



Vaani's struggles

Actor Vaani Kapoor opens up about facing discrimination, being rejected for her skin tone and body shamed for thinness

LEISURE | P2



Starvation deaths

A six-week-old infant was among 15 people who have died of starvation in Gaza in the past 24 hours

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Nod to UK FTA

The Cabinet approves the free trade agreement between India and UK, to seal in London July 24

BUSINESS | P11



Last chance

Shubman Gill-led Indian team looks to bounce back against England in the fourth Test in Manchester, starting today

SPORTS | P12

4 held for gangrape of minor in Malkangiri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malkangiri, July 22: Four persons, including a truck driver, were arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl in this district, police said Tuesday.

The girl had gone to her friend's house Sunday night but did not return home, following which her family lodged a missing person's complaint at the Malkangiri Adarsh police station.

However, the girl was spotted Monday night along with a truck driver, in a suspicious condition, near Bija Ghat on NH 326 by locals who informed the police.

The SP said the police immediately rushed to the spot and rescued the girl and arrested the truck driver. The rescued girl was sent to a shelter home, he said, adding the mother of the victim has lodged a written complaint.

The action has been taken based on the mother's FIR at Malkangiri Police Station and also the statement of the victim.

The SP said cases lodged against the truck driver identified as Shubham Singh (26), a resident of Madhya Pradesh, Manoj Harijan (30), Rohit Kumar Hial (24) and Bira Bhartia (26) of Malkangiri.

The truck, which has been

Puri: 2 arrested for accosting 3 sisters

Puri: Two persons were arrested here for allegedly accosting three sisters who were returning home after visiting the Jagannath Temple, police said Tuesday. A group of six drunk men harassed them in full public view on the street near the bus stand in Kanthapur area Monday evening. The accused allegedly passed obscene comments, pulled the 'dupatta' of one of the women, and attempted to snatch their mobile phones. They also snatched a purse, according to the police complaint lodged by the women. In the meantime, the women dialled their family, who rushed to the spot and caught two of the accused, who were later handed over to the police. The rest of the accused fled. Puri SP Pinak Mishra said a police team has been formed to nab the other accused.

seized, was transporting cement and was on its way to Jeypore in Koraput district, police said.

The SP said that all four accused persons were arrested within six hours of receiving the complaint.



MAGICAL MOMENT: Principal dancers Risako Ikeda and Shunsuke Mizui during a photocall for National Ballet of Japan at the Royal Opera House in London, Tuesday. PTI PHOTO

CM dismisses doctor on corruption charge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has dismissed a medical officer after he was convicted in a corruption case filed by vigilance department, an official statement said Tuesday.

Majhi has dismissed Karunakar Rout, a senior medical officer serving at the mental health and cancer care department at Bhadrak district headquarters hospital, said the statement issued by the chief minister's office (CMO).

The vigilance department had registered a corruption case against Rout when he was serving as medical officer at Madhuban Community Health Centre in Jajpur district. Departmental proceedings were also initiated against him, it said. Later, he was suspended from service and other punishment measures were also imposed against him. In the meantime, the Vigilance court has convicted him in the corruption case and pronounced its verdict, the statement said.

The CM has adopted a zero tolerance policy towards corruption. Majhi has said many times that his government will not spare any corrupt official irrespective of rank, the CMO said. On the instructions of the CM, the anti-corruption department has been taking strong action on corruption allegations against high-ranking officers and other government employees serving in various fields, it said.

AI plane catches fire after landing at Delhi

New Delhi: An Air India A321 plane's auxiliary power unit caught fire after landing here Tuesday afternoon. "Flight AI 315, operating from Hong Kong to Delhi experienced an auxiliary power unit fire shortly after it had landed and parked at the gate. The APU was automatically shut down as per system design," an airline spokesperson said in a statement. The spokesperson said there was some damage to the aircraft, while passengers and crew members disembarked normally and are safe.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why resign for health reasons when taxpayers' money keeps you healthy?

Oppn smells rat in VP exit

Though Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar cited health reasons behind his resignation, the abrupt move sent ripples through political circles, with some remarking that there was more to it than what meets the eye. Was he another Satyapal Malik, the former J&K Governor who turned hostile towards the ruling dispensation, in the making and the government got rid of him before it was too late? Lately, Dhankhar had started asserting himself and discussing issues with Opposition leaders to the discomfort of the government, it is believed. Accepting an Opposition-sponsored move to remove a judge was that last nail in the coffin, claimed a report. The shock resignation, sources indicate, has spared Dhankhar a government-backed no-confidence motion against him

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: President Droupadi Murmu Tuesday accepted the resignation of Vice

President Jagdeep Dhankhar, who stepped down citing health concerns. However, his exit has triggered intense political speculation, with Opposition parties alleging that the move was prompted by pressure from the government.

Congress leader Sukhdeo Bhagat said, Dhankhar's resignation appeared "pre-scripted and the real story lies elsewhere," referring to reports suggesting the VP resigned shortly after receiving a phone call from unnamed officials.

The controversy comes amid simultaneous developments involving Justice Yashwant Varma, against whom large amounts of unaccounted cash were reportedly seized. The opposition had moved a proposal in the Rajya Sabha seeking Varma's removal. As Rajya Sabha Chairperson, Dhankhar had accepted the notice and instructed the secretary general to initiate appropriate procedures.

Sources indicate that this step may have strained Dhankhar's relationship with



the government and the former was summoned for a discussion. He is believed to have strongly defended the constitutional authority of his office. The conversation reportedly escalated into a heated exchange.

Following this, discussions allegedly began within the ruling coalition regarding a possible no-confidence motion against him—Dhankhar's resignation came shortly after these developments, fueling speculation that it was a pre-emptive step to avoid political confrontation.

Meanwhile, Congress Tuesday claimed that there are 'far deeper reasons' for Dhankhar's resignation.

Party's general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The VP has resigned. He has given health reasons for doing so. Those should be respected. But it is also a fact that there are far deeper reasons for his resignation."

The Congress saying that there is "far more to his totally unexpected resignation than meets the eye" also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convince Dhankhar to change his mind.

The AAP also demanded a "clear explanation" from the government for the sudden resignation of former vice president, calling it a matter of "serious concern".

Addressing a press conference, Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh questioned the government's "silence" and the "delayed response" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While both the ruling party and the opposition sought Justice Verma's removal, the real contest is over who will claim the credit.

Will crush your economy: US Senator warns India

AGENCIES

Washington, July 22: US Senator Lindsey Graham has warned that American President Donald Trump will impose steep tariffs on Moscow's trading partners -including India and China- if they don't stop buying Russian oil amid Russia's war in Ukraine. The Republican lawmaker said the Trump administration was planning to impose a 100 per cent tariff on oil-related imports, fueling Russian President Vladimir Putin's campaign against Kyiv.

Graham had earlier proposed a bill calling for 500 per cent tariffs on goods from countries continuing to trade with Russia, including India and China.

"Trump is going to impose tariffs on people that buy Russian oil - China, India, and Brazil... Here's what I would tell China, India and Brazil: If you keep buying cheap Russian oil to allow this war to continue, we're going to tear up the hell out of you, and we're going to crush your economy," Graham said during an

interview with Fox News.

"What you (India, China and Brazil) are doing is blood money...He's (Putin) not going to stop until somebody makes him stop."

In a direct warning to Russia, Graham said, "The game has changed when it comes to you, President Putin. You have played President Trump at your own peril. You made a major league mistake, and your economy is going to continue to be crushed." Graham claimed that by "invading countries that do not belong to him", Putin was trying to recreate the former Soviet Union.

"Putin wants to take countries that are not his. In the mid-90s, Ukraine gave up 1,700 nuclear weapons with a promise that its sovereignty would be respected by Russia. Putin broke that promise," the Republican added. The fiery remarks seem to signal the Trump administration's growing frustration with Putin's disinterest in ending the war, which Trump once promised to end on the first day of his second term.

Students' startup delivers combat drones to Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, July 22: Apollyon Dynamics, a defence-tech start-up founded by two students of BITS Pilani, Hyderabad, an enterprise that began as a humble prototype assembly unit in a hostel room, has now started delivering indigenous combat drones and kamikazes to the Indian Army, just two months after launching operations, the founders said on Tuesday.

The startup co-founded by Jayant Khatri, a Mechanical Engineering student from Ajmer and Sourya Choudhury, an Electronics Engineering student from Kolkata, has delivered unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to Indian Army units in Jam-



mu, Haryana's Chandimandir, West Bengal's Panagarh, and Arunachal Pradesh.

With a strategic goal to reduce India's dependence on foreign UAV technology, Apollyon's lineup includes multi-role aerial vehicles for long-range surveillance, tactical payload delivery, and high-precision kamikaze operations.

Its flagship kamikaze platform can fly at speeds exceeding 300 km per hour and deliver payloads up to 1 kg with high accuracy, making it one of the most effective systems of its kind.

"Designed for versatility in high-stakes environments, these drones are capable of executing a wide range of tactical operations from precision kamikaze strikes and covert nighttime surveillance to strategic payload deployment," Jayant Khatri and Sourya Choudhury, told this agency.

The idea for Apollyon Dynamics was born in early April this year, driven by Jayant and Sourya's shared passion for robotics and unmanned aerial systems.

₹29L GST demand on vegetable vendor

AGENCIES

Haveri (Karnataka), July 22: An unregistered vegetable vendor from this town has received a notice for the non-compliance of new the Goods and Services Tax (GST) laws and a tax demand of ₹29 lakhs.

Shankargouda Hadimani, who has been running a vegetable shop near the Municipal High School grounds for the last four years, received payments mostly through UPI and other e-wallets. The GST officials had served a notice on the vendor stating, "You have done transactions worth ₹1.63 crore in the last four years, for which, you have to pay GST of ₹29 lakh."

Shocked by tax demand, the vendor has stopped accepting payments through UPI. "I procure vegetables from the farmers and sell the produce at



the small shop I own near Municipal High School grounds. Nowadays, customers favour UPI payments. I promptly file I-T returns every year. I have records for the same. The GST

officials have served a tax demand of ₹29 lakh. How can I pay such a huge amount?," Shankargouda questions.

Meanwhile, the Union Minister for Food, Public Distri-

bution and Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi has clarified that the GST notices issued to small-scale traders in Karnataka are the doing of the state government, and not from the Central government.

"It is Karnataka's commercial tax officials who issued the GST dues notices to small traders. And yet, the state government is now misleading the public by pretending it has no involvement. This is nothing but an attempt to shirk responsibility," Joshi said.

It's noteworthy to mention that GST, launched 2017 by the Centre, subsumes central and state levies into one indirect tax with multiple components such as CGST (Centre), SGST (States), IGST (inter-state) and UTGST for Union Territories creating unified national market and seamless input credit flow.

leisure



MARVEL TO RECAST IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA

Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige has hinted at the possibility of recasting two of the Marvel Cinematic Universe's most iconic roles — Tony Stark/Iron Man and Steve Rogers/Captain America — in future projects. Speaking about the evolving nature of long-running film franchises, Feige referenced the recent reshuffling in other major cinematic universes as precedent.

ED SHEERAN SAYS SHILLONG IS HIS FAVOURITE INDIAN CITY

International pop icon Ed Sheeran said Shillong is his favourite Indian city, months after performing here as part of his global + " = A x (Mathematics) Tour. "Shillong just felt very different," the Grammy-winning singer-songwriter said during a candid segment titled *Spin the Wheel with Ed Sheeran* hosted by content creator Shabaz Says.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

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

TAURUS

This is one of those days when not goes well, warns Ganesha. No matter how hard you try you may not be able to keep problems and difficulties at bay. You may not be pleased or comfortable doing what has been assigned, or required, and could simply sit sullenly, doing nothing. Do not, therefore, take up anything difficult or complex. Stick to simple and easy things. Knowing that this day will pass, you should try to remain positive and optimistic.

GEMINI

You face a hectic and demanding day today. You will spend your entire day wondering how best to channelise your energy and enthusiasm. You may be prone to extreme mood swings as well. Meditative techniques should help you keep your mind calm, says Ganesha.

CANCER

You will focus on financial matters and plan accordingly. Compared to expenses, you will save more. A beneficial day for cashiers, money lenders and petty traders. Ganesha counsels hard work to achieve success.

LEO

You will be filled with extraordinary self-confidence and will be able to take on huge risks. Sportspeople will be able to make a lot of progress in their fields. You will square off against any obstacles in your way using your entire might. While it is a good day for you, keep a curb on your speculations, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

You will remain engrossed in personal matters at the cost of professionalism. Solve your problems today by taking them head-on. Ganesha warns you not to let your emotions suppress your enterprising spirit, especially in the evening.

LIBRA

Ganesha says today you will try to be adept in your favorite subject. Today you will be buying antique things too. If there are any legal proceedings going on then the results will be in your favor. You shall be a success in everything that you touch today. Your artistic streak will come to the fore today and you will develop an interest in the fine arts.

SCORPIO

Thank Ganesha that you have the grace to handle pressure at work, because today, you are going to be bogged down with a lot of work pressure. By the end of the day, try some stress bursting activities like yoga, meditation of listening to soft music.

SAGITTARIUS

You are caught in a whirlpool of emotions, predicts Ganesha. You may come across many ups and downs today. However, nothing seems to deter you from your determination and dedication towards work.

CAPRICORN

Forced to some backbreaking work today, you will feel exhausted by the end of the day. It is a cut-throat competition when it comes to the business world. Your arch rivals are looking out for one small opportunity to damage your business and reputation. But, you are no less. You understand their moves. Ganesha predicts that you will be ready with the equally strong counter attack and fight back.

AQUARIUS

Travelling is on the cards for you today, Ganesha advises you to travel alone, because if you take people with different tastes along with you, their preferences may dampen your mood and spoil the trips. But, once put in such a situation, you will try to adjust yourself and find enjoyment in that, too. Your biggest plus point is the ability to convert your shortcoming into strength.

PISCES

The day will be exceptional for working people as the planets seemed to be aligned perfectly, portends Ganesha. You will achieve all the expected results in the office and/or at work today. Those looking to pursue further studies in foreign countries will also make progress and come closer to fulfilling their dreams. Ganesha gladly predicts this day to be fruitful and generous for those who fall under this sign.

Vaani on industry prejudice



Mumbai: Breaking into the film industry is notoriously tough, especially for outsiders—

and even more so for women who don't fit conventional beauty standards. Actor Vaani Kapoor recently opened up about the discrimination she faced early in her career, including being rejected for her skin tone and body shamed for being too skinny.

In a recent interview, Vaani revealed she lost a role because a filmmaker felt she wasn't "milky white" enough. Though the remark wasn't made directly to her, she learned of the decision through others. "A filmmaker had once said that I wasn't fair enough to land a role," she shared.

Vaani also spoke about the frequent comments on her physique, saying, "What I hear a lot is that I'm too skinny and should gain weight. But I like me! I'm fit, healthy, and confident in who I am."

Now, Kapoor is gearing up for her upcoming Netflix crime thriller *Mandala Murders*, where she plays a no-nonsense investigative officer. Co-directed by Gopi Puthran and Manan Rawat, the series explores a string of ritualistic killings in the town of Charandaspur. The ensemble cast includes Surveen Chawla, Vaibhav Raj Gupta, Shriya Pilgaonkar, and Jameel Khan. *Mandala Murders* premieres July 25.

AGENCIES

Hrithik re-installs Instagram for this reason

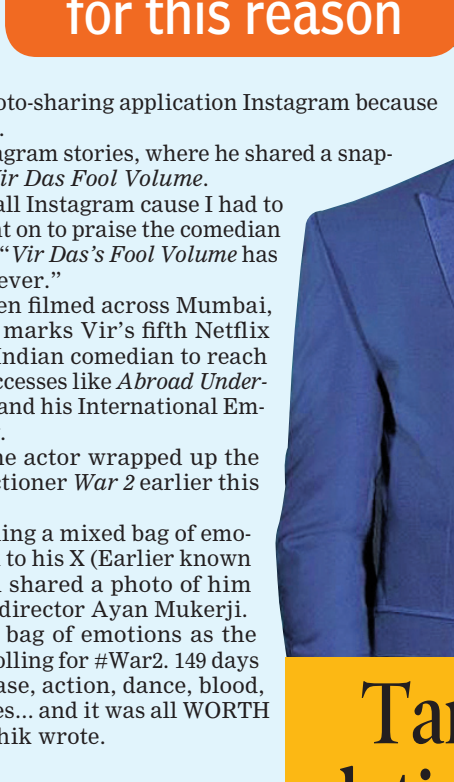
Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan reveals he had to re-install the photo-sharing application Instagram because of stand up star Vir Das.

Hrithik took to his Instagram stories, where he shared a snapshot of Vir's latest show *Vir Das Fool Volume*. He wrote: "Had to re-install Instagram cause I had to say this." The actor then went on to praise the comedian and his show. Hrithik added: "*Vir Das's Fool Volume* has to be the best stand up show ever."

The comedy special has been filmed across Mumbai, New York and London. This marks Vir's fifth Netflix special making him the first Indian comedian to reach that milestone. With global successes like *Abroad Understanding*, *Losing It*, *For India* and his International Emmy-winning special *Landing*.

Talking about Hrithik, the actor wrapped up the shooting of his upcoming actioner *War 2* earlier this month.

Revealing that he is feeling a mixed bag of emotions July 8, Hrithik took to his X (Earlier known as Twitter) handle and shared a photo of him cutting the cake with director Ayan Mukerji. "Feeling a mixed bag of emotions as the cameras stopped rolling for #War2. 149 days of relentless chase, action, dance, blood, sweat, injuries... and it was all WORTH IT!", Hrithik wrote.



Tara reignites dating rumours

Mumbai: Bollywood actors Tara Sutaria and Veer Pahariya have seemingly confirmed their relationship on Instagram.

Sutaria, known for films such as *Student of the Year 2* and *Marjaavaan*, shared a series of pictures alongside rapper-singer AP Dhillon from their song *Thodi Si Daaru* on her Instagram handle. But what caught attention was the word exchange between her and Pahariya.

The *Sky Force* actor wrote 'My', adding star and heart emojis in the comment section of the post, to which Sutaria replied 'Mine' with a heart emoji.

The rumours of the relationship between the actors have been there for a while. The duo also walked as the show-stoppers together for the British fashion brand ASOS at the 25th edition of *Lakme Fashion Week* in March.

Pahariya made his acting debut with *Sky Force* alongside Akshay Kumar. The film was released in January and featured Pahariya in the role of T Krishna Vijaya 'Tabby'. It was directed by Abhishek Anil Kapur and Sandeep Kewlani. He will next star alongside Madhuri Dixit and Tripti Dimri in the drama film, titled *Maa Behan*.

Sutaria appeared in the 2023 thriller film *Apurva*.

FSB's 3rd Children's Film Festival from today

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The third edition of the Children's Film Festival, organised by the Film Society of Bhubaneswar (FSB), is set to commence Wednesday at the GKCM Odissi Research Centre. The three-day event aims to introduce young minds to the world of global cinema and storytelling.

Students from Class VI to VIII of Loyola Odia Medium School and KIIT International School will participate in the festival, which features film screenings and a unique workshop on Shadow Puppetry.

