



Sara's dating dynamics

Actor Sara Ali Khan speaks candidly about the red and green flags she notices in relationships

LEISURE | P2



Booster for Taliban

Russia becomes the first country to formally recognise the Taliban's government in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Trade talk's trouble

India proposes retaliatory duties under the WTO norms against US over auto tariffs in the name of safeguard measures

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Siraj's magic

Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj takes six wickets, while Akash Deep bags four as India take a first-innings lead of 180 runs

SPORTS | P12

Telangana blast: ₹10 lakh each for 8 Odia victims

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday announced an ex gratia of ₹10 lakh each for the families of eight Odia workers who lost their lives in a factory explosion in Telangana earlier this week.

The assistance will be provided from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF), the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in an official release. A state government team is present at the accident site, monitoring relief and medical operations, it added.

The eight Odia people who died in the blast have been identified as Rajnala Jagan Mohan of Chhatrapur in Ganjam, Lagnajet Duari of Paikarapur in Cuttack's Tigiria, Manoj Rout of Parbatipur in Balasore's Simulia, Dolagobinda Sahu of Erabanka in Jajpur's Dharmasala, Chaita Bhadra and Ramesh Gauda of Nabarangpur, Siddharth Gouda of Mahanadapur in Ganjam and Prasant Mohapatra of Berhampur in Ganjam.

"Honourable Chief Minister Shri @MohanMODisha has announced financial assistance of ₹10 lakh each from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the families of Odia individuals who lost their lives in an accident at a factory in Telangana. Additionally, a team of state government officials is present at the accident site, monitoring the rescue and medical operations," the CMO said in a post on X.

'Air India Express forged records'

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 4: India's aviation watchdog reprimanded Air India's budget carrier in March for not timely changing engine parts of an Airbus A320 as directed by the European Union's aviation safety agency, and falsifying records to show compliance, a government memo showed.

Air India Express told Reuters it acknowledged the error to the Indian watchdog and undertook "remedial action and preventive measures". Reacting to the Reuters story Friday, the EU agency said it will investigate the matter. Air India has been under intense scrutiny since the June Boeing Dreamliner crash in Ahmedabad which killed all but one of the 242 people onboard.

The engine issue in the Air India Express' Airbus was raised on March 18, months before the crash. But the regulator has this year also warned parent Air India for breaching rules for flying three Airbus planes with overdue checks on escape slides, and in June warned it about "serious violations" of pilot duty timings.

Air India Express is a subsidiary of Air India, which is owned by the Tata Group.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I outperformed my predecessor. He spent ₹50 lakh on home decor. I spent ₹80 lakh



READY TO RETURN: The majestic chariots of Lord Jagannath and His siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, parked near the Gundicha Temple in Puri, Friday, as devotees gear up for the Bahuda Yatra Saturday

BAHUDA TODAY

Pune techie rape accused is her friend: Police

AGENCIES

Pune, July 4: A suspect detained in connection with the alleged rape of a Pune IT professional at her home was her friend and not a stranger who gained entry by posing as a courier delivery agent, police said Friday, casting doubt on her version of the events.

It was the woman herself who took a selfie with him and typed a threatening message in her phone, police commissioner Amitesh Kumar said.

"They know each other for a couple of years," he said.

The 22-year-old woman had claimed that a man who posed as a courier delivery agent entered her flat in Kondhwa area Wednesday when she was alone, and forced himself on her. Before leaving, the accused clicked a selfie using her phone in which her back and a part of his face are seen, and left a message warning that he had taken her pictures and would release them on social media if she reported the incident, she told police.

No chemical spray had been used to make her unconscious (as suspected earlier), Kumar said. "The rape part is still under investigation," he added.

Municipal corporation status for Puri soon

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: The state government will upgrade Puri Municipality to a municipal corporation, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced here Friday.

Briefing media, Majhi said the process for the upgradation will start July 5.

"Lakhs of devotees from across the country and abroad visit Puri to have a darshan of Lord Jagannath and His siblings. It is the duty of the state government to provide all basic facilities to the devotees. Besides, the residents of Puri town deserve better civic amenities. Considering all these aspects, the state government has decided to upgrade Puri Municipality to a municipal corporation. All the localities of Puri town and some gram panchayats of its surrounding areas will be included in the new municipal corporation," the CM said.

Majhi said the BJP government is committed to making Puri the best religious and tourist destination in the country.

"The state government will



take the necessary steps for the all-round development of Puri, one among the four sacred Dhams as per the Hindu culture," he said.

Majhi said the state government will set up a museum, library and research centre in the Holy City for the preservation of Jagannath culture and literature.

He said the museum will showcase the history of Srimandir construction, making of the deities, Kalinga's victory in Kanchi, festivals, and temple rituals, among others.

All these events can be displayed through paintings, miniature statues, plaques and other items, he said.

The proposed library will have books related to Jagannath culture as well as Odia culture and tradition, he said, noting that it will also have e-library facilities.

The CM said there are many stories related to Srimandir, and they will be divided into episodes and presented in Odia, Hindi, English and Bengali through the light and sound shows.

Notably, the state currently has five municipal corporations - Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Berhampur Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur Municipal Corporation and Rourkela Municipal Corporation. With Puri, Odisha will have six municipal corporations.

According to 2011 Census, Puri Municipality, which was constituted April 1, 1881, has a population of 2,00,564. The civic body has an area of 16.84 sqkm under its jurisdiction. According to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, a municipal corporation is typically established in an urban area with a population exceeding 10 lakh.

Digital hundi for the Lord

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday launched 'digital hundi' for making online donation to Srimandir in Puri.

Majhi launched the online donation facility at the Lok Seva Bhawan here and said the 'digital hundi' will provide devotees with a convenient way to make donations to Srimandir in Puri, even sitting at their homes in the country and abroad.

"I am very happy to make this (digital hundi) announcement. Lord Jagannath devotees all over the world were facing difficulties in giving donations to the Puri temple even if they wanted to. They were facing difficulty to make a donation through online payment," Majhi said. Through the new digital platform, the CM said devotees can easily make their donations using QR codes. "This QR code will be displayed on the website of the temple. For this, all interested banks can set up their own QR code stations outside the temple premises in coordination with the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration," he said.

Apart from the temple, banks can also display this QR code in popular places in Puri town in a secure manner, such as at ATM counters.

'Chinese intel kept Pak ahead of India'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 4: China used the four-day India-Pakistan conflict in May like a 'live lab' to test various weapon systems and was providing all possible support, including intelligence, to Islamabad which kept Pakistan ahead of New Delhi, Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Rahul R Singh said Friday.

Addressing a seminar on 'New Age Military Technologies' organised by FICCI, he said while Pakistan was the 'front face', with China extending all possible support to its all-weather ally, Turkey was also playing a major role by supplying military hardware to Islamabad. India was actually dealing with at least three adversaries during the May 7-10 conflict.

Lieutenant General Singh, who looks after the Indian Army's capability development and sustenance vertical, suggested that China used its satellites to monitor Indian military deployment as the Pakistani military was getting live inputs on it during the DGMO-level phone talks.

"When the DGMO level talks were going on, Pakistan actually

was mentioning that we know that your such and such important sort of vector is primed, and it is ready for action. I would request you to perhaps, you know, pull it back. So he was getting live inputs from China. So, that is one place we really need to move fast and take appropriate action," Lt Gen. Singh said, underlining the need for India to learn its lessons from the conflict.

He highlighted China's ancient military strategy of '36 stratagems' and killing the adversary with a 'borrowed knife' to buttress the point that Beijing extended all possible support to Pakistan to cause pain to India.

"Pakistan was the front face. We had China providing all possible support. This is no surprise because if you look at statistics, in the last five years, 81 per cent of the military hardware that Pakistan is getting is all Chinese," he said.

He said Turkey also played an important role in providing support to Pakistan. "We saw numerous drones coming and landing in the face of war, during the war, along with the individuals who are there," Lt Gen. Singh said.



3,500-yr-old Peru city that linked coast & Andes unveiled

REUTERS

Lima, July 4: Archaeologists have unveiled a 3,500-year-old city in Peru that likely served as a trading hub linking Pacific coast cultures with those in the Andes and Amazon, flourishing around the same time as early civilizations in the Middle East and Asia.

Drone footage released by researchers shows the city centre is marked by a circular structure on a hillside terrace, with remains of stone and mud buildings constructed some 600 metres (1,970 feet) above sea level.

The urban centre, named Peñico, is located in the northern Barranca province and

was founded between 1,800 and 1,500 BC. It is close to where the Caral civilization, the oldest in the Americas, developed 5,000 years ago.

Caral, comprised of 32 monumental structures, is considered a contemporary of civilizations in Egypt, India, Sumeria and China. However, unlike them, it developed in complete isolation, according to researchers.

Ruth Shady, the archaeologist who led the research into Peñico, said the newly-unveiled city is key because experts believe it emerged after the Caral civilization was devastated by climate change.

"They were situated in a strategic location for trade, for



The archaeological site of Chavin de Huantar, a Unesco World Heritage site, 250km north of Lima in Peru (FILE PHOTO)

exchange with societies from the coast, the highlands and the jungle," Shady said.

Archaeologist Marco Machac-

uay, a researcher with the Ministry of Culture, said at a news conference that Peñico's importance lies in it being the contin-

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uation of the Caral society. After eight years of studies, researchers have identified up to 18 structures in Peñico,

including ceremonial temples and residential complexes.

The walls of a central plaza stand out for their sculptural reliefs and depictions of the pututu, a conch shell trumpet whose sound carries over long distances.

In other buildings, researchers found clay sculptures of human and animal figures, ceremonial objects and necklaces made from beads and seashells, they added.

Peru is a centre of ancient cultures and home to archaeological sites such as the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu in Cusco and the mysterious Nazca lines located in the desert region along the country's central coast.

leisure



KATY PERRY, ORLANDO BLOOM CONFIRM SPLIT

Singer Katy Perry and actor Orlando Bloom, who dated and then got engaged, have confirmed their split with a new statement. As reported by *People*, Katy and Orlando will now 'focus on co-parenting' as their 'shared priority is' their four-and-a-half-year-old daughter Daisy Dove.

JLo, AFFLECK RUMOURED TO REIGNITE ROMANCE

After obtaining their divorce earlier this year, Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck shocked many by removing their USD 68 million Beverly Hills mansion from the market. Despite ending their marriage, the ex-couple, who were married in 2022, made the decision to make this joint financial decision, sparking rumours about a reunion.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, a romantic link-up is about to be delivered at your doorstep, all wrapped in silver and tinsel! So, Ganesha hopes you are prepared. Don your best attire, check your breath and practice some sweet-talking. After all, who knows what the evening will lead to? Only Ganesha, and he's smiling an impish grin! Need more clue?

TAURUS
Chaos will reign supreme as unexpected things occur and expected ones are missed out on, says Ganesha. Luck will favour you and nothing is powerful enough to hamper you other than your own thoughts. You will dodge any trouble that is headed your way and escape easily, much to the embarrassment of others.

GEMINI
If you have children, they will be a pampered lot today, says Ganesha. Your affection, however, may not have its desired impact. Children are known to be unpredictable, but keep an eye on their activities, especially today. You may entertain your loved ones with a sumptuous dinner tonight.

CANCER
Today, you will need to rise above your emotional leanings and will have to choose between doing the right thing and keeping your loved ones happy. So far, you have managed to strike a balance. It is about time that you learn to deal with your fears, suggests Ganesha.

LEO
Friendships are supposed to last forever. But it all depends on whether or not the friend is around when most needed. Today, your pals may turn to you for help, and sure enough, you will be there to extend all the support you can, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You are the banner carrier for those around you today, giving hope and inspiring. Clad yourself in robes of the perfect family man. This should spread warmth and love, and will work wonders in improving relationships.

LIBRA
Call it two sides of the same coin, but today, you shall have the uncanny desire to be your own master and servant. But this day is all set to be animated and eventful and full of life. Expect a few run-ins with the opposite sex, as you are bound to attract quite a few of them, mainly because of your killer good looks.

SCORPIO
You may find yourself sulking in your shell today, feels Ganesha. One event or another may lead you to shut out work. Hindsight and bitterness will not lead you anywhere, so Ganesha advises that you must steer clear of negativity.

SAGITTARIUS
A nice, easy and pleasant day is on the cards. Your professional approach will bring you much appreciation, especially in the way you handle complicated problems. The way you balance people's opinions will help you make many friends.

CAPRICORN
Recognition and rewards are awaiting you at work, and unlike in most cases, colleagues won't be envious of your success. They will, in fact, provide the much-needed motivation for taking up new and challenging projects, says Ganesha. For those of you looking to switch jobs, wait awhile, this may not be the right time.

AQUARIUS
Aquarius: Today, your social butterflies will set hearts fluttering! Also, whatever you have been working on will reach completion now. You do have a great vision, but you're lost when it comes to executing your plans.

PISCES
The focus today is on touching base with your near and dear ones, says Ganesha. It is likely that you will renew some old associations in a social function, or in matters related to business. You are likely to surge ahead of your competitors when it comes to work related matters.

Sara's dating rules

Mumbai: Sara Ali Khan recently opened up about relationship red flags and green flags in an interview. She revealed that a partner refusing to acknowledge their relationship is something she actually finds amusing, joking she would give him "108 green flags" for it since it's such a rare scenario. Sara added that she has never used dating apps, explaining that she prefers to meet people in person rather than in the digital world, which she feels takes away the fun.

Talking about dating dynamics, Sara said she doesn't believe the guy should always pay the bill, as she prefers splitting it. She is also fine if her partner frequently asks about her whereabouts, as long as they don't track her via GPS

or demand proof, she laughed. Sara is rumoured to be dating former model and politician Arjun Pratap Bajwa, after they were spotted together at Kedarnath and later seemingly vacationing in Rajasthan, fuelling speculation about their relationship.

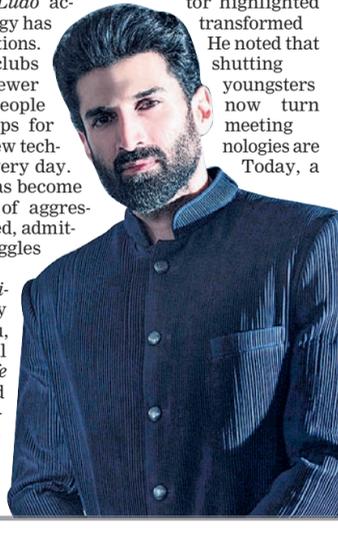
Currently, Sara stars in *Metro In Dino*, directed by Anurag Basu, alongside an ensemble cast including Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, Konkona Sen Sharma, Aditya Roy Kapur, Pankaj Tripathi, Fatima Sana Shaikh, and Ali Fazal. A spiritual successor to Basu's 2007 hit *Life in a Metro*, the film hit theatres Friday.

Aditya gets candid on relationships

Mumbai: Aditya Roy Kapur, currently promoting *Metro In Dino*, recently opened up about love, past relationships, and personal growth. In a candid interview, the actor revealed he is currently single and prioritising his work over romance. Reflecting on his past relationships, Aditya shared that every relationship teaches valuable lessons. "Once something ends, you try and learn where you've gone wrong," he explained, adding that falling in love naturally brings these realisations.

He emphasised that his biggest takeaway has been learning how to become a better person, owning up to mistakes, and avoiding repeating negative patterns. Aditya stressed the importance of accepting one's share of the blame and growing from those experiences. Talking about the impact of changing times on dating, the *Ludo* actor highlighted how technology has social connections, with nightclubs down and fewer partying, people to dating apps for partners. "New tech coming in every day, phone call has become like an act of aggression," he joked, admitting he struggles with texting.

Metro In Dino, directed by Anurag Basu, is a spiritual sequel to *Life in a Metro* and explores different shades of urban love.



Bebo gushes over Brad

Mumbai: Actress Kareena Kapoor enjoyed a fan girl moment with Hollywood heartthrob Brad Pitt.

Taking to the stories section of her Instagram handle, Bebo dropped a still from Pitt's recent release, *F1*.

Gushing over the *Fight Club* actor, Kareena penned on the photo-sharing app, "Who wants to be 20 when you can look like this at 60," along with three-star emojis and three love-struck emojis.

