Tech trap

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu opens up about the toxic relationship she has in her life with her mobile phone

LEISURE | P2



Crete inferno

Hundreds of firefighters battle a blaze on the island of Crete that scorched forests and olive groves and led to the evacuation of over 1,000 people

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Service sector growth

Indian services sector growth touches a ten-month high in June aided by robust expansion in international sales and job creation

BUSINESS | P11



Tragic loss

Tributes from around the world pour in following the death of Liverpool soccer star Diogo Jota and his brother André Silva

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | JULY 4, 2025

12 PAGE |₹5.00

Pause after outrage

In the wake of a massive public outcry over the controversial ban on fuel for older vehicles, 10 years for diesel and 15 years for petrol, the Delhi government announced Thursday that endof-life vehicles will no longer be impounded. The 'no fuel' directive sparked outrage among owners of vehicles that exceeded the age limit but still operated efficiently and produced minimal pollution, as evidenced by their Pollution Under Control certificate issued by the government. Many criticised the ruling BJP government for 'forcing' them to purchase new vehicles due to lobbying by the automobile industry

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 3: Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa Thursday asked the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to immediately revoke Direction No. 89, which prohibits fuel stations from supplying fuel to end-of-life (EOL) vehicles in the national capital.

The Delhi government has written to CAQM, arguing the fuel ban on EOL vehicles is not feasible due to technological challenges and has asked the panel to put it on hold with immediate effect.

Addressing a press conference here, the Delhi Environment said that there was discontent among people due to the move and the government stood with them.

"We are trying to ensure that the vehicles are not banned according to their age rather on the basis of pollution caused by them," Sirsa said.

The minister citing various challenges and problems faced in implementing the ban on refuelling of overage vehicles since July 1, said, "We have told CAQM that we are not able to implement this."

The Delhi government from July 1, banned fuel for EOL vehicles -- 10 years or older for diesel vehicles and 15 years or older for petrol vehicles -- that are deregistered and not allowed to ply on the roads, following a court order.

"Because of the technological inconsistencies of this extremely complex system and lack of integration with neighbouring states, there is public discontent and outcry and in the said circumstances, it is not feasible to implement this system to end of life vehicles identified through ANPR cameras installed at petrol pumps in Delhi," said the minister.

Moreover, the system is also not yet fully integrated with the databases of neighbouring NCR states. These issues require proper trial and error corrections before the same can be implemented in Delhi, Sirsa said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that her government will make 'all-out efforts' for the resolution of problems related to the ban on EOL vehicles.



RECORD RUN: Skipper Shubman Gill plays a shot on day two of the second cricket Test match between England and India at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England, Thursday. He scored a massive 269 before getting out, becoming the first Asian captain to hit a double-century in England. Gill's classic maiden double hundred carried India to a formidable 587 all out in their first innings

Ratna Bhandar safe: Gajapati

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, July 3: The 'Ratna Bhandar' (treasure chest) of Srimandir is safe, and the repair work of the chamber is almost complete, Puri's titular king, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, said Thursday.

The Gajapati Maharaja inspected the Ratna Bhandar repair work being carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the custodian of the 12th-century shrine, for 11

Besides him, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee and technical team members of the ASI entered the Ratna Bhandar and supervised both the outer and inner chambers of the treasury, which were in a dilapidated state.

Deb said the structural revamp and aesthetics of the Ratna Bhandar reflect Odisha's timeless temple architecture.

Around 600 stone slabs were replaced with new ones, replicating traditional design while reinforcing safety, the Gajapati told reporters outside the 65-metre tall imposing temple.

"Whatever little work is left is expected to be completed by Niladri Bije (return of the deities to the temple after Rath Yatra) July 8," he said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I didn't crack a joke to cheer him up. Just told him his longest foreign trip starts tomorrow

Jagannath Pradhan held

BJP LEADER REMANDED TO 14-DAY JUDICIAL CUSTODY; OAS ASSOCIATION CALLS OFF STIR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Police Thursday evening arrested BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan from Bhubaneswar in connection with the alleged assault on an on-duty Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer.

Pradhan surrendered at the DCP office here, following which he was arrested after a medical examination, a police officer said. Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo was allegedly dragged out of his office and attacked by a group of miscreants last week.

Pradhan was subsequently sent to 14 days' judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected by a lower court late Thursday, his lawyer said, adding that they will move the sessions



court for bail Friday.

A total of six persons, including Pradhan, have so far been arrested in connection with the case, the police said.

Meanwhile, the agitating OAS Association called off their stir following the arrest of Pradhan, its president Jyoti

Mishra said.

OAS officers across the state were on a 'mass leave' following the assault on Sahoo. Due to the strike, administrative functions and public service delivery have been severely disrupted across the state, including in Bhubaneswar.

han Meena said Pradhan was arrested on the basis of an FIR. and statements of Sahoo and the accused persons. Following the arrest, several

Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmo-

supporters of Pradhan blocked the main road near Vani Vihar square in the state capital affecting movement of traffic. "I have come here to coop-

erate with the investigation. If my arrest can resolve the issue, I am ready to cooperate," Pradhan said.

The incident occurred June 30 during a public grievance hearing at the BMC office, where a group of six to seven individuals allegedly attacked Sahoo. In his complaint, Sahoo alleged that the attackers grabbed him by the collar, dragged and assaulted him. He also accused Pradhan of making derogatory remarks.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune. July 3: An unidentified man allegedly raped a 22-yearold woman after gaining access to her apartment in Pune by posing as a courier delivery executive, police said Thursday.

The accused also clicked a selfie on the victim's phone and left a message on it, warning her not to inform about the crime to anyone as he had taken her pictures and would share them on social media, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 5) Rajkumar Shinde said.

The incident took place at around 7.30 pm Wednesday at a housing society in Kondhwa area of Pune and search was on for the culprit, as per the police.

The victim, who is an IT professional, was alone in her apartment as her brother had gone out of town, the official said. The man came to her house posing as a courier delivery agent and

gained entry. He asked for a pen to sign (a document) and as she turned her back to him, he came inside the house and latched the door, the official said.

Man posing as delivery

agent rapes Pune techie

"The woman does not remember anything (further) as she gained consciousness around 8.30 pm. The woman then informed her relatives and subsequently police were alerted," Shinde said.

The man left a message on her phone that he had taken photos of her, and if she revealed about the incident to anyone, he would make the pictures viral, the official said.

There is a possibility that the accused used some substance to make her unconscious. The police were verifying if any spray

was used, he said. The face of the accused has

been captured in one of the CCTV cameras in the area and efforts were on to trace him, the official said.

Amarnath Yatra

Deepika to get star on Hollywood Walk of Fame

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Los Angeles, July 3: Deepika Padukone will receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, making her the first Indian actress to be felicitated with the coveted honour.

Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, the official organisation which administers the Hollywood Walk of Fame, shared the news on its official Instagram page Wednesday night.

"A new group of entertainment professionals in the categories of Motion Pictures, Television, Live Theatre/Live Performance, Radio, Recording, and Sports Entertainment have been selected to receive stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame by the Walk of Fame Selection Panel of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce,"

the post read. "We are honoured to wel-

come you to the Walk of Fame

Class of 2026!" it added.

Padukone will receive the star along with a host of popular Hollywood actors including Emily Blunt, Timothee Chalamet, Marion Cotillard, Stanley Tucci, Rami Malek, Rachel McAdams, Demi Moore, filmmakers Chris Columbus and Tony Scott.

From the television industry, "The Office" creator Greg Daniels, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Chef Gordon Ramsay, Bradley Whitford, and Noah Wyle will be honoured.

The Hollywood Walk of Fame celebrates achievements in the entertainment industry with over 2,700 brass stars embedded along the sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street in Los Angeles, making it a major tourist attraction for visitors from around the world.

Each star honours artists

from the worlds of film, tele-



mance for their impact on popular culture. In 2011, re-

> an conductor Zubin Mehta ceived a star on Hollywood Walk of Fame. His was the 2,434th star on the Hollywood Walk

of Fame and Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas spoke at a ceremony to honour him. Before Mehta, Indian-or-

igin American actor Sabu Dastagir, known his work in films during the 1940s, received a star Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Padukone has emerged as one of the top stars of India since she made her Bollywood debut with 2007's "Om Shanti Om". She has starred in critically-acclaimed movies such as "Love Aaj Kal", "Piku", "Bajirao Mastani", "Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela", "Padmaavat", "Chhapaak" and "Gehraiyaan".

In Hollywood, she made her debut with the 2017 action movie "XXX: Return of Xander Cage", co-starring Vin Diesel. She was also named one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in 2018 and received the TIME100 Impact Award.

Padukone also served in the main competition jury of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival in 2022.

The actor is currently working on a number of projects, including an untitled film directed by Atlee, co-starring Allu Arjun.

begins in Kashmir PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 3: The first batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims set off Thursday from the Baltal and Nunwan base camps towards the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

The yatra started early in the morning from the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route and the 14-km Baltal route.

Pilgrims left from the Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam, in south Kashmir's Anantnag, and Baltal base camp in Sonamarg area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal, at the first light of the day, officials said.

Chants of 'Bam Bam Bhole' and 'Har Har Mahadev' heralded the march of the pilgrims. whose faces bore marks of happiness despite the arduous trek ahead, not to speak of the weather's vagaries.

leisure



DAVID DASTMALCHIAN TO STAR IN STREET FIGHTER

Ant-Man actor David Dastmalchian is set to essay the role of an antagonist in the upcoming live-action film Street Fighter. Based on the video games from Capcom, the film is directed by Kitao Sakurai, known for Bad Trip and Aardvark.

OLIVIA MUNN'S STARTLING CLAIM ABOUT NEWSROOM DIRECTOR

Actor Olivia Munn revealed that a male director from the acclaimed series The Newsroom director attempted to sabotage her future acting opportunities after disputes over her character portrayal. Munn, who played anchor Sloan Sabbith in the HBO drama created by Aaron Sorkin, described the director's actions as career-ruining.



FORTUNE **FORECAST**

Ganesha Speaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES You will share wonderful moments with your beloved today. Go ahead

and learn some musical instrument, suggests Ganesha: it's a beautiful way to convey emotions. And it provides a perfect means to woo someone anew.

TAURUS

It is highly unlikely that you will be emotional and sentimental today, predicts Ganesha. Adopt a laid-back attitude towards life to feel at ease. Public servants will have encouraging and affirmative results in their efforts. Your competency will be put to test at the work place.

GEMINI

Today is an important day to completely immerse yourself in your favourite activities. says Ganesha. But don't forget that loved ones come first as lack of warmth may affect family life. Show your family members that you care. New relationships are also on the anvil. It is an eventful and positive day for you.

CANCER

At work, your ability to forge great partnerships will see to the success of one of your ambitious projects. However, you need to be careful before signing the contract. It's always important to go through the finer details of a deal before closing it.

LEO

Reinvention and rejuvenation — these are the two words that shall dictate your philosophy for the day. Refurbishing oneself does not always have to be in accordance with something new; taking a look back can be equally enlightening. In any case, it's a small world, and, hence, chances are that you shall revive most of your old contacts either in a social occasion or an official meeting.

VIRGO

Achievement and accomplish-

ment will be the highlights of the day, notes Ganesha. You will be recognised for your devotion to work and determination to succeed at your workplace. Much awaited promotions may come and financial arrears may also reach your hands.

LIBRA

You will be very active today, especially when it comes to finishing tasks in office. Your thoughts will reach new heights and you will be able to motivate and stimulate others to perform. Your motto for the day is 'Arise, awake and sleep not till the goal is reached'.

SCORPIO

Your close friends and loved ones seem to be on the menu today, predicts Ganesha. Romantic brilliance will usher in happiness and favourable business prospects will be the icing on the cake. Your charm will peak and you will enjoy the attention you get out of it. Try your hands at creative things as there is a good chance that you may come home bragging about the results.

SAGITTARIUS Be ready with you bags packed as you may decide to undertake an impromptu trip today. It could be a business trip or simply travel in pursuit of pleasure. Nostalgia will grip you as you run into an old childhood friend today. Sharpen your public relation skills, which will come in handy when you deal with strangers

today, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN That you are affectionate towards your loved ones will be more noticeable today than ever before, says Ganesha. In fact, you will enjoy their company and will do everything in your capacity to make them feel wanted. Long-term relationships will also thrive.

AQUARIUS

Fortune favours the brave, and who knows it better than you? Your performance may come under scrutiny, but your bosses will come away pleased as punch. Want to make some money? Ganesha points to real estate and the construction business.

PISCES

Your expenses are likely to soar and you will need to draw a line between your needs and your desires if you are to keep them in check. There is a strong possibility that you will undergo a spiritual experience today. You may also pursue meditative techniques for your peace of mind, says Ganesha.



CHITRANGDA ON CRACKING INTO STARDOM

MUMBAI: In today's rapidly evolving film industry, actor Chitrangda Singh reflects on how the dynamics have shifted over the years. Known for her subtle yet powerful performances, the Baazaar actor believes that breaking through in the current environment is more challenging than ever.

"Today there's so much noise out there. There's so much happening constantly that it is quite tough to make a place for yourself in the industry. There's more competition, no doubt, because it's not just about the talent; there's so much other stuff that's also playing a part. It is difficult to tell what is working,' Chitrangda shared in a recent interview.

Her career beautifully illustrates her range as a performer. From surprising audiences with her impeccable comic timing in Housefull 5 — a blockbuster hit that cemented her mainstream appeal — to delivering a deeply emotional portrayal in *Parikrama*, India's first Indo-Italian co-production, Chitrangda has proved her versatility time and again.

Her ability to move seamlessly between mass entertainers and layered, meaningful stories speaks to her dedication to balancing commercial success with artistic integrity. With her thoughtful choices and grounded perspective, Chitrangda remains one of the industry's most well-rounded and respected talents. AGENCIES

Samantha's new struggle

and the action series Rakt Brahmand: The Bloody Kingdom.

Mumbai: After The Sky is Pink in 2019,

Priyanka Chopra shifted her focus from Bolly-

and I'm really excited about

Priyanka's last Indian theatrical

film was The Sky is Pink, while The

White Tiger (2021) premiered on Netflix. She

is now gearing up for a Bollywood comeback

with SS Rajamouli's SSMB 29, an action-ad-

venture inspired by Indiana Jones, featuring

Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

that," she shared, expressing grati-

tude for the unwavering support

from Indian fans.

wood to a flourishing Hollywood career. Cur-

rently promoting her latest release, Heads of

State, the actress spoke about her love

for Hindi films and revealed plans

to work in India again

soon. "I miss Hindi

movies and I

miss India so

much. I'm

working in

India this year,

ham. She is now gear-

ing up for Maa Inti

Bangaram in Telugu



Although the full cast hasn't been officially announced, the project has already generated immense excitement. In January, Priyanka was spotted shooting in Hyderabad and visited a temple, shar-

ing blessings for a "new chapter" on social PeeCee media. Meanwhile, Heads of State,

to work in directed by Ilya Naishuller, costars Idris Elba Hindi films and John Cena, with Priyanka portraying Noel again Bisset, an MI6 agent battling a

global conspiracy. The action-comedy, streaming on Prime Video from July 2, 2025, has

won praise for its high-octane storytelling and



Manchester celebrates Rath Yatra amid fanfare

chester City of United Road, Brantingham Road Kingdom recently hosted its fifth Rath Yatra festival amid spectacular fanfare and spiritual fervour. The abode of Lord of the Universe Gita Bhawan was aesthetically and elegantly decorated to mark the occasion. Organised by North West Odisha Society this year's festival evoked unusual interests, unexpected enthusiasm and unprecedented excitements among both the organisers and participants. More than a thousand Odia and non-Odia devotees congregated at Gita Bhawan alongwith their family and relatives to take part in the event. At about 12.45 p.m. the four deities were taken in Dhadi Pahandi procession to the colourful chariot, parked outside Gita Bhawan. Superbly designed the chariot was decked up with an amazing Patachitra painting designed by renowned artist Pragyan Babu.

The whole atmosphere got reverberated with the recitals of hymns, roaring slogans like Hari Bol, Jai Jagannath, sounding of 'hulahuli', blowing off conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga. The highlight of the celebration was the Pahandi of Devi Subhadra being performed exclusively by ladies. The chariot went through Wil-

Manchester (UK): Man-braham Road, Werburgh's and Withington Road before getting back to Gita Bhawan premises. The distinguished dignitaries present include Councillor Vimal Choski and renowned spiritual preacher from India Devi Chitralekha.

motivational Famous speaker Dr Deepak Gupta's divine discourse was highly emotive and impressive. Special attractions of the festival include soul soothing Bhajan recitals by noted vocalists like Tanishka Gupta, Dr. Siba Senapati, Disha Patnaik, Jayan Panigrahi, Dr. Kapeelmeet Kaur, Deeptiman Rath, Dr Rajinder Singh, Priyanka Geemon, Harshangda Bhatnagar, Soumya Panda, Ms. Manorama and Ms. Supriya. Odissi Exponent Rekha Senapati, Saanvi Sahoo and Drishika Panigrahi enthralled the audiences with their scintillating sance recitals. The cultural show was ably presented and coordinated by Ace Anchor Priyanka Bebarta.

The entire arrangements was well managed and skillfully conducted with active supervision of the Organising Committee consisting of Dr Siba Senapati, Rekha Senapati, Siba Ranjan Biswal, Bishnu Dash, Jeeban Panigrahi, Prasanta Sahu, Sudhakar Sahoo, Bibek Babu, Surendra Nath Acharya, Sanjeev Srichandan, Prabhat Singh and Sujeet Behera. PNN

PEANUTS





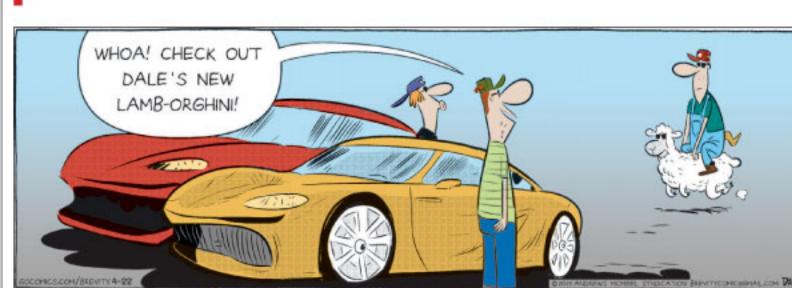




CALVIN AND HOBBES



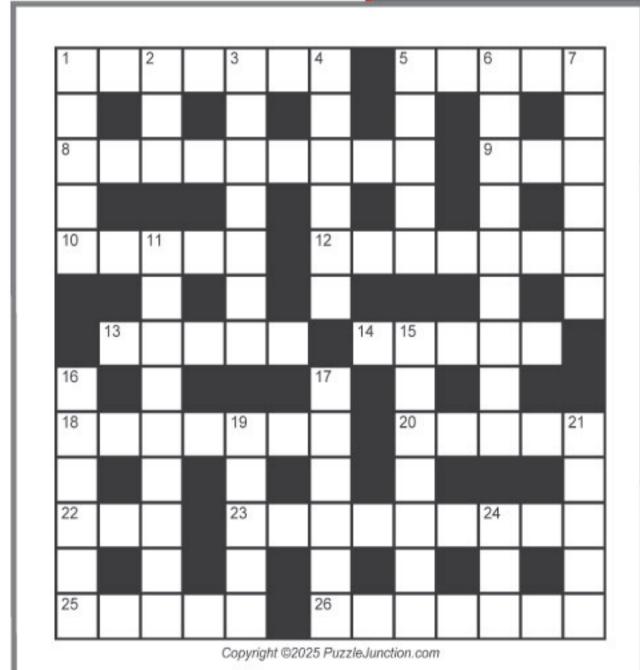
BREVITY



strong lead performances.