The festival opens with screening of *Flow* (2024), a silent animated film by Gints Zilbalodis, and Charlie Chaplin's classic *The Gold Rush* (1925). The following days will feature *A Bug's Life* (1998) by John Lasseter, *The Secret World of Arrietty*



(2010) by Hiromasa Yonebayashi, *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1961) by Andrei Tarkovsky, and *The Cave*

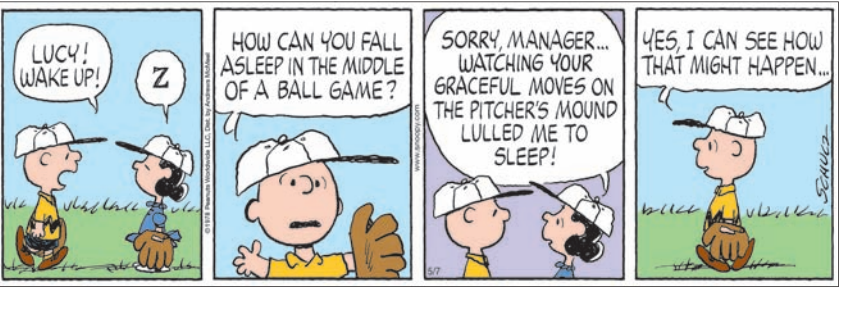
of *the Yellow Dog* (2005) by Byambasuren Davaa.

FSB President Subrat Beura said, "It is important to expose young minds to films from across the world. Our shadow puppetry workshop encourages students to collaborate and take pride in seeing their creations on the big screen."

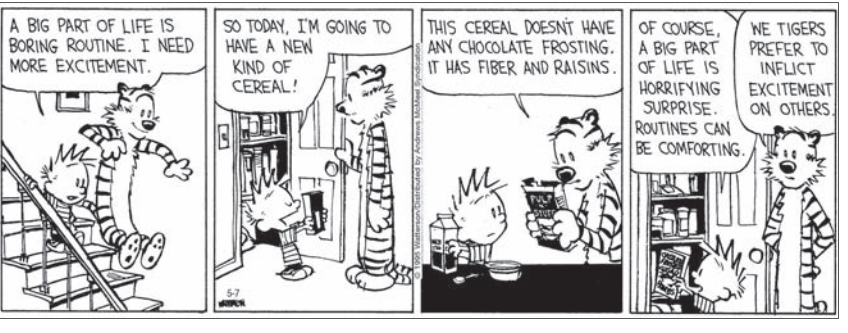
He added, "The idea is to open up conversations about the world through visual storytelling. FSB has been making continuous efforts to bring together students from different schools on a creative platform."

The final day will include a screening of the Shadow Puppetry performances created by the students, with parents invited to witness the culmination of the workshop and storytelling sessions.

PEANUTS



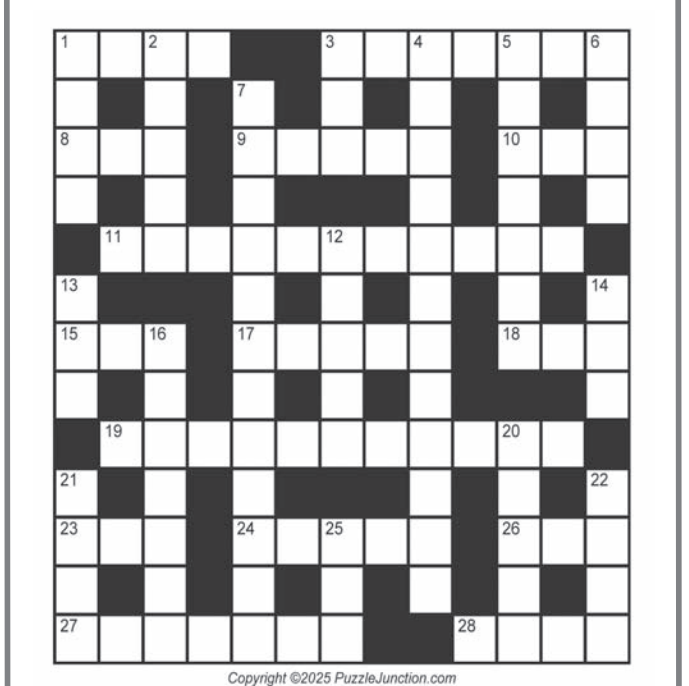
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



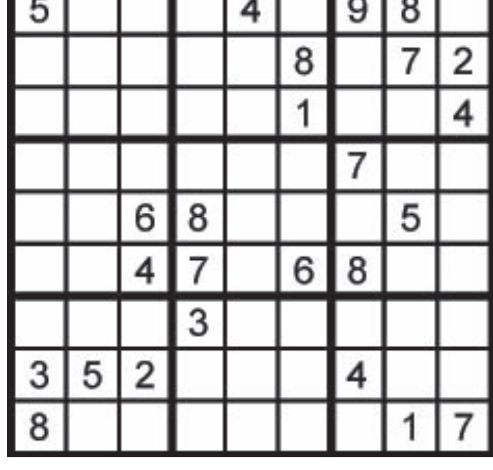
CROSSWORD



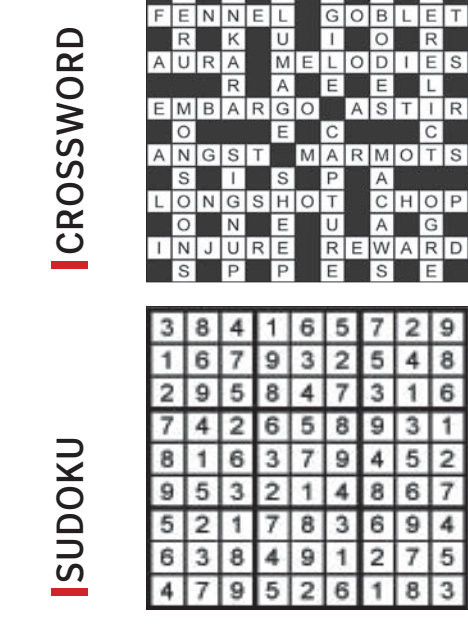
- Across**
- 1 Warning device
 - 3 Looks up to
 - 8 Zero
 - 9 Loathe
 - 10 Basenji, e.g.
 - 11 Dentist's forte
 - 15 Balloon filler
 - 17 Flip-flop
 - 18 Have a bawl
 - 19 Artist's bane (6-5)
 - 23 Permit
 - 24 Keyed up
 - 26 Lenient
 - 27 Baked dessert
 - 28 Huffly state
 - Down**
 - 1 Sharpen
 - 2 Chill out
 - 3 Cigar residue
 - 4 Vine having funnel-shaped flowers (7-5)
 - 5 Chinchillas
 - 6 Philosopher
 - 7 Extinct tigers (5-7)
 - 12 Chorus
 - 13 Gullible one
 - 14 Diminish
 - 16 Nature's alarm clock
 - 20 Parachute material
 - 21 Heidi's home
 - 22 Door sign
 - 25 Sidekick

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

The much-awaited Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court complex for Astaranga and Kakatpur was inaugurated by Orissa High Court Chief Justice Harish Tandon Tuesday.



downtown

FM student death: HC no to SIT probe



HC bench, headed by Chief Justice Harish Tandon, issued notices to Biju Janata Dal and Congress, saying the agitation and bandh by the parties to protest the incident affected normal life

against the professor of her department. The 20-year-old student, who suffered 95 per cent burns, died at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar late July 14 night, it was learnt.

An advocate filed a PIL praying for the constitution of a high court-monitored special investigation team (SIT) to probe the incident. Currently, the Crime Branch of Odisha Police is probing the case.

During the hearing, the bench, also comprising Justice Manas Ranjan Pathak, expressed satisfaction with the investigation being carried out by the Crime Branch.

Earlier, Advocate General (AG) Pitambar Acharya submitted a status report before the bench, stating that the ongoing probe is being led by a senior IPS officer of the rank of inspector general, and assured the court that the state government is making every effort to ensure justice to the victim.

He said that the teacher concerned and the then-principal of the college were arrested.

The bench took exception to attempts by political parties and organisations to politicise the incident, giving bandh

calls, road blockades, and picketing before government offices and hospitals, which have disrupted public life in violation of binding directions issued by the Supreme Court.

The AG told the court that some of the political parties are politicising the issue and resorting to strikes undemocratically, violence, staging demonstrations inside hospitals like AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, paralysing the public transport system, which affected work at public offices.

The petitioner's advocate also informed the bench that he failed to reach court July 17. The court took suo motu cognisance of the mode of protest and issued notices to the BJD and the Congress, directing them to file responses in connection with the PIL within three weeks.

The bench observed that such bandh calls constitute a blatant violation of the Supreme Court's rulings, which prohibit obstruction of normal life under the guise of protest.

The matter has been posted for further hearing after the replies are filed.

State BJP chief Samal on 4-day Delhi visit

Bhubaneswar: Amid speculations of a possible state Cabinet expansion, Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal Tuesday embarked on a four-day visit to New Delhi. Samal is also accompanied by BJP state general secretary Manas Mohanty, said sources.

Major bureaucratic reshuffle in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The state government Tuesday effected a major bureaucratic reshuffle among 47 IAS and two OAS officers.

According to a notification issued by the GA&PG department, Puri Collector Chanchal Rana has been appointed as the Commissioner of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Hemant Sharma, Industries department ACS with the additional charge of Chairman of IPICOL has been allowed to remain in the additional charge of ACS of I&PR department.

Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, Odia Language, Literature & Culture department Principal Secretary with additional charge of ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare department Principal Secretary, has been appointed as Finance department Principal Secretary.

He will retain his additional charge as Chairman of IDCO. NBS Rajput, Principal Secretary to the Governor, has been appointed as Public Enterprises department Principal Secretary. He will continue holding additional charge as OSRTC CMD.

Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma, Sports & Youth Services department Principal Secretary with additional charge as OPTCL CMD, has been appointed as Excise department Principal Secretary. He will also retain the additional charge of OPTCL CMD.

Roopa Roshan Sahoo, RDC (SD), Berhampur, has been appointed as Commissioner-cum-Secretary to the Governor. Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav, RDC (ND), Sambalpur with additional charge of WODC CEO, is appointed as Sports & Youth Services department Commissioner-cum-Secretary.

He is allowed to retain additional charge of RDC (ND), Sambalpur and WODC CEO. Bhupendra Singh Poonia, IPICOL MD with additional charge of Industries department Special Secretary, IDCO MD, and Skill Development & Technical Education department

Commissioner-cum-Secretary, is appointed as Skill Development & Technical Education department Commissioner-cum-Secretary. He is allowed to retain additional charge of IPICOL MD.

B Parameswaran, RDC (CD), Cuttack, is appointed as ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare department Commissioner-cum-Secretary.

Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar, Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts department Commissioner-cum-Secretary, is allowed to retain additional charge of RDC (CD), Cuttack.

D Prasanth Kumar Reddy, Director of Industries with additional charge of OSIC and OSFC MD, is appointed as MSME department Commissioner-cum-Secretary. He is allowed to retain additional charge of IDCO MD.

Indramani Tripathy, Labour

Kendrapara Collector & DM, is appointed as Forest, Environment & Climate Change department Additional Secretary.

Raghuram R Iyer, Higher Secondary Education Director with additional charge of MDM PD, TBPM Director and S&ME department Additional Secretary, is appointed as Kendrapara Collector & DM.

Siddharth Shankar Swain, GA&PG department OSD, is appointed as Director, Special Project, PR&DW department.

Chakravarti Singh Rathore, PR&DW department Additional Secretary with additional charge of ORMAS CEO, is appointed as Technical Education & Training Director.

Yeddula Vijay, Planning & Convergence department Additional Secretary, is appointed as Director of Sports.

Niyati Pattnaik, SSEPD Director, is appointed as Higher Secondary Education Director.

is appointed as Finance department Additional Secretary.

Diabya Jyoti Parida, Ganjam Collector & DM, is appointed as Puri Collector & DM.

Somesh Kumar Upadhyay, Dhenkanal Collector & DM, is appointed as Collector & DM of Malkangiri.

P Anvesha Reddy, Collector & DM of Jajpur, is appointed as Excise Commissioner.

Ashish Ishwar Patil, Collector & DM of Malkangiri, is appointed as Collector & DM of Dhenkanal. Subhankar Mohapatra, Collector & DM of Nabarangpur, is appointed as Collector & DM of Sundargarh.

Keerthi Vasan V, Collector & DM of Koraput, is appointed as Collector & DM of Ganjam.

Ananya Das, Collector & DM of Sonepur, is appointed as H&FW department Deputy Secretary. Manoj Satyawan Mahajan, Collector & DM of Sundargarh, is appointed as Collector & DM of Koraput.

Vedbhushan, Sambalpur Municipal Corporation Commissioner, is appointed as Collector & DM of Kandhamal. Kulkarni Ashutosh C, Rourkela ADM, is appointed as Collector & DM of Rayagada.

Madhumita, Ganjam Zilla Parishad CDO-cum-EO, is appointed as Collector & DM of Gajapati. Chavan Kunal Motiram, Padampur ADM, is appointed as Collector & DM of Jharsuguda.

Bibhuti Bhusan Nayak, Mayurbhanj ADM, is appointed as Collector & DM of Boudh. Dheenah Dastageer, Berhampur Sub-Collector, is appointed as Rourkela ADM. Rehan Khatri, Titilagarh Sub-Collector, is appointed as Sambalpur Municipal Corporation Commissioner.

Rina Pradhan, Baliguda Sub-Collector, is appointed as Keonjhar DMF Chief Executive Officer. Kirandeep Kaur Saha, Gunupur Sub-Collector, is appointed as Cuttack Municipal Corporation Commissioner.

OAS officer Nruparaj Sahu (SS), Sambalpur University Registrar, is transferred and posted as Subarnapur Collector & DM.

OAS officer Ambar Kumar Kar (SS), Excise department Special Secretary, is transferred and posted as Collector & DM of Jajpur.

PNN & AGENCIES

Cuttack, July 22: The Orissa High Court Tuesday declined to order an SIT probe into the self-immolation death of a college student following alleged sexual harassment by a teacher in Balasore.

A division bench, headed by Chief Justice Harish Tandon, also issued notices to the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress, saying the agitation and bandh by the parties to protest the incident affected normal life.

The second-year Integrated BEd student of Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College in Balasore set herself ablaze July 12, shortly after coming out of the principal's chamber, alleging inaction over her complaint

Keonjhar DFO with 218% DA arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Vigilance Directorate Tuesday arrested Keonjhar Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kendu Leaf, Nityananda Nayak on the charge of possessing disproportionate assets (DA) to the tune of 218 per cent of his known sources of income.

On the allegations of possession of DA by the DFO, simultaneous searches were conducted at the office and places linked to the officer Sunday and Monday.

Vigilance sleuths found as many as 123 plots in the name of Nayak and his family members. "While 58 plots were in the name of the OFS officer, 43 were in the name of his spouse, 18 in the name of his two sons and four in the name of his daughter," a Vigilance statement said.

A 9,000 sqft four-storey building at Turanga in Angul, a farmhouse of around 1.50 acre comprising an outhouse of 1,432 sqft, another house of around 314 sqft, a pond over 0.40 acre land excavated at a cost of around ₹30 lakh, two borewells, one well, and plantation of hundreds of coconut, banana and mango trees, another farmhouse with an under construction building and 98 coconut trees over 0.72 acre land, a pond over 0.75 acre in Angul district have also been found in his possession.

These apart, ₹10.25 lakh cash, 200 gram gold ornaments, bank and insurance deposits worth ₹50,38,660, two four-wheelers and two two-wheelers, and household articles worth around ₹23.80 lakh were also found in the possession of the OFS officer. "After a thorough search, inventory and further enquiry, the income, expenditure and assets of the OFS officer were calculated, and he was found in possession of DA which were 218 per cent in excess of his known sources of income," it said.

"This is the highest number of plots, in the possession of a government employee, detected by the Odisha Vigilance till now," a Vigilance officer said.

11 more blocks under NITI's aspirational prog

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Eleven blocks of Odisha have been included in the Aspirational Block Programme of the NITI Aayog, according to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) Tuesday.

The programme focuses on improving governance to enhance the quality of life of citizens and service delivery in the remotest and less developed blocks of India. This is done through converging existing schemes, defining outcomes, and monitoring them constantly to bridge gaps.

Five blocks of Keonjhar district and six of Mayurbhanj district have been added to the programme.

With this, a total of 40 blocks of Odisha have now become Aspirational Blocks.

As per the statement, Chief

Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had requested the NITI Aayog to include these blocks under its programme.

Accepting Majhi's request, the NITI Aayog has included these blocks in the Aspirational Programme.

The new blocks that have been included in the programme are - Champua, Jhumpura, Keonjhar Sadar, Patna and Telkoi of Keonjhar district and Behalda, Bijataala, Jamada, Kusumi, Rairangpur and Tiringi of Mayurbhanj district, it said.

A notification in this regard was issued by the NITI Aayog Tuesday. The broad contours of the programme are convergence of Central and state schemes, collaboration of Central, state-level nodal officers and district Collectors, and competition among blocks through monthly delta ranking.



VICTORY: Deputy CM and Mission Shakti Minister Pravat Parida hands over a cheque of ₹2 lakh to members of Shree Sakambari SHG from Dhenkanal as they bagged the first prize at the grand finale of Subhadra Shakti Traditional Food Competition organised at a hotel in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

6,358 new booths will be created: CEO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) RS Gopalan Tuesday held a meeting with representatives of various recognised political parties here where he said that an additional 6,358 booths will be created across the state to avoid crowding during voting process. He also said that political parties must ensure that booth level agents (BLAs) include their photographs and mobile numbers in BLA-2 application form during their appointment.

In order to enhance voter convenience and reduce crowding, booths that previously catered to 1,500 voters will now be limited to 1,200 voters. For this reason, the number of booths will be increased. Polling centres with more than 1,200 voters will be reorganised to ensure smooth voting process. These



steps are being taken to simplify voter access and reduce overcrowding at polling stations before the elections.

Stating that it is mandatory to include a photo and mobile number in the BLA-2 form while appointing BLAs, the CEO said that the previously appointed BLAs, who had not submitted their photos and mobile numbers, must also re-submit their forms.

Gopalan urged all the political parties to actively appoint BLAs.

The meeting was also attended by Additional Chief Electoral Officer Sushant Kumar Mishra, Deputy Chief Electoral Officers Lakshmi Prasad Sahu and Anamika Singh.

During the meeting, members of all political parties expressed their willingness to participate in the process.

NHRC for ₹28 lakh relief in 144 cases

In Open Hearing and Camp Sitting, the Commission addressed serious issues including custodial deaths and violence against women and children

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) concluded its two-day Open Hearing and Camp Sitting here after reviewing 144 cases of alleged human rights violations. In several instances, the Commission recommended monetary relief totalling around ₹28 lakh for the victims.

Presided over by NHRC chairperson Justice V Ramasubramanian, along with members Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, the hearings addressed grave concerns including custodial deaths, crimes against women and children, electrocution, drowning incidents, and inadequate basic amenities.

The Commission recommended ₹4 lakh compensation each for the families of five workers who died in a blast at a hazardous cracker factory. It also directed authorities to expedite police investigations, provide pensions and interim relief, and ensure access to social welfare benefits.

A total of 38 cases were closed following the hearings, while three others were disposed of after compliance and proof of compensation payment.