Pitt's *F1* is receiving a lot of love and admiration from all over the world, and Bollywood actors are no exception.

Recently, Ananya Panday took to her Instagram stories and revealed that she loved *F1*. Posting an image of the screen, along with a tub of popcorn, Ananya wrote, "I love the movies!! I love it!! I love caramel and cheese popcorn!! And I LOVE Brad Pitt."

Additionally, sharing his views on the movie, filmmaker Karan Johar mentioned on social media, "Familiar Tropes, predictable beats, one-liners you see coming a mile away and Yet. SO MUCH FUN! You can't stop yourself from reaching the edge of your seat or gasping out loud, Brad Pitt seems to have approached the role with a self-reflecting Zen mode movie star swag! So effective and landed every beat!"



Jorfi talks about online hate

Mumbai: After winning *The Traitors*, Jorfi Javed took to social media to share how she's been receiving threats and abusive messages from those unhappy with her victory.

While she's no stranger to online hate, Jorfi pointed out that this time the backlash isn't about her fashion—it's about her win. Unshaken by the negativity, she reminded followers that hate has never stopped her before, and it won't now. Taking to Instagram, the *Bigg Boss OTT* fame actress shared screenshots of the abusive messages she received online after winning the Karan Johar-hosted show.

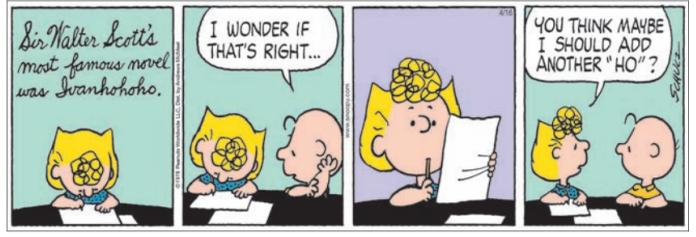
Jorfi wrote, "When we you don't like something a girl does, just drop the 'R' word. Not the first time I've been threatened or abused like this but this time it's not because of my clothes but because I won a show. Imagine being so petty that when your favourite player doesn't win you resort to abusing and threatening."

"These are the most decent ones I uploaded. No matter what I do, people just love hating and abusing. *Harsh ko na Nikalti toh Pyar me andhi, harsh ko nikal Diya toh dhokhebaaz. Pu-rav ko Jeetne deti bewakoof, nahi jeetne diya toh cheater. Hate has never stopped me before it never will now.*"

IANS



PEANUTS



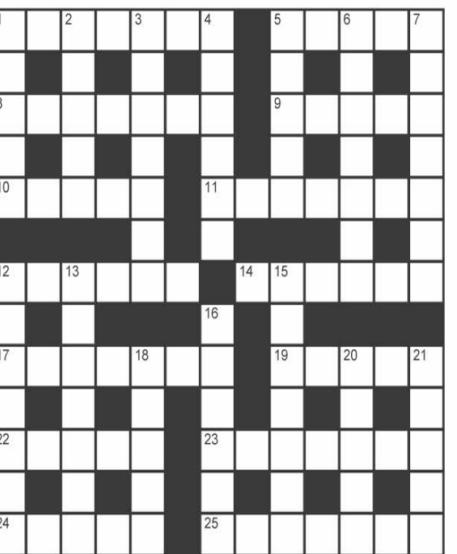
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



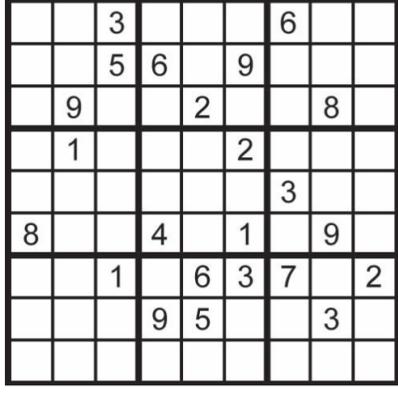
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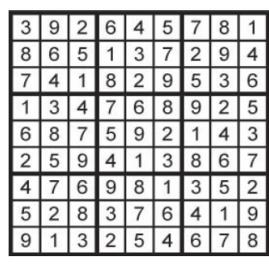
- Across**
- 1 Pie fruits
 - 5 Strong point
 - 8 Soaking spot
 - 9 Kind of energy
 - 10 Sophia of "Two Women"
 - 11 Pacify
 - 12 Charted
 - 14 Digresses
 - 17 Collision (5-2)
 - 19 Baby grand, e.g.
 - 22 Upright
 - 23 Suffer
 - 24 Whimsical
 - 25 Evening
 - Down**
 - 1 Tower site
 - 2 Helicopter part
 - 3 Severe
 - 4 Taxi alternative
 - 5 Fable writer
 - 6 Dried seedless grape
 - 7 Objectives
 - 12 Peccadillo
 - 13 Drug testing pill
 - 15 Tropical storm
 - 16 Verbalises
 - 18 Holiday spot
 - 20 Mexican friend
 - 21 Neptune's realm

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Eminent playback singer Sekhar Ghosh performs during a cultural programme organised by Bidyakanaka Srujananusthan and 'The Samaja' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar Friday



downtown

OAS officers resume work after Jagannath's arrest



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officers have resumed work after the arrest of BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan in connection with the assault of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) additional commissioner, an official said Friday.

The OAS officers were on mass leave since Tuesday following the assault of BMC additional commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo, a senior OAS officer, who was allegedly dragged out of his office and attacked by a group of miscreants Monday.

Pradhan was arrested on the basis of statement of the victim, accused persons and evidence collected during preliminary investigation, Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena said.

So far, six people including Jagannath Pradhan have been arrested in this incident, he said.

Following the arrest of BJP leader Pradhan, who was allegedly the main conspirator on the assault on Sahoo, the OAS officers withdrew their 'cease-work' protest Thursday night. They resumed duty in their respective positions Friday morning, an officer said.

"Today we have resumed our duties. As our demand was fulfilled, the association has instructed all OAS officers to join duty. So, we resumed work today," said Ashirvad Parida, deputy commissioner, Berhampur Municipal Corporation.

Pradhan, who lost the 2024 Assembly elections from Bhubaneswar Central constituency, surrendered before police at the Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) office Thursday night.

Later, he was arrested under different sections of BNS, a police officer said. The BJP leader was forwarded to court and later sent to 14-day judicial custody after his bail petition was rejected by a local court here.

Meanwhile, security at the BMC office building has been tightened. Security personnel along with gunmen have been deployed at the BMC building.

"After holding discussion with the police commissioner, we have deployed some additional security personnel at our office. They will be given the necessary training to avoid such situations in the future," BMC Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil told reporters.

Panel recommends green clearance to Puri airport



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 4: The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has recently recommended Environmental Clearance (EC) for the proposed Puri International Airport, a flagship infrastructure project of Odisha government, an official statement said Friday.

The EAC has recommended environmental clearance for the project during its meeting held June 26, the statement said.

The project, aimed at transforming the coastal town of Puri into an international gateway, has recorded major progress with a series of key clearances and regulatory milestones, reaffirming its trajectory toward realisation, it said.

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) had granted site clearance for the greenfield airport September 22, 2023. This was followed by in-principle approval from the Centre May 6, 2025, marking a green light for further development," the statement said.

Spanning over 1,164 acres of land, the project involves minimal forest diversion, with only 68 acres classified as district-level committee (DLC)/revenue forest land. The state Commerce & Transport department said it has already submitted all required compliance documentation to the MoEF&CC.

Since the Regional Empowered Committee (REC) at the integrated regional office here

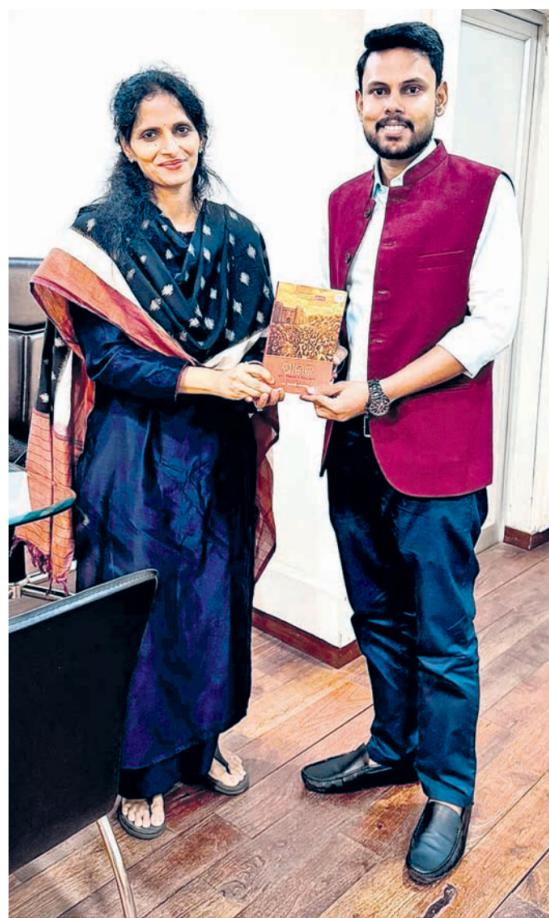
under the ministry has already recommended the project for stage-I forest clearance, the forest diversion proposal is now under active consideration of the Forest ministry, it said.

In its meeting held June 24, 2025, the advisory committee of MoEF&CC sought additional inputs, including a wildlife conservation plan and mitigation measures for ecologically sensitive species such as Olive Ridley turtles, dolphins, and migratory birds. The conservation plan is currently being prepared in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the statement said.

The state government officials clarified that such steps are part of the standard protocol for large-scale infrastructure projects. The department has already begun preparing the required mitigation measures in line with the advisory committee's recommendations and will submit the plan to secure Stage-I clearance.

With these critical developments in place, the state government is expected to finalise modalities for issuing a request for proposal (RFP), moving the project into its execution phase.

Once operational, the airport will offer direct air connectivity to one of India's most revered spiritual and cultural destinations, boosting tourism, employment, and regional economic development.



COURTESY CALL: Acclaimed author and founding director of Puri Literary Festival Omm Priyadarshi Chhotaray presents a copy of his book - 'Paika: People, Narratives and Rebellion' - to the Chief Executive of Orissa POST and Dharitri Adyasha Satpathy at the twin publications' office in Bhubaneswar Friday. The book, published by National Book Trust, Government of India, is a work of historical fiction chronicling Paika Rebellion - an organised uprising in Odisha that predated the First War of Indian Independence in 1857. Chhotaray is a member of the Advisory Council of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India

BJP MLA Santosh Khatua booked

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: A case was registered against BJP MLA Santosh Khatua in Bhubaneswar after BJD leader Lekhashree Samantasinghar lodged a police complaint, alleging that he made derogatory remarks against her.

Khatua, the MLA of Nilagiri in Balasore district, was booked under BNS Sections 75(2) that deals with sexual harassment, 79 (offensive words, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 296 (obscene act/ song in public place) and 356 (defamation), police said.

The case was registered at the Mahila Police Station where the complaint was lodged, DCP Jagmohan Meena said.

In her complaint, Samantasinghar alleged, "Khatua has not only demeaned me but has cast aspersions on every woman of Odisha and India, as well as all the women political workers irrespective of their party affiliations. He has stooped to such a low with his utterances that it is difficult on my part to even narrate it here."

She also wrote to PM Narendra Modi over the issue and shared a copy of it on X. Earlier, Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik of the BJD condemned the BJP MLA's remarks.

ED officer Raghuvanshi released on interim bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, July 4: Enforcement Directorate's (ED's) Deputy Director Chintan Raghuvanshi, who was arrested by the CBI while allegedly accepting a bribe from a businessman in Bhubaneswar, was released on interim bail from the Jharpada jail Friday evening.

The Orissa High Court granted him interim bail Wednesday for 10 days on the ground that the young officer became a father June 28 and he wanted to see his newborn baby and attend some rituals.

"The IRS officer was released from jail this evening after the relevant documents from the High court and the lower court were produced to the

jail authorities," his lawyer, Lalitendu Mishra, said.

A single-judge bench of Justice Gourishankar Satapathy granted the interim bail on the condition that he should not leave the country during the 10-day period.

Raghuvanshi and his associate were arrested in Bhubaneswar May 30 after being allegedly caught red-handed while accepting the bribe amount of ₹20 lakh from a man who is in mining.

According to CBI, he demanded ₹5 crore from the businessman, who was involved in certain financial irregularities, to not arrest him. The businessman negotiated it down to ₹2 crore, and the ₹20 lakh cash was a part of it.

New BJP state prez likely by July 8

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: The state BJP is likely to get a new president by July 8, according to the poll schedule announced by the party Friday.

The formal notification for the president's election will be issued July 6, said the statement issued by Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi, the party's state election officer.

The nominations will be accepted

July 7, while voting for the post of state president will be held July 8, if required, it said. The names of the new state president and central council member will be declared July 8 itself, it added.

The organisational election was put on hold due to the stampede during the Rath Yatra festival in Puri.

Several senior leaders are in the race for the post, with incumbent Manmohan Samal looking for another term, party insiders said.

ASI declares Swapneswar Mahadev temple as 'protected monument'



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 4: The 6th-century Swapneswar Mahadev temple at Punjama village under Niladrip-rasad panchayat of Banapur block has been officially declared a protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Ma-

jhi, and Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan for their special contributions in preserving Odisha's heritage.

The temple was built during the reign of the Sailodbhava dynasty in the 6th century in what is now Punjama village in Banpur Block. Rich in ancient architecture and historical significance, the temple's protection was first initiated in 1977-78 when the then Culture minister Biswabhusan Harichandan entrusted the re-

sponsibility to the state Archaeology department.

However, over time, the site fell into neglect. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed power, recognising the temple's historical importance, he facilitated steps for the ASI to take responsibility for its preservation.

Following the formation of the BJP government in Odisha in 2024, efforts by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan significantly accelerated the process. This finally resulted in the official declaration of the heritage site as a protected monument by the ASI, a release stated.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Harichandan said that this declaration by ASI to preserve a symbol of Odia identity and legacy is a moment of great pride and happiness for all in Odisha.

Advertisement for the book 'Paika: People, Narratives and Rebellion' by Priyadarshi Chhotaray. It features a colorful illustration of a temple and portraits of the author and publisher. The text is in Odia and includes details about the book's release and availability.

OIPR-10003/13/0228/2526

Puri stampede: BJD seeks judicial probe



Bhubaneswar, July 4: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Friday demanded a judicial inquiry, monitored by a sitting judge of the Orissa High Court into the stampede during this year's Rath Yatra in Puri that left three people killed and several others injured.

The BJD alleged that due to the "callous and casual attitude" of the government, three people died and over 750 sustained injuries during the Rath Yatra

"In spite of all these tall claims, the 2025 Rath Yatra witnessed unprecedented chaos, mismanagement, and a tragic stampede," the memorandum stated.

The Opposition also alleged that Lord Jagannath's Nandighosha chariot was pulled at 7:45pm, in violation of long-standing rituals and traditions.

Additionally, the memorandum highlighted that the Srimandir has been operating without its statutory Managing Committee (MC) for the past eight months, thereby delaying crucial administrative and policy decisions.

As per the Shree Jagannath Temple Act, 1954, the Managing Committee is vital for approving matters related to rituals, finances, and temple management. In its absence, the BJD claimed, at least 10 key proposals, including the 2025-26 Budget and Rath Yatra preparations, have been stalled.

The memorandum also noted that during Rath Yatra 2024, the idol of Lord Balabhadra fell from Taladhawaja chariot - an incident that provoked widespread public outcry.

Stressing that the Rath Yatra is not just a religious festival but the cultural soul of Odisha, the BJD said the pain, grief, and outrage caused by this year's events are being profoundly felt across communities.

The BJD leaders urged the Governor to take immediate and appropriate action in the larger interest of the people and millions of Lord Jagannath devotees around the world.

sitting High Court judge into the incident and to personally intervene and oversee the remaining events of the ongoing Car Festival to prevent further mismanagement, protect the sanctity of the festival, and safeguard devotees and Sevayats.

The memorandum stated that this year's Rath Yatra witnessed severe traffic and crowd mismanagement, resulting in bottlenecks, stranded pilgrims, and hampered emergency services, posing a grave risk to public safety.

