Actor-singer Shruti Haasan says her choices today are

guided more by instinct

than compulsion

LEISURE | P2



Mass displacement

Tens of thousands of people seek refuge as border fighting between Thailand and Cambodia enters its third day Saturday

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Boost for seafood

Indian seafood exporters are poised to compete on equal terms with Vietnam and Singapore in the UK market, following the FTA

BUSINESS | P11



Glimmer of hope

Shubman Gill and KL Rahul stitch a 174-ru n partnership to raise India's hopes of saving the fourth Test against England

SPORTS | P12

Two VIMSAR students drown in Deojharan

Sambalpur, July 26: Two final-year MBBS students of a medical college drowned at the Deojharan waterfall in Sambalpur district after a flash flood in the stream

swept them away Saturday,

The two students of Veer Surendra Sai Institute of

Medical Sciences and Re-

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MAROONED: A family trapped in floodwaters at Punshita village under Basta block in Balasore district

Rivers in spate; evacuation ordered in three districts

Bhubaneswar/Balasore, July 26: The government Saturday put the Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur district authorities on high alert and asked them to go for the evacuation of people from low-lying areas as several rivers were in spate, offi-

According to the State

Flood Cell, the water levels an official said. of Jalaka and Baitarani rivers have already breached the danger marks, while the Subarnarekha in Balasore district are swelling at an alarming rate, amid heavy rain in the region.

Keonjhar districts caused a rise in the water Jalaka and Baitarani rivers,

Mayurbhanj district recorded 94 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, with 13 blocks registering over 100 mm, making it one of the wettest belts, he said.

The Jalaka and Baita-Downpour in Mayurbhanj rani catchment areas also received heavy rainfall, leading to rapid water acculevels in the Subarnarekha, mulation, the official said.

MORE P3

Insurance benefit for sanitation workers

In a major relief to sanitation workers in the state who often face extremely poor and hazardous working conditions. and work without proper safety gear, exposing themselves to toxic waste and harmful gases, CM Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday announced a life insurance cover of ₹10 lakh to each one of them, and a compensation of ₹30 lakh if they lose their lives on duty. The decision will benefit over 10,000 sanitation workers from 115 cities and towns of the state. Significantly, the decision came a day after the NHRC directed the Secretary of Labour and Employment department, and the Angul district Magistrate to submit a report regarding the death of two sanitation workers in the district last year, including compensation to their families. According the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment data, the state had reported two deaths due to sewage tank cleaning incidents in the last five years (Cuttack, April 15, 2021), while in April this year, two workers had died of suffocation in Rayagada district while cleaning a well. Last month, four workers had died in Nabarangpur district during the construction of a septic tank

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday announced a life insurance cover of ₹10 lakh for sanitation workers, and a compensation of ₹30 lakh if they lose their lives on duty.

Majhi made the announcement after inaugurating a two-day national workshop on 'Transforming Core San-

itation Work -- Safety, Dignity & Inclusion', organised by the Housing and Urban Development Department of the state government.

"It is our moral responsibility to provide sanitation workers justice, safety and dignity," he said, addressing the programme.

"Key sanitation workers, mostly engaged in cleaning swage and safety tanks, will fare scheme for sanitation be provided with life insur-

ance cover of ₹10 lakh, assishas been an inspiration for tance of ₹30 lakh for loss of many states. life in the field," he said. He said more than 10,000

They will also be given sanitation workers from 115 cities and towns of the state mobile phones and allotted houses under the Pradhan have been identified for the Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), he added. "Today's workshop is an

Transforming Core Sanitation Work

from August 15 to make sanworkers from different itation workers aware of the states can learn a lot from benefits He said the Jagannath culture also spreads the

Majhi said a 15-day state-

wide campaign will be held

message of cleanliness. The CM said the Odisha government's social wel-

workers, Garima Yojana,

he said. Representatives of seven states were participating in it. On this occasion, the CM

important platform. From

this platform, sanitation

each other's experiences,"

inaugurated an exhibition of

modern equipment related

search (VIMSAR), Burla, were identified as Monica Meena, a native of Rajas than, and Sandeep Puri from

police said.

New Delhi, an officer said. According to Jujomura Police Station inspec tor-in-charge (IIC) Sanjay Rout, a group of six students had gone to the popular wa terfall site for an outing, and the two were swept away in a flash flood in the stream due to a sudden downpour on the hilltop. Other stu-

police personnel there. Rescue teams arrived at the spot and recovered the bodies, the police said. The police registered a case of unnatural death, and an investigation is underway the officer said, adding that a team from the institute vis-

ited the waterfall site

dents of the group and sev-

eral tourists immediately

alerted the fire service and

Teacher detained for 'molesting' Class VII girls

Kendrapara: Police Saturday detained a teacher of a government-run high school in Kendrapara district for allegedly molesting a group of girl students. Marine police station at Talchua detained the accused teacher after the headmaster of Naga Narayan high school in Dangamal informed the police of the teacher's advances at a group of class VII girl students. "We have detained the accused and are interrogating him. However no FIR has been lodged in this connection," inspector-incharge of Talchua marine police station Bimal Mallick said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We don't need to shut down govt schools anymore. Parents themselves are pulling their kids out

module on Op Sindoor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NCERT is developing a special classroom module on Operation Sindoor to help students learn about India's defence strategy and diplomatic response, according to sources The module will have

two parts-first for stu- Saturday. dents from class III to VIII and another one for students from class IX to the complainant XII. A source said that the special module prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) will have 8 to 10 pages focussing on India's strategic military response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The aim is to make students understand how nations respond to terror threats and how defence, diplomacy, and coordination between ministries play a role in national security," the source said.

Meanwhile, a special discussion on Operation Sindoor Parliament proceedings.

NCERT plans special Woman gangraped in moving ambulance

New Delhi, July 26: The PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gayaji, July 26: A woman in Bihar alleged that she was gang-raped inside an ambulance which drove her to a hospital after she fainted during a government recruitment test, police said drew strong criticism from

Two persons, lentified by BIHAR HORROR wan, who supports the NDA identified

who had appeared at a re- the state, as well as the Opcruitment drive for home position. guards, have been arrested, they said.

"When the woman fainted July 24, she was rushed to the Anugrah Narain Medical College and Hospital at Gayaji in an ambulance. Afness, she alleged that she was raped inside the vehicle," said SP (Town - Gayaji) Ramanand Kumar Kaushal.

"We thereafter detained the driver and a technician who were in the ambulance. Sabha from Monday after a arrested and booked under Bharativa Nyay Samhita."

plainant has been completof the reports, further action will be taken.

Meanwhile, the incident

Before leaving for Gayaji to address a rally, Paswan told reporters in Patna, "The incident is deplorable. The guilty may have been caught, but the administration is obviously unable to ter she regained conscious- prevent such crimes. The situation is scary, and I regret that I am supporting a

Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, shared on X The woman also identified a news clipping of the incithem. Their reply was not dent with the hashtag "vote would be taken up in the Lok satisfactory, so they were out of power the Nitish Kumar government to protect weeklong virtual washout of relevant sections of the the girl child (Nitish sarkar Hatao beti bachao)".

Kaushal said the medical examination of the comed, and based on the findings

Union minister Chirag Pas-

government in

regime that is incapable of controlling law and order."



Superhero films ignite fan rivalry at the London premiere.

omic fans are embracing the latest showdown between Marvel and DC as their superhero films 'Fantastic Four' and 'Superman' compete for box office dominance, reigniting a rivalry spanning over eight decades.

Whether it's the thrill of seeing the comic book superhero The Thing shout 'It's clobbering time!' before throwing a punch or watching Superman and his faithful pup Krypto save the day, fans are heading to movie theatres to support their favourite films.

"Well, clearly I'm a Marvel fan," said Danielle Stroski, who was dressed as the shapeshifter character named Mystique from Marvel's X-Men comics, at the San Diego Comic-Con. "But I have a little



I know the little white dog is stealing the show for 'Superman,' so it's going to be close. But I got to go Marvel," she added. The 42-year-old from California predicted 'Fantastic Four' would outperform 'Superman' at the box office.

DC fan Lito Loza, dressed I'm thrilled that both of us are as Superboy, voiced his support for 'Superman'. "I've white dog at home, so I love me already seen 'Superman' Four: First Steps', told Reuters million to \$135 million. REUTERS

very happy with what James Gunn did with it. It makes me feel hopeful," he said. The filmmakers, meanwhile, encourage fans to support both movies

"I'm a huge Superman fan. I'm a huge James Gunn fan. coming out this month." director Matt Shakman of 'Fantastic

'Superman' director Gunn, who directed the Marvel movie 'Guardians of the Galaxy', said in an interview in Los Angeles that he grew up reading both Marvel and DC comic books, appreciating their distinct tones. In theatres July 11, 'Superman' introduced David Corenswet as the Man of Steel. The movie grossed around \$173 million globally and \$264 million domestically, according to Box Office Mojo.

Disney said 'Fantastic Four' opened with \$24.4 million in ticket sales in the US and Canada Thursday night while Daniel Loria, senior vice president at Boxoffice predicts that 'Fantastic Four: First Steps' will open domestically at \$115

eisure



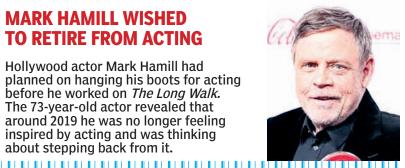
REBEL WILSON SUED BY PRODUCTION COMPANY

Rebel Wilson is being sued by the production company behind her directorial debut, who have accused her of deliberately sabotaging the film's release in order to

MARK HAMILL WISHED TO RETIRE FROM ACTING

Hollywood actor Mark Hamill had planned on hanging his boots for acting before he worked on The Long Walk. The 73-year-old actor revealed that around 2019 he was no longer feeling inspired by acting and was thinking about stepping back from it.

the



UNE **FORECAST**

Ganesha Speaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust

You are likely to give in to the demands of your children today. Ganesha says it is for times like this that you labour so hard. You will finish the tasks that you have been postponing for a long time. It is a good day for people in the medical field and in the public sector

Today, you will be as creative and competent as you can get. Your work style, the deft way you handle things will awe and amaze vour colleagues and superiors. Your subordinates will be highly impressed and motivated. They will be eager and compliant and will support and assist you to the utmost. The project you are working will progress speedily

You will listen to your heart over your head, swept away as you will be in a flood of emotions today. This could mean that you will be unable to distinguish beween good and bad. However, looking back upon your day in the evening, you are unlikely to regret any of the decisions you made, says Ganesha.

You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright fu-ture. You will resolutely implement plans that you have made thoughtfully. Such methodical decisions will save you a lot of time in the future. Ganesha says that you

Your natural self-confi-

dence and capability will help you attain a position of strength today. As a result, all your tasks will be completed easily and you will reap rewards greater than your expectations, says Ganesha.

Ganesha says you realise the

importance of family matters today. You have great skills when it comes to negotiations, and you will use them in settling disputes amicaoly. Ganesha says you have learned the lessons of life on staying level-headed, and that you keenly believe that opposition eventually leads to progress.

Ganesha says you will have a good time with your family members and will have fun with them. You will also be able to organize a picnic or a party enjoy the day with them.

SCORPIO

Try to take a chill pill as you may be worried about petty issues today. Do not let them hinder your happiness and take a toll on your health. However, the day looks promising towards the end. Friends are just a phone call away, call them and set out for a destination unknown to destress and rejuvenate.

SAGITTARIUS

Suddenly, you become ambidextrous and plan to multi task today, says Ganesha. Your instincts will guide you today; trust them and move ahead. You may come across few challenges. But, anyway, who wants an easy way out, right?

CAPRICORN

Actions speak louder than words. Your sincere efforts and honest intentions will motivate others also to put in their best, feels Ganesha. You'll be like a friend, philosopher and guide to them. People will follow you, but it has a darker side to as many will even over take you. It is certainly not a pleasant sight to see opportunities pass by!

AQUARIUS

You are disappointed and you seek solace in spirituality. Don't run away from the problems; rather face them with strength and confidence, advises Ganesha, to bring your life back on track. With patience and belief in the Almighty, you will be sail through the storm.

PISCES You are striving hard to influence your destiny. You are not going to kneel down without a fight against heavy odds. With persistent efforts you will succeed in achieving your goals. While victory is a given, hard work will be necessary. In brief, today will be a challenging day for you, says Ganesha.

SHRUTI: MUSIC IS MY SAVIOUR

CHENNAI: From starting as a child singer to delivering chart-toppers like Odiyamma, Shruti Haasan had quite a journey as a singer.

"My father is very supportive and he is such a pookie. My debut song as a child singer was in dad's iconic film Thevar Magan," she says, adding, "I remember those days when I was six, practicing in the car while driving to the shoot with my dad for my first song as a sing-

er. Back then, I didn't know Shivaji Ganesan as the OG. I used to call him Shivaji thatha, and Ilaiyaraaja Sir as Raja uncle. But now, looking back, I feel truly blessed to have made such a debut in singing.' adds, She

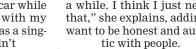
"Music is

my saviour, I

don't know if

I'd be alive

with-



Changing the topic, the actor-singer says her choices today are guided more by instinct than compulsion. That's what prompted her recent digital detox. "I'm not fond of words like attachment or detachment because they carry so many connotations, I wanted to step away from social media for a while. I think I just needed that," she explains, adding, "I want to be honest and authen-



Tahir's favourite genre

MUMBAI: Actor Tahir Raj Bhasin has proved his mettle as an actor with some stellar performances in noteworthy projects. However, Tahir is often

> During an exclusive conversation with this agency, the Mardaani actor revealed which genre he would like to explore next. Speaking to IANS , Tahir revealed that he would love to do a full-out comedy in the future.

T've always chosen roles that challenge me, and comedy is definitely one genre I haven't tackled yet. I'd love to try it - both for myself

Tahir reacted by saying that every genre has its own challenges

to push their boundaries."



seen doing serious roles.

and for the audience. Comedy has its own unique challenges, and I'm excited to explore that," he went on to share When asked if comedy is challenging for actors,

The Chhichhore actor stated, "Action has its own set of difficulties, and comedy is no different. It's about timing and delivery, but I'd be up for the challenge. I think every actor should try something new



an actor, ing ever worries about aging, she revealed that, as a matter of fact, she does worry about it. Kajol shared that, according to

"I think people look at how you are saying what vou're saying. I feel more than the lines on the face, age shows in people's eyes, when they get tired, when they get bored of what they are doing-that's when people start noticing the lines and the wrinkles," the Maa actress added.

"So. I worry about it, yes, I am concerned about it- who isn't, and I do my daily routine religiously," Kajol



MUMBAI: Actress Radhikka Madan hosted filmmaker ah Khan at her Mumbai home for the director's vlog. During a heart-to-heart, the Angrezi Medium actress revealed she wanted to become a professional Radhikka was heard saying, "I am trained in Jazz, I am trained in ballet, I am trained in Modern dance. I wanted to introduce tap dancing in India. The way you feel on stage- you don't see anybody.'

