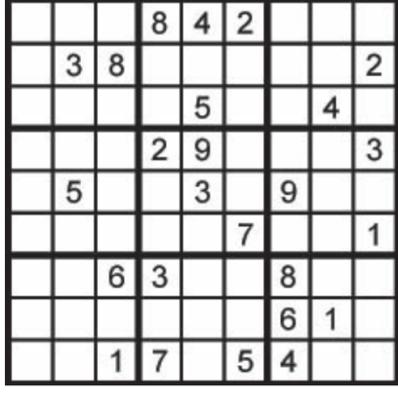
## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Fortuneteller
  - 3 Disney was one
  - 9 Quick bread
  - 10 Place for a barbecue
  - 11 Hot spots
  - 12 Dog command
  - 16 Egg cells
  - 17 Tidal bore
  - 19 Feel flush
  - 20 Dabbling ducks
  - 22 Nook
  - 25 Discover
  - 27 Sudden increase
  - 28 Merits
  - 29 Creative spark
  - 8 Wine order
  - 13 Made loud demands
  - 14 Epoch
  - 15 Skin cream ingredient (4,4)
  - 18 Register
  - 21 Like some eclipses
  - 23 Musher's transport
  - 24 Hoodwink
  - 26 Commercials
- Down**
- 1 Kind of hare
  - 2 Followers
  - 4 Call for
  - 5 Syrup flavor
  - 6 Moppet
  - 7 Chess piece

## 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

An artiste performs during 'Guhari', organised by Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, at GKCM Odissi Research Centre in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



# downtown

## Puri stampede: 4-member team to assist DC in probe



June 29, the state government had ordered an administrative inquiry headed by Garg and asked her to complete the probe within 30 days.

Garg had Monday started her investigation into the incident and held discussions with the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Chief Administrator, Puri Collector and SP, besides other officials and temple servitors.

The Development Commissioner said she would find out what led to the stampede situation and identify the people responsible for the incident.

"I would also see what more measures could be taken to avoid such incidents in future," the Development Commissioner said.

Apart from meeting different stakeholders, Garg said she would examine all CCTV footage, go through the deployment orders and whether the SOPs were being followed.

On the day of the stampede, the state government shifted the Puri Collector and the SP.

A new Collector and SP have been appointed, and senior bureaucrat Aravind Agarwal was assigned to supervise the Rath Yatra affairs in Puri.

Senior IPS officer and ADG Soumendra Priyadarshi has also been given the overall charge of streamlining police arrangements for the Rath Yatra.

Two senior police officers have also been suspended on charges of dereliction of duty.

tional Secretary Binaya Kumar Dash are part of the four-member team.

Two others are Water Resources department Additional Secretary Rashmi Ranjan Nayak and Works department Additional Secretary Pradip Kumar Sahoo.

Of the four OAS officers, Dash and Sahoo are presently deployed in the Rath Yatra duty and will remain in Puri till July 8, the order said.

"The officers concerned shall undertake the responsibility in addition to their regular duties. They are required to be present in the office of the Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary, Planning & Convergence department, for approximately two hours daily, from 3pm to 5pm, to support the inquiry process," the GA&PG department order said.

Hours after the stampede

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** The state government Wednesday formed a four-member team to assist Development Commissioner (DC) Anu Garg to complete an inquiry into the Puri stampede within 30 days.

Garg has been asked to conduct the administrative inquiry into the death of three persons and the injury to around 50 people in the stampede near Gundicha Temple in Puri during the Rath Yatra festivities June 29.

According to an order issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance (GA&PG) department, four Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officers have been included in the team.

Joint Director of Estates and GA&PG department's Additional Secretary Manas Ranjan Samal, and Housing and Urban Development department Addi-



**IN MEMORIAM:** Justice Madan Mohan Das inaugurates an event organised by Sarala Sahitya Sansad at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack to mark the birth anniversary of noted poet Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Wednesday

## BJD demands Nilgiri MLA's arrest over tusker killing

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Wednesday demanded immediate arrest of BJP's Nilgiri MLA Santosh Khatua alleging his involvement in the killing of an elephant and theft of its tusks in Nilgiri area June 15.

Addressing a joint press conference, BJD general secretary and spokesperson Lekhasri Samantasinghar, former minister Jyoti Ranjan Panigrahi, and

**The BJD leaders alleged that Forest officials have not taken any action against the MLA due to political pressure and a lack of courage**

former MLA Sukanta Nayak claimed that three of the four accused arrested in connection with the case were found hiding in the farmhouse of the BJP MLA.

The BJD leaders alleged that the state government was shielding the Nilgiri MLA and demanded his arrest and appropriate

action against him for his alleged role in the jumbo's death and the theft of its tusks.

They further alleged that Forest officials have not taken any action against the MLA due to political pressure and a lack of courage.

According to reports, the carcass of a large tusker was

discovered by a Forest official near Haduisahi village in Telipad panchayat under Nilgiri block June 15. The tusks had been brutally removed, indicating the elephant was killed for its ivory.

"Following an investigation, Forest officials arrested four people allegedly involved in the incident. Of those, three main accused were apprehended from the farmhouse belonging to the Nilgiri MLA," the BJD leaders alleged.



## BAHUDA YATRA PREPARATIONS BEGIN

PNN & AGENCIES

**Puri, July 2:** The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), with the help of Puri district administration and police, started preparations for the Bahuda Yatra (return car festival) of the sibling deities with southward rotation (Dakhina Moda) of chariots Wednesday.

hupa ritual, the Agyanmalas (garlands) reached the chariots at around 2pm, around 1.5 hr after the scheduled time, following which the Dakhina Moda ritual began.

"After receiving the Agyanmalas, Darpadalana chariot of Devi Subhadra was pulled, followed by the Taladhwa chariot of Lord Jagannath. They reached in front of the Nakachana Dwara for forward

pulling July 5," said an official.

According to the SJTA, Lord Jagannath's Nandighosha chariot could not be turned southwards due to the delay in rituals. The ritual will be done Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Hera Panchami ritual was observed Tuesday night when Lord Jagannath's consort Maa Laxmi reached Gundicha Temple in

anger and humiliation for not being taken on Rath Yatra. Maa Laxmi was angry because Lord Jagannath took His siblings - Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra - in Rath Yatra and not her.

In anger, Maa Laxmi broke a portion of Nandighosha chariot of Lord Jagannath as per the ritual and returned to the main temple in a ceremonial procession.

## Inhuman treatment: NHRC seeks report from CS, DGP

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** Taking suo motu cognisance of media reports, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP), seeking a detailed report on the inhuman treatment of two persons in Ganjam district belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) community, official sources said, Wednesday.

Two persons belonging to the SC community were allegedly beaten, forced to eat grass, and made to drink drain water by members of another community on suspicion of illegal cattle smuggling.

The shocking incident took place at Kharigumma village under Dharakote block June 22. The two victims, identified as Bulu Nayak, 52, and Babul Nayak, 43, of Singipur, had purchased a cow and two calves from Haripur as part of dowry arrangement of a family's marriage ceremony.

They were bringing the cattle to their village when local villagers intercepted them at Kharigumma. Suspecting them as illegally smuggling cattle,

the locals snatched their mobile phones and half tonsured their heads.

They then tied them with ropes, paraded them through the village on their knees, and forced them to drink drain water.

The commission observed that the contents of the media report, if true, raise serious concerns regarding human rights violations.

Accordingly, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the DGP, directing them to submit a detailed report within two weeks.

The report is expected to include details of the action taken against the perpetrators and any compensation provided to the victims, the commission said.

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## IMD predicts light to heavy showers in coming week

**NEW DELHI:** As the monsoon continues its journey across the country, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday predicted light to heavy rainfall in Delhi and several other regions over the next week. IMD scientist Akhil Shivastava, speaking to IANS, said the national capital can expect sporadic rainfall in the coming days. "Monsoon officially arrived in Delhi June 29, accompanied by light showers. Our forecast suggests that during the next seven days, Delhi may experience light to heavy rainfall. There will also be periods of partly cloudy skies, with chances of thunderstorms and lightning," he said. Moving beyond the capital, the IMD has issued significant warnings for several states expecting intense rainfall. States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha are also under heavy rainfall alerts.

## A chariot, a word, a world: The cultural voyage of 'juggernaut'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, July 2:** India has given many words to the English language. But perhaps none as weighty as 'juggernaut'.

Derived from Lord Jagannath, the word goes back to the early 19th century to mean any large and overpowering force or object - an allusion to the massive chariot of Lord Jagannath that is pulled by pilgrims every year across a three-kilometre journey in an annual spectacle of devotion in Puri. This year's yatra started June 27.

Along with juggernaut, Indian languages have embellished English with many other words such as shampoo, mulligatawny soup, cummerbund, jodhpurs and dacoit.

According to researcher and

historian Anil Dhir, the word juggernaut is the collision between two forces, an encounter between two worlds - the English-speaking West and India.

"Rev Claudius Buchanan was the first British official to popularise the word 'juggernaut' in both Britain and the United States in the early 1800s. Buchanan was an Anglican chaplain stationed in India and a staunch supporter of Christian missions to India," Dhir told PTI.

The reverend used the word with a negative connotation. "He viewed the word 'juggernaut' as something dangerous, violent, and a bloody religious cult. This is because in the 1800s many people ended their lives by coming under the wheels of Lord Jagannath's chariot during the Rath Yatra," he added. According to Bhaskar

Mishra, a researcher in Jagannath culture, the word Jagannath is a combination of two words - jagat (universe) and nath (master).

Despite its origins in religious texts, the word over the last three centuries has come to be used for an inexorable force that rolls over everything in its path. The earliest known use of the noun juggernaut is in the mid 1600s, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). OED's earliest evidence for juggernaut is from 1638, in writer W Bruton's noted work 'News From The East Indies' or 'A Voyage To Bengalla'.

Apart from lending itself to a popular south India food chain,

the name was also adopted by publishing house Juggernaut Books.

"When I was thinking of starting up on my own, my husband suggested it to me, as it was an English word with Indian origins. I loved the sound of it, its playfulness, and also my grandfather had worked in Orissa so it felt like a nice subtle nod to my own family's story," said Chiki Sarkar, founder of Juggernaut Books.

Juggernaut has also been popularised by Marvel Comics with an eponymous character in 'X-Men' comic books who has superhuman strength and durability.

Then Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik called upon investors at the Make in Odi-

sha Conclave December 1, 2022 and said, "Come, join the juggernaut." The word Jagannath has also lent itself to another English word, 'jaconet'.

Jaconet is a lightweight, cotton fabric that originally came from Puri. The word found itself in English vocabulary somewhere around the mid 18th century.

According to the Oxford dictionary, jaconet is a corruption of 'Jagannathi or Jagannathpuri in Cuttack, where it was originally manufactured'.

There are several other words too that trace their origins to Hindi.

The word shampoo goes back to the 18th century. It came from the Hindi word 'champo', which means to press or massage. Dacoit is a rather simple variation of 'dakaiti' in Hindi, which means robbery.

Jodhpurs, named after the city in Rajasthan, allude to trousers meant to be worn for horse riding. Loose around the thighs and ending in a snug cuff, the pants were popularised by prince Pratap Singh of Jodhpur who wore them to polo matches hosted by Queen Victoria in England during her Diamond Jubilee celebrations of 1897.

Similarly, the word khaki, which is a light shade of tan, has come to be associated with a wide range of uniforms worn by many armies around the world to provide camouflage in sandy terrain.

Mulligatawny soup, which must have been quite a tongue twister for its early English adapters, originates from Tamil cuisine. The name comes from the Tamil word 'milagu' (black pepper) and 'thanneer' (water) - literally meaning pepper water.

# BMC reviews security after attack on officer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Following the recent attack on BMC Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) convened a high-level meeting Wednesday to review security protocols and assess the situation.

The meeting, held at the BMC office, was attended by BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, Twin City Police Commissioner S Debadatta Singh, representatives from Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), the security agency, and members of the civic body's standing committee.

The meeting primarily focused on evaluating the failure of surveillance systems, especially the malfunctioning of CCTV infrastructure. Officials reviewed existing lapses and



Mayor Sulochana Das slams BSCL for CCTV failure; demands accountability. Plans underway to deploy trained ex-servicemen for office security.

discussed measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

In the meeting, Singh said, "We are currently analysing the situation, and the investigation is ongoing. The attack on Sahoo took place during a grievance redressal meeting, when the public is allowed into the office. In the meeting, we discussed security arrangements with the BMC Commissioner and are planning to deploy ex-servicemen, who will be given proper training."

Mayor Sulochana Das also raised concerns over the secu-

city arrangements at the civic body office and emphasised the need to strengthen them.

"The building is currently maintained by Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), and it's their responsibility to ensure the surveillance system functions properly. The unavailability of CCTV footage from the incident was shocking. BSCL must act responsibly—or step down. We will enhance security at the BMC and shift surveillance responsibility directly to the civic body," Das said.

## Oppn seeks Law Min's ouster over stampede

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The Opposition BJD and Congress Wednesday demanded the resignation of Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan over alleged negligence and mismanagement during the Rath Yatra, which led to a stampede near Gundicha Temple Sunday, claiming three lives.

The Law Minister appealed to the Opposition not to politicise matters related to the Rath Yatra.

Taking to his social media account, Prithviraj Harichandan wrote in Odia, "Those who have proved themselves ineffective are now talking a lot. The people of Odisha remember how the Opposition handled the Rath Yatra during their tenure. Everyone witnessed it."

Earlier, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty demanded Law Minister Harichandan's resignation over alleged irregularities during Rath Yatra, saying the chaos, including chariot delay and stampede, brought shame to Odisha. He urged the minister to take moral responsibility or be sacked by the CM. The Congress echoed the demand and staged protests.



INSECT STUDY: Students of Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT) collect insects and flies in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday for academic research

## 19TH FOUNDATION DAY 'Study Smart': Mugdha Kalra inspires KiiT Int'l students



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: "Study smart," urged renowned journalist, author, and neurodiversity advocate Mugdha Kalra while addressing students during the 19th Foundation Day of KiiT International School. Her impactful message struck a chord with the school community on a day that celebrated inspiration, leadership, and inclusivity.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Kalra stressed the importance of staying grounded in today's competitive world. "The real struggle lies at the hu-

man level—the constant comparison with peers," she said. She urged students to maintain balance by staying healthy, staying connected with family and friends, remaining focused, and above all, to "study smart." Kalra also praised KiiT's inclusive approach of integrating special needs and mainstream students in the same classrooms, calling it a rare and commendable initiative.

The ceremony began with the oath-taking of the newly-elected Student Cabinet where the young leaders pledged to uphold the values of the school and contribute to the holistic development of their peers.

KiiT International School chairperson Mona Lisa Bal encouraged students to embrace bold thinking. "Don't be afraid to ask 'why not?' Strange ideas change the world," she said, urging them to lead with empathy and innovation.