It further alleged that the indiscriminate distribution of over 10,000 cordon passes to BJP affiliates and supporters - far beyond practical limits disrupted crowd control efforts and directly contributed to the tragedy, the likes of which have never been seen before.

The BJD also pointed out that, despite repeated assurances from the Chief Minister and Law Minister about fool-proof preparations and a divine experience for devotees, the inter-ministerial group led by Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida failed to monitor the Rath Yatra arrangements effectively.

Centre's support sought for modern Science City

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: The state government has sought Central assistance for setting up a state-of-the-art Science City here.

Odisha Science and Technology Minister Krushna Chandra Patra, during a meeting with Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh in New Delhi Friday, offered 100 acres of land for the proposed Science City.

The project is aimed at fostering scientific curiosity, innovation, and education—particularly among the youth.

In addition to the Science City proposal, Patra submitted several other key proposals. These include the establishment of an Astronomy Observatory, a Bay of Bengal Coastal Observatory under the Minis-



try of Earth Sciences, an Intellectual Property and Patent Facilitation Centre, and various projects under the Department of Biotechnology.

He also sought support for initiatives under the National

Council of Science Museums and the Ministry of Culture.

The envisioned Science City will serve as an interactive hub featuring modern exhibits, immersive learning environments, and advanced research facilities.

Responding to the proposals, Singh welcomed the initiative and assured that the officials of the Union government would engage in further discussions to finalise the modalities.

He also recommended strengthening Odisha's existing scientific infrastructure—such as CSIR laboratories and space research centres—to complement the new initiatives.

The Union minister encouraged the Odisha delegation to explore partnerships under the Central government's Bio-E3 policy by establishing a Bio E-Cell in the state.

He further highlighted Odisha's natural strengths, particularly in coastal and mineral sectors, suggesting these could be effectively leveraged through national missions like the Deep Ocean Mission for the broader benefit of society.

COOPERATIVES ARE GROWTH ENGINE OF RURAL ODISHA: MIN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Reaffirming the vital role of cooperative institutions in rural development, Minister of Cooperation, Handlooms, Textiles, and Handicrafts Pradeep Bal Samanta remarked, "Cooperatives are poised to become the growth engine of rural Odisha," during the inauguration of the 'Cooperative March' to commemorate the International Year of Cooperatives - 2025.

The march started from the Madhusudan Cooperative Management Institute (MCMCI) to Gopabandhu Square was aimed to raise public awareness about the value and service-oriented mission of cooperative institutions. Minister Samant flagged off the event. Key dignitaries, including Cooperative Societies registrar Siddharth Das, additional registrar Bhaktabandhu Sahu, joint registrar Lakshmidhar Subudhi, MCMCI director Dillip Kumar Dash, senior professor Saroj Kumar Kashyap, institute staffs and departmental officers joined the programme.

The march was organised to observe of three significant events—International Year of Cooperatives - 2025, fourth anniversary of the Central Cooperative Ministry, and International Cooperative Day July 5. In order to mark the second phase of the nationwide environmental initiative 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, aimed at protecting nature Samant also planted a sapling on the occasion.

Student Cong demo for 27% OBC quota

POST NEWS NETWORK



Bhubaneswar, July 4: State Student Congress leaders, under the leadership of president Udit Pradhan, held a massive demonstration in front of the Governor's House here Friday demanding 27 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in education and employment in Odisha.

The Student Congress leaders said though OBCs constitute about 54 per cent of the state's population, they remain deprived of their rights. "The Student Congress is protesting this injustice and drawing the attention of the state government and the Governor," they said.

Braving heavy rain, the students continued their sit-in stir for six hours.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das also joined the protest to show his support for the demand.

A memorandum was submitted to the Governor, urging him

to take immediate and legal action to implement 27 per cent OBC reservation in Odisha.

Pradhan said, "If OBC community does not fight now for their constitutional rights and fail to secure the 27% reservation, then in the next 50 years, they will be considered the most backward section of society."

He further said, "There are over 1 crore poor OBC citizens in Odisha, and reservation is essential for them. It is a tool that provides them access to education, employment, and dignity in society. The BJP government is playing with the future of the OBC community. Offering only 11.25 per cent reservation is unjust and an insult to this group."

Odisha Student Congress is treating this issue with utmost seriousness and aims to create pressure on the government. If constitutional rights are not guaranteed to OBCs, there will be a strong state-wide movement.

'Principals play critical role in Vikshit Bharat'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Principals are the main pillars of education who play a vital role in guiding youth towards building a Viksit Bharat, said, School and Mass Education (S&ME) department Additional Secretary Subhasree Nanda, while inaugurating a one-day review-cum-capacity building programme for principals-in-charge of government upgraded higher secondary schools at Krushi Bhavan Friday.

Nanda emphasised that teachers and school leaders must channel their efforts in empowering students with the right knowledge and values to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development.

Speaking on the occasion, Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) Joint Director Sasmita Sahu encouraged the principals to focus on developing their leadership and problem-solving abilities. "If we use our potential to address challenges, the outcomes will always be positive," she said.

Regional Directorate of Education Joint Director Diprimayee Subhadarshini guided the participants through the structure of the workshop, highlighting its practical relevance.

The event was organised by the Directorate of Higher Secondary Education (DHSE) under the S&ME department.

Engineer in Vigilance net

Bhubaneswar: Assistant executive engineer of Titlagarh Roads and Buildings (R&B) sub-division Dileswar Majhi was arrested by Vigilance sleuths Friday for possession of disproportionate assets (DA). Sources in the Vigilance Directorate said Majhi was produced in the court of special judge, Vigilance, Bolangir later in the day.

Money back to 5L more chit fund scam victims in 4 months: Samal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Five lakh people who were duped by various chit fund companies will get back their money in four months, state BJP president Manmohan Samal said Friday.

Addressing a press conference, Samal said that over 1.26 lakh people have already got their money back.

"The BJP government will return the money, whether it is of Rs 10,000 or Rs 10 lakh, to the people cheated by chit fund firms. Returning the money lost in the chit fund scam was one of the promises made by the party ahead of last year's Assembly elections," he said.

Samal blamed the previous BJD government for the chit fund scam, in which lakhs of people lost their savings. "The process to return the money to chit fund investors is already underway. The BJP government in the last one year has returned money to as many as 1,26,137 people. An additional 5 lakh such investors will get back their money in full within four months from today," he said.

Garg suggests IT-enabled monitoring system to track students' progress



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 4: Development Commissioner (DC) Anu Garg Friday highlighted the importance of creating an IT-enabled monitoring system to track every child's educational journey from Shishu Vatika (pre-primary) through to Class XII.

Garg made the suggestion while addressing the second State Task Force meeting on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The meeting reviewed the coordinated efforts made by various departments across the state for the systematic roll-out of NEP 2020, and focused on several key initiatives.

The DC also stressed the importance of outcome-based strategies, the establishment of a comprehensive IT monitoring system, and promotion of Mul-

tilingual Education (MLE).

During the meeting, various participating stakeholders were informed that collaborative training programmes for teachers engaged in Shishu Vatikas were successfully conducted with the support of NCERT and RIE, Bhubaneswar.

These efforts were complemented by the development and statewide distribution of new workbooks and teacher handbooks. The Directorate of Teacher Education and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) are also being strengthened to play a more significant role in curriculum design, textbook development, and teacher training from the pre-primary level through Class XII, in alignment with NCERT guidelines.

Additionally, a special house-

to-house survey campaign launched in May 2025 aims to identify school dropouts and children with special needs (CwSN) and assess multilingual education requirements.

The objective is to prevent dropouts and re-engage out-of-school children in accordance with NEP 2020 mandates.

The introduction of the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) for students from Class I to VIII, set to begin in the 2024-25 academic year, will focus on assessing creativity, critical thinking, and life skills.

Odisha has made significant progress in foundational education, establishing over 45,000 pre-primary Shishu Vatika classrooms. Initiatives such as the 'Sikhayan Sopan' Assessment Register and technology-enabled learning through platforms like the e-Jaadui Pitara app, along with the provision of teaching-learning materials, teacher handbooks, and workbooks, are being actively implemented.

The state is also promoting flagship education schemes, including PM SHRI and the Godabarisha Mishra Adarsha Prathamik Vidyalaya model schools.

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

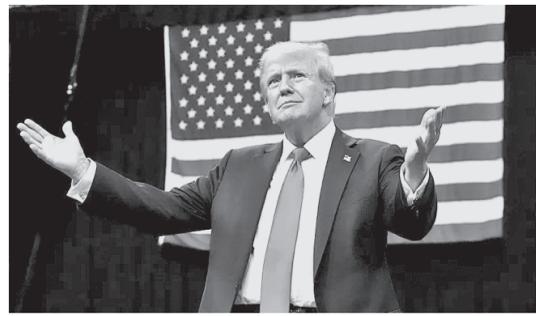
WEATHER section with a satellite image and a table showing BBSR, CTC, and FORECAST data.

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FOCUS UNITED STATES

PLUTOCRATS VS. POPULISTS



Trump himself may have campaigned as a populist, but the policies enacted under unified Republican control of the White House and Congress have been unmistakably plutocratic

US President Donald Trump struck a chord recently when he urged congressional Republicans to consider raising taxes on the rich as part of his signature “big, beautiful bill.” Of course, the version of the bill that just squeaked past the Senate in a 51-50 vote, with Vice President J.D. Vance providing the tie-breaker, does no such thing. Still, Trump’s comments echoed the widely held belief among non-wealthy Americans that the rich pay too little in taxes and are not contributing their fair share.

That belief is rooted in the “ability to pay” principle that helped shape the federal income tax system when it was introduced in 1913. The idea is simple: those with greater financial resources should contribute more. In line with this view, Trump proposed reinstating the top personal income-tax rate to its Obama-era level of 39.6%.

But despite Trump’s knack for tapping into the concerns of his electoral base, Republican lawmakers were quick to shut down the proposal.

At the heart of the bill is the retention of key elements from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, including the permanent expansion of the deduction for “pass-through” business income taxed at the individual level. Roughly 70% of pass-through income goes to the top 1% of earners.

At the same time, the bill includes cuts to health-care and food-assistance programs—measures that would disproportionately harm low- and middle-income Americans. Most notably, Republicans are attempting to slash Medicaid, the public insurance program for lower-income individuals, and let the Affordable Care Act’s enhanced subsidies for private insurance expire, returning them to pre-pandemic levels.

Taken together, these cuts would increase the number of Americans without health insurance by 17 million, reversing nearly three-quarters of the coverage gains achieved under the ACA since its 2014 rollout. And because Medicaid and ACA market place subsidies extend well into the middle class, the impact would be felt across a large swath of the population.

To be sure, the Big Beautiful Bill also throws some bread crumbs to the GOP’s populist base, such as Trump’s campaign-trail promise to eliminate taxes on tips. By combining small tax breaks for working-class Americans with much larger tax cuts for high earners, the bill follows the play book of George W. Bush’s tax cuts of 2001 and 2003. Back then, sweeping tax breaks for the rich, including cuts to income and estate taxes, were paired with modest rebate checks of \$300-600 for middle-income tax payers to help secure public support.

This time, however, the strategy isn’t working. The

difference lies in what the public can see – and what it can’t. Under Bush, rebate checks were sent out immediately and were widely noticed, while the most generous benefits to the wealthy were delayed, since they could afford to wait. By contrast, Trump’s Big Beautiful Bill offers less visible perks to average Americans. Unlike the Bush-era rebates, Trump’s no-taxes-on-tips proposal benefits only a narrow segment of the workforce.

Meanwhile, the bill’s plutocratic tilt is highly visible. The gaggle of billionaires surrounding Trump – both at his inauguration and in his cabinet – has made it abundantly clear who is shaping the administration’s policy agenda. The political downside of Trump’s push for a single, sweeping tax-and-spending bill is that it makes the trade-off hard to miss: most Americans may not follow the fine print of legislation, but they can see when essential programs are being slashed to finance lavish tax cuts for the rich.

Another problem with trying to pass the entire Repub-

lican agenda through a single bill is the party’s slim majority in the Senate. To bypass the 60-vote threshold typically required to overcome a filibuster, Republicans must rely on the reconciliation process, which allows budget-related legislation to be approved with just 51 votes.

But reconciliation comes with strict limitations, and the Senate parliamentarian has already struck down several provisions that violate the so-called Byrd Rule. Named after the late West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, the rule bars “extraneous” provisions that increase the deficit beyond the ten-year reconciliation window or fall outside the jurisdiction of the relevant committee. Its purpose is to prevent the reconciliation process from being used to push through sweeping policy changes unrelated to spending or revenue.

As a result, Republicans will need to find alternative paths—requiring 60 votes in the Senate – to pursue a wide range of policy goals they attempted to jam into the tax-and-spending package.

With control of the White House and both chambers of Congress, Republicans have a rare opportunity to advance their policy agenda. But this agenda remains deeply unpopular, as it clearly prioritizes the rich over the lower- and middle-income Americans who rely on the health-care and food-assistance programs Republicans are so eager to cut. Unlike the Bush administration, today’s GOP has made little effort to conceal its intentions or buy off public support. Whether it will pay a political price for that in the 2026 mid-term elections remains to be seen.

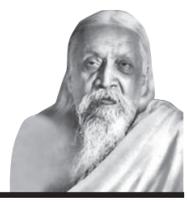
The writer is Professor of Political Science at MIT ©PROJECT PYNDICATE



Andrea Louise Campbell

SINCE THE 1980s REAGAN REVOLUTION, CUTTING TAXES –OR AT LEAST REFUSING TO RAISE THEM – HAS BEEN A CORE TENET OF GOP POLICY

India’s Spy Shift



Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break a dead resistance in the mortal’s heart.

SRI AUROBINDO

India’s espionage architecture is quietly shifting. The appointment of Parag Jain as the new chief of RAW comes at a particularly volatile moment globally. Iran has just executed alleged Mosad assets and detained hundreds, reportedly triggering emergency backchannel coordination by several countries, including India. A few Indian students caught in the crossfire in Mashhad were hastily repatriated. It was a sharp reminder that secret wars don’t stay in the shadows for long.

Jain’s arrival at the top of RAW isn’t just a routine succession. He represents a deeper recalibration. Known for his pivotal role in Operation Sindoor, Jain brings a rare blend of human intelligence and intelligence fluency, said to have enabled India’s pinpoint strikes on terror hubs across the border.

That kind of quiet effectiveness is what India’s intelligence community desperately needs. Someone not just to pre-empt threats but to lead with precision in an era where drones, data leaks, and digital fingerprints define geopolitical risk.

All of this is unfolding as National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, the original architect of India’s modern covert capability, approaches the twilight of his tenure. While no names are confirmed yet, the jockeying for the NSA chair has quietly begun. The next NSA will walk into a role vastly different from what it was five years ago. Today’s challenges involve coordinating across increasingly blurred military-intelligence-tech boundaries, managing international optics, and navigating the messy moral fog of espionage in democracies.

In a world where spy wars now play out on digital platforms and battlefield servers, India’s strategic core is in the middle of a transition. The question is no longer whether our spies are up to the job but whether our leadership and its succession planning are.

Can an ex-babu fix Air India’s woes?

Air India has been in the news, and not for reasons one would want to be. A crash, a cascade of cancellations, tech meltdowns mid-air, and enough passenger horror stories to fill a miniseries. Into this mess may walk a retired senior babu, freshly out of the system and reportedly en route to a cushy corner office at the airline.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

Now, babus are known for many things, whether they are steering policy, managing crises, or surviving turf wars. Running an airline in full-blown turbulence is a different kind of emergency drill.

But sources have informed DKB that this particular officer has a reputation for getting things done. And with Air India’s toilets taped shut with napkins and ministers sinking into their seats (literally), something clearly needs doing. The airline is crying out for accountability, training, and maintenance. Above all, it needs leadership that knows how to stay ahead of bad headlines.

Still, a single appointment won’t cut it if the deeper rot isn’t addressed. The airline is now known for overworked staff, overpromised routes and underdelivered service. These problems cannot be fixed by PowerPoint strategy alone.