CROSSWORD

AGENCIES



Across

1 Coffins

5 Yam

8 Fall guy

9 Like a fox

10 Medicinal plant

12 Difficulty

13 Animal group

14 Ancient Greek theatre

18 Rookie

20 Picture holder 22 Phi follower

25 Exploits 26 Stuff

23 Carpenter's bane

Down 1 Detective's

chores

2 Health resort 3 Beryl variety

5 Aquarium fish

16 Rotten 17 Practice 4 Yells sessions

6 Brazilian dance 21 Come to pass 24 Historic period (5,4)

7 Kings and

11 Return to a

of affairs

15 No longer in

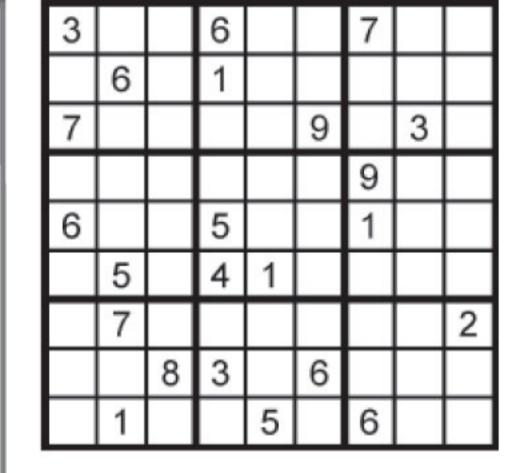
existence

19 Softens

queens, e.g.

standard state

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

OATCAKE PATIO EAGRE T E A L S A L C O V E

SEERANIMATOR

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

RAINING WOES

People wade through knee-deep water in Badagada area of Bhubaneswar as incessant rain caused flooding in low-lying areas of the City Thursday



Automatic weather stns in blocks soon

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Automatic weather stations (AWS) will be set up at block levels while automatic rain gauges (ARG) will be installed in every gram panchayat, as the state government Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Skymet Weather Services Pvt Ltd for implementation of Weather Information Network Data System (WINDS) project.

According to sources, the project is expected to benefit not only farmers but also the broader sectors of insurance and disaster management as it would create a robust and real-time weather monitoring system.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who also holds the portfolios of Agriculture &

Bhubaneswar, July 3: The

State Selection Board (SSB)

Thursday announced that it

will publish the provisional

answer keys for the BEd, MEd,

and BHEd entrance examina-

tiple grievances the SSB had re-

ceived from applicants regard-

ing discrepancies in the marks

awarded during the recently con-

ducted entrance examinations.

This is in response to the mul-

POST NEWS NETWORK

tions 2025, July 7.



Farmers' Empowerment and

The WINDS project, initiated by the Union government, is aimed at improving weather data accessibility and enhancing implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PM-FBY). The project will involve installation of automatic weather stations (AWS) at block levels and automatic rain gauges (ARG) at gram panchayat levels across the state.

"Accurate weather data is crucial for better crop planning, timely risk assessment, and efficient claim settlement.

SSB to release answer keys July 7

The examinations were held

for admission into 2-year profes-

sional education programs for

the academic session 2025-26,

and several candidates have

raised concerns about inaccura-

SSB will make the provisional

answer keys available on its

official website — https://ss-

bodisha.ac.in — July 7. Candi-

dates will have the opportunity

to review the answer keys and

submit objections from July 8 to

According to a release, the

cies in their scores.

our farmers and encourage them to take up multiple cropping," said Singh Deo at the MoU signing event. The project will be jointly

This initiative will empower

implemented by the Agriculture department and Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), under Revenue & Disaster Management department.

The state's financial contribution for the project will come from PMFBY budget, managed by the Cooperation department.

The pact was inked and exchanged by Director of Agriculture & Food Production Subham Saxena and CEO of Skymet Weather Services Pvt Ltd Jogesh Patil.

Senior officials including Agriculture department Additional Secretary Ganeswar Jena and other department officials were present.

July 10, 2025, the release said.

visional answer keys is aimed

at addressing the applicants'

concerns and maintaining fair-

ness in the selection process,"

an SSB official stated, adding,

"Applicants are advised to care-

fully verify their responses and

follow the guidelines provided on

the portal for raising objections."

clared after the evaluation of all

objections and necessary correc-

tions to the answer keys.

The final results will be de-

"The publication of the pro-

lightweight yet durable pieces that are both functional and or-

of OPGC security infra

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Prime

Minister Narendra Modi pre-

sented a stunning Silver Filigree Work Purse to Lordina

Mahama, spouse of the Presi-

dent of Ghana John Mahama,

during his recent official visit

to the African country. This el-

egant gift, handcrafted in Cut-

tack, beautifully represents the

region's centuries-old tradition

of silver filigree work, locally

is a testament to the mastery

of Cuttack's skilled craftsmen,

who meticulously create airy,

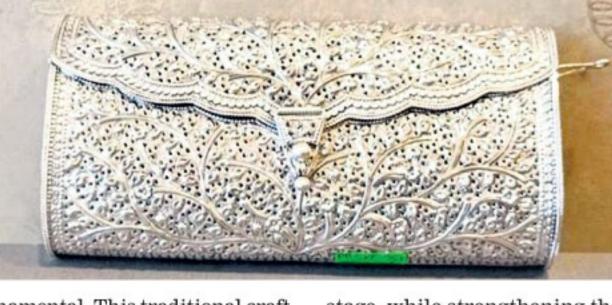
The silver filigree handbag

known as 'Tarakasi'.

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Deputy

While reviewing the func-

In addition to this, it establishes, operates, and maintains large thermal power generating stations across the state.



namental. This traditional craft reflects not only the artistic excellence of Odisha but also its cultural pride and rich history.

By choosing this gift, PM Modi emphasised India's commitment to showcasing its diverse cultural heritage on the global

stage, while strengthening the ties between India and Ghana. The gift symbolises goodwill and mutual respect, serving as a timeless keepsake that celebrates the shared values of artistry and tradition.

Chief Minister Mohan Cha-

PM gifts Cuttack filigree purse to Ghana's 1st Lady ran Majhi expressed gratitude to the PM for highlighting the state's cultural heritage globally. He praised Modi for gifting the silver filigree purse to Ghana's First Lady, calling it a "remarkable tribute" to Cuttack's centuries-old 'Tarakasi' tradition. The CM highlighted the craftsmanship behind the gift, noting its intricate floral and vine motifs crafted from fine silver wires by Odisha's skilled artisans. He said such gestures not only reflect the artistry and devotion of the state's craftspeople but also bring international recognition to the state's cultural legacy and reaffirm pride in Odia Asmita (Odia identity).

Truck runs over lady home guard

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 3: A woman home guard died after being hit by a speeding truck in Chhatra Bazaar area here around 10am Thursday. The deceased was identified as Manorama Panda, 56, attached to Malgodown police station.

Police said, the truck (OD 04 P 4032) ran over Manorama from behind while she was returning home on a bicycle with some groceries. Malgodown police reached the spot, seized the truck, and sent the body to SCB Medical College and Hospi tal for post-mortem. While the driver fled the scene, the truck helper has been detained for questioning.

Manorama hailed from Kulagaon village in Nishchintakoili block and had been living on rent with her two sons at Rausapatana here. Her husband, Ashwini Kumar Panda, had died four months ago.

Dy CM for upgradation

Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Thursday directed officials to strengthen and upgrade the data management and operational security infrastructure of the Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OPGC).

tioning of OPGC at Lok Seva Bhavan, Singh Deo, who also holds the Energy portfolio, emphasised the need to enhance the corporation's internal security systems. OPGC is a key player in Odisha's energy sector, catering to over 30 per cent of the state's power demand.

Official sources said that proposals have been made to secure OPGC through cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other high-end technologies.

Puri stampede: Govt seeks info from public

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 3: The state government Thursday requested the public to share any information related to the Puri stampede that left three people dead and 50 others injured.

The stampede took place near the Shree Gundicha Temple during a Rath Yatra event June 29. The state government through a public notice urged the people to share information, video footage or any other materials related to the stampede which took place early Sunday for a proper and transparent inquiry into the incident. The public notice issued by the Planning and Convergence department, also mentioned that any individual or organisation can share their information regarding how

such an incident took place. "The members of the public are urged to share information,

edy.enquiry@odisha.gov.in by July 20," an official said. This apart, the notice said that the interested persons can meet and share information

with Development Commission-

er (DC) and Additional Chief

Secretary (ACS) Anu Garg at

the State Guest House in Bhu-

video footage or any other mate-

rial through the e-mail puritrag-

baneswar after 3 pm July 9 and at the Special Circuit House in Puri July 10 after 3pm. The state government has also provided two landline telephone numbers (0674-2536882/2391970) of Bhubaneswar to facilitate the people to pass on their information to the team engaged in the in-

The state government, hours after the tragedy, had ordered an administrative inquiry into the stampede with DC and ACS Anu Garg as its chief.

quiry of the stampede tragedy.







Assessing Prevalence of illness & Health Care Services in India

Let us strengthen the National Statistical System

National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is conducting Survey on Household Health Expenditure from January to December 2025.

Information being collected:

Type of ailments

Treatment received

Cost of treatment & vaccination

Coverage of Health Insurance

Ante-natal and post-natal care





Households are requested to cooperate with the enumerators of NSO and provide accurate data. Identity of the households participating in the survey is kept confidential in all reports/microdata of MoSPI.

⊕ www.mospi.gov.in
□
▼ □
② GolStats f /GolStats □ GolStats ┗ Ministry of Statistics & PI

FRIDAY | JULY 4, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

Shabari Bhawan is a platform for empowering tribal youth: Majhi



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Shabari Bhawan is not just a short-stay home, it is a platform for empowering tribal youth and fostering leadership, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said after inaugurating the facility at IRC Village here for the tribal communities of Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur and Malkangiri districts Thursday.

Announcing a grant of ₹2 crore for the facility, Majhi said all necessary amenities would be provided to fully develop the Shabari Bhawan.

Describing the initiative, the CM said, "Shabari Bhawan is more than just a short-stay home, it is a platform for empowering tribal youth and fostering leadership."

The facility will serve as a centre for education, employment, and cultural activities, in addition to offering short-term accommodation for tribal brothers and sisters, Majhi said. "Shabari Bhawan will fos-

ter cultural vibrancy through organisation of conferences, training camps, art exhibitions, and research programmes," the CM added.

Majhi emphasised that tribal culture is not limited to dance and music, but is a way of life and the soul of the community.

"It is our collective responsibility to preserve and promote it (tribal culture)," the CM said, expressing confidence that the Shabari Bhawan would play a key role in nurturing and showcasing Odisha's rich tribal heritage.

He further said a Tribal Culture and Heritage Bhawan and a Tribal Language Institute are also being established in Bhubaneswar to strengthen the cultural and linguistic legacy of the state's tribal communities.

Highlighting his government's vision, the CM said, "We aim to build a prosperous Odisha by 2036 through holistic development and the empowerment of tribal communities." 7,559 students in final PG merit list

Bhubaneswar, July 3: A total of 7,559 students have been shortlisted for admission at 121 higher educational institutions (HEIs) across the state as the Higher Education department Monday released the Phase-I third and final selection merit list for postgraduate (PG) courses for 2025–26 academic session.

In total, 11.346 students take admission till now. The first round 7,874 took admission while 3,472 took admission in second round. Of the newly selected candidates in third round, 2,150 are male, 5,409 are female students, according to the list.

Students are required to report at their selected HIEs on July 4, 7 and 8 between 10am and 5pm - to complete the admission formalities.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: In response to recent floods and diarrhoeal outbreaks across districts, the Odisha Government will roll out an intensive weeklong campaign from July 4 to July 11 to curb water and vector-borne diseases. The drive, starting Thursday, is a joint initiative of the Health & Family Welfare and Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water departments.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Health Secretary Aswathy S at Lok Seva Bhawan here Thursday, where director of Public Health, Nilakantha Mishra, shared updates on the health situation and proposed measures.

The drive will include super-chlorination of drinking water sources, disinfection of health facilities, schools, markets, and public spaces, along with awareness campaigns at village and household levels

DRIVE TO TACKLE POST-FLOOD DISEASES

These activities will take place on two specific days— July 4 and July 11.

ASHA, ANM, and other health workers will conduct door-to-door outreach, demonstrating use of halazone tablets, handwashing, and promoting Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) to prevent mosquito-borne diseases.

To ensure swift response in affected areas, 377 mobile health teams will be deployed. PHCs and CHCs will be stocked with anti-venom for snake bites, and MBBS doctors will be stationed in flood-hit regions for timely care. The government also plans to boost lab surveillance through increased sample collection and testing.

Additionally, food safety officers have been instructed to intensify inspections of bottling plants, eateries, and hotels, enforce SOPs, and take strict action, including fines, for any non-compliance.

Secretary Aswathy urged active involvement of PRI members, social workers, and village communities to ensure the drive's success. Senior state officials will visit affected areas to monitor and oversee field-level activities.

Officials stated that the diarrhoeal situation is now under control due to increased public awareness and timely medical action. Only 190 active cases remain across five districts, with the death toll limited to 13.

Vigilance for dengue and malaria continues, with preventive steps in place. The government stressed strict adherence to monitoring protocols to maintain health security in flood-affected areas.



FOR A GLIMPSE: Sea of devotees at Saradhabali for Lord's Adapa Mandap darshan, in Puri, Thursday

BJD seeks apology from BJP MLA over remarks Montana delegation calls on Governor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Thursday condemned BJP Nilagiri MLA Santosh Khatua for allegedly making derogatory and offensive remarks against BJD spokesperson Lekhasri Samantsinghar, amid allegations linking Khatua to an elephant poaching and ivory theft case. The BJD demanded a public apology from the MLA.

Landslide: Train services

remained disrupted for the second

consecutive day Thursday due to

incessant rains and a landslide that occurred between Malliguda

and Jarati stations. According to

heavy earth-moving machinery,

manpower, and materials have

been mobilised, and restoration

Railway officials, including the

are on the site to oversee the

restoration process.

AFFIDAVIT

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM),

CLASSIFIED

I, Antarjyami Sahu, S/o-

Late Dinabandhu Sahu,

resident of ward No.- 4,

New Kalupatro Street,

P.S.-Brahmapur Sadar,

P.O.-Panigrahipentho,

District.- Ganjam, PIN-

760006, Odisha declare

by this affidavit No.-

A-615, dtd- 03.07.2025.

That now onwards

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future purposes.

Antarjami Sahu for all

Aska Road, Brahmapur,

work is currently underway.

East Coast Railway (ECoR) sources,

hit for second day

Bhubaneswar: Train services

on the Koraput-Kirandul line

under the Waltair Division



At a press conference in Sankha Bhawan, BJD Binjharpur MLA Pramila Mallik said, "Using vulgar and insulting language against a woman leader is not acceptable in a civilised society.

Majhi said the Shabari Bha-

wan would become a symbol

of Odisha's identity and serve

as an inspiration for future

and Mass Education Minister

Nityananda Gond, who is the

president of the Shabari Cul-

tural Council, said tribal cul-

ture has given Odisha a unique identity and remains a source

"The state government has

constituted a task force for

the South Odisha Develop-

ment Council and sanctioned

a grant of ₹200 crore specifical-

ly for the development of the

undivided Koraput district,"

Among others, MPs Muna

Khan and Balabhadra Majhi.

and MLAs Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Gouri Shankar Majhi,

Narsing Bhatra, Rupa Bhatra, Raghuram Machha, Narsingha

Madkami, Kadra Apalswami

and Neelamadhab Hikka were

present on the occasion.

Speaking at the event, School

generations.

of immense pride.

Gond said.

She added that the remarks insult all women and undermine their dignity.

Mallik alleged that since the BJP came to power in Odisha, it has been trying to sideline women in politics. "Santosh Khatua's comments are shameful and unacceptable. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi must apologise to the women of Odisha," she said.

Notably, the war of words began after BJD spokesperson Lekhasri Samantsinghar, at a press conference Wednesday, alleged that poachers involved in the illegal ivory trade were caught from the farmhouse of MLA Santosh Khatua. In response, Khatua made remarks against Samantsinghar, which the BJD condemned as derogatory.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: A 10-member delegation from Montana, USA, met Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan Thursday as part of the India Trek 2025 programme.

Welcoming the visitors, the Governor highlighted Odisha's rich culture, art, and social development, encouraging them to explore India's diversity. He said such exchanges foster better international



understanding. The delegation also toured Rai Bhavan

and expressed appreciation

for the warm hospitality.

ECRICC Odisha bags top honour

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: The Odisha chapter of the Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) Project has secured first prize in the 'government sector' at the Seafood Expo Bharat 2025 (SEB-25), held from July 1 to 3 at the Chennai Trade Centre.

The award highlights Odisha's pioneering efforts in promoting climate-resilient aquaculture and inclusive, community-led development along its coastal regions, a release said.

Organised by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, SEB-25 is one of India's premier platforms for stakeholders across the fisheries and aquaculture value chain. This year's edition attracted over 3,000 delegates, both domestic and international.

The ECRICC Project—supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and UNDP, and implemented nationally by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)—focuses on ecosystem-based adaptation and sustainable livelihoods in coastal communities. In Odisha, it is



implemented by the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, government of Odisha.

Odisha's stall became a major attraction at SEB-25, featuring live demonstrations of pond-based mud crab farming, multimedia exhibits, and real-life transformation stories from local beneficiaries—especially women and marginalised groups. The initiative is playing a key role in advancing scientific mud crab farming, ornamental fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture, while empowering climate champions and local institutions.

"It was an excellent opportunity for our last-mile cadre to represent the state on a national platform," said one of the women climate champions who spoke on stage.

A 14-member delegation from Odisha, comprising SPMU and DPMU officials, community leaders, and beneficiary crab farmers, attended the expo. Their participation facilitated knowledge exchange, technical collaboration, and opportunities to scale community-based aquaculture models, the release said.

Secretary of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA), the Counsellor of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food from the Embassy of Spain (New Delhi), and the CEO of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad were among those visited the stall.

among those visited the stall.

The recognition at SEB-25 underscores Odisha's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its long-term vision of building a Vikshit Odisha by 2036, aligned with the Prime Minister's mission of a Vikshit Bharat by 2047, the release added.

State 5th in school edu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Odisha has achieved a tangible change in the school education system and ranked fifth in the country as per the Performance Grading Index (PGI-2.0) between 2019-20 and 2023-2024, officials said on Thursday.