Additionally, compensation worth ₹1 crore remains pending under the Victim Compensation Scheme in 25 cases. The Odisha State Legal Services Authority assured the NHRC of early disposal of these claims.

Following the hearings, the NHRC held a meeting with top Odisha officials, including the Chief Secretary and Director



THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED ₹4 LAKH COMPENSATION EACH FOR FAMILIES OF FIVE WORKERS WHO DIED IN A HAZARDOUS CRACKER FACTORY BLAST. IT DIRECTED AUTHORITIES TO SPEED UP POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, PROVIDE PENSIONS AND INTERIM RELIEF, AND ENSURE SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS

General of Police, to discuss pressing human rights concerns such as flood-related hardships, snakebite deaths, human trafficking during the Covid pandemic, and witchcraft-linked violence.

The Commission also stressed the need for timely submission of action-taken reports on its advisories related to mental health, bonded labour, and the right to food.

In a solemn gesture, the NHRC paid tribute to late Advocate Radhakanta Tripathy, a noted human rights defender from Odisha, by observing a two-minute silence and issuing a condolence message in his memory.

Chairperson Justice Ramasubramanian highlighted the vital role of civil society and human rights defenders (HRDs) in strengthening the justice system and urged citizens to make use of the Commission's online complaint portal, hrnet.nic.in, for faster grievance redressal.

Min Pujari calls on Guv at Raj Bhavan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari paid a courtesy visit to Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan Tuesday.

During the meeting, they discussed a range of issues concerning governance, disaster management, and the overall development of the state. Their conversation also focused on development strategies aimed at strengthening disaster response systems, streamlining land and revenue administration, and improving the delivery of public services.

Minister Pujari briefed the Governor on key initiatives being undertaken by the Revenue and Disaster Management department to strengthen disaster preparedness, improve service delivery, and promote inclusive growth across the state.

Governor Kambhampati appreciated the department's efforts and emphasised the importance of proactive planning and coordination among various agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens.



COURTESY VISIT: Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari calls on Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

'Eastern region a literary hub'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Eastern Writers' Meet, jointly organised by the Central Sahitya Akademi and Odisha Sahitya Akademi, was inaugurated at the Sanskriti Bhawan auditorium. The inaugural session was presided over by Sahitya Akademi president Dr Madhav Kaushik, who described the eastern region as a treasure trove of literature, home to many

legendary writers.

Dr Kaushik emphasised the need to embrace technology as a powerful tool in the literary world, rather than becoming enslaved by it. In his welcome speech, Sahitya Akademi secretary Dr K Sreenivasrao highlighted the significance of organising regional writers' meets to foster literary exchange and collaboration.

Eminent Odia poet Haraprasad Das, present as chief guest, stated that Indian literature and culture surpass their Western counterparts in depth and richness. He also cautioned writers about the misuse of Artificial Intelligence and tools like ChatGPT, particularly in translation and literary creations.

'Paika Rebellion omission a dishonour'

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Former CM Naveen Patnaik Tuesday expressed anguish, stating that the 'omission' of Paika rebellion from the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbook was a 'huge dishonour' to the state's heroes.

Patnaik, the chief of the Opposition BJD, said the Paika rebellion was a watershed moment in Odisha's history as they fought with extraordinary courage against the oppressive British way back in 1817.

"Deeply concerned to know

that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (@ncert) has dropped #Odisha's Paika Rebellion or Paika Bidroha from its textbooks," he said in a post on X.

"I had urged the Govt of India many times to declare it as first war of Independence," he added. Patnaik, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, said Paikas came together to fight against the tyranny of foreign, colonial rule with unparalleled bravery.

"The omission of the epic rebellion from NCERT textbooks, which took place 40 years before the sepoy mutiny, is a huge dishonour to our brave Paikas, 200 years after the rebellion which became torchbearer for people's movement against British rule," he said.

Patnaik urged Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to ensure that "justice is done to Paika Bidroha and Odisha". The NCERT, in a statement, noted that "the said textbook happens to be the 1st volume of this textbook".

"The second volume is in final stages of development and is expected to be released in Sept-Oct 2025," it said.

"The omission of the epic rebellion from NCERT textbooks, which took place 40 years before the sepoy mutiny, is a huge dishonour to our brave Paikas, 200 years after the rebellion which became torchbearer for people's movement against British rule," he said.

Patnaik urged Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to ensure that "justice is done to Paika Bidroha and Odisha". The NCERT, in a statement, noted that "the said textbook happens to be the 1st volume of this textbook".

OSEFD urges Guv on spl educator appointments



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: A delegation from the Odisha Special Educator Federation for Divyang (OSEFD) met Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan Tuesday, urging the immediate and permanent appointment of special educators in all general schools across the state.

Led by state secretary Ayusman Choudhury and treasurer Abhisek Acharya, the team submitted a memorandum citing Supreme Court directives mandating inclusive education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN). The court, in its orders dated October 28, 2021, and July 21, 2022, requires one special educator per 10 CwSN in primary schools and one per 15 in upper primary to higher secondary levels. Even schools with a single disabled student must appoint a special educator.

With the next Supreme Court hearing set for August 29, OSEFD warned that non-compliance could lead to legal summons for state education officials.

The delegation also renewed its demand for the BED (Special Education) degree to be treated as equivalent to BEd (General), allowing qualified Special Educators to take part in mainstream recruitment.

"This is a crucial moment for the educational rights of PwDs in Odisha," Choudhury said. Governor Kambhampati assured a serious review and timely action on the matter.

RDWU observes Rama Devi's 40th death anniversary

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Rama Devi Women's University (RDWU) observed the 40th Punyatithi of renowned freedom fighter and social reformer Maa Rama Devi Tuesday.

Chair Professor Sucheta Priyabadi welcomed the guests and paid homage to Maa Rama Devi's enduring legacy. "She was a torchbearer of women's empowerment and social reform," she said adding, "Her life stands as a lesson in courage, simplicity, and sacrifice."

Writer Banaja Devi present as chief guest shared personal memories, saying, "Maa Rama Devi's life was marked by faith,



POST NEWS NETWORK

compassion, and unwavering service to humanity." In his address, renowned scientist and literary figure Chitranjan Mishra said, "Maa Rama Devi was more than a freedom fighter—she embodied moral strength, selfless sacrifice, and cultural resilience. Her values were shaped by a legacy of visionaries like

Ashutosh Mohanty, a pioneer of modern Indian education, and Gopabandhu Chaudhary, whose spirit of service continues to inspire."

Vice Chancellor (I/C) Chandhi Charan Rath said, "Maa Rama Devi's values of service and sacrifice continue to guide us. Even Mahatma Gandhi came to Odisha to meet her—such was her

Odisha's young women rise through skilling

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: In a state where women's safety and harassment remain pressing issues, the rise of young women through skill development is both powerful and inspiring. The Skilled-in-Odisha initiative and the World Skill Center (WSC) in Bhubaneswar are becoming safe, empowering platforms for transformation.

Young women from remote districts of Odisha are rising to global success, fueled by the Skilled-in-Odisha initiative and training at the World Skill Center (WSC) in Bhubaneswar.

"I had never imagined that one day I would work in Dubai. WSC helped me to believe in myself and gave me the skills to succeed," said Anjulata Negi, a determined young woman from Barghar district who redefined her life through training and resilience.

Anjulata, who lost her father in childhood, took the responsibility of raising her siblings.



She began her journey at ITI Bheden in the Electrician trade, followed by advanced training in Mechanical & Electrical Services at WSC, Bhubaneswar. Today, she is employed with EFS Facilities Services, Dubai, a leading international facility management company, earning an annual package of ₹6.15 lakh.

Priti Sahoo, from Keonjhar district, faced a similar early personal loss. With limited financial resources and a homemaker mother, she pursued a course in Beauty and Wellness at WSC. Her passion and de-

termination earned her employment in a London-based cruise company, with a remarkable package of ₹20.16 lakh per annum.

Afreen Begum, from Ganjam district, fought economic hardship to complete ITI and specialised in Vertical Transportation at WSC. She now works with Johnsons Lift Company, Chennai, and earning ₹2.64 lakh annually, fulfilling her father's dream.

Jasmin Kandpan, from Koraput, joined WSC to follow her aspirations in the fashion and grooming industry. Now she

is working as a salon manager at Looks Salon. She earns ₹4.2 lakh per year and credits WSC for broadening her vision and connecting her to global opportunities.

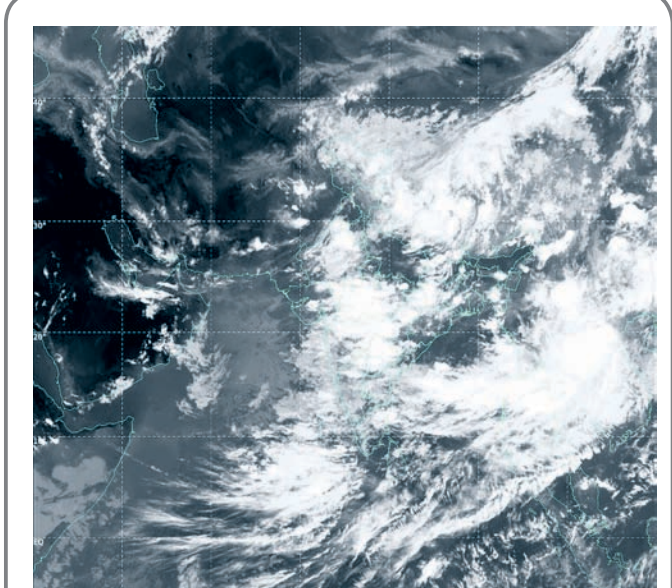
Over the past four years, five graduating batches from WSC have achieved 100 per cent placement, with students being recruited by multinational companies, international cruise liners, and top Indian firms. The WSC, a state-of-the-art institution under the Odisha Skill Development Authority, offers world-class training through its School of Engineering and School of Services, covering seven high-demand skill programmes.

The journeys of Anjulata, Priti, Afreen, Jasmin, and hundreds of others now stand as beacons of possibility for girls across India. By enabling these young women to rise from remote regions to global platforms, Odisha is setting a national precedent in skill-based empowerment.

New cancer unit opens at BMC Hosp

BHUBANESWAR: A dedicated cancer diagnosis and treatment unit was inaugurated Tuesday at the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Hospital, marking a significant step toward accessible cancer care for urban patients. The facility was inaugurated by Mayor Sulochana Das in the presence of senior officials, including BMC Additional Commissioner Shubhendu Kumar Sahu, local corporator Chandra Sekhar Mallia, Chief Medical Officer Dr Siddharth Shankar Ray, and other medical staff. The unit will function every Tuesday from 9 am to 1 pm, providing both diagnostic and treatment services under the supervision of a five-member team of specialist doctors. This initiative is expected to ease the burden on major hospitals by offering timely care within the City. On the occasion, a sterilisation machine donated by the State Bank of India was also inaugurated. The machine will be used for disinfecting surgical instruments, thereby enhancing hygiene and safety protocols at the hospital's operation facilities.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	86.44 ▲ 0.11	SENSEX	82186.81 ▼ 13.53	GOLD	₹100,300 ▲ ₹97
EURO	101.15 ▲ 0.50	NIFTY	25060.90 ▼ 29.80	SILVER	₹115,717 ▲ ₹671



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	34.4°	35.4°	Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain or Thunderstorm.
Min Temp	26.0°	24.6°	
Humidity	87%	87%	
Rainfall	9.6	15.2	

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Diarrhoea outbreak in Ganjam: 2 dead, over 10 hospitalised



POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi/Patapur, July 22: A severe outbreak of diarrhoea in Dampur village under T Gobindpur panchayat of Sanakhemundi block in Ganjam district has reportedly claimed two lives and left more than 10 villagers hospitalised in the past two days.

According to local sources, Sambaru Mallik, 60, and Kandara Mallik, 62, died Tuesday afternoon after falling ill with severe diarrhoea. They had been receiving treatment at a nearby private clinic. Another elderly woman, Shukuri Mallik, has been referred to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur in a critical condition.

More than 10 other residents are undergoing treatment for

diarrhoea-related symptoms at various hospitals.

When contacted, Bahan Das, chief medical officer (CDMO) of Adapada Community Health Centre (CHC), said he had not yet received any official report about the outbreak. However, he assured that he would coordinate with local health workers to verify the situation and gather details.

In a separate incident, five people from Fasiguda village under Digapahandi block have been hospitalised since Saturday with similar symptoms. The affected—Kashi Nayak, Subuddhi Pradhan, Simanchala Mandal, Lagna Biswal and Jadi Nayak of Nuasahi locality of the village—were initially treated at the Digapahandi CHC, and later referred

to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur due to the severity of their condition.

Previously, in Ustapalli village, under the tribal-dominated Sahadeb Tikarpada panchayat, a diarrhoea outbreak was reported, with claims of three deaths. However, the Ganjam district health administration had officially denied any fatalities.

Following confirmation of the outbreak in Fasiguda, the Digapahandi block health administration has initiated emergency measures. A mobile medical team has been deployed in the village to conduct door-to-door visits, raise awareness and distribute preventive medication.

Meanwhile, personnel from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department have begun collecting water samples for testing. They have also taken up urgent repair and disinfection work on the village's tube wells.

Local representatives—including block vice chairperson Sukanti Pradhan, her representative Nakula Pradhan, sarpanch Gauri Bisoyi and sarpanch representative Shibaram Pradhan—have joined in the response effort, conducting door-to-door awareness drives in coordination with health workers.

The Health department is monitoring the situation closely and has urged residents to take all necessary precautions.



WATER WOES: Women draw water from a tube-well standing in knee-deep floodwater amid the threat of crocodile and snake menace in flood-affected Padhanpada panchayat under Rajkanika block of Kendrapara district Tuesday. Over 40 families in the panchayat remain cut-off from the outside world for the last eight days due to flood in Benga river, a distributary of Kharasrota river

3 hockey coaches arrested for raping minor trainee



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Jajpur Town, July 22: Three hockey coaches from Cuttack district were arrested Tuesday in connection with the rape of a 15-year-old hockey trainee near Manasapola, under the jurisdiction of Jajpur Town police station.

The accused were identified as Sandeep Swain, 26, of Odapada village under Kishannagar police limits, Sarthak Mohanty, 22, of Mallikapur village under Nemalo police station, and Sagar Kumar Nayak, 27, of Hulipur village, also under Kishannagar police limits.

They were remanded to judicial custody after a court rejected their bail pleas.

While Sagar and Sarthak are coaches at the Cuttack Hockey Training Centre, Sandeep was associated with the Jajpur Hockey Training Centre for the past 10 months. A fourth coach named in the complaint has been made a witness after his role didn't surface in the crime.

Police said the survivor lodged a complaint at the Jajpur Town police station Sunday

night, accusing four coaches of misconduct and one of rape. DSP Sarat Chandra Patra immediately registered a case and detained all four coaches for questioning.

The complainant alleged that Sandeep had previously coerced her into a physical relationship. On July 3, Sarthak and Sagar allegedly lured her to a city lodge where they raped her.

Investigating Officer Ajay Sahu (SI) has seized the accused's mobile phones and other relevant documents and confirmed that further investigation is ongoing.

The victim's mother had first approached District Sports Officer Fakir Mohan Tudu July 14 to report the incident who allegedly advised her to file a written complaint, which she did July 16. He reportedly assured her that the matter would be brought to the attention of the District Collector within three days and necessary action would be taken.

However, Tudu allegedly remained unresponsive.

Repeated calls to Tudu for response went unanswered.

Man arrested for rape bid on woman teacher

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 22: The Baidyanathpur police Tuesday arrested a 29-year-old man for allegedly attempting to rape a 27-year-old woman teacher in Ganjam district.

The accused was identified as Jeevan Mishra, a native and an AYUSH assistant posted at Rabal village under Hinjilicut block.

Mishra was arrested over a complaint filed by the woman teacher at Baidyanathpur police station, said Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M in a press release Tuesday. A medical examination was conducted on both the survivor and the accused. A case-370/25 was registered in this connection and the accused produced in the court. The mobile phone and clothes of the accused and survivor were seized and sent for forensic examination to state forensic science laboratory (SFSL) at Rashulgarh, Bhubaneswar, the SP added.

The call details containing the conversation between the accused and survivor will also be examined. Police said that the accused came in contact with the woman teacher over social media platform Instagram and developed a relationship with her. The woman, a post graduate in Sanskrit, was recently appointed as a contractual Sanskrit teacher in a private school.

Police said the survivor sought Mishra's help in arranging an accommodation near the school and also to buy some goods. Mishra took him to Bada Bazaar where she purchased some goods and later took her to his aunt's house where he tried to rape her. Mishra assured to marry her when she resisted his advances, the SP added.

70-yr old inmate of old-age home kills self

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, July 22: A 70-year inmate of an old-age home at Apartipur village in Balimeda panchayat and this block in Bhadrak district allegedly died by hanging late Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Sagar Das. He allegedly committed suicide by tying a napkin (Gamuchha) to his neck in the washroom of the old-age home, police said.

Das had been staying in the old-age home for the last few months.

However, what drove him to end life is yet to be clear. Over 50 persons are staying in the old-age home.

Managing committee members of the old-age home informed the deceased's family members and the Nayikani-dih police station after they learnt about the tragic incident.

Police reached the spot, launched an investigation and sent the body for post-mortem. Family members reached the hospital and demanded a thorough probe into the circumstances that drove Das to take the extreme step.

Collector directs termination of 29 employees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 22: The district administration here has issued termination letters for 29 employees who were drawing salaries with the funds available under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) scheme.

The affected personnel include 22 junior project engineers (JPEs) and seven assistant project engineers (APEs), who were appointed across various blocks in the district.

Acting on the District Collector's directive, the Zilla Parishad office in Keonjhar issued a letter (no. 4308; dt July 18, 2025) instructing the outsourcing agency to discontinue the services of these staffers.

This move follows a series of allegations and ongoing legal proceedings in the Orissa High Court regarding irregularities, fund misappropriation, and misuse of DMF grants in Keonjhar. Despite repeated complaints and the lapse of several months, the state-level committee had failed to submit its report to the court, prompting the petitioner to file a second petition in the court.

Sources allege that funds worth crores from the DMF fund were arbitrarily spent by



engaging employees in various departments, violating Section 11(A)(5) of the Odisha DMF Rules, 2015. Moreover, instead of directly transferring salary grants to the outsourcing agency, the funds were routed through the Project Director or CDO, Zilla Parishad of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Keonjhar.

The state Chief Secretary had issued an order September 10, 2019 where in point no-5 (A) it was explicitly instructed that wages for project-specific outsourced personnel should be paid from the project contingency fund. However, the directive was bypassed, and large sums were spent directly from the DMF fund.

In this situation, the timeline for terminating those employees appointed in other departments remains uncertain. Furthermore, although various departments received DMF funds for contingency use, many have failed to return the unspent amounts or provide clear account statements.

Concerns have also been raised about illegal appointments across departments, lack of income and expenditure records, and the absence of dedicated cashbooks for DMF-linked activities. A serious allegation was made May 20, 2025, that different departments had opened multiple bank accounts under the DMF project title without authorisation.

Following a directive from the Union Ministry of Mines, the State Planning and Convergence Department had sent a letter (no-8569/18, dt June 20, 2025) to the Keonjhar Collector, requesting a detailed report on the issue.

