



AIMING HIGH: A tourist takes photos in an open-air studio with a view of the Bosphorus in Istanbul, Turkey, Saturday

PM unlikely to reply

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is unlikely to respond in the Parliament to questions related to Pahalgam attacks, Opposition Sindoors, US President Donald Trump's ceasefire claims, or the Election Commission's controversial SIR in Bihar. On the Opposition demand for the PM to make statement on these matters, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju - during an all-party meeting on eve of the Monsoon Session Sunday - said usually Cabinet ministers respond to issues concerning their departments whenever the Parliament functions. If Rijiju's statement is any indication, the likely stormy session will see statement on Operation Sindoors by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

MOONSOON SESSION BEGINS TODAY

Regional parties Sunday raised various state-specific issues at an all-party meeting here on eve of the Monsoon session, with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) demanding that a discussion be held in Parliament on the 'deteriorating' law and order situation in several states including Odisha. Speaking to media after the meeting, BJD's Rajya Sabha MP and spokesperson Sasmit Patra alleged 'utter lawlessness, anarchy and rise in crime against women' in Odisha under the BJP rule.

BJD seeks discussion on 'deteriorating' law and order

On the Opposition's demand for PM Modi to make a statement on the Pahalgam attack and other issues, Rijiju said, "I want to make it clear that the prime minister remains in Parliament except during foreign travel. The prime minister always remains in Parliament, but the prime minister does not remain in the House all the time. "Whenever Parliament functions, Cabinet ministers are present to respond to issues concerning their departments." Rijiju said the government is bringing 17 key bills, details of which would be provided soon. After the meeting, Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi told reporters that his party sought Prime Minister Modi's statement on Trump's claims, 'lapses' which led to the Pahalgam attack and Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of poll rolls in Bihar. He said it was incumbent and moral responsibility of PM Modi to give a statement in Parliament on key issues raised by his party. "We hope that the PM will fulfil his moral duty," he said.

Vigilance unearths DFO's 115 plots

Bhubaneswar, July 20: Vigilance sleuths Sunday unearthed immovable assets -115 plots and a four-storeyed building - from the possession of divisional forest officer (DFO), Kendu Leaf Division, Keonjhar, Nityananda Nayak and his family members. Simultaneous raids were launched in the morning at the office and properties of Nayak at seven places in Angul, Keonjhar and Nayagarh districts by three DySPs, 10 inspectors, and other supporting staff on the strength of search warrants, a statement by Odisha Vigilance said. During searches, the Vigilance sleuths found 115 plots in the possession of the DFO, an OFS officer, and his family members, the statement said. "Out of the 115 plots, 53 are registered in the name of Nayak, 42 recorded in the name of his spouse, 16 others in the name of his two sons and four in the name of his daughter," the anti-corruption department said, adding that this is the highest number of plots in the possession of a government employee detected by the Vigilance till now. Similarly, one four-storeyed building in Angul district was also detected by the department. Besides, Rs 1.19 lakh cash, three four-wheelers and four two-wheelers were also found in the possession of the DFO. Nayak had purchased all the plots in Chhendipada, Angul from 1992, the year when he joined the government service, to 2024.

5 killed, 7 hurt in separate accidents

Bhubaneswar, July 20: At least five people were killed and seven others seriously injured in two separate road accidents in Koraput and Nayagarh districts, police said. Four people were killed and another seriously injured after two cars collided head-on near Sunabeda on NH 26 in Koraput district at around 11.30 pm Saturday. One car was travelling from Koraput to Damanjodi and the other from Semiliguda to Sunabeda. The drivers of the two cars and two other persons travelling in one of the cars died in the accident, while another injured person is under treatment at the SLN Medical College and Hospital at Koraput. A pick-up van collided with an autorickshaw carrying kanwariyas Sunday morning near Darapada in Nayagarh district. A female kanwariya died, and six others were injured in the accident. The kanwariyas were travelling from Kantilo to Ladubaba temple, the police said. "Seven persons injured in the autorickshaw accident have been admitted to our hospital. Of which one died while six seriously injured persons have been referred to Bhubaneswar," said a doctor of Nayagarh district headquarters hospital.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It is an Uber, sir. We will be taking the Kanwariya route

Balanga victim critical

New Delhi, July 20: A 15-year-old girl, who had been undergoing treatment at the AIIMS Bhubaneswar after three youths set her ablaze at Balanga in Puri district Saturday, was admitted to AIIMS Delhi Sunday, officials said. The girl, who has suffered 75 per cent burns, was airlifted from Bhubaneswar and reached AIIMS Delhi at 4.20pm, the hospital said in a statement. "She is currently admitted to the ICU in the Burns and Plastic Surgery block. Her condition is critical, and she is on oxygen support. A team of doctors is closely monitoring her condition," the AIIMS Delhi said in the statement.



Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said he is deeply saddened by the incident. "The victim has been airlifted to AIIMS Delhi for the best treatment. The state government will ensure all necessary facilities for this. I pray before Lord Jagannath for the girl's speedy recovery," Majhi wrote on X. Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena told reporters that a green corridor was set up to take the patient from AIIMS Bhubaneswar to Biju Patnaik International Airport, and one platoon of police was deployed for this. A green corridor refers to a special route cleared out to carry organs for transplantation or severely ill patients to their destinations in the shortest possible time. Bhubaneswar Traffic DCP Tapan Kumar Mohanty said the patient was taken in an advanced life support ambulance with a dedicated medical team. The ambulance reached the airport from AIIMS Bhubaneswar in 10 to 12 minutes. At the airport, she was boarded into an air ambulance set for the national capital. "The patient's condition is stable, and her blood pressure, which was low yesterday, has improved. It is safe to transfer her," AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas told reporters before her departure. Meanwhile, BJD leaders and supporters staged a protest in front of the Balanga police station, demanding immediate arrest of the accused. Holding party flags, posters and banners, BJD workers marched to the police station and scuffled with police personnel while trying to gherao the building. "More than 24 hours have passed since the barbaric incident but the culprits have not yet been arrested," BJD leader and former minister Tukuni Sahu said.

I might be dead next year: Cliff Richard

Sir Cliff Richard has revealed he might have to take a step back from touring as he admits that "I might be dead next year". The 84-year-old pop icon, who has enjoyed a career spanning seven decades and sold over 250 million records, admitted that it is now "very wearing". "The thing I would have to give up probably at some time is touring," he told Coast Radio, according to The Mirror. "It's very wearing, and you never know when you wake up in the morning whether your voice is still there." When asked if his upcoming 'Can't Stop Me Now' tour in New Zealand, Australia and the UK could be a farewell tour, Cliff said he did not know. "I might be dead next year. So I



don't even think about it anymore. It's one of those things. As I get older, maybe I'll become less able to perform, so I can't say," he said. Looking back on his performances and famous dance moves, Cliff said "I used to move around a heck of a lot", noting how he had around eight dancers he would dance with. While he continues to dance now,

Cliff admitted he "does not want to be an 85-year-old guy trying to be 18". The Ocean Deep singer said he would keep an open mind about his performances and consider paring them down for comfort. "I'm going to see when I get to rehearsals, to just say: 'Let's talk about maybe doing two songs where you come and join me out front. And while we're singing something like "Do You Want To Dance" we do a few steps like that?'," he said. Cliff Richard, born Harry Rodger Webb in 1940, adopted his stage name when he helped found The Shadows. The band shot to fame in 1958 with their No 2 single 'Move It' and their fifth record 'Living Doll' reached No 1 in the British charts in 1960. AGENCIES

OrissaPOST PRESENTS

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METTLE MEET 2025

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THE BATTLE OF BRAINS IS BACK

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EILISH TO COLLABORATE WITH CAMERON ON 3D PROJECT

Popular singer Billie Eilish says she is set to collaborate with the Oscar-winning director James Cameron on an upcoming 3D project. The *Bad Guy* singer performed in Manchester Saturday, where she shared the news during her performance. She is currently on her *Hit Me Hard and Soft* tour.

MILEY CYRUS SAYS SHE HAS 'NO DESIRE' TO GO ON TOUR

Miley Cyrus recently revealed she has no immediate plans to tour, prioritising her mental health and sobriety. Citing the intense lifestyle and lack of infrastructure to support artists on the road, she emphasised the importance of maintaining her mental wellness.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are very apprehensive about your possessions today, and will not like to share them. This mood may be because of someone particular. Affairs regarding love, Ganesha says, are progressing fine, and your married life will bloom.

TAURUS
This day has been earmarked for beautification, a makeover, says Ganesha. You are likely to remain preoccupied with ways to enhance your looks and appearance. A new, stylish hair do, face packs and massages, trendy outfits and accessories could be in store. You will, subconsciously, be doing all that you can do, to get noticed by others. Be sure you will get all the attention and interest your efforts merit.

GEMINI
You will feel lonely and unwanted today. You will feel the need for someone who can calm your troubled mind. Meditation and yoga will help you calm yourself. It is a good day to receive love from that someone special, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will succeed in a new venture and will brim with radiance and energy. Ganesha says this is the best time for get-together and kindle contact with friends and relatives.

LEO
A challenging day awaits you. You will face some tensions and problems, however this doesn't mean you will not be able to complete all your work successfully. Your personal life will proceed as usual, however expectations from you at the work-front will increase. You need to maintain a balance between your home and work-place, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will excel remarkably in whatever work you prefer to engage yourself in today. Ganesha says your aspiration to start a business endeavour in a foreign country will bear fruit. To considerably enhance your self-image, it is necessary to make required improvements in your personal appearance.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today will be an auspicious day for starting any new work. In the office you will be assigned new positions and you shall excel in the same. Whatever work is undertaken by you will see you attain success in it. Today is a lucky day for you Ganesha says.

SCORPIO
Today, there may come up situations which may test your patience, predicts Ganesha. However, it would be wise to sit and sort out all the differences with your colleagues or family members or your partner.

SAGITTARIUS
You are in a dilemma today. You may find yourself standing at crossroads, and your decision power does not seem to help you much, says Ganesha. You are likely to become controversy's favourite child; this may add fuel to the fire. Be wise, and take guidance of experienced people.

CAPRICORN
Not everyday is the same day. And, today is one of those days when you feel extremely confused, feels Ganesha. While you won't be able to get rid off negative emotions, your hard work will be paid off and lay a strong foundation for future. You'll not understand whether to feel good about your achievements or experience sadness of confusion. Ganesha throws light on your path and advises you to keep a calm head over your shoulders.

AQUARIUS
Are you facing a roadblock in your path? Make a minor change in your route, you will find a smooth and clear road once again, advises Ganesha. The efforts you have made in the past will come to fruition, today. Don't get satisfied with your current achievements, you still have a long way to keep working hard.

PISCES
Do not commit yourself to any large investments today. It is best to avoid speculative activities. For those who have a job, the co-operation of your colleagues will help you progress, says Ganesha.

Mandira advocates teen adoption



MUMBAI: Actor and cricket show host Mandira Bedi recently advocated for the adoption of older orphaned children, urging people to look beyond the common preference for infants. Speaking at a panel discussion titled Normalising and Encouraging Adoption in India, Bedi emphasised that parenthood is defined not by blood, but by love, intention, and lifelong commitment.

A mother to both a biological son and an adopted daughter, Bedi shared that adoption was never a fallback plan for her. "Even while dating my husband, I told him it was my dream to have one biological child and adopt another. It wasn't a passing thought—it was a part of me since my early twenties," she said.

While most adoptive families seek babies, Bedi highlighted the overlooked plight of older children in the system. "So many are missed. Everybody wants to hold a baby from the beginning. But slightly older children remain unseen and forgotten," she added, recalling how her daughter Tara was four when she joined their family.

She also shared the moving story of a girl who was adopted and returned multiple times due to unforeseen reasons. "It's heartbreaking. But I'm living proof—it works," Bedi said, advocating simpler adoption processes and broader compassion.



Big B loses cool at paparazzo

MUMBAI: Superstar Amitabh Bachchan, known for his warm Sunday greetings to fans outside his Jalsa residence in Mumbai, recently lost his cool at a paparazzo filming him without consent. In a video that has gone viral on social media, the veteran actor is seen stepping out of his bungalow dressed in a white kurta-pyjama, an off-white shawl, and black spectacles, holding a mobile phone. Clearly upset, he confronted the cameraman, saying, "Hey, don't do it, stop it!" — firmly asking him to stop recording.

While Bachchan is typically known for his dignified rapport with the media, this sudden display of anger caught many by surprise. Social media users were quick to draw parallels with his wife Jaya Bachchan, who has often been critical of media intrusion. The incident also reignites the ongoing conversation about respecting celebrities' privacy, with many stars voicing similar concerns about unsolicited filming.

Meanwhile, the 81-year-old actor also mourned the loss of his *Don* (1978) director Chandra Barot, who passed away at 86. Calling him a dear friend and more than just a colleague, Bachchan penned an emotional tribute on his blog. Professionally, he is all set to return as the host of *Kaun Banega Crorepati* Season 17, premiering August 11 on Sony TV.

RASHMIKA HINTS AT BIG REVEAL

MUMBAI: Actress Rashmika Mandanna has been hinting for a long time now that she has something really big in store for her admirers.

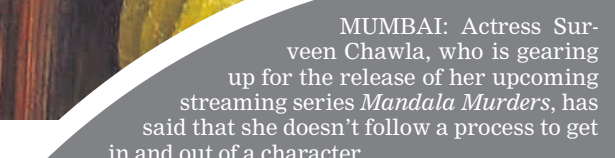
Adding to the excitement, the *Pushpa* actress revealed that she will be making the big announcement Monday.

Rashmika took to her Instagram handle and dropped a video where she was heard saying,

"Okay, I can't believe I am finally recording this. Like you know by now, I have been working on something very very very close to my heart—it's not just a project, it's something I've poured my love into for you— for every message, for every cheer, every bit of love you have sent my way for the years. This is me sharing a little piece of that with you."

"I hope you feel it, I hope you love it — can't wait to share it with you. It's launching tomorrow, and I am very very very excited about this and very nervous, and very grateful," she added.

Her latest IG post was captioned, "Been keeping something special to myself for a while... and trust me, it's not easy when all I want to do is share it with you... Just a little longer..." IANS



MUMBAI: Actress Surveen Chawla, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming streaming series *Mandala Murders*, has said that she doesn't follow a process to get in and out of a character.

The actress recently spoke with this news agency and said that while she doesn't have a process to approach a character, she makes sure to be 100% present mentally in the scene, and do justice to the truth of the moment. However, once the director calls for 'Cut', the actress moves away from it.

The actress told, "I don't have a process. And I don't take myself too seriously. I stopped taking myself too seriously, as Surveen, the person or as Surveen the actor, both. This happened over the course of time. Where I didn't understand the hoo-ha. Or the bubble that I had created in my mind about who I was. I feel it's so important to not have that world around you where you're so engrossed in that bubble. That you can't have a bird's eye view of who you really are. I honestly don't have a process of getting in. Or getting out of one".

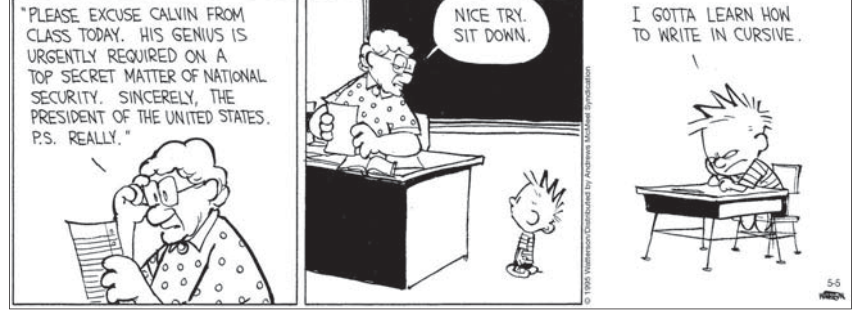
No acting rules for Surveen



PEANUTS



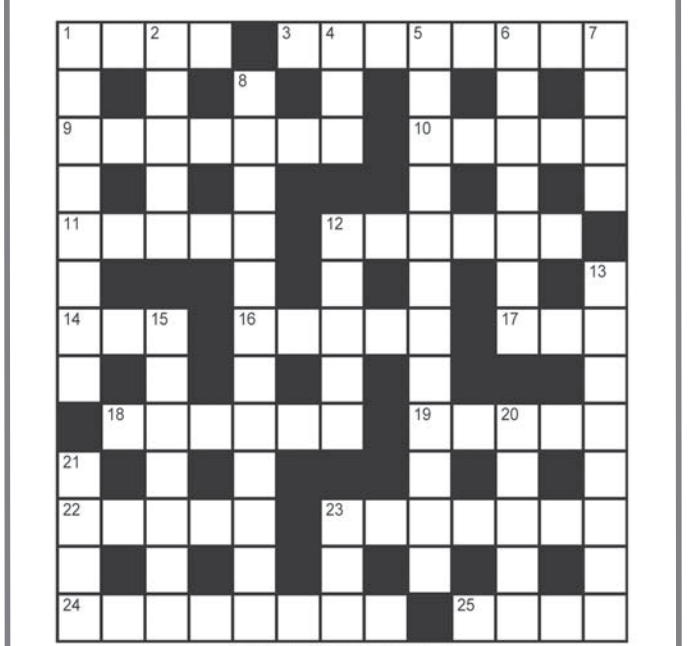
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



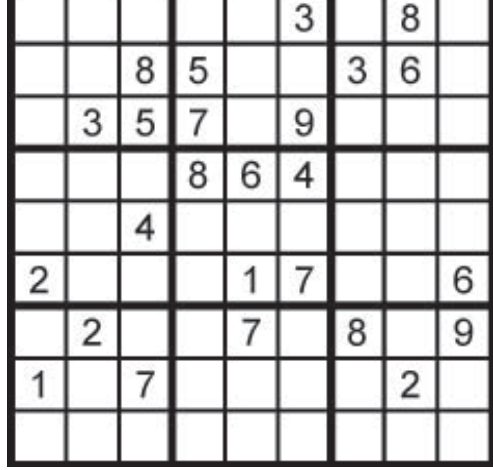
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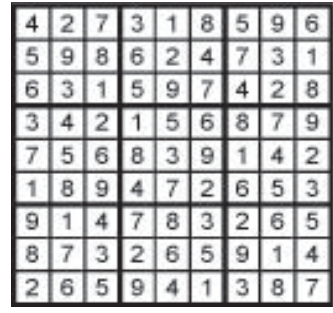
- Across**
- 1 Lacking slack
 - 3 Drive away
 - 9 Lobster part
 - 10 Run-of-the-mill
 - 11 Somewhat (Prefix)
 - 12 Magician's word
 - 14 Rascal
 - 16 Snapshot
 - 17 Chinese tea
 - 18 Kind of code
 - 19 Alpha's opposite
 - 22 Leftover
 - 23 Colombian coin
 - 24 Egg dish
 - 25 Wild hog
 - 6 Like some plants and birds
 - 7 Congers
 - 8 Many facts are this
 - 12 Move like a cat
 - 13 Lover
 - 15 Supermarket section
 - 20 Poetic Muse
 - 21 Audio effect
 - 23 Simple sack
- Down**
- 1 Serene
 - 2 Extreme
 - 4 Rustic locale
 - 5 Perfume (3,2,7)

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

Dignitaries inaugurate English translation of Shantanu Kumar Acharya's book 'Nara-Kinnara' at Gita Gobinda Sadan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



downtown

STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF POSH ACT

IEC boards mandatory at workplaces, institutions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: In a significant move towards strengthening the implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013—commonly known as the POSH Act—the Women and Child Development department has directed all departments and institutions to prominently display information, education, and communication (IEC) boards outlining the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' under the Act.