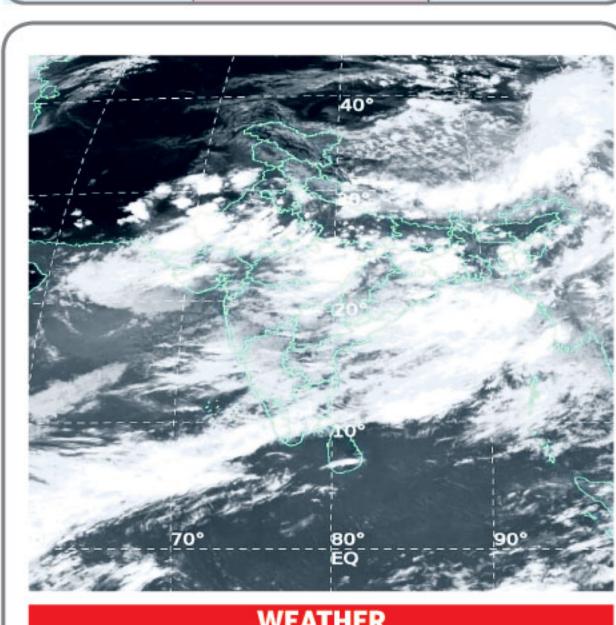
The state was ranked 14th rank in 2019-2020. The PGI 2.0 evaluates school education through 73 indicators across two categories: Outcomes and Governance & Management.

BJD president and Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik, who was the CM during the period, posted on X: "Glad to share that #Odisha has earned 5th rank nationally in School Grading System, as per Performance Grading Index (PGI-2.0) Report released by Government of India. Odisha has achieved score of 595.6 and secured PRACHESTA-3 grade for the academic year 2023-24, up from 14th in 2019. The PGI 2.0 evaluates school education through 73 indicators across two categories: Outcomes and Governance

& Management."
The report released by the Ministry of Education shows that Odisha also topped the 'access' domain, achieving the highest grade, with a

score range of 941-1000.





WEATHER			
	BBSR	СТС	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.4°	32.2°	Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain/ thunderstorm.
Min Temp	25.3°	23.8°	
Humidity	92%	95%	
Rainfall	4.9mm	20.2mm	- William

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-79786466669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-889550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spudier Web-7809186416, Metro-98401873, Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room-7873660137, Near-9873660137, Near-987360137, Near-987360137, Near-987360137, Near-9938134346, Rylinagar-9938134344, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Cofferdam of Kanpur project collapses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Joda, July 3: A temporary earthen dam or cofferdam of the under-construction Kanpur Irrigation Project (KIP) in Basudevpur village under Joda block in Keonjhar district collapsed Thursday following incessant rainfall triggered by a low-pressure area.

As a result, floodwater was flowing above the under-construction main dam into the Baitarani triggering risk of floods on the river's downstream. The water was seen gushing over the half-built depletion sluice gates. The temporary dam had been built by pouring soil for the construction of the depletion sluice gates.

Meanwhile, residents have alleged that technical glitches have delayed the completion of dam work. Though the construction of Kanpur project and Baitarani embankment was started during the previous government, work on depletion sluice gates was not taken up. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had announced in several meetings to complete the project by June, 2025.

The dam work was nearing completion when the incumbent government was informed that the depletion sluice gates



had not been constructed.

The state government held discussion with a technical team and decided to construct the depletion sluice gates. The construction of the cofferdam started in May by completely obstructing the water flow. The depletion sluice gate construction was taken up with plastic concrete materials and it was hoped that the work will get completed by August.

However, due to heavy rainfall in Banspal block June 17 and 18, as well incessant rainfall lashing Joda from June 18, the Suna river swelled and the reservoir got filled to its brim.

Apprehending that the cofferdam might collapse anytime, authorities evacuated the labourers and shifted the heavy equipment elsewhere from the sluice gate construction site. The worst fear came true as the

cofferdam collapsed Thursday. Chief Construction Engineer (CCE) of KIP Prasad Ranjan Panda denied any risk or damage to the main dam due to the collapse of the cofferdam and a flash flood. However, the construction of depletion sluice gates have been hit and work will start only after the rain stops. All construction activities have come to a halt due to continuous downpour. In June alone, the area received an intense 450 mm of rain, de-

ture projects. As a result, the reservoir has inundated a total area of 2,511.266 hectares, reaching its maximum depth of 39.50 metres. Water was flowing into the reservoir at a rate of 249.596 cubic metres per second, Thursday.

railing all ongoing infrastruc-

Due to the collapse of a tem-

porary earthen dyke, floodwaters breached the under-construction embankment and had to be diverted through an emergency outflow channel at a rate of 336.875 cubic metres per second.

Officials stated that the state government is prioritising the completion of the embankment under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme. However, the lack of depletion sluice gates for water drainage in previous years has pushed the project into uncertainty again.

Locals have raised concerns. questioning why such a crucial component was never constructed in the first place. There is growing public sentiment that the government should launch an investigation into the lapses that have repeatedly stalled the project.

Notably, the foundation stone for the Kanpur dam, which was conceived about 30 years back, was laid by three chief ministers - Biju Patnaik, Janaki Ballav Patnaik and Naveen Patnaik. However, the project is yet to be completed.

The project, touted as the second largest irrigation facility in the state, will help in providing water to over 29,000 hectares of farmland in 244 villages under five blocks in Keonjhar district.

T'GANA FACTORY BLAST

5 Odisha workers still missing, DNA matching to be taken up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, July 3: While four workers from Odisha are among those killed in the Telangana factory blast, five others from the eastern state are still missing. prompting their relatives to reach the spot for DNA matching with unidentified bodies.

While relatives of four missing persons have given DNA samples for matching, kin of the fifth person were set to reach the southern state during the day.

officials said Thursday.

Among the missing persons, two are from Nabarangpur district, two from Ganjam and one from Cuttack. The bodies of the deceased have also reached their native places in Odisha.

So far, 38 people have been killed and several others injured in a powerful blast at a pharmaceutical plant in Pashamylaram in Telangana's Sangareddy district June 30.

"The local administration informed us that 143 people were working in the factory when the blast took place. Some people from Odisha were working in different sections. Of them, four were killed, four injured, among whom one is serious, and five others are still missing," Pritish Panda, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Directorate of Odisha Pariyaar told PTI over the phone.

The deceased from Odisha have been identified as R Jaganmohan from Chhatrapur 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.

The injured persons were Samir Padhi of Ganjam district, Chandan Kumar Nayak of Bhadrak, Nilambar Bhadra of Nabarangpur and Chitrasen Batra. Among the injured persons, Samir Padhi is in serious condition with 35 per cent burn injuries and he is in the ICU, the officer said.

Panda, along with another officer, are in Sangareddy district to extend necessary support to the people from the state.

He said the bodies of people from Odisha have been sent to their native places in ambulances. The body of Jaganmohan (56) reached his residence in Chhatrapur area of Ganjam district Wednesday.

Locals, relatives and Chhatrapur MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak and officials of the Labour department visited his home and expressed condolences to the family members.

His wife Vijayalaxmi (50) and two sons, who have been living in Hyderabad for over two decades, also accompanied the body in the ambulance. They performed the last rites of the deceased as per tradition.

the accounts section in the factory for over two decades. He was inside the plant for an inspection when the explosion took place, said R Sai Yashwanth, elder son of the deceased.

Jaganmohan was working in

"We immediately rushed to the plant but saw only his charred body," he said.

The body was dispatched from Hyderabad Tuesday and it reached Odisha early Wednesday. The Telangana government provided Rs 1 lakh as assistance to perform the last

Samir Padhy (24), another victim from Ganjam district, was battling for his life in a hospital in Hyderabad.

rites, he said.

Samir, a resident of Baharapur, was working as a machine operator in the factory for the

last seven years. The explosion occurred in the plant just 10 minutes after he entered the plant, said Papu Kumar Choudhuary, Samir's brother-in-law, who was working in the same factory.

"We both entered the plant just 10 to 15 minutes before the blast. I came out of the plant when the first explosion occurred at a distance and survived," said Choudhury (31) of Aska area. He was working in the paper-cutting section of the factory.

"Within a few minutes, the entire area became dark with smoke and several of them could not come out," he said.

Papu said Lagnajit Duari (20) of Tigiria in Cuttack district along with a man from Bihar were working in his section before the blast. They could not come out from the spot and were charred to death.

DSPL - 159

FMU wins 3rd prize at nat'l hackathon

BALASORE: The Centre for Research and Conservation of Indian Horseshoe Crabs (CRCIHSC) at Fakir Mohan University (FMU) here won the third prize at the National Hackathon on Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change, hosted by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The grand finale, held June 30 at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in Kolkata, was part of ZSI's 110th Foundation Day celebrations. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav awarded trophies to winning teams in the presence of senior officials and scientists. The FMU team, led by Soumyaranjan Dash, presented a research-based model titled 'Captive Breeding of Indian Horseshoe Crabs in Coastal Odisha', emphasising scientific monitoring, community

2 killed in lightning

participation, and conservation

education.

JHARSUGUDA: Two persons were killed after lightning struck them during a thunderstorm near an ash pond at Kurebaga village under Badmal police limits in this district in the wee hours of Thursday. The deceased were identified as Ashok Rohidas, 45, and Chudamani Rohidas, 29, both residents of Banjari area under Badmal police limits. The incident occurred when the two men were collecting some materials from an ash pond at Kurebaga. Lightning struck them during a thunderstorm and rendered them critical. On being informed, family members and villagers rescued and rushed them to the district headquarters hospital in Jharsuguda. However, doctors pronounced them dead on arrival. Badmal police registered a case and launched an investigation after sending the bodies for post-mortem.

Teen killed by friend over mobile phone

Anandapur, July 3: In a shocking case of violence stemming from a petty dispute, a 14-yearold boy was allegedly killed by his friend over a mobile phone at Raighati village under Soso police limits in Keonjhar district, police said Thursday.

The deceased identified as Gusa Purty, 14, son of Silai Purty, was reportedly killed Sunday, and his decomposed body was recovered four days

later from a nearby forest about 2 km from the village Thursday. Police detained the accused Kundia and interrogated him.

Police registered a case over a complaint lodged by the family members, who alleged that the motive was revenge related to the earlier phone dispute. Police sent the body for post-mortem and further investigations were on.

Police said the accused Kundia and the victim Gusa were both working in Puducherry. During

their stay there. Gusa had purchased a mobile phone, which was allegedly hid by his friend. A quarrel broke out between the two over the missing phone, though it was later settled.

However, investigators believe Kundia held a grudge. Kundia reportedly invited Gusa to visit his sister's house but he returned alone the next day. A search began for Gusa, who was missing. Villagers eventually discovered Gusa's decomposed body in the forest and informed his family.

NHRC seeks ATR on minor girl's



PNN & AGENCIES

Jajpur, July 3: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken cognizance of a bizarre incident in Jajpur district, where a Class X minor girl gave birth to a baby while appearing for the board examinations.

Acting on a petition filed by human rights activist and Orissa High Court lawyer Akhand, the NHRC has issued a notice to the Superintendent of Police, Jajpur, seeking an action taken report (ATR) within four weeks.

The incident took place February 26, 2025, when the minor girl, a student of Panchayat High School, Rampur under Bari block, developed severe abdominal pain and gave birth to a baby girl at Bari Government Hospital.

She had appeared for two papers of the High School Certificate Examination and was scheduled to write her Mathematics paper February 27, 2025, but her condition prevented her from continuing.

The petitioner alleged gross negligence by school authorities, Anganwadi staff, and the local administration for failing to notice the pregnancy, which also indicates a possible case of sexual abuse, constituting a violation under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. He further demanded acrehabilitation for the victim, and preventive measures in schools.

Taking the matter seriously,

childbirth during board exam



tion against those responsible,

the NHRC has sought a detailed report from the Jajpur SP within four weeks.

35 Balasore villages remain marooned as flood subsides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, July 3: Around 35 villages in Balasore district continue to remain marooned due to flooding of Subarnarekha river, even as water levels in major rivers began receding Thursday, officials said.

According to official sources, 20 villages under Baliapal block and 15 villages in Bhograi block remain hit by floodwaters, with residents relying on country boats to travel between submerged areas. The situation has worsened due to incessant rainfall triggered by a low-pressure system over the region.

While two persons have lost their lives in the district due to floods, around 1,894 hectares of agricultural land are submerged, damaging crops and vegetables across northern Balasore, they said. An estimated 50,000 people have been affected, as the flood continued to disrupt normal life



for the fourth consecutive day, they added.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, after conducting aerial and ground-level survey of the affected areas, directed the distribution of rice to flood-hit families for seven days, beginning Thursday. "I surveyed the flood-affected areas in Bhograi, Baliapal, Jaleswar, Basta, Remuna, and Balasore Sadar. A total of 154 villages across six blocks and eight wards of Jaleswar Municipality have been affected. Steps have been taken to relocate people to safe places and provide

them food," Parida posted on X. Parida also asked officials

to ensure distribution of baby food, drinking water, fodder for cattle, and essential medicines, while stressing the need for disinfection of water bodies once floodwaters recede.

During a visit to some marooned villages using power boats, Parida faced complaints from locals about shortages of essential supplies, including infant food, clean water, and medical assistance.

As road communication has been totally cut off, patients are being transported by country boats, a villager in Baliapal area said, adding that so far two persons were swept away by floodwaters. A preliminary damage assessment said 1,894 hectares of farmland in 393 villages across 78 panchayats in six blocks have been affected.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said compensation will be provided for crop loss and house damage.







ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଭେକ୍ଟର ବାହିତ ରୋଗ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କେତେକ ଜାଣିବା କଥା

ମୌସୁମୀ ବର୍ଷା ଆରୟ ହେବା ପରେ ମଶା ବଂଶ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇବା ଏବଂ ମ୍ୟାଲେରିଆ, ଡ଼େଙ୍ଗୁ ଓ ଜାପାନୀ ଜ୍ୱର ଭଳି ରୋଗ ବ୍ୟାପିବାର ଆଶଙ୍କା ଅଧିକ ଅଛି । ଏଥିରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ସାବଧାନତା ଅବଲୟନ କରନ୍ତ୍ର ।

- ଘର ପାଖ ପରିବେଶ ସଫା-ସୁତୁରା ରଖନ୍ତୁ
- ଘର ପାଖରେ ଜମୁଥିବା ପାଣିକୁ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ଥରେ ନିଷ୍କାସନ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଘରେ କିୟା ଘର ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଫୁଲ କୁଣ୍ଡ, ପାଣି ଟାଙ୍କି, କୁଲର, ଫ୍ରିଜ୍ର ପଛପଟେ ଥିବା ଡିଫ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ଓ୍ୱାଟର ୟୟର ଆଦିକୁ ସପ୍ତାହକୁ ଥରେ ପାଣି ବାହାର କରି ପରିଷ୍କାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଘର ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଭଙ୍ଗା ଡବା, ବୋତଲ, ପୁରୁଣା/ ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଟାୟାର, କଟା ପଇଡ଼, ନଡ଼ିଆ ଷଢ଼େଇ, କୁଡୁଆ, ବାଉଁଶ ଗଛର କଟା ଯାଇଥିବା ମୂଳ ଅଂଶ ଆଦି ସବୁକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଦିନ ହେଉ ବା ରାତି, ଶୋଇବା ବେଳେ ମଶାରି ନିଷ୍ଟୟ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ, ମଶା ଦାଉରୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଘରର ଝରକାରେ ସରୁ ଜାଲି ଲଗାନ୍ତୁ
- ଶରୀରକୁ ପୁରା ଘୋଡାଇଲା ଭଳି ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧନ୍ତୁ
- ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ସ୍ଥଳେ ମଶା ନିବାରକ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଜ୍ୱର, କମ୍ପ, ଆଣୁ-ଗଣ୍ଠି, ଆଖି ଓ ମାଂସପେଶୀରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ହେଲେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ 🕈 ରକ୍ତ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରି ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାନ୍ତ୍ର

ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ସଚେତନତା ସହିତ ସମୟୋଚିତ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଜୀବନର ମୂଳମନ୍ତ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା ହେଲ୍ଲ ଲାଇନ୍: ୧୦୪

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର





A hero fears nothing, complains of nothing and never gives away.





Djavad Salehi-Isfahani

cease-fire holds,

the real question

won or lost. It will

uses the pause to

will not be who

be whether Iran

Assuming the

Iran's Choices

The 12-day war that pitted Iran against two nuclear powers, "Israel and the United States, is one of those conflicts that permits all sides to declare victory. For the Islamic Republic, that declaration came quickly, and centered on the fact that the regime is still standing. Despite heavy losses and widespread damage, there was no collapse, no revolt, and no regime change.

To many Iranians, especially among the opposition abroad (some of whom - from the exiled crown prince, Reza Pahlavi, to the former armed group Mojahedin-e-Khalq - openly cheered the strikes), the scale of the onslaught suggested an intent to topple the government. But a revolt was always unlikely, given who was calling for it. The urban middle class - the backbone of Iran's civic and professional life - was not going to rise up on behalf of the two foreign powers most associated with decades of coercion and violence in the region.

Thus, whether ordinary Iranians "won" or not will depend on what comes next: how the government responds, how quickly it can rebuild civilian infrastructure, and whether it offers concessions to a middle class that rallied around the flag in the face of a brutal bombing campaign.

Some change was already coming well before Israel attacked. Since mid-2023, the Islamic Republic has been showing signs of a strategic shift inward. It did not directly enter the fray after Hamas' October 7th attack on Israel, nor in response to its allies in Lebanon and Syria coming under pressure.

Owing to mass protests in 2022, following the death of a young

woman, Mahsa Amini, in police custody, the regime curtailed street-level enforcement of the unwritten dress code. When I visited Tehran and a few smaller cities last April, I was struck by how much the urban scene had changed. Many women (though not most) went out with their hair uncovered, and mingled freely with young men in the coffee shops that have mushroomed across urban Iran.

Then came Masoud Pezeshkian's surprising election to the presidency in June 2024. A more reform-minded figure, he succeeded the conservative Ebrahim Raisi, who had made hijab enforcement a priority and cracked down violently on protests. (Raisi died in a helicopter crash the previous month.) By contrast, when a new hijab law was passed, Pezeshkian refused to enforce it, allowing a new social norm to take hold.

omy is not as weak as foreign media coverage often suggests. The data do not paint a rosy picture, but nor do they point to an imminent collapse. Despite the draconian US sanctions imposed in 2018 (after Donald Trump

double down on economic development, or whether the Moreover, the Iranian econtrauma of war will provoke an ideological hardening

abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal), the economy has been slowly recovering. By 2024, GDP had surpassed its 2018 peak, and growth averaged around 3 per cent per year - aided by oil exports that benefited from the Biden administration's lax sanctions enforcement. Moreover, survey data show rising real (inflation-adjusted) per capita expenditures in recent years. Pezeshkian's appointments – including a progressive minister

of welfare and labour and a young Chicago-educated economy minister – signaled a turn toward better economic management. Internally, there has been a major debate over whether Iran can meet the 8 per cent growth target that is regularly listed in annual budgets and five-year plans. The consensus among economists was "not without sanctions relief," which in turn would require diplomacy, not missiles.

Still, the Pezeshkian administration's economic reforms - including the restoration of an innovative 2010 cash-transfer programme – likely bolstered the urban middle class' willingness to stand with the government in the face of Israeli air strikes. Iran's rather measured response to the US attack on its nuclear sites shows where its leaders' priorities lie. They see renewed conflict as a distraction from their development mission, originally laid out in the 2005 Twenty-Year Vision Plan to place Iran among the region's top economies by 2025.