KiiT & KISS founder Achyuta Samanta congratulated students, teachers, and staff, and expressed pride in the school's achievements over the past 19 years.

## Left parties protest, demand arrests over BMC assault case

Protesters raise slogans, hold placards and banners to press for action



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Members of Left parties, including Communist Party of India (M), Communist Party of India (ML) Liberation and All India Forward Block (AIFB), Wednesday, staged protest at Master Canteen Square here, demanding stringent action against the culprits involved in assaulting BMC's Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo.

Leaders of the parties includ-

ing Jayant Das, Jyoti Ranjan Mohapatra, Dushmantha Das and Ashok Pradhan were among the attendees.

Protesters held placards, banners and raised slogans in support of their demands.

Das, CPI state secretary member said, "BJP has become the den of goons. The state government has failed to exercise democratic process in the state. The recent attack on the BMC additional commissioner is a burning example of law and order failure in the state." "The government has also

failed to ensure safety of women, dalits, and minorities. The state government should be answerable for its failure. We also demand the arrest of prime accused in the BMC assault case," Das added.

"If the government can't protect a senior officer, how can it ensure our safety? It appears to be favouring criminals, as the main accused in the attack has not been arrested yet. We demand every person involved behind the incident should be arrested," said another protestor.

## Radio Outreach: Odisha's 1st green energy station

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Jagatsinghpur, July 2: In a groundbreaking step toward sustainable broadcasting, Radio Outreach 90.8 FM—based in Srirampur village, Jagatsinghpur—has become Odisha's first and only radio station to run entirely on green energy.

From transmitters to studio equipment and office systems, the community radio station now runs entirely on solar power. This major shift not only cuts its carbon footprint but also sets a benchmark for media organisations across Odisha and beyond.

"We are proud to lead this green revolution in media," said Subrat Kumar Pati, station director of Radio Outreach. "As a community radio serving rural Odisha, we believe it is our duty to promote sustainable practices—not just through our programmes, but through our operations as well."

Established in 2023, Radio Outreach has been a strong voice for local communities, focusing on grassroots issues such as health, education, agriculture, culture and wom-



en's empowerment. The shift to clean energy further aligns with its mission to build an equitable and eco-conscious future.

The green energy initiative was executed with the help of a rooftop solar system. According to station engineers, the system now meets 100 per cent of the station's daily energy needs—even during peak summer operations.

Environmental activists and community leaders have praised the move as a model for other community broadcasters. "This is a remarkable step—it proves that even small media units can make a meaningful impact on climate action," said Basant Manjari Das, a local environmentalist.

This milestone cements Radio Outreach's role as a media change-maker and a model of community-driven broadcasting.

## Rajdhani, Puri-Gunupur Exp add extra coaches

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 2: The East Coast Railway (ECOR) has announced to temporarily add extra AC-3 Tier coaches to the Rajdhani and Puri-Gunupur Express trains to handle the surge in passengers.

This move aims to provide travelers with a more comfortable and hassle-free journey during the peak travel season.

As part of this initiative, Train No 22823/22824 Bhubaneswar-New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express will be equipped with one additional AC-3 Tier coach. The extra coach will be added from Bhubaneswar July 8 and 11, and from New Delhi July 9 and 12.

Similarly, Train No 18417/18418 Puri-Gunupur-Puri Express will have one additional AC-3 Tier coach attached from Puri daily between July 3 and July 9, and from Gunupur daily from July 4 to July 10.

This temporary augmentation is intended to address the extra demand and ensure smoother travel during this period.

ECOR has advised passengers to plan their journeys accordingly and take note of the additional accommodation available.

## Bhubaneswar citizens rally for greener future

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 2: Ahead of International Plastic Bag Free Day (July 3), Bhubaneswar stands out with spirited citizen-led initiatives. From students and homemakers to environmentalists, people across the City are promoting sustainable alternatives and raising awareness about the hazards of plastic pollution.

In Bhubaneswar, change is taking root at both individual and community levels.

Gyanaranjan Das, Youth for Seva chapter coordinator, Bhubaneswar, underlined the power of small, daily choices. "The first thing we can do is carry our own bags — jute or cloth — whenever we go shopping, whether it's for vegetables, clothes, or groceries. I personally carry my own bag and containers for groceries," he said. "I also collect single-use plastic wrappers in bulk and hand them over to BMC cleaners during their door-to-door rounds," Das said.

"Our voluntary team take up regular programmes — throwing seed balls in barren land for plantation, cleaning tourist spots like Khandagiri, Udayagiri, and Shanti Stupa, and creating awareness among locals

### INT'L PLASTIC BAG FREE DAY



and tourists," he added.

Similarly, Akankhya Rout, an active environmental advocate and journalist, highlighted the role of conscious consumption. "I support businesses that use sustainable packaging and eco-friendly materials. For example, I avoid regular sanitary pads that contain micro plastics and instead choose alternatives made from bamboo or banana stems," she said.

Small steps like carrying your own tote bag, avoiding unnecessary shopping, or skipping plastic decorative

items can create a huge impact on the environment," Rout added.

From academia, Pratibha Biswal, a PhD scholar at Rama Devi Women's University, emphasised the role of community education and said, "I work with the NGO and conduct awareness sessions for students in government schools about the harmful impact of plastic. Personally, I always carry a cloth bag and try to avoid ordering food that generates plastic waste."

Meghamukta Mohanty,

Odia Department, RD Women's University, said "I always carry cotton or jute bags when shopping and encourage my students to do the same. At home, I avoid plastic containers, opting for steel or glass."

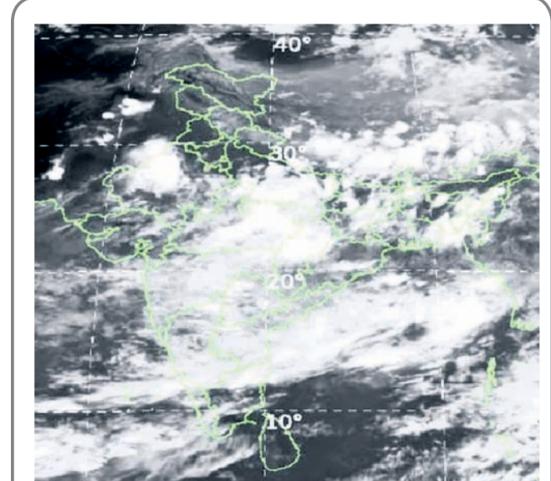
Even homemakers are playing a crucial role.

Sunita Rout, a Bhubaneswar resident, shared her simple yet impactful practices, said "As a homemaker, I have stopped using plastic bags completely. I store groceries in steel container rather than fancy plastic boxes and use steel lunch boxes for my children. It feels good to know that these small changes help protect our environment and marine life."

Globally, an estimated 5 trillion plastic bags are produced every year, with nearly 1 million used every minute. A typical plastic bag serves its purpose for just 25 minutes but can linger in the environment for 100 to 500 years.

The toll on marine ecosystems is catastrophic—plastic bags are responsible for the deaths of about 100,000 marine animals annually, according to a UN Environment report.

MARKET WATCH table with columns for CURRENCY, BOURSES, and COMMODITIES.



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# Widow brutally killed in Keonjhar; 1 nabbed



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, July 2:** In a sign of utter lawlessness, a man beheaded a 58-year-old widow with a spade over suspected past enmity at Bhalughera Sahi of Phula Pahadi village under Patana police station in this district early Wednesday morning. The victim was identified as Tulasi Majhi, 58, wife of late Kade Majhi and the accused as Debadutta Naik, son of Kaibalya Naik of the same village. The accused repeatedly assaulted the woman with a spade and severed her head from the torso. It is suspected that the accused had harboured grudge over the alleged religious conversion of the victim's family

**The victim was identified as Tulasi Majhi, 58, wife of late Kade Majhi and the accused as Debadutta Naik, son of Kaibalya Naik of Phula Pahadi village**

which might have resulted in the brutal murder of the widow. The incident occurred when a villager Barial Majhi was going to his farmland passing by the victim's house around 6am Wednesday. Accused Debadutta Naik waylaid him and attacked him with a spade. Barial fled

the scene to save his life. Meanwhile, victim Tulasi was standing in her courtyard and was witnessing the incident. An angry Debadutta barged into her house and assaulted her with the spade and finally beheaded her. Panicked villagers preferred to stay indoors following the incident. Acting on a complaint by the victim's daughter Duli Majhi, Patana police registered a case (143/25) and launched an investigation with the help of a scientific team. The murder weapon has been seized and sent for forensic examination, said the police. The cops tried to interrogate the villagers as part of the probe but they chose to maintain mum over the issue. When contacted, Patana IIC Manas Mahakud said the accused has been arrested but the actual reason behind the murder is yet to be ascertained. Further investigations are underway, he added. Notably, Tulasi's husband Kade was beaten to death by a group of villagers at a kangaroo court held in the village after he adopted a different religion five years ago.

## 3 killed in Keonjhar landslide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Keonjhar, July 2:** At least three persons were killed in a landslide triggered by heavy rain while extracting manganese illegally from a mine in Keonjhar district, police said Wednesday. The incident took place at a manganese mine near Bichakundi Dulpahar under Joda police limits when some people were illegally extracting minerals from the manganese mine Tuesday, they said. Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Western Range, Brijesh Kumar Rai confirmed the incident and said: "One body was recovered at about 2 am and other two bodies early in the morning. All bodies were shifted to Tata Hospital and now all three bodies are at Tata Morgue House." Police said a portion of loose soil gave away while the trio was extracting manganese illegally at a mine located within the Baitarani Reserve Forest area. The deceased persons were identified as Sandeep Purty, 32, Kande Munda, 19, and Guru Champia, 18. All are residents of Bichakundi under Joda police station area in Keonjhar district, the police said. The bodies were recovered after a six-hour-long rescue operation.

## Rally in Malkangiri over attack on minorities

AGENCIES

**Malkangiri, July 2:** A large number of people, belonging to a minority community, held a protest rally in this district Wednesday, demanding immediate arrest of those involved in an attack on them. The rally was organised under the banner of Malkangiri District Christian Manch, and the protesters submitted a memorandum to the District Collector's office. They alleged that several people in their community were assaulted by a group of men at Katamateru under Malkangiri police station limits June 21. "Though we have lodged a complaint with the police, no action has been taken so far. Therefore, we are on the streets," said Pallav Kumar Lima, the secretary of the organisation. He said nearly 30 people were injured and admitted to the district headquarters hospital. Hundreds of community members joined the protest rally on the rain-drenched day. There was an argument between the protesters and the police as the Collector was allegedly late to come outside his office to accept the memorandum. When contacted, Malkangiri SP Vinodh Patil H said, "The police have registered a case and the matter is under investigation."

# Murder in Berhampur lodge: Cops recreate crime scene

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, July 2:** A day after a youth killed his lover after inviting her to a lodge near New Bus stand under Baidyanathpur police limits in the Silk City here and later surrendered to police, police took the accused to the lodge to reconstruct the crime scene Wednesday. The deceased, Priya Kumari Moharana, 24, was a resident of Reddyka Sahi in Lanjipalli area, while the accused Abhaya Kumar Moharana, 24, a resident of Umanagar here, police said. Meanwhile, the accused recreated the crime scene as he admitted to have slit the throat

of his lover Priya and stabbed her various body parts with a knife Wednesday. Meanwhile, police registered a case over a complaint by the victim's father Prabhakar Moharana and took the accused to Pushpanjali lodge. Police spotted blood stains all around room no-112 of the lodge and seized the blood stained knife, the mobile phone and bike of the accused as well as the scooter of the victim. Police also collected the viscera samples of the victim and sent them for medical examination. According to police, Abhaya checked into Pushpanjali lodge around 11:30am after inviting Priya to the place Tuesday.



Priya arrived a little later. The couple spent some time together before Abhaya allegedly stabbed her 20 times around 3pm, resulting in her death. Following the incident, the accused went to City Hospital for treatment of an injury on his hand. From there, he went to Gosaninuagaon police station and surrendered, police said. Abhaya and Priya were into a relationship for quite a few years. Enraged over Priya's decision to marry another person, Abhaya killed her in the lodge, police claimed. The deceased was working as a laboratory assistant in a private hospital here while the accused was unemployed, police said. Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M said, "The couple booked a room for a day. The accused had a clear motive to kill her and had brought a knife with him. After spending some time in the room, Abhaya stabbed her." Police also said that Priya had tried to resist, but the accused overpowered her and stabbed her multiple times in her neck, back, chest and abdomen, leading to her death on the spot.

## Bhubaneswar, July 2: Tigress Zeenat expects cubs by early Sept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** Tigress Zeenat, which escaped from Similipal National Park and roamed across Odisha, West Bengal, and Jharkhand, is now suspected to be pregnant, and is expected to give birth by August or early September, according to a senior Forest department official. Captured in Bankura district of West Bengal after a dramatic 23-day journey through three states, Zeenat was brought back to Similipal and kept in a soft enclosure from January 1, where she was observed for several weeks. She was found fit and healthy during her stay in the enclosure. On April 17, Zeenat was released into the wild, the official said. According to the official, even during her stay in the enclosure, Zeenat had shown signs of estrus and responded to the presence of a wild melanistic male tiger, T12.



Zeenat, even during her stay in a large enclosure, showed signs of estrus towards a wild male tiger (T12). Taking this opportunity, the tigress was released from the enclosure. Mating with T12 was recorded on thermal cameras installed at Jamuna meadow in the second week of May, the official said. Since her release, Zeenat has been moving inside the core area of STR and hunting natural prey such as cheetal, sambar, and wild boar. The tigress is being monitored 24 hours by tracking teams. Each team consists of 4 people. It is also being monitored using satellite-based GPS, he said.

She has stopped mating and has isolated herself — both strong indicators of pregnancy. Given that the gestation period in tigers ranges from 105 to 120 days, we expect Zeenat to give birth by August or early September, the official said. Zeenat was brought to Similipal from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Maharashtra as part of tiger supplementation project. She escaped from STR December 7 and roamed around three states before being captured in West Bengal's Bankura after 23 days. According to a research by Uma Ramakrishnan of the

## Captured in Bankura district of West Bengal after a dramatic 23-day journey through three states, Zeenat was brought back to Similipal in January

National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore, in 2021, the population of tigers inside Similipal is genetically isolated and inbreeding is taking place within the reserve. To counter this trend, it was proposed to translocate tigers from the central Indian landscape to STR, the official added. Although the tiger population in Similipal has been increasing at about 18 per cent annually since 2014, nearly 50 per cent of them display pseudo-melanistic coat colour, indicating high inbreeding, he said.