POSH
STAND UP, SPEAK OUT



The IEC board contains clear instructions such as respecting personal boundaries, maintaining professionalism, and reporting harassment without fear

It cautions against inappropriate behaviour such as making sexually suggestive comments, sending offensive messages, or ignoring complaints

In a bid to streamline grievance redressal, the government has further instructed that all internal committees constituted under the Act must be registered on the national She Box portal

A directive issued by Additional Secretary to the government Jyotishankar Mohapatra noted that compliance with the POSH Act remains inadequate in many organisations/institutions across the state. To address this, the government has prepared an IEC board listing key behavioural guidelines aimed at preventing sexual harassment in workplaces, schools, and colleges.

The directive, addressed to all Additional Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, District Collectors, Municipal Commissioners, and RDCs, emphasises the need to create a safer and more respectful work environment for all genders. "It is imperative that sen-

sitivity and knowledge about this Act is generated not only amongst girls and women but also amongst boys and men," the circular stated, underlining the government's commitment to gender-sensitive workplaces.

As part of the awareness campaign, all workplaces and educational institutions are required to install IEC boards in multiple prominent locations. The board includes clear instructions such as respecting personal boundaries, maintaining professionalism, and reporting harassment without fear. It also cautions

against inappropriate behaviour such as making sexually suggestive comments, sending offensive messages, or ignoring complaints.

In a bid to streamline grievance redressal, the government has further instructed that all internal committees (ICs) constituted under the Act must be registered on the national She Box portal.

The move is expected to reinforce awareness, accountability, and a zero-tolerance culture toward sexual harassment across both government and private sector institutions in Odisha.



JOINING THE DOTS: Forensic team conducts a probe into the setting ablaze of a minor girl at Bayabara under Balanga police station in Puri, Sunday *OP PHOTO*

CM expresses anguish over Balanga incident

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 20: A day after a 15-year-old girl of Bayabara was allegedly set ablaze by miscreants in Balanga area of Puri district, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday expressed deep anguish over the horrific incident.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister said, "I am deeply pained by the unfortunate incident at Balanga in Puri district. To ensure the best possible treatment, the victim has been airlifted to AIIMS Delhi. The State Government will ensure all necessary support and arrangements for her treatment. On a personal note, I offer prayers to Lord

According to the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, the girl was allegedly accosted by unknown miscreants who poured petrol and kerosene on her in a brutal attempt to murder her

Jagannath for the girl's speedy recovery." Earlier in the day, the victim was shifted to AIIMS, New Delhi, through an air ambulance. The doctors' team and the victim's family members accompanied the girl to Delhi for advanced treatment.

Speaking to mediapersons, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Director Ashutosh Biswas stated that the girl is critical but her condition is stable. He also said that she is showing signs of improvement.

"So a decision was taken to airlift the victim to AIIMS, Delhi, for better treatment. The victim has suffered 75 per cent burn injuries," he added.

The minor girl was reportedly set ablaze by three unidentified assailants near a river embankment under the Balanga police station area.

According to the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, Mahmuda Bibi of Nuagopalpur village, the girl was allegedly ac-

costed by unknown miscreants who poured petrol and kerosene on her in a brutal attempt to murder her. Miraculously, she managed to escape and sought refuge at a nearby residence. Villagers responded swiftly, rushing the victim to the Pipili community health centre before she was referred to AIIMS Bhubaneswar due to the severity of her burn injuries.

The attack, which took place July 19, has triggered urgent police action, including the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT). Balanga IIC Dibya Ranjan Panda is heading the SIT, tasked with expediting the investigation and identifying those responsible.

Oppn slams govt over violence against girls

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress Sunday alleged that the back-to-back incidents of girls being set on fire indicate complete breakdown of law and order in the state and that the state government has failed to protect innocent girls.

This comes in the sidelines of a protest by BJD leaders and supporters before the Balanga police station in Puri district, demanding immediate arrest of the persons involved in setting ablaze a minor girl of Bayabara village in Puri district.

BJD leader and former minister Tukuni Sahu said, "More than 24 hours have passed since the barbaric incident but the culprits have not yet been arrested." One after another incident of violence against girls is happening in Odisha as the government has failed to protect them, she alleged.

"We have come to the police station to know about the whereabouts of the persons who tried to kill the girl by setting her ablaze. The police are still clueless about the accused persons," another BJD leader, Pradeep Kumar Majhi, said.

Similarly, senior Congress leader and former Union minister Srikanth Jena said, "The back-to-back incidents that happened in Balasore and then in Balanga area in Puri show that the law and order situation



DIYAS LIT FOR BALANGA VICTIM

Bhubaneswar: BJD organised a collective lighting of lamps ceremony in front of Lingaraj Temple here Sunday to pray for speedy recovery of the minor girl from Balanga who is battling for her life at AIIMS, New Delhi after being set on fire by unidentified miscreants. The protest event saw participation of numerous party leaders and workers from Bhubaneswar district, expressing solidarity with the victim and her family. Prominent among those present were former minister and Bhubaneswar District BJD president Ashok Panda, Bhubaneswar-Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Bhubaneswar-North MLA Susant Kumar Rout and Mayor Sulochana Das.



has completely collapsed in the state. Women and girls are nowhere safe in the state."

"The second incident happened in the home turf of Dep-

uty Chief Minister Pravatī Parida. But she is yet to visit the victim or her family," he alleged. Jena said the state government has no moral right to

continue further.

BJP leader Samir Ranjan Dash said the police are continuing their investigation into the incident.

"We all are hopeful that the accused persons will be arrested soon," he said.

The victim has been airlifted to AIIMS Delhi for better treatment. All should pray for her speedy recovery, he added.

As the victim was able to speak Saturday, the police have recorded her statement in the presence of a magistrate at the ICU, an official said, adding that her statement is vital for the investigation.

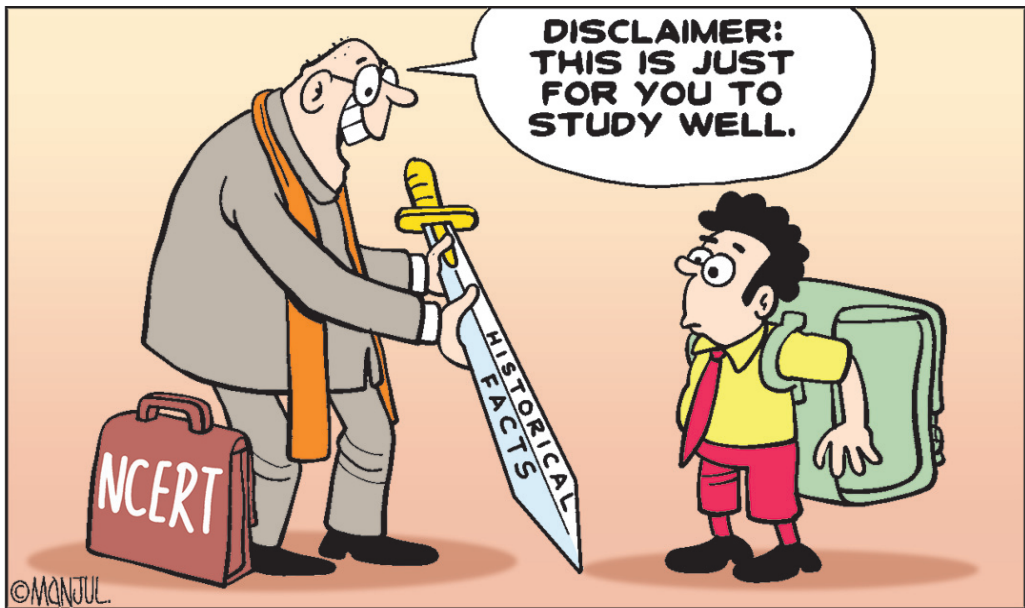
Preliminary police investigation revealed that three motorcycle-borne youths intercepted the teenager, forcibly took her to the banks of Bhargavi River near Bayabara village, poured an inflammable substance on her, and set her on fire Saturday. The miscreants fled the spot after the incident, police said.

Local people doused the fire and later took her to Pipli CHC, from where she was shifted to AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

The girl's mother has lodged an FIR with Balanga police station, officials said, adding the victim was a Class VIII dropout and her father works at a motor garage.

The police have picked up some persons and were interrogating them in connection with the case, a police officer said.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Automated gates at dams, barrages soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: In a bid to revolutionise flood management and enhance safety of both infrastructure and personnel at dams, barrages and intra-river reservoirs in the state, the Water Resources department has enunciated the 'Automated Gate Scheme'.

Under the scheme, gates of 14 dams (76 gates), 10 barrages (153 gates), and 27 intra-river reservoirs (344 gates) will be automated using advanced Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition

(SCADA) systems and 5G connectivity.

"Many of the state's water management structures are located in remote and difficult-to-access areas, making manual gate operations particularly hazardous during natural disasters like floods and cyclones," said an official. Improper or delayed gate operations have, in the past, resulted in downstream flooding or posed structural threats to the dams themselves.

To address these issues, the government has approved ₹80

crore for the scheme, emphasizing the use of real-time data, remote operations, and automated controls. SCADA-based system will allow operators to monitor water levels and control gates from centralised control rooms, that would help reduce response times during emergencies.

Key objectives of the scheme include remote gate operation from control rooms, enhanced safety for personnel by reducing on-site intervention, elimination of human error in gate management, and restricted access to dam and barrage infrastructure.

Girl on fire was screaming for help: Witness

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, July 20: The man who saved the life of the 15-year-old girl, kidnapped and set on fire by some men under Balanga police station in Puri district, recounted Sunday the 90 minutes that he spent after she knocked on his door with cries of "save me, save me".

Dukshishyam Senapati, a resident of Balanga, said he could not believe his eyes when he opened the door after hearing the knocks and the screams.

"The girl was on fire and screaming in pain," Senapati told Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurania, who visited the spot, trying to make sense of the sequence of events that unfolded in the nondescript village Saturday morning.

"It was around 8:30am when the girl came to my house, screaming. With the help of my wife, I doused the fire and gave her water as she was very thirsty. Later, the women of my family changed her clothes," he said.

Senapati said he had asked the girl what had happened, and he was told that three unknown men had set her on fire.

"She said she was walking back home after meeting a friend when she was picked up by three men who arrived on motorcycles. The faces of these men were half-covered, and they took her to a place near the Bhargavi riverbank. She could not tell their names. She could only say that they covered her face with a handkerchief and poured some substance before



setting her on fire," he said. "I did not insist much because she was trembling," he told the DGP.

Senapati said that the accused had tied her hands when they abducted her. "But, when she reached my place, her hands were free," he said.

He said that the victim told

him the name of her father and the village where she lives, following which he contacted them.

"I could not speak much to her as a large number of people assembled at our house," he said.

Senapati said he also ran out of his house to look for the men involved in the crime, but

could not find them.

"The girl told me that they escaped immediately after setting her on fire. The attackers might have thought that she would die on the spot, but the brave girl ran away and reached our house," he said.

He also told the DGP that the 108 ambulance arrived at his house late, forcing him to find an auto-rickshaw to take the girl to the hospital.

"The ambulance came at the same time when we were taking her to the auto-rickshaw. The girl stayed around 90 minutes in our place," he said.

Senapati said the incident has triggered panic in the village.

"Our children are hesitant to go outside alone. We demand immediate arrest of the culprits," he said.

Two arrested for murder in Kanas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kanas, July 20: Three days after the brutal murder of Keshab Dalei, 55, at Harashapada village under Gadisagoda police limits in Kanas block of Puri district, police Sunday arrested three persons for their involvement in the incident.

According to reports, Dalei was seriously injured when he was attacked by a group of people during an altercation that broke out around 10pm Thursday. Family members had rushed him to Kanas community health centre (CHC), where attending physician Ballav Bhad declared him dead after an examination. The incident was suspected to be the



fallout of past enmity over land disputes.

Gadisagoda police station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Sudhir Das said they have arrested Antaryami Biswal, 48, and his wife Gitanjali Biswal, 38, and sent them to the court. "They have been booked under Sections 103(2), 303(2) and 76 of Bharatiya Naya Sanhita (BNS)," said the IIC.



BUDDING TALENT: A young girl sketches a drawing during the 'Utkarsh Pratibha Puraskar Pratiyogita-2025' organised by 'Avikhya' at Kasturba Nari Mahal in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

Somanna inspects Puri station revamp

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, July 20: Minister of State for Railways V Somanna Sunday reviewed the ongoing redevelopment work at Puri railway station, which is being upgraded under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

He highlighted the Government of India's commitment to modernising railway infrastructure and noted that Odisha has received ₹10,599 crore in the 2025 railway budget—a 12.5-fold increase from 2009-14. Currently, 59 stations in the state are being redeveloped at a cost of ₹2,379 crore and railway projects worth over ₹80,000 crore are underway, the minister informed. "Over the past decade, railway infrastructure in the region has seen unprecedented growth, with significant advancements in new line construction, track doubling, and enhancement of passenger amenities – far surpassing the prog-



ress of previous years," he said. Somanna also spoke about the introduction of modern trains such as the Vande Bharat Express, which now connects major parts of Odisha, further boosting regional connectivity and development. He said the redeveloped Puri station will offer world-class amenities including improved access, modern waiting halls, lifts/escalators, executive lounges, sustainable features, and kiosks under 'One Station One Product'. The redevelopment aims to enhance the travel experience for pilgrims, tourists and local passengers, he added. Somanna was accompanied by East Coast Railway's AGM BS Rajkumar and senior officials, including DRM of Khurda Road Division HS Bajwa and Chief Administrative Officer/Construction AG Srinivas. During his visit to the seaside town, Somanna also offered prayers at the Srimandir along with his family.

Govt slammed over OTET leak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Sunday came down heavily on the state government following the cancellation of the Odisha Teacher Eligibility Test (OTET) amid allegations of a question paper leak.

Addressing a press conference at Sankha Bhawan here, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty said, "The frequent incidents of exam irregularities have exposed the failure of the BJP government in ensuring fair recruitment processes."

The OTET exam, which was scheduled to be held Sunday in two sittings, was abruptly postponed at the last moment by the Board of Secondary Education. Raising serious questions on the transparency of the process, Mohanty alleged that the question paper was not only leaked but also sold, causing immense distress to over 75,000 aspirants who were set to appear for the exam.

He pointed out that in past 12 months alone, as many as 12 recruitment examinations have either been postponed or cancelled due to paper leaks or distribution of wrong question sets. "While the BJP government boasts of good governance, it has utterly failed to conduct even a single exam without controversy," he said.

Mohanty further said, "The Odisha Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means)



The OTET exam, which was scheduled to be held Sunday in two sittings, was abruptly postponed at the last moment by the Board of Secondary Education

Act, 2024, mandates strict punishment including imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for those found guilty of exam malpractice. Yet, no one has been punished under this law so far." The BJD has demanded a high-level probe into the OTET question paper leak and strict action against those involved.

It also urged the state government to restore public trust by ensuring recruitment exams are conducted transparently and without irregularities.

BJD seeks Parliament debate on law & order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: Regional parties Sunday raised various state-specific issues at an all-party meeting here on eve of the Monsoon session, with the Biju Janata Dal demanding that a discussion be held in Parliament on the 'deteriorating' law and order situation in several states including Odisha.

Speaking to media after the meeting, BJD's Rajya Sabha MP and spokesperson Sasmit Patra alleged "utter lawlessness, anarchy and rise in crime against women" in Odisha under the BJP rule.

"A 15-year old girl was set on fire by some miscreants in Puri district Saturday. The recent incident of self-immolation by a BEd student in Balasore district has shaken the conscience of this nation," he said.

"About a month ago, a 20-year old college girl was gangraped at Gopalpur sea beach in Odisha. I could go on and on talking about heinous crimes perpetrated against women and girl children while the BJP government in the state stands helpless, completely confused and utterly failed," he added.

The BJD MP also cited a recent case of assault on Bhubaneswar Municipal Corpora-



BJD will raise several other issues, including the incident of Puri Rath Yatra stampede, during the Monsoon session of Parliament

tion Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo and said the incident clearly shows how the Odisha government under the BJP is functioning in the state in "utter lawlessness and anarchy".

Claiming that the law and order situation in other states are also deteriorating, Patra said, "We have specifically demanded that an extensive discussion be held on deteriorating law and order situation

in the states." "This government (the Centre) cannot escape from the issue just by saying that law and order is a state subject. When there is a double-engine government in Odisha, it is functioning in coordination with the Central government. Hence, this government (Centre) is also accountable," he said.

Patra said the BJD will raise several other issues, including the incident of Puri Rath Yatra stampede, during the Monsoon session of Parliament.

At the all-party meeting, the ruling NDA constituent Telugu Desam Party (TDP) proposed a discussion on the diplomatic visit of multi-party delegations to various countries following Operation Sindoor.

"We have proposed a few topics for discussion in Parliament. We have proposed a discussion on multi-party delegations' foreign visits and their feedback. We also want discussion on PM Dhan Dhanya yojna, Jal Jeevan Mission, interlinking of Godavari and Krishna rivers and huge success of PLI scheme," he told reporters.