The immediate question is whether the recent war will push Iran further toward militarisation and an expanded role for the state in the economy, or toward greater freedom for civil society and the private sector. Many will remember how the bloody eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s led to entrenched rationing, central planning, and dominance by state-linked institutions. It took nearly two decades of reform to reintroduce market principles and revive the private sector.

Iran may be better positioned today, because the war was limited in scope, and the private sector and market institutions are more firmly established. Just as the Iran-Iraq War led to vast development investments that acknowledged the contribution of rural communities, this one may catalyse a similar gesture of recognition for the urban middle class. If so, that would go far toward achieving the kind of social consensus (vefagh) that Pezeshkian is seeking.

Two decades ago, the joke in Iran was that the Islamic Republic had a consistent Korea strategy, except that sometimes it resembled the North, and sometimes the South. Now Iran faces a similar choice. The North Korean model may seem attractive to some. with its nuclear deterrence, stifling of dissent, and closed borders. But most observers familiar with Iran's culture, religion, history, and temperament would not regard this as a viable option – even after a war that has exposed Iran's vulnerability in the absence of nuclear weapons.

Undoubtedly, there will be tensions between rebuilding the military and addressing civilian needs – from shoring up the water supply to distributing gasoline and dealing with youth employment. Fortunately, unlike a military buildup, economic reconstruction can be advanced through broadly felt policies that attract private-sector engagement and reduce the budgetary trade-off between defence and development.

Assuming the cease-fire holds, the real question will not be who won or lost. It will be whether Iran uses the pause to double down on economic development, or whether the trauma of war will provoke an ideological hardening. The pro-development option may be constrained by the nature of the regime; but the alternative - a permanent wartime posture – is economically and socially untenable.

> The writer is Professor of Economics at Virginia Tech. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

SOCIETY

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

n this country, those who speak English will soon feel ashamed -the creation of such a country is not far away": Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Any attempt to impose Hindi on Marathi speakers will not be tolerated": Maharashtra Navnirman Sena leader Raj Thackeray.

"Some entitled bigots brand us chauvinists and anti-nationals for the 'crime' of demanding Tamil's rightful place in Tamil Nadu. The true chauvinists and anti-nationals are the Hindi zealots who believe their entitlement is natural but our resistance is treason": Tamil Nadu CM, MK Stalin.

Language 'wars' are back on the national agenda and how. Linguistic chauvinism has always been a political weapon only now it has resurfaced in a manner that only exposes the underlying hypocrisies and narrow political agendas of leaders who seek to divert attention from real issues of our times.

Shah's grievances against English are rooted in the Sangh Parivar's Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan belief system, a belief that views English as being a colonial language antithetical to 'Indian culture'. Ironically, Shah enrolled for a bio-chemistry course in St Xavier's college in Ahmedabad, widely considered an English elite institution in the city. He later shifted to CU Shah Science College in the city. His son, Jay Shah, now the president of International Cricket Conference - the apex body of the original sport of the Empire-studied at Loyola Hall in Ahmedabad, another of the city's much sought after English medium schools. And yet, Shah has never hidden his disdain for English.

Like Shah, the Thackerays too have sent their children to English medium schools. Nor have they stopped speaking or giving interviews in Hindi. And yet, their politics revolves around a 'Marathi-first' agenda, if only to establish a distinctive identity in a crowded political marketplace.



English is no longer seen as a colonial relic but a language of aspiration and ambition. Travel to any corner of the country and witness the rapid expansion of English language coaching classes, all aimed at providing a 'new' India a chance to climb up the social ladder

If for Shah, the 'Hindi-centric' worldview is designed to position the BJP as a 'nationalistic' force taking on an elite Nehruvian Congress, for the Thackerays, rekindling the language issue is an attempt to revive the 'sons of the soil' movement that was Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's original pitch. And while the Sena chieftain may have spewed fire on non-Marathi speakers, his first job as a cartoonist was with the English daily, Free Press Journal. Today, when the Sena has split wide open and is facing an existential crisis, the Gen-next Thackerays are seeking a reunion of sorts under the garb of linguistic pride.

For MK Stalin too, raising the bogie of Hindi being 'imposed' on the people of Tamil Nadu is a familiar political weapon ahead of a big election year in the state. The rise of the Dravidian parties in the 1960s revolved around the strident anti-Hindi agitations meant to refurbish a resilient Dravidian culture. Six decades later, by claiming that the New Education Policy's three language formula is another attempt to force Hindi on Tamil-speaking citizens, the DMK chief minister is re-igniting a north versus south battle to consolidate his position as a flag-bearer of regional identity. And while espousing a 'Tamil-first' war-cry, the fact is that the next-generation of the DMK's first family is sending their children to study in foreign universities. Not to forget that most private schools in Chennai are inclined to offer a three language syllabus, including Hindi.

Which is really the nub of the issue across the country. Politicians who rail against English from old-style socialist Lohia-ties to Hindutvawaadis to regional warriors, all choose to send their kin to English-language schools. Amit Shah can rant against English but he only needs to do a survey of his own Union Cabinet colleagues to find out how many of them, if any, have chosen to send their children to a Hindi or regional language medium school. At least half a dozen Cabinet ministers have their children studying in prestigious foreign universities. English is no longer seen as a colonial relic but a language of aspiration and ambition. Travel to any corner of the country and witness the rapid expansion of English language coaching classes, all aimed at providing a 'new' India a chance to climb up the social ladder. Far from being 'ashamed' of speaking English, most young Indians seek to excel at it. Sadly, it's the quality of English teaching that leaves a lot to be desired in

several parts of the country, one reason why Gujarat for example has lost out in the soft skills driven service industry. Interestingly, Hindi too is now a language of growth and ambition in many corners of India. Just look at the success of so many films made in the south but becoming blockbuster Hindi film releases. The traditional north-south divide is rapidly disappearing on the big screen as it is indeed on the other great Indian theatre of dreams, the cricket field too: who would have thought at the turn of the century that Ranchi-born, Hindi speaking Mahendra Singh Dhoni would be the ultimate Chennai hero. Mumbai too is now less of a Maharashtrian city than ever in the past: Hindi is not just the language of its famed film industry but also the street language of livelihoods, nurtured uniquely by waves of north Indian migration and assimilation. The Bombay versus Mumbai versus Bambai debate has hollowed out a buzzing cosmopolitanism replacing any real angst over language divides. Yes, pride in local language still matters but it no longer needs one language to be pitted against another.

Which is why those who might be fighting language wars need to realise that these are losing battles which may yield temporary political dividend but cannot be sustained beyond a point. Linguistic diversity is India's strength, being multi-lingual a competitive advantage. Politicians who have run out of ideas may seek refuge in linguistic chauvinism, most young Indians are job-seekers not language zealots.

Post-script: I once interviewed a senior politician who insisted on speaking in Hindi because he wanted to reach out to the 'masses'. Interview over, he introduced me proudly to his son. 'Please meet my America-educated young man!'

The writer is a senior journalist and author. His latest book is 2024: The Election That Surprised India.

SPECTRUM

Rajdeep Sardesai

POLITICIANS

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SOCIETY

Freedom from drugs: A commitment to children



Dushyant Meher

A STATE SPECIFIC STRATEGY **TO AUGMENT CIVIL SOCIETY** AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WOULD INTENSIFY THE EFFORT IN **PREVENTING CHILDREN FROM DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

TO THE EDITOR

are most welcome to contribute letters

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suggestions, preferably by email, to:

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requested to send their contact

hile Odisha renews its commitment towards a developed state, leveraging on demographic dividend becomes a central point of discussions for its growth opportunities. With a large portion of its population falling in the working age group, children getting into drugs and substance abuse has become a major concern. In this context, announcement of provisions to open de-addiction centres in every district shows the commitment of the state government.

The Prime Minister gave a clarion call to address the issue of drug and substance abuse by children during his meeting with the chief of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in 2018 through a joint action plan. Subsequently, it took the shape of an inter-departmental joint action plan - "Prevention of Drugs and Substance Abuse Among Children and Illicit Trafficking - 2021 – a policy spearheaded by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in collaboration with the NCB.

This policy framework was primarily formulated to

streamline and strategise the efforts made by various authorities, institutions, agencies to bring paradigm shifts in the direction of drugs and substance abuse prevention amongst the children. Some of the initiatives include installation of CCTV cameras in chemist shops, action on selling substances near schools, separate or exclusive de-addiction and rehabilitation facilities for children. exclusive school club to create awareness, digitisation of sales of schedule X and schedule H drugs, mapping of children in street situations, and stricter enforcement of section 77 and 78 of the Juvenile Justice Act against people selling drugs to or using children for peddling drugs. After one year of piloting in 272 vulnerable districts by 2022, this is now being implemented throughout the country and monitored regularly at the district level under the district magistrate. Odisha is faring well under

this policy. Districts of Gajapati and Keonjhar have been recognised for their performance. However, there is a need for

standardisation of activities across the state, a mechanism for effective coordination as well as capturing data and information under one platform. Moreover, this framework also needs to broaden its scope to achieve its desired results through greater integration of institutions and state specific initiatives.

Mission SPANDAN (Spiritual Partnership Against Narcotic Drug Abuse - Nationwide) launched under NCB must cover all the schools in the state through collaborations with spiritual organisations. It is a step towards combating drug abuse and promoting a healthier society right from childhood. It is observed that adolescents also use dark web to access synthetic drugs, therefore, parents and teachers need to be vigilant about the online content that the children use and to observe any deviant behaviour. Data and information sharing and integration with the narcotics coordination portal are also vital for more vigilant action.

Implementation of the New Education Policy is promising for children as it provides

learning, holistic development, creativity and innovative spirit that can prevent risk behaviour among adolescents and children. Greater availability and accessibility of sports facilities for schoolchildren and state and national competitions for children would be more enabling. Also involving children in creative civic activities, from urban forestry to garbage segregation is crucial.

a platform for experiential

Finally, a state specific strategy to augment civil society and enhance community involvement would intensify the effort in preventing children from drug and substance abuse. Funding from corporate houses under CSR can bring more synergy. Thus, the Joint Action Plan is the promise of the nation and states like Odisha must show their commitment through a state specific strategy to ensure a brighter future free from dug and substance abuse.

The author is a Delhi-based independent consultant who worked with the NITI Aayog and NCPCR.

Lateral entry in CBI

Sir, The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is heavily dependent on officers on deputation to serve its ranks. Also, the functioning of the agency is hampered by the reluctance of state police departments to lend officers. The Centre has taken a rapid stride in appointing non-IPS officers to some of CBI's key posts. Five Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers and an Indian Defence Accounts (IDAS) officer were brought in as Superintendents of Police (SPs) in different departments of the agency over the last few months. Expectedly, the cadre officers are miffed but the Centre seems to be keen to appoint domain experts to a few key CBI departments considering the ever changing complexion of crimes. However, it is critical for the government to maintain a balance between the IPS officers and the lateral entrants so that the latter do not trample upon the authority of the former.

Tiger conservation

Sir, Amid the euphoria over the rising tiger population, the loss of five tigers in Karnataka's Male Mahadeshwara Hills Wildlife Sanctuary brings into sharp focus several conservation issues that have low priority. According to reports, a farmer avenged himself on the tiger that had killed his cow by poisoning the carcass. The tiger and four cubs died consuming the carcass. The State Forest Department and National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) are accountable for the loss of the tigers. This incident raises questions about unchecked cattle farming and grazing in a protected area. Similarly, several people have lost their lives in encounter with tigers. Lack of funding for relocation of people from protected areas is a hindrance to tiger conservation. While solatium is given to the next of kin of dead people in tiger attacks, compensation for livestock death is not given. Project Tiger is a prestigious mission the success of which depends on several aspects of tiger conservation.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Venu GS, KOLLAM



TWOSTATES





Pre-marital thalassemia test mandatory soon

Thalassemia is a genetic blood disorder that affects the body's ability to produce hemoglobin and healthy red blood cells

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 3: Maharashtra will soon frame rules to make testing of thalassemia mandatory for people before marriage as part of a broader initiative to eradicate the disease, minister Meghana Bordikar said in the state assembly Thursday.

Responding to a question raised by MLA Vikas Thakre during the Question hour, the minister of state for public health said there are currently around 12,860 thalassemia patients in Maharashtra.

Thalassemia is a genetic blood disorder that affects the body's ability to produce hemoglobin and healthy red blood cells.

On Thakre's demand that thalassemia testing may be made mandatory before marriage, Bordikar said, "We will soon frame rules on making the test mandatory before marriage."

"This is a serious genetic disorder, and if not diagnosed in time, it can be passed on to the next generation. We have launched a thalassemia eradication campaign, starting with a pilot project in Parbhani,

Responding to a question raised by MLA Vikas Thakre during the Question hour, the minister of state for public health said there are currently around 12,860 thalassemia patients in Maharashtra

which is now being expanded across the state," she said.

She also assured that thalassemia treatment centres will be established in every district.

The minister also informed the House that a probe was underway by the health department commissioner into alleged corruption in the purchase of cancer diagnostic

Speaker Rahul Narwekar directed the inquiry report be tabled in the assembly before

the end of the current session.

The main question was raised by Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Bhaskar Jadhav, who alleged that vans were purchased at double the price.

Congress Legislature Party leader Vijay Wadettiwar alleged irregularities in the purchase of cancer diagnostic vans by the state public health department and demanded that the probe report be tabled in the assembly before the end of the ongoing session.

The state government had procured eight cancer diagnostic vans, but according to Wadettiwar, the vehicles were purchased at highly inflated prices.

"The cost of one van should not exceed Rs 40 lakh, and the diagnostic equipment inside is not worth more than Rs 12 lakh. Despite this, the vans were bought at much higher rates, indicating possible corruption," he said.

He also claimed some of the equipment in these vans was non-functional.

"This is a serious matter involving a life-threatening disease like cancer. There is an ongoing inquiry, but no report has been submitted so far," Wadettiwar said.

He said the inquiry should be completed and its report presented before the House before the end of the current monsoon session.

Responding to the demand, the speaker directed that the probe be expedited and the report be submitted in the assembly before the conclusion of the session. The monsoon session of the state legislature will end July 18.

Art towers about Kerala's heritage feature at TIAL

Thiruvananthapuram, July 3: Travellers arriving at or departing from the international airport here are in for a visual treat as four art towers depicting Kerala's rich cultural heritage have been set up along the route to the aerodrome, TIAL said Thursday.

The Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Ltd (TIAL), which manages the aerodrome, said in a statement that the gateway towers are located on the Chakkar overbridge and each narrate a unique story about the state's cultural heritage.

"Blending tradition with modernity, these vivid paintings will showcase the spirit of Kerala. Passengers will now be greeted by a cascade of colours and culture, turning every arrival into a memorable experience," it said.

At night, these towers are lit up in a way that brings out the vibrant colours of the artwork. according to the photos shared by TIAL.

Tower 1 is a tribute to Kerala's traditional performing

arts -- like Theyyam, Kathakali, Oppana, Margamkali, Pooram, and Ratholsavam -while the second one depicts the state's literary and wellness legacy that includes Thunchath Ezhuthachan -- the father of the Malayalam language -- and tributes to the Malayalam script, Kalaripayattu, Ayurveda, and the boat races, the statement

The third tower is a cultural window into Thiruvananthapuram itself as it depicts iconic landmarks such as the Padmanabhaswamy Temple, the temple procession through the airport, Beemapally, Palayam Church, artworks of Raja Ravi Varma and glimpses of the city's majestic palaces, it said.

The fourth and last tower is a representation of modern Kerala and shows the legislative assembly, the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Technopark, Napier Museum, and the Vizhinjam International Port, the statement said.

The entire project was brought to life under the artistic direction of renowned artists Ambili Thekkedathu and Sanu Krariyely, founders of Deva Creations, Ottapalam it said.

"With this initiative, Thiruvananthapuram International Airport doesn't just welcome passengers, it introduces them to Kerala's heart and soul, painted in bold strokes and rich hues," the statement added.

Shukla interacts with students from ISS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July Sanghavi, a 10th standard student from Government Higher Secondary School, Nayarkuzhi, Kozhikode, could not hide her excitement at witnessing an astronaut floating in space and showing how he could play with a ball in zero gravity.

A wide grin across her face revealed how thrilled she was to have interacted with Shubhanshu Shukla, the second Indian to travel to space after Rakesh Sharma.

"I was so excited and happy. We had so many questions for him, and he answered many of them in detail and showed us how they float inside the International Space Station (ISS)," Sanghavi told PTI Videos.

Around 200 students, selected from schools across the state, got a chance to interact with the Indian astronaut at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Another batch of students in Lucknow, Shukla's hometown, also had the opportunity to interact with him and clear their doubts regarding space travel.

The Kerala batch was given around 10 minutes for the interaction, during which Shukla spoke to the students via video conferencing.

"He spoke about space travel, food, how he spends his free time at the space station, and the scientific experiments conducted there. He also encouraged us to stay curious to learn and excel in science," said Aditya, a student.

The VSSC authorities picked up the students from the railway station in their vehicles and transported them to the space centre, while their parents spent the day in Thiruvananthapuram waiting for their return.

"The students were selected based on their performance in the Upper Secondary Scholarship (USS) exams. Gifted category students from the USS were chosen, along with those who excelled in science clubs and related activities," said Niranjana, a student from GHSS, Kokkallur, Kozhikode.

The Union Government had issued strict instructions to schools and parents to keep the selection process and details of the programme confidential and asked them not to speak to the media beforehand.

Even the event itself was conducted inside VSSC without media presence.

"They had strictly told us not to publicise the selection or participation in the event," said a parent.

June 26, IAF test pilot Group Captain Shukla became the first Indian to set foot on the ISS as he and three other astronauts entered the orbital laboratory to warm hugs and handshakes after the docking of their spacecraft at the end of a 28-hour journey around the Earth.



Commuters amid rainfall, in Nagpur, Maharashtra, Thursday

NAG PANCHAMI

Animal rights activists oppose live snake worshipping practice

Thane, July 3: A section of environmentalists and animal rights activists have opposed the Maharashtra government's plan to explore ways to resume the practice of worshipping live snakes on Nag Panchami in Battis Shirala town of Sangli district.

Battis Shirala is known for its erstwhile practice of worshipping live snakes on Nag Panchami, celebrated in the month of Shravan. The Bombay High Court in 2002 banned the processions of cobras in the town. The issue was raised in the

state assembly on Wednesday by BJP legislator Satyajit Deshmukh, who said Nag Panchami festival in Battis Shirala is a religious tradition with historical significance.

State forest minister Ganesh Naik had told the House that a meeting would be held July 7 and 8 with Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav to see how the practice can be restarted.

"There is absolutely no need to revive a custom that inflicts pain on an already endangered species. Cobras are protected under Schedule-I of the Wildlife



contradict the spirit and the letter of the law. Moreover, the practice has been declining in recent years, thanks to a Bombay High Court order," said noted herpetologist Mrugank Prabhu.

NatConnect Foundation director BN Kumar also opposed the move and said snakes are starved for days to show devotees that they are drinking

Environmental activist Jyoti Nadkarni, who has worked with Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), said snakes subjected to such practices like force-feeding of milk suffer from pneumonia.

IEAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. MCSW-BOBRN-REHAB-25-26-11

NAME OF WORK: REHABILITATION

OF BOBRN WAGONS AT CARRIAGE

REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.

Advertised Value (₹): 30,50,22,156.00,

EMD (₹): 16,75,100.00, Period of

Completion: 24 Months.