> bagged her first television serial, Meri Aashiqui She revealed that a casting person sent her a direct message for an audition in Delhi. "The audition was taking place at a rather shady

The Shiddat star further recalled how she

location, and at that time, I used to watch a lot of Crime Patrol. So I went with two of my friends, carrying hockey sticks. In Delhi, getting into a scuffle is not very uncommon," Radhikka shared. "I told my friends that I'll go in

first, and you follow me from behind - and the next day, we'll be all over the front page of the newspaper. But when I entered, I realised there was an actual audition going on for a television show. I got all awkward and was about to leave, but they called my name," added the actress.

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

8

6

6 9 1

4

9

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

Radhikka wanted career in dance

PEANUTS







CALVIN AND HOBBES





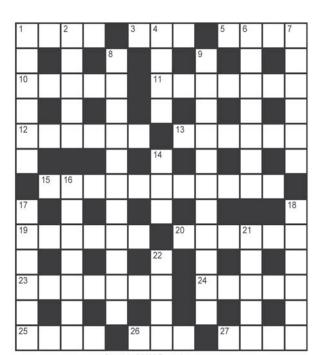


BREVITY



POST

CROSSWORD



24 Estuary

23 Spotted wild cat

25 Ocean menace

26 Hilo garland

27 Aid in crime

Across 1 Sound rebound

- 3 "Ciao!"
- 5 Farm newborn
- 10 Turbine part
- 11 Gun dog 12 Glass ingredient **Down**
- 13 Martial art (3,3)
- 15 Pamper 19 Angel of the
- first order 20 Fencing word

- 1 Means of
 - escape
 - 2 Overnight stop
 - 4 Puppy sounds 6 Kind of illusion

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

- 16 Dinghy thole 17 Place of refuge

14 Frigid

7 Rutabaga

(7,4)

8 Cactus type

9 Quinine water

drink (3,3,5)

- 18 "Get lost!" (4,2)
- 21 Movie star, briefly
- 22 Not engaged

2 5 3 4 8 2 3 6 7 6 4

SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU

DOGHO ALTHYPLATE

	5	1	9	8	2	3	6	4	7
	4	3	7	1	5	6	9	8	2
	6	9	2	5	7	8	4	3	1
	3	4	5	6	9	1	2	7	8
)	1	7	8	4	3	2	5	6	9
1	8	2	3	9	6	5	7	1	4
	7	6	1	2	8	4	3	9	5
•	9	5	4	3	1	7	8	2	6

SUDOKU

owntown

3 DISTS ON FLOOD ALERT

Bhubaneswar/Balasore, July 26: The state government Saturday put the Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur district authorities on high alert and asked them to go for evacuation of people from low-lying areas as several rivers were in spate, officials said.

According to the State Flood Cell, the water levels of Jalaka and Baitarani rivers have already breached the danger marks, while the Subarnarekha in Balasore district are swelling at an alarming rate, amid heavy rain in the region.

Downpour in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts caused a rise in the water levels in the Subarnarekha, Jalaka and Baitarani rivers, an official said.

The Mayurbhanj district recorded 94mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, with 13 blocks registering over 100mm, making it one of the wettest belts,

The Jalaka and Baitarani catchment areas also received heavy rainfall, leading to rapid water accumulation, the official said. Several low-lying areas in Balasore district have already been inundated, and the situation could get worse Sunday, he said.

"At least Basta, Bhograi, Jaleswar and Baliapal blocks of Balasore district are likely to be inundated Sunday as the Subarnarekha river is estimated to flow above 11metre against its danger mark of 10.36metre," Water Resources department engineer-in-chief

Keeping in view the flood situation in the northern districts. the state government has sent rescue and relief teams of ODRAF. NDRF. and Fire **Services to Balasore,** Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jajpur districts

Chandrasekhar Padhi said. The Balasore district au-

thorities have already evacuated many people in the Basta block to safe places and started an open kitchen for the affected people, another official said.

The people of the Basta area have been urged to go to safe places before the flood hits the area, he said.

The district administration has prepared an 'inundation map' based on which the people are being evacuated, the official said

Northern Odisha districts Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak and adjoining Jajpur - have already been hit by the deluge, but there is no flood threat in the Mahanadi river system now, Padhi said, adding that the Brahmani river is not showing any alarming trend.

Keeping in view the flood situation in the northern districts. the state government has sent rescue and relief teams of Odisha Disaster Response Action Force (ODRAF), National Di-

saster Response Force (NDRF), and Fire Services to Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, and Jajpur districts, another official

The disaster response plan includes readiness for evacuation and embankment monitoring, he said.

Padhi said, "Several senior officials are monitoring the flood situation at the ground level in coordination with the district administrations."

engineers-in-chief Two have been deputed from Bhubaneswar to Subarnarekha and Baitarani basins, and they will supervise the flood management there, he said.

Padhi, however, pointed out that the water level at Hirakud reservoir was around 910 feet against the full capacity of 930 feet.

Though there is an inflow of around four lakh cusec water to the Hiradud reservoir, three lakh cusec of water is being released through 20 sluice gates.

"We will be able to manage any flood situation in the Mahanadi river system by controlling the Hirakud reservoir. Padhi said.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its forecast for Sunday, stated that thunderstorms with lightning along with gusty wind speeds reaching 40kmph are very likely to occur in some places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Mayur-

Satpathy honoured for excellence in publishing

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy was felicitated for excellence in publishing at

prestigious 'Femina Achievers Awards 2025: Odisha Edition' at a hotel here, Saturday. Satpathy was

among the 25, who were honoured at the mega event, sponsored by Khimji Jewellers and co-sponsored by JAC OL-IVOL, for their remarkable

contribution to diverse fields

sports, fashion, and as a community leader.

The event was also attended by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Mayor Sulochana Das, SNM Group chairman Pradipta

Femina Achievers Awards 2025

Mohanty, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University Vice Chancellor Pradipta Kumar Nanda and JAC OLIVOL MD Rajarshi Das.



Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy receives the award for excellence in publishing



Women from various walks of life honoured for their contribution to diverse fields at the 'Femina Achievers Awards 2025: Odisha Edition' organised

Rape: Taxi driver sent to jail

Puri, July 26: A taxi driver was remanded to judicial custody by the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM), Puri for allegedly raping a woman passenger inside the vehicle near the Malatipatpur bypass July 24.

According to police sources. the accused, identified as Muna Pradhan of Balidih village in Jagatsinghpur district, was residing in a rented house at Tota Behera Sahi under the jurisdiction of Kumbharpada police station. On the day of the incident, Pradhan was hired by the victim for a ride to Bhubaneswar. However, en route, he diverted the vehicle to a deserted place near the bypass and allegedly raped her inside the taxi.

The survivor later lodged a complaint at the Kumbharpada police station. Police registered a case under relevant Sections of the BNS, arrested the accused, and seized the vehicle used in the crime. After completing the necessary legal formalities, Pradhan was produced before the SDJM court in Puri. His bail plea was rejected, and he was sent to judicial custody.

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal Saturday said that revamping the party's state organisation will be his top priority and a new state team will be formed soon.

Speaking to reporters upon his return from New Delhi, where he met several senior party leaders, including BJP national president JP Nadda. Samal said the restructuring of the state unit will be initi-

This will be followed by the appointment of chairpersons for various corporations and boards in the state, he said.

"The new BJP team in Odisha will feature both experienced leaders and fresh faces to strike a balance between the old guard and emerging leadership," Samal said.

When asked about a possible Cabinet expansion in Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi's government. Samal clarified that no discussions were

held on the matter during his Delhi visit.

However, he added that it is the Chief Minister's prerogative to decide the timing of the Cabinet expansion, in consultation with the BJP's Central Parliamentary Board.

VEW STATE BJP TEAM SOON: SAM

"If the party's opinion is sought on Cabinet expansion, I will certainly provide my input," he added.

At present, the Majhi Cabinet has 15 ministers, though six additional berths remain vacant as per the permissible limit.

A recent meeting between the Chief Minister and the Governor has triggered political speculation about a possible Cabinet expansion in the near Political observers believe

that the expansion is likely to happen after the party finalises its organisational revamp and appoints heads of various state corporations and boards, a process that has been pending for the past 13 months since the

BJP came to power in Odisha. Responding to

Congress president Bhakta Charan Das's statement that his party would support a no-confidence motion if the BJD brings it against the BJP government, Samal said, "The Opposition has every right to move such a motion. We are ready to face it.

Meanwhile, BJP state incharge Vijaypal Singh Tomar also stated that no discussion has taken place regarding a Cabinet reshuffle but hinted that the existing vacancies will

Bribery: Doc gets 5-yr RI

Bhubaneswar: A special Vigilance court in Sundargarh Saturday sentenced Dr Patita Paban Barik, former medical officer (MO) of Gurundia Community Health Centre (CHC) in the district, to five years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a bribery case. "The court also imposed a fine on Barik, who was found guilty under Sections 13(2) read with 13(1)(d) and Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act. 1988, for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹10,000 from the complainant," a Vigilance statement said. According to Vigilance, the doctor had demanded the bribe from a vehicle owner for signing a logbook required to process the hire charge bill for a vehicle engaged by the complainant.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL





501% DA: Jeypore dy ranger arrested

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Vigilance sleuths Saturday arrested Jeypore Forest Range Deputy Ranger Rama Chandra Nepak for possessing disproportionate assets (DA) to the tune of 501 per cent of his known sources of income.

On the allegation of possession of DA by Nepak, anti-corruption wing teams comprising six DSPs, five inspectors, nine ASIs, and other supporting staff Friday conducted raids at multiple locations related to the officer on the strength of search warrants issued by Special Judge, Vigilance, Jeypore.

During the raids, the sleuths

found assets worth crores in the name of the officer and his family members.

"₹1.43 crore in cash, a multi-storeyed building, three flats, two high-value plots, bank deposits of over ₹1.33 crore, 1.5 kg of gold, 4.6 kg of silver and two cars were among the property found in the name of the officer and his family members," a Vigilance statement said.

After thorough search, inventory and further enquiry, the income, expenditure and assets of Nepak were calculated and he was found in possession of DA which is 501 per cent in excess of his known sources of income which he could not account for satis-



factorily, it said.

"RC Nepak, Deputy Ranger, Jeypore Forest Range, Koraput has been placed

under arrest by Odisha Vigilance for possession of DA beyond his known sources of income," the statement said, adding that a case (25) has been registered against him, his spouse and son under provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act. 2018.

It said that the officer draws a gross monthly salary of ₹76,880 (net ₹69,680). Nepak began his career March 9, 1989 as a Village Forest Worker under the Social Forestry Division in Koraput.

Following merger of Social Forestry Division with the Territorial Forest Division, Nepak was transferred to the Jevpore (Territorial) Forest Division.

Form SIT to probe sexual abuse in govt hostels, BJD urges NCST

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Saturday urged the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to form a special investigation team (SIT) under judicial supervision to probe the sexual exploitation and pregnancy of girls in the Odisha government-run hostels in the state.

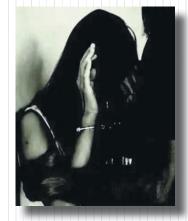
A delegation of the regional party submitted a memorandum to the regional office of the commission in Nayapalli here.

Citing four recent instances of inmates of hostels found to be pregnant, the party "These incidents are not only shocking but point toward systemic failure, gross administrative negligence, and criminal oversight in ensuring the safety, dignity, and well-being of young tribal girls under state care.

"These hostels, meant to ensure safe spaces, fostering education and empowerment, have tragically become environments of abuse and trauma," the BJD said in a petition to NCST.

Stating that these cases represent not isolated incidents, the regional party described it to be a pattern of deep-rooted institutional failure and the lack of monitoring mechanisms in hostels meant for the ST and SC

Pointing out further that Odisha currently reports approximately 15 cases of rape



Stating that these cases represent not isolated incidents BJD described it to be a pattern of deep-rooted institutional failure and the lack of monitoring mechanisms in hostels meant for the ST and SC students

Highlighting that Odisha currently reports approximately 15 cases of rape per day, the regional party said the disconincreasingly unsafe environment for women and girls, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalised communities

per day, it said the disconcerting trend underscores an increasingly unsafe environment for women and girls, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalised communities

"We believe this is not just a matter of policy failure it is a humanitarian crisis demanding urgent national attention and institutional response. The safety and dignity of tribal and Dalit girls must be non-negotiable. These students look to the state for protection, and we collectively bear the responsibility of upholding their rights and security," BJD's petition

maintained. The regional party said it wants the NCST to form an SIT under judicial supervision and initiate an independent and high-level inquiry into all reported and unreported cases of sexual abuse in hostels managed by the ST & SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare department across

It is imperative that accountability is firmly established by identifying and taking action against negligent officials, hostel superintendents, wardens, and law enforcement personnel who failed in their duty of care, it added.

The principal Opposition party in the state further demanded immediate implementation of stringent protection measures, including the installation of CCTV camer as, routine medical examina tions, access to psychological counselling, and deployment of female security staff in all ST/SC hostels.

Comprehensive support must be provided to the vic tims, encompassing medical, legal, and psychological assistance, while strictly safeguarding their identity and dignity, it added.

OrissaPOST

SAIMUN-2025 ends

Bhubaneswar, July 26: The 13th edition of the SAI Model United Nations (SAIMUN)-2025. hosted by SAI International Education Group, concluded Saturday with a strong call for global cooperation and youthled diplomacy. The two-day conference brought together over 720 student delegates from 23 countries and 26 leading schools worldwide, reflecting a vibrant exchange of global perspectives.

Gracing the event as chief guest, Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy praised the students' dedication to meaningful dialogue and global understanding.

"It's heartening to witness such eloquent and globally aware young minds at SAIMUN," she said. "This isn't just a conference—it's a melting pot where future leaders are shaped through diplomacy, discussion, and mutual respect,'

Across various committees, delegates engaged in rigorous debates on key global issues including the global arms trade, Red Sea security, persecution of Tibetan Buddhists in China, women's rights under the Taliban, and air quality emergencies in large cities. Other pressing topics included child abduction in war zones, cyberbullying, and state-sponsored disinformation.

SAI International Education Group chairperson Silpi Sahoo stated, "SAIMUN is where future leaders are made. Students not only engage with global issues but also learn to empathise, communicate, and collaborate across boundaries.

A vibrant highlight of the event was the Global Village, where participants from countries like Uganda, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Papua New Guinea showcased traditional music, food, attire, and art in celebration of cultural diversity.



Learnathon 4.0 concludes at GIET varsity, Gunupur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gunupur, July 26: Learnathon 4.0 wrapped up Saturday at GIET University, Gunupur, organised in collaboration with Koigi Knight EduTech Services Pvt. Ltd. The four-day workshop engaged students with real-world applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) through interactive sessions, expert lectures, and practical projects.

The event was inaugurated by distinguished guests from Koigi Knight EduTech, including CEO K. Sesu Sanyasi Naidu, Director Kris Chintaluri, and Head of Training Vikrant Shitole, who shared valuable insights on emerging trends and the industry relevance of AI and ML

Joining virtually, Kalpana Shastri, former executive director of AgHub, highlighted the increasing importance of AI in agriculture and its potential to revolutionize rural economies.

Prof. Dulu Pattnaik, dean of the School of Engineering and Technology (SoET), outlined the objectives of Learnathon 4.0 and encouraged students to innovate, collaborate, and embrace emerging technologies. Held from July 23 to 26, the event saw enthusiastic participation from students across various engineering disciplines that showcased working models, technical solutions, and concept demonstrations.