"We have also requested for a discussion on online abuse of women as well as women reservation bill," he said.

BMC to resume ration card issuance process

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) announced the resumption of ration card issuance to eligible beneficiaries in the city. The decision was taken during a special meeting chaired by Mayor Sulochana Das, attended by Additional Commissioner Shubendu Kumar Sahu, Deputy Commissioners Priyanka Mallick and N Ganesh Babu, along with chairpersons of standing committees and corporators.

As per the latest update, out of 15,087 ration card applications, 3,255 families have been found eligible while 4,077 were rejected due to ineligibility. The status of the remaining 7,755 applications will be announced soon. Starting July 21, the BMC will conduct e-KYC for eligible beneficiaries at its three zone offices. Mayor Sulochana Das has urged corporators to assist eligible families in completing the e-KYC process to ensure they can access the ration card facility.

Currently, around 103,000 households in the BMC area hold ration cards.

ILS hosts 3rd Ajay Kumar Parida Memorial Lecture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: The Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) hosted the 3rd Ajay Kumar Parida Memorial Lecture here recently to commemorate the death anniversary of ILS's former director Ajay Kumar Parida and celebrate his profound legacy in scientific research and societal impact.

The memorial lecture was delivered by MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) former executive director GN Hariharan. In his keynote address, titled 'Linking Science with Society: Key to Sustainable Development', Hariharan offered powerful insights that resonated with Parida's enduring philosophy of serving society through science to serve,



uplift, and empower marginalised communities.

Parida, during his association with MSSRF, led initiatives aimed at taking scientific innovations directly to grassroots communities. After assuming leadership at ILS as director, he continued this mission by integrating advanced research with community-based programmes, with a particular focus on the most marginalised tribal populations of the state. Hariharan reflected on shared milestones with Parida, from mangrove restoration projects to initiatives in tribal health and agricultural resilience. His remarks underscored a shared belief that innovation must be inclusive to drive meaningful change.

INT'L MOON DAY 2025

Celebrating Moon: City RSC inspires young minds



The day marks the anniversary of the first human landing on the Moon in 1969

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: In a welcoming move aimed towards fostering scientific temper among students and the general public, the Regional Science Centre (RSC) observed International Moon Day 2025 with a series of interactive and educational programmes here Sunday. The date marked the anniversary of the first human landing on the Moon by the Apollo-11 mission in 1969.

The event began with an inaugural address by centre's project coordinator Kapil Jain, who highlighted the significance of the day in promoting awareness about lunar exploration, India's achievements in space science, and the need for

sustainable research on Moon. As part of the celebration, a 'Hands-on Workshop' on the phases of the moon was conducted, in which school students actively took part in building functional models, demonstrating the different phases of Moon. The initiative not only enhanced their understanding of lunar science but also encouraged creativity and scientific thinking. Participants were awarded with certificates, course materials and 'take-home' model kits.

In addition, various short films on the historic Apollo-11 mission were screened throughout the day, which drew significant interest from both students and visitors. The screenings offered a visual journey through humanity's first steps on the Moon, inspiring awe and curiosity about future space missions.

The celebration underscored RSC's commitment to science communication and public engagement.

WEATHER			FORECAST
Max Temp	BBSR 34.7°	CTC 33.6°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain or Thunderstorm
Min Temp	25.2°	24.4°	
Humidity	84%	87%	
Rainfall	7.1 mm	Nil	

Spl drive to clear ULB grievances from today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 20: In a significant move to enhance citizen-centric urban governance, the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department has launched a special drive to address all pending grievances across urban local bodies (ULBs) in the state.

The five-day drive, scheduled from July 21 to July 25, will focus on prompt redressal of complaints received from citizens through Jana Sunani, Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), ULB-level helpdesks and other communication channels. All municipal commissioners and executive officers of municipalities and NACs have been directed to mobilise necessary teams, streamline grievance-handling mechanisms, and ensure that all backlog grievances are addressed within this period.

The initiative reflects the

state government's unwavering commitment to responsive and accountable urban service delivery, and aims to restore public trust through timely resolution of issues related to sanitation, water supply, street lighting, drainage, waste management, building plan approvals, and other civic services.

The department has further instructed all ULBs to submit an action taken report (ATR) on the drive by July 29, 2025, highlighting the number of grievances resolved, system-level improvements made, and citizen feedback received. Speaking on the initiative, a senior official from the department stated, "The special drive is part of our continued efforts to deliver quality services and ensure last-mile governance in urban areas."

For updates, citizens are encouraged to visit their local ULB office or check official communication channel.

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

129 landslide-prone zones identified in Gajapati dist

NO DEDICATED SAFETY MEASURES YET IN PLACE



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, July 20: Nestled between the ancient Mahendragiri hills in the east and Devagiri hill range in the north, Gajapati district has 129 landslide-prone zones. Home to many tribal communities, the district has long been vulnerable to landslides as these hill ranges are very old and have become fragile. Heavy rainfall often leads to soil erosion and rockslides in the region due to the fragile nature of the hills. The district had a firsthand experience of the deadly impact of landslides following the devastation caused by cyclonic storm Titli in 2018. Torrential rainfall in hilly

terrain frequently endangers lives and properties. Areas in Rayagada, Gumma, R Udayagiri, Nuagada, and Mohana blocks have been identified as particularly susceptible to landslides after intense rain. Reports said that a landslide in Minjiri village under Gumma block claimed four lives in 2006. The 2018 Titli cyclonic storm resulted in massive destruction due to landslides, especially in Gangabada, Lakshampur, Kainpur and Gandahati panchayats of Rayagada block, as well as parts of R Udayagiri and Nuagada blocks. Official records said that the disaster claimed 49 lives, killed over 1,000 livestock and damaged 71,434 houses. Twelve lives were lost in Bargara vil-

lage under Gangabada panchayat alone. The trauma of that tragedy still continues to haunt residents, who fear a repeat every monsoon. The administration has identified 129 landslide-prone zones in the district. However, neither the state government nor local authorities have implemented independent preventive measures to ensure the safety of residents in these high-risk areas. Ironically, Gajapati district was once hailed as a model in forest conservation. However, in recent years, widespread deforestation, rampant practice of shifting cultivation and illegal terrace farming on slopes have made the hills more prone to collapse. Environmental experts say these human factors are exacerbating the risk of landslides. Despite funds worth crores being spent annually under afforestation schemes, unchecked tree-felling continues. Environmentalists have stressed the urgent need to enforce a ban on tree felling. They also advocate for stronger community awareness and exemplary legal action against timber mafias to deter further damage to the areas in the district.

Class VIII girl found pregnant



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Bangiriposhi, July 20: A girl studying in Class, VIII was found two months pregnant at the hostel of a state-run residential school under Bangiriposhi police limits in Mayurbhanj district, police said Sunday. The incident has sent shockwaves in the area as the news spread after the girl's mother lodged a complaint at Bangiriposhi police station. Police registered a case (204/25) and launched an investigation. The residential school, where the girl studies, is run by the state Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development (SSD) department. The matter came to the light after the girl fell sick in her hostel. On being informed, the headmistress admitted her to the Bangiriposhi Community Health Centre for treatment. Doctors found her two-months pregnant during a check-up and informed the school authorities. Her teachers questioned her about her pregnancy and informed her mother. When questioned, she informed that she fell in love with a minor boy and entered into a physical relationship with him when she had been to her village on summer holidays. The Crime Branch, which

FM student's complaint not validated: Crime Branch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, July 20: The Crime Branch of the Odisha Police, which is investigating the self-immolation death of a college student in Balasore, Sunday said the 20-year-old woman had set herself on fire as her complaint of sexual harassment was not validated by an internal enquiry committee of the institute. Addressing a press conference here, Crime Branch DG Vinaytosh Mishra said its sleuths found discrepancies in the statements of witnesses in the case. The college authorities had taken action on her complaint, and an internal enquiry was conducted. But the internal enquiry team did not validate her complaint. Her extreme step was a reaction to the non-validation of her complaint, the Crime Branch DG said. The branch's Crime Against Women & Children Wing (CAW&CW) has been probing into the self-immolation death of the student over her alleged complaint against Samira Kumar Sahoo, the head of the department of Integrated BEd of the Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College. The student immolated herself July 12 and died on the night of July 14, triggering nationwide outrage. The Crime Branch, which

took over the investigation from the Balasore district police, started an inquiry into the matter July 17. "We have found inconsistencies between statements of witnesses to the internal complaints committee (ICC) and police, and their posts on social media. They have given different views and opinions before and after the incident. A thorough analysis of every statement is necessary, and it will take time. A proper analysis is needed against digital evidence to reach a conclusion," the DG said. Stating that all will get justice as per the law, Mishra said the Crime Branch will ensure that no innocent person is held responsible for the death of the college student. He said the government has taken the matter seriously, and CAW&CW Inspector General S Shyni has visited Balasore twice to oversee the investigation. He said this is a complicated case and the local police have arrested two persons, Sahoo and then principal of the FM (Autonomous) College Dillip Ghose. The Crime Branch is mandated to identify all those directly or indirectly involved in the incident, the DG said. He said the CCTV footage and other digital evidence collected by the crime branch are being sent to the State Forensic Science Laboratory for its opinion. Statements of internal complaints committee members and college staff were also being recorded, he said, adding that the probe is underway to find out whether anyone provoked her to go for self-immolation. "The Crime Branch has got a number of leads in the case. We assure all that the probe has been conducted in a fair manner to ensure justice for the 20-year-old woman," Mishra said. Replying to a question, the Crime Branch DG made it clear that the victim had not submitted a written complaint with the police, though the then principal of the college had invited some police officials to a meeting on her allegation. In addition to the Crime Branch, a four-member fact-finding team from UGC and a high-level team of Odisha's Higher Education department are also conducting investigations separately, an official said. The UGC team's probe reached the third day Sunday, and its members refused to give any indication of their findings. The members of the ICC, formed by the college authority to look into the grievances of the student, were being questioned by the investigating teams, and their statements have been recorded, an official said without divulging details.

Man murders wife, dumps body in nullah suspecting adultery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bonai, July 20: A man murdered his wife and later dumped her body in a nullah reportedly over her extramarital affair at Jada village under Gurundia police limits in Sundargarh district Saturday. The matter came to light after the accused surrendered at Gurundia police station Sunday. He revealed before police that he had to kill his wife as her extra-marital affair became intolerable. According to police, Lakshman Oram of Jada village in Pankadihi panchayat and Gurundia police limits murdered his wife Jayanti Kujur after suspecting her of being in a relationship with another man. Initially, he misled police by claiming that he had thrown his wife's body into the Brahmani river. Based on that tip, police launched a search operation but were unable to trace the body. Under further interrogation, Lakshman confessed to dumping the body in a nullah near Kansbahal. Acting on his statement, police recovered the body and registered a case. Sources said Lakshman had married Jayanti in 2019. The couple had frequent quarrels after he learned about her alleged affair with another man. At one point, Jayanti had returned to her parental home due to ongoing disputes. Though Lakshman later convinced her to return, he reportedly planned her murder in advance. He killed his Jayanti, packed the body in a sack and transported it through a forest route to Rajganpur where he dumped the body in a nullah in Kansbahal.



RAIN FURY: Road communication between Jagannathprasad block in Ganjam district and Daspalla block in Nayagarh district was disrupted after a road passing through Kadua panchayat was washed away following torrential rainfall in the wee hours of Sunday

Probe ordered after 21-yr-old man accuses prof of sexual harassment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, July 20: An investigation was started after a 21-year-old man lodged a complaint, accusing his professor of sexually harassing him, officials in Jajpur district said Sunday. The man, a third-year undergraduate student of Political Science, alleged that the head of his department invited him to his residence multiple times and solicited sexual favours in exchange for better academic grades. As he refused, the professor threatened him with academic

The professor was arrested on similar charges in 2021

retaliation, he alleged. He alleged that the HoD threatened to deliberately make him fail in the upcoming examinations in the presence of two of his classmates July 16. The college authority has constituted a five-member internal inquiry committee to investigate the allegations. "The panel has been directed to submit its report by Monday.

We have also informed the local police about the student's complaint," said the principal of the college. Jajpur Sub-Collector Tapas Ranjan Dehury, who is the president of the college's governing body, visited the campus and spoke separately with the principal and other teachers. Police said they have also started a separate investigation into the allegations. The professor was arrested on similar charges in 2021 as well, but was later released on bail and reinstated to his post.

Discontent over abrupt cancellation of OTET

PARALAKHEMUNDI: The Odisha Teacher Eligibility Test (OTET), which was scheduled for Sunday, was abruptly postponed late Saturday night after reports emerged that the question paper had been leaked on social media platforms. After the reports surfaced, authorities postponed the examination till further notification. As a result, more than 1,000 candidates who had travelled to five exam centres across Paralakhemundi town in Gajapati district returned home disappointed. Many had already arrived at their centres Sunday morning, unaware that the test had been postponed as no official notification had been displayed beforehand. It was only after a few staff members arrived at the centres that a handwritten notice announcing the postponement was pasted on the walls, further frustrating the waiting candidates. The late night decision and poor communication led to widespread resentment among the aspirants.

Plaint filed with NHRC over alleged illegal arrests in jumbo death case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 20: A complaint has been filed with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in New Delhi over the alleged illegal detention of 11 residents of Saleikena village in Keonjhar district in connection with an elephant death and tusk theft case. According to human rights activist Narayan Rath, the individuals were forcibly taken from their homes by Forest officials under the Telkoi forest range on the night of July 7, without any formal charges or a first information report (FIR) being filed. The complaint, filed on behalf of victim Nanda Kishore Munda and others, claims the villagers were picked up around 11pm while some were having dinner. They were allegedly held at the Telkoi range office, where they were subjected to physical assault, verbal abuse

and mental harassment over a period of four days. Family members were not allowed to meet them during this time. Rath cited multiple media reports in his petition and described the incident as "shocking, heartbreaking, painful, disgusting and barbaric." He has requested the commission to intervene and take stern action against the Forest personnel involved. Those named in the complaint include Telkoi Range Officer Shivaji Mohan Rao, Forester Malay Kumar Jena, Guard Ajit Kumar Das, and officers identified as Dhanraj HD and Sudipta Panda. Rath has demanded compensation of Rs 10 lakh for each victim, to be recovered from the salaries of the accused officials. The NHRC has acknowledged receipt of the complaint and registered it under diary number 17058/IN/2025 for further consideration.

IndianOil

Marketing Division – Odisha State Office

CORRIGENDUM

In reference to the advertisement published on 15.05.2025 in the newspapers regarding requirement of land for retail outlet (petrol/diesel pump) in the state of Odisha, it is to inform that the last date to submit applications has been extended till 14.08.2025. Other terms and conditions shall remain the same. Applications already received shall be considered valid and such applicants need not apply again.

Schoolboy killed in truck accident; locals block road



POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, July 20: A 13-year-old schoolboy was killed Sunday afternoon after being hit by a speeding truck near Betada Bazaar on the Basudevpur-Dhamara road in Bhadrak district. The victim, Debadiya Behera, son of Debendra Behera from Harisaranbindha village under Aruha panchayat, was a student of Prashanti Shishu Bihar School in Betada. According to police, he was returning home on a bicycle when the truck struck him from behind. He was first rushed to Basudevpur Hospital in critical

condition and later referred to Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital (DHH), where he succumbed to his injuries. Following the incident, hundreds of locals staged a road-block by burning tyres at Harisaranbindha Square near Betada Bazaar, demanding justice and improved safety measures. Officials including SDPO Bichitrnanda Sethi, Tehsildar Priyabrata Das, IIC Lopamudra Nayak, Block Chairman Nagendra Biswal and Sarpanch Gobinda Mallick reached the spot and attempted to pacify the agitated crowd. As per the District Collector's directive, the Tehsildar handed over Rs 20,000 as assistance to the bereaved family from the district Red Cross fund. Officials also promised to construct a speed breaker at the accident site, after which the blockade was lifted. The truck involved in the accident was seized and held at Basudevpur police station.

Showcasing tribal life: Homestay push gains ground in Kandhamal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, July 20: The state government has launched a new initiative to develop homestays in the tribal villages of Kandhamal district, aiming to promote eco-cultural tourism while boosting rural livelihoods. As part of the project, a joint survey by the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) and the Department of Tourism was conducted Saturday in several villages across Daringbadi block. The survey team inspected potential locations for setting up homestays on vacant land in tribal habitations, where the local environment and cultural practices could be preserved and showcased to visiting tourists.



Officials said the survey was carried out in areas including Kisubadi under Siangabali panchayat, the Midubanda waterfall in Dasingbadi panchayat, Hill View Park in Daringbadi panchayat, and Peedikharipi

in Hatimunda panchayat. Earlier, Deogada near the Belghar tourism zone in Tumudibandha block had already been identified for homestay development. The project is part of the state's Dharani Aba Janajati-

ya Grameen Utkarsha Abhiyan programme and aligns with the Centre's Bharat Darshan tourism vision. It seeks to provide tourists with immersive experiences in tribal life, including traditional food, dance, music, festivals, farming, rituals, and craftsmanship, while empowering women's self-help groups (SHGs) through tourism-linked income generation. "Most tourists visit Daringbadi and return the same day," said Krupasindhu Behera, project administrator of ITDA, Baliguda. "If we can offer authentic homestay experience inside the villages, guests will stay overnight and experience the stories, traditions, and hospitality of tribal communities first-hand." Behera said tourists will be

able to interact with village elders, learn about local deities such as Dharani Penu, and enjoy traditional meals prepared by SHG women. The initiative is expected to not only attract more visitors but also enhance the self-reliance of rural women by involving them directly in tourism services. Each homestay will be designed to offer basic amenities without disturbing the natural or cultural fabric of the village. Officials believe this model can turn tribal villages into sustainable rural tourism hubs while protecting heritage and promoting community participation. The survey team included project officials from Baliguda ITDA and tourism experts from Bhubaneswar, including senior consultant Sraddha Hota.

One who loves God finds the object of his love everywhere

SRI AUROBINDO



Water Bomb

On 19 July, China began constructing a \$167.8 billion dam on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh. Billed as the largest infrastructure project in the world, this massive hydroelectric project is expected to not only jeopardize the region's fragile ecosystem but also enhance China's geopolitical leverage over India, the downstream nation. The scale of this project surpasses any other single infrastructure project in the world, including China's own Three Gorges Dam, currently regarded as the largest in the world and supposedly visible from space.