Youth kills elderly mother for objecting to assault on wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pattamundai, July 22: In a shocking incident in Bishnupur village under Oupada panchayats and Pattamundai rural police limits, a youth allegedly beat his 70-year-old mother to death after she protested against his assault on his wife.

The accused, identified as Manoj Malik, reportedly attacked his wife Sasmita during a domestic altercation late Monday night. When his elderly mother, Shantilata Malik, intervened and objected to the violence, Manoj turned towards her and hit her brutally.

Shantilata died on the spot due to the assault. As Manoj attempted to flee, villagers apprehended him and informed the police. A team from Pattamundai Rural Police, led by IIC Dhiraj Lenka, arrived at the scene and took the accused



into custody.

Police registered a case (270/25) under Section 302 of the IPC and launched an investigation.

Sources said Manoj had married three months ago and had since been subjecting his wife and family to regular physical and mental abuse. The incident has triggered widespread outrage in the area, with villagers demanding strict punishment for the accused.

The case has shaken the local community, as the brutal act of matricide has left residents deeply disturbed.

Man held for causing wife's miscarriage

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi: Police arrested a man here in Bhadrak district on charge of allegedly causing the miscarriage of his wife following birth of two girl child instead of male progeny. The accused was identified as Sheikh Sahauddin, a resident of Balipal village in Achak panchayat under Tihidi police limits in Bhadrak district. He was arrested Monday, and produced in a court over a complaint by his wife, Samina Biwi alleging that he assaulted her with the intent to terminate her pregnancy. As per reports, Sahauddin married Samina in 2017. She falls from Mirzapur village under Bhatapada panchayat of the same district. The couple had a daughter soon after marriage, and later, Samina gave birth to a second daughter, which reportedly displeased Sahauddin. Following this, he allegedly began harassing her for dowry and subjected her to repeated physical and mental abuse. Unable to bear the torture, Samina went back to her parental home. The incident occurred when she was alone at home, July 4. Sahauddin allegedly visited his in-laws house and kicked Samina on the stomach on finding her alone in the house. This led to the loss of her pregnancy, the woman stated in her complaint. Based on her complaint, police registered a case-233/25 and launched an investigation. Sahauddin was later arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

Tribal women aim to restore forests with seed balls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, July 22: Awareness about environment conservation is growing among indigenous communities in the tribal-dominated regions of Daringbadi in Kandhamal district as large patches of forests have been wiped out in several villages due to the effects of climate change.

Realising the adverse impacts of deforestation, tribal women across various panchayats have taken the lead in rejuvenating forest lands. Through an initiative involving the preparation and dispersal of seed balls—locally known as bihana mati pindula—they aim to restore degraded forest areas, including the barren

'Landa hills'.

These seed balls are created using a traditional organic method, mixing soil and compost with seeds. The balls are then dispersed across deforested areas, offering a simple yet effective technique for forest regeneration. According to the women involved, this method not only protects the seeds from harsh climatic conditions but also improves the chances of germination and survival.

Local voluntary organization Jagruti, while working under the state government's forest land rights initiative, is making the collaborative efforts with tribal women in reviving native tree species that are on the verge of disappearing. Seeds of such trees are being



collected and turned into seed balls which are then scattered across deforested and vacant forest land. These seed balls are expected to germinate naturally, restoring vegetation in the region.

The trees targeted for restoration include species such as barada saag, siali lata (Bauhinia vines), harida (Terminalia chebula), amla (Indian gooseberry), bahada (Terminalia bellirica), kendu (Diospyros

melanoxylon), jamukoli, bel (Wood apple), tentuli (tamarind), mahul (Mahua), bhalia, piassala, dimbiri, banyan, and simili (silk cotton), among others. Seed balls are also being prepared for indigenous fruit trees such as desi amba (local mango), panasa (jackfruit), lembu (lemon), aat, sitaphala (custard apple), and ram phal (Annona reticulata), to help preserve and regenerate these native species.

According to Pradeep Kumar Kanhar and Kamini Pradhan - area resource persons in charge at Danekabadi panchayats - the seed balls are being planted in open forest patches to ensure the natural regeneration of lost biodiversity.

The movement is more than

just a plantation drive; it reflects a deeper understanding among the tribal population about the crucial role forests play in preserving biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and supporting sustainable livelihoods. The women believe that restoring forests will also help sequester carbon and strengthen essential ecosystem services.

Currently, tribal women from the Danekabadi, Sonapur, and Badabanga panchayats are actively participating in this green mission under the guidance of their local Forest Management Committees. Their dedication and grassroots mobilisation efforts underscore the significance of community-led conservation in achieving long-term environmental resilience.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Tender No. 22-KUR-TRD-OT-2025-26	E-Tender/46 Dt.: 18.07.2025
NAME OF WORK: OHE MODIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF 8 NOS. STEEL GIRDER BRIDGES OF SPAN 12.20 MTR BY PSC SLABS BETWEEN BHADRAK-MANJURI ROAD SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.	
Advised Value: ₹ 29,13,414.02, EMD: ₹ 58,300/-, Period of Completion: 180 Days.	Bidding Start Date: 23.07.2025
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1300 Hrs. of 06.08.2025.	Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.irps.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), PR-386/Q/25-26 Khurda Road	
EAST COAST RAILWAY	
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/25-26/ E-Tender/46 Dt.: 18.07.2025	(1) Tender No. eTender-SouthKUR-155-2025, Dt.: 04.07.2025
Description: EXECUTION OF THROUGH SLEEPER RENEWAL FOR A LENGTH OF 57.417 KMS. ON DIFFERENT LOCATIONS OF KHURDA ROAD-PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.	
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 975.06 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 6,37,500/-	(2) Tender No. eTenderSouthKUR-154-2025, Dt.: 04.07.2025
Description: EXECUTION OF PWAY LINKING WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH "PROVISION OF ONE ADDITIONAL LINE WITH HIGH LEVEL PASSENGER PLATFORM AT DOWN LINE SIDE OF PALASA STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION".	
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 113.67 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,06,800/-	(3) Tender No. eTender-hq-kur-144-2025, Dt.: 09.07.2025
Description: PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO THE FLOORS, PLASTER, COLOURING, PAINTING, SEWER LINE, KITCHEN, TILLET, DOORS & WINDOWS OF STAFF QUARTERS AT RETANG COLONY UNDER JURISDICTION OF DIVISIONAL ENGINEER(HQ)/KHURDA ROAD.	
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 230.16 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,65,100/-	(4) Tender No. eTenderEastkur-156-2025, Dt.: 08.07.2025
Description: PROPOSAL FOR RENOVATION OF SRP STATION OFFICE BUILDING CUTTACK OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.	
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 70.20 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 1,40,400/-	Completion period: 12 months (for SI. No. 1, 2 & 3) & 06 months (for SI. No. 4).
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 30.07.2025 (for all tenders).	
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.	
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website www.irps.gov.in	
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website of 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.	
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), PR-388/Q/25-26 Khurda Road	

Sin and virtue are a game of resistance we play with God in His efforts to draw us towards perfection

SRI AUROBINDO



Exit Mystery

A major controversy has erupted after the sudden resignation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, tendered hours after he had attended the proceedings of the first day of the Monsoon Session of the Rajya Sabha, of which he was the Chairman, on 21 July. The government itself is to blame for this unseemly development. The official reason given out by Dhankhar himself for the resignation – his health problems - does not wash easily. Statements made by some RS members, who attended the session, suggest the Vice President did not show any signs of being so ill that he had to put in his papers immediately late in the evening. Coupled with this the fact that he still had two more years before his tenure was to come to an end gives enough room for speculation, as several Opposition parties are doing, that there is more than meets the eye. Of course, there is no definite and easy clue to what “more” could imply in this situation. He had recently said he would complete his tenure at the right time.

The government, which has a knack of springing surprises on the people before announcing something big, should have made a highly important matter such as the resignation or selection of the second highest constitutional head of the country transparent and convincing. The Vice President did have health issues that cropped up a few months back. Had his health deteriorated to the extent that he was unable to discharge the responsibilities any longer, the nation should have been informed before the decision for his exit from the office was announced unless a health emergency had occurred. There is no indication whatsoever that such a thing had happened. On the contrary, the Vice President appeared hale and hearty when he had conducted RS business earlier in the day. He even took up important issues such as the impeachment of High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma from whose house wads of notes were discovered months ago. Only a few hours later the incredulous announcement was made that Dhankhar was stepping down, of all things, on account of failing health. On another note, any Vice President would be the greatest beneficiary if she or he needs health care as the national exchequer (or rather the tax payers of the country) would have been forced to pay for his best medical care that may be available anywhere in the world. After resignation, obviously, Dhankhar will now have to pay any medical expenses that he may incur from his own pocket. Significantly, two Union ministers had been conspicuous by their absence from an important meeting presided over by the RS Chairman earlier in the afternoon.

Unlike his predecessors, Dhankhar, in his three years in the office, became embroiled in several controversies for the statements he made inside and outside the Parliament. He took a stand diametrically opposite to that of the government on the farmers’ protests, while he was over-enthusiastic about corruption in judiciary. He advised the government in a veiled manner against being audacious with people. But, he was more vocal than many of the Union Ministers on issues such as Sanatana Dharma and insertion of the words secularism and socialism in the Constitution.

In one of his first speeches as Vice President on judicial accountability in 2022, he called the Supreme Court’s 2015 judgement striking down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act a “glaring instance” of “severe compromise” of parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the “mandate of the people.” He urged then Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, who was present at the programme, to find out a parallel in the world where “a Constitutional provision was undone.” He wondered why even after the verdict, there was not even a murmur in the Parliament. He also had a running feud with the Opposition which tried unsuccessfully to impeach him. Of the greatest importance is Dhankhar’s recent statement made on 10 July at JNU where he had said addressing a gathering, “I will retire at the right time - August 2027. Subject to divine intervention.” Now, it seems the divine, in whatever form, has indeed intervened.

Before his tenure as Vice President he had been appointed West Bengal Governor and he had several face-offs with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government. The latter accused him of turning the Raj Bhavan into an extension of the BJP’s office and acting more as a BJP leader with animus against the Trinamool than as an impartial Governor.

Now with speculation about the reasons for his resignation being rife, bigger surprises may be in store for the country, given the government’s track record and Dhankhar closeness to the RSS.

WISDOM CORNER

If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us

HERMANN HESSE

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers

KAHLIL GIBRAN

Too much self-centered attitude, you see, brings, you see, isolation. Result: loneliness, fear, anger. The extreme self-centered attitude is the source of suffering

DALAI LAMA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1885: U.S. General Ulysses S. Grant, who commanded the Union armies to victory in the American Civil War and later served as the 18th president of the United States, died at the age of 63.

1903: Ford Motor Company sold its first automobile, a Ford Model A; five years later it introduced the hugely influential Model T.

1952: Egyptian monarchy toppled by coup. On this day in 1952, the Free Officers, a nationalistic military group led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, engineered a coup that overthrew King Farouk I of Egypt, ending the monarchy and bringing Nasser to power.

1967: A riot began in Detroit as African Americans and the city's police department were involved in violent confrontations following a police raid on an illegal drinking club; the unrest, which lasted for five days, is considered one of the catalysts of the militant Black Power movement.

1970: Sultan Sa' ibn Taym r of Oman was overthrown by his son, Qaboos bin Said, in a palace coup.

1972: Landsat 1 launched. The first satellite in the US's LANDSAT program, the Landsat discovered an uninhabited island off the eastern coast of Canada in 1976. The island is now called Landsat Island.

1997: Slobodan Milošević became president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (comprising Serbia and Montenegro) after serving as president of Serbia from 1989; he was later charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes relating to the Kosovo conflict, and he died during his trial in 2006.

AMERICAN TINDERBOX

FOCUS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

“Bomb threat! You need to exit – now,” a security officer shouted at me as I observed the Principles First conference, a gathering of moderate Republicans in Washington, on 22 February. Moments later, we learned that the threat had come from an untraceable email claiming that four pipe bombs had been planted “to honor the J6 hostages recently released by Emperor Trump.”

Sadly, I wasn’t surprised. Just days earlier, former Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrío and other insurrectionists pardoned by President Donald Trump for crimes related to the 6 January, 2021, attack on the US Capitol had been celebrated as heroes at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), a major gathering of Trump’s “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) movement. As one of them boasted at the event, “We’re like gods.”

During the conference, Tarrío led a group back to the US Capitol, where they chanted, “Whose house? Our house!” He was later arrested for assaulting a protester. After his release, Tarrío traveled to the Principles First venue, where he verbally harassed Michael Fanone, the former Washington police officer who was severely injured while defending the Capitol during the insurrection.

As an anthropologist who studies political violence, I see these events as a sign that the United States is in serious trouble. In my 2021 book *It Can Happen Here*, I argued that bad actors are increasingly emboldened, heightening the risk of politically motivated violence. That threat became even more apparent on 14 June, when Trump supporter Vance Boelter shot two Minnesota state Democrats and their spouses, killing State House Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman and her husband. Authorities later discovered a hit list with the names of 45 Democratic officials in Boelter’s car.

Two months earlier, Cody Allen Balmer was arrested for attempting to assassinate Penn-



By stoking fear and division and undermining every check on his power, Trump has brought the US to the brink of major civil disorder. As democratic norms erode and polarisation deepens, political violence could surge ahead of the 2026 midterms and reach crisis levels by 2028

sylvania’s Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro by breaking into his residence and setting it on fire. There have also been other recent attacks, including some carried out by individuals on the political left.

Four key factors are driving this surge in political violence. First, despite branding himself as a “law and order” president, Trump has helped cultivate a culture of impunity. It’s not just that he is a convicted felon whose three remaining criminal cases were dismissed or suspended after his re-election. Long before that, he famously proclaimed, “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn’t lose any voters.”

On his first day back in office, Trump pardoned or commuted the sentences of more than 1,500 6 January insurrectionists, including Tarrío. He has continued issuing pardons to allies, with the Justice Department’s pardon attorney, Ed Martin, posting on X, “No MAGA Left Behind.” By politicising the presidential pardon, Trump has sent the dangerous message that partisan violence is acceptable.

The second factor is past acts of political violence, which heighten the risk of future violence. As I explained in *It Can Happen Here*, the US has a long history of political violence to draw on. But even recent events offer ample cause for alarm.

Trump bears much of the

blame. Before the 6 January insurrection, he attacked election integrity and explicitly directed the Proud Boys – and, by extension, other far-right extremists – to “stand by.” Like other scholars at the time, I warned that the risk of violence in the US was especially high. While dramatic, neither the 7 October, 2020, arrest of militia members who plotted to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor the 6 January Capitol attack came as a surprise.

As the 2024 election approached, the threat of violence once again escalated. Trump himself was nearly assassinated during a 13 July rally in Pennsylvania, threats against election workers surged, and many feared that a contested election would again lead to an insurrection – a concern that Trump’s victory ultimately rendered moot.

Third, American society remains deeply divided. In my research on US political culture, I have seen this polarisation firsthand, as people on both the left and the right often demonise the other side as authoritarian, framing politics in apocalyptic us-versus-them terms.

The data underscore just how toxic and entrenched US polarisation has become. Nearly half of Americans view those on the opposite side of the political spectrum as “downright evil,” while an even greater share of Democrats and Republicans describe

each other as “closed-minded, dishonest, and immoral.” Roughly 80% of US adults worry about political violence, and 40% believe the country is headed toward civil war.

While both parties have contributed to this division, Trump remains the polariser-in-chief. He repeatedly stoked anger and resentment during his first term, and his 2024 campaign centered on promises of retribution and warnings about “criminal” immigrants and “woke” leftists – groups he continues to demonise.

Lastly, the risk of political violence tends to rise during tumultuous periods, especially when the legitimacy of elections is challenged or when democratic institutions are weakened. Both conditions were present in the lead-up to the 2021 insurrection, and they persist today.

Trump is now waging an aggressive campaign to consolidate executive power. Since returning to the White House, he has sought to undermine every check on presidential authority, including judicial independence, civil society, academic freedom, public-service neutrality, press freedom, and even basic civil liberties.

As a result, today’s America is a tinderbox. When and where the next would-be assassin might strike is anyone’s guess, but one thing is certain: the risk of political violence will spike ahead of the 2026 midterm elections and could reach crisis levels by the presidential election of 2028.

There’s an easy way to mitigate this risk: Trump could choose to be a unifier rather than a divider. Polls show that most Americans want the political temperature brought down. Unfortunately, it is far more likely that Trump, who rose to power on a populist platform rooted in fear and grievance – much of it racially tinged – will continue to fan the flames of division, keeping the risk of political violence elevated.

The writer is Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University.

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Alex Hinton

BY POLITICISING THE PRESIDENTIAL PARDON, TRUMP HAS SENT THE DANGEROUS MESSAGE THAT PARTISAN VIOLENCE IS ACCEPTABLE

IN JEST THIS

It’s okay to keep your shoes on

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the US recently decided to allow people to keep their shoes on while going through airport security. In a related move, I have decided to allow people to keep their shoes on while entering my home.

Anyone entering my home may keep wearing their shoes if the following conditions are met: (1) the shoes look clean; (2) it is not raining heavily; and (3) my wife is not home.

It is not that my wife would necessarily object to someone entering our home without removing their shoes in the entryway. She has certainly made exceptions over the years. But I have not consulted her before deciding that the shoe-removal tradition we have followed puts an unnecessary burden on our guests. Older people have trouble bending down to put their shoes on when leaving our home, while youngsters have trouble tying their laces. It’s

an extra five minutes of their lives that I’m hoping to return to them.

The TSA, on the other hand, is concerned more about safety than convenience. The shoe removal rule was instituted in August 2006, when the TSA determined that shoes continued to pose a serious threat. About five years earlier, on 22 December, 2001, an American Airlines passenger named Richard Reid, flying from Paris to Miami, tried to detonate his shoes. He had filled them with 10 ounces of explosive material, as well as two large feet. Fortunately he had trouble lighting the fuse, and passengers and crew members pounced on him before he could blow up the plane. Reid, known as the “shoe bomber,” is serving a life sentence in federal prison. (I do not know if the TSA has informed him that his name is no longer being cursed at security checkpoints.)

The shoe-removal rule was

in place for almost two decades and during that time, very few shoes were found to pose actual threats. The most serious incident reportedly occurred a few years ago at LaGuardia Airport in New York City when a passenger from Europe placed his shoes on the conveyor belt, causing two TSA officers to immediately faint from the odor. Smelling salts were needed to revive them. The passenger was arrested and sentenced to three hours on a Spirit Airlines flight. He was ordered to keep his shoes on.

The main reason for the rescinding of the shoe-removal rule is improved technology. The TSA now has the technology to detect explosives, contraband or anything else in your shoes while you are wearing them. If you need to sneak anything onto a plane, don’t do it in your sneakers.

Thankfully, I do not have to worry about any explosives entering my home through shoes. But shoes can certain-

ly carry a lot of dirt, which is why Donald Trump was once spotted speaking directly to Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s shoes, asking, “Do you have any dirt on Joe Biden?”

Keeping dirt out of a home is one of the main reasons that the shoe-removal tradition is followed in India and other Asian countries. It was natural for my wife and I to do what is commonplace in our native land. But aside from the inconvenience to our guests, I wonder whether it makes sense to be concerned about dirt on a guest’s shoes when our dog, Lulu, does not even wipe her feet before entering our home. She not only puts her feet on our carpet, she rolls around on it, as though it’s her best friend with whom she wants to share whatever she carries in.