Stranded British F-35 jet becomes star in Kerala's tourism campaign

The Royal Navy aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing at the airport of the state capital Thiruvananthapuram June 14 and has been grounded ever since, despite efforts to repair it

Kerala, July 3: The southern state of Kerala has found a unique ambassador to promote its coconut palm-lined beaches. backwaters and vibrant culture to tourists - a British F-35 fighter jet that has been stranded there since mid-June.

The Royal Navy aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing at the airport of the state capital Thiruvananthapuram June 14 and has been grounded ever since, despite efforts to repair it.

An AI-generated image of the stealth aircraft parked on the tarmac surrounded by coconut trees has gone viral after it was shared by Kerala's tourism de-

partment Wednesday. "This was part of our tourism campaign. It has been one of the most innovative and eye-catching ones... It's all in good hu-



mour and creativity," Biju K, Kerala's tourism secretary, told the news agency.

In the viral social media post, originally created by entertainment website The Fauxy, the jet can be seen giving the state of Kerala five golden stars, calling it "an amazing place".

"I don't want to leave. Definitely recommend," the image quotes the jet as saying.

"Though tourism is under the government, it has moved out of government space in promoting the destination," said Roy Mathew, director of Stark Communications, the tourism department's brand promotion

Kerala is among India's most popular tourist destinations, and markets itself with the tagline 'God's own country'. Last year, 22.2 million tourists visited the state.

It boasts natural beauty along India's south-western coastline and a rich heritage of classical dances, temple festivals and vibrant cuisine.

The Indian Air Force said last month it would help in the repair and return of the F-35. which made an emergency landing June 14 when it was flying over the Arabian Sea off Kerala's coast.

A British High Commission spokesperson told Reuters the UK had accepted an offer to move the aircraft to the Maintenance Repair and Overhaul facility at the airport. The jet will be moved to the hangar once engineering teams arrive from the UK with specialist equipment, the spokesperson added.

The Royal Navy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

UK's Minister for the Armed Forces Luke Pollard said in Parliament Monday that a Royal Air Force crew were in Thiruvananthapuram and working with Indian counterparts.

Teaching Hindi early will harm Marathi, say litterateurs

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, July 3: Educationalists and litterateurs from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Thursday opposed any plan to make Hindi compulsory from lower classes in schools claiming it would harm the state's culture and also affect its rich literature.

The Maharashtra government recently withdrew two GRs on the three language policy and teaching of Hindi from Classes I to V in English and Marathi medium schools after vociferous opposition from various parties, especially the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray-led MNS. The government, however, set up a committee to show the way forward.

"Out country is diverse. If everyone starts speaking in Hindi, then this diversity will be in danger. Every word of Marathi

that dies out is like the death of a species. Maharashtra never opposed Hindi but we cannot be guinea pigs for a language experiment. If we take up Hindi, who will read Marathi literature," poet Dasoo Vaidya told PTI.

Marathwada Sahitya Parishad president Kautikrao Thale Patil questioned if other states have done anything for the welfare of Marathi despite having speakers of the language within their jurisdiction.

"However, we spend money on Hindi departments in our universities. The people of Maharashtra will decide which language they want to learn. Now matter what committee is formed by the state government. the opposition to Hindi will remain strong," Thale Patil asserted. He said members of this committee must think about Marathi language rather than doing what the state government favours.

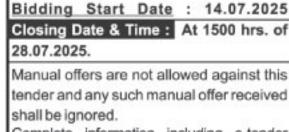
Ministry of Culture Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Tender Notice

Request for proposal for digitization of manuscripts for Gyan Bharatam Mission floated on 30 June 2025 by Ministry of Culture.

Interested bidders may see details on eprocure.gov.in Last date for bid submission is 21 July 2025.

CBC 09101/11/0008/2526



Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: http://www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH-II), CRW / Mancheswar PR-316/Q/25-26

EAST COAST RAILWAY 'E'-PROCUREMENT

Tender No.: TP255001A DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS MANUFACTURE AND SUPPLY OF HIGH PERFORMANCE RAIL PADS MADE OF (1) ETHYLENE VINYL ACETATE (EVA), (2) THERMOPLASTIC POLYURETHANE (TPU), (3) POLYURETHANE (PU), (4) ETHYLENE PROPYLENE DIENE MONOMER (EPDM) AND (5) THERMO PLASTIC POLYMER BASED ELASTOMER MEETING FUNCTIONAL AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENT OF RDSO TO BE USED ON WIDER PSC SLEEPER T-8746 FOR ADDITIONAL TRIALS IN **GHAT SECTIONS IN EAST COAST** RAILWAY, QUANTITY: 16600 NOS

EACH TYPE. Tender Closing Date & Time: At 1430 hrs. of 22.07.2025.

No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person accepted against such etenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information like detailed tender

notice, EMD, Purchase Restrictions and detailed tender conditions etc are available in website: www.ireps.gov.in Dy. Chief Engineer/TM/

PR-314/Q/25-26 Bhubaneswar

national



The deeper the roots of democracy at the local level, the stronger our nation becomes

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

AI TERMINATES DELHI-WASHINGTON FLIGHT

An Air India flight from Delhi to Washington, which took off July 2, could not complete its journey after it developed a technical glitch during a scheduled refuelling stopover in Vienna, the Tata Group-owned airline said Thursday



From financial frauds and identity theft to online harassment and defamation. cybercrimes are

exacting a severe toll on individuals and institutions alike MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

We have no alliance with Congress. If there was any alliance, why did they contest the bypoll in Visava-

dar? They came to defeat us. The BJP had sent the Congress to defeat AAP by cutting our votes. When Congress failed, the BJP even reprimanded them. The INDIA bloc was only for the Lok Sabha polls. Now there is no alliance from our

ARVIND KEJRIWAL AAP'S NATIONAL CONVENER

It was only after the BJP came to power (in 2014) that a separate ministry was created for tribal

welfare with a sizable budget

JUAL ORAM UNION MINISTER FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS

SHORT **TAKES**

Actor's son jumps to death

Mumbai: The 14-year-old son of an actor allegedly committed suicide by jumping off a high-rise in Kandivali in the northern part of Mumbai after an argument over going to tuition, a police official said Thursday. The incident took place at 6pm Wednesday at a residential complex where the actor, who has worked in popular Gujarati and Hindi television serials, stays in a 51st floor flat, the official said.

Kishor sworn in as cabinet minister

Agartala: BJP MLA Kishor Barman Thursday took oath as a cabinet minister in Tripura. The 44-year-old MLA of Nalchar constituency in Sepahijala district was administered the oath of office by Governor N Indrasena Reddy at Rai Bhavan. With the induction of the new minister, the strength of the cabinet of Chief Minister Manik Saha rose to 12. In the 12-member cabinet, the BJP has now nine members, including the chief minister, while the Tipra Motha Party (TMP) has two ministers and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) one.

Transformer blasts near **AIIMS Trauma Centre**

New Delhi: A blast followed by a fire in a transformer located near the Trauma Centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) was reported Thursday afternoon, a Delhi Fire Services (DFS) official said. He added that no one was injured in the incident. "We received a call regarding a blast and a fire in an electric transformer at the AIIMS Trauma Centre at 3:34 pm. We rushed eight fire tenders to the spot. The fire was was doused by 3:55 pm. No one was injured," DFS chief Atul Garg said.

Three dead in road accident in Jabalpur

Jabalpur: Three persons were killed and two injured in a collision between a multiaxle truck a and mini truck in Jabalpur city of Madhya Pradesh Thursday, police said. The accident took place around 3.30 pm near Gour Chowki under Barela police station limits, they said. "A 12-wheeler truck and a mini truck collided head on, trapping some persons inside the smaller vehicle. The impact of the collision was such that the two vehicles got entangled and gas cutters had to be used to separate them," the official said.

DAC clears ₹1.05L-cr defence buys

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 3: The Defence Acquisition Council, under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Thursday, gave the go-ahead for 10 proposals to purchase military hardware, including missiles and electronic warfare systems, worth approximately ₹1.05 lakh crore through indigenous sourcing.

The Council accorded its "Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of Armoured Recovery Vehicles, Electronic Warfare System, Integrated Common Inventory Management System for the Tri-Services and Surface-to-Air Missiles. These procurements will provide higher mobility, effective air defence, better supply chain management, and augment the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces", according to a Defence Ministry statement.

AoNs were also accorded for the procurement of Moored Mines, Mine Counter Measure Vessels, Super Rapid Gun Mount and Submersible Autonomous Vessels. These procurements will enable the mitigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Lawmak-

ers from different parties Thurs-

day were united in raising

concern over cybercrime

incidents, especially fi-

nancial fraud targeting

gullible people, as the

CBI director, NIA DG and

parliamentary committee.

senior officials from different

ministries appeared before a

tion MPs flagged the alleged

low conviction in such cas-

es and also raised the issue

of businessmen accused of

defrauding banks of thousands

of crores of rupees continuing

to escape Indian agencies'

attempts to bring them back

from their foreign refuge to

The Standing Committee on

Home Affairs, headed by BJP

MP Radha Mohan Das Agrawal,

held almost day-long meetings

Wednesday and Thursday over

"Cyber Crime - Ramifications,

Department of Financial Ser-

vices, representatives of banks,

Department of Telecommuni-

cations, Telecom Regulatory

Authority of India, ministries

of Electronics and Information

Technology, External Affairs,

Corporate Affairs and Finan-

cial Intelligence Unit-India

(FIU-IND), besides federal

probe agencies, appeared be-

Protection and Prevention".

face justice.

Sources said some Opposi-



of potential risks posed to the

To provide further impetus the statement said.

India's indigenous defence production has surged to an all-time high of ₹1.46 lakh crore, with exports increasing to a record ₹24,000 crore in 2024-25, according to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

"Our defence production,

with the private sector's contribution of over ₹32,000 crore. Our defence exports, which were around ₹600-700 crore 10 years ago, have surpassed a record figure of ₹24,000 crore today," the minister stated in his address at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) annual summit recently.

He described Make-in-India as crucial for security and prosperity, stating that the use of indigenous systems during 'Operation Sindoor' has proved that India has the power to penetrate any armour of the enemy.

sub-systems, components, and services are reaching around

he critical procurement projects were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, weeks after the May 7 to 10 military conflict between India and Pakistan

The DAC accorded initial approval for 10 capital acquisition proposals amounting to about ₹1.05 lakh crore through indigenous sourcing, the defence ministry said

100 countries. Over 16,000 MS-MEs, associated with the defence sector, have become the backbone of the supply chain. These companies are not only strengthening our self-reliance journey, but are also providing employment to lakhs of people,' the minister said.

He further stated that the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme execution model will open an opportunity for the private sector to participate in a mega defence project along with public sector companies for the first time, further bolstering the Make in India drive in the defence industry, he added.

Minor rape survivor to continue pregnancy after AIIMS report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: A minor rape survivor, who sought termination of her 27-week foetus, Thursday agreed to continue with her pregnancy after AIIMS doctors opined in the Delhi High Court that aborting the pregnancy at this stage would amount to foeticide.

The doctors, who were part of the medical board of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) which examined the minor, stressed that it would be in the best interest of the child to be born and his mother if the pregnancy is continued for another 4-6 weeks.

A bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Anish Dayal then modified a single judge's order, which allowed the 16-year-old girl to terminate the pregnancy, considering the medical board's opinion.

The court told the counsel appearing for the survivor and her mother to make them understand that it would be in the interest of the survivor and her child to continue with the pregnancy and after the delivery if they wish, the infant could be given for adoption.

Post discussions with the



survivor and her mother, the counsel informed the bench that the survivor had agreed to continue with the pregnancy.

The bench termed the situation to be "very unfortunate, unpleasant and precarious" in which the court had to ensure the welfare of both the minor girl and her unborn child.

Two doctors comprising the medical board appeared before the court and said if the procedure was performed right now, it would be a pre-term delivery with the child being alive and not the termination of pregnancy.

The doctor said it would amount to foeticide which was only permissible in case of medical issues.

Terminating the pregnancy would hamper her future reproductive health and it would be much safer to perform the procedure at 34 weeks gestation period, she added.

One dead, two injured after hospital building collapses in Kottayam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kottayam (Kerala), July 3: A woman died and at least two others, including a child, were injured after a part of the Government Medical College Hospital in Kottayam collapsed Thursday, police said here.

The injured -- an 11-year-old girl and a hospital staff member --were admitted to the casualty department shortly after the incident. The woman was pulled out from the debris more than two hours later and was

declared dead. Her identity was later confirmed as Bindu, a resident of Thalayolaparambu. She had come to the hospital with her daughter, who is being treated there. The injured child identified as Aleena Vincent from Meenangadi in Wayanad, had been standing next to her grandmother, who was under-

going treatment in Ward 10. Aleena's injuries are said to be not serious. Amal Pradeep, a hospital casualty staff member, suffered minor injuries after being hit by a trolley during the evacuation.

Officials said the collapsed portion was part of the bathroom complex of Ward 14 in a three-storey block. The hospital authorities described it as an unused section, though a woman later claimed it had been in use. Health Minister Veena George and Cooperation Minister V N Vasavan visited the site soon after the incident They claimed that the damaged section was an old, disused toilet area in a block that housed three wards.

One of the women disputed the minister's claim and said it was not an unused area.

in the prevalence of low birth

weight, and 12 per cent in pre-

The team added that 18 per

cent of children born in the five

years preceding the National

Family Health Survey-5 had a

low weight at birth. The authors

called for targeted interventions,

especially in the northern dis-

tricts, and an intensification of

the National Clean Air Program.

mature birth.

naval and merchant vessels.

to indigenous design and development, AoNs were accorded under the Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) category,

which was only ₹43,000 crore 10 to 11 years ago, has now crossed a record figure of ₹1,46,000 crore,

"Members from across par-

ty lines were united in ex-

pressing seriousness over the

issue. While probe agencies

highlighted their action, sev-

eral suggestions were made by

the spurt in incidents of

cyber frauds, especially digital

The government had told

Parliament in March this

year that the number

of digital arrest scams

and related cyber-

crimes in the country

almost tripled between

2022 and 2024, with defraud-

Another point that was

ed amounts skyrocketing by 21

flagged in the meeting was the

trafficking of unsuspecting Indi-

ans looking for employment to

the Southeast Asian countries,

where they are forced to work

for cybercrime syndicates.

Some MPs called for better co-

ordination among probe agen-

cies, noting that a large number

of them deal with cybercrimes.

ranging from gathering intelli-

Another MP, sources said,

cited a recent RTI reply that

said against over 2,000 crimi-

nal cases registered by cyber

police stations in Mumbai in

four years, there were only two

convictions during the period.

have frozen lakhs of mule ac-

counts, used to receive and

launder funds swindled from

victims of these crimes, and

have been stepping up their

efforts to boost cooperation

with other countries, as these

criminal enterprises often have

A probe agency said they

gence to investigating cases.

times during the period.

Some MPs highlighted

MPs," a member said.

arrests.

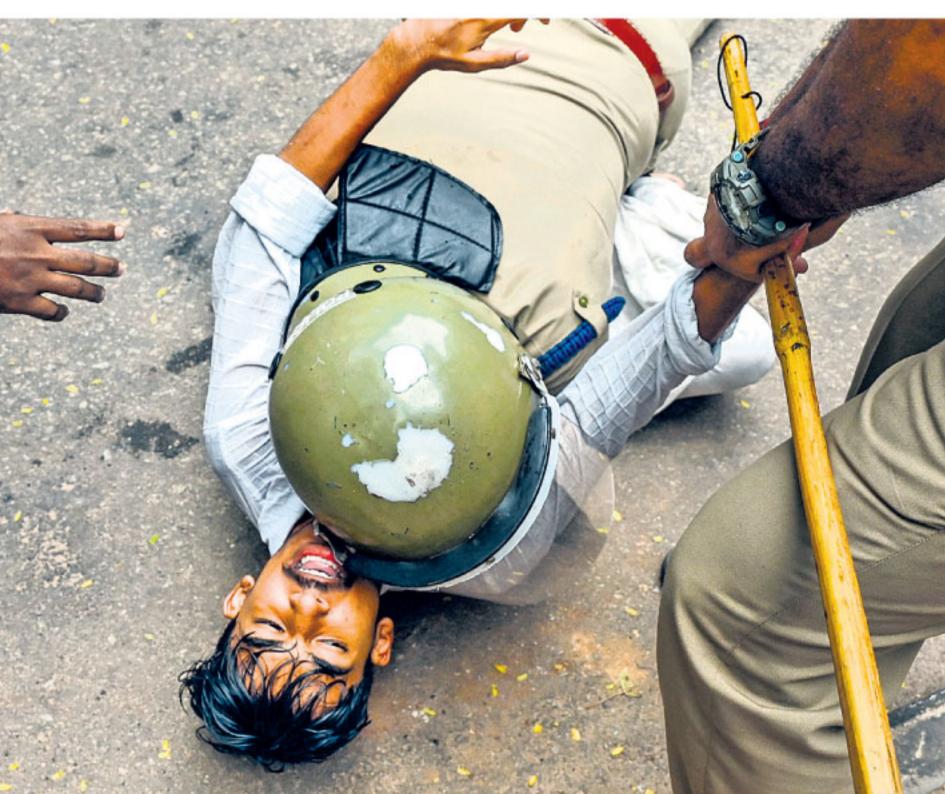
CYBER

FRAUD

MPs express concerns

despite govt assurances

"Our weapons, systems,



An agitator being detained during a protest by SFI members against the suspension of Kerala University Registrar K S Anil Kumar by Vice Chancellor Mohanan Kunnummal, outside Kerala Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram

Scolded by employer, man kills woman, son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: In an "act of revenge", a 24-year-old man killed his employer's wife and teenage son at their home in Delhi's Lajpat Nagar after the woman allegedly scolded him publicly for not repaying a loan of around ₹40,000, police Thursday said.

The man, identified as Mukesh Kumar, worked as a helper at Kuldeep Sewani's garment shop in the Lajpat Nagar market. Kumar would also transport garment. The accused, a native of Bihar's

Hajipur, was nabbed by Uttar Pradesh Railway Police from a train while he was trying to flee, police said. Earlier, police suspected him as a house help.

ACT OF REVENGE

The incident came to light when a PCR call was received at 9.43 pm Wednesday from Kuldeep Sewani, a resident of Lajpat Nagar-I. He informed police that his wife Ruchika (42) and son were not answering his calls and that there were bloodstains on the staircase of their house.

"A PCR van and an investigation team rushed to the spot where Kuldeep reported that the main gate of the house was locked from outside. Bloodstains were seen on the staircase leading to the house," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast, Hemant Tiwari. "Police forcibly opened the door and found the bodies of the woman and her son inside." he added.

The DCP said that Ruchika's body was found with the throat slit in the bedroom, while the body of her 14-year-old son was recovered from the bathroom.

13% babies born prematurely, 17% with low weight: Survey

fore the panel.

New Delhi, July 3: India's demographic health survey 2019-21 reveals that 13 per cent of children were born prematurely, and 17 per cent with a low weight at birth, with air pollution contributing to the adverse birth outcomes.

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, and institutes in the UK and Ireland looked at the National Family Health Survey-5 and remote sensing data to analyse how exposure to air pollution in pregnancy impacted the delivery outcomes.