The Brahmaputra, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibetan, originates at the Angsi Glacier near Gang Rinpoche (known as Mount Kailash to Indians), situated on the northern slopes of the Himalayas in the Burang County, Tibet. It traverses the Tibetan Plateau, creating the deepest canyon on the planet. The dam is being constructed in a significant gorge in the Himalayan region, where the Brahmaputra makes a U-turn before flowing into Arunachal Pradesh and subsequently into the Bay of Bengal through Bangladesh. The project site is also positioned along a tectonic plate boundary. Located over the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, the Tibetan Plateau, also called the roof of the world, frequently experiences earthquakes.

In 2006, India and China established the Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) to engage in discussions concerning various issues related to transboundary rivers. Under this framework, China had been providing India with essential hydrological information regarding the waters of the Brahmaputra in the north east and Sutlej in the north west during the flood seasons. However, since 2022, Beijing has ceased the sharing of crucial hydrological data pertaining to transboundary rivers, including the Brahmaputra. This cessation follows the expiration and subsequent non-renewal of previous Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). This data blackout coincides with an increase in the construction of large-scale dams by China in Tibet, thereby depriving India of critical upstream flow data. For instance, China has already operationalised the Zam Hydropower Station, a \$1.5 billion project and the largest in Tibet, since its inauguration in 2015, about which India had previously raised concerns.

The Brahmaputra is a crucial river, underpinning nearly one-third of India's freshwater reserves and accounting for over 40 per cent of the nation's hydropower potential. The absence of access to upstream metrics renders India vulnerable to increased ecological, economic, and strategic risks, particularly in the north eastern states. Also, the prospect of China using the waters of the Brahmaputra as a strategic instrument against India cannot be ruled out. In the Brahmaputra case, China could release water from the dam without prior notification, resulting in flooding the lower regions of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. This situation has been aptly highlighted by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, who has cautioned that the dam represents an existential threat to the local populace and could be employed as a "water bomb" by China against India.

Adding to the strategic calculus, Pakistan, on the other side, views this dam project as a vital gain, one that not only strengthens its alliance with China but also acts as a counterweight to Indian influence in the region. This is true especially in the wake of India putting the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan in abeyance in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack. It may be noted that the IWT, signed between the two countries in 1960, has stood the test of time. Three wars had been fought in between, Kargil being the last. Yet the river water kept flowing all through. Nearly 93 per cent of water from the Indus is used for irrigating nearly 80 per cent of the agricultural fields of Pakistan amounting to nearly 60 million hectares, feeding some 230 million people in that country. Meanwhile, Indian leaders have since been warning that "blood and water cannot flow together" and have vowed to not supply "even a drop of water to Pakistan." In this backdrop, it is not difficult to understand what could happen to India if China weaponizes the Brahmaputra in the same way in support of its "all-weather friend" Pakistan. In fact, unlike the IWT between India and Pakistan, Beijing is not bound by any water-sharing treaty with New Delhi. As matters stand, China has already succeeded in encircling India with enemies and is itself embroiled in a border dispute with India. India's foreign relations with all its immediate neighbours seem to have totally crumbled. Under such circumstances, a water war with China is the last thing India would need to face or be capable of handling.



Piate
Tathagata
Satpathy

FOCUS FOOD REGULATION

SOFT TARGETS

India's fight against obesity may soon come with a public notice — stuck next to your favourite samosa stall or jalebi counter. The Union Health Ministry wants central government offices to install 'oil and sugar boards' — warning staffers of the health hazards of deep-fried and sugary indulgences. The noble intent? Encouraging healthy eating. The unintended fallout? A direct blow to an informal food economy that feeds both bodies and bank accounts across the country.

This isn't just a cultural shift — it's an economic tremor. And one that could quietly destabilise the ₹3 to 5 lakh crore unorganised food sector that runs on the backs of Bhantis, Halwais, Mayaras, Mithaiwalas and Modaks — names that don't appear in the NITI Aayog charts, but feed crores of households. In 2023, the Indian packaged sweets market of rosogolla, laddoo, barfi of some large confectioners in IMARC study was valued at ₹6,229.7 crore, and it's projected to reach ₹25,970.8 crore by 2032, with a CAGR of 16.67%.

This sprawling informal economy is largely unregulated, yes — but it is also ethical, preservative-free, hyper-local, and affordable. From Delhi's Sarojini Nagar to Patna's Gandhi Maidan, Allahabad's Loknath, Lucknow's Hazratganj, Kerala's beaches or Kolkata's Garer Maath, India sells an estimated 6 crore samosas daily, may be more. If you add the allied universe of pakoras, vadapavs, Jaipur pyajkachori, jalebis and other mithais, the numbers multiply — as does their economic gravity. Each samosa, different in every city, represents a supply chain: wheat farmer to flour miller, the aloo vendor, the masala mixer, the oil refiner, the street hawker, and finally the hungry buyer.

And then comes jalebi, India's golden spiral of joy. Take



If street foods are discouraged without providing cheap, healthy alternatives in the same spaces, the consumer will simply pivot to cheap packaged junk, often worse in nutritional value and more additive - a bigger health crisis

Ahmedabad — the country's fadda-jalebi capital. On Dussehra 2023 alone, 17 lakh kilos of fadda-jalebi were consumed in a single day, generating an estimated ₹175 crore, estimated a national newspaper. That's more than some tech start-ups raise in Series A funding. But while venture capitalists get headlines, the jalebiwala gets cholesterol warnings.

Let's be clear: rising obesity and lifestyle diseases are real concerns. India is seeing a spike in hypertension, diabetes, and cardiac ailments across demographics. But where is the policy coherence? There are no front-of-pack regulations on ultra-processed branded foods loaded with additives — chips, colas, frozen snacks — flooding Indian shelves. And like samosa-jalebis, are not made fresh or served hot. Yet, it's the affordable, preservative-free, freshly-made local food — consumed by daily wage workers, office-goers, and students — that's now being flagged. This is not public health reform. This is misplaced elitism disguised as nutrition.

The irony is harsh. The very people who rely on these foods for their daily calories — and livelihoods — are being shamed.

For crores of urban and rural poor, a ₹5 to 10 samosa or ₹6 jalebi is often the only meal. Railway stalls sell vadapavs and alooondas starting at ₹10.

If these foods are discouraged without providing cheap, healthy alternatives in the same spaces, the consumer will simply pivot to cheap packaged junk, often worse in nutritional value and more additive - a bigger nutritional health crisis. You don't fix an obesity crisis by targeting a jalebi in Azamgarh-Guwahati or a pakora in Pune-Tiruchirappalli. You fix it by regulating MNC food giants. Samosas, laddoos, and jalebis are not just items on a plate. They're the foundation of a decentralised food economy that employs crores without requiring land, degrees, or foreign funding. To disrupt this fragile ecosystem in the name of wellness — without consultation, compensation, or coherent planning — is to denigrate India's most resilient social safety net, the street-food economy.

Let's not kid ourselves. This isn't just about calories. It's also about market realignment. Global and domestic food giants are eyeing India's growing billion-rupee unorganised snack sector. Unable to beat

the local seller on price, freshness, or taste, they now ride the "health" bandwagon to undermine traditional foods and insert factory-packed substitutes.

At ₹5 to 10, a street samosa is unbeatable. But with an "unhealthy" tag stuck on it, consumers are nudged towards ₹60 frozen puff pastries, ₹40 "healthy baked" chips or ₹35 sugar-heavy oat bars. And while the samosawala is forced to hang a warning sign, these packaged snacks carry no visible red flags, despite being ultra-processed, preservative-laced, and sugar-heavy.

India still lacks mandatory warning labels for high-fat, high-salt, high-sugar products in the processed food market — something Brazil, Chile, and even Mexico enforce strictly. Packaged snack makers continue to use preservatives, emulsifiers, artificial flavours and colourants — yet face minimal scrutiny.

This regulatory bias that masks itself as public health sends the message: homemade is harmful, but lab-made is clean — a myth that is both nutritionally and culturally dishonest. The potential fallout - millions of daily wage earners, including women and caste-marginalised vendors, risk livelihood collapse. A culture is erased as regional snacks, rituals, and taste traditions face extinction in favour of bland standardisation.

Yes, India has an obesity problem. But solving it by going after traditional, local food is like banning lassi to control cola consumption. India didn't become obese on samosas alone. And we certainly won't become healthy by simply banning them with bureaucratic notice boards. The real recipe for wellness lies not in shaming tradition — but in supporting it smartly. Otherwise, we risk frying the very hands that feed us.

INFA

SPECTRUM MULTILATERALISM

What happens next to globalization?

Despite the handwringing about US President Donald Trump's tariff war, which many claim sounds the death knell for the world's trading system, and worries about heightened geopolitical tensions, globalization is not ending. But it is being fundamentally restructured by geopolitical shifts, technological transformation, and climate change. And each of these forces will affect globalization in different ways.

For starters, the rise of China and other economies is bringing an end to the postwar world order dominated by the US. Escalating strategic rivalries, coupled with populist politics, have ushered in an era of economic nationalism, upending old paradigms and fuelling trade tensions. Economies that used to preach the neoliberal gospel of free markets and openness have embraced nationalist industrial policies, protectionism, and discriminatory trade practices. This shift is most apparent in the US, formerly the chief exponent of neoliberalism and the de facto guarantor of the multilateral system.

Today's tariff war is motivated not so much by isolationism as by mercantilism — a power play to gain economic advantage. With international trade

amounting to nearly 60% of global GDP, the world economy has become highly interdependent, suggesting that global integration is here to stay. Moreover, China and the US still depend on international markets — and each other — to sustain their economic success. So, while a strategic decoupling of the Chinese and US economies will undoubtedly take place in advanced technology and other critical sectors, a broader rupture is not in the cards.

The most likely outcome is fragmented globalization, with economic connections reconfigured around competing powers and along regional lines. Trade geometry will become increasingly variable as groups of countries and sectors become more integrated and others less so. This fracturing will inevitably impose costs on everyone. But not all reorganization of supply chains will be driven by geopolitical power plays. Some will result from efforts to diversify and enhance resilience, especially as emerging economies offer new sources of supply. In fact, the developing world's economic rise and greater integration into the world economy may do more to shape global supply chains in the long term than the current geopolitical shifts.

At the same time, the digi-

tal revolution, including AI, is remaking global labour and financial markets, business models, and production and delivery processes. Digital technologies are already changing the structure of globalization by expanding trade beyond physical goods. Whereas international integration has been driven by labour-cost arbitrage in manufacturing, with global companies taking advantage of low-wage workers in emerging economies, now digitally deliverable services, particularly business-to-business services, will maintain and strengthen these ties. As technology re-localizes some manufacturing, it will de-localize services, heralding an increasingly "weightless globalization."

Global warming also will affect patterns of production, trade, and investment. To reduce their carbon footprints, companies will reconfigure supply chains. Trade in environmental goods and services, as well as cross-border investment in green technologies, will expand. Combating climate change confronts humanity with huge challenges, but it also opens new avenues for global growth and creates new opportunities for international commerce and finance. And precisely because climate change is a universal

problem, it can increase interconnectedness and elevate the provision of global public goods on the international agenda. Even as geopolitical rivalries deepen, the threat of mutual assured destruction from climate inaction can motivate adversaries to cooperate. This may have positive spillovers for international collaboration in areas that are more susceptible to zero-sum thinking, such as trade.

The real risks to globalization are not from geopolitical rivalries, technological disruption, or climate change, but rather from policy responses to them. Countries must do a better job of managing the necessary restructuring of their economies, especially when it comes to addressing distributional consequences. At the international level, new trade, technology, and climate rules will become increasingly important in coming years. As economies evolve and geopolitical power shifts, new competitive dynamics will inevitably emerge. How much turmoil and uncertainty this process brings will depend on the extent to which policymakers agree on and adhere to a core set of global rules.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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Zia Qureshi

THE REAL RISKS TO GLOBALIZATION ARE NOT FROM GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRIES, TECHNOLOGICAL DISRUPTION, OR CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT RATHER FROM POLICY RESPONSES TO THEM

WISDOM CORNER

It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up

ECKHART TOLLE

No work or love will flourish out of guilt, fear, or hollowness of heart, just as no valid plans for the future can be made by those who have no capacity for living now

ALAN WATTS

The wise man must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future

HERBERT SPENCER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1798: Egyptians defeated in the Battle of the Pyramids. Napoleon's Army of Egypt used a new military tactic, the massive divisional square, to defeat the Egyptian forces of Mur d Bey this day in 1798 at the Battle of the Pyramids during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign.

1925: The trial of high-school teacher John T. Scopes ended with his conviction in Tennessee; he had taught Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in violation of a state law.

1960: Politician Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the world's first woman prime minister when she took office in Ceylon (later Sri Lanka).

1967: Albert John Lutuli, president of the African National Congress (1952-67) and the first African to be awarded a Nobel Prize for Peace (1960), died, reportedly after being struck by a train, although that narrative has been challenged.

1969: First person walks on the Moon. Neil Armstrong became the first person to walk on the Moon. He stepped on the Moon's surface almost 7 hours after Apollo 11, the space craft that carried them, landed on the Sea of Tranquility on the Moon. After stepping on the Moon, Armstrong uttered his famous words, "one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind."

1983: The world's lowest recorded temperature, -128.6 °F (-89.2 °C), was measured at Vostok Station, Antarctica.

1987: American heavy metal band Guns N' Roses released the landmark album Appetite for Destruction, which sold more than 17 million copies.

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

OrissaPOST
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Bhubaneswar-751010

Judicial accountability

Sir, Notwithstanding Justice Yashwant Varma moving the Supreme Court in the cash-recovery row, the case has propelled India into uncharted constitutional waters. It has transcended the alleged misconduct of one judge to become a melting pot for the entire judicial system. The fire that broke out at Yashwant Varma's house has ignited a much larger blaze, and its embers continue to combust at the very heart of the system. While Justice Varma's petition could spark a legal debate, the case is expected to test the constitutional contours of in-house judicial procedures and could have significant and wide-ranging implications for judicial accountability in India.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Clear the clouds

Sir, American President Donald Trump has been consistent in his assertion that it was he who stopped the war between India and Pakistan and he diffused the situation using trade leverage. This time he has also said that five fighter jets were downed during the India-Pakistan conflict. Though India has been refuting the role played by the US in stopping the war, they have not categorically denied the loss of our fighter jets including the Rafael ones in the conflict. Even our military officials had given enough clues to believe we lost our jets. If all the five jets Trump has mentioned about belonged to Pakistan, by now India would have confirmed the same. India's silence on this makes one believe that all the five jets shot down in the conflict could be ours. If this is true, then the question arises about the fate of our pilots in the jets. There are many unanswered questions relating to the dastardly terrorist attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgam and the Operation Sindoor that followed the Pahalgam massacre. It is time the Indian government came out with a comprehensive and convincing reply with absolute transparency and cleared various doubts that linger in the minds of the common man in respect of the above.

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

TOO YOUNG TO WORK, TOO POOR TO STOP

Brick kiln migrants' kids struggle for basic rights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bulandshahr/Aligarh, July 20: In the scorching May heat, 12-year-old Rajni cradles her infant sister while stirring watery dal simmering in a soot-blackened aluminium pot outside her hut in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh district.

Just as the thin lentils begin to look ready, she pours more water into the pot in a bid to stretch the modest meal, which otherwise wouldn't be enough to feed her family of eight.

When asked how it tastes, Rajni responds in a defensive tone: "This is not bad... It's better than no food."

Fruits, she adds, are a rare treat — usually available only when a local farmer tosses away overripe leftovers.

"This year, I ate a lot of mangoes," she said with a grin, referring to tapkas, the ripe mangoes that fall from trees that she and her friends were allowed to collect.

Rajni's family is one among thousands of seasonal migrants who travel each year to work in the sprawling brick kilns of western Uttar Pradesh.

But while the kilns promise income, the real cost is borne by children like Rajni, who grow up without education, adequate food, or healthcare and are caught in a cycle of generational poverty and invisible labour.

In 2021, data submitted by the government to Parliament suggested that there are 1.74 crore workers in registered brick kilns, while independent research has shown that 20 per cent of this workforce consists of child labourers.

"Therefore, it can be reasonably presumed that approx-



imately 35 lakh children are working in brick kilns, with the number likely higher in illegal kilns," said Bhuwan Ribhu, a child rights activist who founded Just Rights for Children.

"Most of the families' movement, dictated by the kiln season, spans eight to nine months a year. With no permanent address and no local documentation, the children are often excluded from even the most basic rights," he added.

Ten-year-old Neeraj, for instance, spends his days hauling lumps of dried mud in a wooden pan. "I can't go to school because my father says we have come here as one unit and all

need to work. If I get a chance to go to school, I would study hard and become an officer," he said.

His mother adds, "Each one of us, including the children, has a role in this industry."

Children are typically assigned so-called "lighter tasks", such as fetching water, helping to mould bricks, or carrying half-baked clay, but the physical toll is visible in their frail, malnourished bodies.

"For every rupee a worker earns, nearly 25 paise goes to the agent and brick kiln owners are in direct touch with the agents, so we get just 75 per cent of the earnings, which comes to around Rs 400 per day for a fam-

ily," explained Suresh, a brick kiln worker.

Elaborating further, Ramesh Shrivastav, general secretary of the Mazdoor Adhikar Manch, said the system is designed to exploit the vulnerability of the migrant workers and their children and keep them indebted.

"For kiln owners, local labourers are a risk because they can protest against exploitation as they have their community here. This, however, is not the case with migrant workers, so kiln owners only hire them as they are vulnerable and less likely to resist exploitation. Moreover, as migrant workers' children don't attend school like the locals, the kiln owners get extra hands," he said.

Among the 20-odd children PTI spoke to across kiln sites in Aligarh and Bulandshahr, none were currently enrolled in school. Only two had ever attended school, and that too briefly, as their parents began migrating seasonally.

"My sister and I studied till Class V when our parents used to find work in our village. That was back in 2018," said Naresh, a 14-year-old boy.

Despite the Right to Education Act mandating free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14, migrant children remain excluded. The government has tried to bridge this gap through the Poshan Tracker, linking anganwadis to migrant families, but the implementation is patchy.

While most parents were unaware of the scheme, the prospect of sending their children away from the worksite was a deal-breaker.

"Who will fetch water or help us mould bricks if they go to school? We came here to earn,

not to study. That will come later, maybe for their children," said Munni Devi, a mother of five.