## 70 stray dog attack cases in a week

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barbil, July 2:** More than 70 people have been injured in Barbil area of Keonjhar district in the past week due to stray dog attacks, health officials at Barbil community health centre (CHC) said. The victims include pedestrians and two-wheeler riders, many of whom have sustained bleeding and injuries after being bitten by roaming dogs. On average, around 10 people are reportedly being attacked daily across Barbil, Joda Municipality and adjoining areas. Residents say the situation worsens after evening descends, when attacks by stray dogs become more frequent. People in Barbil, Joda, and surrounding rural areas have expressed growing fear and frustration, saying they feel unsafe in their own neighborhoods and step out on road. Chief medical officer at Barbil CHC Soubhagya Rashmi Ranjan Samal confirmed that the hospital is receiving an average of 10 dog bite cases per day from areas including Jurudi, Joda, and Kiriburu. "Over 70 people have been administered anti-rabies injections in the past week alone," he added.

# Monsoon magic at Kanjipani pulls crowd

*Thick clouds settling over the forested hills and descending close to the roads, creates an experience reminiscent of hill stations in Himachal Pradesh*

POST NEWS NETWORK



tacular ghat road has emerged as a significant tourist attraction. Travellers often pause at various points along the route to soak in the tranquil and refreshing ambience. Light showers and mist-covered forests offer breathtaking views that are frequently captured by tourists in photographs. The elevation of the ghat adds to the thrill, with many reporting a tingling sensation as clouds brush against them. Visitors of all ages can be seen strolling along the winding road, capturing selfies with scenic views and drifting

clouds in the background. Small waterfalls, formed by rainwater cascading down the hills, flow beneath culverts and create miniature streams. These natural features, some forming small surges, further enhance the ghat's appeal. However, lack of basic infrastructure has led tourists to take photos from unsafe spots along the roadside, and atop damaged guard walls. Many believe that building proper shelters for rest and rain protection, as well as dedicated viewing points, could significantly improve tourist

experience. Cottages at designated locations would allow visitors to stay overnight and witness the sunrise and sunset — especially alluring moments in the ghat. Such arrangements would also encourage visitors to explore the nearby Juang tribal villages and experience their unique culture and traditions. Bimbhadra Behera, a nature lover, suggest that tourism facilities and cottage accommodation would not only boost footfall but also offer a chance to promote tribal heritage. Assistant Tourism Officer Ramesh Chandra Nayak informs that efforts are underway to develop various amenities for tourists at Kanjipani Ghat. Notably, wild monkeys often wander near the road, attracting curious tourists who feed them — a practice discouraged by experts. To address the nuisance, locals have proposed planting fruit-bearing trees - such as figs and wild bananas - at strategic spots. This would provide natural food sources for the monkeys, reducing their dependency on visitors and fostering a safer environment for both animals and people. The Forest department is reportedly considering steps in this direction.

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Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 21,48,774.00, EMD: ₹ 43,000/-, Cost of Tender document : ₹ 3,540/-, Completion Period for the Work : 03 (Three) Years.  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs on 17.07.2025.  
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**e-Procurement Notice - Bid Identification No. - ACEM/MDB-23/2025-26**  
1. Name of the Work : Mechanical Gate Works  
2. No. of Works : 01 (One)  
3. Category of executors : SSI Units registered under DIC/ NSIC/MSME for Irrigation Shutters/ Hydro mechanical gates.  
4. Bid Identification No. : ACEM/MDB-23/2025-26  
5. Estimated Cost : Rs. 10,60,259/-  
6. Period of Completion : 02 (Two) calendar months  
7. Date & time of availability of bid documents in the Portal : From Dt.03.07.2025 (10.00 A.M.) to Dt.14.07.2025 (5.30 P.M.)  
8. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the Portal : Dt.14.07.2025 (up to 5.30 P.M.)  
9. Date and Place of opening of Bid : Dt.15.07.2025 (12.00 Noon onwards in the O/o the undersigned)  
10. Name of the Officer inviting bid : Addl. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar  
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> Any further issue of Addenda/Corrigenda/ Cancellation Notice shall be uploaded in the aforesaid website only.  
Sd./- Addl. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar  
OIPR-32405/11/0080/2526

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



SRI AUROBINDO

# Tech Sovereignty

The recent AI agreement between the United States and the United Arab Emirates, which paves the way for the UAE to establish one of the world's largest data campuses, has sparked heated debate in the US. The New York Times questioned whether President Donald Trump was "trading away America's tech future," while Bloomberg warned that "offshoring AI to the Middle East could hand China a win."

At the center of the deal is a commitment to sell the UAE 500,000 of Nvidia's most advanced semiconductors per year (for comparison, 200,000 chips reportedly are used to power Elon Musk's Colossus, believed to be the world's largest AI supercomputer). This is a clear win for the UAE, which aims to position itself as a tech leader. But the agreement also highlights a profound shift in global power dynamics: technological sovereignty is no longer a choice; it has become a strategic imperative.

The economic and geopolitical implications could be far-reaching. As countries compete for dominance in AI, semiconductors, and cloud infrastructure, the real challenge is to achieve technological autonomy without resorting to protectionist policies. That requires striking a delicate balance between international cooperation and addressing national-security risks.

The UAE's push for AI leadership is a prime example. To become a tech powerhouse, it needs to foster homegrown innovation while navigating an increasingly interdependent digital landscape.

As the race for technological supremacy intensifies, tech sovereignty has become a top priority for governments around the world. The ability to design, build, and maintain critical systems and production capacity independently is now essential to both economic competitiveness and national security, especially as global supply chains realign.

At its core, technological and manufacturing sovereignty is about maintaining control over the foundational tech stacks that underpin modern economies, from semiconductors to 5G networks. Relying on foreign chipmakers or cloud services can lead to delays, shortages, and strategic vulnerabilities. Consequently, economic competitiveness increasingly hinges on the strength of domestic innovation. For developing countries, in particular, bolstering local capacity is a prerequisite for job creation, value generation, and long-term resilience.

The global economic shocks of the past few years, especially Russia's invasion of Ukraine and pandemic-related semiconductor shortages, have underscored the link between national security and technological independence. To shield key sectors like defense, energy, finance, and health from foreign influence, governments require secure communication networks, uncompromised defense systems, and AI solutions based on reliable data.

In the digital age, sovereignty also means protecting citizens' privacy. Control over data governance, encryption, and storage infrastructure is crucial to avoid exposure to foreign surveillance or legislation that undermines national privacy protections and civil liberties.

But tech stacks are not just a combination of hardware and software. They are socio-technical ecosystems that comprise human capital, research institutions, supply chains, intellectual-property frameworks, and the broader policy environment. Achieving technological sovereignty, therefore, requires more than building a fabrication plant or hosting data on a local server. It calls for government, academia, and industry to work together to advance shared objectives.

Governments, in particular, have an important role to play in setting strategic priorities, funding research, regulating platforms, and leveling the playing field for domestic innovators. In addition to investments in education, research and development, and industrial policy, public procurement can help unlock new opportunities for local tech providers.

To be sure, innovation cannot be commercialised or scaled without the private sector. From chipmakers to AI startups, industry actors need clear incentives, supportive policy frameworks, and a stable investment climate to grow. Public-private partnerships can help mitigate risks, bridge knowledge gaps, and accelerate the development of frontier technologies.

Meanwhile, universities and research labs must continue to serve as talent incubators of innovation engines. By fostering collaboration between academic institutions and private companies, policymakers can ensure a steady flow of skilled professionals and promising ideas into the broader economy.

In its efforts to build a thriving innovation ecosystem, then, the UAE must look beyond capital investments in physical infrastructure. Its success will depend on strengthening ties between academic institutions and the private sector while continuously refining its policy frameworks to attract and retain a diverse, highly skilled workforce.

But the quest for tech sovereignty must not veer into digital protectionism. Instead of chasing an unrealistic vision of total self-sufficiency, policymakers should pursue strategic autonomy by setting national tech policies while remaining open to international cooperation.

The European Union offers a useful model. Dozens of European tech companies and organisations have expressed support for the EuroStack initiative, which aims to reduce dependence on foreign infrastructure by developing competitive domestic alternatives in cloud computing, AI, and software. At the same time, the EU aims to curb US firms' market power by enforcing the Digital Markets Act, despite pushback from Big Tech.

Although the US-UAE agreement has attracted significant media attention, little is known about its approach to national-security concerns and geopolitical risks. How these issues are addressed will determine whether the UAE's AI campus becomes a model for strategic international collaboration or a cautionary tale about the dangers of overlooking digital security.

The obstacles to achieving tech sovereignty are significant and multifaceted. The high costs of semiconductor production, the complexity of global supply chains, and the market dominance of major tech firms make it difficult for any single country to secure full sovereignty without trusted international partnerships.

Given this reality, policymakers must integrate sovereignty considerations into trade agreements and data-sharing frameworks. The deepening US-UAE tech partnership, the EU's efforts to balance regulation with competitiveness, and the formidable barriers to semiconductor self-sufficiency all show that strategic collaboration remains vital even in a volatile geopolitical landscape.

At stake is not just who develops the fastest chips and most powerful algorithms, but who writes the rules that govern the digital world. This kind of influence depends on more than technological prowess; it requires balancing national security with economic openness. The countries that manage to enhance domestic resilience while forming international partnerships will be the ones driving global innovation for years to come.

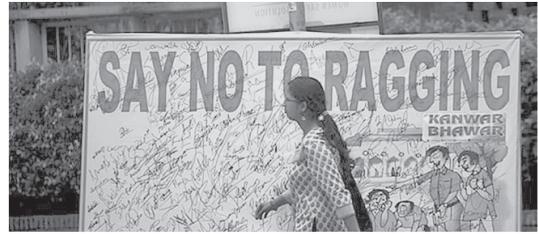
The writer is a visiting fellow at New America's Planetary Politics initiative.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

# HORROR ON CAMPUSES

FOCUS RAGGING

As India's universities reopen after summer holidays, campuses brim with the energy of returning students and new arrivals carrying dreams of academic achievement. Yet beneath this veneer of renewal festers an old terror: ragging. Countless newcomers face humiliation, violence, and psychological torture at the hands of seniors, their educational promise swiftly curdling into trauma. This systematic abuse shatters confidence, extinguishes futures, and tragically drives some to suicide, leaving families devastated and aspirations unfulfilled. Despite decades of Supreme Court directives, UGC regulations, government pledges, dedicated helplines, anti-ragging cells, and stringent penalties under laws like the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the menace persists - a damning indictment of systemic failure.



The persistence of ragging, despite a seemingly robust legal framework, is fueled by its dangerous normalisation as an 'initiation ritual' or 'bonding exercise' or 'ice breaking session'

ments are severe institutionally—ranging from suspension, scholarship withdrawal, and rustication to permanent expulsion and debarment from other institutions for up to five years, plus fines up to ₹50,000. Crucially, ragging is a cognizable, non-bailable, non-compoundable offense. HEIs must file FIRs for every incident, invoking stringent BNS sections like 103/104 (Culpable Homicide/Murder), 106 (Abetment of Suicide), 74 (Sexual Harassment), 125/126 (Causing Hurt/Grievous Hurt), 305 (Criminal Intimidation), 79 (Insulting Modesty), and 3(7) (Group Liability).

However, the chasm between policy and practice remains vast. Enforcement is weak, investigations are often superficial, committees lack independence, and police responses can be indifferent. Eradicating this scourge demands more than punishment; it necessitates a fundamental cultural transformation within campuses. Stricter, consistent enforcement of laws is non-negotiable. Proactive monitoring through CCTVs in hostels and common areas, coupled with accessible, truly anonymous reporting mechanisms, is essential. Robust psychological support must be immediately available for victims. Most critically, continuous, impactful sensitisation programmes for students, faculty, and parents must dismantle the myth of 'harmless tradition,' replacing it with campuses built on empathy, mutual respect, and positive senior-junior interactions. Until this profound shift occurs, the annual reopening of India's universities signifies not just the start of learning, but a grim ritual where countless young lives remain vulnerable to a preventable darkness.

The writer is former Principal, Nabarangpur College.



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

ERADICATING THIS SCOURGE DEMANDS MORE THAN PUNISHMENT; IT NECESSITATES A FUNDAMENTAL CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION WITHIN CAMPUSES

Legally, ragging is defined with damning clarity: any disorderly conduct causing teasing, hardship, psychological harm, fear, or apprehension. Established by the Supreme Court in 1999 and elaborated in UGC regulations (2009), it explicitly encompasses physical assault, verbal abuse, psychological humiliation, sexual harassment, and financial extortion. This is not benign tradition; it is criminal depravity violating fundamental human dignity. The watershed moment came in 2009 following the horrific ragging death of Aman Kachroo, a medical student in Himachal Pradesh. The Supreme Court's intervention led to the UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging, making it a cognizable offense and placing primary responsibility on higher education institutions (HEIs) for prevention and action.

Yet, the data paints a picture of alarming failure and

persistent horror. The UGC's anti-ragging helpline recorded 1,107 complaints between April 2024 and March 2025 alone - a 14.12% increase over the previous year. While potentially indicating better reporting, this undeniably confirms the menace's deep roots. More chillingly, from April 2022 to May 2025, 3,318 ragging cases were reported, linked directly to 44 student suicides. The true toll is certainly higher, shrouded by fear of retaliation and institutional apathy. A particularly disturbing pattern emerges: medical and engineering colleges are devastating epicenters. Despite medical students constituting only 1.1% of India's higher education enrollment, they accounted for 24% of ragging-related deaths during this period; engineering students accounted for 29%. Collectively, institutions under the National Medical Commission (NMC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and UGC reported 2,520 cases, accounting for over 74% of the total. This disproportionate impact points to toxic, culturally ingrained hierarchies within these high-pressure environments where notions of 'tradition' brutally over-

ride legal compliance and human decency. The cumulative human cost is catastrophic: 45 ragging-linked deaths reported between April 2022 and May 2025, contributing to an alleged 101 such deaths since 2012. The persistence of ragging, despite a seemingly robust legal framework, is fueled by its dangerous normalisation as an 'initiation ritual' or 'bonding exercise' or 'ice breaking session'. Compounding this is the pervasive fear of retaliation and social stigma that silences victims, leading to critical underreporting, alongside institutional apathy often prioritising reputation over student safety. To counter this, a multi-pronged strategy exists on paper. UGC mandates require every HEI to establish Anti-Ragging Committees and Squads comprising faculty, student representatives, and parents to monitor and address complaints. Institutions must declare zero-tolerance policies and collect anti-ragging affidavits during admission. A national helpline (1800-180-5522) and online portal offer reporting channels. Proactive measures include awareness campaigns, posters, counseling, securing vulnerable locations, and mentoring cells. Punish-

SPECTRUM POLITICS

# Bigotry & democratic backsliding

The BJP is marking the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, emphasising how power was misused by Indira Gandhi for personal interests without considering the broader national interest. Going into top gear, Union Home Minister Amit Shah highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "nation first" approach. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge launched a counter attack stating that an "undeclared emergency" has prevailed for the past 11 years and claimed that Modi is addressing the Emergency issue to divert attention from "governance challenges and institutional control."