If this ex-babu brings vision and backbone (and isn’t just window-dressing), maybe there’s hope for a turnaround. Otherwise, it’ll be just another chapter in the long saga of Air India’s flight plan gone wrong. Watch this airspace. And buckle up – it might still be a bumpy ride.

All announcement, no arrival

For those who remember, the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) was supposed to be up and running by December 2024. Well, it’s now mid-2025, and all we have is the ghost of a tribunal. It’s been all promise, no presence.

To be fair, it did start with a bang. Flashy promos, a buzzing selection committee, and over a hundred eager candidates interviewed during the summer of 2024. For a brief moment, it felt like we might finally get that missing puzzle piece in the GST dispute resolution chain. But just as the engine began to hum, our fabled babudom pulled the handbrake.

Apparently, the committee didn’t even get around to signing the minutes of its own meetings. And then, in a classic Delhi plot twist, the key driver of the process, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, exited stage left to take up residence in Mint Street as RBI Governor. The process flatlined.

Cut to May 2025. Another selection round was attempted, but then a judicial aspirant moved the Orissa High Court, effectively putting the brakes on the entire thing again. That’s two rounds down, zero appointments made. The tribunal needs 72 members, and right now it has none. And let’s not even talk about the states. Most haven’t nominated their members or even found the poor tribunal a roof.

So nearly eight years since GST was launched, we are still waiting for the tribunal that could ease the load on overburdened courts. The disputes keep mounting, but GSTAT? It’s still stuck in a Kafkaesque limbo. A classic Indian institution-in-the-making: all announcement, no arrival.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

THOMAS A. EDISON

However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.

STEPHEN HAWKING

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1946: The first bikini, designed by French engineer Louis Réard, made its debut in Paris; the swimsuit was named for the Bikini atoll, which, just days earlier, had been the site of the world’s first peacetime atomic-weapons test.

1950: Passed this day by the Knesset, the Law of Return granted Jews the freedom to immigrate to Israel and receive immediate citizenship, but it proved controversial when the question “Who is a Jew?” raised other issues.

1954: American singer Elvis Presley recorded That’s All Right, which became his first hit and helped give rise to rock and roll music.

1996: Dolly, a female Finn Dorset sheep, was born near Edinburgh, becoming the first successfully cloned mammal; her birth was not publicly revealed until the following year.

SPECTRUM QUAD MEET

Strategic opportunities for India

The Quad Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Washington on 1 July opens up strategic opportunities for India. Will New Delhi make the most of it having missed the bus a few times before?

This is the time for reckoning for Quad in the context of freedom and security in India Pacific in the face of Chinese belligerence. For India, Quad meetings in the run-up to the Summit later this year become doubly important as New Delhi has been somewhat marginalised in the recent SCO meet. I will juxtapose Quad against other regional structures India is part of, namely BRICS and SCO. This is to drive home the point that New Delhi has to make a choice in the current chaotic geo-political situation.

Quad was created in 2007 with a formal proposal by then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Although it started as Tsunami Core Group following the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004, there was little doubt about its real intention. That was to contain China. That is why for about a decade, Quad remained dormant, largely due

to Australian concerns about potential negative impacts on its relationship with China.

Fast forward, Quad was vigorously revived in 2017 in the face of growing assertiveness of China. Since then, Quad has experienced increased engagement, greater institutionalisation, and sharper focus. There have been regular foreign ministerial consultations, sector-level meetings, and leader-level summits. The key objective of Quad has been to ensure, “free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region”. The Quad countries also participate in joint military exercises like Malabar Naval Exercise which have since expanded to include all the four countries. Significantly, Quad is perceived as an Asian NATO.

Several experts have construed Quad as a counter-weight to China. The American think tank, Centre for a New American Security (CNAS) suggests that it is because of the rise of Chinese power Quad should serve as a tool for American statecraft. Admittedly, Quad has not yet achieved much in practice. It

is because it has lacked a common ground or a coherent strategic approach. New Delhi is partly guilty of watering down Quad’s security structure by suggesting that it is a developmental and a humanitarian outfit.

Quad provides a great strategic opportunity for India as the interest of other three members converge with India’s especially on a common Chinese threat. It begs understanding of why India is reluctant to project Quad as a security alliance. India is a member of BRICS and SCO, initiated and largely controlled by China. BRICS has expanded beyond five founder countries to ten in order to enlist allies for China and Russia in an increasingly polarised world. For India, the recent SCO meeting was an embarrassment caused by isolation on calling out terrorism.

Contrast that with the Quad Foreign Ministers condemning the Pahalgam terror attack in strong terms. It said, “The Quad unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations including

cross-border terrorism”.

The Quad agreed on a ‘new agenda’ that focuses on four key areas - maritime security, economic prosperity, critical and emergent technologies and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

Second critical step taken is the launch of ‘Quad Critical Minerals Initiative’. Quad members were concerned about China’s domination in critical minerals meant for emerging and new technologies. This initiative will aim at diversifying supply chains, minerals recovery and reprocessing.

All in all, Quad renewed its focus which will result sharpening Quad’s ability to leverage resources in order to face the most pressing challenges in the region. To be sure, the onus of steering Quad rests largely on New Delhi as it faces the brunt of Beijing’s belligerence. New Delhi must play it cards well at least until the Quad Summit in November this year.

The writer is Prof of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions ©INFA



DK Giri

NEW DELHI IS PARTLY GUILTY OF WATERING DOWN QUAD’S SECURITY STRUCTURE BY SUGGESTING THAT IT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL AND A HUMANITARIAN OUTFIT

Beijing’s brazen attempts

Sir, China’s insistence on controlling the spiritual leader’s succession of the Dalai Lama only reflects its domineering attitude over Tibetan Buddhist practices, a stance criticised globally and by many international observers. In fact, by declaring that his reincarnation will take place outside of China and Tibet, the Dalai Lama himself has pre-emptively countered Beijing’s attempts to politicise his succession. As for India, its firm stance in support of the Dalai Lama’s autonomy in selecting his successor reflects its historical role as an asylum for Tibetan refugees and its commitment to religious freedom. Naturally therefore, India’s position signals a robust defence of religious autonomy amidst geopolitical challenges. The celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday in Dharamshala, amidst these diplomatic tensions, serves as a reminder of his enduring influence on spiritual and global affairs. Succinctly put, the future of Tibetan spiritual leadership solely belongs to the Tibetan people and their faith, and not to politics.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Creative advertisement

Sir, An F-35 British Navy fighter jet made an emergency landing at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport two weeks ago due to a technical fault. As transferring the American-made F35B, one of the world’s most expensive fighter jet, to the airports maintenance hangar was rejected by the Royal Navy stating technical reasons the fighter jet remains grounded in a space in the airport. Kerala Tourism meanwhile has used this aircraft as part of its advertisement. The very creative and attractive advertisement says, “Kerala is such an amazing place, I don’t want to leave. Definitely recommend.” In addition, the caption concludes with the ‘fighter jet’ giving a 5-star rating for Kerala in the ad. The advertisement has become viral for its creativity and humour and has caught the attention on social media. Meanwhile, Britain has stated that an expert team will soon arrive in Thiruvananthapuram to examine the problems of the fighter jet and if possible airlift it to its destination.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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



Arunachal India's top carbon sink

Boasting 79% forest cover, Arunachal Pradesh currently holds a carbon stock of 1,021 million tonnes, the highest in India



AGENCIES

Itanagar, July 4: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu claimed that the frontier state holds the distinction of being India's largest carbon sink, an ecological powerhouse playing a pivotal role in combating climate change and aiding the country's march toward net-zero emissions.

In a social media post as part of his administration's 'PEMA 3.0 - Year of Reforms and Growth' campaign, Khandu highlighted that Arunachal Pradesh contributes a remarkable 14.38 per cent to India's total carbon sequestration.

With an impressive 79 per cent forest cover, the state currently boasts a carbon stock of

From the lungs of the Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh plays a crucial role in India's journey towards Net-Zero emission by 2070

PEMA KHANDU | CM, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

1,021 million tonnes, the highest in the country, the chief minister claimed.

"From the lungs of the Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh plays a crucial role in India's journey towards Net-Zero emission by 2070," the chief minister said in another social media post.

Khandu's remarks not only spotlight the ecological value of Arunachal's forests but also align with national and global

climate priorities.

The state's forest wealth, which spans across dense tropical rainforests and alpine woodlands, absorbs vast amounts of atmospheric carbon dioxide, an essential mechanism in mitigating global warming.

CM Khandu urged everyone to sustain these efforts for a healthier environment and sustainable development for future generations.

According to the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department, the forest cover was reported to be over 79.33 per cent of the total 83,743 sq km geographical area of the state.

Of the total forest cover, 21,058.37 sq km is under very dense forest (25.15 per cent of

the total geographical area of the state); 30,175.56 sq km is under moderately dense forest (36.03 per cent); and 15,196.74 sq km is under open forest (18.15 per cent).

The state supported more than one-fifth of the total dense forest cover in the country, Forest Department records said. Vast climatic variations of Arunachal Pradesh have resulted in the existence of almost all types of timber wealth, ranging from the tropical teak-like species in the foothills to the conifers in the high mountains. Due to the variation in altitudes and climatic conditions, different places of Arunachal Pradesh have different types of forests.

According to the latest (2023) report of the Forest Survey of India (FSI), area-wise, the top three states in the country having the largest forest and tree cover are Madhya Pradesh (85,724 sq km), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (67,083 sq km) and Maharashtra (65,383 sq km).

Area-wise top three states having the largest forest cover area are Madhya Pradesh (77,073 sq km), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (65,882 sq km) and Chhattisgarh (55,812 sq km), the FSI report said.

Gujarat amends Factory Work Laws

The state govt allows 12-hour shift and night duties for women

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, July 4: The Gujarat government has introduced a sweeping set of labour reforms through an ordinance that allows factory workers to clock up to 12 hours a day, up from the previous 9-hour limit, while retaining the weekly cap of 48 working hours.

The move is part of the Factories (Gujarat Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, which was issued July 1 by the Labour, Skill Development and Employment Department, in the absence of a state assembly session.

The ordinance is aimed at improving industrial flexibility to boost investments, productivity, and job creation in Gujarat's manufacturing sector. Under the revised Section 54 of the Factories Act, daily work shifts can now officially stretch to 12 hours, subject to written consent from workers and adherence to weekly hour limits.

In addition, the uninterrupted work period can be extended from five to six hours, pending formal notification. Increased provisions for overtime compensation have also been included: workers will now be paid double wages for extra hours, and the quarterly overtime ceiling has been lifted from 75 to 125 hours, again requiring voluntary worker participation.

A key highlight of the amend-



Digital livelihood scheme for 50,000 women from marginalised households

The Gujarat government has launched a targeted initiative to support 50,000 women from Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) card-holding families across 13 aspirational talukas and two aspirational districts. The scheme, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8, 2025, aims to foster self-reliance and economic participation among women through direct digital interventions. At the heart of the programme is a first-of-its-kind 'Ring-Fencing Digital Wallet Transfer' system, introduced by the Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company Ltd. (GLPC) under the state's Rural Development Department as part of the G-SAFAL scheme. This mechanism transfers financial assistance directly into individual digital wallets, ensuring funds are safeguarded and exclusively used for approved livelihood activities. In the initial rollout, 674 women have already received assistance via digital wallets, with the system praised for its transparency, security, and targeted utility.

ment is the provision allowing women to work night shifts (between 7 pm and 6 am), a step seen as a push for gender inclusivity in industrial workplaces.

However, this will be subject to 16 stringent safeguards, including round-the-clock CCTV surveillance, female security staff, a minimum of 10 women per shift, and secure transport-

ation. Crucially, no woman can be assigned night duties without written consent, and protection from harassment is mandatory.

The Factories (Gujarat Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, introduces significant changes to labour regulations in the state, primarily aimed at enhancing industrial efficiency and employment flexibility.

Gujarat now third state with over 1cr stock mkt investors

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 4: The number of people joining stock markets are surging continuously in India, now Gujarat has become the third Indian state to cross the 1-crore mark in registered investors, according to the latest data released by the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The NSE said, "In a significant milestone, Gujarat became the third state to cross the 1-crore investor registrations mark, joining Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh".

Together, these three states account for 36 per cent of the total investor base in the country, underlining their significant role in shaping India's growing equity participation.

As of May 2025, the NSE data highlighted that the total number of registered investors in India has reached close to 11.5 crore. The month of May alone witnessed addition of over 11 lakh new investors, marking a 9 per cent month-on-month growth, signalling a strong rebound after four straight months of decline in new registrations.

Region-wise, North India continues to lead with 4.2 crore registered investors, followed by West India at 3.5 crore. South India has 2.4 crore investors while East India has 1.4 crore.

FROM HUNTERS TO PROTECTORS

Arunachal's air gun surrender scheme ups conservation hopes

The initiative, launched to curb indiscriminate hunting of birds and wildlife, has emerged as a nationally acclaimed model, earning praise from PM and global recognition at a UNESCO platform

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, July 4: More than 2,400 air guns have been voluntarily surrendered by citizens across Arunachal Pradesh under the state's 'Air gun Surrender Abhiyan,' officials said Friday.

The initiative, launched to curb indiscriminate hunting of birds and wildlife, has emerged as a nationally acclaimed model, earning praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and global recognition at a UNESCO platform.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu has described the movement as a proud moment for Arunachal, calling it a shining example of people-driven environmental action.

"It reflects the strong ecological values of our people and our shared responsibility to protect biodiversity," he said in a recent social media post, adding that the campaign aligns with the state government's mission of reform and sustainable development under



the 'PEMA 3.0 - Year of Reforms & Growth Framework'.

The campaign was launched in March 2021 at Lumdung village in East Kameng district, where 46 air guns were surrendered during the inaugural event.

Since then, the movement has gained momentum, supported by the Environment and Forest Department and led by former minister Mama Natung, who actively mobilised communities across the state.

Over time, the campaign grew into a mass movement, with thousands of people giving up their air guns, licensed guns and power chainsaw machines used for illegal logging.

The impact of the campaign is already visible, with reports of increased bird sightings and revival of local wildlife populations in many districts, officials claimed.

The initiative stood out for its community-oriented approach, combining traditional values with modern conservation goals.

Regular awareness camps, rallies, and district-level outreach programmes were conducted in collaboration with local leaders, NGOs, student unions, and forest officials.

The emphasis was on voluntary action and long-term behavioural change, not coercion.

The campaign's success was also acknowledged nationally when Prime Minister Modi featured it in his Mann Ki Baat radio programme in December 2021, calling it an inspiring example of citizen-led environmentalism.

Internationally, it was showcased at the UNESCO International Conference on Biosphere Reserves in 2021 as one of India's most promising and replicable conservation models.

Arunachal Pradesh, with its rich but vulnerable biodiversity, is home to several endangered bird species.

The Air Gun Surrender Abhiyan has not only brought these conservation concerns into public consciousness but has also united communities in a shared effort to protect their natural heritage.

The Air Gun Surrender Abhiyan, once a simple appeal, is now a beacon of environmental responsibility, both for the state and for the nation.

SMC converts wastewater into financial resource

Surat MC generates Rs 140cr by selling treated sewage water to industries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gandhinagar, July 4: Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has converted the wastewater generated in the city into a resource.

By treating wastewater generated in the city, the municipal corporation has generated Rs 140 crore in revenue through sales to local industries.

This initiative has not only addressed water reuse but also created a significant source of income for the municipal body.

While speaking at the first National Level Conference of Urban Local Bodies of States and Union Territories in Gurugram district's Manesar Thursday, Surat Municipal Commissioner Shalini Agarwal shared this remarkable success story.



She highlighted that Surat, globally known as the Diamond City, also hosts a large number of textile and solar panel manufacturing units, industries that require substantial water usage daily.

The wastewater generated in the city is collected through the sewerage system and directed to treatment plants. Three treat-

ment plants, with a capacity of 115 megalitres per day, purify this water, which is then supplied to local industries. This initiative generates significant revenue of approximately Rs 140 crore.

According to an official statement, Agarwal stated that currently, only 33 per cent of the wastewater generated in the city is being treated.