Meanwhile, local anganwadi workers say they often hesitate to enrol children without documents like Aadhaar.

"While Aadhaar now allows for easier enrolment, many children still don't come because of the distance. Most anganwadis are located within villages, while many families live on the outskirts. There's also fear that showing up at an anganwadi might draw attention to the fact that the children aren't attending school," said an anganwadi worker in Bulandshahr, speaking on condition of anonymity.

When PTI reached out to the brick kiln owners, they denied employing children, saying the kids only "accompany" their families.

"It is up to the parents to decide whether they want to send their children to school or keep them here... how can we interfere?" a kiln owner said.

Rights activists, however, termed it as an excuse for systemic exploitation.

"Children working alongside parents is normalised, but this is not helpful; it's hidden labour, and it violates their rights," said Nirmal Gorana, convener of the National Campaign Committee for the Eradication of Bonded Labour.

According to a local official, the seasonal nature of the work also makes oversight difficult, as the workers come in October and leave by June before the monsoon.

"So, keeping track of their movement and exploitation becomes tough," the district official told.

Critical mineral-rich NE offers massive opportunity for India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 20: Long treated as a remote corner of the country, the northeastern region is becoming a frontrunner in several fields amid a mega infrastructure drive, and the mineral-rich states are now receiving focused attention to transform untapped resources into drivers of economic growth, employment, and local empowerment.

This is crucial as the world races towards clean energy, making critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, rare earths, graphite and vanadium, among others essential and valuable.

The government recently announced that northeast is home to several critical minerals, including lithium, cobalt, chromium, rare earths, graphite, and vanadium.

The National Mineral Exploration Trust's ongoing survey has identified 38 blocks in the region, and seven have been cleared for auction.

Critical minerals are essential to semiconductors, smartphones, servers, precision tools, telecom equipment, medical electronics, batteries, and clean energy, among others. These inputs underpin industrial strength and national resilience. Global supply chains remain vulnerable due to geopolitical concentration and strategic trade controls, and a focused national mission was both timely and necessary.

Recently-concluded 'North-East Mining Ministers' Conclave' in Guwahati underlined

the Centre's commitment to strengthen mining infrastructure, fast-track project approvals, and promote sustainable mining practices in the northeastern region.

The development of the northeast is central to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 with the eight states — Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim — rightfully celebrated as 'Ashta Lakshmi'.

The government recently announced that northeast is home to several critical minerals, including lithium, cobalt, chromium, rare earths, graphite, and vanadium

India's mineral auction framework has gained strong momentum in recent months. Since FY2024-25, a total of 283 mineral blocks have been put up for auction by the state and Central governments. Of these, 161 mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned, bringing the cumulative tally

to 515. This includes five mineral blocks from Assam and four critical mineral blocks from Arunachal Pradesh, opening new avenues for industrial growth and employment in the region.

These auctions underscore the readiness of the northeast to play a central role in India's critical mineral strategy, while also reflecting the government's commitment to transparency and competitiveness in resource allocation.

India holds 8 per cent of the world's rare earth element reserves, which gives it the potential of playing a key role in the gradually evolving global supply landscape as China's current dominance is projected to decline, according to a recent CareEdge report.

Mizoram govt trains officials to begin biometric enrolment of Myanmar, B'deshi refugees

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aizawl, July 20: The Mizoram government has been providing vigorous training to the district level officials to collect biometrics and biographic data of Myanmar and Bangladeshi refugees taking shelter in the northeastern state, officials said here Sunday.

A Home department official said that the process of recording biometrics and biographic data of Myanmar and Bangladeshi refugees would start from this month (July).

Training of district-level officials on the 'Foreigners Identification Portal and Biometric Enrolment' for displaced persons from Myanmar and Bangladeshi nationals are almost completed in all 11 districts of Mizoram.

The District Level Committee on Myanmar and Bangladesh Refugees (DLCMBR) are providing training to the officials and government staff to equip them for proper identification and enrolment of displaced refugees.

After a military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, refugees, including women and children from the neighbouring country, started coming to Mizoram seeking shelter, and now their numbers have increased to around 35,000. Around 5,000 Myanmar refugees also took shelter in Manipur.

The Manipur government has almost collected the biometric and demographic data of the refugees staying in the state. Besides the Myanmar refugees, over 2,370 Bangladeshi Bawm community tribals from Chitragang Hill Tracts (CHT) are also staying in Mizoram for over two years after they fled from their country due to ethnic troubles after the Bangladesh Army launched a crackdown on the tribals.

According to the Mizoram Home Department official, Rs 38 lakh was earmarked for the exercise, and the expenditure would be borne by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

The MHA had earlier asked both the Manipur and Mizoram governments to capture biographic and biometric details of "illegal migrants" in the two states and complete the process at the earliest.

Action soon against those trying to defame Kanwar Yatris: Adityanath



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Meerut, July 20: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday said some people are trying to defame the Kanwar Yatra on social media and urged every 'kanwar sangh' to expose such troublemakers.

Addressing an event here, Adityanath said, "Troublemakers have resorted to defame this holy pilgrimage. We have CCTV footage of all of them. We are going to paste their posters after this (Kanwar Yatra) is over."

He added, "We have to keep in mind that where there is enthusiasm and excitement, where there is faith and devotion, some elements are constantly trying to disturb that enthusiasm and to defame this devotion and faith."

Social media is replete with videos showing apparent Kanwar Yatris, wearing the saffron associated with them, creating ruckus on roads, ransacking hotels, damaging vehicles, and beating civilians.

Adityanath claimed these are miscreants who infiltrate Kanwar groups and bring them bad names. "Unmask them, keep them away from you at all costs. Do not allow them to enter your circle. Immediately inform the administration about this," he said. The chief minister said there is administration to take legal action if any such miscreant desecrates the Kanwar, as he urged people not to take into their hands.

Adityanath alleged that before 2017, the year he came to power, the governments in UP did not allow these pilgrimages to happen and create obstacles in their path.

"But, today there are governments that respect your devotion. So it is our responsibility to take it forward with the same sacred sentiment," he said.

He also urged the Kanwaris to join in cleanliness programmes, and strive to not let any river, intersection, or road become dirty.



Submerged Sangam area as the swollen Ganga river inundates nearby areas during the monsoon season, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

Herbal rush as Manipur startups look beyond caffeinated drinks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, July 20: Aiming to present tea lovers an alternative to caffeine-based beverages, a number of young Manipur entrepreneurs are experimenting with indigenously grown plants to produce flavoured herbal drinks.

Sumac berries, gooseberries and banana peels are among the ingredients that go into the making of these unconventional beverages.

For Elizabeth Yambem, the founder of 'Dwellers Teas', the longingness for home and the desire to reconnect with childhood memories prompted her to launch her own brand of beverages. "We produce more than 10 varieties of herbal tea and employ 20 women at our Uripok manufacturing unit in Imphal West district. Our products are sold outside the state,



too," Yambem told PTI. She said her company procures locally grown indigenous plants cultivated by farmers from various villages and hill districts, including Phayeng in



Imphal West, and Ukhrul. "I wanted to relive the childhood memories of Sumac berries, gooseberries, the vibrant Red Roselle, and the bittersweet Nong-mang-kha (a tradition-

al medicinal plant) lovingly brewed by our elders in a way that could suit the changing times," she said.

"We started researching for locally grown ingredients,

many of which had medicinal properties, in 2016 and launched the company in 2017 in Guwahati. We relocated to Imphal in 2018," Yambem said.

Yambem is not alone in the growing number of young entrepreneurs experimenting with unique ingredients to come up with herbal beverages in the northeastern state.

Selina Mutum, the founder of 'Nongmadol Beverage', focuses on producing drinks with banana and pineapple peels to which spices are added for extra flavour. "In my locality, I had seen some manufacturing units producing banana chips but wasting the peels. I wanted to promote a sustainable way to use those unused peels as well as bring a new flavour-based beverage that is purely herbal," Mutum told PTI.

"We formally launched the product in January, 2024 at

our unit in Heingang in Imphal East district. We have a team of six dedicated women," she said. She, however, said operations are occasionally impacted as packaging materials from outside the state do not arrive on time, due to the crisis caused by the ethnic conflict in Manipur. Yambem and Mutum's companies produce around 500-700 boxes of herbal beverages per month. While the herbal drinks of 'Dwellers Teas' start from Rs 50 a packet, the prices of 'Nongmadol Beverage' range from Rs 50 to Rs 200 per packet.

Manipur University student Thounaojam Selika, who has a liking for such beverages, said, "Herbal drinks are becoming more and more popular among the youths in the state, as those don't contain caffeine and have various health benefits. It is also very popular on the varsity campus."



Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the three criminal laws were enacted in the country. The people will benefit from these laws as it mandates a timeline for disposal of cases

MANIK SAHA | TRIPURA CM

FAUJA SINGH CREMATED WITH FULL STATE HONOURS

World's oldest marathoner Fauja Singh, known by the nickname 'Turbaned Tornado', was cremated Sunday with full state honours here in Beas, his native village. Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Minister Mohinder Bhagat and several other politicians attended the funeral



of the day quote

BJP has destroyed the future of students and the youth. Today, young people are struggling for jobs and employment opportunities. By shifting government jobs to contractual and outsourced systems, the BJP has plunged the youth into darkness

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

Troublemakers have resorted to defame this holy pilgrimage... We have CCTV footage of all of them. We are going to paste their posters after this (kanwar yatra) is over

The guns of goons are ruling in Haryana, and the silence of the government is giving protection to the criminals. In Haryana, the bullets of goons are now dominating the rule of law

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

SHORT TAKES

'Don' director Chandra Barot dies

Mumbai: Veteran filmmaker Chandra Barot, best known for directing the 1978 Amitabh Bachchan-starrer 'Don', passed away Sunday due to cardiac arrest at a hospital in Mumbai, his family said. He was 86. Barot was battling 'Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis' (IPF-fibrosis of lungs) for the last 11 years and had been receiving treatment at the Guru Nanak Hospital, as per his family. 'Chandra passed away at the Guru Nanak Hospital this morning at 6.30 due to cardiac arrest caused by a chest infection. He had IPF, which is fibrosis of the lungs, for the past 11 years,' his wife Deepa Barot told PTI.

Body of kidnapped Agra boy found

Agra (UP): The body of an eight-year-old boy, who was kidnapped from Agra in April, has been recovered from Mania village in Rajasthan, police said. The recovery was made by the Rajasthan Police Saturday following which they informed their Agra counterparts, they said. According to police, the deceased Abhay, a Class I student, was the son of Vijay Pratap, a Vijay Nagar resident who owned a transport firm.

4 militants held

Imphal: Security forces have arrested four militants belonging to different proscribed outfits from Imphal East and West districts of Manipur, police said Sunday. Police arrested an active cadre of the banned outfit UPPK from Kangla Pat in Imphal West district Saturday. He has been identified as Yumnam Prem Meitei (23). A militant belonging to KCP (PWG) was nabbed from the parking area of Polo Ground in Imphal West district Friday. He was identified as Nanaoh (43) and was involved in extorting shops in the valley area.

Man set on fire

Kottayam (Kerala): A 55-year-old man, who was attacked and set on fire over a financial dispute in Pala, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital Sunday, police said. Ashokan, who ran a jewellery shop near the Ramapuram bus station, suffered 80 per cent burns after the accused, Thulasi Das, poured petrol on him and set him ablaze July 19.

PM to visit Britain, Maldives

Modi will first travel to the UK on a two-day trip and then will visit the Maldives to grace the island nation's Independence Day celebrations as "guest of honour"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a four-day visit to the United Kingdom and the Maldives from Wednesday to shore up overall bilateral ties and ink the landmark India-UK free trade deal.

Modi will first travel to the UK on a two-day trip and then will visit the Maldives to grace the island nation's Independence Day celebrations as "guest of honour", according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The Prime Minister's visit to the Maldives from July 25 to 26 is seen as significant as it marks a reset of bilateral ties that had come under severe strain after Mohamed Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, came to power in November 2023.

In the first leg of his trip, Modi will visit the UK from July 23 to 24 to hold wide-ranging talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the MEA said Sunday.

India and the UK are expected to formally sign the free



trade deal during PM Modi's visit to London, people familiar with the matter said.

In May, India and the UK sealed the free trade agreement that is expected to benefit 99 per cent Indian exports from tariff and will make it easier for British firms to export whisky, cars and other products to India besides boosting the overall trade basket.

The trade deal, firmed up after three years of negotiations, is expected to ensure comprehensive market access for Indian goods across all sectors and India will gain from tariff elimination on about 99 per cent of tariff lines (product categories) covering almost 100 per cent of the trade values, according to officials. A British readout had said Indian tariffs will be slashed, locking in reductions on 90 per cent of tariff lines, with 85 per cent of these becoming fully tariff-free within a decade.

PM Modi will hold wide-ranging discussions with PM Starmer on the entire gamut

of India-UK bilateral relations besides exchanging views on issues of regional and global importance, the MEA said Sunday, announcing the two-nation trip. It will be PM Modi's fourth visit to the UK. The MEA said he is also expected to call on King Charles III. "During the visit, the two sides will also review the progress of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) with a specific focus on trade and economy, technology and innovation, defence and security, climate, health, education and people-to-people ties," the MEA said in a statement.

From London, Modi will travel to the Maldives primarily to grace the island nation's 60th anniversary of its Independence July 26.

It will be Modi's third visit to the Maldives, and the first visit by an Indian head of state or government since President Muizzu assumed office in November 2023.

Lucknow: 4-yr-old girl raped; school van driver arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 20: A van driver employed by a private school was arrested in connection with the rape of a four-year-old girl, a police official said Sunday.

The accused was identified as Arif (25), the police said.

A case was registered Friday against both the driver and the school manager, Sandeep Kumar, under several legal provisions, including Sections 65(2) (committing rape on a woman under 12 years of age), 352 (intentional insult with the intent to provoke a breach of peace), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of the BNS, as well as the POC-SO Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes



People with disabilities take part in the 'Pedal Through Paradise' cyclothon organised by Jammu and Kashmir Police, near Dal Lake in Srinagar

Maha minister faces flak for playing rummy during Assembly session

Nagpur/Mumbai: A viral video of NCP leader and Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate purportedly playing a game of rummy on his mobile phone during a legislative session has sparked a huge row, with the Opposition accusing the government of being insensitive to farmers. Facing criticism, Kokate Sunday clarified that he was only trying to skip the downloaded game on his mobile phone, which popped up for 5 to 10 seconds while checking YouTube to understand the business transacted in the lower house during the recently concluded monsoon session. He was checking his phone when the Upper House of the state legislature was adjourned. The video was posted on the X by NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) MLA Rohit Pawar, targeting the NCP headed by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and the BJP.

K'taka govt forms SIT to probe Dharmasthala mass grave claim

Bangalore: The Karnataka government has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe grave allegations of multiple murders, sexual assaults, and cases of missing women in the Dharmasthala region of Dakshina Kannada district spanning the past two decades. The GO, dated July 19, was shared with the press Sunday. The Special Investigation Team will be headed by Pranav Mohanty, Director General of Police, Internal Security Division. Its other members include Additional Commissioner of Police (Recruitment) M N Anucheth, Deputy Commissioner of Police (CAR Headquarters) Soumya Latha, and Superintendent of Police (Internal Security Division) Jitendra Kumar Dayama. The move comes in response to a letter from Karnataka State Women's Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Choudhary, who cited a court statement by an individual claiming that "hundreds of bodies were buried in the Dharmasthala area."

Couple, 3 children found dead at home cops suspect suicide

Ahmedabad: The bodies of a couple and their minor three children were found at their house in Gujarat's Ahmedabad district in the wee hours of Sunday, with police suspecting it to be a case of mass suicide, officials said. The incident took place in Bagodara village and the police were informed about it around 2 am, Ahmedabad (rural) Superintendent of Police Om Prakash Jat said. Prima facie, it appeared that they died by suicide by consuming poison. "A man, his wife and their three children died by consuming poison at their rented accommodation in Bagodara. The man used to drive an auto-rickshaw for a living, and the exact reason behind the extreme step taken by the family is not immediately clear," the official said. The deceased have been identified as Vipul Vaghela (32), his wife Sonal (26) and their children Kareena (11), Mayur (8) and Princess (5), a Bagodara police station official said. The bodies were sent to a local hospital for postmortem, he said.

NDRF to soon commission cadaver dogs to assist in disaster ops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will soon operationalise its first contingent of cadaver dogs who can sniff out the dead or human remains in a disaster or accident zone, officials in the federal organisation said.

About half-a-dozen such dogs are under training at the NDRF battalion bases in Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad for the last few months, they said.

For training the special canines, largely from the Belgian Malinois and Labrador breed,



the force has procured a special scent from abroad that smells akin to the odour emitted by a dead body, they said. "For all these years, the NDRF focussed

on its mandate of saving lives. Utilising the golden hour of finding life during a disaster has been the guiding principle of the rescuers and hence find-

ing the dead or mortal remains was not a priority," a senior NDRF officer explained to PTI. However, we have seen that the force is also part of operations where NDRF personnel

are tasked to retrieve bodies from under the debris like in the aftermath of a landslide or train or road accident, he said. Finding bodies or human remains is important to ensure closure to the families and near and dear ones of the victims, he said. Hence, the NDRF few months back embarked on a maiden exercise to train cadaver dogs, the officer said.

A second officer said there are hardly any such dogs in the establishment of state rescue forces in India and those who have them, have had a mixed success rate. The success of such dogs depends on a lot of factors, including prevailing

weather conditions, humidity, snow and presence of other strong odours in the area of operation. Detection of the dead is harder than the alive, he said. "Training such dogs is a challenge as it required a human body or body parts which is not easily available. Hence, a special scent that smells like dead human remains was procured for training the NDRF dogs," the second officer said. The dogs are expected to complete their training by the next month and then they will be placed with some specific NDRF battalions out of the total 16 spread across the country, he said.

Cong wants PM reply on Pahalgam attack, Trump's claims in Parl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: The Congress Sunday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself should respond to debates in Parliament's Monsoon session on various issues including Pahalgam attack, US President Donald Trump's ceasefire claims and Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

Congress' deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said the Opposition parties will get an Opportunity to seek answers from the government on key issues in this session starting Monday.