The BJP insisted that it's imperative to discuss the sufferings the then government inflicted on people so that it is never repeated. As against this, critics of the NDA government are raising questions about freedom of expression in the country and accusing the government of lacking tolerance and trampling liberty and fraternity. In particular, they allege journalists and student activists are being imprisoned for simply being critical of the government and opposing its policies. A recent study undertaken by the Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative in part-

nership with the National Law University, Delhi and Columbia Law School's Human Rights Institute analysed 624 incidents of criminalisation of journalists in relation to their work from 2012 to 2022. The dataset breaks down 423 criminal cases against 427 journalists across states and Union Territories of the country. Of the arrested reporters, 24% were from metro cities and 58% from small towns and villages. The latter are more vulnerable to arrests and detentions as they lack necessary legal support and access to justice. Across the country, police invoked a multitude of offences against journalists and registered a large number of cases against them.

Additionally, recent data from India Hate Lab, an international research centre, witnessed a rise in anti-minority hate speeches by an astonishing 74% in 2024, the year of the general election. Worse, the crisis of free speech transcends its contamination by hate, it noted. The foundational tenet of regimes endorsing free speech, as was pointed out in a recent talk by one of the country's foremost intellectuals Pratap Bhanu Mehta, has traditionally been rooted in a milieu of trust between the State and citizens. While the imposition of Emer-

gency has to be condemned in the strongest possible terms, the Opposition flags the BJP's dislike for civil society. A deeper analysis perhaps may reveal that both the Congress and the BJP have misused the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) to target NGOs and civil society, particularly those criticising environmental and human rights issues. This reflects the government's fear of an independent scrutiny. Additionally, there have been attacks on the press, with journalists and activists jailed under the UAPA for criticising government policies and highlighting its failures.

The overall hostility towards the civil society and independent thought is common worldwide. Statistics spell out how democracy is increasingly in peril across the globe. The Economist's recent Global Democracy Index (GDI) indicates that just 6.6% of the world's total population, residing in 25 out of the 165 countries assessed, enjoyed full democracy in 2024. The first GDI in 2006 had credited 28 countries covering 13% of the world population with 'Full Democracies'. Ten years later in 2016, it reported a sharp decline with 19 countries and just about 4.5% of the world population in that category. The Economist

distributed its results based on 60 parameters in four categories - 'full democracies', 'flawed democracies', 'hybrid systems' and 'authoritarian regimes'. Over the last two decades, much less than one-fifth of the world's countries have been described as fully democratic. Despite the dilution of its content, democracy is still in circulation in political discourse though they may be practicing 'hybrid systems' or 'flamed democracies'.

Some political analysts have observed that despite her dictatorial ways, Indira Gandhi upheld the plural idea of India enshrined in the Constitution, wherein citizenship is not defined in terms of language, religion or ethnicity. However, in the present times, the poison of religious bigotry has pervaded society and brought enmity, jealousy and hatred among communities. This resulted in hate speech among political leaders and a steady loosening of bonding among communities. This bigotry is increasing day by day with the tacit support of political leaders, who are only interested in reaping electoral advantage. If unchecked, this may not just destroy democratic plurality but also the social fabric of the country.

INFA



Dhurjati Mukherjee

OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, MUCH LESS THAN ONE-FIFTH OF THE WORLD'S COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS FULLY DEMOCRATIC

## Criminal complicity

Sir, This refers to "Custody of 3 accused extended till July 8," Orissa POST, July 2. No words are strong enough to condemn the gangrape of a law student in Kolkata and it is more painful to know that the college authority allowed the prime accused Monojit Mishra to work as a temporary employee knowing full well of his criminal background. Was the principal of the college aware of the fact and abetted the crime? The chairman of the governing body of the college should also be held responsible and be brought to book. I would expect the investigating officer in the case to complete the investigation within the given time frame and make sure to plug all the loopholes in the probe.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

## Strategic location

Sir, Pakistan has become a crucial arena in the intensifying strategic rivalry between China and the United States—a modern-day "Great Game" shaped by trade routes, rare minerals, and shifting alliances. Its geographic location at the crossroads of Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean, combined with its nuclear capability and untapped mineral reserves, makes it a strategic asset for competing powers. China's deep involvement through the CPEC—especially its development of Gwadar Port—demonstrates Beijing's ambition to secure direct access to the Arabian Sea and expand its influence via infrastructure investment and non-conditional aid. In response, the US has sought to reinvigorate its military and intelligence partnership with Pakistan, including F-16 upgrades and closer ties with the Pakistani military. Yet, this move comes with diplomatic friction, as Washington tries to balance outreach to Islamabad while deepening its strategic alignment with India—reviving fears in New Delhi of being re-grouped with its historical rival, Pakistan, for its part, is navigating a delicate balancing act. It is trying to extract economic and military benefits from both superpowers without slipping into overdependence on either. But this hedging strategy is risky, particularly in volatile regions like Balochistan—rich in rare earths and marred by instability—where the interests of China and the US subtly collide.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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## Concerns grow over poaching in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 2:** Concerns over poaching in Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve have intensified after it was found that three tigers killed by an interstate gang of poachers were likely from RTR.

The development follows a joint operation by Madhya Pradesh's State Tiger Strike Force, Rajasthan Forest department, and Sawai Madhopur-based NGO Tiger Watch last month that led to the arrest of six poachers, including three from Rajasthan. Over 225 pieces of big cat bones were seized near Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh June 5, according to an official statement.

Those arrested are Dauji Bheel and Sunita Dauji, residents of Dausa in Rajasthan, and Besta Bheel of Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh with big cat skulls and bones. Madhya Pradesh forest officials picked up Baniram Moghiya and Naresh, both from Shivpuri in the state, and Rajaram Moghiya, a resident of Tonk in Rajasthan.

In an official communication, Madhya Pradesh forest authorities have asked Rajasthan to share DNA profiles from Ranthambore's tiger population to match with the confiscated remains.

"We received the correspondence and a response will be provided after due examination. Our teams are actively pursuing the matter," a senior Rajasthan Forest department official said.

Ranthambore Field Director Anoop K R, in a report sent to Rajasthan's chief wildlife warden, said, "A few bones have been identified as that of a tiger. As part of further investigation to find out the origin of these bones, the joint team of MP and Rajasthan forest departments is working in



**Investigations reveals that a tiger was killed around six months ago and a leopard around Holi, both likely within Rajasthan**

coordination."

DNA testing in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur confirmed that the seized remains were of three tigers and one leopard. The samples have since been sent to the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bengaluru, for advanced matching with Ranthambore's tiger database. The report is expected in three weeks, forest officials said.

According to sources, the poaching is suspected to have occurred on Rajasthan's side of the Chambal landscape.

Investigations revealed that a tiger was killed around six months ago and a leopard around Holi, both likely within Rajasthan, the sources said.

Wildlife activist and RTI campaigner Ajay Dubey demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into what he called a "well-organised inter-state and interna-

tional trafficking network".

"Given that only tigers from Rajasthan are known to use the Kuno-Madhav-Ranthambore corridor, these deaths point to a much bigger poaching racket that must be investigated thoroughly," he said.

Rajasthan Forest department records show five Ranthambore tigers -- T79, T131, T138, T139, and T2401 -- went missing under suspicious circumstances between June 2022 and May 2024. The missing tigers include two females and three males aged 3 to 12 years.

Forest officials said if the DNA tests confirm that the seized remains are of Ranthambore's missing tigers, it will not only highlight the vulnerability of big cats straying beyond protected zones but also the urgent need for tighter interstate anti-poaching coordination.

## Delhi to Jaipur in 3 hrs; trial run begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 2:** The trial run on the Bandikui-Jaipur Link Expressway, connecting the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway to Jaipur, started Wednesday. The journey from Jaipur to Delhi will now take just 2.5 to 3 hours, offering a faster and smoother travel experience.

The trial run started at 8 am, and no toll will be levied during this trial period of ten days.

The ultramodern expressway is undergoing quality checks and facility testing through the trial runs to identify and rectify any shortcomings before toll collection officially begins in the coming days, said officials. On the first day, the expressway was opened directly for traffic.

Additionally, the Khuri Interchange has been made operational to manage traffic coming from the Manoharpur-Kauthun highway. If all goes smoothly, traffic from other interchanges will also be allowed on the expressway within a day or two.

The 67-kilometre-long, four-lane access-controlled express-



way stretches from Bandikui in Dausa district to Jaipur in Rajasthan and is nearly complete.

Vehicles will be permitted to travel at speeds of up to 120 km/h on this modern roadway. Impressively, construction was completed ahead of schedule.

Once fully operational, the expressway will significantly reduce travel time and will reduce the journey from Bandikui to Jaipur to just 25-30 minutes, compared to the previous duration of over an hour, which will eventually reduce travel time

from Jaipur to Delhi and so on. Furthermore, with its link to the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, travel time from Gurugram to Bandikui will be reduced to just three hours.

Other tracks which will be connected on the Expressway include Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, Manoharpur-Kauthun Highway (via Khuri Interchange) and additional interchanges which will be opened soon, depending on trial success.

"All preparations for toll collection are complete. As soon

as we receive the green signal from higher authorities, toll operations will commence," said BS Joiya, Project Director, NHAI Dausa Unit.

According to officials from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the 66.91-kilometre-long Bandikui-Jaipur Expressway has been constructed at a cost of ₹1,368 crore.

During the ongoing trial phase, all vehicles except tractors, motorcycles, and other restricted categories will be allowed to pass without interruption.

Once fully operational, the new expressway is expected to significantly reduce travel time, with the journey from Jaipur to Delhi expected to take just 2.5 to 3 hours.

Proposed Toll Rates (for private cars) include ₹150 for the 66.91 km Jaipur-Bandikui Expressway, ₹550 to ₹560 for the full Jaipur-Bandikui-Sohna stretch, ₹130 for the Sohna-Gurugram six-lane highway and ₹680 to ₹690 total toll between Jaipur and Delhi.

## Another victim's body found; toll rises to 7



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rudraprayag, July 2:** The body of another victim of the bus accident in Uttarakhand was retrieved Wednesday, six days after the 31-seater bus taking devotees to Badrinath fell into the Alaknanda river at Gholthir.

Another body has been recovered from the Srinagar Dam area at Kirtinagar in the Tehri district more than 50 km from the accident site, District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said.

The victim was identified by her family members as Mayuri Soni (24), a resident of Surat in

Gujarat, he said.

The recovery takes the death toll in the bus accident to seven. Five people are still missing for whom the search operation continues, Rajwar said.

The accident occurred on June 26 when the bus taking pilgrims from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh fell into the Alaknanda river near Gholthir between Rudraprayag and Gauchar.

District administration, police, NDRF, DDRF, and SDRF personnel are continuously engaged in rescue and search operations, he said.

## Char Dham Yatra resumes after 24-hour suspension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dehradun, July 2:** The 24-hour suspension on the Char Dham Yatra was officially lifted Monday, officials confirmed, allowing the pilgrimage to resume after a temporary halt due to relentless rainfall and heightened risks of landslides in Uttarakhand.

Garhwal Divisional Commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey told IANS, "The 24-hour ban on the Char Dham Yatra has been lifted."

However, he added that all District Magistrates along the Yatra route have been instructed to regulate vehicle movement based on the prevailing weather conditions in their respective areas.

The temporary suspension had been imposed Sunday as a precautionary measure to protect the lives and property of pilgrims and residents

amid severe weather.

Authorities had issued advisories urging pilgrims to remain where they are and avoid travelling to Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri until conditions improve.

The suspension followed a severe cloudburst near Silai on the Barkot-Yamunotri road in Uttarakhand district that left at least nine road construction labourers missing.

At least two labourers lost their lives, and seven others are still missing after a devastating cloudburst. The incident occurred near an under-construction hotel in the Silai area along the Yamunotri National Highway, washing away a labourers' campsite where 29 workers had taken shelter.

While 20 people were rescued, nine were reported missing. Later, it was confirmed that two people were dead. The search for the seven others is

still underway.

The Yamunotri National Highway was blocked at multiple points near Silai Band, severely affecting the route. Authorities at NH Barkot were alerted to manage the situation, and the debris was cleared.

Elsewhere in the state, the National Highway near Nandprayag and Bhaneropani was also blocked due to debris, while the Sonprayag-Munkatiya road in Rudraprayag -- an essential route for Kedarnath pilgrims -- was closed because of landslides.

Heavy rain continues to lash several districts, including Chamoli, Pauri Garhwal, Dehradun, Rudraprayag, and others.

As rivers swell dangerously close to banks, the administration has issued a fresh advisory urging people living near riverbanks to remain alert and take all necessary precautions.

## Heavy rains in Kota region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota (Rajasthan) July 2:** Heavy rains in the Kota region of Rajasthan inundated several colonies and public buildings with water, prompting authorities to open eight gates of the Kota barrage.

Rainwater entered hospitals, schools and ATMs in Modak town in Kota district following heavy rain at night.

Many areas in Kota city, including residential areas and the Khade Ganesh Temple, were waterlogged.

Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar and Baran districts received intermittent heavy to moderate rains from Tuesday noon to midday on Wednesday noon, the local Met department said.

A 30-year-old pregnant woman and her family were rescued by a team of the SDRF on a boat across Ahu river from the flooded Gargon village. She was then rushed to a hospital in Jhalawar in an ambulance.

Five gates of Kota barrage were opened around 8.30 am Wednesday, releasing 75,000 cusecs of water. Three more gates of the dam will be opened in the afternoon due to a rise in water level in Gandhi Sagar and Jawahar Sagar dams, taking the amount of water released to 1.4 lakh cusecs, officials said.

Kota district collector Peeyush Samariya visited Kota barrage Wednesday noon and took stock of the situation and gave necessary directions to the officials.

**Kota district collector Peeyush Samariya visited Kota barrage Wednesday noon and took stock of the situation and gave necessary directions to the officials**

Executive engineer at Kota barrage, Arun Kumar Meena, said eight gates have been opened due to the constant flow of rainwater from the catchment areas. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the region is expected to receive a substantial amount of rainfall till around July 6.

Water level at the dam will be maintained depending on the amount of rain, Meena said.

Heavy rains also threw normal life out of gear in Jhalawar, where 9,000 cusecs of water were released from three gates of Bhim Sagar Dam and 122.26 cusecs of water from one gate of Kalisindh Dam.

Baran district administration, in view of the rains, Wednesday, conducted a mock drill on rescue operations in case of an emergency.

Baran district collector Rohitashv Singh Tomer, SP Rajkumar Choudhary, ASP Rajesh Choudhary and several other officials with SDRF, civil defence personnel, Home Guard, police and medical teams were present for the drill.