The team found that an increased exposure to PM2.5 during pregnancy was related with a 40 per cent chance of low

birth weight, and 70 per cent of

premature delivery.

roots outside India.

The study, published in the journal PLoS Global Public Health, also found that children living in the northern districts of India could be more vulnerable to the ambient air pollution. The researchers found high-

er levels of PM2.5 pollutants over the upper Gangetic region, covering states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana, and lower levels in the country's southern and north-eastern regions. A higher prevalence of pre-

mature births was seen in northern states, such as Himachal Pradesh (39 per cent), Uttarakhand (27 per cent), Rajasthan (18 per cent), and Delhi (17 per cent). Mizoram, Manipur and Tri-

pura exhibited a lower prevalence of the trend. Punjab was found to have

such as rainfall and temperature, were found to have

Pradesh. Nagar Haveli, Madhya Pradesh,

"Utilising data from the na-

Climate

conditions,

a greater link with

adverse birth

outcomes

authors said.

tional family health survey and raster images, the study employs various statistical analyses and spatial models to elucidate the connection between in-utero exposure to air pollution and birth outcomes," the authors wrote. They "observed

> that approximately 13 per cent of children were born prematurely, and 17 per cent were with born low

weight." Further, an increase of 10 microgram per cubic metre in PM2.5

birth

Launched in 2019, the programme is aimed at improving air quality in India by addressing PM levels. The researchers also advocated for climate adaptation strategies, such as heat action plans and water management, to be included in public health planning. Awareness of risks due to air pollution and climate change should be raised as part of public health initiatives, especially among pregnant women, the team said

the highest prevalence of low-Haryana, and Uttar er birth weight at 22 per cent, followed by Delhi, Dadra and

North-east India fared

far better on the metric, the

exposure was associated with an increase of five per cent

national



I am committed to bolster Jharkhand's infrastructure. I assure the people of implementing ₹2 lakh crore-worth national highway projects in the state

NITIN GADKARI UNION MINISTER

AKHILESH OPENS NEW SP BASE IN AZAMGARH

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav Thursday invoked the "historic" coming together of party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) architect Kanshi Ram, saying it reflected the power of ideological alliances for social justice





ers are now threatening Singayya's grieving wife to politicise the tragedy, displaying insensitivity and exploiting personal loss for political gain

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM

I can challenge the Congress that they don't have the courage to speak on 'qurbani'. BJP

can openly say that Islam does not recognise 'qurbani' of cows. 'Qurbani' can be of any animal. BJP has the courage to request the public not to carry out 'gurbani' of cows next time, but to do it with goats

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM



are once again facing uncertainty and potential displacement. They are being punished for no fault of their own. They are caught in a dispute between state and central agencies

AADITYA THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER





#Maharashtra for 25 years but is slapped mercilessly by men half his age just because he

said all languages are spoken in the state. He also told me #MNS leaders come to eat at his shop regularly and speak badly. _ #LanguagePolitics

@ShivaniGupta_5

SHORT **TAKES**

Samik Bhattacharya new Bengal BJP prez

Kolkata: Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya was Wednesday officially named the new president of the West Bengal BJP, with the party tasking him to lead its charge in the 2026 Assembly elections, a battle he described as a fight to save the state's culture and pluralism from what he termed the "corrupt misrule" of the TMC. A dyed-in-the-wool party loyalist and articulate communicator with deep roots in the RSS, Bhattacharya's election as the West Bengal BJP president signals the central leadership's calibrated move to steer the state unit through internal churn and retool it into a winning machine ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Mandi cloudburst death toll rises to 14

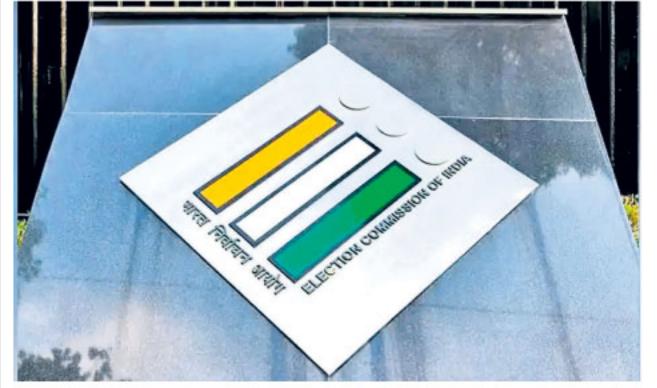
Shimla: With the recovery of one more body, the death toll in the cloudburst and flash flood-related incidents in Mandi has mounted to 14, officials said Thursday. Five people were injured, while a search is underway for 31 missing, they said. The latest body, yet to be identified, was found in Rode in the Thunag subdivision of the district. Ten cloudbursts, three flash floods and a landslide were witnessed in different parts of Mandi Tuesday. Earlier in the morning, two people were found dead. In all, seven bodies were found in Gohar, six in Thunag and one in Karsog subdivision of the district.

Four killed in road accident

Amritsar: Four people were killed while six injured in a road accident on Tarn Taran road in Amritsar Thursday when an overloaded auto-rickshaw collided head-on with a car, police said.

SPECIAL REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS

Cong asks EC not to act at behest of BJP



New Delhi, July 3: The Congress Thursday launched a fresh attack on the Election Commission over Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, accusing the poll body of conspiring to deprive 20 per cent people of their voting rights, and asked it not to act at the behest of ruling party.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress' media publicity department head Pawan Khera said the EC should act within its limits set by the Constitution and be a "slave" to democracy and voters, and not the BJP.

Khera said every Indian has the right to vote which should not be "deliberately undermined", as he urged the Commission to stop the SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar.

"We feel danger to the democratic process in the country and this danger is not just for the Opposition but for every single voter," he alleged.

"After meeting the Election Commission, we felt that we had gone to the wrong address. The Election Commission does

he Election Commis-

sion should not act as

a middleman for any

party. Everyone must work within

their limits; this is the definition of

democracy. And the Constitution

has fixed everyone's role PAWAN KHERA

not need to sit in its own building. The BJP has a large headquarters; they should take a floor there and sit.

"The Election Commission should not act as a middleman for any party. Everyone must work within their limits; this is the definition of democracy. And the Constitution has fixed everyone's role," Khera said.

Leaders of several INDIA bloc parties Wednesday met the EC over the SIR issue 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.

"With all humility at my command, I warn the Election Commission that power is a transient thing. Why are you acting as a slave to the BJP?

You should be a slave to the Constitution, of democracy and every voter in the country, and not the BJP. You will go down in history if you indulge in such acts. People will remember you for wrong reasons," the Congress leader said.

Bihar Congress chief Rajesh Kumar alleged that "it seems as if they (EC) have resolved to strip away the rights of 20 per cent of Bihar's voters".

the people that decided to conduct a Special Intensive Revision on such a large scale for the first time in just one month?" he asked.

Asking how this mammoth task will be completed in just 19 days after the Election Commission's notification, he said, "It is clearly evident to us that this step is an injustice to Bihar's voters."

Kumar said that just four months before the elections in Bihar, such a large-scale decision has been taken for the first time in 20 years.

"This process is neither transparent nor practical...Is this actually a well-planned conspiracy to exclude voters?" he asked, alleging that in Bihar, the NDA government lacks competent officers who can ac-

He alleged that the process will affect nearly 8 crore people in Bihar.

"The Election Commission is purely under suspicion, trying to eliminate 20 per cent of Bihar's votes," he said.

hopes have been dashed.

"The question is who were

complish this work.

Congress in-charge for Bi-

har Krishna Allavaru said they had some hopes from the Election Commission, but after the Wednesday's meeting those



MONEY LAUNDERING CASE HC junks Jacqueline's

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

plea to quash FIR

New Delhi, July 3: The Delhi High Court Thursday dismissed a plea by Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez for quashing an FIR against her in a ₹200 crore money laundering case, involving alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar.

Justice Anish Dayal dismissed her plea, which also sought to quash the second supplementary chargesheet of the Enforcement Directorate in the case and proceedings pending in a Delhi trial court. The ED counsel opposed the petition on the ground of maintainability, saying a special court had taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) and prima facie found a case.

The cognisance order was not challenged, the counsel added. Fernandez is an accused in the money laundering case lodged against Chandrasekhar and had appeared before the ED for questioning in the investigation.

jiju said the Dalai Lama is the "most important and defining institution" for the Buddhists. "And all those who follow the Dalai Lama feel that the Incarnation is to be decided by the established convention and as per the wish of the Dalai Lama himself. Nobody else has the

ture reincarnation.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

and no one else.

New Delhi, July 3: In a snub

to China, Minority Affairs Min-

ister Kiren Rijiju Thursday as-

serted that the decision on the

Incarnation of the Dalai Lama

would be taken by the estab-

lished institution and the lead-

er of Tibetan Buddhist himself

senior government functionary

on the comments of the Dalai

Lama on his successor. Tibet-

an spiritual leader Dalai Lama

Wednesday said that the insti-

tution of the Dalai Lama will

continue and only the Gaden

Phodrang Trust will have the

authority to recognise his fu-

Talking to reporters here, Ri-

This is the first reaction by a

right to decide it except him and the conventions in place," Rijiju said. The minister's remarks came after China rejected the Nobel Peace laureate's succession plan, insisting that any future heir must receive its seal of approval.

Rijiju, a practising Buddhist, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, a fellow Union minister, are representing the Government of India on the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday event in Dharamshala July 6. The minister said the birthday event is a religious function and has nothing to do with politics.

India backs Dalai Lama

on succession, snubs China

The 14th Dalai Lama is the most important institution for Tibetans and all those who follow the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism.

Meanwhile, Tibetan Parliament-in-exile member Tenzing Jigdal Thursday termed China an "atheist country" that had been defaming the Dalai Lama for a long time and asserting that the incarnation decision would be taken by the established institution and the leader of Tibetan Buddhist himself.

Ahead of his 90th birthday. Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on Wednesday affirmed that the sacred institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and only the Gaden Phodrang Trust will have the authority to recognise his future "reincarnation", declaring no one else can "interfere" in his suc-

cession plan. Talking to PTI Videos on Thursday, Jigdal said, "The incarnation of the Dalai Lama would be chosen through a spiritual process and established Tibetan practice like other Dalai Lamas, including the incumbent.'

The statement by the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, a day ago, that ended speculation on whether he will have a successor or not after his death, is set to escalate tensions with China The Gaden Phodrang Trust, a non-profit organisation, was founded by the Office of the

Dalai Lama in 2015.

NATIONAL HERALD

Classic money laundering, ED tells court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: This is a classic case where the offence of money laundering is made against all accused, the Enforcement Directorate Thursday argued before a Delhi court in the National Herald case.

Continuing his argument on the point of chargesheet's cognisance before special judge Vishal Gogne, additional solicitor general S V Raju said Sonia and Rahul Gandhi were the "beneficial owners" of Young Indian and acquired 100 per cent control after the death of other shareholders.

"They saw that AICC released a ₹90 crore loan (to Associated Journals Limited or AJL, a ₹2,000 crore company, the publisher of the National Herald newspaper). The purpose...target was to have ₹2,000 crore," Raju said.

SNIPPETS

ISRO transfers 10 technologies to industry to boost self reliance

New Delhi: The ISRO transferred 10 technologies, including two inertial sensors to reduce import dependence, to six Indian industries for commercial use in space and other sectors, India's space sector promoter said Thursday. The transfer of technology was facilitated by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe). Technologies of two advanced inertial sensors – the Laser Gyroscope and the Ceramic Servo Accelerometer - developed by the ISRO's Inertial Systems Unit were transferred to Hyderabad-based Zetatek Technologies Pvt. Ltd, making it the first company to get the niche technology. Zetatek a company with over 25 years of expertise in Inertial Navigation System (INS) testing, calibration and QA/QT equipment, will manufacture the sensors in the country which may help reduce import dependence.

T'gana plant explosion: 9 people still missing

Sangareddy (Telangana): Efforts were on to trace nine people missing after the June 30 explosion at the Sigachi Industries' pharma plant in Pashamylaram that claimed at least 38 lives and left 35 injured, district Superintendent of Police (SP), Paritosh Pankaj said Thursday. Meanwhile, the expert committee appointed by the state government to ascertain the causes and establish the sequence of events that led to the explosion visited the site Thursday, the official said. A statement from Sigachi said as many as 12 injured who underwent treatment in various hospitals were discharged and each one was provided with ₹1 lakh as interim relief. However, Sangareddy district Additional Collector Chandrashekar Badugu told PTI that 11 people were discharged from hospitals Thursday, while 19 continue to be under treatment.

Govt to collect signatures of MPs for motion to remove Justice Varma

New Delhi: Prominent opposition parties have given their in-principle approval to support the motion to remove Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma and the process of collecting signatures could begin soon, Union minister Kiren Rijiju said Thursday. He said the government is yet to decide whether the motion would be brought in the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. For Lok Sabha, signatures of a minimum 100 MPs is required. For the Rajya Sabha, the requirement is the support of at least 50 MPs. He said the signatures will be collected after the government decides on the House where the motion will be brought. The Monsoon session will commence from July 21 and end August 21. According to the Judges (Inquiry) Act of 1968, once a motion to remove a judge is admitted in any of the houses, the speaker or the chairman, as the case may be, will constitute a three-member committee to investigate the grounds on which the removal (or, in popular term, impeachment) has been sought.

COURT ACTION BENGAL COLLEGES

Cal HC orders lock on union rooms amid pending student polls

Prohibiting all forms of recreational activities inside union rooms, the court directed that these rooms can be used for official purposes, if absolutely required, only after written permission from the registrar of the university or the principal of the institution concerned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 3: The Calcutta High Court Thursday ordered that students' union rooms in colleges and universities across West Bengal, where students' body elections are pending, should remain closed.

Prohibiting all forms of recreational activities inside union rooms, the court directed that these rooms can be used for official purposes, if absolutely required, only after written permission from the registrar of the university or the principal of the institution concerned.

A division bench, presided by Justice Soumen Sen, passed the order during the hearing of a set of Public Interest Litiga-

tions on the alleged gang rape of a first-year student inside the premises of South Calcutta Law College in Kasba area here on the evening of June 25.

The part of the order allowing the use of such rooms under special circumstances would, however, not be applicable to the students' union room of the South Calcutta Law College, which is currently sealed for the sake of investigation, the bench specified.

The alleged torture of the woman at the law college was led by Monojit Mishra, a now-arrested former student, and assisted by two college seniors, Zaib Ahmed and Pramit Mukherjee. The crime took place for over three hours at

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multiple locations inside the campus, including the stukata Police. dents' union room, the victim said in her complaint with the

The investigation is currently being carried out by the De-

police.

tective Department of the Kol-

According to information available in public domain, Mishra, the prime accused in the case, is a former TMCP

leader of the college who was

ployee in the institution. He allegedly used the union room premises to extort, threaten and abuse vulnerable students in the past.

later appointed as a casual em-

Students' body elections across educational institutions in Bengal have remained on hold for several years. At least two petitions seeking directions to the state education department for holding students' elections are pending before the high court.

The court on Thursday also directed the state government to file an affidavit on its plans to hold the pending elections. The matter would be heard next on July 17.

Responding to the high

court's order, Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMCP) state president Trinankur Bhattacharya told PTI: "We will go by the directives of the honourable high court and look forward to July 17 when the matter will be heard again."

He, however, asserted that union rooms don't belong to any political party but to the general students.

They use the union rooms for various administrative and academic procedures, said the leader of the ruling TMC's stu-

dent wing. "Once we go through the entire judgment, we can come up

with a more detailed response on the issue," Bhattacharya added.

international



As President of the United States, I'm not going to let this **Communist Lunatic destroy** New York. Rest assured, I hold all the levers, and have all the cards. I'll save New York City, and make it 'Hot' and 'Great' again, just like I did with the Good Ol' USA!

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

SHANDONG'S FIRST HK VISIT

China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier arrived in Hong Kong on Thursday as part of a drive to drum up patriotism, days after the former British colony marked the 28th anniversary of its return to Chinese rule. The Shandong entered the city's waters alongside another vessel from its battle group in the early morning hours



Deputy head

of Russian Navy

killed by Ukraine

Moscow, July 3: Major Gen-

eral Mikhail Gudkov, the dep-

uty head of the Russian Navy

who also led a brigade fight-

ing against Ukraine, has been

killed in Russia's Kursk region,

Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of

a far eastern Russian region.

Ukrainian military Telegram

channels had earlier reported

that Gudkov had been killed

along with 10 other service-

men in a Ukrainian attack on

a command post in Korenevo

in the Kursk region, which

borders Ukraine. He is one

of the most senior Russian

military officers to have been

killed by Ukraine since Mos-

cow launched its full-scale war

Unofficial Russian and

said Thursday.

on European soil. We face trade wars, and new tariffs. and we have our closest ally, in the

United States, turning increasingly inward. Europe can no longer be in the shadow of the United States. We need now to stand on our own two feet

MARIE BJERRE DANISH EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MINISTER

Ukraine belongs in the EU. It is in the interest of both Denmark and Europe. Therefore.

dency will do everything we can to help Ukraine on its path towards EU membership VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE



of criminal groups who are expanding attacks not only into surrounding areas but beyond into previously peaceful areas

GHADA FATHY WALY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME, UNSC

SHORT TAKES

Ferry sinks near Bali

Gilimaunk: Rescuers were searching Thursday for 29 people who were missing after a ferry sank and five people died the previous night near Indonesia's resort island of Bali. As of Thursday afternoon, 31 people had been rescued from the ferry's 53 passengers and 12 crew members, the National Search and Rescue Agency said in a statement. "The condition of this ship is fully submerged, so there is a possibility that there are people inside the ferry. But right now we are focusing on the surface of the water first," Surabaya Search and Rescue head Nanang Sigit said.

US shooting rampage

Chicago: Four people have died from gunshot wounds and 14 others have been hospitalised following a driveby shooting in Chicago, police said Thursday. At least three were in critical condition. The shooting happened late Wednesday in Chicago's River North neighbourhood. Several media outlets said it happened outside a restaurant and lounge that had hosted an album release party for a rapper. Someone opened fire into a crowd standing outside. police said, and the vehicle immediately drove away.

Indian jailed in S'pore

Singapore: A 21-year-old Indian national was Thursday sentenced to six months' jail for biting off a colleague's ear after a heated argument, with vulgarities and punches thrown in the scuffle. Senthilkumar Vishnusakthi, an electrician at Ty Engineering. pleaded guilty to one count of voluntarily causing grievous hurt to 31-year-old Nesamani Hariharn. The victim, around 7 pm on February 15, was seated on his bed when Senthilkumar returned to Kallang Dormitory, where both the Indians stayed, in a drunken state, a Channel News Asia report said.

■ 79 protesters detained

Belgrade: Serbian police said they detained 79 university students and other protesters as they broke up street blockades in several cities that are part of persistent dissent against President Aleksandar Vucic's populist government. Officers in riot gear intervened late Wednesday and early Thursday in the capital, Belgrade, the northern city of Novi Sad and the southern cities of Nis and Novi Pazar. University students behind the protests said police charged and injured many peaceful demonstrators.

HEATWAYE HORROR Crete wildfire displaces over 1K as Europe sizzles

Scientists say heatwaves have arrived earlier this year, spiking temperatures by up to 10 C (50 F) in some regions as warming seas encouraged the formation of a heat dome over much of Europe, trapping hot air masses

REUTERS

Athens, July 3: Hundreds of firefighters fought a blaze Thursday on the island of Crete that scorched forests and olive groves and led to the evacuation of over 1,000 people, officials said, highlighting the region's vulnerability to destructive wildfires.