"We have more expectations than before that PM Modi will address the nation in Parliament on key issues - Pahalgam attack and the intelligence failure there. It is also important that we support and thank our armed forces in Parliament,"

Gogoi said the prime minister should also put light on the statements from US President Trump, who by his claims, has raised fingers at India's pride and its armed forces, and it is only the prime minister of India who can respond to it.

"It is the moral responsibility of the PM to answer on these issues. We hope that PM will fulfil his moral duty," he said. Gogoi said the questions raised on Bihar's SIR and the Election Commission not giving answers points fingers at the future elections. "It is PM's duty to clarify government's stand in Parliament."

The Congress leader said several senior army officers have raised the two-pronged threat from China and Pakistan and there should be a discussion on this in Parliament. It is also important to discuss the country's defence and foreign policies and the defence budgetary allocation, he added.

He said Manipur has been facing violence for the last 2.5 years and there is no peace there. The Prime Minister has visited several small countries but is avoiding going to Manipur, he alleged, demanding answers from him.

Later, AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh in a post on X listed out several issues raised by Gogoi during the all-party meeting.

"In the all-party meeting con-



We have more expectations than before that PM Modi will address the nation in Parliament on key issues - Pahalgam attack and the intelligence failure there. It is also important that we support and thank our armed forces in Parliament

GAURAV GOGOI | CONG'S DEPUTY LEADER IN LS

vened by the Modi Government today, my colleague

Gaurav Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of the INC in the Lok Sabha, made the following demands for discussion in Parliament on behalf of the INC - Pahalgam, Sinoor, statements of LG J&K, CDS, Deputy COAS, and President Trump.

"The SIR votebank exercise that will lead to mass disenfranchisement in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, and other states, alongside other actions of ECI that threaten electoral democracy," he said.

Ramesh also said foreign policy challenges with respect to China especially, the failure of neighbourhood diplomacy, the moral cowardice on Palestine, were also raised during the meeting with the government.

He also said that the restoration of full statehood to J&K, Schedule VI status for Ladakh, and the situation in Manipur (a state that is still awaiting the PM's visit) was also raised during the meeting.

"He further insisted on a reply by the Prime Minister himself on these debates which must last a minimum of two days each," Ramesh said in his post on X.

During the Monsoon session of Parliament, the Opposition is set to corner the government on several issues.

Leaders of the INDIA bloc also held a meeting to chalk out their joint strategy and present a united face in attacking the government on intelligence failures that resulted in the Pahalgam attack, Trump's ceasefire claims, besides on SIR in Bihar.



No matter what we do, if Pakistan's intent is inimical, then we will never fully achieve a terror-free Jammu and Kashmir. And I think Pahalgam has proven that

DELHI: UNIFORM PRICE SOON FOR PIPED COOKING GAS

Oil sector regulator PNGRB has ordered city gas retailers to charge a uniform price for natural gas they pipe to household kitchens for cooking purposes, regardless of consumption levels, as it looks to curb the tendency of companies to charge a higher rate beyond a usage threshold



of the day quote

Lightweight Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is less concerned about India and more about Pakistan. That is why the Gandhi family is crying from pain more than Pakistan due to the blow of Operation Sindoor



When someone announces a rally towards state secretariat Nabanna, do we have any issue? When you (Opposition) hold rallies without police permission, we don't stand in your way



So, India's Waqf properties you know very well are the highest number of Waqf properties in the world. More than 9,70,000 Waqf properties are there which must be put into use for the purpose for which those properties were created



'Only 18 Muslim women made it to LS since independence'

New Delhi, July 20: That women were always under-represented in the Lok Sabha is a known fact, but Muslim women members have been a greater rarity with only 18 making it to the Lower House since independence, according to a new book. And while dynastic politics may not be conducive for democracy to deepen its roots, it has played a positive part in giving chances to Muslim women, with 13 out of the 18 being

from political families. From royalty to a tea vendor-turned-politician's wife and from a first lady to a Bengali actress, the 18 Muslim women who treaded the hallowed corridors of power in the Lok Sabha are an eclectic mix, with each of them having an interesting backstory, but one common thread - their path to power was always strewn with struggle and hurdles. The story of these 18 Muslim women has been chronicled in an upcoming book-- 'Miss-

ing from the House -- Muslim women in the Lok Sabha' by Rasheed Kidwai and Ambar Kumar Ghosh. Kidwai says he wanted to document the profile of 20 Muslim women who made it to the Lower House, but two of them -- Subhasini Ali and Afrin Ali -- had openly proclaimed that they did not follow Islam. "Only eighteen Muslim women have made it to the Lok Sabha since the first parliamentary polls in 1951-52. It is a shockingly abysmal

figure, considering Muslim women are about 7.1 per cent of India's 146 crore population. Out of the 18 Lok Sabhas constituted till 2025, five times the Lok Sabha did not have a single Muslim woman member," Kidwai and Ghosh write in their book, published by Jugernaut and will be released next month. Equally shocking is the fact that the number of Muslim women elected to Parliament in one tenure never crossed the mark of four in the 543-seat

lower house of Parliament, the book points out. The book also notes that none of the five southern states -- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana -- otherwise known for better political representation than the North and with better literary levels and other socio-economic indicators, have not yet sent a single Muslim woman MP to the Lok Sabha. The 18 Muslim women who made it to the Lok Sabha in-

clude Mofida Ahmed (1957, Congress); Zohrabai Akbarbhai Chavda (Congress, 1962-67); Maimoona Sultan (Congress, 1957-67); Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah (National Conference, 1977-79, 1984-89); Rashida Haque (Congress 1977-79); Mohsina Kidwai (Congress, 1977-89); Abida Ahmed (Congress, 1981-89); Noor Bano (Congress, 1996, 1999-2004); Rubab Sayda (Samajwadi Party, 2004-09); and Mehbooba Mufti (People's Democratic Party, 2004-09, 2014-19).

3,500CR AP LIQUOR SCAM

Chargesheet mentions ex-CM Jagan as kickback recipient

Amaravati, July 20: A chargesheet filed by Andhra Pradesh police in connection with the ₹3,500 crore alleged liquor scam in a local court has mentioned former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy as one of the recipients of the kickbacks averaging ₹50-60 crore per month. The 305-page chargesheet filed Saturday, however, stopped short of naming Jagan as accused. The court is yet to take the cognizance of the chargesheet. In a post on X, Jagan termed the alleged liquor scam as nothing but a manufactured narrative, created purely for media theatrics and to divert attention from real issues.



Midhun Reddy remanded to judicial custody till August 1

Vijayawada: YSRCP Lok Sabha member PV Midhun Reddy who has been arrested in the alleged 3,500 crore liquor scam case was remanded to judicial custody until August 1. He was produced before Vijayawada ACB court today, said a police official. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested Reddy on Saturday in the alleged liquor scam case involving liquor policy during the previous YSRCP regime. Earlier this morning, SIT officials took Mithun Reddy to a government hospital in Vijayawada, where doctors conducted medical examination.

transfer it to former Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. On an average, ₹50-60 crore was collected every month (during the 2019-24 YSRCP regime)," the charge sheet said, adding that it was corroborated by a witness. The chargesheet alleged that Rajasekhara Reddy, "the mastermind and co-conspirator" behind the entire ₹3,500 crore liquor scam, had influenced excise policy manipulation besides being instrumental in replacing automated OFS (order for supply) with manual process; to have planted loyalists in APSBCL (Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation Limited). He allegedly created shell distilleries and handed over "kickbacks" to Jagan through another accused Bala-

Patna hosp murder: Prime suspect held

Patna, July 20: The Bihar Police Sunday said it has arrested the prime accused and his three associates for the murder of gangster Chandan Mishra inside a private hospital in Patna, and is waiting for transit remand from a court in Kolkata, where they were apprehended. Patna SSP Kartikeya K Sharma told reporters here that an application for transit remand of the four persons, including prime accused Tauseef alias Badshah, who was arrested in a joint operation with Kolkata Police and Kolkata Special Task Force (STF), has been moved.

Six kanwariyas killed in road accidents as pilgrim rush surges

Muzaffarnagar/Haridwar, July 20: Six pilgrims were killed and nearly 20 injured in road accidents as the rush of kanwariyas significantly increased Sunday on the Kanwar Yatra routes, especially the Delhi-Dehradun highway and the Ganga Canal road, during the final leg of the pilgrimage. Thousands of kanwariyas (Lord Shiva devotees), heading back from Haridwar in Uttarakhand with 'Gangajal', were greeted by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with a helicopter showering flowers on them in Muzaffarnagar. Authorities have implemented tight security measures along the Kanwar Yatra routes.



The Yatra concludes July 23, when the pilgrims will return home after offering the holy water from the Ganges at Shiva temples on their way. As he welcomed the pilgrims, CM Adityanath claimed that some people were trying to defame the Kanwar Yatra on social media and urged every 'Kanwar Sangh' to expose such troublemakers. Addressing an event, Adityanath said, "Troublemakers have resorted to defame this holy pilgrimage... We have CCTV footage of all of them. We are going to paste their posters after this (Kanwar Yatra) is over." Rajya Sabha MP Laxmikant Bajpai and UP's Minister of State Somendra Tomar shared the stage with him. Meanwhile, three kanwariyas were arrested for allegedly assaulting a CRPF jawan following an argument over train tickets at the Mirzapur railway station, an official said Sunday. The GRP registered a case against the kanwariyas under sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 352 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) of the BNS and the Railway Act. Later, the kanwariyas were released on bail, the GRP said. Two kanwariyas were killed and eight others seriously injured in two separate road accidents on the Delhi-Haridwar National Highway in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, police said Sunday.

A kawariya identified as Abhishek (28), a resident of Kairana, died and four others were injured after two motorcycles collided near Barla bridge under Chhapar police station late Saturday night, they said. The accident occurred when Abhishek and his friend Manish Kataria were en route to Haridwar from Kairana to collect water from the Ganga River. In a separate incident, another kawariya identified as Anil (23) died and four others were injured after a collision between two motorcycles near the Saleempur bypass. SHO Jaivir Singh said Anil and his friend Ghanshyam were heading to Haridwar from Noida to collect Ganga water when their bike collided with another motorcycle. In Ghaziabad, a speeding ambulance collided head-on with a motorcycle and a scooter, leaving three kanwariyas dead and another injured, police said Sunday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rural, Surendra Nath Tiwari said the accident occurred in front of a restaurant on the Delhi-Meerut Road near Kadrabra at around 11.45 pm Saturday. The ambulance has been seized and the driver has been arrested. The police said the number of Kanwar pilgrims has significantly increased on the Delhi-Dehradun highway and the Ganga Canal road. In Uttarakhand's New Tehri, 14 kanwariyas were injured while returning from Gangotri when their truck overturned, the police said. In Odisha, a pick-up van collided with an autorickshaw carrying kanwariyas Sunday morning near Darapada in Nayagarh district. A female kanwariya died, and six others were injured in the accident.

POST OF THE DAY

Yogender Yadav & Kapil Sibal exposed BJP & ECI nexus "SIR in Bihar is completely fraud. BJP wants to repeat voter list scam like they did in Maharashtra But now the Opposition is alert" Now BJP IT cell will attack them @mr_mayank

SHORT TAKES

Incessant rains lash Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Incessant rainfall across several parts of Kerala Sunday led to rising water levels in rivers and dams, causing waterlogging in low-lying areas and prompting the IMD to issue an 'orange alert' for nine districts in the state. The 'orange alert' was issued for Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod. A 'yellow alert' was issued for the remaining five districts. An 'orange alert' indicates "very heavy rainfall" between 11 cm and 20 cm, while a 'yellow alert' denotes "heavy rainfall" between 6 cm and 11 cm.

NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar booked

Mumbai: NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar was booked on the charge of obstructing public servants in discharging duty after he shouted at a sub-inspector inside a police station here while trying to meet a party worker injured in a clash, an official said Sunday. A viral video shows Rohit Pawar, grandnephew of NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, yelling at the sub-inspector in Marathi, "Keep your voice down, keep your voice down. If you raise your hand, I will teach you a lesson".

Several districts in Bihar on flood alert

Patna: An alert was issued for several districts of Bihar Sunday for flood-like conditions as the water level of Ganga was rising amid a forecast for more rain in the region, a statement said. Development Commissioner Pratyaya Amrit held a high-level meeting and reviewed the preparedness of the Disaster Management Department (DMD).

Op Sindoor: Army honours 10-yr-old who served soldiers

Chandigarh, July 20: The Indian Army Sunday said it will bear the study expenses of a ten-year-old boy, who supplied little meals to soldiers battling gunfight in a Punjab village during Operation Sindoor. Shvan Singh had run errands for the soldiers posted in Tara Wali village. The boy took water, ice, tea, milk, and lassi to soldiers as they exchanged fire with the Pakistan Army. In recognition of his courage and enthusiasm, the Indian Army's Golden Arrow Division has committed to fully sponsor Shvan's education. During a ceremony at Ferozepur Cantonment Saturday, Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Katiyar, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command, also felicitated the boy. The army said Shvan's story serves as a reminder of the "quiet heroes" across the country who deserve recognition and support. Shvan, whose village lies in Mamdot area of Ferozepur district, had earlier said he too wants to join the army when he grows up. "I want to become a 'fauji' when I grow up. I want to serve the country," the boy had said in May. His father had then said, "We are proud of him. Even soldiers loved him." He said the class 4 student supplied the ration on his own without anyone asking him to do it. Tara Wali village is around 2 km from the international border. Under Operation Sindoor, the Indian armed forces carried out pre-dawn missile strikes May 7 on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.



Men dressed as 'Pothuraju', a Hindu folk deity, and others dance during the 'Ashada Masam Bonalu' festival, near Charminar, in the Old city of Hyderabad, Telangana

Andaman: 9 Onge tribe kids pass Class X, join Class XI

The nine Onge students, including five girls and four boys, have been admitted to Class 11 in the Arts stream at PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School, R K Pur at Dugong Creek in Little Andaman



Port Blair, July 20: Nine children of Onge tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have cleared the CBSE Class X board examination and have taken admission in Class XI, an official said.

The nine Onge students, including five girls and four boys, have been admitted to Class 11 in the Arts stream at PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School, R K Pur at Dugong Creek in Little Andaman. "We are happy to announce that they cleared their CBSE

10th Board Examination held recently. This is the first time Onge students have reached this educational milestone. Their admissions were formalised and their classes commenced July 15, 2025," said Prakash Tirkey, school teacher at Dugong Creek. He

said, "Onge students are very bright and hardworking. They are willing to pursue higher education, and they would like to participate in mainstream society. They are also urging for good job opportunities." The nine students are Alagae, Kokoi, Mukesh, Palith, Sonia, Bolling, Gitae, Otikalai and Suma. Excited over his educational journey, Alagae said, "I would like to become a forest officer to protect my forest and land and prevent encroachment activities. Forest is everything to us, and it is our duty to protect it from exploitation by outsiders." Another girl student Otikalae expressed her desire to become a school teacher to promote and motivate her community in higher education, while Mukesh's dream is to become a Tribal welfare officer. Andaman and Nicobar Tribal

Welfare department Secretary, Satyendra Singh Dursawat, said, "This remarkable achievement of nine Onge students from Dugong Creek reflects the extraordinary resilience and potential of the PVTG community. This historic milestone was made possible through the visionary guidance and leadership of our Lieutenant Governor and Vice Chairman of Islands Development Agency (IDA), Admiral D K Joshi (Retd) and our chief secretary." A special classroom for them was built after consultation with officials of Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) and the Principal of PM SHRI GSS R K Pur. To ensure a smooth transition, the AAJVS and Education department have made comprehensive arrangements, including dedicated hostels for boys and girls near the school.

international



President Putin has repeatedly spoken of his desire to bring the Ukrainian settlement to a peaceful conclusion as soon as possible. This is a long process, it requires effort, and it is not easy. The main thing for us is to achieve our goals. Our goals are clear

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Exit polls show Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling coalition is likely to lose a majority in the smaller of Japan's two parliamentary houses in a key election Sunday, worsening the country's political instability. Voters were deciding half of the 248 seats in the upper house, the less powerful of the two chambers in Japan's Diet



of the day quote

You have this little group called BRICS. It's fading out fast, but BRICS is, they wanted to try and take over the dollar, the dominance of the dollar, and the standard of the dollar



DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

The main reason for the stability in current account surplus is a significant increase in remittances and exports. Improving financial and economic indicators show that the country's economy is on the path of stability



SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

I appeal to the international community to observe humanitarian law and respect the obligation to protect civilians as well as the prohibition of collective punishment, of indiscriminate use of force and forced displacement of the population



POPE LEO IV | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Iran says it replaces damaged air defences

Dubai: Iran has replaced air defences damaged during last month's conflict with Israel, Iran's Defah Press news agency reported Sunday quoting Mahmoud Mousavi, the regular army's deputy for operations. During the conflict in June, Israel's air force dominated Iran's airspace and dealt a heavy blow to the country's air defences while Iranian armed forces launched successive barrages of missiles and drones on Israeli territory. "Some of our air defences were damaged, this is not something we can hide, but our colleagues have used domestic resources and replaced them with pre-arranged systems that were stored in suitable locations in order to keep the airspace secure," Mousavi said.

Libya deports 700 Sudanese migrants

Cairo: Eastern Libyan authorities have sent hundreds of Sudanese back to their war-torn home country, officials said Saturday, in a crackdown on migrants seeking to flee conflict and poverty for Europe by way of the Mediterranean nation. Seven hundred Sudanese who were detained recently in central and southeastern Libya, were deported Friday by land to Sudan, the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration in eastern Libya said in a statement.

Nepal PM to visit India

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli will pay an official visit to India towards mid-September, the Foreign Ministry said Sunday. "Preparations for the upcoming visit of the prime minister are underway. However, the date and the detailed schedules of the visit are yet to be finalised," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lok Bahadur Chhetri said. However, sources at the Prime Minister's Office said that Oli will embark on his official visit to the southern neighbour September 16. The visit will be short this time, probably for two days, the sources added.

5 TTP terrorists killed

Peshawar: At least five terrorists of the outlawed TTP were killed and two injured in an operation carried out by security forces in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Saturday, according to the police. Eight terrorists were captured alive in the operation conducted by police and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in the Malakand district.

GAZA GENOCIDE

Hunger ends in death

73 Palestinians killed while waiting for humanitarian aid across Gaza, health ministry says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Deir al Balah, July 20: At least 73 people were killed while attempting to access aid at locations across Gaza Sunday, the health ministry in the Palestinian territory said.