Anyone who keeps a dog inside their home is saying to the world, “A little dirt won’t kill me.”

Neither will a pair of shoes, as the TSA has concluded.



Melvin Durai

ANYONE WHO KEEPS A DOG INSIDE THEIR HOME IS SAYING TO THE WORLD, ‘A LITTLE DIRT WON’T KILL ME’

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
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Leader par excellence

Sir, In the demise of former Kerala Chief Minister VS Achuthanandan Indian politics has lost a charismatic and strong leader who dedicated his whole life for the masses. He will always be remembered not just as one of the greatest politicians of Kerala but also as a leader who proved the world that politics means serving the masses irrespective of the party and ideology. There is a lot that the present day politicians have to learn from this great leader. His sacrifices, perseverance, endurance, humility, commitment and above all his selflessness as a leader who knew the pulse of the common man makes him a leader par excellence. Achuthanandan always put people’s interests before political interests. He will be remembered as a leader of the people, by the people and for the people. Achuthanandan served as the Kerala Chief Minister from 2006 to 2011, was a seven-time MLA and Leader of the Opposition for three terms. One of the last surviving comrades of the CPI(M)’s founding generation, Achuthanandan will remain etched in the hearts of the common man as a lifelong campaigner for social justice and workers’ rights and a saviour of the downtrodden.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Coercive hydro-politics

Sir, China’s construction of the colossal Motou Hydroelectric Power Station on the Brahmaputra in Tibet poses a grave geopolitical threat to India. Costing \$160 billion, with five power stations, it dwarfs the world’s largest dam and is slated for completion by 2030. With 98,000 dams and reservoirs already under its control, China aims to weaponise water, giving itself a strategic chokehold over India. Economies downstream, especially India’s northeast, are at risk of catastrophic disruption, even the potential of a ‘water bomb’ scenario. India has firmly demanded transparency but cannot rely on China’s assurances. New Delhi must accelerate dam construction in Arunachal Pradesh, build robust water storage systems, strengthen diplomatic alliances with other riparian nations, and prepare defensive infrastructure to counter Beijing’s coercive hydro-politics. Water security is now integral to India’s national security strategy.

RS Narula, PATIALA

With attackers at large, security concerns rise

While the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made two arrests in connection with the April 22 incident, those nabbed are believed to be the ones who provided logistical support, while the actual terrorists responsible for the ghastly crime have evaded security agencies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

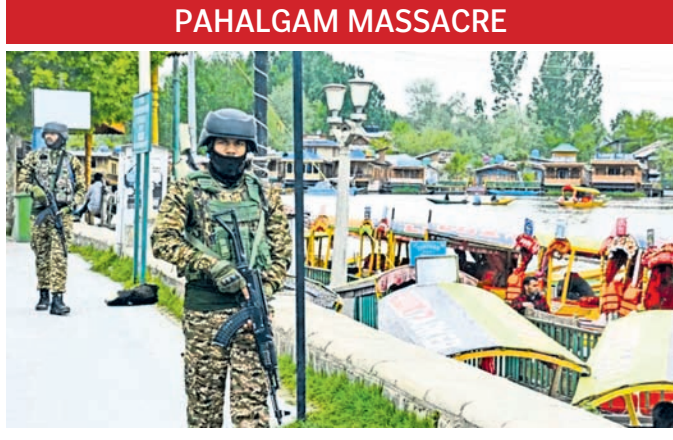
Pahalgam, July 22: Three months after the brutal terror attack in Pahalgam that left many tourists dead, the perpetrators are still at large, raising concerns over security lapses in the region and sparking growing calls for fixing accountability.

While the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made two arrests in connection with the April 22 incident, those nabbed are believed to be the ones who provided logistical support, while the actual terrorists responsible for the ghastly crime have evaded security agencies.

The security vacuum has prompted Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who will complete his five-year term next month, to take full responsibility for what he acknowledged as a "security failure".

This admission was appreciated by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who nonetheless called for accountability. "I appreciate the statement of the Lt Governor but an admission of failure must be followed by action," he had told PTI here recently. "Heads must roll when such a grave mistake leads to the loss of precious lives. The people of Kashmir deserve to know what went wrong and who will be held accountable," the chief minister had said.

A meticulously planned terror strike hit holiday-makers in Pahalgam meadows April 22, killing 26 people -- 25 tourists and one local pony rider



PAHALGAM MASSACRE

The hotels that were near empty post the terror strike have now been witnessing some tourists who have been braving the odds to choose Pahalgam as their destination to spend their vacation

bility for security failure.

The incident has highlighted doubts over the efficiency of the security system in Kashmir and will probably be at the centre of public debate in the months ahead.

Security officials said the terrorists, members of a TRF unit known as the "Falcon Squad," breached the Pahalgam area wearing military camouflage and equipped with military-grade firearms and modern communication equipment, including a camera-fitted helmet.

-- a huge setback for the counter-insurgency campaign of the government.

The strike was characteristic of careful planning and the terrorists' successful escape indicated a high level of training and local support.

The officials said that intelligence agencies had been alerted about the possibility of a terror attack, but the inputs were utilised at another place, some 90 kilometres away from the site where the attack took place, resulting in a key security lapse.

The NIA has been mandated to conduct the investigation and, so far, it has arrested two suspects who were suspected to have given shelter and food to the attackers.

The two men - Parvaiz Ahmad Jothar from Batkote, Pahalgam and Bashir Ahmad Jothar of Hill Park, Pahalgam -- were arrested by NIA June 22.

The NIA had said the arrested accused, who are presently on remand, have disclosed

Pahalgam's soul yearns for return of tourists

As the annual Amarnath Yatra enters its final leg, people in this tourist township of Kashmir Valley, reeling in the aftermath of the April 22 terror attack, are anxiously waiting for revival of tourism with a firm belief that the soul of Pahalgam will not be held hostage to terrorism. The hotels that were near empty post the terror strike have now been witnessing some tourists who have been braving the odds to choose Pahalgam as their destination to spend their vacation. "I came here in 1988 and after that I decided to come now with my family to spend our holiday. The locals here are more careful about our security and guide us properly," says Sachin Waghmare, a resident of Thane district. He said he hoped to see other nearby destinations, but they remain closed as a precautionary measure. "I have been able to only visit Betab valley," he said, adding that the decision to visit this place was taken after he saw pictures of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah cycling on the roads of this town. Pahalgam MLA Altaf Kaloo has been holding daily meetings with delegations associated with the tourism industry. "Rates have been brought down to ensure more tourists come back," he said. "The government and the people, they're still trying to come out of the big shock. People are still wondering how and why it happened. Locals are in deep shock. How it happened," the MLA said the April 22 massacre. The collective trauma of the people was still felt in Kaloo's voice, but he quickly regained his composure and added, "All these delegations came to us. Tourists are very comfortable. We are keeping a bird's eye on the security of our guests and ensuring no stone is left unturned to keep them safe." He said this year, after a meeting with the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and the chief minister, locals and tourists were allowed to come to Pahalgam. "This has helped a lot."

the identities of the three armed terrorists involved in the attack, and have also confirmed that they were Pakistani nationals affiliated to the proscribed The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of Pakistani-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Parvaiz and Bashir had knowingly harboured the three armed terrorists at a seasonal dhok (hut) at Hill Park before the attack, according to NIA

investigations. The two men had provided food, shelter and logistical support to the terrorists, who had, on the fateful afternoon, selectively killed the tourists on the basis of their religious identity, making it one of the most gruesome terrorist attacks ever, the agency said.

CM Abdullah's demand for accountability of top officials is symptomatic of the public pressure building up to fix responsi-

The attack was reportedly planned by Saifullah Kasuri alias Khalid, a top LeT commander and personal assistant of internationally designated terrorist Hafiz Saeed, they added.

They indicated that the online trail of the attackers originated from safe houses along the border in Karachi and Muzaffarabad, which implied extensive logistical integration with the LeT network in Pakistan.

LG Sinha launches portal for terror victim families



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ments on the property of the victims or their family members are also being captured.

It will ensure that no legitimate case is left unaddressed and timely support is extended to eligible families in terms of financial relief, ex-gratia compensation and compassionate employment while ensuring elimination of any bogus or multiple claims, he said.

The LG is personally monitoring and overseeing the redressal of all cases across Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson added.

Toll-free helpline numbers have also been established at the offices of the divisional commissioners in both Jammu (0191-2478995) and Kashmir (0194-2487777) divisions, to facilitate the registration of any overlooked or pending claims, the spokesman said.

These helplines are being attended through dedicated control rooms as citizen interfaces for receiving grievances or queries related to pending government support to terror-affected families regarding compensation, ex-gratia relief and compassionate appointments, he said.

The helplines have been staffed with trained personnel and will be integrated with the centralised application to ensure that every claim is formally recorded and acted upon, he said.

To ensure regular oversight, coordination, and follow-up on the grievances and pending claims, special monitoring cells have been constituted in the offices of the chief secretary and the director general of police.

Srinagar, July 22: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday launched a web portal to expedite the process of providing relief and compassionate appointment to the families of terror attack victims in the Union Territory.

Sinha said the portal, developed by the Home Department in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), will act as a centralised platform to capture and maintain comprehensive district-wise data on terrorism-affected families and provide institutionalised support to them.

"The initiative will streamline and expedite the process of providing relief, compassionate appointments, and other forms of assistance to those who have suffered from terrorism in the UT," the LG said.

An official spokesperson said the details of any encroach-

Bengal urged to lift ban on jute, garment imports from B'desh via Petrapole

The Petrapole Clearing Agents' Staff Welfare Association claimed that the trade flow at the border checkpoint in North 24 Parganas district has been affected due to the restriction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 22: An organisation of clearing agents' staffers at Petrapole border checkpoint has written a letter to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, seeking her intervention to lift the Centre's ban on imports of jute products and garments from Bangladesh via land routes.

The Petrapole Clearing Agents' Staff Welfare Association claimed that the trade flow at the border checkpoint in North 24 Parganas district has been affected due to the restriction.

It highlighted how the ban has disrupted trade flows and impacted the livelihoods of thousands who depend on the transactions via the critical India-Bangladesh integrated checkpoint.

"Import trade volumes have plummeted sharply after the restrictions were imposed. The number of import trucks and rakes handled at Petrapole fell to 1,654 in June, down from 3,886 in May 2025," association

secretary Kartick Chakraborty told PTI.

Unlike the current trends, the peak monthly figure was 4,900 in 2023, while average volumes typically remain above 3,500, he said.

"The livelihood of a large section of the local population is under severe threat due to unfavourable geo-political conditions. We urgently seek the government's help to restore normalcy," Chakraborty said.

In May, India imposed port restrictions on the import of certain goods, such as ready-made garments and processed food items, from Bangladesh.

Imports of several jute products and woven fabrics from Bangladesh through land routes were also banned in June.

The association pointed out that jute products and garments accounted for a majority share of imports through the Petrapole border checkpoint. "The prolonged suspension of trade in these categories is pushing many into financial distress," Chakraborty said.

A former chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association said raw jute should be allowed through all ports for the sake of the domestic jute industry.

The association has urged the state government to coordinate with the Centre to resolve the issue and safeguard local livelihoods.

Petrapole is India's largest land port for trade with Bangladesh.



Street vendors sell hats and hand fans on a humid morning, in Kolkata, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Incessant rains lash parts of Jammu region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 22: Three private cars were damaged after a 10-foot boundary wall of an army camp collapsed in Rajouri district amid incessant rains which lashed parts of Jammu region for the second day Tuesday, triggering landslides at several places and increasing water level in rivers and streams, officials said. Though there was no immediate threat of flash floods, schools in Rajouri, Poonch and Reasi districts remained closed for the day as a precautionary measure, the officials said.

Landslides struck Vaishno Devi track in Reasi Monday and a school building in Poonch, resulting in the killing of two persons -- a pilgrim and a minor student -- and injuries to several others including a police officer.

The weather office has forecast moderate to heavy rains at different places in Jammu and Kashmir till Thursday, prompt-

ing administrations of various districts to issue advisories asking people to stay away from the swollen water bodies and landslide prone areas.

The officials said a portion of the boundary wall of an army camp collapsed near a bus stand in Rajouri owing to heavy rains, resulting in damage to three parked cars including a sports utility vehicle belonging to civilians. An earth mover engaged in road widening work along Jammu-Poonch highway near Irwan Khanetar was damaged when it fell down into a gorge after earth beneath it caved-in, the officials said.

Landslides triggered by rains also briefly blocked Jammu-Poonch national highway and several interior roads in both Rajouri and Poonch districts, while a culvert was washed away in Chatral-Mendhar, snapping road connectivity to nearly half-a-dozen remote villages, they said.

End of an era in Bengal's Naxalite politics

A poet, political thinker and once the head of the CPI(ML)'s second central committee, Haque had long been battling illness and was admitted to ICU after a fall at home that left him with a fractured hand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, July 22: Azizul Haque -- firebrand poet, political thinker and one of the last towering leaders of India's Naxalite uprising -- died here Monday, marking the end of a turbulent, blood-soaked chapter in Bengal's radical Left history that once shook the nation in the 1960s and '70s.

He was 83. Haque, who was born in Howrah in 1942, belonged to the generation of Naxal leaders who believed that 'bonduker nol-i, khomotar utsa' (Political power flows out of the barrel of the gun), a doctrine popularised by their ideological mentor, Charu Mazumdar, who made

the Mao Zedong's slogan popular in India in the Sixties and Seventies.

A poet, political thinker and once the head of the CPI(ML)'s second central committee, Haque had long been battling illness and was admitted to ICU after a fall at home that left him with a fractured hand.

He breathed his last at 2:28 PM, sources said. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed deep condolences on X, describing Haque as a "fighter who never bowed down in his long political life".

"I express my condolences at the passing of veteran politician Azizul Haque. Azizul Haque was a fighter, a resolute leader. In his long political career, he never bowed his head. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family and associates," she posted on X.

A close associate of Charu Mazumdar and Kanai Chatterjee, Haque was among the few leaders who kept the flame of the Naxalbari uprising alive long after it was crushed by the state.

He was expelled from the CPI(M) for endorsing Ma-



zumdar's radical line, later co-founding the CPI(ML)'s Second Central Committee with Nishith Bhattacharya after the latter's death.

Under their leadership, the faction tried to set up parallel revolutionary governments in parts of rural Bengal and Bihar during the late 1970s, before being expelled following a ceasefire accord with the West Bengal government.

First arrested in the Parvathipuram conspiracy case in

1970 and was released in 1977. Haque spent nearly two decades in prison over his lifetime.

His re-arrest in 1982 triggered outrage even within Bengal's ruling Left Front, with jail ministers Debabrata Bandopadhyay and Jatin Chakraborty recommending his parole after visiting him behind bars.

His book 'Karagare Atharo Bochor' (Eighteen Years in Jail) remains one of the most poignant firsthand accounts of

Veteran Naxalite leader Azizul Haque passes away at 83

Naxalite movement and ideological resilience in that era.

Haque's writings, including 'Naxalbari: Tirish Bochor Aage ebong Pare', continued to challenge establishment thinking even as he gradually moved away from hardline Naxalism in his later years.

Notably, he supported the CPI(M)'s industrialisation drive in Singur in 2006, distancing himself from many of his former comrades who opposed land acquisition.

"Leftism is to walk against the current," he often said, and till the end, his pen remained active-contributing columns and essays to leading dailies and journals, always with a streak of rebellion.

Azizul Haque's death is not just the passing of a political veteran, it is the quiet extinguishing of one of the last flames of Bengal's revolutionary Left. For many, July 21, 2025, will be remembered as the day a radical conscience bid farewell.



Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Unlike the Holocaust, where many claimed ignorance, this genocide is widely known. @narendramodi must ensure India does not join countries complicit in Israel's crimes. India has always supported Palestine and opposed Israeli apartheid
ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM CHIEF

GROUNDING BRITISH FIGHTER JET FLIES BACK

The British F-35B fighter jet flew back Tuesday after completing maintenance, more than a month after it made an emergency landing at the international airport here, and remained parked since then



of the day quote

My case itself is proof of the ED being misused politically. They filed a case against me, sent me to Tihar Jail, and eventually the case was dropped
D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA BY CM



At present, Gadchiroli figures among the bottom two districts of Maharashtra in terms of the per capita income of people. I want to tell you that in the next five years, it will be among the top 10 districts of the state
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM



If EV consumers in Haryana get proper infrastructure like charging stations, it will create a win-win situation for both users and manufacturers' benefitting consumers while supporting company growth
ANIL VIJ | HARYANA TRANSPORT MINISTER



SHORT TAKES

Kanwariyas showered with flower petals

Barabanki/Ayodhya/Basti/Sambhal (UP): Kanwariyas, or Shiva devotees, Tuesday were showered with flower petals in various districts, including Sambhal, which witnessed violence last year over a dispute related to Shahi Jama Masjid. As the yatra entered its 11th day, the district administration of Barabanki, Sambhal, Ayodhya and Basti districts greeted the devotees with petals as they arrived at various temples in these districts to perform rituals. Communal harmony was on full display in Sambhal district as Muslims, along with authorities, showered rose flowers on kanwariyas.

3 women killed in lightning strikes

Medininagar/Chatra: Three women were killed in lightning strikes in Jharkhand's Palamu and Chatra districts Tuesday, police said. Medininagar Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Manibhusan Prasad said the first incident in Palamu took place in Sahdeva village, where a woman, identified as Asha Devi (45), was killed in a lightning strike when she was sowing paddy in a field.

Man held for raping two-year-old relative

Garhwa (Jharkhand): A two-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a distant relative in Jharkhand's Garhwa district, police said Tuesday. The accused, a 22-year-old man, was arrested in a place under Chiniyan police station area, and the victim is undergoing treatment at a hospital. Her condition is stated to be stable. "The accused was arrested and sent to jail Tuesday. The medical examination of the victim was also conducted," Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Garhwa, Rohit Ranjan Singh, told PTI.

J&K Congress holds protest

New Delhi: Congress' Jammu and Kashmir unit on Tuesday staged a protest at Jantar Mantar here, demanding restoration of full statehood to the Union Territory. Congress general secretary (organisation), K C Venugopal, AICC in-charge of J&K Naseer Hussain and J&K Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra, among others, took part in the protest. "Jammu and Kashmir is the first instance of a state being downgraded into a Union Territory.

EC defends SIR drive in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The Election Commission of India has justified its ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar saying it adds to the purity of the election by "weeding out ineligible persons" from the electoral rolls.

The affidavit filed by the poll panel in a plea challenging the June 24 order directing SIR of electoral roll pan-India starting from Bihar, said despite legal concerns Aadhaar, voter card and ration card were already being considered by the commission for the limited purpose of identity during the SIR-2025 exercise.

"The SIR exercise adds to the purity of elections by weeding out ineligible persons from the electoral roll. The entitlement to vote flows from Article 326 read with Sections 16 and 19 of the RP Act 1950 and Section 62 of the RP Act 1951 which contains certain qualifications with respect to citizenship, age, and ordinary residency. An ineligible person has no right to vote, and thus, cannot claim a violation of Articles 19 and 21 in this regard," the ECI said in a detailed affidavit.

It referred to the July 17 order of the top court asking the ECI to consider Aadhaar, voter IDs and ration cards for the purpose of SIR-2025.