## Eateries on Kanwar Yatra route must display food licenses

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 2:** The Uttarakhand government has mandated all food vendors catering to Kanwar Yatra pilgrims to prominently display their photo ID and shop license number, in a bid to ensure food safety and hygiene amid the massive influx of devotees.

This rule applies across the board, from large eateries to roadside stalls.

Violators found operating without the required identification risk heavy penalties, with fines reaching up to ₹2 lakh under the Food Safety Act.

While the move has been welcomed by many as a necessary step to safeguard public health, it has also triggered political criticism, with opposition leaders calling the penalty excessively harsh, particularly for small-time street vendors.

Former Samajwadi Party MP ST Hasan, expressed his disapproval of the steep fine, stating, "We have no objection to putting up nameplates. Islam teaches us not to deceive anyone in business. But if a fine of ₹2 lakh is imposed on a street vendor, that is excessive. The fine can be of ₹1000-2000, but the said amount is too much."

Countering Hasan's remarks, Mahant Ravindra Puri, President of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, defended the state government's decision and accused critics of selective outrage.

"Hasan did not speak when people were spitting in food or urinating in our juice. The Chief Minister has taken this decision to ensure that our religion is not corrupted. Crores of people from Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal, etc., come to Uttarakhand for the Kanwar



Yatra," he told.

Food Safety Officer Sanjay Kumar Singh clarified the state's position and emphasised that the measure is rooted in law.

"There is a provision for licensing under the Food Safety Act, and individuals involved in food-related businesses are required to obtain licenses. Regarding the ongoing Kanwar Yatra, a video meeting was held

with our Hon'ble Commissioner and district officials to ensure proper food safety measures are in place," he said.

He added that every food business operator along the yatra route -- including small vendors, hawkers, and street food stalls -- must display their license or registration certificate along with a visible photo ID.

Failure to show this iden-

tification will lead to immediate action under the Food Safety Act, resulting in a ₹2 lakh fine.

The administration is actively helping vendors get registered.

"We are ensuring that the street vendors get their licenses on time. We are doing all to ensure that the devotees do not face any problem of unhygienic food during the Yatra. The number of street vendors increases during the Kanwar Yatra, and hence, all the checks will be taken. If any problem is found, samples will be collected and appropriate action will be taken," Singh added.

The directive comes in response to recurring concerns over food adulteration, contamination, and unsanitary practices reported during major religious events.



Lalu Prasad had a portrait of Babasaheb Ambedkar placed at his feet. This was no small error but reflective of a mindset of disrespect for Dalits...

JSK MOVIE CERTIFICATION: HC JUDGE TO WATCH FILM JULY 5

The Kerala High Court Wednesday said it would watch the Suresh Gopi starrer movie - 'Janaki Vs State of Kerala' (JSK) -- July 5, before deciding whether its name should be changed as insisted by the censor board



of the day quote

I am here as part of the first step towards good governance. We will transform Kuppam into a model constituency for the nation



N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM

Uddhav will not invite him (Raj Thackeray for alliance). Because if Raj joined hands with Uddhav, he would become the leader of Shiv Sena (UBT) and Uddhav would be reduced to a non-entity.



NARAYAN RANE | UNION MINISTER

Congratulations to NCB and all agencies on busting a global drug cartel. The probe set a stellar example of multi-agency coordination, resulting in 8 arrests and seizures of 5 consignments...



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Opposition demands apology from Lonikar

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Assembly was Wednesday adjourned for ten minutes following a ruckus as the Opposition demanded apology from former minister Babanrao Lonikar...

Modi arrives in Ghana

Accra (Ghana): Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday arrived in Ghana on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with the West African country's top leadership...

Bangladeshi smuggler killed

Krishnagar (WB): A Bangladeshi smuggler was killed and a BSF jawan injured in a face-off near the India-Bangladesh boundary in West Bengal's Nadia district...

Farmer beaten to death for trivial reason

Chhatrapur: A farmer was allegedly beaten to death over a petty dispute in Chhatrapur district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Wednesday.

Pilots recreate AI-171's final moments on simulator

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 2: A group of senior Air India pilots recreated on simulators some adverse conditions, such as flying with higher weight and temperature...

line's Mumbai facility within days of the crash of an Air India Dreamliner in Ahmedabad, sources said. When contacted, Air India said pilots conducted simulator tests on their own...



They attempted to create some slightly adverse conditions like with higher weight and higher temperature, while keeping (landing) gear down and retracting (wing) flaps at 50 feet

altitude," said a source. Flaps are movable panels, located along the trailing edge of an aircraft's wings, which get extended during takeoff and landing to increase the wing's surface area...

launched a probe after the tragedy and constituted a multidisciplinary team June 13. The team includes representatives from the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), an air traffic control officer, and an aviation medicine specialist.

MANDI CLOUDBURSTS

Toll rises to 11; 6 bodies recovered



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, July 2: The death toll from cloudbursts and flash flood-related incidents in the Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh has risen to 11 with the recovery of six additional bodies.

The state witnessed 11 cloudburst incidents, four flash floods and a major landslide Tuesday, most of which occurred in Mandi district, disrupting normal life

Neri-Kotla in Jogindernagar. A total of 245 roads were closed in the state following heavy rains, and 918 transformers and 683 water schemes were disrupted.

Meanwhile, the weather department has warned of low to moderate flash-flood risk in parts of five districts of Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi and Shimla in the next 24 hours.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who visited the disaster-hit Syathi village of Laungani Panchayat in Dharampur, announced a special relief package to assist in rebuilding damaged homes.

The state witnessed 11 cloudburst incidents, four flash floods and a major landslide on Tuesday, most of which occurred in Mandi district, disrupting normal life.

Cloudbursts were recorded in four locations in Gohar, three in Karsog, two in Dharampur, and one in Thunag, Mandi.

Two bodies were recovered in Siyanj, Gohar, and one each in Thunag, Dhar Jarol, and Pandeev Sheel areas, while one body was recovered from Neri-Kotla in Jogindernagar, officials said.

On Tuesday, two deaths were recorded in Bada and one in Talwara, both in Gohar; one person died in Old Bazaar, Karsog; and another body was recovered at

Most of the damage was caused in Mandi, where 151 roads were blocked for vehicular movement and 489 transformers and 465 water schemes were affected as of Wednesday evening, according to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC).

Additionally, 148 houses, 104 cattle sheds, 31 vehicles, 14 bridges and several roads were damaged. A total of 162 cattle perished in the events, while 370 people, including 316 in Mandi, were rescued and 11 remain stranded, the SEOC added.

Distraught locals recalled how they narrowly escaped after the entire village was swept away suddenly. They also informed the chief minister that they did not even have land left to pitch tents for shelter.

Sukhu, who also inspected the damage to the Mandi-Kotli road, assured that if any government land is available nearby, it will be allotted to those who lost their homes.

INDIA opposes Bihar voter roll revision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: Leaders of several INDIA bloc parties met the Election Commission over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar and raised concerns over its timing, alleging that over two crore voters of the state may be disenfranchised by this mammoth exercise being done just ahead of Assembly elections.

Leaders from 11 parties, including the Congress, RJD, CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, NCP-SP and the Samajwadi Party, put forth their objections before Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and other election commissioners to the special scrutiny of the voters' list.

The INDIA bloc parties have been vocal in their opposition to the Special Intensive Revision exercise that has already started in Bihar and is to be carried out in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which are going to the polls next year.



two crore persons may be disenfranchised in this exercise as many, especially, the SCs, STs, migratory and impoverished, among the nearly eight crore voters in Bihar may not be in a position to present their and their parents' birth certificates to the poll authorities in such a short period.

of the second most populated state in India, Bihar, which has roughly under eight crore voters. "This disenfranchisement, disempowerment is the worst attack on the basic structure of the Constitution. We gave universal adult suffrage in 1950, when so-called advanced countries like the USA and the UK got it only in 1924 and 1928.

"Today, every vote counts, even if you wrongfully delete or wrongfully add a single voter, it is creating a non-level playing field and that affects elections, that affects democracy. "Elections and democracy are part of the basic structure and it is said that even a constitutional amendment is unconstitutional if it affects the basic structure," he asserted.

Rlys to prepare charts by 9 pm for early morning trains

Since 2015, the first reservation charts have been prepared at least four hours before the scheduled departure of the train after the Railway Ministry, for the first time, framed norms in this matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: The railways will prepare seat reservation charts at 9 pm for trains starting journeys between 5 am and 2 pm the next day, while for the rest, the list will be prepared eight hours in advance.

Since 2015, the first reservation charts have been prepared at least four hours before the scheduled departure of the train after the Railway Ministry, for the first time, framed norms in this matter.

According to the ministry,

the latest change has been made for passenger convenience.

"For the trains with departure between 0500 hours and 1400 hours, the first reservation chart will be prepared preferably by 21:00 of the previous day," the Railway Board directed all zones in a July 2 circular.

For the trains with departure between 14:00 and 23:59 and 00:00 and 5:00, the first reservation chart will be prepared preferably eight hours in advance."



The circular instructed the zones to issue necessary instructions to all concerned accordingly, but did not mention any definite date of its implementation, nor did it mention any change in the preparation of the second reservation chart.

"Once the chart is ready eight hours before the train's departure, if seats/berths still remain vacant, passengers can book these under current booking facilities. The second chart is prepared 30 minutes to five minutes

before the train's departure, and this is mainly for passengers opting for tickets under the current booking," a railway official said.

"Prior to 2015, there was no fixed time schedule for chart preparation, and zones were following varying norms. The Railway Board decided to standardise it to facilitate passengers to plan their journey well in time," an official said.

Asked the reason for increasing the time gap between chart preparation and the train's departure, officials said that although there was no feedback from the passengers to enhance the time gap, it was felt by the ministry to provide more time to passengers to plan their journey.

The Railway Board had also run a pilot project in the Bikaner Rail Division for preparing

KOLKATA GANGRAPE Lawyer of accused claims consensual sex

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 2: The counsel of Monojit Mishra, prime accused in the gangrape of a student of a city-based law college, Wednesday claimed that his client had "consensual sex" with the victim and that he was "framed" for a crime of which there are "no video evidence" as being claimed in certain quarters.

"My client has been framed. The two had consensual sex, and there is evidence of that. There are marks of love bites on the left side of Monojit's neck. My client has done nothing wrong," Ganguly said.

Sources at the Alipore court, which heard the remand prayer of Mishra and the two co-accused, Zaib Ahmed and Prami Mukherjee, Tuesday, however, told PTI that the defence counsel made no such submissions before the judge. The court extended the police remand of all three prime accused in the case till July 8 and that of the arrested security guard, Pinaki Bandyopadhyay, till July 4.

"The only two submissions the defence counsel made before the judge were a prayer to remain present with his clients during police interrogation and a plea to visit the crime scene in police presence. While the judge rejected the second prayer, I am not exactly sure about what he ruled about the first," he added.

The senior advocate said that while he had brought to the attention of the court that the medico-legal test results corroborated the allegations pressed by the victim during the first day of production of the suspects before the judge, he supplemented his submission on the second day by stating that the circumstantial and electronic evidence gathered by the police also corroborated her complaint.



Security personnel keep vigil as the first batch of pilgrims leaves for the Amarnath Yatra 2025, in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

# national



**“The redressal of every public issue must be timely, transparent and result-oriented. Any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated”**  
YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

## SHUBHANSHU STUDIES MUSCLE LOSS IN SPACE

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is conducting scientific experiments on board the International Space Station (ISS) to understand muscle loss under microgravity conditions, a study that could help create medicines to treat immobility among a section of the elderly



### of the day quote

In New Delhi today, I had a fruitful meeting with Hon'ble Union Minister Shri @nitin\_gadkari Ji. We reviewed the progress of Assam's flagship infra projects and sought @MORTHIndia's cooperation in their time bound completion. Hon'ble Minister has assured us of the Ministry's undivided focus on this matter

Today, I speak not only as your chief minister but as a fellow Naga — hopeful, proud, and committed to creating an environment where every child with a dream finds the wings to soar

The Uttar Pradesh government's move to merge or consolidate primary schools under the Basic Education Council will disproportionately harm the poor and marginalised children

# 11 river sites breach flood warning levels

12 sites in Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh were flagged for "above-normal" flood situations, where water levels have crossed the warning threshold but remain below danger levels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: Water levels at 11 river monitoring stations across India have breached the warning level, but none have reached the danger or extreme flood thresholds, the Central Water Commission (CWC) said Wednesday. This alert is part of the commission's daily flood bulletin released by the Central Flood Control Room. The bulletin indicates there are currently no sites in the "severe" or "extreme" flood situation categories, meaning that no location has reached or surpassed its danger mark or highest historical flood level.



## Centre launches unified flood forecasting system

New Delhi: Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil Wednesday launched C-FLOOD, a web-based flood forecasting system, designed to sound an alarm at the village level up to two days in advance. The system has been developed by the Central Water Commission (CWC), the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC). It has been made operational under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), jointly steered by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

at Elginbridge, and Gandak at Khadda, which touched the warning level at 95 metres.

CWC issued inflow forecasts for 23 sites across 10 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The majority of Karnataka's major reservoirs, including Almati, Narayanapur, and Tungabhadra, are experiencing rising or steady trends with high inflow volumes.

However, 12 sites in Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh were flagged for "above-normal" flood situations, where water levels have crossed the warning threshold but remain below danger levels. In Assam, the Kushiyara River in Karimganj and the Brahmaputra at Neamatighat in Jorhat are among those nearing concern levels. Bihar remains under observation, with elevated water levels in the Kosi at Baltara, Bagmati at Benibad, and Gandak at Dumariaghat. Uttar Pradesh is closely monitoring four sites, including the Ganga at Fatehgarh and Kachhla Bridge, Ghagra

## Patanjali's 'Orthogrit' claims Arthritis cure

AGENCIES

National/Haridwar, July 2: Scientists at Patanjali have made significant advancements in the treatment of Osteoarthritis or Arthritis, a condition characterised by joint pain. This recent research on Ayurvedic medicine, Orthogrit, has been published in the International Research Journal Pharmacological Research Reports by Elsevier publication. This study demonstrates that Orthogrit effectively reduces inflammation caused by arthritis, prevents cartilage deterioration, and helps maintain joint functionality.

On this occasion, Acharya Balkrishna mentioned that today it is rare to find an elderly person who does not experience knee pain. Current medical treatments typically address only the symptoms rather than the underlying causes. Ayurveda, on the other hand, identifies the root cause of diseases and offers practical solutions. Orthogrit represents a blend of Ayurvedic principles and modern science, with the potential to fundamentally eliminate even diseases considered incurable, such as arthritis.

He further stated that Orthogrit is made from natural herbs, including Vacha, Motha, Daruhaldi, Pippal Mool, Ashwagandha, Nigundi, and Punarnava, which have been recognised for their benefits in reducing joint pain and swelling since ancient times in Sanatan Dharma.