The largest toll was in northern Gaza, where at least 67 Palestinians were killed while trying to reach aid entering northern Gaza through the Zikim crossing with Israel, according to the ministry and local hospitals.

More than 150 people were wounded, with some of them in critical condition, hospitals said.

It wasn't immediately clear whether they were killed by the Israeli army or armed gangs or both. But some witnesses said that the Israeli military shot at the crowd.

The killings in northern Gaza didn't take place near aid distribution points associated with the Gaza Humanitarian Fund, or GHF, a US- and Israel-backed group that hands out food packages to Palestinians. Witnesses and health workers say hundreds of people have been killed by Israeli fire while trying to access the group's distribution sites.

The Israeli military didn't immediately make any comment on Sunday's killings.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military published new evacuation warnings for areas of central Gaza Sunday, in one of the few areas where the military has rarely operated with ground troops.

The evacuation cuts access between the city of Deir al-Balah and the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis in the



narrow enclave.

The announcement came as Israel and Hamas have been holding ceasefire talks in Qatar, but international mediators say there have been no breakthroughs.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly stressed that expanding Israel's military operations in Gaza will pressure Hamas to negotiate, but negotiations have been stalled for months.

Earlier this month, the Israeli military said that it controlled more than 65% of the Gaza Strip.

Cutting off access

The area of Gaza under the evacuation order is where many international organisations attempting to distribute aid are located.

The United Nations has been in contact with Israeli authorities to clarify whether UN facilities in southwestern Deir al-Balah are included in Sunday's evacuation order, according to a UN official who spoke on the condition of anonymity

because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media.

The official said that in previous instances, UN facilities were spared from evacuation orders. The evacuation announcement covers an area stretching from a previously evacuated area all the way to the coast and will severely hamper movement for aid groups and civilians in Gaza.

Military spokesman Avichay Adrae warned that the military will attack "with intensity" against militants. He called for residents, including those sheltering in tents, to head to the Muwasi area, a desolate tent camp on Gaza's southern shore that the Israeli military has designated a humanitarian zone.

Gaza's population of more than 2 million Palestinians are in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

Hamas triggered the 21-month war when militants stormed into southern Israel Oct 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage. Fifty remain, but fewer than half

Ferry bursts into flames with 280 onboard



AGENCIES

Barcelona, July 20: At least one person has died and the death toll is expected to rise after a ferry burst into flames off the coast of Indonesia.

On Sunday, July 20, the KM Barcelona VA vessel was travelling between the Talaud Islands and Manado when it caught fire at approximately 12:00 p.m. local

time, near Talisei Island, local news outlets reported.

The ferry was carrying 280 passengers at the time of the blaze, according to the outlets. The cause of the fire has not been disclosed at this time.

In harrowing footage posted on X, passengers can be seen jumping off the burning boat into the sea while wearing life jackets as flames and thick

black smoke arise from the top of the ship. Screams and cries can be heard as several people float in the water waiting to be rescued.

One person has died in the incident. It is not yet known whether the person died in the inferno or drowned.

A passenger identified as Abdul Rahmad Agu showed himself holding a toddler after escaping the ferry in a Facebook livestream while calling for help.

In another video shared on X, the fire can be seen blazing through the inside of the ferry on the upper deck. Passengers on the lower level scrambled to get their belongings in what appeared to be a sleeping area.

The Manado Harbormaster and Port Authority Office (KSOP) sent three ships for rescue and evacuation, IDN Times reported. "There are KM Barcelona III, KM Venecian, and KM Cantika Lestari 9F," the Manado KSOP officer told the outlet.

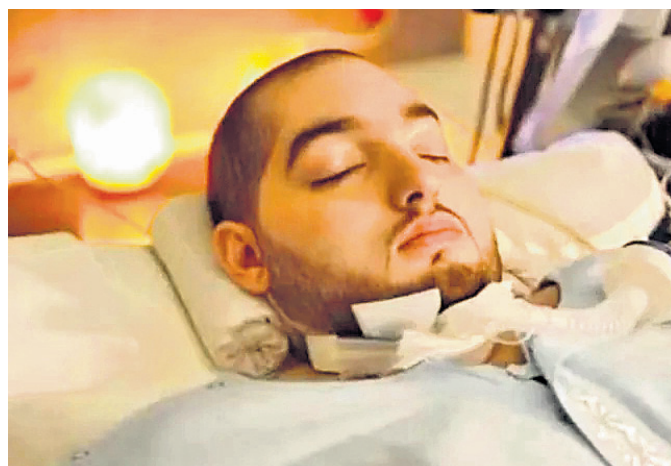
Saudi's 'Sleeping Prince' dies after 20 yrs in coma

Alwaleed, the eldest son of Prince Khaled bin Talal Al Saud, was just 15 when he was involved in a high-speed accident in 2005 while studying at a military college in the United Kingdom

AGENCIES

Riyadh, July 20: Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Khaled bin Talal died Saturday, two decades after falling into a coma following a serious car accident in London in 2005. He was 36.

The Global Imams Council said in a statement, "The Global Imams Council extends its sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to...His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the esteemed Royal Family, on the



passing of Prince Alwaleed bin Khaled bin Talal Al Saud, who passed away after a long struggle that lasted nearly twenty years following a tragic accident."

"With hearts full of faith in Allah's decree and destiny, and with profound sadness and sorrow, we mourn our beloved son Prince Al-Waleed bin Khaled bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may Allah

have mercy on him, who passed away to Allah's mercy today," his father, Prince Khaled bin Talal said in a statement.

Prince Alwaleed was 15 when the accident occurred while he was studying at a military college in the UK. The crash caused critical brain injuries and internal bleeding, leaving him in a complete coma. He was later moved to King Abdulaziz

HUMANITARIAN HORROR

Gaza health ministry said at least 71 children had died of malnutrition during the war, and 60,000 others were suffering from symptoms of malnutrition

Much of Gaza has been reduced to a wasteland during more than 21 months of war and there are fears of accelerating starvation

are thought to be alive.

Israel's military offensive that followed has killed more than 58,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many militants are among the dead but says more than half of the dead have been women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas government but the UN and other international organisations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

The Hostages Family Forum, a grassroots organisation that represents many of the families of hostages, condemned the evacuation announcement and demanded that Netanyahu and the Israeli military explain what they hope to accomplish in the area of central Gaza, accusing Israel of operating without a clear war plan.

"Enough! The Israeli people overwhelmingly want an end to the fighting and a comprehensive agreement that will return all of the hostages," the forum said. On Saturday night, during the weekly protest, tens of thousands of protesters marched in Tel Aviv to the branch of the US Embassy, demonstrating for an end to the war.

Calm reported in Sweida as tribal fighters withdraw



The clashes between militias of the Druze religious minority and the Sunni Muslim clans killed hundreds and threatened to unravel Syria's already fragile postwar transition

REUTERS

Damascus, July 20: Residents reported calm in Syria's Sweida Sunday after the Islamist-led government declared that Bedouin fighters had withdrawn from the predominantly Druze city and the United States stepped up calls for an end to days of fighting.

With hundreds of people reported killed, the Sweida bloodshed has marked a major test for interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, prompting Israel to carry out airstrikes last week as it declared support for the Druze. Fighting continued Saturday despite a ceasefire call.

On Sunday morning, residents reported no sound of gunfire in the city after the

interior ministry announced late on Saturday that Bedouin tribal fighters had left.

Reuters images showed interior ministry security forces deployed in an area near the city, blocking the road in front of members of tribes congregated there.

Kenan Azzam, a dentist, described the situation on Sunday morning as "a tense calm" but told Reuters residents were still struggling with a lack of water and electricity.

"The hospitals are a disaster and out of service, and there are still so many dead and wounded," he said by phone.

Another Sweida resident, Raed Khazaal, said humanitarian aid was urgently needed in the city. "Houses are destroyed ... The smell of corpses is spread throughout the national hospital", he said in a voice message to Reuters from inside Sweida.

Tom Barrack, the US envoy for Syria, said "brutal acts by warring factions on the ground undermine the government's authority and disrupt any semblance of order".



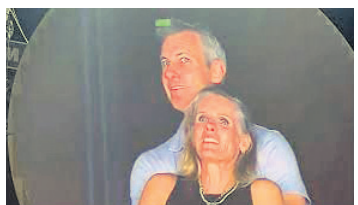
A woman walks next to the graves of soldiers killed in the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus at the Tymvos Makedonitissas military cemetery in Nicosia, Cyprus

REUTERS

SNIPPETS

Astronomer CEO resigns after viral kiss cam video

Washington: The CEO of the technology firm Astronomer Inc has resigned after being caught canoodling on camera at a rock concert with a woman who was not his wife, the company said Saturday. The company posted a written statement on its LinkedIn profile stating that its leaders "are expected to set the standard in both conduct and accountability, and recently, that standard was not met."



The statement said that Andy Byron had offered his resignation as CEO and that the board of directors had accepted it. Byron had been placed on leave on Friday, and Chief Product Officer Pete DeJoy is serving as the interim CEO. Byron and Astronomer's chief people officer Kristin Cabot were caught on camera at the Coldplay concert on Wednesday in Massachusetts in an awkward clip that quickly went viral. A spokesman for the company said that the pair was the only employees of the firm caught on camera. The spokesman did not respond to a request for comment on Cabot's job status.

Indian-origin doctor charged with offering drugs for sexual favours

New York: An Indian-origin doctor in New Jersey has been charged with distributing drugs without a legitimate medical purpose to his patients in exchange for sexual favours, according to a press release issued by the US Attorney's Office. Ritesh Kalra, 51, of Secaucus, allegedly operated a "pill mill out of his medical office, where he routinely prescribed high-dose opioids—including oxycodone—and promethazine with codeine to patients," said the press release issued by the US Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey, Friday. "Physicians hold a position of profound responsibility—but as alleged, Dr Kalra used that position to fuel addiction, exploit vulnerable patients for sex, and defraud New Jersey's public healthcare programme," US Attorney Alina Habba said. Kalra is accused of issuing more than 31,000 prescriptions for oxycodone, including days when he wrote upwards of 50 prescriptions between January 2019 and February 2025.



In India, the overall two-wheeler usage is mostly male, with 90 per cent, and females just around 10 per cent. It means the potential for two-wheeler sales to grow among the female customers is huge
TSUTSUMU OTANI | HMSI PRESIDENT

SEBI RESOLVES NEARLY 4,500 COMPLAINTS VIA SCORES

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has disposed of 4,415 complaints in June through its online grievance redressal platform SCORES. The regulator received 4,959 fresh complaints in the month, and a total of 5,107 grievances remained unresolved at the end of June, slightly higher than the 4,563 charges that were pending as of May 31. SCORES is an online platform which facilitates investors in lodging and tracking complaints against listed companies and registered intermediaries



of the day quote

Indians are very pragmatic. They don't want to pay a donation for nothing, as they want the money back. They also want a return on their investment



ANDREW BOIKO | FOUNDER, GARANT.IN

Yes the focus is very heavily on India. We definitely want to be in the upscale market and would like to grow in tier 2 and tier 3 cities also



KUSH KAPOOR | CEO, ROSEATE HOTELS AND RESORTS

Gold prices are seen consolidating in a range over the past couple of weeks amid a lack of fresh triggers and recovery in the US Dollar in the given period



PRANAV MER | VP - EBG, JM FINANCIAL SERVICES

EU oil curbs may hit India

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that a central component of the package is a ban on the import of refined petroleum products made from Russian crude and exported via third countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



RUSSIA SANCTIONS

New Delhi, July 20: India's petroleum product exports worth \$15 billion to the European Union (EU) may be at risk as Brussels moves to restrict imports of Russian crude oil refined in third countries, economic think tank GTRI said.

The 18th package of sanctions by the 27-nation EU included a set of measures

largely aimed at curbing the revenues of Russia's oil and energy sector, such as an import ban on refined petroleum products made from Russian crude oil and coming from any third country.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that a central component of the pack-

age is a ban on the import of refined petroleum products made from Russian crude and exported via third countries, excluding only a select few allies like US, UK, Canada, and Switzerland.

This measure will hurt nations such as India, Turkey, and UAE, which have been refining Russian crude and selling diesel, petrol, and jet fuel to Europe, it said.

"India's \$5 billion exports of petroleum products to the EU are at risk. The EU's new sanctions ban imports of refined petroleum made from Russian crude via third countries like India," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

India exported \$19.2 billion worth of petroleum products to the EU in FY24, but this dropped by 27.1 per cent to \$15 billion in 2024-25, according to the think tank.

It added that India imported \$50.3 billion of crude oil from Russia in FY2025, over a third of its total \$143.1 billion crude bills.

"Although India continues to engage in legitimate trade with Russia, the political optics of such transactions are shifting in Western capitals. As energy ties deepen, India will have to walk a fine line between economic pragmatism and geopolitical pressure," Srivastava said.

Vedanta dismisses Viceroy allegations



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: US-based Viceroy Research has alleged that Vedanta group's semiconductor unit was a "sham commodities trading operation", designed to avoid classification as an NBFC, whereas the mining conglomerate dismissed the allegations, stating them baseless

US short seller Viceroy Research, which last week published a scathing report about Vedanta Group and followed it with similar reports on group companies, in fresh allegations said Vedanta Ltd's subsidiary, Vedanta Semiconductors Pvt Ltd, was part of a scheme to allow the Mumbai-listed firm to remit brand fees to parent Vedanta Resources in April this year, when it faced a severe liquidity crisis.

In a statement, Vedanta spokesperson said the group "strongly rejects the baseless allegations made in the report regarding Vedanta Semiconductors Pvt Ltd (VSPL)".

"All business activities of VSPL have been transparently disclosed and are in line with statutory norms," it said.

Viceroy said, "VSPL is a sham commodities trading operation designed to improperly avoid classification as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)".

"This scheme was devised to facilitate Vedanta Ltd's remittance of brand fees to Vedanta Resources' (VRL) in April 2025, when it faced a severe liquidity crisis," Viceroy said.

"VSPL's operational illusion needs 24 months of regulatory silence to fulfil its purpose, repaying its offshore lenders and hiding the near-catastrophe of April 2024. While credit analysts are snoozing through the alarm bells, India's regulators are famously light sleepers."

In April 2024, Vedanta Limited (VEDL) faced a severe liquidity crisis. "In response, VEDL reactivated VSPL, not as a semiconductor venture, but as a zero-margin trading entity, whose operations appear to consist entirely of paper-based commodity trading."

"VSPL tapped offshore lenders for a short-term, INR-denominated, 10 per cent NCDs secured by VEDL's stake in HZL (equivalent to 1 per cent of outstanding shares). VSPL then began trad-

ing commodities (copper, silver, gold) on a zero-margin basis reminiscent of wash trading," Viceroy alleged.

VSPL, it said, remitted the loan to VEDL as a 24-month 12 per cent loan, with the spread intended to cover the sham operation's costs. The semiconductor unit, superficially an operating entity, would face reduced scrutiny for loan repayments under FEMA, Companies Act, PMLA and AML frameworks.

"VSPL will likely have to continue these sham operations until FY27, when the loans fall due and repayment will have to be routed back through it. If, at any point, the regulators intervene at VSPL, the lender group is likely facing a total wipeout," the US short-seller alleged.

Vedanta spokesperson said, "Loans between VSPL and Vedanta Ltd were executed in full compliance with applicable laws, corporate governance standards, and both Vedanta Ltd and VSPL have consistently reported accurate loan terms, interest rates, and collateral in line with statutory norms," it said, adding that it would encourage stakeholders to only rely on verified disclosures and audited financials. Viceroy, July 9, said it has taken a short position against the debt of Vedanta Resources, the UK-based parent of Indian miner Vedanta Ltd, and alleged in the report that the British firm is "systematically draining" its Indian unit.

Vedanta had dismissed the report as "a malicious combination of selective misinformation and baseless allegations", and that Research issued it without contacting the group.

Mcap of six top valued firms slumps ₹94,433cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most valued firms declined by ₹94,433.12 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, in line with a bearish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tumbled 742.74 points or 0.90 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Hindustan Unilever suffered erosion from their market valuation last week, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) emerged as gainers.

The valuation of TCS tumbled ₹27,334.65 crore to ₹11,54,115.65 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

Reliance Industries suffered an erosion of ₹24,358.45 crore to ₹19,98,543.22 crore from its valuation. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank tanked ₹20,051.59 crore to ₹15,00,917.42 crore.

TPSODL gears up for Monsoon

Berhampur, July 2025: TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) stands fully ready to counter the challenges of heavy monsoon.

A dedicated frontline team of 5,925 personnel has been strategically deployed across six operational circles, assisted by emergency vehicles and additional manpower. Six mobile distribution substations and two tower wagons are now stationed for rapid response. Critical emergency materials including poles, conductors, and LT AB cables are kept in store at strategic level to avoid delays, while 25 ASKA lights and 19 DG sets in each division ensure night-time repair works.

TPSODL has already installed 2,529 interposing poles to strengthen network. Drone-based survey to detect the potential weak spots. Power System Control Centre (PSCC) at Berhampur and other areas to monitor substations via SCADA system.

Customer relation has also been upgraded with the IVRS-enabled systems, SMS alerts, and a dedicated missed



call service (9777774699) to keep consumers informed of outages and restorations instantly. Additionally, 24x7 call centre (Toll-free numbers: 1912 / 1800-2026) for emergencies.

TPSODL CEO Amit Kumar Garg said, "During the monsoon, safety remains our top priority — both for our teams on the ground and, most importantly, for our consumers. Our focus is to ensure that every household, business, and essential service across Southern Odisha experiences minimal disruption despite the season's challenges."

CoinDCX hit by \$44.2mn cyberattack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: Indian cryptocurrency exchange CoinDCX has suffered a security breach, resulting in theft of \$44.2 million, or ₹378 crore, even as the founders took to X to reassure that customer funds remained unaffected and safe, with the compromise limited to an internal operational account.

The total exposure is being absorbed entirely by CoinDCX, using the company's treasury reserves, the company said in a First Incident Report released Sunday.

According to the report, July 19, at 4 AM IST, CoinDCX security systems detected an incident involving unauthorised access to one of its accounts on the partner exchange, leading to a financial exposure of about \$44 million. The incident once again puts the spotlight on mounting security threats in the highly volatile world of cryptocurrencies. Last year, crypto exchange WazirX faced a hack in India, leading to the loss of more than \$230 million, and marking one of the biggest such heists in India. The theft had prompted a thorough examination of safety measures and eroded sentiments.