However, the goal is to significantly increase this capacity in the coming years. The target is to treat 70 per cent of wastewater by 2030 and achieve 100 per cent treatment by 2035. This expansion is expected to generate revenue of Rs 450 crore.

She also mentioned that treated water is not only supplied to industries but is also used for construction purposes, with water being delivered to construction sites through tankers. Agarwal stated that an integrated waste management system has been implemented in the city. With just one click, residents can send construction waste to designated processing sites. Once an online request is made, the waste is collected directly from the location.

She also shared that SMC was honoured on the fifth National Water Day in recognition of its efforts. The corporation continues to undertake initiatives aimed at improving services and quality of life for its citizens, she added.

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India		Regional Office: Sambalpur		GOLD AUCTION NOTICE	
		1st Floor, Balaji Midtown, Budharaja, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768004			
This is to inform the public that in spite of repeated reminders the following gold loan borrowers have not repaid their loan. If they do not repay their outstanding debts before the auction, their gold ornaments will be auctioned at the premises of our Concerned Branches on 11.07.2025 at 11.00 A.M. The Bank will not be liable for any inconvenience or loss to the borrowers and the Bank will take legal action against them if the Bank loses where necessary. Borrowers can take their Jewellery by repaying the outstanding debt before the auction take place.					
Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Gold Loan Account No.	Outstanding	Net Weight (in Gram)		
AINTHAPALLI BRANCH (76120), 944, BHAGAWATI COMPLEX, UNIT NO. 15, NH-6, AINTHAPALI SAMBALPUR-768004					
1.	Sanatan Kairi, Kokerna, Donia, Sundargarh, Odisha, PIN-770033 / 76120654000090	₹ 23,037.00 + interest	4.8		
BURLA BRANCH (74830), OLD DAILY MARKET, R.K. COMPLEX (1ST FLOOR), WARD NO. 5, KACHA MARKET ROAD, BURLA-768017					
1.	Md Firoz Kadary, Near Masjid, Bishnumandirpada, Burla, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768017 / (1) 748306540000332	₹ 31,578.00 + interest	5.6		
1.	(2) 748306540000350	₹ 24,329.00 + interest	4.5		
CIVIL TOWNSHIP BRANCH (13491), LIC BUILDING, NEAR PF BLDG, ROURKELA, DIST.: SUNDARGARH, ODISHA-769004					
1.	Titu Biswal, C/o- Bharat Sahoo, Shop No.: 12, Shopping Center, Rourkela, Odisha, PIN-769004 / 134916540000087	₹ 15,956.00 + interest	3.46		
2.	Ranjeet Kumar Jha, S/o- Manganu Jha, D. No.: Qr. No. JB-11, Jagda, Rourkela, Odisha, PIN-769042 / 134916540000085	₹ 14,916.00 + interest	3.33		
DHANUPALI BRANCH (14502), AT: DHANUPALI MAIN ROAD, SAMBALPUR-768005					
1.	Souvagya Prusti, Parmanpur Sason, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768200 / (1) 145026540000616	₹ 58,620.00 + interest	12.3		
	(2) 145026540000989	₹ 55,391.00 + interest	10.03		
2.	Ranu Sahu, W/o- Dolamani Sahu, At: Putukigrinjel, PO: Saipali, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768032 / 145026540000472	₹ 20,926.00 + interest	4.5		
I G MARKET BURLA BRANCH (09551), DAILY MARKET, MAIN ROAD, BURLA, ODISHA-768017					
1.	Tulu Nayak, S/o- Pandaba Nayak, At: Near UP School, Attachaki Peda, Burla, Odisha, PIN-768017 / 5516540000976	₹ 1,65,950.00 + interest	52		
2.	Sitansu Bhusan Patjoshi, S/o- Bibekananda Patjoshi, Sadeipali, Burla, Sambalpur, Odisha-768017 / 5516630000051	₹ 81,618.00 + interest	19.5		
3.	Sangeeta Kumari, I G Market, Burla, Odisha, PIN-768017 / 5516540001514	₹ 36,274.00 + interest	7		
4.	Surendra Behera, S/o- Bhuban Behera, 1R Colony, Burla, Odisha, PIN-768017 / 5516540000972	₹ 8,588.00 + interest	2		
SAMBALPUR MAIN BRANCH (36520), GROUND FLOOR, BALAJI BUILDING, SAMBALPUR					
	Prashant Nayak, C/o- Raimon Marnadi, S/o- Bhikari Nayak, Tilak Nagar, C Block, Bondamunda, Rourkela, Odisha-770032 / (1) 365206530000045, (2) 365206530000064, (3) 365206530000070	₹ 1,26,220.00 + interest	28.1		
2.	Tushar Kanta Saraf, At: Karamtoli, Kainsir Road, PO: Ainthapali, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768004 / 365206530000092	₹ 16,774.00 + interest	3.9		
3.	Pratima Majhi, At: Karamtoli, Kainsir Road, PO: Ainthapali, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768004 / 365206530000038	₹ 10,928.00 + interest	3.2		
SONEPUR BRANCH (61150), POLICE STATION ROAD, NEAR BIJU PATNAIK CHOWK, SONEPUR-767017					
1.	Mita Budek, W/o- Rahash Budek, At: Majhipada, Sonapur, Dist.: Subarnapur, Odisha, PIN-767017 / (1) 611506540000468	₹ 64,319.00 + interest	17		
	(2) 611506540000472	₹ 25,716.00 + interest	5.6		
SUNDARGARH BRANCH (71780), MEGHA MALLAHAR BUILDING, HOSPITAL ROAD (MISSION ROAD), SUNDARGARH-770001					
1.	Rebati Behera, At: Gailo, PO: Ranpur, Sundargarh, Odisha, PIN-770014 / 717806540000129	₹ 12,178.00 + interest	2.5		
2.	Md Wasim, Dengibhad, Rajgangpur, Odisha, PIN-770001 / 717806540000065	₹ 11,307.00 + interest	2.5		
THELKOLOI BRANCH (68480), THELKOLOI, PO: LAPANGA, DIST.: SAMBALPUR, PIN-768232					
1.	Krushna Gardia, S/o- Mr. Laxman Gardia, At: Thelkolo, Brahminpada, Near Hanuman Mandir, PO: Lapanga, PS: Thelkolo, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768232 / 684806630000022	₹ 64,000.00 + interest	12.9		
UMFB SAMBALPUR-II BRANCH (05371), FIRST FLOOR, BALAJI BUILDING, G.M. COLLEGE ROAD, SAMBALPUR-768001					
1.	Subhransu Kumar Moharana, Near Railway Line, Deolbandh, Modipara, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha-768002 / (1) 53716540000100	₹ 1,30,776.00 + interest	27.8		
	(2) 53716540000101	₹ 77,858.00 + interest	16.3		
2.	Satya Narayan Padhee, S/o- Lalit Mohan Padhee, L6 4, JM Colony, Budharaja, Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768004 / 53716540000075	₹ 48,924.00 + interest	10.5		
Person willing to participate in the auction should obey the following rules:					
1) Person willing to participate in the auction must deposit ₹1,000/- in the form of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) two hours before the scheduled auction time.					
2) After depositing the EMD, person who willing to participate in the auction can inspect the ornaments.					
3) Auction for another account will begin only after the auction and amount deposit of one account have been completed.					
4) The Bank is not Bound to accept any auction calls. The Bank may cancel the auction without assigning any reason therefor.					
5) Union Bank of India will not held responsible in any manner for the quality, weight and purity of the ornaments pledged for auction.					
6) Bank will forfeit the EMD Deposit Amount if any person does not obey the above rules.					
7) The successful bidder shall pay the entire bid amount at once and take delivery of the ornaments at his/her absolute risk and responsibility and the said bidder shall not have any recourse to our Bank for any reason whatsoever.					
8) If the successful bidder does not clear the bid amount and/or does anything which may give rise to a necessity of adjourning/postponing/holding fresh auction sale, he/she shall be liable to indemnify the Bank to the extent of loss, if any, caused on account of his/her lapses which may come in the way of completing the auction.					
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 04.07.2025			Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India		

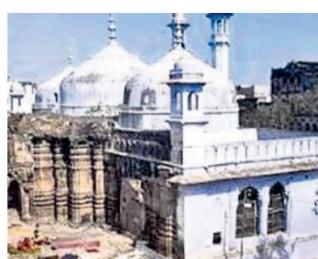


Everyone should be allotted a housing plot within two years, and construction should be completed in the following two years. In total, the goal is to ensure housing for all within four years

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

ALLAHABAD HC DEFERS GYANVAPI CASE HEARING TO AUGUST 6

The Allahabad High Court Friday deferred to August 6 the hearing over the ASI survey of the wuzukhana (ablution pond) area except for the Shiva Linga inside the Gyanvapi mosque. On Friday when matter was taken up, the court was informed by one of the counsel that the Supreme Court's interim order was in operation



of the day quote

Till now, according to the information, over 20,000 devotees of Baba have had darshan



MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

This ceremony reflects our commitment to social inclusion and women's empowerment



BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

The BJP gave me a platform, made me an MLA, an MP, and gave me organisational responsibilities. Even the car and security I use were provided by the party. I never asked for anything. If the party wants me to work as an ordinary member, I will do that. If they call me, I'll go. If they don't, I won't. This is how a system works



DILIP GHOSH | SENIOR BJP LEADER

Govt reduces toll charge by up to 50 per cent on NHs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: The government has reduced the toll rates up to 50 per cent for the sections of National Highways that have structures like tunnels, bridges, flyovers or elevated stretches, a move which will lower travelling cost for motorists.

User charges at fee plazas on National Highways are collected as per NH Fee Rules, 2008. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has made amendment to 2008 rules and notified a new method or formula for calculating toll charges.

"The rate of fee for use of a section of national highway comprising of structure or structures shall be calculated by adding ten times the length of structure or structures to the length of the section of national highway excluding the length of structure or structures, or five times the total length of section of national highway, whichever is lesser," said the notification dated July 2, 2025. 'Structure' means an

independent bridge, tunnel or flyover or elevated highway. To explain the new toll charges, the ministry has cited examples. In one of the examples, it said that if a section of a national highway has a total length of 40 kilometers, comprising of structure alone, the minimum length shall be computed: '10 x 40 (ten times length of structure) = 400 kilometers or five times the total length of section of a national highway = 5 x 40 = 200 kilometers'.

According to the extant rules, users pay ten times the regular toll for every kilometre of structure on national highways.

A senior official of National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) said the existing toll calculation method was meant to offset higher construction cost associated with such infrastructure. The revised notification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways reduces the toll rate for stretches such as flyovers, underpasses and tunnels up to 50 per cent, the official said.



Trucks being swept away in floodwater following heavy rainfall in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Don't see God in us, see God in justice: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: Don't see God in us, the Supreme Court Friday remarked after a counsel said they saw God in judges. Justices M M Sundresh and K Vinod Chandran made the remark while hearing a case of a temple in Uttar Pradesh. One of the counsel appearing in the matter sought discharge from the case saying his client was not listening to him. The counsel further claimed of having received a notice from the client alleging "judges were getting fixed through lawyers".

TN custodial death: Autopsy finds 44 injuries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): In a shocking incident, the post-mortem report of the custodial death victim, a security guard B Ajith Kumar of Tamil Nadu's Sivaganga district, revealed at least 44 external injuries besides signs of severe internal bleeding. There were signs of internal bleeding in the brain, heart and abdomen region, the examination report claimed and indicated that Ajith could have died from a combination of causes, which included excruciating pain and catastrophic blood clots. The 29-year-old working as a security guard at the Bhadrakaliamman temple in Tiruppuvanam was picked up by the police on June 27 evening for interrogation in connection with a jewel theft case. The following night he was declared brought dead by police at the government hospital here.

DSP held for offering bribe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh: A deputy superintendent of police was arrested in Punjab's Faridkot for allegedly offering a bribe of Rs 1 lakh to a senior officer's staff to suppress a complaint against him, officials Friday said. A case has been registered against Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Rajanpal Singh, posted in the Crime Against Women cell in Faridkot, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, they said. Faridkot Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prayga Jain had a few days back received a complaint against the DSP, wherein the aggrieved party had accused him of taking Rs 1 lakh for settling a matrimonial dispute and demanded action against him.

DALAI LAMA SUCCESSION PLAN

MEA: India does not take position on faith & religion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Beijing, July 4: India Friday said it does not take any position on matters concerning faith and religion, two days after the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, unveiled a plan for choosing his successor that has been rejected by China.

Ahead of his 90th birthday Sunday, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso had Wednesday affirmed that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and that only the Gaden Phodrang Trust will have the sole authority to recognise his future "reincarnation", declaring no one else can "interfere" in his succession plan. The Gaden Phodrang Trust was founded by the current Dalai Lama in 2015 to oversee matters related to the 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the Indian government has always upheld freedom of religion for all in the country and will continue to do so.

Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the statement by the Dalai Lama that also ended speculation on whether the Tibetan spiritual leader will have a successor or not after his death. The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India since 1959. Earlier in the day, China urged India to act cautiously on Tibet-related issues to avoid its impact on the improvement of bilateral relations. Beijing was responding to Union Minister Kiren Rijiju's assertion Thursday that the decision on the Dalai Lama's



AHEAD OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY SUNDAY, THE 14TH DALAI LAMA TENZIN GYATSO HAD WEDNESDAY AFFIRMED THAT THE INSTITUTION OF THE DALAI LAMA WILL CONTINUE AND THAT ONLY THE GADEN PHODRANG TRUST WILL HAVE THE SOLE AUTHORITY TO RECOGNISE HIS FUTURE "REINCARNATION", DECLARING NO ONE ELSE CAN "INTERFERE" IN HIS SUCCESSION PLAN

THE GADEN PHODRANG TRUST WAS FOUNDED BY THE CURRENT DALAI LAMA IN 2015 TO OVERSEE MATTERS RELATED TO THE 600-YEAR-OLD INSTITUTION OF THE DALAI LAMA

incarnation would be taken by the established institution and the leader of the Tibetan Buddhists himself and no one else. Rijiju reiterated Friday that all the devotees and followers of the Dalai Lama want the Tibetan spiritual leader to decide on his successor. Rijiju, however, clarified he was not making the remarks on behalf of the Indian government and neither was he commenting on a statement made by China on Wednesday. Rejecting the Nobel Peace laureate's succession plan, China

insisted that any future heir must receive its seal of approval, adding a new chapter to Tibetan Buddhism's decades-long struggle with the Chinese ruling Communist Party. Asked by reporters in Delhi about China's statement on the issue, Rijiju said, "I do not want to react to China's statement. I speak as a devotee, I have faith in the Dalai Lama, those who follow the Dalai Lama wish that he decides his successor."

"There is no need for any confusion on the Dalai Lama issue. All the people across the world who believe in Buddhism and follow the Dalai Lama want him to decide (on his succession). There is no need for me or the government to say anything. Who would be the next Dalai Lama, it will be decided by him," Rijiju said. On Thursday, Rijiju had said the Dalai Lama is the "most important and defining institution" for Buddhists. Rijiju, a practising Buddhist, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, a fellow Union minister, are representing the Government of India at the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala July 6.

Fadnavis defends Shinde over 'Jai Gujarat' slogan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 4: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's 'Jai Gujarat' slogan at a Pune event kicked up a row, with the Congress seeking his resignation by dubbing it as "sycophancy and political slavery", while Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis defended his colleague.

Another Opposition party, NCP (SP) said Shinde has betrayed the Marathi 'manoos' (person). "Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra, Jai Gujarat," Shinde said at the event, where Union minister Amit Shah was present. Shah addressed the gathering in Gujarati language.

"Just because Shinde said Jai Gujarat, it doesn't mean that Shinde loves Gujarat more than Maharashtra," Fadnavis told reporters. "Such a parochial thinking doesn't behove Marathi manoos," he added. Fadnavis recalled that when a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was unveiled at Chikodi in Karnataka, former Union minister Sharad Pawar had said 'Jai Maharashtra, Jai Karnataka'.

"Does this mean that Sharad Pawar loves Karnataka more and Maharashtra less?" Fadnavis asked. Meanwhile,

Maharashtra Congress chief Harshwardhan Sapkal sought Shinde's resignation for exhibiting "political slavery" and betraying the state's pride.