The inauguration was attended by Dr. NVJ Rao, Registrar of GIET University, along with faculty members, students, and staff. Dr. K Murali Gopal, associate dean, department of Computer Science and Engineering, delivered the welcome address. The session was moderated by Dr. Raghvendra Kumar, the event coordinator.



INTERNATIONAL MANGROVE DAY Coastal communities lead green revival drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: A powerful display of environmental commitment unfolded across Astaranga and Talapada as students, communities, and organisations Saturday came together to promote mangrove restoration and climate resilience.

At Astaranga Government High School, the Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshana Abhiyan Trust coordinated a mass oath-taking ceremony involving 9,135 students from 131 schools. The initiative aimed to instill ecological responsibility and create awareness about the vital role of mangroves in protecting coastal zones.

The event also saw the launch of a scientific Fish-Bone Technique-based mangrove restoration drive under the Trust's "Million Mangroves by 2030" mission.

"We're empowering the next generation to lead the charge in restoring our environment," said an OPSA official. The event was supported by Orissa POST and *Dharitri*, which helped amplify the mes-





sage across the state

Simultaneously, Talapada in Balasore witnessed a celebration at the Jamuka River Mouth, marking one year of a grassroots mangrove restoration initiative led by Eco Walk, in collaboration with the Reliance Foundation,

ROSIA, and local residents. The effort has restored over 6,000 native mangrove saplings, turning the site into a model of community-driven ecological revival.

'This is not just about planting trees—it's about rebuilding natural barriers and empowering communities," said Jalendra Moha-

lik, founder of Eco Walk.

OUAT's Umashankar Nayak highlighted mangroves as "nature's frontline defense against coastal threats," while Dibyakanta Nayak of Reliance Foundation added, "Mangroves are vital for biodiversity and

local livelihoods." Key attendees included Harendra Malik (Sarpanch), Mohit Choudhary (Reliance Foundation), Swastik Dey, and Sashmita Majhi (ROHF).

Guv urges revival of regional literature in modern times

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Saturday stressed the need to keep regional languages and literature alive and relevant in the modern age.

Speaking at the 123rd Annual Convocation of Utkal Sahitya Samaj in Cuttack, he said, "Our literature must not be confined to archives or memories. It should become a living. evolving force that inspires and engages with our times.



ed the National Education Policy 2020's emphasis on mother-tongue learning and urged institutions to promote literary research, translations, and digital engagement.

A major highlight was the conferral of the Utkal Ratna Award on Biswabhusan Harichandan, former Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, for his contributions to public life and Odia literature.

"The pen is mightier than the

Digital safety essential to protect individuals: Min



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 26: "Digital transformation is reshaping human lives and driving national development. However, it also brings serious cybersecurity challenges. Understanding the legal framework and practising digital safety are essential to protect both individual and societal interests," said Law, Works, and Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Saturday

He was speaking as a chief guest at a workshop titled 'Securing Digital India: Challenges, Strategies and Legal Framework in the Cyber Age,'

organised by University Law College, Utkal University as part of its golden jubilee celebrations

The event brought together legal experts, policymakers, academics, and students to discuss the growing threats of cybercrime and the urgent need for effective legal and technological solutions.

Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack, S Dev Datta Singh, delivered the keynote address, describing cybercrime as a "complex and evolving issue." He noted, "Law enforcement operates within an ecosystem that includes the legal system, civil society, and key stakeholders. I thank the Law Minister for empowering us to act without fear or favour to ensure public safety.' He praised a student-made

video that depicted how a victim of online blackmail found support through friends and family. "Unfortunately, not everyone gets such supportmany suffer in silence. My message is simple: speak up, don't isolate yourself. Avoid clicking unknown links or sharing personal information. Most cybercrimes are preventable with awareness and open communication," he advised.

Speaking at the event, Principal Gaynendra Kumar Sahu remarked, "This is the first visit by the Law Minister to our college in the past eight vears. This e-workshop reflects a meaningful collaboration between governance, legal expertise, and multidisciplinary engagement." He added that experts from technology, law enforcement, and psychological counselling were invited to offer diverse perspectives. "Our aim is to help students understand both the legal and technological dimensions of cybercrime," he said.

Loyola School hosts 'Synchrony 2025'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: As part of its silver jubilee celebrations, Loyola School organised 'Synchrony 2025' Saturday showcasing students' creativity and innovation through diverse events such as art, robotics nukkad natak, face paint ing, tattoo making, rangoli



A thought-provoking street play by Class IX students highlighted how social media reels and digital updates have increasingly replaced real-life human connections. Students from Classes IX to Class XII pre sented a range of science and robotics-based projects, while Class VII students focused on environmental themes in their presentations.

The event was attended by eminent personalities. Rector Fr. Augustine Ezhakunnel SJ and Principal Fr. A. Amaladoss SJ commended the students creativity and collaborative spirit, stating, "This event re flects what dedication and cooperation among teachers, students, and parents can achieve.'

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhawanipatna, date 24.07.25, I, Ishika Agrawal, D/o Govind Agrawal (Father), Mamata Agrawal (Mother), R/o. At/P.O.-Belgaon, P.S.- Saintala, Dist.- Balangir, Odisha declare that in my HSC, +2 and +3 Arts certificate, my name has been wrongly entered as Eska Agrawal, D/o Gobind Kumar Agrawal (Father), Mamata Agrawal (Mother). Henceforth, I shall be known as Ishika Agrawal, D/o Govind Agrawal (Father), Mamata Agrawal (Mother) for all purpose.

Silent protest demands closure of dump Yard

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 26: Citizens under the banner of the 'Save Sainik School, Remove Dump Yard' campaign staged a silent protest Saturday at the main gate of Sainik School here, demanding the closure of an illegal dump yard operating behind the institution for the past 18 years.

Wearing black mask and tape over their mouths, hundreds of residents symbolically expressed their frustration over prolonged health hazards and environmental degradation caused by the dump yard, which operates without environmental clearance or Pollu-

tion Control Board approval. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in the Odisha High Court has prompted the State Government, Defence



Ministry, Pollution Control Boards, and the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to submit detailed affidavits. Bhubaneswar Development Authority Chairman Vasudev Bhatt has been directed to respond by August 4.

Despite numerous protests, road blockades, and even the symbolic inauguration of an alternative facility at Palasuni by residents, the government has renamed the site as a temporary waste management centre—further angering locals. The BMC has reportedly filed police cases against several protestors,

including community leaders.
The dump yard has affected

thousands living in Gadakana, VSS Nagar, Mancheswar, and nearby areas, impacting institutions like Sainik School and Utkal University. Before coming to power, the ruling BJP had joined a 40-day-long protest at the site, with even the Chief Minister and senior leaders assuring resolution within two days of forming the government. However, nearly one and a half years later, there has been complete silence from

their side. Campaigners, including The movement is set to intensify in the coming days, according to activist and campaign leader Bhikhyakari Tripathy and senior members including Vasudev Bhatt and Ashok Paikaray.

INS Chilka marks **Kargil Vijay Diwas**

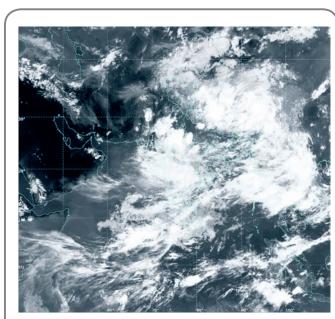


POST NEWS NETWORK

Chilika, July 26: INS Chilka commemorated Kargil Vijay Diwas with solemn reverence to honour the valour and sacrifice of the Indian Armed Forces during the Kargil War of 1999.

A wreath laying ceremony was conducted at the War Memorial. Commodore B Deepak Aneel, Naval Officer-in-Charge (Odisha) laid the wreath on behalf of all ranks.

The ceremony stood as a poignant reminder of the bravery displayed during Operation Vijay and inspired next generation of sea warriors to uphold the proud legacy of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation.



	WEATH	ER	
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	32.0°	31.2°	Partly cloudy sky
Min Temp	25.8°	23.8°	with possibility of moderate rain or
Humidity	86%	89%	Thunderstorm
Rainfall	11.2mm	11.8mm	

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-986134148 Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

There is no concrete drainage

system in place beyond this

point. As a result, erosion is

worsening on both sides of the

discharge area, where large

pits are forming and gradually

encroaching upon residential

In many neighbourhoods

along the riverbank, the mu-

nicipality has not yet built a

proper drainage system. When

contacted, Rayagada Munici-

pal Executive Officer Kuldeen

Kumar stated that drainage

work will begin only after the

embankment is completed. He

explained that constructing

drains without embankments

would be counterproductive as

soil erosion could destroy them.

concern among residents, who

are questioning why no perma-

nent solution has been found

despite years of erosion. They

have appealed to the district

administration and the state

government to intervene imme-

diately and ensure a long-term

resolution to the threat posed

by the shifting river and lack of

protective infrastructure.

The situation has sparked

settlements.

INCOMPLETE EMBANKMENTS

Rayagada faces threat of shifting Nagavali for molesting girls



Rayagada, July 26: The changing course of the Nagavali River has become a growing concern for residents of Ravagada town and nearby villages as the absence of complete protective embankments along its banks increases the risk of flooding and erosion.

Large sections of the riverbank remain exposed due to delays in embankment construction. Riparian residents, particularly in urban neighbourhoods and adjoining rural pockets, have expressed fear and frustration over the lack of

progress. Many years ago, the river veered toward the town and washed away a portion of land near the Raniguda area. Since then, people living in this zone have remained anxious during every rainy season.

Villages such as Dhumaguda and Mariguda on the opposite bank of the river also experience frequent erosion during monsoons. Soil from both riverbanks is being washed away year after year, endangering homes, farmland, and infra-

Last year, the Water Resources department began constructing a protective embankment

Daspalla police seized both

trucks and the motorcycle and

According to preliminary re-

ports, a goods-laden truck, trav-

elling from the Boudh side, was

heading toward Daspalla when

it collided with another truck

carrying limestone from the op-

posite direction. The accident

took place near Takeraghat

when a dog suddenly crossed

the road, prompting the trucks

to swerve and crash head-on.

Both vehicles overturned at

the roadside due to the impact.

died on the spot while three

others were trapped inside the

wreckage. Personnel from the

Daspalla Fire Station rushed

to the scene and rescued the

trapped individuals. One was

declared dead upon arrival at

the health centre, while the oth-

er two are under medical care.

In the aftermath, two persons

launched an investigation.

along the rural side of the river but the work remains incomplete. On the urban side, no such measure has been taken up. With no embankment to act as a buffer, the river continues to eat into the town's fringe, triggering further erosion and

putting livelihoods at risk.

Assistant Engineer Durjyodhan Jani of the Water Resources department said stretches of the riverbank land in the urban zone is privately owned and must be acquired before construction can proceed. He added that steps will be taken in the coming days to resolve

Gift cards worth

₹1.86cr looted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Adding to the problem, sew age from Rayagada town—including from areas such as New Colony and Raniguda—is being discharged directly into the river near the Ring Road culvert.



PNN & AGENCIES

Rajnagar, July 26: Police Saturday said they have detained a teacher of a government-run high school in Kendrapara district for allegedly molesting a group of girl students.

The accused was identified as Amar Prasad Mallick, a science teacher in the school. Around 15 girl students including seven from Class-VII and eight from Class-IX of Naga Narayan high school in Dangamal under Talachua Marine Police limits and Rajnagar block lodged a complaint with the headmaster, alleging that the science teacher had inappropriately touched them while checking their notebooks and also during classroom teaching

Teacher detained

The students urged the headmaster to take immediate action and prevent the teacher from continuing such inappropriate behaviour.

Additionally, five parents of the students submitted separate complaints to the headmaster Thursday regarding the same

Following the complaints, the headmaster reported the incident to the police. A police team promptly visited the school, detained the teacher, and took him to the station for further inquiry.

"We have detained the accused and are interrogating him. However no FIR has been lodged in this connection. We are in touch with parents of the victim girls and they have consented to file a complaint in this connection," Inspector-In-Charge of Talchua marine police station Bimal Mallick said. Mallick, however, refused to give further details keeping in view the sensitive nature of the case.

The incident has sparked outrage in the coastal village of Dangamal.

Man axes wife to death over dispute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Harabhanga, July 26: In a shocking incident stemming from a domestic dispute, a man allegedly killed his wife with an axe late Friday night in a slum behind Purunakatak police station in Boudh district.

The deceased woman has been identified as Kuni Guru, 35 Her husband, Sajan Pradhan, 38, was arrested and produced in court Saturday. Police have registered a case (114/25) at the Purunakatak police station and launched an investigation.

Sajan, a native of Tukulunda village under Harabhanga block in Boudh district, had married Kuni, from the neighbouring village of Lokapada, around 10 years ago following a romantic relationship. They belonged to different castes and had been working as migrant labourers in another state after their marriage. They had returned to Odisha a few years back and were living in a rented house.

A quarrel reportedly broke out between the couple Friday night, during which Sajan struck Kuni with an axe. She was rushed to Purunakatak hospital in critical condition but was declared dead shortly after.

Following the incident, Sajan

surrendered at the police station. The body has been sent to the Boudh District Headquarters Hospital for autopsy.

3 dead as trucks collide head-on



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh/Daspalla, July 26: A head-on collision between two trucks claimed three lives and left two others critically injured Saturday evening at Takeraghat under Daspalla police limits along the Bolangir-Khurda National Highway 57.

While the identities of the deceased were not immediately known, two seriously injured youths identified as Pankaraj Dihan, 35, and Kehan Mahanta, 35, are undergoing treatment at Daspalla Community Health Centre. Post-mortem of the three deceased is underway at the same facility.

In a dramatic turn during the collision, one of the trucks overturned onto a motorcycle. However, the motorcyclist managed to flee just in time and escaped unscathed. Following the crash, worth Rs 1.86 crore meant for

distribution among coal mine hicle near Badakathia jungle on Koshala-Kumunda road under Gopalprasad police limits here in Angul district Saturday afternoon, police said. Police said miscreants inter-

Talcher, July 26: Gift cards

2,408 gift cards, each valued at Rs 7,500. A case (196/25) has been registered under Gopalprasad police station and an investigation is under way. As per initial reports, V Vinod Kumar, an official of VPR

cepted the vehicle and looted

Company, was transporting the cards from the Ananta coal mine office of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) in Talcher to the Chhendipada coal mine office in an SUV when the robbery took place.

As the vehicle was passing through a forested stretch on the Kosala-Kumunda road, a group of three to four men in a vehicle blocked the road and forcibly stopped the vehicle. The attackers allegedly threatened the official and physically assaulted him before fleeing with the entire consignment of gift cards, police said. A formal complaint was filed with Gopalprasad police and the investigation is being carried out by the local police.

2 crocodiles rescued from village ponds

Kendrapara, July 26: Forest officials from Bhitarkanika National Park Saturday rescued two estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles from village ponds in the Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district.

In the first incident, a 6.3-foot-long female saltwater crocodile was captured with the help of fishing net from a pond belonging to Dibakar Sethy in Endulapur village under Hatina panchayat. Officials suspect the crocodile may have strayed from its natural habitat during a high tide and drifted into the pond via floodwaters. The rescued reptile was released into the Habali creek near Gupti.

"During floods, it becomes easier for crocodiles to move upstream into rivers and ponds from nearby creeks and rivulets. It is a natural instinct for aquatic animals to swim against the

current to escape stronger water flows," said a forest officer.