A man on a cycle takes a school student pillion in the backdrop of monsoon clouds in Nadia, West Bengal

## POST OF THE DAY

Not even 3 months into the ban and Pakistani channels are back, many Pakistani actresses' Insta accounts unbanned in India, reports say India vs Pakistan Asia Cup match in September

## SHORT TAKES

### More than 20 bonnet macaques found dead

Chamarajanagar (Karnataka): Over 20 bonnet macaques were found dead along the roadside in Gundlupet taluk Wednesday morning, prompting forest officials to launch an investigation on suspicion of foul play. The incident came to light around 6.30 am when Range Forest Officers (RFOs) of the Gundlupet Buffer Zone were alerted to the presence of dead monkeys along the road between Kandegala and Kodosoge, officials said. A gunny bag was also found nearby, raising suspicion that the animals had been transported and dumped at the location, where officials later rushed to the spot and confirmed the deaths of over 20 monkeys.

### Maha: Oppn walks out from Assembly

Mumbai: Opposition in the Maharashtra legislative assembly twice staged a walk-out Wednesday over the issues of farmer suicides and non-payment to soybean cultivators whose crop was procured by government agencies. More than 700 farmers have ended their lives in the state in the first three months of this year, claimed Congress leader Vijay Wadetiwar as he moved an adjournment motion seeking a discussion on the issue.

### Nearly 200 held for illegal cattle slaughter

Guwahati: Nearly 200 people were arrested in connection with the alleged violation of the Assam Cattle Preservation Act and over 1.7 tonnes of suspected beef were seized across the state, a senior police officer said Wednesday. According to Inspector General Police (Law and Order) Akhilesh Kumar Singh, a drive was launched across Assam Tuesday to check reported incidents of illegal cattle slaughter and selling of beef in restaurants unauthorisedly.

# Siddaramaiah: Will be CM for full-term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore/Chikkaballapura, July 2: Siddaramaiah Wednesday asserted that he will be the Chief Minister of Karnataka for a full five-year term, following which a reconciled D K Shivakumar, said he will support him as he has "no option", indicating a truce between the two for the time being.



Shivakumar also said he will fulfill the directions of the Congress high command. The remarks by both the leaders came even as Congress General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka, Randeep Singh Surjewala, continued his one-on-one meetings with the party MLAs for the third consecutive day in the wake of internal bickering in the party's state unit over the Chief Minister's position.

Responding to a question about whether Surjewala's meetings will bring down disgruntlement in the party, Shivakumar said: "There is no disgruntlement in the party. He (Surjewala) is fixing accountability on matters related to the party and the organisation and how to prepare for elections from now itself." Earlier in Chikkaballapura, Siddaramaiah said the Congress party was united and the party's government will be in power "solid as a rock" for five years. "Yes, I will be. Why do you have doubts?" Siddaramaiah said in response to a question by reporters whether he will be the chief minister for five years. Asked about

the chief minister's statement, Shivakumar responded: "What option do I have? I have to stand by him, support him (Siddaramaiah). I don't have any objection to it. Whatever the party high command tells and whatever it desires, it will be fulfilled." There has been speculation within political circles, especially within the ruling Congress, about the Chief Minister change later this year, with some of the Shivakumar supporters pushing for his elevation, citing a power-sharing agreement involving Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the Chief Minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results in May 2023, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him the Deputy CM.

There were some reports at the time that a compromise had been reached based on a "rotational chief minister formula," according to which Shivakumar will become the chief minister after two-and-a-half years, but there was no official confirmation by the party.

## PARL SECURITY BREACH

# HC grants bail to Neelam Azad, Mahesh Kumawat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: The Delhi High Court Wednesday granted bail to two accused in the 2023 Parliament security breach case, saying their protest was not a terrorist act as it was more symbolic and an act of "political dissent".

A bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar granted the reprieve to Neelam Azad and Mahesh Kumawat on a personal bond of ₹50,000 each and two sureties, while forbidding them from talking about the incident to the press or on social media.

The bench also noted that while Kumawat was not in Delhi at the time of the offence, Azad was not inside the Parliament building. The bench passed the order while noting that Azad and some other accused chose the Parliament to raise their voice.

"The Parliament represents the very basis of our Democracy. It cannot be said that what the accused have done is a legitimate form of protest or demonstration. At the same time, the Appellants have not propagated any movement which can be said to be against the interest of the nation. The activities of the appellants are of the nature of propagation of ideological messages and in the opinion of this court prima facie do not constitute a terrorist act," the bench said.

It further said that the protest was "more symbolic rather than giving apprehension of substantial threat or having been done with terrorist intent. This case at this juncture appears to be a case of protest and political dissent. Even though the choice and the place of the protest is highly deprecable, it cannot be said that ingredients of UAPA are attracted while considering the issue of grant of bail".

The bench also said that had the smoke canisters, used by the accused, generated any substance which can cause death or serious injury, they would not be freely available in the market.

"This court can take judicial notice that such canisters are used in IPL games, cricket matches, and in various events and festivals like weddings, parties, Holi etc. The use of canisters which emitted yellow smoke alone does not raise a prima facie case against the appellants and as to whether those canisters could have acted as explosives or not will be tested in trial. The quantity of noxious substance in the canisters and the propensity to cause injury are also a matter of trial," the bench said.

## Infosys employee arrested for filming woman in washroom

Bangalore: A 30-year-old Infosys employee was arrested Wednesday for allegedly "filming" a female colleague inside the women's washroom at the company's Electronic City campus, police said. The accused, identified as Swapnil Nagesh Mali, a Senior Associate Consultant from Sangli, Maharashtra, was caught by HR personnel and handed over to the police. According to police, the incident occurred on Monday morning when the woman noticed a suspicious reflection and movement from an adjacent cubicle while using the washroom. Moments later, she alleged that Mali was standing on a commode in the next cubicle, filming her with his mobile phone, in her complaint. Shocked, she rushed out screaming and alerted her colleagues. The accused, who tried to flee, was caught by HR staff. On checking his phone, HR personnel found a video of the victim and another secretly recorded video of a different woman employee.

## T'gana pharma plant explosion: Toll rises to 38, govt says still 11 missing

Hyderabad: The death toll from the explosion at the Sigachi Industries' plant in Pashamylaram has risen to 38 on Wednesday even as the company announced a ₹1 crore compensation amid allegation of usage of outdated machinery in the unit. State Health Minister C Damodar Rajanarasimha, who has been supervising rescue operations at the accident site, said that 11 people were still missing. Although most of the debris has been cleared, no human remains have been found, the minister further said. Sangareddy District Superintendent of Police Paritosh Pankaj told PTI that the toll rose to 38. In a regulatory filing with bourses, Sigachi said the deadly explosion in its plant has killed 40 persons. However hours after the filing, Amit Raj Sinha, Managing Director & CEO of Sigachi told media persons "there seems to be some over calculation. I believe right now the death toll is at 38".

# No linkages between Covid vax and heart-related deaths

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had Tuesday said "hasty approval and distribution" of the Covid vaccine to the public could also be a reason for these deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 2: In the wake of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah linking heart-related deaths in Hassan district to Covid vaccine, the Union Health Ministry Wednesday said extensive studies by ICMR and AIIMS have conclusively established no linkages between coronavirus vaccines and sudden deaths.

Siddaramaiah had Tuesday said "hasty approval and distribution" of the Covid vaccine to the public could also be a reason for these deaths.

He urged everyone to visit the nearest health centre immediately for a check-up if they

have symptoms such as chest pain or difficulty breathing, and not to ignore these signs.

The ministry said the matter of sudden unexplained deaths has been investigated through several agencies in the country and these studies have conclusively established that there is no direct link between COVID-19 vaccination and reports of sudden deaths. Studies by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) affirm that COVID-19 vaccines in India are safe and effective, with extremely rare instances of serious side effects, it said. Sudden cardiac deaths can



result from a wide range of factors, including genetics, lifestyle, pre-existing conditions, and post-Covid complications, the ministry said in a statement. The ICMR and NCDC have been working together to understand the causes behind

sudden unexplained deaths, especially in young adults between the ages of 18 and 45 years. To explore this, two complementary studies were undertaken using different research approaches -- one based on past data and another involving real-time investigation.

The first study conducted by ICMR's National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) was titled "Factors associated with unexplained sudden deaths among adults aged 18-45 years in India - a multi-centric matched case control study."

This study was carried out from May to August 2023 across 47 tertiary care hospitals in 19 states and Union territories, the

statement said.

It looked at individuals who appeared to be healthy but died suddenly between October 2021 and March 2023. The findings have conclusively showed that COVID-19 vaccination does not increase the risk of unexplained sudden deaths in young adults. The second study titled "Establishing the cause in sudden unexplained deaths in young" is currently being conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi with funding and in collaboration with ICMR. This is a prospective study aimed at determining the common causes of sudden deaths in young adults.



The United States is very pleased with the successful integration of many US defence items into India's inventory

EUROPE BAKES IN HEAT WAVE

Two people died in Spain in a wildfire that spread quickly before firefighters brought it under control, authorities said, as a European heat wave sent thermometers soaring again Wednesday.



of the day quote

To the entire nation, especially PTI workers and supporters, I urge them to rise against this tyrannical system after Ashura. I would rather live in a dark prison cell than accept this slavery



MIRAN KHAN | JAILED FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

The steam-roller of repressions doesn't stop, and the authorities continue to stifle any dissent in Belarus, opening new high-profile cases. No one, absolutely no one can feel safe in Belarus



PAVEL SAPELKA | A RIGHTS ADVOCATE, BELARUS

There's a better chance for Russia to come to some kind of terms with Ukraine in the fall when the Russians see the extent of their offensive



SERGEY RADCHENKO | RUSSIAN-BRITISH MILITARY HISTORIAN

Gaza truce on cards

Trump's ceasefire statement raises hopes in Gaza as Israel presses on with attacks



REUTERS

Cairo, July 2: Word from US President Donald Trump that Israel has agreed to the conditions needed to finalise a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza raised hopes Wednesday in the enclave, where health officials said at least 20 people had been killed in Israeli attacks.

A "final" proposal would be delivered by the mediators, Qatar and Egypt, to Hamas, Trump said in a social media post Tuesday, after what he described as a "long and productive" meeting between his representatives and Israeli officials.

Gazans said even a temporary pause would bring relief. "I hope it would work this time, even if for two months, it would save thousands of innocent lives," Kamal, a resident of Gaza City, said by phone.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar wrote on X Wednesday that a majority within the coalition government would back an agreement that would see the release of the remaining hostages held by Hamas militants in Gaza.

"If there is an opportunity to do so - we must not miss it!", he wrote on X. Of 50 hostages still held, around 20 are believed to be still alive.

- Trump says Israel has agreed to conditions for a ceasefire
Israeli minister says most of cabinet backs a deal
Hamas source says militants will study the proposal
Gazans hope a 60-day truce will lead to end of war

For Gazans, who have fled multiple times and face daily struggles to find food 21 months into Israel's military campaign, the statements provided a glimmer of hope.

"Everyone is hopeful that it would work this time, there is no room for more failures, every day more costs us our lives," said Tamer Al-Burai, a businessman.

"We are living the most difficult days. People want an end to the war, an end to the starvation and humiliation."

There was no immediate official comment by either Israel or Hamas to Trump's latest statement on the progress of the plan.

"Israel has agreed to the necessary conditions to finalise the 60 Day CEASEFIRE, during which time we will work with all parties to end the War,"

Trump's statement said, without specifying the conditions.

IRAN LINK

The US president appeared to be seeking to use any momentum from US and Israeli strikes on nuclear sites in Iran and a recently agreed ceasefire in that conflict to put pressure on Hamas, which is backed by Tehran. Israeli leaders also believe that, with Iran weakened by last month's 12-day war, other countries in the region have an opportunity to forge ties with Israel.

A Hamas official declined immediate comment on Trump's statement. A source close to the group said leaders of the Islamist faction were expected to debate the proposal and seek clarifications from mediators before giving an official response.

At the end of May, Hamas had said it was seeking amendments to a US-backed ceasefire proposal, which Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff said was "totally unacceptable."

That proposal had involved a 60-day ceasefire and the release of half the hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and the remains of other Palestinians; Hamas would release the remaining hostages as part of a deal that guarantees the end of the war.

The war began when Hamas fighters stormed into Israel October 7, 2023, killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took 251 hostages back to Gaza in a surprise attack that led to Israel's single deadliest day.

Israel's subsequent military assault has killed more than 56,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to the Gaza health ministry, displaced almost the whole 2.3 million population and plunged the enclave into a humanitarian crisis.



University students scuffle with police during a protest called by main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), in Istanbul, Turkey

Quad condemns Pahalgam attack without naming Pak

AGENCIES

Washington, July 2: The Quad grouping of the United States, India, Japan and Australia called Tuesday for the perpetrators of an Islamist militant attack that killed 26 in India-administered Kashmir to be brought to justice without delay.

The April 22 attack sparked heavy fighting between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan in the latest escalation of a decades-old rivalry as India blamed it on Pakistan, which denied responsibility while calling for a neutral investigation.

The US State Department issued, opens new tab a joint statement by the foreign ministers of the grouping, who met in Washington, but stopped short of naming Pakistan or blaming Islamabad.

The Quad unequivocally



- Attack in India-administered Kashmir sparked hostilities
Ceasefire between India, Pakistan announced May 10
Trump takes credit for ceasefire, India differs

condemns all acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, the ministers said in the statement.

They called on all members of the United Nations to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in delivering justice

to the perpetrators, organizers, and financiers of this reprehensible act, without any delay.

India is an increasingly important US partner in Washington's effort to counter China's rising influence in Asia while Pakistan is a US ally.

On May 7, Indian jets bombed sites across the border that New Delhi described as terrorist infrastructure, setting off an exchange of attacks between the two countries by fighter jets, missiles, drones and artillery that killed dozens until a ceasefire May 10.

CONTEMPT CASE

Hasina sentenced to six months

REUTERS

Dhaka, July 2: Bangladesh's ousted and self-exiled Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was sentenced to six months in prison by the country's International Crimes Tribunal Wednesday in a contempt of court case, a top prosecutor said.

Hasina has been facing multiple cases since she fled to India after deadly student-led protests in August, but it was the first time the former leader was sentenced in one of them.

Shakil Akand Bulbul, a leader of the Awami League party's banned student wing Chhatra League, was also sentenced to two months in prison in the same case, Chief Prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam told reporters. The party had been led by Hasina for years.

A three-member ICT tribunal, led by Justice Golam Mor-tuza Mozumder, delivered the verdict in their absence, noting



that the sentences will take effect upon arrest or surrender, the prosecutor added.

The contempt charges stem from a leaked phone recording where Hasina was allegedly heard saying, "there are 227 cases against me, so I now have a licence to kill 227 people."