"In addition to the legal concerns already articulated hereinabove, these documents are, in fact, already being considered by the Commission for the limited purpose of identity, during the SIR process," it said. The ECI continued, "A bare perusal of the enumeration



form issued under the SIR Order reveals that the Aadhaar number may be voluntarily furnished by a person furnishing the enumeration form. Such information is utilised for the purpose of identification, in accordance with Section 23(4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and Section 9 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016."

Section 23(4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 stipulates the "electoral registration officer may for the purpose of establishing the identity of any person require that such person may furnish the Aadhaar number given by the Unique Identification Authority of India as per the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016".

On the other hand, Section

52 lakh voters untraceable: ECI

New Delhi: During house-to-house visit in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral roll in Bihar, poll officials have so far found that more than 52 lakh voters were not present at their addresses and another 18 lakh have died. The Election Commission said Tuesday that 26 lakh electors have shifted to different constituencies, while another seven lakh have enrolled at two places. Poll officials in the state have shared detailed lists of the 21.36 lakh electors whose enumeration forms have not been received so far and also of the nearly 52.30 lakh who are reportedly deceased or permanently shifted or have enrolled at multiple places.

9 of the 2016 Act says Aadhaar number is not evidence of citizenship or domicile, etc. The ECI affidavit said each and every existing elector has the same opportunity to provide all documents including proof of eligibility to the booth level officer (BLO) at their place of residence.

"No elector is put through any hardship in comparison to the persons mentioned above. The same methodology has been utilised for all past SIRs as well. Moreover, the BLOs, BLAs (booth level agents), and volunteers are actively facilitating the obtaining of eligibility documents for all genuine electors who require assistance..." it said.

The poll panel said as on July 18, of the 7,89,69,844 existing electors in Bihar, enumeration forms from 7,11,72,660 electors, constituting 90.12 per cent, had already been collected. The poll panel assured of making "all possible efforts" to include all those eligible in the electoral roll and as a special effort, political parties were

given the list of electors, whose enumeration forms had not been received, in order to trace them and get their enumeration forms through their BLAs.

NGO Association of Democratic Reforms and other petitioners, including leaders of various political parties and members of civil society, argued that the June 24 orders violates fundamental rights of citizens.

The ECI refuted the claims saying no discrimination could be alleged. Further, the poll panel said persons who featured in the 2003 electoral roll had already undergone scrutiny through the previous intensive revision and remained electors since then.

As a result, it said, they did not constitute the same class of persons whose names feature in the electoral roll of January 2025. The poll panel said any person unable to submit an eligibility document by July 26, could do it in the claims and objections period and there was no discriminatory treatment meted out to ordinary voters as compared to the distinguished persons such as members of judiciary and public representatives as their documents were being collected from home.

Poll panel tells court Aadhaar, voter ID, and ration cards used only for identification; 94.68% of Bihar electorate covered so far

EC to soon initiate process to hold vice-presz polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The Election Commission (EC) will soon initiate the process to hold polls to elect the next vice president after Jagdeep Dhankhar quit the post, sources indicated Tuesday.

Though there is no official word yet, the sources said with the Union home ministry officially notifying Dhankhar's resignation Tuesday, the process to hold the election for his successor could commence soon.

The Constitution says in case a vice president dies in office or resigns or is removed, the poll to elect the next person to the office should be held "as soon as possible".

Dhankhar resigned with immediate effect Monday, citing health grounds.

The members of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, including those nominated, elect the vice president.

From the day the notification is issued, "calling the electoral college to vote", and till the day of the poll, a period of 30 days is stipulated.

A person cannot be elected as the vice president unless he is a citizen of India, has completed 35 years of age and is qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

SNIPPETS

Thousands pay homage to VS Achuthanandan

Thiruvananthapuram: As grey clouds gathered over Kerala's capital, hundreds of tearful faces stood shoulder to shoulder under umbrellas and open skies -- braving rain, grief, and emotion -- to bid farewell to one of the tallest leaders of the Communist movement in India - VS Achuthanandan. Affectionately known as "VS", he may have departed physically, but his legacy, comrades declared marches on. The mortal remains of the 101-year-old CPI(M) stalwart were brought to the historic Durbar Hall at the Secretariat complex from his residence for political leaders and the public to pay their last respects. Emotional slogans filled the air - "Brave comrade VS, who said you are gone? You live on through us!" -- as long-time supporters and young admirers alike queued for a final glimpse of the leader who shaped Kerala's political and social fabric for over eight decades.

'13,212 freedom fighters still alive, getting pension'

New Delhi: A total of 13,212 freedom fighters are still alive and receiving pension from the government, Parliament was informed Tuesday. There are also 9,778 widows of freedom fighters who receive pension under the Centre's Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY), Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. "There are 1,71,689 freedom fighters who received a central pension under the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY) till date. There are 13,212 pensioners who are still alive and receiving SSSY Samman pension. There are 9,778 widows (spouses) who are still alive and are receiving SSSY Samman pension," he said.

All 6 rom J'khand kidnapped in TN rescued: Police

Ranchi/Chennai: All six workers from Jharkhand's Jamtara, who were allegedly kidnapped in Tamil Nadu, were rescued in the southern state, a police officer said Tuesday. Tamil Nadu police said four persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, and a hunt is on to trace and nab two more suspects who were involved in "extorting" ₹1.25 lakh from the kin of the unsuspecting guest workers. The development comes a day after Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari expressed apprehension that there was a life threat to all of them. "The Tamil Nadu Police contacted us. Based on our inputs, they rescued all six workers. However, criminals, who are allegedly involved in the incident, have been absconding as per information we have so far," Jamtara Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajukumar Mehta told PTI.



A traditional fisherman casts his net in Nadia, West Bengal

Five Kuki militants of Manipur shot dead in 'internal clash'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, July 22: Five cadres of a Kuki militant outfit were shot dead during a suspected internal clash at Deivaijang village in Noney district of Manipur, officials said Tuesday.

The incident occurred at the remote Deivaijang village, about 53 km from the district

headquarters Noney, on late Monday night.

The circumstances surrounding the killing of five cadres of the Chin Kuki Mizo Army (CKMA) were yet to be ascertained, but it is suspected to be the result of some internal dispute, the official said.

Further details are awaited, the official added. Meanwhile, the CKMA said in a statement

in local dialect: "Due to misunderstandings and certain malicious intentions, five of our cadres were killed, a significant loss to both our organisation and our community."

Formed two years ago, CKMA is not a signatory to the Suspension of Operations (soO) pact with the Centre, which was inked way back in 2008.

Citizens lost over ₹22,845cr to cyber criminals in 2024: Govt

According to the data shared by the minister, 10,29,026 cyber crimes were reported on NCRP in 2022 with a 127.44 per cent increase over the previous year, 15,96,493 incidents were reported in 2023 showing 55.15 per cent increment, and 22,68,346 cases were reported in 2024, reflecting a 42.08 per cent increase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: Citizens lost more than ₹22,845.73 crore to cyber criminals in 2024, a staggering increase of nearly 206 per cent from the previous year, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday.

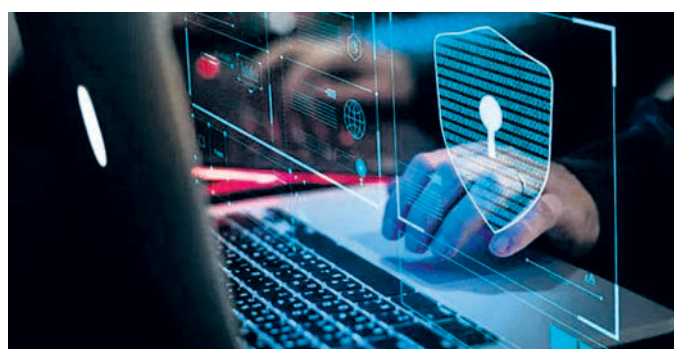
Responding to a written question, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that according to the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) and Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFCFRMS) operated by the ministry's I4C, "total amount of losses incurred by citizens due to cyber frauds in the entire country" in 2024 was ₹22,845.73

crore as compared to ₹7,465.18 crore the previous year.

Kumar said 36,37,288 incidents of financial frauds committed by cyber criminals were reported on NCRP and CFCFRMS in 2024 as compared to 24,42,978 such incidents the previous year.

According to the data shared by the minister, 10,29,026 cyber crimes were reported on NCRP in 2022 with a 127.44 per cent increase over the previous year, 15,96,493 incidents were reported in 2023 showing 55.15 per cent increment, and 22,68,346 cases were reported in 2024, reflecting a 42.08 per cent increase.

"The Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Manage-



ment System (CFCFRMS), under I4C, was launched in 2021 for immediate reporting of financial frauds and to stop siphoning off funds by the fraudsters," he said.

The minister said as per CFCFRMS, financial amount

of more than ₹5,489 crore has been saved in more than 17.82 lakh complaints reported on it so far.

"Cyber crime incidents reported on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, their conversion into FIRs and sub-

sequent action, i.e., filing of chargesheets, arrests and resolution of complaints, thereon are handled by the state/UT law enforcement agencies concerned as per the provisions of the law," Kumar said.

Giving details of the action taken by the government against cyber criminals, the minister said so far, more than 9.42 lakh SIM cards and 2,63,348 IMEIs as reported by police authorities have been blocked by the Centre.

A Suspect Registry of identifiers of cyber criminals was launched by I4C on September 10, 2024, in collaboration with banks/financial institutions. So far, more than 11 lakh suspect identifier data received

from banks and 24 lakh Layer 1 mule accounts have been shared with the participating entities of Suspect Registry and saved more than ₹4631 crore, he said.

The minister said it has launched the 'Pratibimb' module, which maps locations of criminals and crime infrastructure on a map to give visibility to jurisdictional officers.

"The module also facilitates seeking and receiving techno-legal assistance by law enforcement agencies from I4C and other SMEs. It has led to the arrest of 10,599 accused, 26,096 linkages and 63,019 cyber investigation assistance requests," Kumar said.

national



Majority of the people think they want to be multilingual. Let us give them a fair chance and a fair opportunity

PAWAN KALYAN | AP DY CM

ER RASHID GETS CUSTODY PAROLE TO ATTEND PARL

A Delhi court Tuesday granted to jailed Lok Sabha MP Engineer Rashid custody parole between July 24 and August 4 to attend the monsoon session of Parliament. Rashid has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the 2017 terror funding case



of the day quote

I had resolved that unless I received a direct invitation from the chief minister, I would not take the initiative to meet him. I received a message through my children and a few officials saying that the CM wished to meet me

BRU BHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH | FORMER BJP MP

With the help of religious organisations, arrangements such as shelters, rest areas, health services and refreshments were set up in various parts of Delhi, showcasing a unique blend of faith and public service

REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

While the SAD chief tries to deny any alliance, BJP national leaders say they will contest (assembly polls) alone in Punjab. I want to remind everyone of Punjab's dark past written during their rule, pages full of pain for the state

HARPAL SINGH CHEEMA | PUNJAB FINANCE MINISTER



TMC MP Mahua Moitra amid rainfall during the Monsoon session of Parliament in New Delhi

Protests over Bihar's SIR rock Parl

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju slammed the Opposition for disrupting the House. He said the government has agreed to their demand for a discussion on Operation Sindoor and also fixed a time for the same

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: Parliament was rocked by Opposition protests over the ongoing voter-roll revision in Bihar Tuesday, leading to a washout of proceedings in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on the second day of the Monsoon session.

As the Rajya Sabha convened for the day, Deputy Chairman Harivansh made a reference to the vacancy in the vice president's office, citing provisions in the Constitution, amid Opposition protests over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, leading to an adjournment of the proceedings.

When the House re-convened at noon, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Ghanshyam Tiwari said the home ministry has issued a notification regarding the resignation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

In the Lok Sabha, carrying placards and raising slogans, opposition members trooped to the Well of the House at 11 am and demanded a rollback of the SIR exercise. Agriculture



Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan appealed to the opposition members to allow the Question Hour to continue. As his plea went unheeded, Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings till noon.

Similar scenes were witnessed when the Lok Sabha reconvened at noon and BJP

member Jagdambika Pal, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm after the laying of parliamentary papers on the table of the House.

The opposition continued with its demand for a discussion on the SIR when the House reconvened at 2 pm, even as Dilip Saikia, who was in the chair,

appealed to them to allow the House to function.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju slammed the Opposition for disrupting the House. He said the government has agreed to their demand for a discussion on Operation Sindoor and also fixed a time for the same.

"Now, you want discussions on all other issues at the same time. How is this possible?" Rijiju asked as the opposition members continued to raise slogans and wave placards.

Rijiju said the opposition is wasting taxpayers' money by resorting to protests and disrupting the proceedings of the House. As the protests continued, Saikia adjourned the proceedings for the day.

The Rajya Sabha too was adjourned for the day without transacting any business after an uproar by Opposition members over several issues, including a discussion on the SIR.

The Upper House saw two adjournments during the pre-lunch period, before it was finally adjourned within minutes of meeting at 2 pm.

Boeing delivers 3 Apache choppers to Indian Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: American aerospace major Boeing Tuesday delivered three Apache attack choppers to the Indian Army with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh describing it as a significant step towards strengthening India's defence capabilities.

The company delivered the AH-64E Apaches choppers as part of a Rs 4,168 crore contract to supply six helicopters to the Indian Army. The AH-64 Apache is one of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters and is flown by the US Army.

"The arrival of the first batch of Apache helicopters for the Indian Army is a significant step towards strengthening India's defence capabilities."

"These advanced helicopters will enhance the Army Aviation wing's operational effectiveness, specially in challenging terrains. A proud moment reflecting our commitment to modernising the Armed Forces," Singh said in a social media post. The Army described the delivery of the first batch of choppers as a "milestone moment" for the force.

"These state-of-the-art platforms will bolster the operational capabilities of the Indian Army significantly," it said. In 2020, Boeing completed delivery of 22 E-model Apaches to the Indian Air Force and signed a contract to supply six AH-64Es for the Indian Army. The delivery of the Indian Army's Apaches was scheduled to begin in 2024. The IAF had signed a multi-billion dollar contract with the US government and Boeing Ltd in September 2015 for 22 Apache helicopters.

ALL ACCUSED IN 7/11 BLASTS ACQUITTED

SC agrees to hear Maha govt's plea

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: The Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to hear July 24 the Maharashtra government's plea challenging the Bombay High Court decision to acquit 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai agreed to urgently list the matter for hearing Thursday, after Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta mentioned it.

Seeking an urgent hearing on the state government's special leave petition (SLP), SG Mehta said that it was a "serious matter" requiring the top court's consideration on "some important issues".

In a major ruling delivered Monday, the Bombay High Court acquitted 12 accused, of whom five were on death sentence and seven others on life imprisonment, in the July 11, 2006, Mumbai blast case.

Directing their immediate release from jail, the acquittal order passed by a bench of Justices Anil Kilar and S. Chandak



came as a major blow to the investigation agencies.

The Justice Kilar-led Bench castigated the shoddy probe prosecution, opining that the prosecution failed to even establish the type of bombs used in the crime.

The 12 accused -- incarcerated for 19 years -- succeeded in establishing before the Bombay High Court the fact of torture inflicted on them to extort confessional statements.

As a result, it held the state-

ments inadmissible, saying, "On all the tests relating to voluntariness and truthfulness of the confessional statements, the prosecution failed."

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis termed the Bombay High Court verdict as "shocking", saying that the Maharashtra government will move the Supreme Court against it.

On July 11, 2006, seven bomb serial blasts in packed Mumbai local trains brought the maximum city to its knees within 11 minutes. The terror attack left 189 dead and over 800 injured. Earlier in 2015, a special court convicted 12 individuals in the case, sentencing five -- Faisal Shaikh, Asif Khan, Kamal Ansari, Ehtesham Siddiqui, and Naveed Khan -- to death, while the remaining seven were given life imprisonment.

The prosecution had argued that the attack was planned by Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, and carried out by operatives of Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba with help from the Students' Islamic Movement of India, a banned Indian group.

9 walk out jails, 2 still in prison

MUMBAI: Nine of the eleven persons acquitted by the Bombay High Court in the 7/11 serial train blasts case have been released from various prisons in Maharashtra, while two others will continue to be behind bars as other cases are pending against them, officials said Tuesday. Nineteen years after seven train blasts here killed more than 180 persons, the high court Monday acquitted all the 12 accused, saying the prosecution utterly failed to prove the case and it was "hard to believe the accused committed the crime". The court allowed the appeals filed by the accused challenging their conviction and sentences imposed on them by a special court in 2015. Of the 12, five had been sentenced to death and seven to life imprisonment by the special court. One of the death row convicts died in 2021.

Indian cities need \$2.4 trillion to tackle climate risks: Report

The report identifies Delhi, Chennai, Surat and Lucknow among cities most exposed to urban heat island effects and flood risks, particularly due to settlement expansion into vulnerable areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Jul 22: Indian cities are becoming increasingly more vulnerable to floods, heat-waves, and other climate-related risks and will require over 2.4 trillion US dollars in investments by 2050 to build resilient and low-carbon infrastructure, according to a World Bank report released Tuesday.

The report notes that Indian cities hold tremendous potential as centres of economic growth, with 70 per cent of new jobs coming from cities by 2030. "However, timely action is

needed for cities to deal with impacts from extreme weather events and avert billions of dollars in future losses," the report "Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India" states. The report, prepared in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, stated that "Annual economic losses from rain-related flooding are currently estimated at 4 billion dollars. These are projected to rise to five billion dollars by 2030 and between 14 and 30 billion dollars by 2070 if no remedial action is taken." According to the report,



much of the urban expansion is occurring in "flood-prone and heat-vulnerable areas."

The report identifies Delhi, Chennai, Surat and Lucknow among cities most exposed to urban heat island effects and

flood risks, particularly due to settlement expansion into vulnerable areas.

"In Delhi, the report highlights risks linked to rising temperatures and urban flooding. Heat stress is also expected

to intensify. Between 1983 and 2016, exposure to dangerous heat levels increased by 71 percent in India's 10 largest cities, rising from 4.3 billion to 10.1 billion person-hours per year," the report added. The report raised concerns about heat-related deaths.

Heat mitigation alone could increase India's Gross Domestic Product by up to 0.4 per cent and save up to 130,000 lives annually by 2050, the report states.

According to the report, the country's urban projected population will be around 1.1 billion by 2070. "More than 144 million new urban homes will be required, doubling the current housing stock," the report states.

To offset these risks, the

World Bank estimates that India will need to invest 2.4 trillion dollars by 2050 and 10.9 trillion dollars by 2070 across sectors such as housing, public transport, solid waste management, and municipal services.

Without timely action, climate risks such as flooding and extreme heat will become much more severe, Kouame added.

The report states that public financing alone will not be sufficient to meet this demand.

It calls for increased private sector investment through tools such as green bonds, blended finance, and access to international climate funds. The report recommends strengthening the financial autonomy of urban local bodies and improving their capacity to plan and implement bankable projects.



POST OF THE DAY

The judiciary this week: 1. Concluded that nobody killed 189 people, acquitted terrorists including

- Pakistanis 2. Declared that Justice Verma, accused of being a stealing, scamming, bribe taking thief, is still "respectable" 3. Suppressed a move about Kanhaiya Lal's beheading 4. Quashed FIRs against Muslims who sheltered foreign Tablighi Jamaat members during COVID 5. Told Hindus how to worship in the Tirumala Temple petition about cow milk 6. Told Hindus how to worship again by disallowing Nama Sankeertanam in residential societies without permission.