It may be recalled that three to four saltwater crocodiles were spotted last week in human settlements under Pattamundai

and Rajnagar blocks, following the recent floodwaters inundating several low-lying areas.

In another incident, forest personnel rescued a 5-foot-long estuarine crocodile from the pond of Kartika Behera in Dangala village, located within Bhi tarkanika National Park. This crocodile was later released into the Bhitarkanika river.

Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), Manas Kumar Das, confirmed both rescues.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Mangrove and Wildlife Division, Sudarshan Gopinath Yaday, ap pealed to residents of riverside villages to immediately inform forest officials if they spot crocodiles in or near human settlements. "Prompt reporting en ables us to take timely action and ensure both human and animal safety," he said.

It is worth noting that Forest department personnel had earlier rescued a 6.4-foot-long male saltwater crocodile from another pond in Endulapur village June 29, and a 6.2-footlong crocodile from a pond in Dangamala village June 17.

Description: PROVISION OF LIMITED HEIGHT SUBWAY (LHS) AT TRESPASSING

LOCATION AT KM. 627/36-38 BETWEEN

ICHCHAPURAM-JHADUPUDI STATIONS ON

KHURDA ROAD-PALASA MAIN LINE OF

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 319.00 Lakhs,

(2) Tender No. e-tenderNorthkur-166-2025.

Dt.: 15.07.2025

Description: MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO MAJOR AND MINOR BRIDGES LINDER THE

ENGINEER/KENDUJHARGARH OF KHURDA

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 199.90 Lakhs, EMD: ₹2,50,000/-.

(3) Tender No. eTender-SouthKUR-152-

KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

EMD: ₹3.09.500/-.

ROAD DIVISION.

Probe begins as bodies go missing from burial ground

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhadrak, July 26: Police started an investigation after it was alleged that bodies were going missing from a burial ground in Bhadrak district, officials said Saturday. Locals alleged that the bodies of four people, who died in the last few months. have gone missing from the Maninathpur burial ground.

This has been happening since 2017, with 15 bodies missing so far, they claimed.

"My mother's body was missing after 10 days of being buried there. I have lodged a police complaint," said Tapas Samal, a local. Kamalakant Nayak, the IIC of the Bhandaripokhari police station, said an investigation has been started.

BJD slams rising crimes against women

Koraput: Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Saturday

government for failing to ensure their safety. Senior

cited a spike in incidents, including the rape of a

15-year-old girl in Malkangiri and a brutal attack

on a nursing student in Nabarangpur. The nursing

in Jeypore Town. Though an FIR was filed and the

accused initially detained, he was later released

later attempted suicide. Her condition remains

criticised police inefficiency, saying the student

had to file two FIRs in different jurisdictions. He

blamed the "so-called double engine government"

critical, according to hospital sources. Majhi

for the lack of justice and vowed continued protests until women feel safe in Odisha.

ASHA killed, daughter

critical in road mishap

ited Social Health Activist

(ASHA) was killed and her

daughter critically injured

after the motorcycle they

were riding was hit by a

fish-laden container truck

Friday night in Balasore dis-trict. The incident occurred

around 8nm near Naskarpui

village on the Jagannathpur

Phulhani road under Bhogra

block. The deceased has

been identified as Sukanti

Nayak, 45, wife of Ramesh

Nayak from Jodabali vil-

lage in Nilagiri block. She

was working as an ASHA

under the Raj Barhampur

sub-centre. Sukanti was

was struck from behind

by the speeding container.

Her 23-year-old daughter

sustained critical injuries

in the mishap.

seated on the pillion, which

Bhograi: An Accred-

student from Raighar block was allegedly assaulted

and reportedly returned to torment the victim, who

staged a protest outside the South Western range

DIG office here, condemning the rise in crimes

against women and blaming the BJP-led state

BJD leader and spokesperson Pradeep Majhi

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION Notice is hereby given to

and premises situated on the complete section of the under noted section of the East Coast Railway, Khordha Road Division that the 25000 volts, 50Hz, A.C Over Head Traction wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section, on and from the same date the Over Head Traction Lines shall be treated as live all times and no unauthorised person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said Over Head Lines.

Section: Electrification of M/s Aarati Steel Limited (in-Plant Yard) taking off from Ghantikhal Nidhipur Station of Khordha Road Division.

Date of Energization 30.07.2025.

Project Head M/S AARATI STEEL LIMITED

2025, Dt.: 16.07.2025

Description: PROVISION OF LIMITED
HEIGHT SUBWAY (LHS) AT TRESPASSING
LOCATION AT KM. 626.00 BETWEEN ICHCHAPURAM-SURLA ROAD STATIONS ON KHURDA ROAD-PALASA MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx cost of the work: ₹ 200.66 Lakhs,

(4) Tender No. e-Tender-estatekur-158-2025, Dt.: 14.07.2025

Description: MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO DIFFERENT SHOPS INCLUDING REPAIRS TO SERVICE BUILDINGS SUCH AS REPAIRS TO ROOF, FLOOR, WALL, DRAINAGE, GRATING, TOILETS & URINALS, CHHAJA, STRUCTURAL SHED, DOORS & WINDOWS, GATES, INTERIOR & EXTERIOR WALL PAINTING ETC. AND JUNGLE CLEANING IN DIFFERENT SHOPS, STORES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP/MANCHESWAR.

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 188.41 Lakhs, (5) Tender No. etenderNorthkur-165-2025,

Dt.: 15.07.2025 Description: PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS TO LEVEL CROSSING APPROACH

ROAD SURFACE, LEVEL CROSSING GOOMTY INCLUDING TOILET, FENCING, HEIGHT GAUGE ETC. AT LEVEL CROSSINGS UNDER ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 104.83 Lakhs,

Completion period: 10 months (for Sl. No. 1, 2, 3 & 5)

&12 months (for Sl. No. 4).

Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 06.08.2025 (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 ma 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 ebsite www.ireps.gov.in

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes. corrigenda issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), PR-398/Q/25-26 Khurda Road

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank

▲ डलाहाबाद

ALLAHABAD

ZONAL OFFICE: SAMBALPUR 2nd Floor, Shyam Arcade, Khetrajpur,

Sambalpur-768003, E-mail: zosambalpur@indianbank.co.in

SALE NOTICE {See proviso to rule 6(2) & 8(6) Sale Notice fo sale of property /ies under SARFAESI Act 2002

E-AUCTION

Sale of immovable property/ies mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Sarfaesi) Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued unde

Sec13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the followin loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferrer under the said Act 13(4) proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website https://www.baanknet.com Date of Demand Notice / Reserve Price Description of the

- 1	No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagors	Immovable / Movable Properties	Outstanding dues (As per 13(2) notice)	Bid Increment Amount
		Mobile No.: 8249105007/ Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr.Debendra Pradhan, S/o- Mr. Binal Pradhan, At: Pradhan Beer Parlour & Chancellor Restaurant, At/P.O.: Padampur, Dist.: Bargarh, PIN-768036 / Guarantor: Mrs. Sunanda Rout, W/o- Mr. Debendra Pradhan, At/P.O.: Padampur, Dist.: Bargarh, At/P.O.: Padampur, Dist.: Bargarh,	All that piece and parcel of land and building recorded in the name of Mr. Debendra Pradhan, S/o- Bimal Pradhan, located at Mouza: Padampur, Plot No.: 35/5562, Area: Ac.0.050dec., Kissam: Gharabari and Plot No.: 35/5563, Area: Ac.0.10dec., Kissam: Gharabari, both the plots are under Khata No.:1309/1127, Bounded (Plot No.: 35/5562): North: Land of Amir Khan, South: Land of Fakira Naik, East: Land of Pradip Pradhan, West: Land of Purchaser, Bounded (Plot No.: 35/5563): North: Road and Binod Mishra, South: Fakira Naik, East: Land of Seller, West: Land of Seller	17.02.2025 / 08.05.2025 / ₹75,26,779/- as on 16.02.2025 plus further interest @ applicable rates till the date of realization and costs, charges and expenses	₹1,96,00,000/- / ₹19,60,000/- / ₹10,000/-

DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 14.08.2025 from 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes duration LAST DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD AND DOCUMENTS: ON OR BEFORE 14.08.2025 i.e. before the e-Auction date and time in the portal.

DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION OF PROPERTIES: 28.07.2025 to 13.08.2025 between 10.00 AM to 04.00 PM

(with prior appointment from bank) at their own expenses

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

(1) For detailed terms & conditions of the sale please refer to the link: https://www.baanknet.com . Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch No. as mentioned in above list. (2) This is also 15 days notice to the borrowers/guarantors mortgagors of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. (3) On receipt of the entire sale consideration, the Authorised Officer shall issue the Sale Certificate as per rules. (4) All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate conveyance if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. (5) The Authorised Öfficer will not be held responsibile for any charge lien encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. (6) The Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitmen or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 Borrowers/Guarantors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

Place: Sambalpur Date: 26.07.2025

Indian Bank

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER **BALASORE (ROADS & BUILDINGS) DIVISION-I** AT/PO - PADHUANPADA, BALASORE

CONTACT NO.: 06782262045, E Mail ID: ee_blsrb@yahoo.co.in BID IDENTIFICATION NO. SE (R and B) BLS-Divn-I-15 / 2025-26 Letter No.5076 Date.23.07.2025 The Superintending Engineer, Balasore (R&B) Division-I

Balasore on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bids to be received in ONLINE MODE only for road and Building works No. of Work Building, Roads & Electrical work of Nature of work Balasore (R&B) Division-I "D", "C" & "HT" Class Contractor Rs.5.72 Lakh to 14.58 Lakh

4 Class of Contractor Approx. value of work 6 |Tender Cost Availability of Bid From 10.00 Hours of dt.30.07.2025 Documents in the website to 16:00 hours of dt.08.08.2025 B Date of Opening of Bid : Dt.11.08.2025 at 10:00 Hours Other details can be seen in the Bidding documents from the website: https://tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Superintending Engineer OIPR-34157/11/0004/2526

Balasore (R&B) Division-I



power post



Genius discovers a system; average talent stereotypes it till it is shattered by fresh genius.

SRI AUROBINDO



Showing The Mirror

Toint-family and indissoluble marriage have been the basis of Hindu society. Laws that alter this basis will ultimately lead to the disintegration of society. Jana Sangh will, therefore, repeal the Hindu Marriage and Hindu Succession Acts.'

This is from the party's manifesto of 1957. The Jana Sangh/BJP's opposition to divorce and its championing of joint families was accompanied also by an attack against the rights of women. In his draft legislations in the early 1950s, Dr BR Ambedkar had proposed modest changes to Hindu personal law, especially on the question of inheritance for women. He identified the two dominant forms of traditional inheritance law and modified one of them to make inheritance fairer for women. In its 1951 manifesto the Jana Sangh opposed this proposal in the Hindu Code Bill, saying social reform should not come from above but from society. In 1957, the one that is quoted above, it said that such changes were not acceptable unless rooted in ancient culture. 'Riotous individualism' would ensue as a result, it feared. One part of its opposition to divorce was the idea of eternal marriage. However, the material element was not letting divorced women and widowed daugh-

ters-in-law inherit property. This position changed over time, but there is no explanation why the party changed its position on its manifestos. As divorce became less rare in India society and as urban, upper caste, middle-class families (the base of the BJP) became more nuclear, the pledged loyalty to joint families eroded.

As we observed in the earlier column looking at a similar abandoning by the Jana Sangh/ BJP of its socialist policies on the economy, this is not necessarily a problem. All parties have the right to alter and shift their stand. but when a position is laid out, then its retreat and cancellation and the taking up of a stand that was previously opposed should also be laid out and explained. This, the RSS-linked political force has chosen not to do.

An uneasiness with how to handle caste is also reflected in its manifestos. The party said it would create a "feeling of equality and oneness in Hindu society by liquidating untouchability and casteism." But it did not speak of how. Jana Sangh did not add to the Congress policy of reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, for example by

subject that on which the BJP has won many gold medals recently, the Jana Sangh did not have any particular strategic view of the world and India's place in it besides stating that India should be friends with all who were friendly and tough on those who were not

On foreign affairs, a

Aakar Patel

pushing for it in the private sector or expanding it. The support to the Dalits comes from such ideas as "arranging for extra training classes, refresher courses and in-service training for their benefit." Culturally, the party stood firmly against alcohol and sought nationwide prohibition. And it wanted English to be replaced in all spheres by local languages and especially, Hindi. This is something Home Minister Amit Shah spoke about recently. After an uproar, the BJP forced media outlets to delete his video, likely because it offended their middle class base.

Another place the Jana Sangh showed itself to be a party of the urban middle class was in agriculture. The first point on agriculture of its first manifesto calls for "a country-wide campaign to educate and enthuse the cultivator about the necessity of harder work for more production." Today it would take a brave BJP minister to accuse India's farmers of not working hard enough, and the surrender on the farm bills shows that the party continues to be removed from the way the Indian farmer thinks.

On foreign affairs, a subject that on which the BJP has won many gold medals recently, the Jana Sangh did not have any particular strategic view of the world and India's place in it besides stating that India should be friends with all who were friendly and tough on those who were not. It wanted India to be given a place in the United Nations. Security Council but there was no reference to why or what India's role would be, or how its influence and options could be increased if this seat were miraculously given. It offered no path for getting to the Security Council. There appears to be no continuity in the way the Jana Sangh thought about such things. The 1957 manifesto opened with a grim warning of a threat emanating from a Pakistan-Portuguese alliance. The 1962 manifesto made no reference to this but opened with an admonition against Nehru for losing the war to China. The 1972 manifesto made no reference to the war in Bangladesh which had been created out of Pakistan only weeks earlier. Its idea of defence policy came through such demands as compulsory military training for all boys and girls, removal of licences for possessing muzzle-loading guns (an eighteenth century weapon), expansion of the National Cadet Corps and the manufacture of nuclear weapons. It is a series of things strung together without coherence.

The reader will ask what the point of raising these things in 2025 is, and that is a valid question. Perhaps the answer is that the BJP is the largest and most dominant political force in our country. What it says it stands for and what it ultimately does is important. Its own constitution says that the party "shall bear true faith and allegiance... to the principles of socialism and secularism," and this came years before other parties were compelled to do so by law. Today it is talking of removing these words from the constitution. It is therefore important that its own words be read out to the party that it is under some pressure, even if the very gentle one exerted by the columnist, to explain itself and its endless shifts to its voters and to the citizens of this country.

WISDOM CORNER

Anyone can give up; it is the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone would expect you to fall apart, now that is true strength.



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Take chances, make mistakes. That's how you grow. Pain nourishes your courage. You have to fail in order to practice being brave.

MARY TYLER MOORE

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

THE 'TRUMP DOCTRINE'

S Vice President JD Vance recently tried to cast President Donald Trump's strikes on Iran's nuclear infrastructure as a wildly successful example of the "Trump Doctrine." According to Vance, the doctrine is simple: you identify a problem that threatens US interests, which "you try to aggressively diplomatically solve." If diplomacy fails, "you use overwhelming military power to solve it and then you get the hell out of there before it ever becomes a protracted conflict.'