"Maharashtra is the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who stood for self-respect and sovereignty. It is a matter of shame that a leader occupying the Deputy Chief Minister's chair would chant 'Jai Gujarat' instead of 'Jai Maharashtra'. This is nothing but political slavery," Sapkal said in a statement.

After breaking the original Shiv Sena and being rewarded with the party's name and symbol by the powers in Gujarat, Shinde has crossed all limits to please his political masters, he further claimed.

"His slogan of 'Jai Gujarat' is not just sycophancy, it is an insult to every proud Maharashtrian. Shinde's actions show how deeply entrenched Gujarat's influence has become in Maharashtra politics under the current regime," Sapkal added.

Has Shinde forgotten that he is Deputy CM of Maharashtra and not Gujarat, the state Congress chief asked while alleging that industries and projects were being diverted to the neighbouring state by the current BJP-led regime.



India plans \$234mn drone incentive after Pak conflict: Sources

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 4: India will launch a \$234 million incentive programme for civil and military drone makers to reduce their reliance on imported components and counter rival Pakistan's programme built on support from China and Turkey, three sources told Reuters.

India's push to build more home-grown drones stems from its assessment of the four-day clash with Pakistan in May that marked the first time New Delhi and Islamabad utilised unmanned aerial vehicles at scale against each other. The nuclear-armed neighbours are now locked in a drones arms race.

New Delhi will launch a 20 billion Indian rupees (\$234 million) programme for three years that will cover manufac-



ture of drones, components, software, counter drone systems, and services, two government and one industry source, who did not want to be named, told Reuters.

Details of the programme have not been previously re-

ported and its planned expenditure is higher than the modest 1.2 billion rupees production-linked incentive scheme New Delhi launched in 2021 to promote drone start-ups, which have struggled to raise capital and invest in research.

India's civil aviation ministry, which is leading the incentives programme, and defence ministry did not immediately respond to e-mails seeking comment.

Reuters previously reported that India plans to invest heavily in local industry and could spend as much as \$470 million on unmanned aerial vehicles over the next 12 to 24 months, in what government and military officers said would be a staggered approach.

In the past, India has mainly imported military drones from its third-largest arms supplier, Israel, but in recent years its

nascent drone industry has scaled up its cost-effective offerings, including for the military, although reliance on China continues for certain components such as motors, sensors and imaging systems.

Through the incentives, India is aiming to have at least 40% of key drone components made in the country by the end of fiscal year 2028 (April-March), the two government sources said.

"During (the India-Pakistan) conflict there was quite a lot of use of drones, loitering munitions and kamikaze drones on both sides," Indian Defence

Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said last week.

India bans import of drones but not their components and the government has planned additional incentives for manufacturers that procure parts from within the country, the two government sources said.

The state-run Small Industries Development Bank of India would also support the incentive programme by providing cheap loans for working capital, research and development needs for the firms, the government sources added. Currently, there are more than 600 drone manufacturing and associated companies in India, according to estimates shared by an industry source involved in the discussions for the incentives programme.



national



I bow to Swami Vivekananda Ji on his Purnima Tithi. His thoughts and vision for our society remains our guiding light. He ignited a sense of pride and confidence in our history and cultural heritage. He also emphasised on walking the path of service and compassion

VIJAY IS CHIEF MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE, DECLARES TVK

Actor politician Vijay, founder-chief of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), will be its chief ministerial candidate for the 2026 Assembly election, the fledgling party announced Friday. A special resolution was adopted in the party's executive committee meeting in this regard



of the day quote

Our party believes that arbitrary and distorted experiments of this kind should not be allowed in any specialised field

Tripura has already become a fully literate state, the third in the country after Mizoram and Goa. The pass percentages in Class 10 and higher secondary levels have improved this year. The Vidayajyoti schools (CBSE) did well in both the exams this year, with the pass percentages increasing by 26 and 21, respectively, compared to 2024

Swamiji's teachings still echo in the hearts of every Bharatiya and his lessons ignite the spirit of a strong nation led by youths with spiritual conscience

POST OF THE DAY

Indian Army : In the recent India-Pak war, Pakistan got live inputs from China on Indian deployments & full support. Rahul Gandhi had warned in Parliament years ago, don't bring China & Pakistan closer. But BJP leaders laughed at him

SHORT TAKES

Delhi Police nabs 2 sharpshooters

New Delhi: Two sharpshooters, allegedly from the Nandu gang, were arrested following an encounter near Sector 34 in Rohini Friday, officials said. The two were allegedly involved in the murder of Deepak, the nephew of gangster Manjeet Mahal, in northwest Delhi's Bawana area, the police stated. Deepak (43) was on a morning walk when he was allegedly shot dead in front of his 10-year-old daughter, who also suffered a bullet injury in the attack. He was shot just 700-800 metres away from his home and died on the spot after suffering multiple bullet injuries, the police said.

Man pushes wife out of running train

Ramgarh (Jharkhand): A 25-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh Friday allegedly pushed his wife out of a running train in Jharkhand, a police officer said. She, however, miraculously survived and is undergoing treatment at RIMS in Ranchi, the officer said. The incident occurred when the couple boarded the Varanasi Express Tuesday from Barkakana to go to Varanasi, he said. The woman was pushed out of the running train allegedly by her husband when the train was between Bhurkunda and Patratu railway station under the East Central Railway division.

Tragedy averted

New Delhi: A major tragedy was Friday averted at Channapattana station, about 60 km from Mysore in Bangalore division, after the loco pilot and assistant loco pilot of the Palace Queen Humsafar Express doused fire in the engine using an extinguisher. South Western Railway Chief Public Relations Officer Manjunath Kanmadi said "the cause of the fire is being investigated".

RAIN HAVOC IN HP, U'KHAND

45 KILLED, SEVERAL MISSING IN 2 WEEKS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Heavy rains have played havoc in some parts of the country with 43 people getting killed and 37 missing in Himachal Pradesh in the last two weeks besides two Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel drowning in a swollen lake in Uttarakhand's Bhimtal Thursday.

On Friday, the soldiers from the National Disaster Response Force rescued 65 people trapped in Bharad, Deji, Payala and Rukchui villages after heavy rain.

The downpour, followed by landslides, damaged roads and caused rivers to swell, which cut off many villages and deposited debris to people's houses and fields.

More than 150 houses, 106 cattle sheds, 31 vehicles, 14 bridges and several roads have suffered damage, while 164 cattle have perished in the various inclemencies.

Five relief camps have been set up to house the 402 people rescued, 348 of them from Mandi alone. The State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said 280 roads, including 156 in Mandi, 49 in Sirmour and 36 in Kullu districts, were rendered out of bounds for vehicular traffic. It said 332 transformers and 784 water supply schemes have been disrupted in the state.

The local Met office has issued an Orange Alert, warning of heavy to very heavy rain in



« The monsoon hit Himachal Pradesh June 20 and has already cost the state ₹5,000 in damages due to cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides

« Of the 43 killed in the hill state, 14 died in cloudbursts, eight in flash floods and one in a landslide, while seven were drowned

« The most deaths, 17, took place in Mandi district where 10 instances of cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides wreaked havoc Tuesday

« A search is still on for 31 people missing from this district alone, officials said

personnel drowned in a swollen lake in Bhimtal, officials said Friday.

Prince Yadav (22) from Pathankot, Punjab and Sahil Kumar (23) from Muzaffarpur in Bihar were part of a group of eight IAF personnel, including four women, vacationing in Nainital, Circle Officer Pramod Shah said. Locals joined the police in the rescue operation to pull Yadav and Kumar's bodies out of the lake after a struggle that lasted almost an hour, he added. The rains which have been battering the state have affected daily life with the closure of more than 100 roads across the state, disrupting the Chardham Yatra and causing food grain shortages in some villages in the Geeth area of Uttarkashi district. Home Minister Amit Shah spoke with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama Friday to assess the situation in

isolated parts of the state from Saturday to Tuesday. Amid heavy rains in another hill state, Uttarakhand, two IAF

MEDICAL COLLEGE REGULATION MANIPULATION

Govt officials among 34 booked by CBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: The CBI has busted a network of officials of the Health Ministry and National Medical Commission, intermediaries and representatives of private medical colleges, allegedly involved in "egregious" acts, including graft and manipulation of the regulatory framework governing medical colleges, officials said Friday.

The agency has named 34 people in an FIR, including eight officials of the Health Ministry, one of the National Health Authority and five doctors who were part of the National Medical Commission (NMC) inspection team.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences Chairman D P Singh, Gitanjali University Registrar Mayur Raval, Rawatpura Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Chairman Ravi Shankar ji Maharaj and Index Medical College Chairman Suresh Singh Bhadoria have also been named in the FIR.

According to the officials, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently arrested eight people in the case. These include three doctors of the NMC team who were held for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹55 lakh for giving a favourable report to the Naya Raipur-based Rawatpura Institute of Medical Sciences and Research. The agency has alleged that Ravi Shankar of the Rawat-



pura Institute wanted advance information about the inspection. Ravi Shankar also got in touch with DP Singh to get a favourable inspection report in lieu of bribes, the CBI alleged and added that Singh delegated the task to one Suresh. There was no immediate reaction from Singh. Raval had allegedly demanded ₹25-30 lakh for the information and gave the names of assessors and the date of inspection to the institute officials.

The syndicate has its roots in the Union Health Ministry, where the eight accused officials ran the sophisticated scheme facilitating unauthorised access, illegal duplication and dissemination of highly confidential files and sensitive information to representatives of medical colleges through a network of intermediaries in exchange for huge bribes, the FIR alleged. It is alleged that the officials, in collusion with the intermediaries, manipulated the statutory inspection process conducted by the NMC by disclosing inspection schedules and identities of the designated assessors to the medical institutions concerned well in advance of the official communication.

SNIPPETS

Jaishankar set to visit China for SCO meet

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to visit China around July 13 to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), people familiar with the matter said Friday. It would be Jaishankar's first visit to China after the ties between the two countries came under severe strain following the 2020 military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The external affairs minister is likely to travel to Beijing for talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi before going to Tianjin for the conclave of the SCO foreign ministers that will be held July 14 and 15, the people cited above said. Jaishankar's visit is taking place less than three weeks after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh travelled to the Chinese port city of Qingdao to participate in the SCO defence ministers' conference. China is the current chair of the SCO and it is hosting the meetings of the grouping in that capacity.

PIO doc booked for killing daughter in US

New York: An Oklahoma medical doctor is accused of travelling to South Florida and staging the death of her 4-year-old daughter to make it appear the child drowned in the swimming pool at their rented vacation home in the middle of the night, detectives say. Dr Neha Gupta, a 36-year-old pediatrician, was booked into the Oklahoma County Jail in Oklahoma City Tuesday. She is accused of first-degree murder in Miami-Dade County, an arrest warrant states. Gupta "attempted to conceal the killing of the deceased victim by staging an accidental drowning within the swimming pool of a rental property," a Miami-Dade sheriff's homicide detective wrote in an affidavit obtained by The Associated Press. But her lawyer, Richard Cooper of Miami, said he and Gupta cooperated with authorities by telling their account of what happened and were surprised when the first-degree murder charge was announced. The doctor, he said, is a victim of a terrible tragedy.

Bengal ex-teacher gets life term in minor rape case

New Delhi: A special court in West Bengal's Malda sentenced a retired teacher to life imprisonment Friday for the rape of a nine-year-old girl, the first conviction in a 2021 post-poll violence case probed by the CBI. Sixty-one cases of murder and crimes against women -- specifically rape or attempted rape -- during the post-poll violence in West Bengal following the declaration of the 2021 Assembly poll results were handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation by the Calcutta High Court. In one such case, Rafikul Islam, a retired government school teacher had lured the girl, who was playing in a mango orchard, by offering her money and raped her on the evening of June 4, 2021. The CBI filed a charge sheet against him. Special Public Prosecutor for the CBI, Amitava Maitra, presented the case supported by eyewitness testimony of the victim and her 10-year-old friend.



Tibetan students from Belgium practice 'cham' (ritual dance), in Mcleodganj, Kangra district of HP. Preparations are underway for the 90th birthday celebration of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama

Aastha Poonia becomes 1st woman maritime fighter pilot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Sub Lt Aastha Poonia has become the first woman to be inducted into the fighter stream of naval aviation, paving the way for a new era of women fighter pilots in the force, officials said Friday. She will now undergo training for qualifying as a fighter pilot.

The Indian Navy celebrated the graduation of the Second Basic Hawk Conversion Course at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam. On July 3, Lt Atul Kumar Dhull and



Sub Lieutenant Poonia received the prestigious 'Wings of Gold' from Rear Admiral Janak Bevi, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air) at the winging ceremony, the defence ministry said. "Sub Lt Aastha Poonia be-

comes the first woman to be streamed into the fighter stream of naval aviation, shattering barriers and paving way for a new era of women fighter pilots in the Navy," it said. The Indian Navy has already inducted women officers as pilots and naval air operations officers in Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) aircraft and helicopters, the statement said. Streaming of Sub Lt Poonia into the fighter stream highlights the Navy's commitment towards "gender inclusivity in naval aviation", fostering a culture of equality and opportunity, it added.

Kerala turns to tribal wisdom for solving human-animal conflict

For the first time in India, the Kerala Forest Department has launched a programme called 'Gothrabheri', which brings together the traditional knowledge of tribal communities to help address human-animal conflict in the state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 4: In the forests of Kerala, where elephants sometimes stray into villages and leopards are spotted near farmland, a new effort is underway to ease tensions between humans and wildlife—by listening to those who have lived closest to nature for generations.

For the first time in India, the Kerala Forest Department has launched a programme called 'Gothrabheri', which brings together the traditional knowledge of tribal communities to help address human-animal

conflict in the state. Gothrabheri, meaning gathering of tribal voices, is a symbolic initiative that unites tribal communities to share their traditional knowledge—especially about forests and wildlife—while giving them a platform to participate in conservation and conflict resolution efforts.

These communities, 37 in total, have lived in and around Kerala's forests for centuries. Many of them once shared the landscape peacefully with wild animals, following age-old customs that respected the rhythms of the natural world.



Now, as that balance has become harder to maintain, officials hope these communities might hold part of the answer. In recent months, the For-

est Department held regional gatherings with tribal representatives, encouraging them to share their experiences and ideas. The aim is to collect

this wisdom and turn it into a practical guide for forest and wildlife management—one that reflects both science and lived experience. Kerala Forest Minister A K Saseendran, while inaugurating the final state-level convention of Gothrabheri here two days ago, said that the state government came up with the idea of Gothrabheri after realising that 13 out of the 19 people killed in wild elephant attacks this year were tribals, and that the attacks occurred inside forest areas.

"We wanted to study why such attacks are happening now, when they were rare or

unheard of in the past. So we decided to listen to the tribals and gather the indigenous knowledge that once helped them live in harmony with wild animals," Saseendran said. "The indigenous knowledge possessed by the tribal communities that are very deeply rooted in nature, environment, and ecosystem management. So what we are planning is to gather this information from tribals themselves and use it in our day-to-day forest and wildlife management strategies," P Pugazhenthil IPS, head of Kerala Forest Force, told PTI.



You will never find Rwanda at fault with implementing what we have agreed to do. But if the side we are working with plays tricks and takes us back to the problem, then we deal with the problem like we have been dealing with it

PAUL KAGAME | PRESIDENT, RWANDA

INDIAN MANGOS MAKE SPLASH AT 'AAM MAHOTSAV' IN CHINA

Indian mangoes, which formed part of Sino-India diplomacy in the past, have made a comeback in China this summer with the king of fruits getting a diplomatic push to increase its presence in the lucrative Chinese market



of the day quote

Sri Lanka's performance under the Fund-supported arrangement is generally strong with some implementation risks being addressed. Reforms are bearing fruit, with economic growth strengthening, inflation remaining low, reserves accumulating, and fiscal revenues improving

KENJI OKAMURA | DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR, IMF

We will probably have a very, very successful dialogue without diversionary inputs or interference from a party that does not have the interests of South Africans at heart

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | PRESIDENT, SOUTH AFRICA

We have our diplomatic channels open to resolve the issue, but what is certain is Sri Lanka will never agree to let go of a part of Sri Lanka which is Katchatheevu and established so by international law

VIJITHA HERATH | FOREIGN MINISTER, SRI LANKA

Russia pounds Kyiv with largest drone attack

REUTERS

Kyiv, July 4: Russia pummeled Kyiv with the largest drone attack of the war, killing one person, injuring at least 23 and damaging buildings across the capital hours after US President Donald Trump spoke to Russia's Vladimir Putin, officials said Friday.