Gale-force winds and dry weather made for tinderbox conditions in Greece, hampering authorities' efforts' to tame the fires, as much of Europe baked



ABOUT 1,000 EVACUATED, 5,000 HOLIDAYMAKERS LEAVE SOUTHEAST

in an early summer heatwave linked to the death of at least eight people across the region.

Around 230 firefighters, along with 46 engines and helicopters, were deployed to contain the conflagration on Crete, which broke out a day earlier near Ierapetra town on the southeastern coast of Greece's

Stoked by intense winds, the blaze widened to encroach upon houses and hotels that were earlier evacuated, officials said.

"There are wind gusts in the area, some measuring 9 on the Beaufort scale, triggering rekindling and hindering firefighting efforts," fire brigade spokesman Vassilis Vathrakogiannis said, as his troops

ments from Athens to tame several resurgent blazes. More than 1,000 residents and

fought alongside reinforce-

tourists were evacuated from at least four settlements and moved to a temporary shelter at an indoor stadium in Ierapetra. Some left Crete by boats. authorities said.

Local media reported damage to some homes but no severe injuries, though some people were hospitalised with respiratory issues, an official said.

Southeastern Crete saw the large exodus of about 5,000 holidaymakers, George Tzarakis, head of hoteliers in the area. told Reuters, expressing concern over the impact on future bookings. Tourism is a key income earner for the popular tourist island.

July is usually the most difficult month of the fire season due to high temperatures and strong winds, the fire brigade's Vathrakogiannis said.

Greece and other countries

in the Mediterranean are in an area scientists have called "a wildfire hotspot" - with blazes common during hot and dry summers. These have become more destructive in recent years, authorities say, due to a fast-changing climate.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, thousands fled wildfires as the country battled blazes in Cesme and Odemis districts for a second day on the western coastal province of Izmir.

Winds hindered their efforts as the flames approached a main highway to Cesme, local TV footage showed, and thick smoke billowed over mountainous areas.

Italy's health ministry issued red alerts for 18 cities as temperatures poised to soar as high as 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in major cities.

Temporary blackouts were possible with power consumption surging from the use of air conditioners, Italian Energy Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin warned.

against Ukraine in 2022. Kozhemyako, who said he had spoken to Gudkov a lot over the years, said in a statement that Gudkov had been killed "carrying out his duty as an officer" along with others, and expressed his condolences to

the dead men's relatives.

"When he became Deputy Chief of the Navy, he did not stop personally visiting the positions of our marines." Kozhemyako said on Telegram.

Gudkov had received awards for bravery in military action against Ukraine and been accused by Kyiv of war crimes. Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed him deputy commander-in-chief of the Navy in March, according to a statement on the Kremlin's website.

Gudkov had led a Marine Brigade of Russia's Pacific Fleet, which had been fighting in Kursk. Parts of Kursk were seized by Ukrainian forces in a surprise offensive in August



Israel's incessant airstrikes continue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tel Aviv, July 3: Airstrikes and shootings killed 94 Palestinians in Gaza overnight, including 45 who were attempting to get much-needed humanitarian aid, hospitals and the Health Ministry said Thursday. Israel's military did not im-

mediately comment on the strikes. Five people were killed while

outside sites associated with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the newly-created, secretive American organisation backed by Israel to feed the Gaza Strip's population, while 40 others were killed waiting for aid in other locations across the Gaza Strip.

Dozens of people were killed in airstrikes that pounded the Strip Wednesday night and Thursday morning, including 15 people killed in strikes that hit tents in the sprawling Muwasi zone, where many displaced



4 Palestinians killed Jin Gaza, including 45 people waiting for aid

mnesty International accused a controversial Israeli- and US-backed

Asystem to distribute aid in Gaza of using starvation tactics against

Palestinians to continue to commit genocide in the Gaza Strip during

Israel's war with Hamas. The UK-based human rights group released

distribution in Gaza from a network led by the United Nations. Gaza's

or near GHF distribution centres over the past month. The centres are

forces of opening fire at crowds of people moving near the sites. The

Amnesty report said Israel has "turned aid-seeking into a booby trap

for desperate starved Palestinians" through GHF's militarised hubs. The

conditions have created "a deadly mix of hunger and disease pushing

the population past breaking point." "This devastating daily loss of life

as desperate Palestinians try to collect aid is the consequence of their

deliberate targeting by Israeli forces and the foreseeable consequence

of irresponsible and lethal methods of distribution," said Agnès

guarded by private security contractors and located near Israeli military

Health Ministry says more than 500 Palestinians have been killed at

positions. Palestinian officials and witnesses have accused Israeli

a report Thursday condemning Israel and the Gaza Humanitarian

Foundation, which the US and Israel have backed to take over aid

The deaths come as Israel and Hamas inch closer to a possible ceasefire that would end the 21-month war

war began on October 7, 2023.

Palestinians are sheltering. A separate strike on a school in Gaza City sheltering displaced people also killed 15 people. Ganumber of Palestinians killed in Gaza has passed 57,000, including 223 missing people who have been declared dead, since the

za's Health Ministry said the Amnesty accuses Israel of Gaza genocide

The ministry doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its death count but says that more than half of the dead are women and children. Trump said Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. But Hamas' response, which emphasised its demand that the war end, raised questions about whether the latest offer could materialize into an actual

pause in fighting. The war began when Hamasled militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages.

The war has left the coastal Palestinian territory in ruins, with much of the urban landscape flattened in the fighting. More than 90 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million population has been displaced, often multiple times. And the war has sparked a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, leaving hundreds of thousands of people hungry.

PM Modi conferred Ghana's nat'l honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Accra, July 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Wednesday conferred with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana', the country's national honour, for his "distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership".

Modi received the award from the Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama.

"Honoured to be conferred with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana'," the prime minister said in an X post.

In his acceptance speech, Modi said the award was a matter of great pride and honour for him. "I humbly accept the award on behalf of the 140 crore Indians," he said, dedicating it to the aspirations and bright future of the youth of India, its cultural traditions and diversity, and the historical ties

between Ghana and India. The award was conferred on the prime minister in recognition of his "distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release.

Thanking the people and government of Ghana for the special gesture, the prime minister noted that the "shared demo-

cratic values and traditions of the two countries would continue to nurture the partnership". He said the award "further deepens the friendship between

the two countries and places new responsibility on him to embrace and advance bilateral ties." Modi asserted his confidence

that his "historic" state visit to Ghana would impart a new momentum to India-Ghana ties, according to the MEA. The prime minister is in Gha-

na on the first leg of his five-nation tour. It is the first prime ministerial visit from India to Ghana in three decades.

Kurdish fighters to hand

over arms Irbil: A Kurdish militant group

that has waged a long-running insurgency in Turkey announced

Thursday its fighters in northern Iraq will begin handing over their weapons, marking the first concrete step toward disarmament as part of a peace process. The Kurdistan Workers' Party. or PKK, announced in May it would disband and renounce armed conflict, ending four decades of hostilities. The move came after PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who has been imprisoned on an island near Istanbul since 1999, urged his group in February to convene a congress and formally disband and disarm.

France tells Iran to free its citizens

Paris: France Thursday demanded the immediate



release of two of its citizens held in Iran for more than three years and said espionage charges reported to have been filed against them were unfounded. The French government has accused the Islamic Republic of detaining Cecile Kohler and partner Jacques Paris arbitrarily, keeping them in conditions akin to torture in Tehran's Evin security prison and barring proper consular protection. Iran had charged the couple with spying for Israel's Mossad intelligence service. No such report had yet appeared in Iranian state media. "If it is indeed confirmed that they are facing these charges, we would consider those charges to be completely unjustified and unfounded," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told reporters in Paris. "We demand their immediate release. This is our highest priority."

The first edition of the manga warned of a major natural disaster in March 2011. That was the month and year when a massive earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster struck Japan's northeastern coast killing thousands.

Callamard, Amnesty's secretary general.

Some have interpreted the latest edition as predicting a catastrophic event would occur specifically July 5

REUTERS

Tokyo, July 3: Viral rumours of impending disaster stemming from a comic book prediction have taken the sheen off Japan's tourism boom, with some airlines cancelling flights from Hong Kong where passen-

gers numbers have plunged. Japan has seen record numbers of visitors this year, with April setting an all-time month-

ly high of 3.9 million travellers. That dipped in May, however, with arrivals from Hong Kong - the superstitious Chinese-controlled city where the rumours have circulated widely - down 11% year-on-year, according to the latest data.

Steve Huen of Hong Kongbased travel agency EGL Tours blamed a flurry of social media predictions tied to a manga that depicts a dream of a massive earthquake and tsunami hitting Japan and neighbouring countries in July 2025. "The rumours have had a

significant impact," said Huen,

adding that his firm had seen its

Japan-related business halve.

Discounts and the introduc-

tion of earthquake insurance had "prevented Japan-bound travel from dropping to zero," he added. Hong Kong resident Branden Choi, 28, said he was a frequent traveller to Japan but was hesitant to visit the coun-

try during July and August due



Manga doomsday prediction spooks tourists to Japan

sible, I might delay my trip and go after September", he said. Ryo Tatsuki, the artist behind the manga titled 'The

Future I Saw', first published in 1999 and then re-released in 2021, has tried to dampen the speculation, saying in a statement issued by her publisher

ears of catastrophe linked to viral manga 'The Future I Saw'

▲ rrivals from Hong Kong drop A11% on-year in May ■ apan has seen record visitor

Inumbers this year

that she was "not a prophet".

The first edition of the manga warned of a major natural disaster in March 2011. That was the month and year when a massive earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster struck Japan's northeastern coast killing thousands. Some have interpreted the latest edition as predicting a catastrophic event would occur specifically July 5, 2025, although Tatsuki has denied this. Situated within the Pacif-

ic Ocean's 'Ring of Fire,' Ja-

pan is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. In recent days there have been more than 900 earthquakes, most of them small tremors, on islands off the southern tip of Kyushu.

But Robert Geller, a professor at the University of Tokyo who has studied seismology since 1971, said even scientifically-based earthquake prediction was "impossible".

"None of the predictions I've experienced in my scientific career have come close at all,' he said. Nevertheless, low-cost carrier Greater Bay Airlines became the latest Hong Kong airline Wednesday to cancel flights to Japan due to low demand, saying it would indefinitely suspend its service to Tokushima in western Japan from September.



business



Domestic capital has emerged as a key driver in India's real estate investments, with its share in total investments rising steadily from 16 per cent in 2021 to 34 per cent in 2024

BADAL YAGNIK | CEO, COLLIERS INDIA

ONGC, MITSUI SIGN PACT FOR ETHANE CARRIERS

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed an agreement with Japan's Mitsui OSK Lines to enter into a partnership to build two very large ethane carriers that will be used to import petrochemical feedstock for its subsidiary. In a regulatory filing, ONGC said it signed a Heads of Agreement Thursday with Mitsui "to enter into a partnership to build, own and operate two very large ethane carriers (VLECs)





support, we are proud to lead the deployment of one of India's first and largest BESS

assets in Gujarat. This project represents a strategic milestone in building next-generation infrastructure that is clean, resilient,

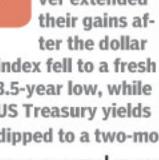
HARSH SHAH MD, INDIGRID

and future-ready

There was substandard, Chinese material coming in (through) from Vietnam. Our government is taking a clear view, there is

enough capacity in the country, we can produce any kind of grade, any kind of quality that is required ABHYUDAY JINDAL MD, JINDAL STAINLESS

ver extended ter the dollar index fell to a fresh 3.5-year low, while US Treasury yields



dipped to a two-month low RAHUL KALANTRI VP COMMODITIES, MEHTA EQUITIES

9

SHORT **TAKES**

UCO Bank posts 17% loan growth

New Delhi: State-owned UCO Bank Thursday said it has registered a credit growth of 16.58 per cent at Rs 2.25 lakh crore in the April-June quarter. The outstanding credit was Rs 1.93 lakh crore at the end of the first quarter of the previous fiscal, UCO Bank said in a regulatory filing. The Kolkataheadquartered lender reported an 11.57 per cent increase in total deposits to Rs 2.99 lakh crore in the reporting quarter as against Rs 2.68 lakh crore at the end of the first quarter of the previous financial year. As a result, total business (total credit and deposits) of the bank registered an increase of 13.67 per cent to Rs 5.24 lakh crore as against Rs 4.61 lakh crore at the end of June 30, 2024. During the latest quarter, it said, the Current Accounts and Savings Accounts (CASA) ratio declined to 36.90 per cent of the total deposits as against 38.62 per cent in the same period of the preceding financial year.

MSBPL gets SEBI nod

New Delhi: MobiKwik Securities Broking Pvt Ltd (MSBPL), a fully owned arm of One MobiKwik Systems Ltd, has received the green light from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to operate as a stockbroker and clearing member. SEBI issued the certificate of registration to MSBPL on July 1, 2025, the company said in a statement Thursday. With this approval, MSBPL can now buy, sell, deal, clear, and settle equity trades in the Indian stock market. In April, MobiKwik Group's subsidiary Zaak ePayment Services Pvt Ltd (Zaakpay) received authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as an online payment aggregator.

BMW India reports jump in sales

Mumbai: German premium car maker BMW group Thursday reported a 10 per cent jump in total sales in India at 7,774 units in the January-June period of 2025 over the same period year-ago, The Group had sold 7,081 units of BMW and Mini brands of cars in India in the first of CY 2024. Besides, the company also retailed 2,569 Motorrad brand of motorcycles during the period under review. The company also said it continued its leadership position in the luxury electric vehicle sales in India with a massive 234 per cent yearon-year growth in volumes at 1,322 units of BMW and MINI EVs sold during the first half

of the current calendar year.

NCLT says insolvency proceedings can't sidestep PMLA process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Proceedings under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code cannot be used as a mechanism to "frustrate or sidestep" the process going under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) said.

Rejecting the plea for dissolution of Shakti Bhog Snacks, which is under the lens of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) with a special PMLA Court taking cognisance of the complaint filed by the probe agency, NCLT said it "would amount to judicial overreach".

This will also "impair the ED's ability to complete its investigation, pursue trial, and recover proceeds of crime," said NCLT while dismissing the plea of the Resolution Professional of Shakti Bhog Snacks.

A two-member NCLT bench further said the Supreme Court has already held that NCLT and the appellate tribunal NCLAT do not have jurisdiction to interfere with proceedings or orders passed under the PMLA.

"In view of the foregoing, we are of the considered opinion that permitting dissolution despite the pendency of the Special Court's cognizance over the Corporate Debtor would amount to judicial overreach and would impair the ED's ability to complete its investigation, pursue trial, and recover proceeds of crime," said a 14-pagelong order by NCLT.

"Dissolution under Section 54 of the IBC results in the Corporate Debtor ceasing to exist as a legal entity. Such a consequence would inevitably frustrate the ongoing criminal prosecution under the PMLA and defeat the authority and jurisdiction of the Ld. Special Court, which is statutorily vested with the power to try offences under the PMLA and adjudicate upon related attachments and confiscation proceedings," NCLT said.

Services sector growth touches 10-month high

The ongoing expansion of the Indian service sector had a positive impact on recruitment. Employment rose for the 37th consecutive month in

June, with the rate of job growth outpacing its long-run average despite slowing from May's record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The Indian services sector growth touched a ten-month high in June aided by robust expansion in international sales and job creation, amid positive demand trends and ongoing improvement in sales, a monthly survey said Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted HS-BC India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose from 58.8 in May to 60.4 in June, driven by sharp upturn in new business orders.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"The Services PMI business activity index was up to a tenmonth high, led by a sharp rise in new domestic orders. New export orders also expanded, albeit at a softer pace. Margins improved, as the rise in input costs was below that seen for output charges," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

New orders expanded at the quickest rate since August 2024. Services companies ben-



efited most from the continued strength of the domestic market, alongside a marked increase in new export business.

Overseas demand particularly improved from the Asian, Middle Eastern and US markets, according to panel members.

The ongoing expansion of the Indian service sector had a positive impact on recruitment. Employment rose for the 37th consecutive month in June, with the rate of job growth outpacing its long-run average despite slowing from May's record.

On the price front, the survey said, cost pressures were most intense in the consumer services category, while the fastest upturn in output charges was noted in the finance and insurance segment.

As per the survey, optimism regarding the outlook for output levels in one year time was sustained, with 18 per cent of service providers forecasting growth. This proportion of upbeat firms was, however, the lowest since mid-2022. Hence, the overall level of confidence fell and was below its long-run

"Service providers remained optimistic about future growth, though their confidence faded a tad," Bhandari added. Meanwhile, the HSBC India

Composite PMI Output Index rose from 59.3 in May to 61 in June, indicating the fastest rate of expansion in 14 months. Composite PMI indices are

weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data. As per the survey, prices

charged by private sector companies rose at the slowest pace in three months at the end of the first fiscal quarter. Concurrently, cost burdens increased at the weakest rate since August 2024. For both indicators, slowdowns were broad-based across the manufacturing and service economies.

The HSBC India Services PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies.

Indian economy likely to grow in FY26: CII

New Delhi, July 3: India's economy is expected to grow 6.4-6.7 per cent during the current financial year driven by strong domestic demand, even as geopolitical uncertainty poses downside risks, the newly appointed CII President Rajiv Memani said Thursday.

Addressing his first press conference after taking over as the CII President, Memani made a strong case for simple three-tiered GST rate structure. with essential items attracting 5 per cent, luxury and sin goods at 28 per cent, and the remaining items in the 12-18 per cent bracket. Currently, goods and ser-

vices tax (GST) is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Luxury and demerit goods are taxed at the highest bracket of 28 per cent, while packed food and essential items are in the lowest 5 per cent slab. On India's GDP growth, he

said factors, including a good monsoon forecast, and enhanced liquidity emanating from the Reserve Bank's cash reserve ratio (CRR) cut, and interest rate reduction will support the country's economic growth. "We expect (economic

growth in) a range of 6.4-6.7 per cent," Memani said in response to a question on CII's gross domestic growth (GDP) forecast for India during 2025-26.

Observing that there are some obvious risks, he said, "A lot of these relate to external trade risk. I think a lot of them have been factored in, and also there is some upside. So hopefully they should get balanced out... From a CII standpoint, we're looking at 6.4-6.7 per cent growth."

In a presentation, Memani said risks to growth are evenly balanced, and "geopolitical uncertainty" poses downside



risks whereas "strong domestic demand" is an upside.

The Reserve Bank forecast the economy to grow 6.5 per cent during the 2025-26 financial year.

Last month, the central bank announced slashing CRR by 100 basis points, which will unlock Rs 2.5 lakh crore liquidity to the banking system for lending to productive sectors of the economy. Benchmark interest rate was cut 50 basis points to 5.5 per cent.

To a query related to goods and services tax (GST), he emphasised on the need for rate rationalisation. Under GST 2.0, we have

called for rate rationalisation, especially on products that are consumed by lower income segments. Several products taxed at 28 per cent, including cement, should also be reduced... we believe this will boost economic activity,' Memani said.