@UnSubtleDesi

SHORT TAKES

Court grants bail to 2 held for Assembly lobby clash

Mumbai: A Mumbai court has granted bail to two persons -- one each supporter of NCP (SP) MLA Jitendra Awhad and BJP legislator Gopichand Padalkar -- in the case pertaining to scuffle in the Maharashtra legislature complex premises here last week. The court, in its order while granting bail Monday, said keeping them in jail will serve no purpose as they are ready to obey bail conditions. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (in-charge), Esplanade court, K S Zanwar granted bail to Awhad's supporter Nitin Deshmukh and Padalkar's supporter Sarjerao Takale, noting despite getting ample custody of the accused police failed to find out at whose behest they committed the act.

Four more eateries shut down in Shillong

Shillong: Four more eateries in Shillong's Fire Brigade area have been shut down for violations of food safety regulations, officials said Tuesday. The action was taken following tests conducted by the Food Safety on Wheels mobile laboratory team, which found lapses in hygiene and non-compliance with licensing norms, they said. "All of them were served rectification notices besides penalty, during which their shops are required to remain shut," a senior FSSAI official told PTI.



Ukraine never wanted this war, and it is Russia that must end the war that it itself started
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

COKE WITH CANE SUGAR

Coca-Cola has laid out plans to launch a product made with US cane sugar this year, days after Donald Trump claimed the company had agreed to replace high-fructose corn syrup. The company announced the change in a quarterly earnings report released Tuesday.



of the day quote

President Donald Trump was caught off guard by the recent Israeli strikes in Syria and on a Catholic church in Gaza
KAROLINE LEAVITT | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

We have no reason to expect any magical breakthroughs (in the Ukraine war), it's hardly possible in the current situation
DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

Constitution amendment is necessary for effective implementation of federal, democratic republic system and to address the issues related to the rights and proper representation of women, backward communities and marginalised people
BIMALENDRA NIDHI | NEPALI CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

'Racist' attack on Indian in Ireland

London: An Indian man in his 40s was hospitalised following what has been dubbed "mindless, racist violence" in a suburb of the Irish capital of Dublin, with the Indian Ambassador to Ireland calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. According to local reports, the victim had arrived in Ireland a few weeks ago when he was targeted in an assault at Parkhill Road in Tallaght Saturday evening. The Gardaí, as the police are known in Ireland, have opened an investigation into the case. "Gardaí in Tallaght were alerted to an incident at Parkhill Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 on the evening of Saturday 19th July, 2025, at approximately 6pm," the local police said in a statement. "Gardaí attended the scene and a male, aged in his 40s was taken to Tallaght University Hospital with injuries," the statement added.

Crackdown on 'extremist' content

Moscow: Russian lawmakers Tuesday approved a bill that punishes online searches for information that is deemed "extremist", the latest move by government authorities in their relentless crackdown on dissent. The bill passed by the lower house, the State Duma, moves to its all-but-certain endorsement in the upper house and then goes to President Vladimir Putin to be signed into law. The legislation punishes what it describes as "deliberately searching for and accessing extremist materials" online. First-time offenders face a fine of up to the equivalent of \$64. The official definition of extremist activity is extremely broad and includes opposition groups like the Anti-Corruption Foundation, created by the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and the "international LGBT movement". It's not clear how authorities will track down violators.

2 kids killed in Pak mortar blast

Peshawar: Two children were killed in a mortar explosion while on their way to a religious seminary in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Tuesday, as per local sources. The victims Arafat and Amir, both around six to seven years old, belonged to the Mehsud tribe in Raghza village, located in the jurisdiction of Gomal Bazaar Police Station in Tank district of northwest Pakistan, sources said. The victims were carrying tea for their teacher when the blast occurred, they added. The bodies of the victims were taken to the District Headquarters Hospital in Tank. Authorities have launched an operation to further investigate the incident.

Starvation deaths mount in Gaza

REUTERS

Cairo/Gaza July 22: A six-week-old infant was among 15 people who have died of starvation in Gaza in the past 24 hours, local health officials said, with malnutrition now killing Palestinians faster than at any point in the 21-month war.

The infant died at a hospital ward in northern Gaza, the health officials said, naming him as Yousef al-Safadi. Three of the others were also children, including 13-year-old Abdulhamid al-Ghalban, who died in a hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis. The other two children were not named.

Palestinian health officials say at least 101 people have died of hunger during the conflict, including 80 children, with most of them in recent weeks.

Israel controls all aid supplies into the war-ravaged enclave, where most of the population has been displaced multiple times and faces acute shortages of basic necessities.

The head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency said Tuesday that its staff, as well as doctors and humanitarian workers, were fainting on duty in Gaza due to hunger and exhaustion.

"No one is spared: caretakers in Gaza are also in need of care. Doctors, nurses, journalists and humanitarians are hungry," UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini said in a statement.

There has been international condemnation of mass killings of civilians and dire shortages of aid in Gaza, but no action that has yet stopped the conflict, or significantly increased supplies.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Tuesday that images of civilians killed during the



Palestinians hold onto an aid truck returning to Gaza City from the northern Gaza Strip, Tuesday
AP PHOTO

distribution of aid were "unbearable" and urged Israel to deliver on pledges to improve the situation, but did not say what action European countries would take.

Israel's military said that it "views the transfer of humanitarian aid into Gaza as a matter of utmost importance", and works to facilitate its entry in coordination with the international community.

It has denied accusations it is preventing aid from reaching Gaza and has accused Palestinian militant group Hamas of stealing food, an allegation Hamas denies.

FOOD AND MEDICINE SHORTAGES

"Hospitals are already overwhelmed by the number of casualties from gunfire. They can't provide much more help for hunger-related symptoms because of food and medicine shortages," said Khalil al-Deqran, a spokesperson for the health ministry.

Deqran said some 600,000 people were suffering from

malnutrition, including at least 60,000 pregnant women. Symptoms among those going hungry include dehydration and anaemia, he said.

Baby formula in particular is in critically short supply, according to aid groups, doctors and residents.

Israel says its assault on Gaza aims to destroy Hamas, which waged the deadliest attack in Israel's history on October 7, 2023, killing at least 1,200 Israelis including civilians, by its tallies.

Israeli bombs and gunfire have killed nearly 60,000 people in Gaza since then, according to local health authorities.

Tank shelling killed another 16 people living in tents in Gaza City on Tuesday, as Israeli troops launched attacks across the strip, health officials said. The Israeli military said it wasn't aware of any incident, or artillery in the area at that time.

The health ministry said at least 72 Palestinians were killed by Israeli gunfire and military

US leaving UNESCO again, only 2 yrs after rejoining

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, July 22: The United States announced Tuesday it will again pull out of the UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency because it believes that its involvement is not in the country's national interest, and that the agency promotes anti-Israel speech. This decision comes only two years after the United States rejoined UNESCO after leaving in 2018, during US President Donald Trump's first administration.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the withdrawal was linked to UNESCO's perceived agenda to "advance divisive social and cultural causes."

She added in a statement that UNESCO's decision "to admit the State of Palestine" as a Member State is highly problematic, contrary to US policy, and contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organisation.

The decision, first reported by the New York Post, will

take effect at the end of December 2026.

This will be the third time that the United States has left UNESCO, which is based in Paris, and the second time during a Trump administration. It last rejoined the agency in 2023, under the Biden administration.

UNESCO's Director General Audrey Azoulay said she "deeply" regrets the US decision but insisted that it was expected, and that the agency "has prepared for it." She also denied accusations of anti-Israel bias.

"These claims ... contradict the reality of UNESCO's efforts, particularly in the field of Holocaust education and the fight against antisemitism," she said.

The Trump administration in 2017 announced that the US would withdraw from UNESCO, citing anti-Israel bias. That decision took effect a year later. The US and Israel stopped financing UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member state in 2011.

Tiny Pacific nation turns to ICJ as climate disasters mount

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Port Vila (Vanuatu), July 22: When John Warmington first began diving the reefs outside his home in Vanuatu's Havanah Harbour a decade ago, the coral rose like a sunken forest — tall stands of staghorns branched into yellow antlers, plate corals layered like canopies, and clouds of darting fish wove through the labyrinth.

"We used to know every inch of that reef," he said. "It was like a friend."

Now, it's unrecognisable. After Cyclone Pam battered the reef in 2015, sediment from inland rivers smothered the coral beds. Crown-of-thorns starfish swept in and devoured the recovering polyps. Back-to-back cyclones in 2023 crushed what was left. Then, in December 2024, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake shook the seabed.

What remains is a coral graveyard — bleached rubble scattered across the seafloor, habitats collapsed, life vanished. "We've come out of the water in tears," said Warmington, who has logged thousands of dives on this single reef. "We just see heartbreak."

That heartbreak is becoming more common across this Pacific island nation, where intensifying cyclones, rising seas and saltwater intrusion are reshaping coastlines and threatening daily life. Since 1993, sea levels around Vanuatu's shores have risen by about 6 millimetres per year — significantly faster than the global average — and in some areas, tectonic activity has doubled that rate.

On Wednesday, Vanuatu will get its day in the world's highest court. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) will issue an advisory opinion on what



Men push a cart with passengers along a flooded road following tropical storm Wipha fueled monsoon rains in Manila, Philippines, Tuesday
AP PHOTO



legal obligations nations have to address climate change and what consequences they may face if they don't. The case, led by Vanuatu and backed by more than 130 countries, is seen as a potential turning point in international climate law.

"Seeing large, polluting countries just continue business as usual and not take the

climate crisis seriously can get really sad and disappointing," said 16-year-old climate activist Vepaiamele Trief. "If they rule in our favour, that could change everything."

The opinion won't be legally binding, but could help shape future efforts to hold major emitters accountable and secure the funding and action

Students protest as B'desh jet crash toll goes up to 31



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, July 22: Thousands of students Tuesday protested demanding 'accurate' information on casualties and compensation for the families of those killed when a Bangladesh Air Force training jet crashed into a school, as the death toll in the incident rose to 31, including 25 children.

The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after takeoff and crashed into a two-storey building of Milestone School and College in Dhaka's Uttara area Monday, according to officials.

The death toll from the crash rose to 31, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the military. The Chief Adviser's special adviser, Saidur Rahman, told reporters that 25 deceased were children and many of them under the age of 12, who succumbed to extensive burn injuries. The pilot and one teacher were among the dead.

Sharing the details, the ISPR said that 16 people died at the Combined Military Hospital, 10 at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, two at Lubana General Hospital, and one each at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital, and United Hospital.

It added that 165 of the injured are undergoing treatment at 10 hospitals in Dhaka. Authorities fear the toll could further rise as conditions of some of the injured were critical.

Hundreds of students of Milestone School and College, as well as from nearby schools, protested, demanding the "accurate" disclosure of the information about those killed, compensation for victims' families and the immediate discontinuation of outdated and unsafe training aircraft used by the Bangladesh Air Force.

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, Education Adviser CR Abrar, and Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam visited the crash site, where agitating students confronted them and shouted slogans in favour of their demands. The advisers took shelter inside one of the school buildings around 10:30 am.

Despite security vigils by army and paramilitary troops, the students laid a siege to the building where the advisers took shelter. They alleged that the authorities were deliberately hiding the actual death toll.

Their demands include a complete list of the injured; a public apology for the assault on teachers by army personnel at the crash site, and reforms in Air Force training procedures to ensure safety.

small island nations need to adapt or survive.

It comes after decades of frustration for Pacific nations who've watched their homelands disappear. In Tuvalu, where the average elevation is just 2 metres, more than a third of the population has applied for a climate migration visa to Australia. By 2100, much of the country is projected to be under water at high tide.

In Nauru, the government has begun selling passports to wealthy foreigners — offering visa-free access to dozens of countries — in a bid to generate revenue for possible relocation efforts.

For children in Vanuatu, climate change isn't a theory — it's a classroom, or the lack of one. At Sainte Jeanne D'Arc school on Efate Island, elementary school teacher Noellina Tavi has spent two of the last

three years teaching her students in tents — first after the 2023 cyclones and again following the 2024 earthquake.

With a shortage of emergency tents, her class was combined with another. Students fidget and lose focus. "It's too crowded," Tavi said. "We can't work peacefully."

When it rains, the tents turn cold and muddy. Tavi often sends students home so they don't get sick. Anytime a storm approaches, the tents must be dismantled, the furniture carried to shelter and the children sent home. "That disrupts their education for a whole week," she said. In rural areas, extreme weather hits something even more basic: food security. On Nguna Island, farmer Kaltang Laban has watched cyclones wipe out the banana, cassava and taro crops that feed his community.



Regional currencies remain range-bound as the dollar consolidates amid geopolitical uncertainties. Near-term, spot USD-INR has support at 85.95 and resistance at 86.70
DILIP PARMAR | RESEARCH ANALYST, HDFC SECURITIES

HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA GETS ₹517.34CR GST DEMAND

Hyundai Motor India Ltd Tuesday said it has received a demand of ₹517.34 crore from tax authorities, along with penalty, for alleged short payment of GST compensation cess on its certain SUV models. The company has received an order from Commissioner (Appeals), CGST Dept, Tamil Nadu, confirming GST compensation cess demand of ₹258.67 crore, along with penalty of ₹258.67 crore, on the allegation of short payment of GST compensation cess on certain SUV models



of the day quote

I do think these trade wars are for a particular time. It's not going to be a prolonged time. One way or the other, it will end...the trade war, the trade tariffs, the high tariffs...I don't think it is 50-60 per cent... Those tariffs, my personal view, I don't think it will happen. It will come down

ROMAL SHETTY | CEO, DELOITTE SOUTH ASIA

Regulatory uncertainty in India's highly regulated crop protection industry poses challenges for bringing new technologies to farmers

STEVE HAWKINS | GLOBAL PRESIDENT, SYNGENTA CROP PROTECTION

The 2025 findings reflect a clear shift - today's workforce is no longer satisfied with conventional jobs; they're seeking equity, purpose, meaningful growth, and work-life harmony

VISWANATH PS | CEO, RANDSTAD INDIA

TRAVEL, TALKS, TRADE

Cabinet approves India-UK trade deal

India and UK are set to sign a free trade agreement. The agreement aims to boost trade between the two nations. The pact will remove taxes on some exports and imports. It also addresses issues like intellectual property rights



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The cabinet Tuesday approved the free trade agreement between India and UK, which will be signed in London July 24, sources said.

The pact, officially called as comprehensive economic and trade agreement, will be signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to London.

Modi's four-day visit to United Kingdom and Maldives begins Wednesday. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will accompany the prime minister.

The two countries announced the conclusion of the negotiations for the trade agreement May 6.

The trade pact proposes to remove taxes on the export of labour-intensive products such as leather, footwear and clothing, while making imports of whisky and cars from Britain cheaper, in a bid to double trade between the two economies to \$120 billion by 2030.

The pact has chapters on issues including goods, services, innovation, government procurement, and intellectual property rights.

The text of the agreement is

generally signed by the commerce ministers from both countries. Once the free trade agreement is signed, it will require approval from the British Parliament before it can take effect.

The two countries have also concluded the negotiations for the Double Contribution Convention Agreement, or social security pact. It would help avoid double contribution to social security funds by Indian professionals working for a limited period in Britain.

However, the talks for the bilateral investment treaty (BIT) are still going on. The FTA comes into force after signing and ratification by both the countries.

In such trade agreements, two countries either eliminate or significantly reduce customs duties on maximum goods traded between them. They also ease norms for promoting trade in services and bilateral investments.

India's exports to UK rose by 12.6 per cent to \$14.5 billion, while imports grew by 2.3 per cent to \$8.6 billion in 2024-25.

The bilateral trade between India and UK increased to \$21.34 billion in 2023-24 from \$20.36 billion in 2022-23.

Resurgence of rate-cut wagers revives FDI in bonds

REUTERS

Mumbai, July 22: Foreign appetite for Indian government bonds is back, with inflows picking up steadily over the last month, as investors gauge fresh expectations of a rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as early as August.

The RBI cut rates by a larger-than-expected 50 basis points in June and changed the stance to "neutral", prompting investors to bet on a prolonged pause.

The RBI could implement a modest 25 basis point cut in August if inflation remains subdued and growth concerns persist, said Singapore-based Manish Bhargava, CEO of Straits Investment Management, adding that bond yields are attractive at current levels.

Over the last one month, foreign investors have net bought 129 billion rupees (\$1.5 billion) of Indian bonds linked to global indexes after selling more than 330 billion rupees in the first two-and-a-half months of the financial year that started April 1, clearing house data showed.

With recent high-frequency data disappointing and indicating the possibility of a further slowdown in growth, "there is potential for more support from the RBI further down the line," said London-based Giulia Pellegrini, lead portfolio manager, emerging market debt at AllianzGI.

India's overall economic fundamentals remain solid, keeping the country on investors' radar, she said.

A wider gap between interest rates in India and US would



add to the appeal of Indian debt, investors said.

That's why a Federal Reserve rate cut could act as a positive catalyst for Indian bonds, as they have historically helped local currency debt markets, said Nigel Foo,

Singapore-based head of Asian fixed income at First Sentier Investors.

However, current Indian bond yields are lower than where they were in the past a similar policy rate levels, and so are relatively unattractive he added.

The 10-year US yield was around 4.35 per cent, with the Fed expected to cut rates by at least 50 bps in 2025. The Indian 10-year benchmark bond yield was at 6.30 per cent.

"India's local debt story remains very compelling on both FX and rates," said Jean Charles Sambor, head of emerging markets debt at TT International Asset Management in London, who expects bond yields to decline through this year and next, and finds the middle of the yield curve attractive.

SEBI flags cyber threats as key investor challenge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: With an increasing number of savers stepping into the capital markets, Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Whole-Time Member Ananth Narayan Tuesday highlighted that cyber threats, market volatility, and a trust deficit in the financial ecosystem could pose significant challenges to this growing investor trend.

Over the years, the number of unique investors in India's capital markets has risen sharply from 4.2 crore in March 2020 to 13 crore to date. Despite this remarkable growth, there remains considerable room for further expansion.

While acknowledging the rise of domestic investors, Narayan stressed the importance of addressing the challenges to sustain the momentum.

Among these challenges, he noted that risks such as cyber risk and digital frauds are a serious concern. Fraudsters - often sophisticated and organized - prey on unsuspecting investors, making cybersecurity a key area of focus.

Alongside this, investors



need to be fully aware of market volatility, he said, emphasising that market movements are a given, and urged investors to align their portfolios with their individual risk appetites.

"We must understand and internalise the meaning of volatility and risk better, just as we have better understood the concept of returns," he added.

Addressing an International Conference on Financial Planning, Narayan further stressed the importance of maintaining investor trust in the financial ecosystem. Trust, he pointed out, can be challenged by any episodes of "egregious governance failures or market manipulation".

In this regard, he acknowledged the vital role of first-line regulators - such as exchanges

and depositories - along with Sebi and other stakeholders in upholding the integrity of the market.

On investment strategy, Narayan emphasised the need for diversification across asset classes. He observed that some small investors display a tendency to concentrate heavily in equities. To address this, SEBI is working to strengthen the debt and commodities markets to offer robust alternatives.