Air raid sirens, the whine of kamikaze drones and booming detonations reverberated from early evening until dawn as Russia launched what Ukraine's Air Force said was a total of 539 drones and 11 missiles.

Families huddled in underground metro stations for shelter. Acrid smoke hung over the city centre. Kyiv's military administration chief said Friday afternoon a body had been found in the wreckage of one of the strike sites.

Outside a high-rise apartment block damaged by a drone, residents stood around surveying the scene as the clean-up job began. Some cried. Others looked on silently.

"I woke up to the sound of explosions, first the Shahed drones started buzzing, and then the explosions began," said 40-year-old resident Maria Hilchenko.

"Then people started screaming outside. The explosions



from the Shaheds kept coming." Shahed drones are an Iranian design, a variant of which is now manufactured in Russia.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is due to speak to Trump later Friday about the war and a US pause in some deliveries of air defence missiles, called the attack "deliberately massive and cynical."

"Notably, the first air raid alerts in our cities and regions yesterday began to blare almost simultaneously with media reports discussing a phone call between President Trump and

Putin," Zelenskyy said on X.

"Yet again, Russia is showing it has no intention of ending the war and terror," he added, calling for increased pressure on Russia and more air defence equipment.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said a Chinese component had been found in one of the Shahed drones attacking Kyiv, adding it had been found shortly after China's consulate in the southern city of Odesa suffered minor damage in a separate strike. "What an irony," Sybiha

wrote on X.

Kyiv officials said the attack damaged about 40 apartment blocks, passenger railway infrastructure, five schools and kindergartens, cafes and many cars in six of Kyiv's 10 districts. Poland said the consular section of its embassy was damaged in central Kyiv, adding that staff were unharmed.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram that 14 of the injured were taken to hospital.

Damage was recorded on both sides of the Dnipro River bisecting the capital and falling drone debris set a medical facility on fire in the leafy Holoosivskiy district, Klitschko said.

Russian airstrikes on Ky-

Attacks follow Trump-Putin call that yielded no results, Zelenskyy due to talk to Trump Friday

One person killed, at least 23 injured in hours-long attacks

iv have intensified in recent weeks and included some of the deadliest assaults of the war on the city of three million people.

Russia's Defence Ministry said drone factories, a military airfield and an oil refinery were among targets it struck in Kyiv with what it called high-precision weapons. Ukraine did not give details of any militarily valuable targets.

Trump, Zelenskyy discuss weapons, escalating Russian strikes

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he discussed air defences in a conversation with US President Donald Trump Friday, and agreed to work on increasing Kyiv's capability to "defend the sky" as Russian attacks escalate. He added in his account on Telegram that he discussed joint defence production, as well as joint purchases and investments with the US leader. Ukraine has been asking Washington to sell it more Patriot missiles and systems that it sees as key to defending its cities from intensifying Russian air strikes. A decision by Washington to halt some shipments of weapons to Ukraine prompted warnings by Kyiv that the move would weaken its ability to defend against Russia's airstrikes and battlefield advances. Germany said it is in talks on buying Patriot air defence systems to bridge the gap. The conversation came a day after Trump said he had a disappointing call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

North Korean crosses heavily fortified border to South Korea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, July 04: An unidentified North Korean man crossed the heavily fortified land border separating the two Koreas and is in South Korean custody, the South's military said Friday.

The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military identified and tracked the individual near the central-west section of the military demarcation line and conducted a "guiding operation" before taking the person into custody Thursday night.

It said authorities plan to investigate the border crossing and did not immediately say whether they view the incident as a defection attempt.

The Joint Chiefs said it notified the US-led United Nations Command about the incident and had not detected any immediate signs of unusual military activity by the North. A South Korean military team approached the unarmed North Korean man after detecting him and, after identifying themselves as South Korean troops, guided him safely out of the mine-strewn Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas.

Border tensions have flared in recent months as the two Koreas traded Cold War-style psychological warfare, with North Korea sending thousands of trash-filled balloons toward the South and South Korea blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda through loudspeakers.

Israeli military kills 20 in Gaza



Trump awaits Hamas reply to truce proposal

REUTERS

Tel Aviv/Cairo, July 4: At least 20 Palestinians were killed Friday in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza, according to local health officials, as US President Donald Trump said he expected Hamas to respond to his "final proposal" for a ceasefire in Gaza in the next 24 hours.

Health officials at the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, said the Israeli military had carried out an airstrike on a tent encampment west of the city around 2 am, killing 15 Palestinians displaced by nearly two years of war.

Five were killed in northern Jabalia, medics said. The Israeli military had no immediate comment.

Later Friday, Palestinians gathered to perform funeral prayers before burying those killed overnight.

"The ceasefire will come, and I have lost my brother? There should have been a ceasefire long ago before I lost my brother," said 13-year-old Mayar Al Farr as she wept. Her brother, Mahmoud, was among those killed.

Adlar Mouamar said her nephew, Ashraf, was also killed. "Our hearts are broken. We ask the world, we don't want food...We want them to end the bloodshed. We want

Modi conferred with Trinidad and Tobago's highest civilian honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Port of Spain, July 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Friday conferred with 'The Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago', becoming the first foreign leader to receive the Caribbean country's highest civilian honour.

This is the 25th international honour bestowed upon PM Modi by a country.

In a special ceremony at the President's House, President Christine Carla Kangaloo conferred upon Prime Minister Modi the highest national award for his statesmanship, for championing the priorities of the Global South and for his exceptional contribution to strengthening the relationship between the two countries.

Modi, who is on a two-day visit to the Caribbean nation, expressed his gratitude to the government and the people for being honoured with the highest national award.

"I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to you, your government, and the people for honouring me with the highest national award, the 'Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago'," Modi said after receiving the award.

In a first, Russia recognises Taliban govt in Afghanistan

While no country had formally recognised the Taliban administration until now, the group had engaged in high-level talks with many nations and established some diplomatic ties with countries including China and the United Arab Emirates

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, July 04: Russia Thursday became the first country to formally recognise the Taliban's government in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021, after Moscow removed the group from its list of outlawed organisations.

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it had received credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed Ambassador Gul Hassan Hassan.

The official recognition of the Afghan government will foster "productive bilateral cooperation," the ministry said in a statement.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry called it a historic step, and quoted Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi as welcoming the decision as "a good



example for other countries."

The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021 following the withdrawal of US and NATO forces. Since then, they have sought international recognition while also enforcing their strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Women are barred from most jobs and public places, including parks, baths and gyms, while girls are banned from education beyond sixth grade.

Russian officials have recently been emphasising the need to engage with the Taliban to help stabilise Afghanistan, and lifted a ban on the Taliban in April.

Russia's ambassador to Afghanistan, Dmitry Zhirnov, said in remarks broadcast by state Channel One television that the decision to officially recognise the Taliban government was made by President Vladimir Putin on advice from Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

in power from 1996 to 2001, it started to enforce restrictions on women and girls soon after the 2021 takeover.

Women are barred from most jobs and public places, including parks, baths and gyms, while girls are banned from education beyond sixth grade.

Russian officials have recently been emphasising the need to engage with the Taliban to help stabilise Afghanistan, and lifted a ban on the Taliban in April.

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China exempts cognac from EU brandy tariffs

REUTERS

Shanghai, July 4: China spared major cognac producers Pernod Ricard, LVMH and Remy Cointreau from hefty duties on EU brandy Friday, a rare bright spot at a time of trade tensions between Brussels and Beijing as the two sides row over tariffs on Chinese-made EVs.

China will from Saturday levy duties of up to 34.9% for five years on brandy originating in the European Union, most of it cognac from France, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said in a final ruling.

But most of France's cognac industry including big brands LVMH-owned Hennessy and Remy Martin will be exempt from the duties provided they sell at a minimum price, the ministry said in a statement. It did not disclose the minimum prices.

Beijing launched its anti-dumping probe on EU brandy in January last year, in what was widely viewed as retaliation for the EU's decision to impose big import tariffs on



China-made EVs.

French cognac makers generate global exports of \$3 billion a year combined. With premium aged bottles of the liquor selling for hundreds of dollars, they have complained they are collateral damage in the broader trade row between Brussels and Beijing.

In addition to the reprieve, China's commerce ministry will also give back deposits made by brandymakers since October 2024, when provisional duties

were imposed. The refund issue, which weighed particularly heavily on smaller producers, was one of the sticking points in months-long negotiations, two industry sources said.

China is the world's biggest market for cognac in value terms.

Remy Martin-owner Remy Cointreau said in a statement that the deal on minimum price commitments constituted "a substantially less punitive alternative" thus enabling "the

- China announces duties up to 34.9% on EU brandy producers
Duties come into effect Saturday for five years
Major cognac producers spared if they sell at minimum price
Cognac makers say caught in wider EU-China trade dispute over EVs
EU says tariffs are unfair, unjustified

strengthening of some investments in China."

Pernod Ricard said it regrets the increase in the cost of operating in China but additional costs are significantly less than would be the case if tariffs had been made permanent.

LVMH and Campari did not immediately respond to requests for comment. There was little sign that the rift between China and the EU was easing.

Olof Gill, the European Commission's spokesperson for trade, said the tariffs were unfair and unjustified.

Iran resumes int'l flights after 20-day suspension

Tehran: Iran's Imam Khomeini International Airport has welcomed its first foreign flight since the resumption of international air travel after a 20-day suspension, local media reported Friday. According to Student News Network, Mehdi Ramezani, spokesperson for Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation, confirmed the Flydubai flight from the United Arab Emirates landed Wednesday, after extensive security and diplomatic coordination. The landing marks a "new phase of stability" for Iran's aviation sector, Ramezani said, after recent tensions with Israel. He added that it represented a return to calm and intelligent management of the nation's airspace. International flights will gradually resume to specific destinations in coordination with authorities, to meet public needs and restore air links, he said. Iran and Israel agreed to a ceasefire last month after a bloody 12-day conflict that saw Israel striking hundreds of Iranian military infrastructure targets and nuclear-related sites, and Iran firing missiles at Israel in return. The truce was brokered by the US after it dropped 30,000-pound "bunker-busting" bombs on three of Iran's key nuclear sites.



The government's upcoming support measures will not be export incentives; instead, they will be based on the criteria of enhancing production and job creation

PIYUSH GOYAL |
 COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

FOREX RESERVES SURGE

India's forex reserves were up by \$4.84 billion to \$702.78 billion for the week ended June 27, the Reserve Bank of India said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the foreign exchange reserves had dropped by \$1.01 billion to \$697.93 billion. The forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in end-September 2024. The gold reserves were down by \$1.23 billion to \$84.5 billion during the week ended June 27, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) increased by \$158 million to \$18.83 billion



of the day quote

Chaired a meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on GST Revenue
Analysis to review state-wise revenue trends and identify actionable strategies for improved GST collection

PRAMOD SAWANT | CM, GOA

Dubai's role as a gateway to MENA region and its investor-friendly environment make it an ideal base for expanding into emerging markets. It marks a significant milestone in SAIL's evolution into a globally competitive steelmaker and reflects India's growing profile

HD KUMARASWAMY | UNION MINISTER OF STEEL AND HEAVY INDUSTRIES

A stronger than expected PCE data could revive inflation worries and lift safe-haven demand, while a softer print may boost hopes for interest rate cuts

CHINTAN MEHTA | CEO, ABANS FINANCIAL SERVICES

SEBI bans Jane Street

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has barred US-based Jane Street Group from the securities markets and directed the group to disgorge unlawful gains of Rs 4,843 crore for allegedly manipulating stock indices through positions taken in derivatives segment.



This could be the highest disgorgement amount ever directed by the SEBI. In its interim order, the regulator has debarred JSI Investments, JSI2 Investments Pvt Ltd, Jane Street Singapore Pte Ltd, and Jane Street Asia Trading -- entities collectively referred to as the Jane Street Group from trading until further notice, while continuing its investigation.

identified- one involved buying heavily in Bank Nifty stocks and futures in the morning and selling them aggressively in the afternoon to create a softer close, while the other involved concentrated selling or buying in the last two hours of the expiry day to sway index levels.

Established in 2000, Jane Street Group LLC is a global proprietary trading firm in the financial services industry. It employs more than 2,600 people across five offices in US, Europe, and Asia, and conducts trading operations in 45 countries.

These actions helped the group earn illegal profits of about Rs 4,843 crore, even as they incurred smaller losses in cash and futures trades, the regulator said.

The Jane Street (JS) Group has come under SEBI's scrutiny for allegedly manipulating index levels in the stock market to earn illegal profits, primarily through the highly liquid Bank Nifty and Nifty index options segments.

SEBI also noted that between January 2023 and March 2025, the JS Group recorded substantial trading activity across various segments of the market. The group made gains of Rs 44,358 crore from index options trading, which formed the bulk of their profits.

An investigation by the regulator revealed that over 21 expiry days between January 2023 and May 2025, the group executed large trades in the underlying cash and futures markets to influence index movements and profit from massive positions in the options market.

However, these were partially offset by losses of Rs 7,208 crore in stock futures, Rs 191 crore in index futures, and Rs 288 crore in the cash market. After accounting for all gains and losses, the JS Group reported a net total profit of Rs 36,671 crore during this period, Sebi noted.

STOCK MARKETS END IN GREEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 4: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher Friday in a highly volatile trade amid a buying rush in banking and other bellwether stocks on the back of a rally in US markets.

Tata Steel receives ₹1,902cr demand notice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Tata Steel Friday said it has received a demand notice of Rs 1,902 crore from Deputy Director of Mines in Jajpur for alleged shortfall in dispatch of minerals from its Sukinda Chromite Block in Odisha.

violation of Rule 12A of the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydrocarbon Energy Minerals) Concession Rules, 2016, and consequent appropriation of performance security, the company said.

In a filing, the steel maker said it will pursue suitable legal remedies before the appropriate judicial or quasi-judicial forums.

"The alleged shortfall in mineral dispatch by the company as per the aforementioned Mine Development and Production Agreement for Sukinda Chromite Block has resulted in an aggregate demand of Rs 19,02,72,53,760 including sale

value of shortfall quantity and appropriation of performance security," it said.

As per the notice, the revision in assessment is based on declaration of average sale price notified by the Indian Bureau of Mines.

The management believes that the "state's demands lack justification and substantive basis and the Company will pursue suitable legal remedies before the appropriate judicial or quasi-judicial forum(s)," it said.

'Reserve right to suspend' India over US auto tariff

The safeguard measures would affect \$2,895 million imports annually into the United States of the relevant products originating in India, on which the duty collection would be \$723.75 million

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: India Friday proposed imposing retaliatory duties under the WTO (World Trade Organisation) norms against US over American tariffs on automobile sector in the name of safeguard measures.

bile parts, and for an unlimited duration. The measures have not been notified by US to the WTO, but are, in essence, safeguard measures.

"The proposed suspension of concessions or other obligations would take the form of an increase in tariffs on selected products originating in the United States," according to a notification of the WTO being circulated at the request of India.

India has maintained that the measures taken by the United States are not consistent with the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariff) 1994 and the agreement on Safeguards.

India has notified the WTO's Council for Trade in Goods of its proposed suspension of concessions and other obligations under certain WTO provisions. "This notification is made in connection with safeguard measures extended by the United States of America on imports of automobile parts from India," it said.

As consultations sought by India on these tariffs have not taken place, "India reserves the right to suspend concessions or other obligations", the WTO notification added.

March 26, US adopted a safeguard measure in the form of a tariff increase of 25 per cent ad valorem on imports of passenger vehicles and light trucks, and on certain automobile parts from India.

The safeguard measures would affect \$2,895 million imports annually into the United States of the relevant products originating in India, on which the duty collection would be \$723.75 million.