If only it were that easy. What Vance describes is neither a doctrine nor unique to Trump. It is the same wishful thinking that produced many of the long, costly, and unsuccessful US military interventions that Vance himself has often decried

If Vance thinks that the strikes "solved" the problem of Iran's nuclear programme. then he must believe that they fully destroyed Iran's nuclear capabilities: its centrifuges, its stocks of enriched uranium, and any other materials used for weaponization. Either that, or he views this display of America's military might as powerful enough to persuade the Islamic Republic to abandon its nuclear programme and not reconstitute it in the future.

There is no question that the US strike severely damaged the Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan nuclear facilities. But it is far from clear that the bombing of these sites, coupled with Israel's assassination of senior Iranian nuclear scientists, has set Iran back to zero. It appears more likely that Iran's programme has only been delayed. though estimates of the setback vary from months to years.

Unless and until there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that Iran's nuclear programme was completely obliterated, then Vance must rely on the belief that, as US



The Trump administration is not the first to be tempted by the idea that short, sharp displays of military strength can convince other countries to capitulate to US demands. Since achieving its unquestioned military primacy in 1990, the **United States has compiled a long record of** such attempts, many of which failed

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth put it, "American deterrence is back.

The Trump administration is not the first to be tempted by the idea that short, sharp displays of military strength can convince other countries to capitulate to US demands. Since achieving its unquestioned military primacy in 1990, the United States has compiled a long record of such attempts, many of which failed.

Some targets of US military coercion proved willing to tolerate more pain than American officials anticipated. Throughout the 1990s, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq endured multiple US-led bombing campaigns for repeatedly obstructing International Atomic Energy Agency and United Nations weapons inspectors. This cycle, as Vance knows well, culminated in 2003 with America's "shock and awe" campaign, which set off a grinding eight-year war that killed thousands of US service members and roughly a half-million Iragis

Similarly, in the 1990s, NA-TO's threats, blockades, and shows of force did not deter Serbian President Slobodan Miloševi from waging brutal wars in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. In particular, Miloševi was unmoved by NATO's early bombing campaign in Kosovo, which was restricted to military targets and did not threaten his hold on power. The air strikes that were supposed to last a matter of days ended up continuing for months without success. The presumption, in other words. that simply bringing superior force to bear would convince Miloševi to abandon a cause he was deeply committed to was dead wrong. It was only when NATO shifted from targeting Serbian forces to targeting infrastructure in and around Belgrade – which threatened to undermine the Serbian elite's support for Miloševi – that he

agreed to leave Kosovo. Other targets have played possum when faced with US military threats, seeming to concede in the moment before resuming their unwanted behaviours weeks, months, or even years later. North Korea has long taken this approach. Despite repeated reminders of the US military's overwhelming strength, the country eventually resorts to its old ways,

issuing nuclear threats, conducting missile tests, launching satellites, and engaging in other provocations.

China's behaviour follows a similar pattern. In 2016, America successfully used an ostentatious joint military exercise to deter Chinese island building and claims around the Philippines. But just a few months ago, the Chinese Coast Guard landed on an island that the

Philippines claims as its own. Still others have responded by inflicting pain on the US. The Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid found that killing a few Americans is all it takes for the world's most powerful military to back down.

Iran seems willing to do all three. The Islamic Republic has displayed an ability to absorb both economic and military blows. Its military provocations and nuclear activities have ebbed and flowed, sometimes in sync with - and other times irrespective of the intensity of US responses. And as Iran expert Vali Nasr recently recounted, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei apparently shares Aidid's assessment, having told his advisers that "America is like a dog. If you back off, it will lunge at you, but if you lunge at it, it will recoil and back off."

It is understandable that Vance wants to believe - and wants Trump's anti-interventionist constituency to believe that impressive demonstrations of the US military's reach and power are uniquely persuasive. But if short-ofwar displays of military power were sufficient to achieve US political objectives - especially ones as difficult to achieve as convincing Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions - then they would be a pillar of every president's doctrine.

The writer is Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM

Melanie W. Sisson

COERCION

WILLING TO

TOLERATE

PAIN THAN

AMERICAN

OFFICIALS

ANTICIPATED

PROVED

MORE

SOME TARGETS

OF US MILITARY

TRADE

India-UK FTA: The key takeaways



DK Giri

ALLOWING BRITISH COMPANIES TO BID FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TENDERS MAY AFFECT LOCAL ENTERPRISES

he signing of the FTA between India and the United Kingdom marks a new chapter in the bilateral ties. A former colonial master, accused in the past of exploiting the resources from India, 'the jewel in its crown', now is negotiating with a sovereign country for goods, services and expertise. That is the inevitable change of fortunes, equations of power and international relations.

Both countries, however, should view the bilateralism through the lenses of contemporary politics and future possibilities without prejudice of the past. Thanks to leadership in both countries, they have been taking things prudently.

The FTA, which is called the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, was concluded on 6 May after four years of negotiations since 2022. It was being signed, at the time of writing, on 24 July at Chequers, the official country residence of the British PM. It was inked by Piyush Goyal, the Indian Trade Minister and his counterpart Jonathan Reynolds in presence of both the PMs.

The significance of the Agreement can be seen in the utterances of the PMs. Narendra Modi said, "The FTA will further prosperity, growth and boost job creation of our own people. A strong India-UK partnership is essential for global progress." Keir Stammer was equally sanguine in the midst of chaotic geopolitics and global trade, "It is a landmark deal that will boost employment. drive economic growth and bring down the prices for the British consumers.'

The FTA is quite comprehensive having chapters on goods, services, innovation, procurement, IPR, social security, mobility of professionals, visa and work opportunity etc. Notably, FTA will be followed by a Bilateral Investment Agreement and an Agreement on Defence Production and Cooperation.

The key takeaways from the FTA are as follows. The Indian labour-intensive goods will have easier access, they include leather, footwear, garments, clothes, marine products, sports goods, toys, gems, jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts, organic chemicals etc. Almost 99% of Indian exports will be duty free. On the other hand, Britain will receive heavy reduction of tariffs on whisky and cars. Other goods from Britain enjoying concessional tariffs are cosmetics, lamb, salmon, medical products, soft drinks, chocolates and drinks

The major concession granted by India is a drastic slash of duty on whisky from 150% to 40% in 10 years. The tariff on automobiles from UK falls from 100% to 10%. The India-UK trade will rise to \$25bn per year reaching \$120bn by 2030. Specifically, on a sector-wise

perusal, UK firms on telecoms, banking and insurance sectors will have access to Indian market. UK companies can bid for Central government tenders. Both countries agree to promote digital trade with paperless transactions making trade quicker and easier.

However, there are apprehensions about tangible benefits accruing to India out of the FTA. The Opposition Congress has expressed its concern about the impact on the MSMEs and farmers, whether British exports will overwhelm their prices and products. Allowing British companies to bid for Central government tenders may affect local enterprises. Without reciprocal visa facilities, British entrepreneurs are given a red carpet.

The Global Trade Research Institute warns that India will suffer a net loss of \$900mn without gaining benefits in real terms. India's concurrence on certain IP rules beyond WTO provisions may hurt its interests. A drastic slash on duties in cars will undermine local companies. Observers argue that India's global manufacturing share is merely 2%, so, the sector should be enabled not weakened through unfair competition.

Such apprehensions will be tested as the Agreement unfolds on the ground. To conclude on the unbreakable historic relations between India and UK, both countries have to deal with the expectations of complementarities in their positions in international relations. To illustrate, India made diplomatic contact with EEC (now European Union) in 1962. but could join it only after Britain became a member in 1973. Such twining continues even today. That should be remembered by both sides.

The writer is Professor of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions. ©INFA

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:

OrissaPOST B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Strategic significance

Sir, During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to the Maldives under President Mohamed Muizzu's leadership, both nations reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral ties. President Muizzu personally received PM Modi at the airport—an important diplomatic gesture. The two sides finalised the terms of reference for a Bilateral Investment Treaty and a Free Trade Agreement, aiming to boost economic cooperation. Seven key MoUs and agreements were signed, including a Line of Credit worth Rs 4,850 crore in Indian currency, reflecting India's strong financial commitment. Despite his previous pro-China image, largely due to his involvement in the "India Out" campaign and calls to remove Indian military personnel from the Maldives, President Muizzu's engagement with PM Modi marks a significant shift. His openness to strengthening ties suggests a pragmatic recognition of India's vital role in the region. Given the Maldives' strategic position in the Indian Ocean, it remains a critical partner in India's maritime security and regional influence. This visit highlights a reset in ties, with both leaders choosing cooperation over confrontation in navigating geopolitical dynamics in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Badminton sensation

Sir, Eighteen-year-old Indian Unnati Hooda has stunned the badminton world by defeating compatriot and two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu in the China Open Super 1000 tournament in Changzhou. Unnati is known as a player possessing a solid defence to back her aggressive stroke play. Despite the fact that she went down to Japanese star Akane Yamaguchi in the quarters, Unnati had already announced her arrival at the big league by then. That the 30-vear-old Sindhu had never lost to a fellow Indian in international tournaments in the last eighteen years underscores the significance of Unnati's triumph. With her superlative performance, the girl from Rohtak, Haryana has clearly sent a signal to the world that the next generation Indian women's singles badminton players are here to stay

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES





Assam's eviction drive prompts 4 NE states to prevent intruders

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati/Kohima, July 26: Several state governments in the North East have sounded a high alert along inter-state borders with Assam, apprehending that displaced people may attempt to cross into their states following the Assam government's eviction drive in several districts, officials said Saturday.

Assam shares 2616.1 km interstate borders with six northeastern states – Nagaland (512.1 Km), Arunachal Pradesh (804.1 km), Manipur (204.1 km), Mizoram (164.6 km), Tripura (46.3 km) and Meghalaya (884.9 km) besides 127 km with West Bengal.

This interstate border runs through multiple districts on both sides. The Assam government has recently intensified its eviction operations in some districts, including Dhubri, Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Kampur (Metro) and announced to undertake the eviction drive in Golaghat and southern Assam districts, targeting people allegedly encroaching on government and forest lands.

Thousands of people were evicted in the eviction drive. Nagaland, Manipur, and Meghalaya governments separately issued urgent directives to the District Magistrates/Deputy Commissioners and Superintendent of Police to take all-out measures to prevent attempts by the displaced people to cross into these states after the Assam government's eviction drive.

In Tripura, Tipra Motha Party (TMP) supremo Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma has asked the Chief Executive Member of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) to urgently constitute a monitoring committee across all party lines to



detect illegal immigrants who are illegally entering the council areas.

"We should take this matter seriously, as many illegal people from Assam are being evicted and may enter neighbouring states. This committee should work not as political entities but as the protector of our rights," Debbarma said in a post on X.

The TMP has been governing the politically important TTA-ADC, which has jurisdiction over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area, and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals.

A senior official in Kohima said that Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, while reviewing the situation along the Nagaland-Assam inter-state border Thursday, directed Chief Secretary J Alam and Director General of Police (DGP) Rupin Sharma to enhance round-theclock surveillance and initiate all preventive and proactive measures to detect and deport any potential influx of illegal immigrants.

He asked the officials to strengthen vigilance mechanisms along the Assam-Nagaland inter-state border. Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister for Home and Border Affairs, Y Patton, earlier this week visited vulnerable locations in the Ralan area under Wokha and Niuland districts to assess the situation following the eviction operations in Assam.

During his visit and in several coordination meetings in the border areas, the Deputy Chief Minister expressed appreciation for the tireless efforts of the district administration, police, village chiefs, students, youth organisations, and volunteers in maintaining a vigilant watch along the borders.

Deputy Commissioner of Niuland reported that over 200 vehicles carrying evicted illegal immigrants from Assam attempted to enter the district. These attempts were successfully thwarted, and the individuals were deported by the District Administration, Police, and CRPF at various checkpoints.

On July 17, during the eviction drive in the Paikan Reserve Forest under the Krishnai Range in Assam's Goalpara district turned violent, leaving one person dead and another seriously injured. Earlier, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asserted that the administration is determined to free encroached and forest

Libraries become lifeline for Manipur aspirants

In violence-hit Manipur, private libraries thrive offering job-seekers quiet places to read and surf uninterrupted internet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, July 26: With unreliable mobile internet connection and no suitable place at home to study for competitive exams, many job aspirants in Manipur are visiting private libraries, which offer them both facilities at a low cost.

Amid the ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo communities, which killed over 260 people and rendered thousands homeless in the state, these libraries have been flourishing in the last two to three years, serving the needs of job-seekers, readers and owners of these facilities said.

Unlike traditional libraries stocked with extensive academic collections, these private spaces offer magazines, study materials for competitive examinations and wi-fi internet connections and provide a calm, comfortable environment where visitors can focus on reading books they bring themselves.

Th Abemma, a government job aspirant in Imphal, was found reading books and surfing the internet at a private library to prepare herself for state civil service exams, while Laishram Victor, a graduate, was busy studying for CDS tests at such a facility here.

Like Abemma and Victor, there are many job aspirants who are preparing for competitive exams at 40 such private libraries in Imphal area and Kakching district, as they have a poor environment for reading at their homes, with many suffering from frequent internet shutdowns amid ethnic violence in the state, the stakeholders said.

taken shape in the past two years with the emergence of private libraries, catering to the needs of those who do not have separate rooms for study at their residence," said Victor who completed his graduation from West Bengal's Darjeeling in 2023 and visits a library on a daily basis from 7am to 5pm to prepare for SSC and CDS exams.

"Three years ago, there were

books and accessing the in-

ternet at a common space has

"Three years ago, there were just fewer than five private libraries or reading spaces in Imphal. Many of my friends and I could not book a seat at these facilities as seats were limited. That's how a friend of mine and I came up with the idea of setting up a library to cater to the needs of readers, especially those who have completed their studies and are preparing for different national-level exams," Books and Brain Co-founder A Mayanglambam told PTI.

A majority of the visitors in their library in Imphal's Keisampat area, with a seating capacity of 92, are those preparing for NEET exams and other national-level competitive tests, he said.

"Many of them do not have the leisure time to read novels. And hence, I concentrated mostly on providing a comfortable reading space and didn't think of stocking too many books," Mayanglambam, who himself is preparing for banking exams, added.

"Charging monthly fees ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹1,300, more than 40 private libraries have sprouted in the last two or three years in the Imphal area and Kakching district, all catering to the needs of readers," said Johnson Yumnam, who runs My Reading Room at Ghari.

The private library boom in

Imphal stems from a poor reading environment at home. The libraries are mostly frequented by job aspirants who find it difficult to concentrate on their studies at home. Since most of them have completed their education, they find a level of competitiveness when they visit the libraries, Yumnam told PTI.

A library culture has existed in Manipur for decades but seats are very limited. After the COVID pandemic and the ethnic conflict, there has been a sudden surge of interest in private libraries, the owners said.

The interest in these libraries is also linked to an increasing number of Manipuri youths taking a keen interest in national exams, including SSC, banking and UPSC, they said.

Many of the families in Imphal live in congested areas and youths often have to share rooms with their siblings and elders. The private libraries provide an atmosphere to connect with other aspirants and discuss on the strategies to prepare for national-level exams. Studying at home can make one feel isolated as well and so they come here to connect with their peers who share similar objec-

The facilities provided by the private libraries, such as reliable internet, are another factor that has attracted many readers.

tives. Yumnam added

Abemma, a state civil service aspirant who recently cleared prelims and will appear for the mains exam, said, "The state has often witnessed internet shutdowns and regular power cut-offs. Private libraries provide free wi-fi facilities by obtaining permits from government authorities in times of internet ban and the rooms are fully air-conditioned. This also makes the aspirants enrol at the private libraries as well."