He also highlighted the necessity of informed and responsible investing to ensure sustained capital formation. Registered and trained financial planners, he said, have a vital role in helping investors navigate these complexities.

The official also said SEBI is significantly scaling up its investor education and awareness initiatives. A nationwide survey covering over 90,000 households is underway to address two critical questions - what will it take to bring more savers into the securities market, and how informed are existing and potential investors about risks, and what steps are necessary to promote responsible investing.

Gold climbs ₹1 lakh/10 g, Silver rallies ₹3,000

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: Gold prices climbed ₹1,000 to regain the ₹1 lakh per 10 grams level in the national capital Tuesday due to strong buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity soared four-week high of ₹1,00,020 per 10 grams from the previous close of ₹99,020 per 10 grams. Previously, gold traded at ₹1 lakh per 10 grams level June 19.

In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by ₹1,000 to ₹99,550 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) Tuesday. It had closed at ₹98,550 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

In line with gold, silver prices too rallied by ₹3,000 to ₹1,14,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) Tuesday. The white metal had ended at ₹1,11,000 per kg Monday.

Meanwhile, spot gold slipped 0.28 per cent to trade at \$3,387.42 per ounce in the global markets.

"Gold traded in a narrow and volatile range between \$3,395 and \$3,383 on Comex, reflecting a lack of fresh triggers from trade deals or major global developments," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Q1 RESULTS

Paytm posts profit

New Delhi: Fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns Paytm brand, has reported its first-ever consolidated net profit of ₹122.5 crore in the quarter ended June 2025, the company said in a filing. Paytm had posted a net loss of ₹840 crore a year ago. Its consolidated revenue from operations in the reporting quarter increased by about 28 per cent to ₹1,917.5 crore from ₹1,501.6 crore in the June 2024 quarter.

Colgate-Palmolive India profit drops

New Delhi: FMCG major Colgate-Palmolive India Ltd Tuesday reported a decline of 11.9 per cent in its net profit at ₹320.62 crore for the first quarter ended June 2025 on account of subdued urban demand and elevated competition intensity. The company had posted a net profit of ₹363.98 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, Colgate-Palmolive India Ltd (CPIL) said in a regulatory filing. Its sales were down 4.38 per cent to ₹1,420.64 crore during the quarter under review. It was at ₹1,485.76 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Crisil profit rises

New Delhi: Domestic rating agency Crisil Tuesday reported a 14.3 per cent growth in net profit at ₹171.6 crore in the June quarter of the current fiscal. The company has a consolidated net profit of ₹150.1 crore in the second quarter (April-June) of 2024-25 fiscal. Consolidated total income for the April-June quarter rose 6.3 per cent to ₹866.6 crore, compared with ₹815.4 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Parag Milk foods profit flat

New Delhi: Parag Milk Foods Ltd has reported a flat consolidated net profit at ₹27.58 crore for the quarter ended June. Its net profit stood at ₹27.30 crore in the year-ago period. Total income, however, rose to ₹859.16 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal from ₹763.43 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing.

Solex Energy revenue up

New Delhi: Solar PV modules maker and EPC services provider Solex Energy Tuesday said its revenue rose by 84 per cent to ₹260 crore in the April-June quarter of 2025-26 compared to the year-ago period.

TPNODL upgrades transformers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 22: TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has undertaken major upgrades to its electricity infrastructure to ensure reliable and quality power supply across the region.

In the Ghatagaon area of Keonjhar district, a 100 KV transformer has been replaced with a 250 KV unit, while Vidyadharpur saw a 63 KV transformer upgraded to 100 KV. Similar efforts were made in Raghunathpur (Mayurbhanj district) and Akhuapada (Bhadrak district), where 100 KV transformers were upgraded to 250 KV.

In the Rairangpur division, the Kantabani and Uparabedha areas witnessed upgrades from 25 KV to 100 KV, and in Joda,



Keonjhar, a 100 KV unit was also upgraded to 250 KV. These enhancements are meant to cater to the demands of a broader consumer base by ensuring electricity with greater voltage stability.

Beyond boosting capacity, TPNODL is also prioritising safety by constructing boundary walls around previously unfenced transformers to prevent accidental contact, particularly in residential and high-traffic zones. These measures aim to enhance public safety and prevent accidents involving children and animals.

Stock markets close flat; Eternal jumps nearly 11%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 22: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a volatile trade Tuesday as gains in quick commerce and private banking shares were offset by losses in oil & gas and IT shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 13.53 points or 0.02 per cent down at 82,186.81. 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 29.80 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 25,060.90.

Lack of clarity over US-India trade deal ahead of August 1 deadline and profit booking by FIIs hit the market sentiment, experts said.

Among Sensex firms, Eternal jumped the most by 10.56 per cent in a post-result rally. Food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal, which owns the



Zomato and Blinkit brands, Monday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹25 crore for the June quarter, as continuing investments in quick commerce and going-out businesses weighed on its bottom line.

Titan rose by over 1 per cent while HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank extended gains after their quarterly results. Hindustan Unilever, Bharat Electronics, Maruti, ICICI Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were also

among the gainers.

However, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, State Bank of India and Reliance Industries were among the laggards. The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.62 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.17 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 1.01 per cent, followed by telecommunication (0.87 per cent), auto (0.78 per cent), IT (0.53 per cent) and teck (0.53 per cent).

Consumer discretionary emerged as the only gainer.

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

European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended mostly higher Monday.

Customer complaints rising, bankers lacking empathy

Banking today is more complex than ever. Need to tackle upgraded problems with upgraded solutions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 22: Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has ruled a "lack of empathy" among bankers, even in the face of rising number of customer complaints around serious aspects like fraud.

Speaking at an event of RBI-promoted NIBM (National Institute of Bank Management) July 12, Swaminathan said there is "increasing automation but decreasing ownership", and customers have to contend with template emails and helplines

loop back "endlessly". He made it clear that addressing these issues will be essential if bankers were to sustain people's trust in the system.

The Reserve Bank's website published the speech Tuesday. "The number of customer complaints - especially through digital channels - has risen significantly in recent years. From social engineering frauds to poor grievance redressal, the loss and frustration is real. Often, the problem is not the product or service, but, as I see it, the real issue is a lack



of empathy," the commercial banker-turned-regulator said in his valedictory address to the students.

Nowadays, KYC (know your

customer) is often reduced to a "periodic ritual", he said, exhorting bankers to find a way to bring back that personal awareness and responsibility even in

a digital context.

Enlisting instances like senior citizen's struggles with ATM PIN, a rural area borrower's challenges to repay a loan online or the worries of a small business owner over UPI payments, Swaminathan said these are not mere service requests, but opportunities to earn trust by giving time and patience, and showing professionalism.

"Technology will enable the transaction. But only you can build the relationship and only you can earn the customer's trust for your institution," he

said, stressing that this is what will distinguish a banker from an app.

The DG said a banker has to act quickly, endure uncertainty, recover from setbacks, and stay focused over the long run.

"You will face moments of rapid change - crises, deadlines, audits, policy shifts - but you will also need the discipline and stamina to navigate slow, complex processes that unfold over months or years," he told the students beginning a two-year post graduation course in banking.

89-YEAR-OLD JINX AT OLD TRAFFORD

India aim to level Test series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manchester, July 22: An injury-plagued India is likely to go back to the Headingley template when it takes on a reinvigorated England in the fourth Test starting here Wednesday, hoping to end a winless record at the storied Old Trafford and draw level in what has been a compelling series so far.

Following the first Test in Leeds, India had found a settled line-up by fielding three all-rounders in the playing eleven including Nitish Reddy, who has now been ruled of the series due to a knee injury.

Pacer Akash Deep was also ruled out on the eve of the Test due to a groin injury, and captain Shubman Gill said uncapped fast bowler Anshul Kamboj is on the verge of making his debut.

With Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar being the two spin bowling all-rounders, India had the cushion of batting till number eight but that may not be the case in Manchester, where the visitors are yet to win in nine attempts including four losses and five draws. England are leading 2-1 going into the penultimate game of the rubber.

Shardul Thakur, who played the series-opener, would be the direct replacement for Reddy in the playing eleven but he doesn't provide the same batting quality. If selected, he would have to up his game with the ball too as Reddy had produced timely wickets in the third Test at Lord's.

Considering the options available, India could also go back to the combination they played at Leeds where they had only one spinner in



Jadeja and there were specialist batters till number six with both Karun Nair and Sai Sudharsan in the playing eleven.

Also in the mix are Kamboj and Prasidh Krishna, and either of them can come in for Akash Deep.

Like Akash Deep, Kamboj can generate plenty of seam movement and he also looked in good shape in the first outdoor training session ahead of the high-stakes contest. He was also a part of India A's shadow tour of England. Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and workhorse Mohammed Siraj are two certain starters in

the playing eleven.

Lord's was the first time in the series that Indian batters faltered and the Gill-led line-up would be looking to course correct with all to play for. Despite low returns in the third Test, Gill has aggregated more than 600 runs in the series and from the team's point of view, he would need to return to his heavy scoring ways.

Jofra Archer got the better of Yashasvi Jaiswal twice in his successful return to Test cricket and the young Indian left-hander would be better prepared to deal with the extra pace of the England fast bowler.

Gill has been the team's leading run getter but someone who has looked most assured in the middle across six innings is K L Rahul, having provided a batting masterclass in English conditions at the top of the order.

After the training session 48 hours before the game, Rishabh Pant appeared to have fully recovered from his finger injury and would be performing his dual duties as usual. Gill has also confirmed his participation as wicketkeeper at the pre-match press conference.

If Nair gets another opportunity, he would be desperate to convert his starts into a big score. With four 50-plus scores on the trot, Jadeja has been rock solid in the middle order but is expected to do more with the ball. It has been raining regularly in Manchester for the past week or so and there is forecast for light showers for the majority of the five days.

Considering the damp weather, there would be moisture to exploit for the fast bowlers on day one.

Squads:

India: Shubman Gill (captain), Rishabh Pant (vc & wk), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Karun Nair, Ravindra Jadeja, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Anshul Kamboj.

England XI: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope (vc), Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (c), Jamie Smith (wk), Liam Dawson, Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer.

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

METTLE MEET 2025

OrissaPOST

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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

PRATYUSH DHAL

PRIYANKA NAHAK

Others who answered correctly are

Joseph John, Bishnu Prasada Dash, Anjubala Mohanty, Rajendra Kumar Panda, Madan Harijan, Saroj Nag, Surendra Pradhan, Parsuram Swain, Sachin Minji, Divyanshu Mohanty, Dipak Kumar Routray, Firoja Kumar Badhai, Amar Kumar Jena, Alok Ranjan Sahoo, Vibhu Anand Dash, Sourav Nayak, Omm Prakash Sahoo, Mahesh Prasad Dalabehera

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

As a reader of **OrissaPOST**, this is a chance for you to be part of the exciting **Grand Finale** if you can give correct answers in the daily quiz. Starting **July 01, 2025** there will be one question each day for you to answer till **July 31, 2025**. Every day two winners will be selected from correct entries. Then winners will be decided by draw of lots. The winners will be invited for the **Grand Finale** which will be conducted by a nationally acclaimed quizmaster. So buckle up and get set for some brainstorming.

TODAY'S QUESTION

Born on this day in 1856, he was a prominent Indian nationalist, teacher, and independence activist who popularized the slogan "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it!" Who was this influential leader?

ANSWER TO TUESDAY'S QUESTION

Tea

SHORT TAKES

Bangladesh clinch historic T20I series win over Pakistan

Dhaka: Bangladesh secured their maiden T20I series with a dramatic win over Pakistan, edging out the visitors by eight runs in a tense second match at a packed Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka Tuesday. The hosts, buoyed by a composed bowling display and a late batting charge, now hold an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Defending 134, Bangladesh's pacers - Shoriful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, and Tanzim Hasan Sakib - rose to the occasion with a disciplined bowling performance that rocked Pakistan's top order. The visitors crumbled to a shocking 15/5 - their lowest score after losing five wickets in a T20I - within the first five overs.

Vaishnavi in WUG semis

Berlin: India is assured of a rare medal in tennis as Vaishnavi Adkar made it to the women's singles semifinals while most of her compatriots across disciplines failed to make a mark in the World University Games here Tuesday. The 20-year-old Vaishnavi beat home favourite Sina Herrmann 6-1 6-4 in a dominant display in the women's singles quarterfinals. She will face Eszter Meri of Slovakia in the semifinals on Thursday. She will become only the second Indian to win a medal in the World University Games, after Nandal Bal clinched a silver in men's singles in the 1979 edition in Mexico City.

Arjun, Vidit to headline Chennai Grand Masters

Chennai: Grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and Anish Giri will headline the third edition of Chennai Grand Masters, starting here August 6. India's most prestigious classical chess tournament will feature 20 players from across the Masters and Challengers categories. The latest edition will have a Rs one crore prize pool as competitors chase FIDE Circuit points, which are vital for qualifying for next year's Candidates Tournament.

Prannoy progresses, Sen exits China Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Changzhou, July 22: Indian shuttler HS Prannoy saved five match points and clawed his way back from a game down to beat Japan's Koki Watanabe in the opening round of the China Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here Tuesday.

The world No 35 Prannoy pulled off a stunning 8-21, 21-16, 23-21 win against the 18th-ranked Watanabe.

It was a tough day for Lakshya Sen, whose poor run continued as he squandered a one-game advantage to suffer a 21-14, 22-24, 11-21 loss to China's fifth seed Li Shi Feng.

"This point in my career, every win matters. I'm happy to be back on tour, small breaks happened here and there. The level of playing has gone really high and winning each round is getting tough day by day," Prannoy said after the win.

"The average age has become 22-23 in the men's singles all of a sudden. Lot of fresh faces and you don't really know what their game is. So, it's tough to be a veteran out there," he added.

In the opening game of his match, Prannoy, a former top-10 player and bronze medallist at the 2023 World



Championships, was never in the contest as Watanabe closed it out with ease. But he bounced back in the second game, forcing a decider with sharper court coverage and better control.

Prannoy trailed 2-11 in the final game before picking up five points in a row to narrow the gap. Still, he found himself starting at defeat at 15-20, with Watanabe holding five match points.

But the Indian showed nerves of steel, saving five match points before taking a slender 21-20 lead and eventually sealing a memorable win.

It was a disappointing outing for Anupama Upadhyay in the women's singles, as she exited in the opening round following a 23-21, 11-21, 10-21 loss to Chinese Taipei's Lin Hsiang Ti.

The mixed doubles pairs of A Surya and A Pramuthesh and Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvikha Gadde too lost their opening round matches.

U17 WORLD CH'SHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The Indian cadet wrestling teams risk missing the prestigious U17 World Championship in Athens, beginning July 28, as the 47-member contingent is scheduled to depart Saturday but the Greece embassy is yet to respond to their visa appointment request.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) had sought appointment July 10 but 12 days have passed and it is yet to hear a positive response from the embassy.

When nothing moved even six days after their request, WFI wrote to the Ministry of External Affairs

(MEA) July 16, seeking intervention.

The 47-member Indian contingent has 30 wrestlers, who made the national team after coming through selection trials conducted by WFI July 7 and 8 in Delhi and Lucknow respectively.

"The Federation had to seek intervention of the MEA and the Home Ministry after its numerous requests did not receive a positive response from the Greece embassy," WFI President Sanjay Singh told PTI.

"The tickets have been booked and the players are ready. The exposure for young athletes is paramount for their growth. They must

BCCI to come under National Sports Governance Bill 2025

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will come under the National Sports Governance Bill 2025, set to be tabled in the ongoing monsoon session of the Parliament, ministry sources told IANS Tuesday.

This will be mandatory for all the federations, including the BCCI to come under NSP, sports ministry sources confirmed. The BCCI was the only prominent sports body which did not come under government regulations.

It also brings into question whether BCCI President Roger Binny will continue at the helm, as BCCI constitution allows office bearers to continue till the age of 70 - the 1983-WC winner turned 70 on July 19 - but with the the Annual General Meeting scheduled to take place in September, it is still to be seen whether he will remain at the top post or will senior vice-president Rajeev Shukla take over.

The Bill also aims to solve 10 problems through the NSP:

Opaque Governance in National Sports Federations (NSFs): Introduces transpar-



ency and accountability in decision-making processes.

Lack of Athlete Representation in Governance: Mandates athlete inclusion through Athlete Committees and representation of Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOM).

Frequent Litigation Over NSF Elections: Establishes clear electoral guidelines and dispute resolution mechanisms to minimise court cases.

Unfair or Non-transparent Athlete Selection: Standardizes selection criteria and mandates publication of trials and results to ensure merit-based selection.

Harassment and Unsafe Sporting Environments: Mandates Safe Sport mechanisms, POSH compliance, and independent commit-

tees for complaints.

Lack of Grievance Redressal Channels: Sets up dedicated, time-bound grievance redressal systems for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders.

Long Legal Delays Damaging Athletes' Careers: Introduces fast-track arbitration or tribunal systems to resolve disputes quickly.

Age Manipulation and Doping: Enforces strict verification, biometric systems, and anti-doping compliance as legal obligations.

Conflict of Interest Among Officials: Introduces clear definitions and enforcement of conflict of interest rules.

No Uniform Code for NSFs and IOA: Brings all sports bodies under a unified code of governance and eligibility criteria.

4 days to departure, wrestlers wait for visa appointment



not miss the World Championship. It's Tuesday today, let's hope we get a response now," he added.

"In the past we have got visas from the Greece embassy in a matter of four

days but this time there is an inexplicable delay. Recently our wrestler Harshita got a Shengen visa by the Hungary embassy in one day, I don't know why Greece embassy is delaying

—have encountered difficulties and delays in obtaining their Schengen visas," Lalovic wrote Sunday.

"Despite having followed the application procedures correctly, these teams have not yet received their visas. I would therefore be most grateful for your support in facilitating this process with the relevant authorities, to ensure that all participating athletes and officials are able to obtain their visas in time," the letter read.

A note on the Greece embassy website reads, "Kindly be informed that due to the current situation the processing time of the visa applications is 15 working

Humpy, Divya hold firm with draws in semifinal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Batumi (Georgia) July 22: Grandmaster Koneru Humpy held China's Tingjie Lei to a comfortable draw with black pieces, while Divya Deshmukh's solid defence frustrated former women's world champion Zhongyi Tan in the first game of the FIDE Women's World Cup semifinals here Tuesday. With two Indians and two Chinese making up the final-four, the Asian dominance in women's chess remains undisputed. But it's now a battle of nerves for the final two spots. From the look of it, the two Indians have had a great beginning drawing with black and in the return game both will play as white.

Divya was the first to get off the hook against Zhongyi Tan who boasts of a remarkable resume as a woman chess player. The former world champion did not find

any flaws in Divya's opening repertoire as the game embarked on a queen's gambit declined opening path. Divya exchanged pieces almost at will and Zhongyi also did not seem averse to equalising against an active position for black forces.

In the end the players were left with just a rook and a minor piece each with three pawns on the same flank when nothing could have happened other than a drawn result. India's top woman player, Humpy, came up with a huge opening surprise for Lei that has not been seen at top level chess regularly.

The Chinese did not know what hit her as early as on move four and even her best resources were not enough to combat Humpy into equalising. The players fought on post the exchange of queens in the middle game but the presence of opposite coloured Bishops ensured that Humpy was never in any danger.