He also batted for procedural simplification of GST framework and advocated for the need to build a national consensus on inclusion petroleum, electricity, real estate and potable alcohol in GST.

He further said if India has to capitalise on the prevailing opportunities, "it will need to undertake more economic reforms, win the AI race and possible impact on jobs, grow high-end and employment intensive manufacturing and continuing focus on Ease of Doing Business".

Push for trade pact post Trump deal with Vietnam

New Delhi, July 3: US and India trade negotiators were pushing Wednesday to try to land a tariff-reducing deal ahead of President Donald Trump's July 9 negotiating deadline, but disagreements over US dairy and agriculture remained unresolved, sources said.

The push comes as Trump announced an agreement with Vietnam that cuts US tariffs on many Vietnamese goods to 20% from his previously threatened 46 per cent. Trump said that US products could enter Vietnam duty free, but details were scant. Trump threatened a 26 per cent duty on Indian goods as part of his April 2 "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariffs, which were temporarily lowered to 10 per cent to buy time for negotiations.

Sources in India's commerce ministry said that a trade delegation from India was still in Washington a week after arriving for talks that started last

Thursday and Friday. They may stay longer to conclude a deal, but without

compromising on key agricultural and dairy issues, the sources said, adding that it was unacceptable to lower tariffs on genetically modified corn, soybeans, rice and wheat

grown in US. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government "doesn't want to be seen as surrendering the interests of farmers - a strong political group in the country," one of the sources said.

However, India is open to lowering tariffs on walnuts, cranberries and other fruits, along with medical devices, autos and energy products, the source said. The source added that "there's been intense and constructive effort to close a deal. I think both sides understand the strategic importance, beyond the economic importance, of closing a deal."

Trump cast doubt on a potential deal with Japan, saying he may impose a tariff of 30 per cent or 35 per cent on Japanese goods, well above the 24 per cent duty rate he announced April 2. Japan is seeking to lower separate 25 per cent automotive and steel tariffs that Trump imposed.

India has lower US tariffs exposure than APAC peers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: India may be subject to lower tariffs than many countries in the Asia Pacific, which could help the economy attract further investment and become a global manufacturing base, Moody's Ratings said Thursday.

In its outlook on Asia Pacific sovereigns, Moody's Ratings said many export-reliant APAC economies were hit with very high US tariffs in April. While negotiations will likely lead to some reduction in tariffs and other trade barriers on a bilateral basis. policy uncertainty is challenging investment decisions and disrupting trade.

Uncertainty about trade policy and a potential overhaul of global trade have raised cyclical and possibly structural credit risks in APAC, it said, adding that economies like Vietnam and Cambodia, which benefited from a diversification of investment and manufacturing out of China and now face high US tariffs,



are particularly at risk.

"In contrast to countries like Cambodia and Vietnam, India has the potential to emerge as a beneficiary of a tariff-driven shift in investment and trade flows. India may be subject to lower tariffs than many in APAC, which could help the economy, attract further investment flows and support its development as a global manufacturing base," Moody's Ratings said.

The signing of a free trade agreement with UK in May and ongoing efforts to establish the same with the EU will further support such development. However, US goal to reshore select manufacturing segments could challenge the extent to which India benefits, it added.

April 2, US imposed an ad-

ditional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent levy.

Currently, officials of India and US are negotiating a proposed interim trade agreement between the two countries. While India is seeking greater market access for its labour-intensive goods, US want duty concessions for its agricultural products.

These talks are important as the suspension of US reciprocal tariffs is ending July 9. The two sides are looking at finalising the talks before that.

Moody's also said that potential shifts in investment and trade flows stemming from tariffs will take years to materialise, and it is unlikely that multinational companies will make drastic investment changes while there is still significant uncertainty about the magnitude of tariffs and whether they will persist.

Stock markets decline PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 3: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty pared intra-day gains to close lower Thursday due to lasthour selling in financial and metal shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 170.22 points or 0.20 per cent to settle at 83,239,47. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 48.10 points or 0.19 per cent to 25,405.30.

Among the Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Adani Ports, Trent, State Bank of India, Titan and Tata Consultancy Services were the laggards. However, Maruti, Infosys, NTPC, Asian Paints, Eternal and Hindustan Unilever were

among the biggest gainers. Sector-wise, the trend remained mixed -- auto and pharma posted gains, while metal and realty were among the top losers, he added. The broader indices also mirrored this movement and closed on a flat note.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.47 per cent while midcap index dipped 0.06 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, services dropped the most by 1.08 per cent, followed by metal (0.77 per cent), realty (0.61 per cent), telecommunication (0.55 per cent), utilities (0.48 per cent) and bankex (0.48 per cent).

Healthcare, consumer discretionary, auto, consumer durables and oil & gas were the gainers.

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

ing on a mixed note. The US markets ended mostly higher Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent

crude declined 1.03 per cent to \$68.40 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,561.62 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Quick commerce stays slow in non-metros

E-commerce is gaining traction in metros, but due to lower demand and lack of digital depth, this industry is facing challenges in non-metros

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: India's quick-commerce sector is growing rapidly but struggles to scale profitably beyond metros, with non-metro areas contributing a mere 20 per cent of gross merchandise value (GMV) due to lower demand, digital maturity, and local shopping habits, a re-

port said. According to market research firm Redseer, the Indian quick commerce industry grew by ap-

year during the first five months of 2025, fuelled by the rapid rollout of "dark stores," aggressive category expansion, and fierce competition. Yet, despite this explosive

proximately 150 per cent year-on-

growth and the presence of quick-commerce platforms in over 100 cities, non-metro cities (excluding the eight metros) contribute just over 20 per cent of the sector's GMV.

This is starkly disproportion-



of the overall retail market in India's top 100 cities, highlighting a ate to their 60-70 per cent share significant untapped potential --

the sector's ability to scale profitably in these markets. Orders per day per dark store

but also raising questions about

drop sharply beyond the top 10-15 cities, falling below 1,000, and further below 700 in the next 20 cities. Further, the scale-up curve of a typical non-metro city (beyond the top 15) suggests that these cities tend to plateau out before the 1,000 OPD mark, reflective of weak demand, Redseer noted. A variety of factors contribute

to this: many users in smaller cit-

and trust in online platforms, which limits how often they place orders and their comfort with digital transactions. Population density is lower

ies have lower digital maturity

in these areas, so there are simpeal to local consumers.

ply fewer potential customers within each delivery zone. Local preferences are highly specific, and the product selections offered by quick-commerce platforms often don't reflect these tastes, reducing their ap-

Gill shatters records

Indian skipper slams majestic 269, becomes first **Asian Test skipper** to score double hundred in **England, carries** dominant India to 587 in first innings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, July 3: Shubman Gill earned himself a place in the pantheon of Indian batting heavyweights with a near flawless and record-breaking double hundred, giving his team complete control of the second Test against England here Thursday.

Gill's monumental 269 off 387 balls in his debut series as Test captain allowed India to post a massive 587 all out before the inexperienced Indian pace attack delivered upfront to dismantle England top-order to reduce the hosts to 77 for three at stumps on day two.

Joe Root (18 batting off 37) and Harry Brook (30 batting off 53) settled the nerves in the England dressing room after the hosts lost three wickets for 25 runs. While England bowlers got no help from the surface, the Indians found swing and seam. Playing his first game of the series, Akash Deep struck twice in as many balls to cap off a perfect day for his team before Mohammed Siraj made it even better by having Zak Crawley caught at first slip.

Akash got the ball to seam away on both the occasions,

resulting in dis-missals of the dangerous Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope in his second over.

But the day was truly ruled by Gill, who collected 30 fours and three sixes on way to a record shattering double ton, making him the highest individual scorer for India in England ahead of Sunil Gavaskar and Rahul Dravid.

shores. For somewho had exhis desire to be the best batter of the series, he is well on course

In a matter of innings in England, the 25-year-old has managed to improve his average to 40 from mid 30s at the start of the series. At the break, England had run out of ideas to stop Gill, who forged a 144-run alliance with Washington Sundar (42 off 103) to prop up India to

564 for seven.

to meet his target.

He also became the first Asian captain amass a douhunble dred on

DREAMII

while but the moment finally arrived when Gill pulled Tongue for a single towards fine leg. His celebrations showed how much the effort meant to him as the opposition and the England fans duly applauded the special knock.

Beyond

numbers, what

makes Gill's feat

remarkable is

that the high

profile series

is his first as

Test captain.

made

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number

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Virat

Kohli.

Gill was

199 for

stuck

He has also

the

his

fol-

Though he could not fetch a possible 300, getting jettisoned by Tongue soon after tea.

Brief scores:

India: 587 all out in 151 overs (Shubman Gill 269, Ravindra Jadeja 89, Yashasvi Jaiswal 87; Shoaib Bashir 3/167) vs England: 77/3 in 20 overs

Highest score by **Indians in England:**

269 in 2025 Shubman Gill -

at Edgbaston Sunil Gavaskar - 221 in 1979 at

The Oval Rahul Dravid -217 in 2002 at The Oval

Sachin Tendulkar - 193 in 2002 at Leeds

187 in 1990 at Ravi Shastri -The Oval



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, Champions the

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 Title in both Junior and Senior segments.

s a reader of **OrissaPOST**, this is a chance for you to be part of the exciting Grand Finale if you can **A** 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

UPSETS RULE WIMBLEDON

ndependence Hall is the building where the Declaration of Independence of the United ■ States was adopted by the Founding Fathers of the United States on July 4, 1776. In which city is this World Heritage Site?

ANSWER TO THURSDAY'S QUESTION

Harbhajan Singh

RULES & REGULATIONS

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to mettlemeet@orissapost.com
- Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.
- Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.
- 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





Others who answered correctly are

Pratik Kumar Sahu, Jigyansa Priyadarshini, Archit Mishra, Anurag Samantaray, Jignesh Kumar, Biswajit Sahoo, Amrit Kumar Munda, R Sekhar Rao, Bhubanananda Behera, Prasant Kumar Jena, Niranjan Nayak, Madhura Roy, Rudra Sabitru Bhanja, Pratyush Satapathy, Sk Azaruddin Md, Priyanshu Nayak, Amar Kumar Jena, Smruti Ranjan Sendh, Dibyanshu Pani, Brajagopal Ray, Jyotiprakash Jagadev, Subhashree Jena, Shoumik Jena, Ruchismita Prusty, Abha Priyadarshini, Saloni Mohapatra, Fatima Lakra

SHORT **TAKES**

Pugilists dominate

Astana: Hitesh Gulia and Sakshi assured India of two more medals after securing the semifinal spots at the World Boxing Cup here Thursday. Hitesh, a gold medallist from the Brazil leg earlier this year, delivered a dominant 5:0 win over Kazakhstan's Almaz Orozbekov in the men's 70kg quarterfinal, ensuring another medal to his name. In the women's 54kg category, Sakshi put on a composed display to beat Brazil's Tatiana Regina de Jesus Chagas via unanimous decision. They thus joined guaranteed medallists Minakshi (48kg) and Pooja Rani (80kg), as well as Sanju (60kg), who confirmed a podium for herself on Wednesday after advancing to the semifinals. Anamika (51kg) also remains in contention after reaching the quarters. With several medals guaranteed and more boxers still in the mix, Team India's campaign in Astana continues to build toward a strong finish ahead of the World Boxing Cup Finals in New Delhi.

Bad start by golfers

Kildare (Ireland): The Indian guartet got off to a disappointing start at the KPMG Irish Open and all of them will need a low second round effort to make the cut in a month that is full of high-profile events on the Ladies European Tour. Tvesa Malik had the best score among the four with 1-over 74 at the par-73 Carton House golf course. She was lying on tied-86th, though a good number of players were yet to finish their opening round. Diksha Dagar, who has ensured her place in the AIG Women's Open, and rookie Avani Prashanth shot 2-over 75 each and were Tied-

Srikanth in quarters

105th. Hitaashee Bakshi was

3-over through five holes.

Calgary: India's Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the men's singles quarterfinals at the Canada Open Super 300 badminton tournament with a straight-game win over Chinese Taipei's Wang Po-Wei here Thursday. Srikanth, a 2021 World Championships silver medallist and the 2022 Thomas Cup winner, prevailed over world number 71 Wang 21-19, 21-12. The Indian was trailing for most of the opening game, fighting back from 5-11 down to draw parity at 18-18.

GRAND CHESS TOUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Zagreb (Croatia), July 3: World champion D Gukesh came up with two straight victories to tie for the top spot along side world No 1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway, Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland and American Wesley So at the end of the first three rounds of Super United Rapid and Blitz Chess tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour.

Alireza Firouzja of France before defeating compatriot R Praggnanandhaa to reach on four points out of a possible six.

Carlsen beat Wesley So and drew his remaining two games against local star Ivan Saric and Duda to match Gukesh on points, while Wesley was the only other player involved in all decisive games, apart from Gukesh, as he put it across his US compatriot Fabiano Caruana and Anish Giri of then with two points each.



Holland.

In-form Praggnanandhaa had a tough day in office as he drew with Firouzja and Starting the day with a Nodirbek Abdusattorov of loss against Duda, Gukesh Uzbekistan with the loss

With six rounds still to come in the rapid section, and 18 thereafter in the blitz, it's early days but Carlsen still remains the firm favourite in his second favourite

version after freestyle chess. With four players in front, Giri and Saric are close behind with three points apiece and then a group of four players -- Caruana, Abdusattorov, Firouzja and Praggnanandhaa - follow

Gukesh in joint lead Djoko sets new record at Wimbledon with Carlsen, Wesley ASSOCIATED PRESS Balaji enters second

London, July 3: Novak Djokovic added another record to his name by reaching Wimbledon's third round for a 19th time with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-0 win over Dan Evans on Centre Court Wednesday. It was Djokovic's 99th

match win at Wimbledon overall, and the 19 thirdround appearances put him one ahead of Roger Federer for most by any man in the Open Era. It's hardly the most pres-

tigious record for Djokovic, whose 24 Grand Slam titles - including seven at Wimat least use it to poke fun at his new, and much younger, main rivals.

great stat," said the 38-yearold Djokovic. "That's probably almost as much as Sinner and Alcaraz have years in their lives."

Well, not quite. Carlos Alcaraz, who beat Djokovic in the last two Wimbledon finals, is 22,

while No 1-ranked Jannik

Sinner — who was playing

overpowered a reckless against Gukesh costing him bledon — are the most by a tween Sinner and Alcaraz interview. "I would like to. male player. But he could — especially in the wake But I think that's going to of their five-set final at the French Open last month

> - has helped tennis move "Nineteen times, that's a on from the era of the Big Three, where Djokovic is the last man standing after Federer and Rafael Nadal retired.

cused on proving he can still win another Slam to sit back and reflect on everything he has accomplished at Wimbledon.

"I don't pause to reflect, to the rest of the way.

later on Centre Court — is 23. be honest, I don't have time." The growing rivalry be- Djokovic said in an on-court come probably when I set the racket aside and then sip margarita on the beach with Federer and Nadal and just reflect on our rivalry and

everything."

Against Evans, Djokovic failed to convert his first nine But Djokovic is too fo- break points in the first set. But once he got the breakthrough for a 5-3 lead - raising both arms in the air as if to say "finally" — he went five-for-six on break points

round in men's doubles

India's N Sriram Balaji joined compatriots Yuki Bhambri and Rithvik Bollipalli in the second round of the men's doubles event at the Wimbledon here Thursday. Balaji, world No 74, and his Mexican partner Miguel Reyes-Varela defeated American duo of Learner Tien and Aleksandar Kovacevic 6-4 6-4 in an opening round match. The contest lasted 71 minutes and the Indo-Mexican pair broke their opponents once each in both sets to wrap up the match without much fuss. However, Balaji and Reyes-Varela will have a tough second round against fourth seeds Marcel Granollers of Spain and Horacio Zeballos of Argentina. Bhambri and Bollipalli had won their respective opening round matches Wednesday while



Rohan Bopanna had crashed

out in the first round itself.

govt clearance for events in India PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pakistan yet to get

Karachi, July 3: Senior officials of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) said they are yet to receive clearance from the government to take part in two major hockey events in India this year.

An Indian sports ministry source said on Thursday that Pakistan's hockey teams will not be stopped from competing in next month's Asia Cup and the subsequent Junior World Cup in India, as any move to block them from multilateral competitions would violate the Olympic Charter.

The Asia Cup is scheduled to be held in Rajgir, Bihar from August 27 to September 7, while the Junior World Cup will take place in Chennai and Madurai from November 28 to December 10.

PHF Secretary General Rana Mujahid said they had sent an official inquiry to the PSB seeking clearance to send teams to India. "But the PSB has forwarded the official query to the concerned Ministries and they are yet to respond," he said.

Tributes pour in for Red's forward Diogo Jota's demise

standard chartered

Liverpool star and his brother were killed in a car accident in Spain, leaving the football world deeply saddened

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Liverpool, July 3: Premier League and Liverpool said they were "devastated" to hear the news of Portugal and Red's forward Diogo Jota's demise in a tragic car accident in Spain Thursday. According to a BBC report, Jota's brother, Andre

Silva, who is also a profes-

sional footballer with Por-

tuguese second-tier club

Penafiel, also died in the accident, which took place in the Spanish province of Zamora.

The Guardia Civil (national police force of Spain) informed BBC Sport that Jota and his brother lost their lives around 00:30 local time Thursday. According to officials, their car veered off the road while overtaking another vehicle, following a tyre blowout, and subsequently caught fire.

"Liverpool Football Club are devastated by the tragic passing of Diogo Jota. The club have been informed that the 28-year-old has passed away following a road traffic accident in Spain along with his brother, Andre," Liverpool said in a statement.

Doesn't make any sense. Just now we were together in the National Team, just now you were married. To your family, to your wife and children, I send my condolences and wish them all the strength in the world. I know you will always be with them. RIP. Diogo and Andre. We will all miss you CRISTIANO RONALDO PORTUGAL AND AL NASSR CAPTAIN

"Liverpool FC will be making no further comment at this time and requests the privacy of Diogo and Andre's family, friends, teammates, and club staff is respected as they try to come to terms with an unimaginable loss. We will continue to provide them with our full support," the club added. The Portuguese forward

joined Liverpool in 2020 and went on to win the Premier League, FA Cup, and two League Cup titles. His time at Anfield saw him make 182 appearances for Liverpool, scoring 65 times. Jota

> times for Portugal and scored 14 goals, winning the **UEFA** Nations League in 2019 and 2025, where they defeated Spain in

the final last month.

was capped 49

League is shocked and devastated to learn of the tragic passing of Diogo Jota and his brother Andre. Our sincerest condolences go to Diogo's family, friends, Liverpool FC, and all their supporters at this heartbreak-

"Everyone at the Premier

ing time. Football has lost a champion who will be forever missed. We will continue to support our friends and colleagues at the club,'

the Premier League statement read. Reaction

ty owner at Liverpool — and

tennis legend Rafael Nadal.

also poured in from across the world, including from non-soccer players such as NBA star Lebron James — a minori-

Glorious achievements

FA Cup: Jota won the Football Association Challenge Cup with The Reds in 2021-22 season.

Premier League: The

forward won the 2024-25 title

with Liverpool. League Cup: Jota won

the English Football League Cup with Liverpool in 2021-22 season.

UEFA Nations League: With Portugal, the star footballer won the international European football competition twice in

2018-19 and 2024-25.

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