Following this, users rushed to check their balances, leading to a spike in withdrawal requests. The sudden surge in activity led to CoinDCX's portfolio APIs, which display user balances and transaction histories, becoming jammed and unresponsive. For several hours, many were unable to even see their holdings on the app, adding fuel to rumours and anxiety online.

FPIs pull out ₹5,524cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: After three months of fund infusion, foreign investors turned net sellers with withdrawal of ₹5,524 crore so far in July, due to ongoing trade tensions between US and India and mixed corporate results.

With this, the total outflow has reached ₹83,245 crore so far in 2025, data with the depositories showed.

Looking ahead, the trajectory of FPI flows will hinge on developments in US-India trade negotiations and corporate earnings, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

A resolution of the trade disputes and earnings recovery could potentially restore investor confidence and attract FPIs back to Indian markets, he added.

Going by the depositories data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew a net sum of ₹5,524 crore from equities this month (till July 18).

This came following a net investment of ₹14,590 crore in June, ₹19,860 crore in May and

₹4,223 crore in April. Prior to this, FPIs had pulled out ₹3,973 crore in March, ₹34,574 crore in February, and a substantial ₹78,027 crore in January.

FPIs exhibited a notable shift in sentiment this month, reversing their previous bullish stance. This behaviour can be attributed to a combination of factors.

"While elevated market valuations prompted FPIs to reassess the attractiveness of Indian equities, ongoing trade tensions, especially between the US and India, and concerns over US interest rate policies contributed to a cautious investment outlook. Additionally, mixed corporate earnings raised doubts about the sustainability of corporate profitability," Srivastava said.

Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst, Angel One, also said that global markets and macro developments along with the result season in India led to the outflow.

On the other hand, FPIs invested ₹1,850 crore in the debt general limit and ₹1,050 crore in the debt voluntary retention route during the period under review.

IBA URGES BANKS TO SHIFT TO ISO 20022



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 20: Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has asked all banks to fast-track the implementation of the SWIFT ISO 20022 norms, failing which they may face difficulties in cross-border payments.

In a letter recently written to heads of all banks, IBA Chief Executive Atul Kumar Goel said it is essential for lenders to begin migration by August 2025 to ensure sufficient buffer time for monitoring ISO 2022 transaction volumes.

ISO 20022 is a global standard for financial messaging that the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) is adopting for cross-border payments and reporting.

This new standard for messaging aims to improve the payments flow through faster processing, visibility, cost reduction, enhanced reconciliation and increased interoperability.

As many as 3 banks in India reached a migration percentage rate of above 85 per cent, while the majority of banks are still targeting migration closer to the global deadline of November 2025, the letter said.

This approach may pose significant operational and technical risks for India as a country, including exposure to message rejections, reduced readiness for exception handling, and potential customer impact, Goel cautioned banks.

SWIFT began its migration to ISO 20022, with a coexistence period that will continue until November 2025. The coexistence period is a migration phase to ensure a smooth transition to a new format, allowing the use of the new and existing legacy MT messaging standard for a limited period.

The coexistence period between the legacy systems (MT) and ISO 20022 will officially end on November 22, 2025. Any MT payment instruction messages in the scope post November 22, 2025, will fail validation, IBA informed banks.

Institutions that wish to prevent risk of service disruption due to stricter network validation, loss of data, and avoid additional charges should ensure they do not send FIN (financial information) / MT (message type) instruction messages for cross-border bank-to-bank payments after November 2025, it said.

Electronics export surges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jul 20: US, UAE, and China have emerged as the top three export destinations for India's electronics sector during April-June quarter of 2025-26, according to the commerce ministry data.

Netherlands and Germany are other major export destinations for the country's electronics exports. During April-June this fiscal, the exports rose by 47 per cent to USD 12.41 billion, the data showed.

"This geographical spread highlights India's growing integration into the global electronics supply chain and underscores the country's emergence as a credible alternative manufacturing hub in Asia," an official said.

US remain India's largest export destination, commanding a 60.17 per cent share, followed by UAE (8.09 per cent), China (3.88 per cent), the Netherlands (2.68 per cent), and Germany (2.69 per cent).

The data also showed that US remains the dominant ex-

port destination for India's ready-made garments (RMG). It accounted for 34.11 per cent of shipments. US is followed by the UK (8.81 per cent), UAE (7.85 per cent), Germany (5.51 per cent), and Spain (5.29 per cent).

During April-June this fiscal, exports of RMG of all textiles rose to \$4.19 billion as against \$3.85 billion in the same quarter last fiscal.

"These figures reflect India's continued competitiveness in the global apparel market, backed by its skilled manufacturing base, diversified product offerings, and growing reputation for quality and compliance," the official said.

India's RMG sector, a key pillar of the textiles industry, recorded a 10.03 per cent growth during FY25 at \$15.99 billion compared to \$14.53 billion in FY24.

Similarly, marine exports grew by 19.45 per cent to \$1.95 billion during April-June this fiscal.

In 2024-25, these exports rose marginally by 45 per cent to \$7.41 billion.

The revival in these exports during the first quarter of the current fiscal is largely attributed to robust demand from key markets such as the US, which remains the largest importer with a 37.63 per cent share.

It was followed by China (17.26 per cent), Vietnam (6.63 per cent), Japan (4.47 per cent), and Belgium (3.57 per cent).

Diversification in product offerings, improved cold chain logistics, and compliance with international quality standards have been instrumental in sustaining India's competitive edge in the global seafood market.

A closer look at India's export performance across electronic goods, RMG, and marine products reveals a common thread - strong reliance on mature, high-value markets.

"US consistently emerges as the leading destination across all three sectors, underscoring its position as India's most critical trade partner," the official said.

Legends face-off halted: WCL scraps India-Pak tie



Indian stars took the boycott call in view of the current 'geopolitical' situation between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of Pahalgam terror attack and the ensuing Operation Sindoor carried out by the country

decision of cancellation and said their intention while conducting the match was to recreate some "happy memories."

"After hearing the news that the Pakistan hockey team will be coming to India this year, and seeing the recent India vs Pakistan volleyball match along with a few other fixtures between the two nations in different sports, we thought of continuing with the India vs Pakistan match at WCL, just to create some happy memories for people around the globe. But maybe in the process, we ended up hurting the feelings of many and stirring emotions," the WCL statement read.

The Pakistan team has in its ranks captain Shahid Afridi, Younis Khan, Sohail Tanvir, Wahab Riaz, Kamran Akmal among a host of yesteryear players. The organisers also apologised for "unintentionally causing discomfort" to Indian legends.

"Hence, we have decided to call off the India-Pakistan match. We sincerely apologise again for hurting the sentiments and hope people will understand that all we ever wanted was to bring a few happy moments to the fans," it read.

Former India opener Dhawan also shared a statement on X, announcing his stand not to participate in the match against Pakistan.

"This is to formally reiterate and confirm that

Mr. Shikhar Dhawan will not be participating in any matches against the Pakistan team in the upcoming WCL League. This decision was communicated earlier during our discussion on call and WhatsApp dated 11th May 2025," read his statement.

Dhawan made it clear that he has taken the call in view of the current "geopolitical" situation between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of Pahalgam terror attack and the ensuing Operation Sindoor carried out by the country.

Operation Sindoor had led to a brief military showdown between the two arch foes before India agreed to halt its operations on Pakistan's request for a cease fire.

"In view of the current geopolitical situation and the prevailing tensions between India and Pakistan, Mr. Dhawan and his team have taken this position after due consideration.

"We respectfully request the league's understanding and cooperation on this matter," he said in the statement.

Off-spin legend Harbhajan, a sitting Rajya Sabha MP, Yusuf, who is also a Member of Parliament, and Irfan too have conveyed their decision to boycott the match against Pakistan, though they are yet to issue a statement in this regard.

The players received a lot of flak on social media for agreeing to play against

the Pakistan team. India had defeated Pakistan by five wickets to win the inaugural edition of the six-team legends tournament last year in Edgbaston.

While India does not engage with Pakistan in any bilateral sporting activities because of the existing geopolitical scenario, the two nations often meet each other at various levels of competitions featuring Olympic sports.

In fact, the Indian government has given its approval for Pakistan's participation in several major events to be hosted in India this year, including the Hockey Asia Cup (August), Junior Hockey World Cup (November-December), Junior Shooting World Cup (September), and the World Para Athletics Championships (October).

The reason being that any move to block Pakistan, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 tourists, would have been a violation of the Olympic charter, which is like a constitution for the Olympic Movement.

Rule 44 of the Charter specifically prohibits National Olympic Committees from excluding athletes based on "racial, religious or political reasons". Failure to grant visas can lead to "international isolation and loss of hosting rights for future events."

In cricket, India and Pakistan do not engage in bilateral series, limiting their face-offs to global ICC events such as the World Cup and Champions Trophy.

A hybrid hosting model was introduced during this year's Champions Trophy, under which India played its matches at a neutral venue — Dubai — while the rest of the tournament was held in Pakistan.

Following that precedent, Pakistan will play all its matches in Colombo during the Women's ODI World Cup this year. The tournament is being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

METTLE MEET 2025

HERE NOW
OrissaPOST

QUIZ Extravaganza

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 XII)
- No employee or families of **OrissaPOST** team can be part of the competition.

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS

MAYANK MANDAL

PARAMESWAR DALAI

Others who answered correctly are

Bhumika Subhalaxmi, Ranjita Sethi, Divyanshu Mohanty, Om Prakash Rath, Saroj Nag, Bishnu Prasada Dash, Abinash Tripathy, Debaddatta Tripathy, Ahaana Paikray, Jitendra Nath Pradhan, Mahesh Prasad Dalabehera, Amandip Lakra, Pratyush Dhal

TODAY'S QUESTION

On this day in 2007, India welcomed its first female President, who previously served as the Governor of Rajasthan. Who broke this glass ceiling in Indian politics?

ANSWER TO SUNDAY'S QUESTION

Apollo 11

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, July 20: A veterans' cricket match involving India and Pakistan in the World Championship of Legends here Sunday has been cancelled after Indian players, including Shikhar Dhawan, refused to be a part of it citing the Pahalgam terror attack in April.

The second edition of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) tournament, which is co-owned by Bollywood star Ajay Devgn, started June 18 at Edgbaston here and is scheduled for an August 2 final.

World Cup winner Yuvraj Singh is the captain of the India Champions, while the squad also features the likes of Dhawan, Harbhajan Singh, Yusuf Pathan, Irfan Pathan, Suresh Raina, Robin Uthappa and Varun Aaron among others.

The WCL organisers shared a statement on their X account, detailing the de-

India top Group D; to face tough Japan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Solo (Indonesia), July 20: India continued their winning run, defeating Hong Kong China 110-100 to top Group D at the Badminton Asia Junior Mixed Team Championships here Sunday.

Both India and Hong Kong had already secured their spots in the knock-out stage before their face-off.

Rujula Ramu once again gave India a winning start

ASIA JUNIOR MIXED TEAM C'SHIPS

beating IP Sum Yau 11-8 and world number six doubles combination of Bhargav Ram Arigela and Viswa Tej Gobburu extended the lead to 22-13 against Cheung Sai Shing and Deng Chi Fai.

Hong Kong's Lam Ka To helped his team close the gap as he scored 13 points before Rounak Chouhan could take India's tally to 33.

With just six points separating the two teams at 55-49 after five matches, junior world no. 1 Tanvi Sharma dominated Liu Hoi Kiu Anna in the second girls' singles to once again put India in the driver's seat by extending the lead 66-54.

Though the next four matches were close, India kept their nose ahead and ensured that they topped the group to set up a quarterfinal clash against Japan Monday.

Eng remains destination for WTC finals, ECB to host next three editions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, July 20: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Saturday awarded the hosting rights for the next three editions of World Test Championship finals to England.

The global body made the decision at its annual conference which concluded here Sunday.

The three WTC finals scheduled in 2027, 2029 and 2031 after completion of two year cycles will in all likelihood be held in June, which is the time for the cricket season in England.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has already hosted the 2021 final in Southampton (India vs New Zealand), 2023 summit clash at the Oval in London (India vs Australia) and the 2025 edition finale at the Lord's (South Africa vs Australia).

"...the England and Wales Cricket Board have been awarded hosting rights for the next three World Test Championship Finals. The first three editions of the WTC Final were held at different venues in England, with Lord's hosting the most recent final between South Africa and Australia last month," the ICC stated in a release.

SHORT TAKES

Pacer Anshul Kamboj added to India squad

Manchester: Pacer Anshul Kamboj has been added to the India squad in England as cover for Akash Deep and Arshdeep Singh, who are racing against time to be ready for the fourth Test beginning here at the Old Trafford July 23. Akash Deep, who is dealing with a groin niggle, played in the second and third Test against England at Birmingham and Lord's respectively, while left-arm pacer Arshdeep is yet to feature in a match in the on-going series. There is no clarity as yet on Akash Deep's availability, while Arshdeep is unlikely to be available for selection for the Manchester Test, and therefore the selectors decided to call Kamboj, PTI has learned.

Wrestlers dominate

Budapest: Indian women continue to assert their dominance on the global wrestling stage at the ongoing 4th Ranking Series - 'Polyak Imre & Varga Janos Memorial' being held in Budapest, Hungary, winning a silver and bronze medal Saturday. In a commendable display of strength and resilience, three Indian women wrestlers made it to the podium, adding more medals to India's tally. While the gold medal remained elusive this time, the performances of the athletes reflected the growing power of Indian women in the sport. Young wrestler Priya Malik demonstrated her exceptional skill and determination in the 76 kg weight category, winning a silver medal.

Marquez creates Ducati milestone

The rider creates MotoGP history with fifth consecutive win

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Brno (Czech Republic), July 20: Marc Marquez claimed his fifth consecutive victory with a dominant performance at the Grand Prix of Czechia, becoming the first Ducati rider to achieve such a feat. Despite the final winning margin of 1.7 seconds, the race was far from easy in its early stages.

Francesco Bagnaia got the best start and took the holeshot, but Marc Marquez quickly responded.

The pair swapped positions multiple times in the opening corners, with Marco Bezzecchi also inserting himself into the mix and eventually taking the lead. However, Bagnaia ran wide shortly after, allowing Bezzecchi and Marquez to pass, as per MotoGP.

Drama unfolded as Alex Marquez attempted a risky move on Joan Mir, resulting in a crash for both riders and an early end to their race. This incident dealt a significant blow to Alex Marquez's title hopes.

Further back, Pedro Acosta began his climb up the order, passing Bagnaia to join the lead battle. Enea Bastianini looked strong early on but crashed out while chasing down Acosta,



ending what had been his best weekend so far.

The decisive moment came on Lap 8 when Marquez overtook Bezzecchi for the lead. He gradually built a gap over the following laps, delivering a series of fastest laps that left his rivals unable to respond. Bezzecchi pushed hard but couldn't match Marquez's pace.

In the closing laps, Bagnaia closed in on Acosta in the fight for the final podium spot. Despite his late charge, he couldn't find a way past, leaving Acosta to celebrate his first Sunday podium of the season.

Brno delivered thrilling action, a passionate crowd, and a historic win for Marquez.

NEW STARS IN MAKING

Sreeshankar triumphs at Portugal athletics meet with best effort

Maia: India's long jumper Murali Sreeshankar won the Meeting Maia Cidade do Desporto 2025, a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze-level meet, with a best jump of 7.75m. Sreeshankar started with a jump of 7.63m and recorded his best jump in the second round (7.75). He then registered 7.69m, followed by a foul attempt, 6.12m and rounded up with a jump of 7.58m. Poland's Piotr Tarkowski and Australia's Chris Mitrevski finished second and third, respectively. Sreeshankar was out of action for a long period of time after suffering a knee injury last year in April, which forced him to miss the Paris Olympics 2024. He had qualified for the Paris Olympics after recording an 8.37m jump on the way to winning silver at the 2023 Asian Athletics Championships. The 26-year-old began with 7.84m and improved further to 7.99m before he breached the 8m mark.



India opens WUG medal account with bronze; Nataraj shines again

Berlin: India opened its medal account in the World University Games (WUG) through the shuttlers, who won a bronze in the mixed team event despite defeat against Chinese Taipei, while swimmer Srihari Nataraj continued his record-breaking spree in the pool Sunday. The Indian mixed team comprising Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, Devika Sihag, Saneeth Dayanand, Tasnim Mir, Varshini Viswanath Sri and Vaishnavi Khadkekar lost to their Chinese Taipei opponents 1-3 in the semifinals. In the swimming competitions, Nataraj bettered the 'Best Indian Time' in the men's 100m freestyle, clocking 49.46 seconds to qualify for the semifinals.

Humpy marches into semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Batumi (Georgia), July 20: Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy played out a fine countering game to hold International Master Yuxin Song of China and march into the semifinals of the FIDE Women's Chess World Cup here Sunday.

Having won the first game with white pieces, Humpy was only a draw away from reaching the last four stage, and she achieved it after a keenly contested second game against the Chinese.

With fourth place assured, Humpy will get two chances to reach the

top three which will also guarantee her a place at next Women's Candidates' tournament for which the top three from here qualify.

The all-Indian duel between Grandmaster D Harika and IM Divya Deshmukh ended in a draw which means that the two will battle it out in the tie-break games scheduled for Monday.

Grandmaster R Vaishali ran out of luck as she lost from slightly better prospects against former world women's champion Zhongyi Tan of China. Vaishali who had drawn the first game lost by the same score as Song.

Vaishali took her chances in the middle game and got the dynamic balance she was looking for. However, resourceful as she is, Tan capitalised on an unforced error to gain the upper hand. Vaishali again got some chances according to the computer but it was always a tall order to find all correct moves.

Quarterfinal results:
Koneru Humpy (Ind) beat Yuxin Song (Chn) 1.5-0.5; Nana Dzagnidze (Geo) lost to Tingjie Lei (Chn) 0-2; R Vaishali (Ind) lost to Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 0.5-1.5; Divya Deshmukh (Ind) drew with D Harika (Ind) 1-1 goes to tiebreaker.

WHEN CRICKET MEETS FOOTBALL



Ahead of their date with destiny against England at the Old Trafford Stadium, the Indian men's cricket team linked up with the Manchester United football team at their post-match training session here Sunday. A post by the Indian Cricket team on Instagram, captioned 'United in Manchester', showcased both teams in action, indulging in a day of sports with both cricket and football