At some libraries, cafes are also attached to provide brief recreation for the readers, and this makes these facilities more attractive for readers, she added.

K'taka jumbos explore new home in Japan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bengaluru, July 26: In a first-of-its-kind international transfer, four elephants from Bannerghatta Biological Park have been successfully relocated to Japan, where they have begun a new chapter of their lives.

Bannerghatta Biological Park authorities also shared videos showing the elephants being moved in trucks, resting, and eating at their new enclosures in Japan.

Four pachyderms - Suresh (8), Gauri (9), Shruti (7), and Tulsi (5) - were airlifted from Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru to Kansai International Airport in Osaka July 24, aboard a Qatar Airways B777-200F cargo aircraft.

After a journey lasting over eight hours, they arrived safely in Japan Friday.

From there, they were transported in specially designed



cages by road to Himeji Central Park, their new home.

A team from Bannerghatta Biological Park accompanied the elephants throughout the journey to ensure their comfort and safety.

Now settled in Japan, the elephants have started exploring their new surroundings freely in the spacious natural enclosures of Himeji Central Park,

marking the beginning of a new

chapter in their lives.

In preparation for the relocation, the elephants underwent three months of specialised training. A dedicated team, comprising two veterinary officers, four mahouts, a supervisor, and a biologist, accompanied them and will remain in Japan for 15 days to help the elephants adapt to

their new environment.

The park is expected to soon welcome rare species such as cheetahs, jaguars, pumas, chimpanzees, and capuchin monkeys, in exchange for elephants from Japan, offering wildlife enthusiasts the opportunity to witness exotic animals in enriched habitats.

This exchange, in the planning stages since 2023, was made possible through collaboration between the Central Zoo Authority, the Embassies of Japan and India, and various other departments.

Bannerghatta Biological Park is a designated section carved out of Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) in 2002. Located near Bangalore city, within the hills of the Anekal range in Karnataka, Bannerghatta National Park spans across two districts: Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru South. It was declared a National Park in 1974.

It's K'taka vs Andhra over first indigenous quantum computer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bengaluru, July 26: In a sharp rebuttal to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that his state is set to deploy India's first indigenously built 8-qubit quantum computer this November in Amaravati, Karnataka Minister NS Boseraju asserted that the country's first quantum computer is already operational in Bengaluru.

In a statement, Karnataka Science and Technology Minister said the quantum computer, built by Bengaluru-based QpiAI, has been providing commercial services since April 2025.

He was responding to Naidu's post on 'X' dated July 24, in which the Andhra Pradesh chief minister said, "Our state is set to deploy India's first indigenously built 8-qubit quan-

Tripura steps up efforts to save India's only ape species



tum computer this November in Amaravati, with support from @QpiAI."

from @QpIAI."
"This initiative, backed by the National Quantum Mission, aims to transform agriculture, water management, and healthcare. I would like to congratulate QpiAI founder Mr Nagendra Nagarajan

and express my gratitude to @ nqmdst for their support of this project," Naidu added. Reacting to the announce-

ment, Boseraju said, "For the record, India's first quantum computer—built indigenously by @QpiAI right here in Bengaluru—began commercial operations in April 2025."

This 25-qubit quantum com-

This 25-qubit quantum computer, named INDUS, is already delivering real-world services in sectors such as healthcare, defence, advanced research, finance, and others, he said.

Karnataka, he added, is not only leading the nation in quantum innovation but also continues to strengthen its position as the epicentre of India's

quantum future.

"While celebrating our progress, we must also cultivate a culture of considering facts and figures," the minis-

39th Nat'l Games likely to be co-hosted by NE states

The 39th edition of the Games, to be held in 2027, was earlier supposed to be hosted by Meghalaya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, July 26: The Centre has proposed a unique model for the 39th National Games, asking all eight northeastern states to co-host the event, an official said.

The proposal received unanimous support during the first regional meeting of sports ministers, sports secretaries, and state Olympic association office-bearers held in Shillong Saturday, he said.

The closed-door meeting was chaired by Meghalaya Sports Minister Shakliar Warjri and cochaired by Arunachal Pradesh Sports Minister Kento Jini.

The National Games were organised in the region in 1999, when Manipur hosted it, and in 2007, when Assam was the host.

Delegates from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura shared views and suggestions



on how to coordinate efforts for the multi-state hosting concept, said John F Kharshiing, the working president of the Meghalaya State Olympics Association (MSOA).

The 39th edition of the Games, to be held in 2027, was earlier supposed to be hosted by Meghalaya.

Meghalaya.

Asked why the state was not hosting it alone, Kharshiing told PTI, "The proposal came from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Meghalaya government accepted it, considering that it will promote regional cooperation." It also celebrates the rich sporting potential that the North East has always exemplified, he added.

Agartala, July 26: The Tripura government has unveiled a

ra government has unveiled a detailed action plan aimed at protecting the endangered Western Hoolock Gibbon -- the only ape species found in India, in a major push for wildlife conservation.

This initiative marks a significant milestone in the state's efforts to safeguard its fragile biodiversity and tackle the alarming decline in the gibbon population.

Listed as "endangered" on the IUCN Red List and protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Western Hoolock Gibbon enjoys the highest degree of legal protection. Yet, its numbers have continued to decline over the years, largely due to habitat loss, hunting, and human-wildlife conflicts.

Tripura, an ecologically rich state in the northeast, harbours one of the country's last remaining gibbon populations. These agile, tree-dwelling primates are known for their spectacular aerial swings across

forest canopies and hauntingly melodic calls that echo through the jungle. But once-flourishing forests have shrunk and fragmented, leaving fewer safe spaces for them to thrive.

A survey in 2005 recorded 97 individual gibbons across three forest patches in Tripura. That number has since dipped to 79, divided among 32 groups, officials said.

Nationally, the gibbon population stood at about 12,000 two decades ago, but conservationists fear it may now be significantly lower.

To reverse this worrying trend, the Tripura Forest Department, in collaboration with Tripura University and conservation NGO Aaranyak, convened a multi-stakeholder workshop this year to craft a robust conservation roadmap.

Tripura University's professor Sabyasachi Dasgupta, who is actively involved in the project, said establishing protocols for long-term population monitoring and restoring degraded forest habitats are part of the action plan.

action plan. Training forest staff and law



enforcement in wildlife protection, conducting ecological and behavioural research and promoting community awareness and participation in conservation are also the goals of it, he said.

The gibbons of the state mainly live in protected areas such as Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in South Tripura, and forests in Gomati and Khowai districts. However, conservationists caution that without proactive steps to prevent further forest degradation, gibbons may vanish from the wild.

"We are emphasising the need to maintain cultural integrity while protecting the gibbons," Dasgupta said.

"Traditional methods like shifting cultivation are deeply rooted, but they often disrupt forest continuity. We need strategies that reduce ecological harm while respecting cultural traditions. Canopy connectivity is crucial for gibbon movement and survival," he added. Divisional Forest Officer of

Gomati H Vignesh said gibbons have been spotted in the Amarpur subdivision, though accurate population data is still being collected.

Bimal Das, the assistant

Bimal Das, the assistant conservator at Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, confirmed that eight gibbons are currently thriving within its core zone.

Grassroots conservation campaigns are also underway, with NGOs and academics engaging communities living near forest fringes. These programmes aim to reduce human-animal conflict, especially incidents involving crop damage and encroachment, while highlighting the ecological role

As awareness grows and conservation efforts gain momentum, environmentalists believe Tripura has the potential to become a model for gibbon preservation across the region, and a beacon of hope for India's only ape.

of gibbons, officials said.

national



The action against Congress leaders and now against former CM **Baghel's son proves Cen**tral and state investigative agencies have been trying to suppress the voice of political opponents of the BJP

SACHIN PILOT | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

MARRIAGE REGISTRATION UNDER **UCC PICKS UP IN UTTARAKHAND**

Registration of marriages made mandatory under the UCC in Uttarakhand has picked up with an average of 1,634 marriages being registered every day under the act since its implementation January 27. The average of marriage registrations in the state under the Uttarakhand Marriage Registration Act-2010 which was operational before the UCC took effect was only 67 per day





innings in the political set-up. I was a seven-time legislator in Andhra Pradesh before it was bifurcated into two states

ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU | GOVERNOR. GOA

The World Bank has sanctioned the project in a short time due to the support of Union Finance

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Implementation of the project is already underway in the northeastern region MANIK SAHA I CHIEF MINISTER. TRIPURA

Respective parties will make their decisions. However, the final decision rests with Fadnavis as he is the chief minister of

CHANDRASHEKHAR BAWANKULE | BJP LEADER

SHORT **TAKES**

Gujarat: Bridge collapse victims' kin meet Rahul

Anand (Gujarat): The family members of some of the victims of the Mahisagar river bridge collapse incident, which claimed 20 lives in Gujarat earlier this month. on Saturday met Congress MP Rahul Gandhi here to seek "justice", and the leader assured to help them. Several vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river after a segment of the 40-year-old bridge near Gambhira village in Vadodara district collapsed July 9, killing 20 people. Gandhi was in Anand district of the state as part of his day-long visit to the BJP-ruled state. He held a meeting with cooperative sector leaders and members of various milk unions and dairies in Jitodiva town in Anand district in the backdrop of recent protests organised by dairy farmers in Himmatnagar town on milk

2020 Delhi riots: Court acquits 6 accused

New Delhi: A Delhi court has acquitted six persons in a case related to the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, saying the prosecution has completely failed to prove its case against them. Additional Sessions Judge Parveen Singh was hearing the case against the six men, who were accused of various penal offences, including unlawful assembly, rioting, robbery and arson. In an order dated July 23, the judge said, "I find that there are serious discrepancies in the story of the prosecution which had emerged during the prosecution evidence, and the prosecution failed to explain them.

Red alert in Palghar

Palghar: Four persons have died and more than 450 houses damaged in heavy rains this monsoon in Maharashtra's Palghar, an official said Saturday amid a 'red alert' issued for the district by the India Meteorological Department. A 'red alert' indicates "heavy to extremely heavy" rainfall of over 200 millimetres in 24 hours. "Since June 21, a total of four persons have died due to heavy rain in Palghar. It has also caused damage to 461 houses, comprising 375 'pucca' houses as well as 86 temporary and mud dwellings. Our teams are carrying out damage assessments and extending assistance where needed," said the district's disaster management cell chief

RAJASTHAN SCHOOL BUILDING COLLAPSE

Centre orders safety audit of all schools

Structural integrity, along with fire safety. emergency exits, and electrical wiring, must be thoroughly assessed, a senior MoE official says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The Ministry of Education has issued a directive to all states and Union territories mandating them to conduct audits of safety mechanisms and facilities for children in schools, officials said

The Education Ministry has also called for schools to ensure the structural integrity of buildings. This comes a day after a portion of a government school in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district collapsed Friday, killing seven children and leaving 28 injured.

"States and UTs must take urgent steps to ensure students' safety and well-being. This includes mandatory safety audits of schools and child-related facilities as per national safety codes, training for staff and students in emergency preparedness, and the provision of psychosocial support



Rajasthan min accepts moral responsibility

Jaipur: Rajasthan School Education Minister Madan Dilawar Saturday said he accepts moral responsibility for the school building collapse in Jhalawar district and vowed to expedite and closely monitor the repair work on other unsafe buildings. The school in Jhalawar was not included in the list of dilapidated school buildings provided to the ministry for repair works, which led to oversight, he said. During his visit to Bharatpur and Deeg districts, the state minister also made key announcements aimed at strengthening infrastructure in government schools. "I have taken the moral responsibility. When some good work is done in the department, I take the responsibility; and when tragedy has occurred, it is also my responsibility," Dilawar told reporters. The minister said that while Rs 82 crore were allocated last year for school building repairs, the amount has been doubled to Rs 175 crore this year. He said that repair work on unsafe buildings will now be expedited and monitored closely.

through counselling and peer networks," a senior MoE official said.

"Structural integrity, along with fire safety, emergency exits, and electrical wiring, must be thoroughly assessed. It must

be ensured that staff and students are trained in emergency preparedness, including evacuation drills, first aid, and safety protocols," the official said.

The ministry recommended that collaborations with local

CASH DISCOVERY ROW

SC to hear Justice **Yashwant Varma's** plea July 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma's plea seeking invalidation of a report by an in-house inquiry panel which found him guilty of misconduct in the cash dis-

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and AG Masih is likely to hear the plea. Justice Varma has also sought quashing of the May 8 recommendation by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, urging Parliament to initiate impeachment proceedings against him.

In his petition, Justice Varma submitted that the inquiry "reversed the burden of proof", requiring him to investigate and disprove the charges levelled against him.

Alleging that the panel's findings were based on a preconceived narrative, Justice Varma said the inquiry timelines were driven solely by the urge to conclude proceedings swiftly, even at the expense of 'procedural fairness'

The petition contended that the inquiry panel drew adverse findings without affording him a full and fair

RAHUL DEMANDS PROBE

children in a government school building collapse in Rajasthan's Jhalawar, with Rahul Gandhi demanding a probe and strict punishment for the culprits In a post in Hindi on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the death of many innocent children due to the collapse of the roof of a government school in Jhalawar, Rajasthan, is a very painful and shameful incident. "The government, which cannot repair the roofs of the schools of our children, despite complaints, for the future of the country, shows big dreams of 'Viksit Bharat'," he said. According to a news report from the previous day, water in a school run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi was so much that the teachers themselves had to take the nursery children to a safe place, he said Today, the news has come that the building of a school in Jodhpur has become so dilapidated that the children are forced to study under a neem tree, he said. "The BJP, which boasts a lot about development, has ruined the country Bridge collapses, train accidents, cracks in newly built roads, statues of great personalities getting damaged after inauguration - all these have become common," he alleged. Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi also lashed out at the BJP over the incident. "It is extremely saddening and worrying that several innocent children died and many others were injured when the roof of a government school collapsed in Jhalawar, Rajasthan," he said on X. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the news of the death of several nnocent children and injuries to many due to the collapse of the roof of a school in Jhalawar, Rajasthan, is extremely saddening

authorities (NDMA, fire services, police, and medical agencies) must be strengthened to conduct periodic training sessions and mock drills.

In addition to physical safety, mental health and emotional well-being must be prioritised through counselling services, peer support systems, and community engagement initiatives.

'Any dangerous situation, near miss, or incident involving potential harm to children or youth must be reported within 24 hours to the designated state or UT authority. Strict accountability must be ensured in cases of delay, negligence, or failure to act," the official said. Parents, guardians, commu-

nity leaders, and local bodies should be encouraged to remain vigilant and report unsafe conditions in schools, public areas, or modes of transportation used by children and youth.

"The ministry has urged education departments, school boards, and affiliated authorities to act without delay in implementing the above measures," the official said.

Bengali speakers being targeted

Lok Sabha to discuss **India's Operation Sindoor from today**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: The Lok Sabha will take up Monday a special discussion on India's 'Operation Sindoor' that was carried out in response to the terror attack in Pahalgam, after a weeklong virtual washout of Parliament proceedings.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs S Jaishankar are likely to par ticipate in the 16-hour debate that is expected to stretch over three days as an aggressive Opposition would seek to corner the government over US Pres ident Donald Trump's claims that he mediated to avert a nu clear war between India and Pakistan and got them to agree on a ceasefire.