A forensic report by a government investigative agency later confirmed the audio's authenticity.

The ICT was originally set up in 2010 by Hasina's own government to try 1971 war crimes.

Iran suspends cooperation with IAEA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, July 2: Iran's president Wednesday ordered the country to suspend its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency after American and Israeli airstrikes hit its most-important nuclear facilities, likely further limiting inspectors' ability to track Tehran's programme that had been enriching uranium to near weapons-grade levels.

The order by President Masoud Pezeshkian included no timetables or details about what that suspension would entail. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi signalled in a CBS News interview that Tehran still would be willing to continue negotiations with the United States.

"I don't think negotiations will restart as quickly as that," Araghchi said, referring to Trump's comments that talks could start as early as this week. However, he added: "The doors of diploma-



cy will never slam shut."

Iran has limited IAEA inspections in the past as a pressure tactic in negotiating with the West — though as of right now Tehran has denied that there's any immediate plans to resume talks with the United States that had been upended by the 12-day Iran-Israel war.

A diplomat with knowledge of IAEA operations, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the situation in Iran, said that IAEA inspectors were

still there after the announcement and hadn't been told by the government to leave.

ISRAEL CONDEMNS MOVE

Iran's decision drew an immediate condemnation from Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar.

"Iran has just issued a scandalous announcement about suspending its cooperation with the IAEA," he said in an X post. "This is a complete renunciation of all its international nuclear obligations and

commitments."

Saar urged European nations that were part of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal to implement its so-called snapback clause. That would reimpose all UN sanctions on it originally lifted by Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, if one of its Western parties declares the Islamic Republic is out of compliance with it.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, and the IAEA doesn't have access to its weapons-related facilities.

Iran's move so far stops short of what experts feared the most. They had been concerned that Tehran, in response to the war, could decide to fully end its cooperation with the IAEA, abandon the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and rush toward a bomb. That treaty has countries agree not to build or obtain nuclear weapons and allows the IAEA to conduct inspections to verify that countries correctly declared their programmes.

US halts some arms to Ukraine; Kyiv concerned

The move comes as Russian forces, which control about a fifth of Ukraine, have made significant gains in a grinding summer campaign in the east



ington, saying any cut-off would embolden Russia as diplomatic efforts to end the war falter.

The Pentagon's pause due to concerns that US stockpiles are too low came in recent days and includes precision munitions and air defence interceptors that knock down Russian drones and missiles, two people

familiar with the decision said Tuesday. "The Ukrainian side emphasised that any delay or procrastination in supporting Ukraine's defense capabilities will only encourage the aggressor to continue the war and terror, rather than seek peace," Kyiv's foreign ministry said in a statement.

- US pausing weapons shipments due to low stockpiles say sources
Ukraine says the military aid is vital as Russian attacks rise
Dozens killed in air strikes on Ukrainian cities in recent weeks

Ukraine's defence ministry said it had not been officially notified of any halt in US shipments and was seeking clarity from its American counterparts.

Dozens of people have been killed in recent weeks during air strikes on Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv, that have involved hundreds of attack drones in addition to ballistic and cruise missiles.

Since US President Donald Trump took office in January, he has softened Washington's position toward Russia, seeking

a diplomatic solution to the war and raising doubts about future US military support for Kyiv's war effort. Last week, Trump said he was considering selling more Patriot air defense missiles to Ukraine following a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Politico, which reported the pause Tuesday, said it includes the critical Patriot air defence missiles which Ukraine has relied on to destroy fast-moving ballistic missiles.

Fedir Venislavskyy, a member of the Ukrainian parliament's national security and defense committee, called the decision to halt the shipments "very unpleasant for us".

The Kremlin Wednesday welcomed the news of a halt, saying the conflict would end sooner if fewer arms flowed to Ukraine.

Combs faces possible jail time after mixed verdict

Sean "Diddy" Combs, who elevated hip-hop in American culture while building a music and clothing empire that made him a billionaire, was found guilty of prostitution-related offenses but cleared of sex trafficking



ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, July 2: Sean "Diddy" Combs was convicted of a prostitution-related offence but acquitted Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that could have put one of hip-hop's most celebrated figures behind bars for life.

The mixed result came on the third day of deliberations. It could still send Combs, 55, to prison for as long as a decade, and is likely to end his career as a hitmaking music executive,

fashion entrepreneur, brand ambassador and reality TV star.

Combs was convicted of flying people around the country, including his girlfriends and paid male sex workers, to engage in sexual encounters, a felony violation of the federal Mann Act. But the jury of eight men and four women acquitted Combs of racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges, related to allegations that he used his money, power and frightening physical force to manipulate his girlfriends into hundreds of drug-fuelled sex marathons with the men.



**We are deeply confident in the potential of India's dynamic financial ecosystem. This milestone complements our commitment to fostering innovation, investment and facilitating trade between India and multiple key corridors in the Middle East and across the world, as we aim to leverage our extensive global network**

**AHMED ABDEAL** | GROUP CEO, MASHREQ

**GOLD CLIMBS RS 500 PER 10 G; SILVER TRADES FLAT**

Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 99,170 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, tracking heavy global buying amid renewed concerns over US tariffs. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended Rs 1,200 higher at Rs 98,670 per 10 grams Tuesday. The yellow metal has gained Rs 1,700 per 10 grams in the two consecutive sessions. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 450 to Rs 98,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes)



**of the day** **QUOTE**

**Tokenisation could favour small and medium enterprises (SMEs) access to credit by narrowing the information gap. Further, SMEs could improve their collateral offering by tokenising real assets or trade receivables, thus improving their standing in the credit market**

**M RAJESHWAR RAO** | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

**GCCs contribute significantly to the office market in India, accounting for over 40 per cent of the absorption recorded in the past two years**

**SHRINIVAS RAO** | CEO, VESTIAN

**As a part of its global mineral diversification strategy, NMDC has been actively evaluating acquisition opportunities across 10 strategic mineral assets globally and exploring critical mineral block acquisitions in Africa, Australia & South America to strengthen its presence in the global critical mineral value chain**

**AMITAVA MUKHERJEE** | CMD, NMDC

**SHORT TAKES**

**Microsoft announces another layoff**

**Redmond (US):** Microsoft is firing thousands of workers, its second mass layoff in months. The tech giant began sending out layoff notices Wednesday. The Company declined to say how many people would be laid off but said that it will comprise less than 4% of the workforce it had a year ago. Microsoft said the cuts will affect multiple teams around the world, including its sales division and its Xbox video game business. Microsoft employed 228,000 full-time workers as of last June, the last time it reported its annual headcount. The company said Wednesday that its latest layoffs would cut close to four per cent of that workforce, which would be about 9,000 people. But it has already had at least three layoffs this year. Microsoft also cut another 300 workers based out of its Redmond, Washington headquarters in June, on top of nearly 2,000 who lost their jobs in the Puget Sound region in May, according to notices it sent to Washington state employment officials.

**PVR INOX plans to add 200 screens**

**New Delhi:** Cinema exhibitor PVR INOX plans to add around 200 screens in two years at an investment of up to Rs 400 crore, its Executive Director Sanjeev Kumar Bijli said Wednesday. The company's expansion plans will majorly focus on South India, followed by smaller cities and towns in the next two years. Out of the 100 screens, 40 screens are in South India, including Hyderabad, Bangalore and Hubli. At the same time, some cinemas will come up in Mumbai, Delhi, and Gurugram, and some smaller towns like Siliguri, Jabalpur, Leh and Gangtok. For 200 screens that the company has planned, its investment will be around Rs 350-400 crore.

**SEBI mandates CCN**

**New Delhi:** To make trading easier for institutional investors and market participants, SEBI has made it mandatory to issue a Common Contract Note (CCN) with a single volume weighted average price (VWAP), starting June 27. A contract note refers to a legal document that presents the summary of all the trades executed during a trading day. Based on the representation received from market participants, the regulator decided to provide uniformity in post-trade communication.

**MOTOR VEHICLE GUIDELINES-2025**

**Cab fares to rise 2X during peak hours**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** The road transport ministry has allowed cab aggregators to charge up to two times the base fare during peak hours, as against 1.5 times, while for non-peak hours the fare has to be a minimum of 50 per cent of the base fare.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in its 'Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025' said "the aggregator shall be permitted to charge a minimum of 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum dynamic pricing of two times the base fare specified under sub-clause (17.1)."

Moreover, the base fare chargeable shall be for a minimum of three kilometers to compensate for dead mileage, including the distance trav-



elled without a passenger and the distance travelled and fuel utilized for picking up the passenger(s).

As per the guidelines, the fare notified by the state government for the respective category or class of motor vehicles,

shall be the base fare chargeable to passengers availing services from the aggregator.

States have been advised to adopt the revised guidelines within three months.

In case of cancellations, a penalty of 10 per cent of the fare

**MV industry hails MVAG**

**I**ndia's ride-hailing and bike-taxi industry has welcomed the government's new Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines (MVAG) 2025, calling it a major step toward regulatory clarity, innovation, and expanded affordable mobility across the country. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Tuesday issued the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines (MVAG) 2025, providing long-awaited regulatory clarity for India's shared mobility sector by officially permitting states to allow the use of non-transport (private) motorcycles for passenger rides through aggregator platforms. This move brings relief to bike taxi operators like Rapido and Uber. Uber lauded the guidelines as a "forward-looking step toward fostering innovation and regulatory clarity." The policy shift will act as a catalyst for creating lakhs of flexible livelihood opportunities for riders across urban and rural India, promote shared and low-emission transport in line with India's climate commitments and formalise the gig economy with technology-backed platforms and regulatory support, said Rapido. Rapido specifically welcomed the operationalisation of Clause 23 of the MVAG 2025. This clause permits the aggregation of non-transport motorcycles for passenger journeys, a move Rapido described as a "milestone in India's journey towards a Viksit Bharat".

**Markets end lower**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, July 2:** Benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 287 points Wednesday due to profit selling in HDFC Bank, L&T and Reliance Industries shares. The BSE Sensex closed lower by 287.60 points or 0.34 per cent at 83,409.69.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 88.40 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 25,453.40.

Among Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major laggards. However, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, and Trent were the biggest gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.20 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.18 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 1.36 per cent, financial services (0.92 per cent), industrials (0.84 per cent), power (0.77 per cent), bankex (0.69 per cent) and capital goods (0.69 per cent).

Metal (1.44 per cent), consumer durables (1.22 per cent), commodities (0.90 per cent), telecommunication (0.55 per cent) and auto (0.22 per cent). As many as 2,205 stocks declined while 1,809 advanced and 157 remained unchanged on BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled lower while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher.

**HDB FINANCIAL SHINES**

REUTERS

**Mumbai, July 2:** India's HDB Financial Services jumped more than 13% in its trading debut Wednesday, notching the non-bank lender a valuation of \$8.2 billion at day's high, as investors bet on long-term growth prospects in the world's most populous country.

HDB's \$1.5 billion IPO is the largest in India this year so far and also the biggest ever by a non-bank lender. The stock rose to as much as 849.85 rupees in Mumbai compared with its offer price of 740 rupees. The shares were last trading at 833.55 rupees while India's benchmark Nifty 50 index was marginally down.

The firm, a unit of India's top private lender HDFC Bank



gives out personal, home, vehicle and gold loans, among other offerings. It had targeted a valuation of \$7.1 billion. Demand at the IPO was boosted by qualified institutional buyers such

as foreign investors and mutual funds, whose bids were 55 times the shares reserved for them.

India's IPO market is witnessing an upswing after a slow start to the year. As many as 143 IPOs are being planned worth a potential \$26 billion, according to IPO tracker PRIME Database. Firms have raised \$5.86 billion through IPOs in 2025, maintaining India's position as the world's second-largest IPO market after US, according to LSEG data.

At HDB Financial's IPO, parent HDFC Bank sold 100 billion rupees of shares last week while the firm issued fresh stock worth 25 billion rupees. In all, the IPO garnered bids worth \$19 billion. HDB also raised \$321 million from anchor investors such as BlackRock.

**53% of Indian firms' paid ransom to recover data from cyberattacks**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** UK-based cybersecurity firm Sophos Wednesday claimed that 53 per cent of Indian companies that faced ransomware attacks in 2024 paid the hackers to get their data back.

According to the State of Ransomware in India 2025 report, the median payout towards ransom was \$481,636 (about Rs 4 crore), down 79 per cent from the previous year.

The findings are based on a survey commissioned by Sophos and conducted during January-March 2025. As many as 378 Indian IT and cybersecurity firms affected by a ransomware attack were part of the study.

However, the survey did not name any companies which fell prey to cyberattacks and paid



the ransom for recovery of data. "The median ransom demand fell by 52 per cent, from \$2 million to \$961,289, while the median payment dropped even more sharply by 79 per cent to \$481,636," the report said.

Even though companies are paying less ransom, they spend a lot of money fixing the damage caused by these attacks. On average, Indian companies spend about \$1.01 million on recovery costs, excluding the ransom money, the report said.

The most common technical causes of ransomware attacks were exploited vulnerabilities (29 per cent), compromised credentials (22 per cent), and malicious emails (21 per cent).

Operational challenges such as lack of skilled personnel, poor-quality protection, and insufficient cybersecurity products were cited by around 40 per cent of respondents as contributing factors to ransomware victimization.

**UCO bank gets new Zonal head**

**CUTTACK:** Varsha has joined as the new Zonal Head of Cuttack Zone of UCO Bank. Prior to this, she served as DGM in Head Office of Risk Management Department. She was serving as Retail Loan Hub Head in Kolkata. She has started her career in UCO Bank as a Probationary Officer in 2006 and has worked in different places in different capacities and gained vast experience. Varsha is having a degree in Master of Science in Agriculture. During her tenure as Zonal Head in Cuttack Zone, She is likely to give more emphasis to Retail, Agriculture & MSME Credit, CASA Deposit, Financial Inclusion and better customer service.



**TPCODL wins prestigious Industry Award**

**BHUBANESWAR:** TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TP-CODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and Odisha government, has been honoured with the Industry Award under the Transmission & Distribution category at the 19th National Awards for Excellence in Cost Management -2024, and the 8th CMA Awards - 2024. The award ceremony was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, recognising organisations that have demonstrated outstanding cost management practices and operational excellence. Hemant Goyal, CFO, TPCODL; Siba Prasad Kar, CGM (Finance), and Sudhanshu Kumar Sahu, Senior GM (Finance), received the award on behalf of TPCODL. This recognition is a testament to TPCODL's consistent efforts towards financial efficiency, transparency and delivering quality services to consumers. TPCODL remains committed to innovation and sustainability in power distribution, ensuring reliable and efficient electricity supply to the people of Central Odisha.