These measures apply from May 3, 2025 as regards automo-

To ensure the effective exercise of its right to suspend substantially equivalent concessions or other obligations, the multinational body said, India has reserved its right to adjust the products as well as the tariff rates.

"India reserves the right to withdraw, modify, supplement or replace this notification, and/or make a further notification or modifications as and when required," it added.

The development is important as India and US are actively negotiating an interim trade agreement to boost trade ties. India has last month taken similar measures against US tariffs on steel and aluminium.



SHORT TAKES

KPI Green Energy bags solar project

New Delhi: KPI Green Energy Ltd Friday said it has secured an order to set up a 100 MW solar project from a private entity. The project will be set up in Gujarat, the company said in a regulatory filing. The company did not disclose the project cost. The scope of work includes end-to-end EPC (Engineering, Procurement & Construction) delivery and supply of advanced module mounting systems and balance-of-plant materials. The company will also take up civil, structural, electrical and instrumentation works and comprehensive operations and maintenance throughout the project lifecycle.

PC Jeweller clocks 80% revenue growth

New Delhi: PC Jeweller Ltd has reported around 80 per cent growth in revenue during the April-June quarter of this financial year on strong demand despite volatility in gold prices and said it will become debt free this fiscal. Delhi-based PC Jeweller has a total of 52 showrooms, of which 49 are company-owned. In a regulatory filing Thursday, PC Jeweller informed that the company closed the April-June quarter on a very strong note clocking a robust performance.

TPREL's rooftop solar installations jump 5X

New Delhi: Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd (TPREL) on Friday said its rooftop solar installations in June quarter jumped fivefold year-on-year to a record 45,589 with installed capacity at 220 MW. The number of rooftop solar installations in April-June FY25 stood at 8,838. The Q1 FY26 installations propelled TPREL to a nationwide total of 2,04,443 rooftop solar installations, with cumulative capacity surpassing 3.4 GW. Beyond its leadership in rooftop solar, TPREL is strategically expanding its footprint in solar manufacturing, reinforcing the entire solar value chain.

DMart Q1 revenue up

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarkets Ltd, which owns and operates retail chain DMart, has reported 16.2 per cent increase in standalone revenue from operations at Rs 15,932.12 crore for June quarter FY26. The company logged revenue of Rs 13,711.87 crore in April-June period a year ago, Avenue Supermarkets said in a BSE filing. The total number of stores as of June 2025 stood at 424. In April-June FY24, revenue from operations was at ₹11,584.44 crore.

CCI's cement cartel crackdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Fair trade regulator CCI has directed Aditya Birla firm UltraTech, which now owns south-based cement firm India Cements, along with two other makers and their executives to submit financial documents, after its Director General in its investigations found contravention of competition norms.

tion of India (CCI) has also directed Dalmia Bharat Cements and Shree Digvijay Cements to submit their audited financial statement, including balance sheet and profit and loss account, within eight weeks of the order.

It has directed UltraTech to submit the financial statements of its subsidiary India Cements for five years from FY15 to FY19, while Dalmia Bharat Cements and Shree Digvijay Cements for nine years, from FY11 to FY19.

Besides, CCI has also directed their executives to submit detailed financials and income tax records for five years, along with formal responses to the investigation report.

Govt employees under UPS to get tax benefit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: In a bid to promote Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), the government has made necessary changes to provide tax benefits to employees opting for UPS at par with those under National Pension System (NPS).

under NPS would apply mutatis mutandis to UPS as it is an option under NPS," it said.

The inclusion of UPS under the tax framework marks another step forward in the government's effort to strengthen retirement security for central government employees through transparent, flexible and tax-efficient options, the finance ministry said in a statement.

These provisions ensure parity with the existing NPS structure and provide substantial tax relief and incentives to employees opting for the UPS.

The finance ministry through a notification dated January 24, 2025 had notified introduction of the UPS as an option under NPS for the recruits to the central government civil service with effect from April 1, 2025, giving one-time option to the employees covered under NPS for inclusion under the UPS.

To operationalise this framework, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Author-

ity (PFRDA) notified the PFRDA (Operationalisation of the Unified Pension Scheme under NPS) Regulations, 2025 on 19th March 2025, it said.

UPS is applicable to the central government employees who are covered under the NPS and who choose this option under the NPS, which came into effect on January 1, 2004.

The option can be exercised by 23 lakh government employees. August 24, 2024, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the UPS. Under the old pension scheme (OPS) which has been discontinued since January 2004, employees used to get 50 per cent of their last drawn basic pay as pension.

INDIA'S FINTECH SECTOR RAISES \$889 MN IN H1 2025

Bengaluru's dominance and the continued emergence of breakout companies reinforce India's position as a global fintech powerhouse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 4: Indian fintech sector raised \$889 million in the first six months of 2025, a drop of 26 per cent from \$1.2 billion of H2 2024 and a five per cent slide from \$936 million seen a year ago, according to a report by market intelligence platform Tracxn.

scalable, innovation-led models," Neha Singh, Co-Founder of Tracxn, said.

Bengaluru's dominance and the continued emergence of breakout companies reinforce India's position as a global fintech powerhouse, Singh added.

As per the report, India ranked third globally, trailing only the United States and the United Kingdom.

Funding trends across stages in H1 2025 revealed a nuanced landscape for India's fintech sector as early-stage funding fared better than seed-stage and late-stage infusions. Seed-stage startups raised \$91.2 million, a fall of 27 per cent from H2 2024 (\$126 million) and 33 per cent from H1 2024 (\$137 million).



In striking contrast, early-stage funding saw resurgence with \$361 million raised. This marked a 10 per cent in-

crease over \$329 million in H2 2024 and a 9 per cent rise from \$333 million in H1 2024, underlining renewed confidence in startups with initial traction.

half (H1) of 2025 witnessed 16 acquisitions, higher than 11 acquisitions in H1 2024, but a tad lower than 17 acquisitions in H2 2024.

The highest-valued deal was Fisdom, acquired by Groww for \$150 million, followed by Stocko, acquired by InCred Money for \$35 million.

"While IPO activity remained muted with no fintech companies going public, one new unicorn emerged in the Indian FinTech space during the period, consistent with H2 2024, but an improvement over H1 2024, which saw none," Tracxn said.

Bengaluru, which cornered 55 per cent of total funding, continued to lead India's FinTech funding landscape, followed by Mumbai at 14 per cent.

Overall, the top investors in H1 2025 were Peak XV, Angel List and LetsVenture. In the early stage, which saw a surge in funding, the leading investors were Peak XV, Accel and Bessemer Venture Partners.

Blume Ventures, Venture Catalysts and 1000 Unicorns led investments at the seed stage, while SoftBank Vision Fund, Lathe Investment and Sofina were the top investors in the late-stage round.

"Among venture capital firms, US-based Accel led the highest number of investments with 34 rounds, while India-based Blume Ventures added 7 new companies to its portfolio during the period," the Tracxn report said.

GRAND CHESS TOUR Gukesh dominates

WORLD CHAMPION BEATS WESLEY SO TO CONTINUE HIS DOMINATION IN RAPID



ised on a tactical error to net a couple of pawns in the middle game and two full points without much ado in just 36 moves.

World number one Magnus Carlsen showed initial promise on the final day of rapid, starting off with full points against Fabiano Caruana of the United States but then a draw with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan ended his hopes of coming much closer.

The other Indian in the fray, R Praggnanandhaa defeated Saric in round seven and drew with Wesley and his game against Duda was about to end in a draw too though the Indian enjoyed a miniscule advantage.

I'm not enjoying playing chess: Carlsen after loss

Zagreb: World number one Magnus Carlsen says he is struggling to enjoy chess after suffering a second consecutive defeat to reigning world champion D Gukesh, who the Norwegian has described as a "weak" player multiple times. The 19-year-old Indian Grandmaster once again outplayed the former world champion maverick, this time in the rapid format at the SuperUnited Rapid & Blitz tournament on Thursday. The win comes less than a month after Gukesh stunned Carlsen in the classical format at the Norway Chess tournament, a match that ended with latter visibly frustrated, famously banging the table. "Honestly, I am not enjoying playing chess at all right now. I just, I don't feel any flow at all when I'm playing. I'm constantly hesitating and it's just really poor right now," Carlsen told "Take Take Take" after the loss. "He's doing incredibly well now (in the format). It's a long way to go in the tournament but winning five games in a row is no mean feat," said Carlsen.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Zagreb (Croatia), July 4: World champion D Gukesh ended his campaign with a finely-crafted victory over Wesley So of the United States in the ninth and final round of the rapid section of Super United Rapid and Blitz Tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour.

After five victories in a row on the second day, Gukesh played out a couple of draws on day 3 and eventually defeated Wesley to end on 14 points out of a possible 18.

Overall in rapid, he had two draws, a loss against Duda Jan-Krysztof of Poland and six wins. With the rapid section ensuring two points for each win, the Indian ace now enjoys a

healthy lead over Duda who drew the first two games and was poised to draw the third one too in the day.

For Gukesh, the day started with a peaceful result against Dutchman Anish Giri when the players reached a nearly-locked position despite several pieces on the board. The players shook hands as neither side was able to make much progress.

The second round was really interesting for Gukesh as he employed the Marshall gambit against Ivan Saric of Croatia and the marathon match lasted 87 moves before peace was signed.

Wesley So was already under pressure to catch up but his challenge did not last long as Gukesh capital-

Keys surprised by Siegemund: Another seed leaves Wimbledon

At 37 years old, Siegemund knocks out No 6 Keys to extend Wimbledon run

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 4: This most unpredictable of Wimbledons delivered yet another surprise Friday when reigning Australian Open champion Madison Keys, the No 6 seed, was a lopsided loser in the third round, eliminated 6-3, 6-3 by 104th-ranked Laura Siegemund of Germany.

Keys' exit left just one of the top six women in the bracket before the end of Week 1: No 1 Aryna Sabalenka, who was scheduled to face 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu later in the day.

No 2 Coco Gauff, No 3 Jessica Pegula, No 4 Jasmine Paolini and No 5 Zheng Qinwen already were out. The men's field also has seen its share of surprises, including a



Wimbledon-record 13 seeds gone in the first round.

"At times, it wasn't the best quality, let's say. But I managed, and in the end, it's just important to find solutions and I did that well. Kept my nerves in the end," Siegemund said, then added with a laugh: "There are always nerves. If you don't have nerves in this moment, you're probably dead."

Wimbledon might be the only Grand Slam event where Keys hasn't reached at least the semifinals, but

she has participated in the quarterfinals there twice and is enjoying a break-through 2025, including her title at Melbourne Park in January.

Keys' power vs Siegemund's spins and slices offered quite a contrast in styles, and this outcome was surprisingly one-way traffic on a windy afternoon at No 2 Court. The key statistic, undoubtedly, was this: Keys made 31 unforced errors, 20 more than Siegemund.

Siraj's fiery spell saves India

Siraj grabs 6 wickets, Akash Deep 4; India take their overall lead to 244 against England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, July 4: Mohammed Siraj's stellar six wicket-haul kept India ahead in the second Test against England after counter-attacking hundreds from Jamie Smith and Harry Brook threatened to take the game away from the visitors on an extraordinary third day here Friday.

Siraj struck twice in the second over of the day to leave England on the mat at 84 for five before Brook (158 off 234) and Smith (184 not out of 207) combined to script the hosts' remarkable recovery with a 303-run stand off 368 balls.

England eventually ended with 407 all out in response to India's mammoth 578 all out.

At stumps, India were 64 for one in 13 overs with the



loss of Yashasvi Jaiswal (28 off 22), leading England by 244 runs.

KL Rahul (28 batting off 38) looked in sublime touch

and was joined by Karun Nair (7 batting off 18) in the middle after the left-handed opener was trapped in front by Josh Tongue amid grey

skies with floodlights on.

England hammered as many as 172 runs in the morning session despite having lost half their side, before adding another 106 runs in a wicketless afternoon session.

With the wicket not helping either the pacers or spinners, India were desperately hoping the second new ball would do the trick for them. And it did with Siraj (6/70) and Akash Deep (4/88) taking England's last five wickets for 20 runs, giving India a healthy 180-run first innings lead.

Both the pacers got the new ball to seam around and the tail was polished off quickly after Akash Deep had Brook's off-stump uproot with a nip backer.

Brief Scores	
India 1st innings: 587 all out & 64 for 1 in 13 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 28, KL Rahul 28 batting).	England 1st innings: 407 all out in 89.3 overs (Jamie Smith 184 not out, Harry Brook 158; M Siraj 6/70, Akash Deep 4/88).

Tara clinches silver

Astana: Indian lifter Pungni Tara delivered a commendable performance to clinch the silver medal in the youth girls 44kg contest at the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships here Friday. Tara lifted a total of 141kg (60kg+81kg) on the opening day of the tournament. Her 81kg clean and jerk effort fetched her the gold medal in the section. Medals are awarded separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift in continental, World Cups and World Championships.

Must-win clash

Chiang Mai (Thailand): India will have to play out of their skin when they take on higher-ranked Thailand for a place in next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia here Saturday. India have never defeated Thailand and have never reached the AFC Women's Asian Cup through the qualifiers route. The Blue Tigresses last featured in the continent's premier tournament in 2003 when there were no qualifiers. India will look to grab the opportunity to stay on course for the bigger dream of a first-ever qualification to the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2027.

Spain rout Portugal

Bern (Switzerland): Esther González scored twice and world champion Spain delivered a strong statement by routing Portugal 5-0 in their Women's European Championship opener.

Neeraj hopes to spark javelin revolution

Neeraj Chopra Classic competition starting today is India's first-ever international javelin tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 4: Sachin Yadav looked understandably awed sitting next to three Olympic medal winning javelin throwers in Neeraj Chopra, Thomas Rohler and Julius Yego but his mere presence on that glittering dais holds a deeper significance to it. It was a febrile representation of Chopra's dream of turning javelin into a household sport across the nation.

In that context, the Neeraj Chopra Classic here



Saturday could be India's equivalent to Mondo Classic, a gala pole vault event hosted by world record holder and Olympic champion Armando Dulpontalis in his hometown Uppsala, Sweden.

Duplantis is also driven by his unquenchable drive to break his own world records, and he has done it 15 times so far, but Chopra has

wider ambitions. Chopra underlined that thought of inspiring the next line of Indian javelin throwers.

"First of all, I want to thank you, Julius, Thomas and everyone else from the heart of India. All are good friends of mine and thank you so much for coming. Finally, we are sitting here with such great throwers.

I am very happy that such an event is happening in India," Chopra momentarily appeared emotional.

The double Olympic medallist also ensured that the host country will get a fair representation. Hence, apart from himself and Sachin, an Asian Championship silver winner, India will field Rohit Yadav, Sahil Silwal and Yashvir Singh.

I feel like I'm in a dream. Medals are a different thing. But I've given something like this to India and to Indian athletes. I'm very happy about that. This is the beginning of a new chapter in our athletics

NEERAJ CHOPRA

But Chopra is not alone in his venture, as he has accomplished champions like Rohler and Yego at his side.

All these young Indian javelin throwers have an inner connection to Rohler, the 2016 Olympic gold medalist from Germany, as they pick up a lot of tips from his popular YouTube channel.

Even if the turnout does not match his expectations, Chopra would know that all revolutions in world history had begun with a soft spark.

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

METTLE MEET 2025

OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW

QUIZ Extravaganza

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

As a reader of OrissaPOST, this is a chance for you to be part of the exciting Grand Finale if you can give correct answers in the daily quiz. Starting July 01, 2025 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 a nationally acclaimed quizmaster. So buckle up and get set for some brainstorming.

TODAY'S QUESTION

Inaugurated on this day in 1912 as the tallest building in Europe until buildings from Moscow began one-upping each other, which pyramid-shaped building was formerly called London Bridge Tower?

ANSWER TO FRIDAY'S QUESTION

Philadelphia

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

RUDRA SABITRU BHANJA

DIBYANSHU PANI

Others who answered correctly are

Megha Satapathy, Bhubanananda Behera, R Sekhar Rao, Priyanshu Nayak, Anjubala Mohanty, Pratyush Dhal, Jyotiprakash Jagadev, Janvi Naik, Amandip Lakra, Debashree Manasi Mishra