India has made it clear that the cessation of firing and mil itary activity targeted at Paki stan was paused after "direct contact" between the directors general of military operations (DGMOs) of both nations, at the instance of Islamabad.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat has listed a "special discussion on India's strong, successful and decisive 'Operation Sin door' in response to the terror attack in Pahalgam" in its agenda for Monday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to intervene in the discussion.

17 MPs honoured with Sansad Ratna Awards



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: Seventeen Members of Parliament -- including Supriya Sule (Nationalist Congress Party-Sha radchandra Pawar), Ravi Kishan (Bharatiya Janata Party), Nishikant Dubey (BJP) and Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-Uddhav Balasaheb Thackerav) -- have been selected for the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 for their exemplary performance in the Lok Sabha. The honours also include

four Special Jury Awards, recognising their consistent contributions to parliamentary democracy across three successive terms.

The Special Awards have been conferred on Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJP, Odisha), NK Premachandran (Revolutionary Socialist Party, Kerala). Supriva Sule (NCP-SP. Maharashtra), and Shrirang Appa Barne (Shiv Sena, Maharashtra) -- all of whom have maintained top performance since the 16th Lok Sabha.

Other award-winning MPs include Smita Uday Wagh (BJP), Naresh Mhaske (Shiv Sena), Varsha Gaikwad (Congress), Medha Kulkarni (BJP), Praveen Patel (BJP), Bidyut Baran Mahato (BJP), Dilip Saikia (BJP), among others.

In the committee category, the Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by Bhartruhari Mahtab, and the Standing Committee on Agriculture, chaired by Dr Charanjit Singh Channi (Congress), were recognised for the quality of their reports and contributions to legislative oversight.

New Delhi, July 26: Bengali-speaking migrants are being targeted and dubbed as Bangladeshis in certain states despite them having valid documents. Trinamool Congress MP and West Bengal Migrant Workers' Welfare Board Chairman Samirul Islam alleged.

In an interview with PTI, Islam said that while action should be taken against infiltrators, Bengali-speaking people are being detained or even pushed across the border despite the state government verifying their citizenship

"Bengali speakers are being targeted in BJP-ruled states in the name of document verification. This is not about religion, whoever is speaking in Bengali is a target," Islam told PTI.

"They show Aadhaar cards, voter ID cards. Some people have shown their passports and even land documents. Yet, they are being held in detention, and no information is being shared with the West Bengal government," he said.

Islam said that every time they get report about a case against a Bengali migrant, they conduct a thorough back ground check, with verification from the local police and the district magistrate concerned.

"Even after we get all the



verification done and share it (with authorities concerned), they still do not cooperate with us. This is an anti-Bengali attitude being adopted by the BJPruled states," Islam said.

He said there were cases where West Bengal residents with land documents were being pushed to Bangladesh. There was an incident June

13. when some Bengal residents were pushed to Bangladesh. When we informed the Border Security Force (BSF) that they were Indian citizens, the BSF conducted a flag march and brought back seven people. But June 26, six others, including a minor and a pregnant woman, were sent to Bangladesh. Those people have land deeds dating back to 1956," Islam said.

In June, seven migrant workers from West Bengal, who were apprehended on suspicion of being Bangladeshis and subsequently pushed through the Indo-Bangla border, were repatriated after their Indian citizenship was verified.

'A few days ago, some people

from Malda (West Bengal), who have land records, were deport ed to Bangladesh by Rajasthan Police. This is total injustice, he said.

The Rajya Sabha MP alleged that authorities in some states refuse to accept the evidences

provided to them. Stating that Bengalis, who had made significant contribution to the freedom struggle, are now being targeted, he requested the citizens to raise their voices for them.

"I request all the citizens, please support these poor people who are facing atrocities Stand with them and raise your voice for them," he said.

KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

India pays tributes to Kargil bravehearts

On July 26 that year, the Indian Army announced the successful culmination of 'Operation Vijay' d eclaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kargil in Ladakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 26: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday led the nation in paying tributes to military personnel who fought valiantly in harsh conditions to hand Pakistan a crushing defeat in the 1999 Kar-

gil conflict. On July 26 that year, the Indian Army announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after a nearly three-month-long battle on the icy heights of Kar-

gil in Ladakh. India observes the day as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' every year. Over 500 soldiers made supreme sacrifice in the conflict.

Murmu, who is also the Supreme Commander of the military, said, "This day symbolises the extraordinary valor, courage, and steadfast determination of our jawans. Modi said Kargil Vijay Diwas

In her message, President

reminds the country of unparalleled courage and valour of its soldiers who sacrificed their lives in defending the country's

Various events were organised across the country, including at the Kargil War Memorial in Drass, to mark the occasion.

In the event at Drass, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, highlighting the Army's

"unique victory" on the Kargil



peaks 26 years ago, said the military achieved a "decisive during Operation victory" Sindoor as well continuing that

tradition "It was the time when India made it clear that no evil intention will be allowed inside its borders, no harm will be allowed to the unity and integrity of India," he said, referring to

'Continuing this tradition, during Operation Sindoor too, Indian military with the same indomitable courage and firm resolve targeted Pakistan backed terrorist infrastructure and thwarted other aggressive actions of Pakistan with effective pretense and achieved a decisive

hief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi Saturday launched three projects, including a portal where people can pay 'e-shradhanjali' to martyrs, as part of the 26th Kargil Vijay Diwas

he others were a QR codebased audio gateway, on which people can listen to the stories of the 1999 Kargil war battles fought, and the Indus Viewpoint, which offers people a chance to go up to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Batalik sector

victory," he said.

"Operation Sindoor is our resolve, message and answer,'

The Army Chief further added, "With the unwavering trust of the countrymen and the political freedom granted by the government, the Indian armed forces gave a determined, precise and decisive response.

In his message, Chief of De-

fence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said the Kargil conflict remains a stark reminder of Pakistan's "treachery" and that India's adversaries will continue to test

But the nation will always come out victorious over the enemy's "deceit and aggression" as was evident in Operation Sindoor, he added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also paid glowing tributes to the military personnel who made supreme sacrifices in the conflict.

"On Kargil Vijay Diwas, I pay heartfelt tributes to our bravehearts who displayed extraordinary courage, grit and determination in defending our nation's honour in the toughest of terrains," Singh

Singh and the top military brass also paid tributes to the fallen heroes at the National War Memorial.

Vivekanand Kadam

nationa



Fiscal stress worsened in the first quarter of this financial year. The CAG has uploaded the monthly key indicators for this period, and the figures clearly indicate a precarious outlook for the financial stability of the state government

YS JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | OPPOSITION LEADER,

AHMEDABAD CRASH: AI PAYS INTERIM COMPENSATION

Private carrier Air India Saturday said it has paid the interim compensation to the families of 166 victims of the Ahmedabad plane crash last month. Besides, payment to the families of another 52 victims is in the process, it added. The plane crash, one of the worst air disasters in India in decades, involved a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner operating as Air India flight AI171





under the direct government. It's not independent

Election Commission has to function independently and fairly, but it

SIDDARAMAIAH | CHIEF MINISTER, KARNATAKA

If you increase the footpaths, you will definitely increase the carrying capacity. It will reduce many other issues and promote safety. This is something we are committed to MAHESHWAR RAO | BBMP CHIEF COMMISSIONE



including Uttai Pradesh, Now, after losing power, they are suddenly remembering these communities, which can only be described as crocodile tears given their perpetual deceitful intentions and policies

SHORT TAKES

4 Naxalites killed in **Bijapur encounter**

Bijapur: Four Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh Saturday, police said. A gunfight broke out in the evening in a forest in the south-western part of the district when a team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation following information about the presence of Naxal cadres, said Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P. So far, the bodies of four Maoists have been found at the encounter site and intermittent exchange of fire is still underway, he said. A huge quantity of weapons, including INSAS and SLR rifles, has also been recovered, the senior official said.

Four of family die by suicide

Sagar (MP): Four members of a family, including a 45-yearold man and his two teenage children, allegedly committed suicide Saturday by consuming sulphas tablets in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh, police said. The deceased were identified as Manohar Lodhi, his daughter Shivani (18) and son Ankit (16), and their grandmother Phulrani Lodhi (70), Khurai Urban police station in-charge Yogendra Singh Dangi told reporters. The incident occurred in Tehar village, about 12 km away from the Sagar district headquarters. Phulrani and Ankit died on the spot, while Shivani breathed her last during treatment at a hospital. Manohar Lodhi was referred to the Sagar district

UDF alleges errors

police officer said.

hospital but died en route, the

in voters' list Thiruvananthapuram: Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala assembly, VD Satheesan Saturday criticised the recently published voters' list for the upcoming local body polls, alleging widespread irregularities, and warned that the UDF would take "legal action" if the deadline to rectify the errors is not extended. The Congress-led UDF guestioned how a free and fair election could be conducted using a voters' list that, according to them, "is riddled with errors". Speaking to reporters. Satheesan said the UDF would initiate legal proceedings if the time to make corrections in the list, published July 23, is not extended by at least 30 days. "Many names of those who voted last time are missing. Names of people who died three or four years ago are still

on the list," he alleged.

Chirag targets Nitish govt over law, order

A woman in Bihar alleged that she was gang-raped inside an ambulance which drove her to a hospital after she fainted during a government recruitment test, police said Saturday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna/Gaya, July 26: Cracks appeared in the ruling NDA in Bihar Saturday as Union minister Chirag Paswan expressed "regret" over having to support the Nitish Kumar government, which he alleged has "surrendered" before criminals.

The remarks predictably drew a sharp reaction from Kumar's JD(U), which asked the LJP (Ram Vilas) president to "first ensure that his own party does not induct those with criminal antecedents"

The Hajipur MP, who had caused the JD(U)'s tally to crash in the 2020 Assembly polls by fielding candidates of Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), in all seats contested by the CM's party, set the pigeon among the cats when journalists approached him with queries about a gang-rape in Gayaji, the south Bihar town where he was to address a rally.

Paswan said, "The incident is deplorable. The accused may have been caught, but the fact remains that the administration is unable to prevent such crimes from occurring. It appears that the police have surrendered (natmastak) before criminals.'

"I regret (afsos hota hai) having to support a government which is unable to prevent

July 26: The SIT constituted

to probe the case related to the

alleged mass burial in Dhar-

masthala in Dakshina Kannada

they said. The probing team vis-

ited certain spots in connection

Deputy Inspector General

(DIG) of Police, MN Anucheth,

who is overseeing the probe,

arrived in Mangaluru and is

with the case, sources said.

(Karnataka),

I regret (afsos hota hai) having to support a government which is unable to prevent such crimes. We should think of the trauma the victims of such incidents have to undergo. The

such crimes. We should think of the trauma the victims of such incidents have to undergo. The situation has, indeed, become scary," said the young leader, pulling no punches.

situation has, indeed, become scary

CHIRAG PASWAN | UNION MINISTER

Paswan, whose party has, incidentally, no representative in the state's bicameral legislature, continued with his tirade at the rally, where he said "crime was unacceptable in the 1990s, when the state was under RJD's rule, and it should be unacceptable even now".

"I promise you that crime will be struck at the very roots and criminals will be behind bars after the Assembly polls, with a new government in place which will work on my motto of Bihar

first, Bihari first," he said. "I promise to give you a new Bihar. But I cannot do anything on my own. All my supporters must fan out across the state and work with an intensity that should give the impression that it is Chirag Paswan himself who is contesting elections everywhere.' he added



A customer purchases flowers from a stall at a waterlogged road during high tide in the Ganga river, at Kalighat area in Kolkata, West Bengal, Saturday

Modi: India looks forward to boosting ties with Maldives

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday left for home after wrapping up his two-day visit to the Maldives where he joined the celebrations marking the island nation's 60th Independence Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, July 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday graced the 60th Independence Day celebrations of the Maldives as the guest of honour, signalling a renewed momentum in bilateral ties after a spell of unease.

Modi was warmly welcomed by President Mohamed Muizzu and top ministers in his Cabinet at the iconic Republic Square, the venue of the ceremony at the heart of the Maldivian capital

Following the over 50-minute ceremony, the prime minister said India remains committed to supporting the aspirations of the Maldivian people



"India and the Maldives share a deep-rooted partnership built on mutual respect, shared values and a long history of cultural and economic exchanges," he said.

'Our relationship contin ues to grow, shaped by people-to-people ties and cooperation in various sectors. India remains committed to support ing the aspirations of the Maltogether for the betterment of our planet," he said on "X". The prime minister sat next

to Muizzu and watched the event that featured military parade and colourful cultural performances by children and traditional artistes. "It was an honour to attend

the 60th Independence Day celebrations of the Maldives. This momentous occasion showcased the rich cultural heritage and vibrant spirit of the Maldivian people," the prime minister said. "It also signified the coun-

try's journey of transformation over the years gone by. From its ancient maritime traditions to global leadership in critical areas like climate change, the Maldives has carved a unique place for itself on the world stage," he added.

"My best wishes to the great Maldivian people.'

Water sports girl Bilquis Mir wins legal battle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 26: Bilquis Mir, India's sole female judge for Kayaking and Canoeing at the 2024 Paris Olympics, has triumphed in her three-year lega battle for quashing an FIR filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau with the Jammu and Kashmir High Court delivering a scathing indictment of authorities saying it "seems that the people at the helm of affairs are leav ing no stone unturned in ha rassing such talented people'

The court said the attitude of ACB "in criminalising non-acquisition of a technical qualification" by Mir when she has brought laurels to the coun try all over the world "speaks volumes about the manner in which we are treating our sport ing heroes" and that the case appears to be "nothing but a witch-hunt launched against the petitioner by vested interests"



DHARMASTHALA SIT probe begins

DIG Anucheth to oversee investigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mangaluru

district commenced its investigation Saturday, officials said. scheduled to chair a high-level Senior officials arrived at the designated SIT office esmeeting with more than 20 officers tablished at the Intelligence and personnel assigned to the SIT, Bureau premises in Mallikatte, a senior police officer said.

Superintendent of Police Jitendra Dayama, has been designated as the investigating officer in this case, he said.

According to sources, officers from Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, and Uttara Kannada dis-

tricts have been deputed to the team. These include inspectors and sub-inspectors from Dharmasthala, Mulki, and Byndoor police stations. The SIT is expected to initiate internal briefings and possibly question the anonymous complainant who had initially raised allegations about the burials. It is likely that the interrogation will be conducted within the SIT office in Mallikatte itself, under the supervision of DIG Anucheth.

All necessary arrangements. including video recording equipment, have been made for the documentation of interrogations and proceedings, police

1-year-old bites cobra to death in Bihar village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bettiah, July 26: A one-vearold child in a remote Bihar village killed a cobra by biting it, local residents claimed.

The bizarre incident took place in West Champaran district where the boy was brought to the government medical college and hospital in Bettiah town by family members.

According to hospital superintendent Duvakant Mishra. "The boy. Govind Kumar, was referred here yesterday by the primary health centre close to his village where he was rushed by family members after he fainted soon after chewing on the live snake".