**SBI labels RCom loan account 'fraud'**

*Multiple transactions do not appear to be genuine or conducted in a normal course of business. It appears that RCom has utilized intra-day limits to finance RWSL to pay collection proceeds worth ₹1,110 crore, said report*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** State Bank of India has decided to classify the loan account of beleaguered telecom firm Reliance Communications as "fraud" and to report the name of its erstwhile director -- Anil Ambani to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), according to a regulatory filing.

Reliance Communications in a regulatory filing said that it has received a letter dated June 23, 2025 from the State Bank of India (SBI) to this effect.

According to the filing, Reliance Communications (RCom) and its subsidiaries received a total loan of Rs 31,580 crore from banks. The Fraud Identification Committee of the bank has found deviation in utilization of the loans involving complex web of fund movements across multiple group entities.

The letter marked to Reliance Communications and its erstwhile director Anil Ambani stated that SBI has decided to report the loan account of the company as "fraud" and to report the name of Anil Ambani to the RBI, as per the extant RBI guidelines, the filing said.

RCom is at present going through a liquidation process. The committee found that out of the total loan, Rs 13,667.73 crore, about 44 per cent, was utilized for the repayment of loans and other obligations.

An amount of Rs 12,692.31 crore, 41 per cent of total loan, was utilized to pay connected parties.

According to the filing, Rs 6,265.85 crore was used for repaying other bank loans and Rs 5,501.56 crore was paid to related or connected parties

**India's tyre export rises**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** Tyre exports from India grew 9 per cent year-on-year to Rs 25,051 crore in FY25 despite headwinds, including trade policy uncertainties and global supply chain disruptions, the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association said Wednesday.

With nearly 40 per cent of the industry's natural rubber (NR) requirement met through imports due to limited domestic availability, the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said there is an urgent need to accelerate domestic production through focused interventions to meet rising demand.

India's tyre exports in 2024-25 increased by 9 per cent year-on-year, reaching Rs 25,051 crore compared to Rs 23,075 crore in the previous fiscal, ATMA said, citing data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

With an estimated annual turnover of Rs 1 lakh crore and exports exceeding Rs 25,000 crore, the Indian tyre industry stands out as one of the few manufacturing sectors in the country with a high export-to-turnover ratio, it added.

"The tyre industry has exhibited remarkable resilience and growth post the COVID-19 downturn. Over the past 3-4 years, tyre manufacturers have invested approximately Rs 27,000 crore across greenfield and brownfield projects, underscoring their strong belief in India's economic trajectory," ATMA Chairman Arun Mammen said.

# Gill's hard-fought ton



**GILL TON, JAISWAL'S 87 TAKE INDIA TO 310 FOR 5 ON DAY 1 OF 2ND TEST AGAINST ENGLAND**

**PACE SPEARHEAD JASPRIT BUMRAH WAS RESTED FROM THE SECOND TEST AS PART OF HIS WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT**

on 41 not out, shared an unbroken 99-run stand for the sixth wicket and helped India recover well from 211/5. For England, local lad Chris Woakes was the standout bowler with two wickets and could easily have had at least a couple more if he was on the right side of DRS. Brydon Carse, Ben Stokes and Shoaib Bashir all claimed one apiece. The final session began sedately, before a ball change was made due to it being stuck in the gauge. Gill then used his feet nicely to take a four each off Woakes and Bashir – second of which got him his fifty in 125 balls.

While Jadeja took boundaries off Bashir and Tongue, Gill cut off the pacer for four, before sweeping on consecutive deliveries off Joe Root to bring up his seventh Test hundred off 199 deliveries, with a trademark roar and gentle bow. After the second new ball was taken, Gill and Jadeja got a boundary each before a solid day of Test cricket came to an end.

### BRIEF SCORES

India 310/5 in 85 overs (Shubman Gill 114 not out, Yashasvi Jaiswal 87; Chris Woakes 2-59, Brydon Carse 1-49) against England

Gill, coming after making 147 in Headingley, showed immense responsibility as well as patience and played like someone extremely determined to grind it out to be unbeaten on 114 off 216 deliveries, laced with 12 boundaries.

During his unbeaten knock, which is his fourth Test hundred against England, Gill has become just the second Indian captain af-

ter Mohammad Azharuddin to score hundreds in consecutive Tests in England.

He is also the third India captain with hundreds in consecutive Tests against England, after Azharuddin (Lord's and Old Trafford in 1990) and Vijay Hazare (Delhi and Brabourne in 1951/52). After Yashasvi Jaiswal hit an enterprising 87, Gill and Ravindra Jadeja, who ended the day

**A CHANCE TO BE PART OF**

# METTLE MEET 2025

## OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW

### QUIZ Extravaganza

**It's time for METTLE MEET.** An initiative by the state's only home grown English daily, **OrissaPOST** to revive quizzing in Odisha. This year, the Preliminaries will take place August 9 and the Grand Finale August 10. Like in the previous years, top educational institutions of the State both from schools and higher education institutions will be competing for Prizes worth ₹3,50,000 & the Champions Title in both Junior and Senior segments.

**As a reader of OrissaPOST, this is a chance for you to be part of the exciting Grand Finale if you can give correct answers in the daily quiz. Starting today, there will be one question each day for you to answer till July 31, 2025. Every day two winners will be selected from correct entries. Then winners will be decided by draw of lots. 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 and get set for some brainstorming.**

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

Turning 45 today is the lead actor of the 2021 Tamil film *Friendship*. While he does have both films and TV entries in his Filmography section on Wikipedia, he became known to Tamil audiences when he spent significant time there playing his trade in the profession he is best known for. Who?

**ANSWER TO WEDNESDAY'S QUESTION**

**Kalindi Charan Panigrahi**

**RULES & REGULATIONS**

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to [mettlemeet@orissapost.com](mailto: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.
- OrissaPOST'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 not be entertained.
- 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 or families of **OrissaPOST** team can be part of the competition.

**THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS**

**AMRIT KUMAR MUNDA**

**SALONI MOHAPATRA**

**Others who answered correctly are**

Abha Priyadarshini, R Sekhar Rao, Madhura Roy, Anurag Samantary, Bhubanananda behera, Dibyanshu Pani, Amrit Kumar Munda, Rudra Sabitru Bhanja, Bhubanananda behera, Ronan Slade Toppo, Saloni Mohapatra, Biswajit Sahoo, Smruti Ranjan Senth, Sushanta Kumar Das, Amar Kumar Jena, Jigyansa Priyadarshini, Pratyush Satapathy, Ruchismita Prusty, Debashree Manshi Mishra, Sarat Chandra Misra

**Birmingham, July 2:** Shubman Gill was at his determined best to hit a hard-fought seventh Test hundred – his second as India's captain – as the visitors' reached 310/5 in 85 overs at stumps on day one of second Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy Test against England at Edgbaston Wednesday. Under sunny blue sky,

## SHORT TAKES

### Yarraj suffers injury

**New Delhi:** Asian champion and national record holder 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraj has suffered a knee injury while training a "few days back", in a big blow to her World Championships hopes later this year. Yarraj, also an Asian Games silver medallist, has a high chance of qualifying for the World Championships in Tokyo in September. However, the recent injury could derail those ambitions. "Due to an unfortunate injury to my knee during training a few days back, I've had to put a pause on my season," Yarraj, who holds the national record of 12.78 second, posted on her Instagram story.

### Athletes' ban reduced

**New Delhi:** The four-year bans on track and field athletes Pooja Rani, Kiran, Pankaj and Chelimi Pratyusha for evading dope tests has been reduced by one year after they accepted their offence within 20 days of being charged. The quartet was among several athletes who were suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) earlier this year under Article 2.3 of the anti-doping rules, which deals with "evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection by an athlete" without compelling justification.

### Madrid beat Juventus

**Miami Gardens:** Breakout tournament star Gonzalo Garcia scored his third goal of the Club World Cup to power Real Madrid past Juventus 1-0 in the round of 16 and into the quarterfinals. Garcia has started all four of Real Madrid's matches because of a gastrointestinal illness to star striker Kylian Mbappé. The 21-year-old broke a second-half tie with a header in the 54th minute on Tuesday, giving him a goal contribution in every match of the tournament. Garcia subbed out in the 68th as Mbappé checked in, making his Club World Cup debut after he was briefly hospitalized with the illness. He missed Real Madrid's three group stage matches.

# Blue Tigresses extend unbeaten run

**INDIA BEAT IRAQ 5-0, A STEP AWAY FROM WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP QUALIFICATION**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chiang Mai (Thailand), July 2:** The Indian women's football team produced another commanding performance in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers, thrashing Iraq 5-0 here Wednesday.

India led 2-0 at half-time. First-half goals from Sangita Basfore and Manisha set the tone before a dominant second half saw Karthika Angamuthu, Phanjoubam Nirmala Devi, and Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi add to the scoreline, taking India's goal tally to an impressive 22 from three games, all without conceding a single one.

With this result, the Blue Tigresses remain unbeaten.



India are currently atop Group B with nine points and a goal difference of +22. With Thailand, currently second in the group with six points and set to face Mongolia later in the

day, the stage is set for a high-stakes showdown between India and the host country Saturday.

With only the group winner progressing, it will be a winner-takes-all

affair Saturday.

On Wednesday, India, coming off thumping wins against Mongolia (13-0) and Timor-Leste (4-0), were high on confidence and wasted no time in asserting their authority.

Crispin Chhetri's side played with fluency and control, showcasing impressive cohesion across all areas of the pitch.

From the opening whistle, India seized control and used the full width of the pitch to stretch the Iraqi defence. Their midfielders dictated the tempo with intelligent passing and quick transitions.

India continued their relentless press with waves of attacks, keeping Iraq pinned back in their own half.

# Amanjot, Rodrigues power India to win over England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bristol, July 2:** Indian juggernaut in the white-ball tour continued as Amanjot Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues hit radiant fifties to propel the visitors to a commanding 24-run win over England in the second T20 International here.

Tuesday night's win handed Harmanpreet Kaur's side a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, having won the opener by a record-shattering 97-run margin last week.

Amanjot (63 not out off 40 balls), who scored her maiden T20I fifty, and Rodrigues (63 off 41 deliveries) posted a formidable 181 for 4 after being asked to bat.

The Indian bowlers, led by spinners, then did their bit to restrict the home side to 157 for 7 in 20 overs despite Tammy Beaumont's



35-ball 54, marking the first time any team has been able to beat England in a women's T20I in Bristol.

"Good win for us, the way the entire team performed today was special to see. The way Jemimah and Amanjot played gave us a platform. When boundaries were not coming they were looking for twos. Still it's a long time to see how it'll be in the World Cup. Just focus on this series. Spin is our strength and I want to back that," Harmanpreet said after the win.

# Alcaraz ends Tarvet's adventure, Sabalenka avoids upset

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**London, July 2:** Carlos Alcaraz spoiled Oliver Tarvet's Wimbledon adventure as the defending champion moved into the third round with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over the British amateur Wednesday after Aryna Sabalenka stemmed the tide of shock exits.

A record-breaking number of seeds crashed out at the All England Club in the first round, but Alcaraz and women's world number one Sabalenka avoided seismic shocks on Centre Court. Second-seeded Alcaraz needed two hours and 17 minutes to subdue world number 733 Tarvet, who produced flashes of his emerging talent to delight the partisan crowd.

"First of all I have to give big praise to Oliver. In his second match on the tour, I just loved his game to be honest," Alcaraz said. "I knew I had to play my best tennis. I was really happy with my performance but big praise to him as well." Alcaraz has won his



past 20 matches since losing to Holger Rune in the Barcelona final in April, a blistering streak that has brought him titles at the Rome Masters, the French Open and Queen's Club.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, who fought back from two sets down to beat Jan-nik Sinner on clay in an epic final at Roland Garros last month, has won 31 of his 34 Tour-level matches on grass.

His last defeat at Wimbledon came against Sinner in the fourth round in 2022.

Having vanquished Novak Djokovic in the past two Wimbledon finals, Alcaraz is looking to join an elite group of Wimbledon icons.

The world number two hopes to become the fifth man in the Open Era to win at least three consecutive Wimbledon titles after seven-time champion Djokovic, Bjorn Borg, Roger Federer and Pete Sampras.

**'I hope it's no upsets anymore'**  
Sabalenka had opened

proceedings on Centre Court Wednesday, out-duelling 48th-ranked Marie Bouzkova 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in a heavy-hitting contest.

The Belarusian, who suffered painful defeats in the finals of both the Australian Open and the French Open this year, lashed an impressive 41 winners in a match lasting one hour and 35 minutes.

It meant she avoided the fate of several top stars including second seed Coco Gauff, third seed Jessica Pegula and fifth seed Zheng

## Yuki-Galloway pair enters second round

**London:** India's Yuki Bhambri and his American partner Robert Galloway progressed to the second round of men's doubles event at the Wimbledon with straight-sets win over Romain Arneodo of Monaco and Manuel Guinard of France here Wednesday. The 16th-seeded Indo-American pair defeated Arneodo and Guinard 7-6(8) 6-4 in a first-round match that lasted one hour and 49 minutes. Yuki and Galloway will next take on the winner of the match between the Dutch combination of Robin Haase and Jean-Julien Rojer and American Marcos Giron and Nuno Borges of Portugal in the next round.



Qinwen, who crashed out in the first round.

"Honestly it's very sad to see so many top players losing in the first round but you better focus on yourself and stay away

from the results," said the three-time Grand Slam winner in her on-court interview. "I hope it's no upsets anymore in this tournament, if you know what I mean!"

## Under-fire Marquez quits as head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 2:** Embattled India football head coach Manolo Marquez stepped down Wednesday after reaching a "mutual agreement" with the All India Football Federation (AIFF), which was under pressure to fix accountability for the recent downward spiral of the national team.

The AIFF Executive Committee, in its meeting here, agreed to relieve the 56-year-old Marquez after he expressed his desire to do so despite one year still left in his contract.

"The AIFF and Manolo decided to mutually part ways without any financial implications to any of the two parties. So, he is relieved from being India coach. The AIFF will shortly advertise for the post of head coach," AIFF Deputy Secretary General K Satyanarayana told PTI.

The Spaniard was appointed as head coach in June 2024 for a two-year tenure. He worked in a dual role last year as he was also the head coach of Indian Super League side FC Goa in 2024-25 season.

India logged just one win from their last eight matches under Marquez's tutelage, the lone victory coming against Maldives in March.

This year, India have so far played four matches, out of which they have won one, drew another, and lost two. The poor results prompted the return of former skipper and iconic striker Sunil Chhetri to the squad but that has done little to improve the team's fortunes.

Marquez has been one of the longest serving foreign coaches in Indian football, having managed multiple Indian clubs. He has secured trophies, including the Super Cup and the ISL Cup.

His tenure of one year is the shortest among Indian head coaches in the last decade -- Stephen Constantine was India head coach from 2015-2019 before Igor Stimac (2019-2024).