"Family members claim he caught hold of their snake at their house, in Mohachchhi Bankatwa village under Majhaulia block. He was spotted with the serpent by his grandmother and by the time she could intervene, the reptile was bitten by the child. The cobra lay dead on the floor while the child also fell unconscious",

said Mishra. He added that the child was being monitored by doctors and treatment for poisoning would start if the boy showed any

Mir still shudders recalling the moment, three years ago when she learned from news-

tered a case against her. "My dreams came crashing and I could not understand what was my fault," she recounted to

papers that the ACB had regis-

PTI, tears welling up.

The FIR, which the High Court quashed Friday, claimed a verification was conducted into allegations that Mir. ap pointed as a Physical Education Teacher, did not complete her Bachelor of Physical Education course during her probation.

The ACB had filed an FIR against Mir in 2023 charging her with taking gratification beyond legal remuneration for official work and involvement in a criminal conspiracy.

FROM COASTS How South India became country's latest narcotic hub

Once the drugs land in Kerala mostly through the waters, it is then transported to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 26: The challenges when it comes to tackling narcotics trade in India have increased with newer routes and fresh players entering the scene. Gone are the days when drug syndicates would use the tradition routes through Afghanistan and Pakistan to smuggle drugs into

While the focus of the enforcement agencies remained up North, the dynamics have changed dramatically today with South India becoming one of the biggest transit points for drug smugglers.

Today, if one looks at the operations by the drug lords, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are the biggest hubs as well as transit points in the country. Long

coastlines and the proximity to international borders have made both these states as favourite destination in recent times.

Kerala's 590-km coastline is suited for smugglers. Further the state has some of the busiest airports and ports, which also works in favour of the narcotic smugglers. For those smuggling drugs

from Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu is the ideal entry point. The investigations by the National Investigation Agency show that there are international cartels at play and they have been using Tamil Nadu as an entry as well as transit point.

The magnitude of the problem came to light when a former DMK functionary was arrested after it had been found that he was the mastermind of a ₹2,000 crore international drug



racket. Further investigations found that he was also the head of the India-Australia-New Zea-

land drug trafficking network. Kerala has also become the primary drug hub for cartels from both the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent. The Golden Crescent has cartels op-

erating from Afghanistan and Pakistan and the primary narcotic to be smuggled by them is opium. On the other hand, the Golden Triangle which has smugglers from Laos, Thailand and Myanmar deal in methamphetamine and marijuana.

Once the drugs land in Ker-

ala mostly through the waters, it is then transported to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur.

The smugglers in Kerala have a route through most of its neighbouring states. They use the border with Andhra Pradesh to smuggle cannabis and synthetic drugs. The Karnataka border is used to push cocaine and heroin.

What started off on a smaller note has turned into a major international racket in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There are allegations of corruption and laxity, which has helped this trade thrive.

Another reason why narcotics trade became big in the state is owing to the large number of tourists, especially from international destinations. The international cartels too have invested heavily in the state after understanding its potential.

The international cartels brought in sophistication with them and the kind of tactics that they have used has made it harder for the agencies to keep track. The network of these international cartels involves a large number of Nigerians They are the ones who stay in touch with the local peddlers and ensure that it is delivered to them.

In recent times, there has been a spike in the quantity of drugs that have been coming in from Iran, Dubai and the Middle East. Kerala has a large population that works in the Middle East and the agencies believe that some of them may be used as mules.

international



I say two things to **Europe. Stop the** windmills. You're ruining your countries. I really mean it, it's so sad. You fly over and you see these windmills all over the place, ruining your beautiful fields and valleys and killing your birds

NASA'S 20% OF WORKFORCE TO QUIT

About 20% of the employees at the **US National Aeronautics and Space** Administration (NASA) are set to depart the space agency, a spokesperson said. Around 3,870 individuals are expected to depart, but that number may change in the coming days and weeks, the spokesperson said



to airdrop aid into Gaza has come far too late - but we

we can to get aid in via this route KEIR STARMER | UK PRIME MINISTER

Together with our US allies. we are now peace for Israel and our region

The US will now consider alternative options to bring

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

the hostages home and try to create a more stable

STEVE WITKOFF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S SPECIAL ENVOY

SHORT **TAKES**

Glacial flood

alert in Pak Peshawar: Pakistan Saturday warned of glacial flooding in the northwest with more rain forecast for the area in the coming week. Downpours are heavier in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province than the same period last year, prompting weather advisories and alerts for flooding from glacial lake outbursts. said Anwar Shahzad, a spokesperson for the local disaster management authority. A letter from the authority sent out mid-July said "persistent high temperatures may accelerate snow and glacier melt and subsequent weather events' in vulnerable parts of the region. Dr Abdul Samad, from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Department, said rescue teams evacuated more than 500 holidaymakers from Naran after a cloudburst overnight Friday caused a road closure. Authorities deployed heavy machinery to remove debris and restore access. In the neighbouring Gilgit-Baltistan region, the government said it had distributed hundreds of tents, thousands of food packets, and medicine to flood-affected communities. Spokesperson Faizullah Firag said Saturday there was "severe destruction" in some areas and damage to houses, infrastructure, crops, and businesses

18 dead in mishap on Andes highway

Lima: A bus travelling from Lima to Peru's Amazon region overturned on a highway in the Andes Mountains, leaving at least 18 people dead and 48 injured, authorities said Friday. The doubledecker bus belonging to the company "Expreso Molina Líder Internacional" went off the road and fell down a slope in the district of Palca Junín region, Junin's health director Clifor Curipaco told reporters. Authorities are still investigating the cause of the accident. Videos broadcast on local television showed the bus split in two, while firefighters and police tried to rescue the injured. It was not the first fatal bus accident in 2025, another bus fell into a river on Jan. 3, leaving six people dead and 32 injured. A study by the Attorney General's Office found that driver recklessness and excessive speed are the main causes of accidents in Peru. Road transportation is poorly monitored by authorities in Peru, and emergency assistance is so slow and disorganized. In 2024, there were approximately 3,173 deaths as a result of traffic accidents in the South American country, according to official data from the

Death Information System.

Thailand, Cambodia trade fresh attacks

Surin, July 26: Thailand and Cambodia traded accusations of fresh attacks Saturday as deadly border clashes entered a third day and international pressure mounted for a ceasefire. The fighting has killed at least 33 people and displaced more than 168,000.

Artillery and small arms fire were reported near several border villages, expanding the area of the fighting that flared Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Cambodian and Thai officials blamed each other for starting the clashes.

with Cambodia.

Cambodian authorities reported 12 new deaths on Saturday, bringing its toll to 13, while the Thai military said a soldier was killed, raising the number of dead to 20, mostly civilians.

Minister Neth Pheaktra said Saturday that the clashes have forced 10,865 Cambodian families, or 37,635 people, in three border provinces to evacuate to safe locations. Thai officials said more than 131,000 people have fled their border villages.

between Thailand and Cambodia has been disputed for decades, but past confrontations have been limited and brief. The latest tensions flared in May when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a confrontation that created a diplomatic rift and roiled Thailand's domestic politics.

On Saturday, President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that he has talked with the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he



Displaced Cambodians receive water at the Battkhao Resettlement Camp Cambodia, Saturday

would not conclude a trade agreement with either country if the cross-border hostilities continued. He later said both sides have agreed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire. Officials from the two coun-

tries did not immediately confirm any plan to meet. Trump's comments followed

increasing pressure on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to defuse the tensions between its two members.

During an emergency meeting Friday, members of the UN Security Council called for a de-escalation and urged ASEAN to mediate a peaceful solution. The council didn't issue a resolution on the crisis, but Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa said Saturday that the group's 15 members called for restraint. an end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution.

The leader of Malaysia, ASE-AN's current chair, has said Thailand and Cambodia are open to a ceasefire proposal. Malaysian media said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has tasked the country's foreign minister with mediating peace talks, but no concrete plans have been announced.

Maris said earlier Saturday that his country has agreed in principle to ASEAN's ceasefire proposal, but insisted Cambodia must first cease hostilities. He said Thailand continues to engage with Malaysia on the

"Thailand reaffirms its commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully and in accordance with international law," he said, urging Cambodia to "return to the negotiating table with sincerity and in good faith."

Cambodia's Defence Minis-

try condemned what it called an expanded Thai offensive early Saturday after five heavy artillery shells were fired into Pursat province. It said the attack was an "unprovoked and premeditated act of aggression.

Ministry spokesperson Lt Gen Maly Socheata said tensions flared in the coastal province of Koh Kong and expressed concern about the possibility of confrontations at sea.

Maly Socheata said seven Cambodian civilians and five soldiers have been killed in two days of fighting. Another man was reportedly killed when a pagoda he was hiding under was hit by Thai rockets

The Thai army has denied targeting Cambodian civilians and accuses Phnom Penh of using "human shields" by positioning their weapons near residential areas.

Gaza: Israeli gunshots, strikes kill at least 25

Deir Al-Balah, July 26: Israeli airstrikes and gunshots overnight killed at least 25 people, according to Palestinian health officials and the ambulance service Saturday, as ceasefire talks appear to have stalled and Gaza faces famine. The majority of victims were

killed by gunfire as they waited for aid trucks close to the Zikim crossing with Israel, said staff at Shifa hospital, where the bodies were brought.

Israel's army didn't respond to a request for comments about the latest shootings.

Those killed in strikes include four people in an apartment building in Gaza City, among others, hospital staff and the ambulance service said.

The strikes come as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have hit a standstill after the US and Israel recalled their negotiating teams on Thursday, throwing the future of the talks into further uncertainty. Israeli Prime Minister Benja-

min Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering "alternative options" to ceasefire talks with Hamas, His comments came as a Hamas official said negotiations were expected to resume next week and portrayed the recall of the Israeli and American delegations as a pressure tactic. Egypt and Qatar, which are

mediating the talks alongside the United States, said the pause was only temporary and that talks would resume, though they did not say when.

For desperate Palestinians, a ceasefire can't come soon enough. The United Nations and experts say that Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of famine, with reports of increasing numbers of people dying from

While Israel's army says it's

allowing aid into the enclave with no limit on the number of trucks that can enter, the UN says it is hampered by Israeli military restrictions on its movements and incidents of criminal looting. The Zikim crossing shootings come days after at least 80 Palestinians were killed trying to reach aid entering through the same crossing. Israel's military said at the time its soldiers shot at a gathering of thousands of Palestinians who posed a threat, and that it was aware of some casualties.

During the shootings Fri day night, Sherif Abu Aisha said people started running when they saw a light that they thought was from the aid trucks, but as they got close. they realised it was from Israel's tanks. That's when the army started firing on people, he told The Associated Press. He said his uncle, a father of eight, was among those killed.

"We went because there is no food ... and nothing was distributed," he said.

Israel is facing increased international pressure to alleviate the catastrophic humani tarian crisis in Gaza. More than two dozen Western-aligned countries and over 100 charity and human rights groups have called for an end to the war, harshly criticising Israel's blockade and a new aid delivery model it has rolled out.

Taiwan voters reject bid to oust China-friendly lawmakers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, July 26: Taiwanese voters rejected a bid to oust about one-fifth of their lawmakers, all from the opposition Nationalist Party, in a recall election Saturday, dampening hopes for the ruling party to flip the balance of power in the selfruled island's legislature.

The independence-leaning ruling Democratic Progressive Party won last year's presidential election, but the China-friendly Nationalists, also known as the KMT, and the smaller Taiwan People's Party have enough seats to form a majority bloc.

Official preliminary results showed that the recall efforts failed to remove any of the two dozen KMT lawmakers. The scale of the recall elections is unprecedented, with another seven KMT lawmakers facing



a similar vote on August 23.

The KMT currently holds 52 seats, while the ruling DPP holds 51 seats. For the DPP to secure a legislative majority, at least six KMT lawmakers would need to be ousted, and the ruling party would need to win the by-elections, which must be held within three months of the announcement of results.

For the recall to pass, more than a quarter of eligible voters in the electoral district must vote in favour of it, and the total number of supporters must exceed those voting against.

Paris, July 26: President Emmanuel Macron's announcement that France would become the first Western member. of the United Nations Security Council to recognise a Palestinian state in September has caused diplomatic ructions from the Middle East through Europe to Washington.

But it did not come out of the blue. When Macron visited the Egyptian town of Al-Arish on the border with Gaza in April. he was struck by the mounting humanitarian crisis and made clear on his return home that Paris would soon opt for recognition.

Working with Saudi Arabia, Macron came up with a plan to have France plus G7 allies Britain and Canada recognise Palestinian statehood, while pushing Arab states to adopt a softer stance towards Israel through a



Three diplomats said London did not want to face the wrath of the United States, and Ottawa took a similar stance, leaving Macron to go it alone.

"It became increasingly apparent that we could not wait to get partners on board," said a French diplomat, adding France will work to get more states on board ahead of conin September.

Domestically Macron was under rising pressure to do something amid widespread anger at the harrowing images coming out of Gaza. Although with both Europe's biggest Muslim and Jewish communities and a polarised political landscape, there was no obvious course of action that would satisfy all sides.

Israel and its staunch supporter the United States have blasted France's move, brand ing it a reward for the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which ran Gaza and whose attack on Israel on October 7. 2023 triggered the current war.

Macron had discussed the matter extensively with both Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in advance.

Trump said on Friday that France's decision didn't "carry

any weight" but added Macron was "a good guy"

French officials previously considered an announcement at a conference scheduled for June at the United Nations co-hosted by France and Saudi Arabia, to sketch out a roadmap to a viable Pales tinian state while also ensuring Israel's security. But the conference was postponed

amid intense U.S. diplomatic

pressure and after Israeli air

strikes on Iran.

Trump's distraction methods fall flat against Epstein uproar

Unlike political crises that dogged Trump's first term, the people propelling the push for more transparency on Epstein have largely been his supporters, not his political foes

REUTERS

Washington, July 26: President Donald Trump's super powers as a public figure have long included the ability to redirect, evade and deny.

But the Republican's wellworn methods of changing the subject when a tough topic stings politically are not working as his White House fends off persistent unrest from his usually loyal base about convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his associates.

Trump has scolded reporters, claimed ignorance and offered distractions in an effort to quash questions about Epstein and the suspicions still swirling around the disgraced financier's case years after his 2019 death in prison. The demand for answers has only grown.

"For a president and an administration that's very good at controlling a narrative, this is one that's been harder," said Republican strategist Erin Maguire, a former Trump campaign spokeswoman.

Unlike political crises that dogged Trump's first term, including two impeachments and a probe into alleged campaign collusion with Russia, the people propelling the push for more transparency on Epstein have largely been his supporters, not his political foes.

Trump has fed his base with conspiracy theories for years, including the false "birther" claim that former President Barack Obama was not born in the United States. Trump's advisers fanned conspiracies about Epstein, too, only to de-



golf at the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland,

clare them moot upon entering office. That has not gone over well with the president's right-leaning base, which has long believed the government was covering up Epstein's ties

to the rich and powerful. 'Donald Trump's been running a Ponzi scheme based on propaganda for the better part of a decade and it's finally catching up to him," said Geoff Duncan, a Republican former lieutenant governor of Georgia and Trump critic. "The far right element is just dug in. They're hell bent on getting this

information out." The White House has dismissed reporting about Trump's ties to Epstein as "fake news," though it has acknowledged his name appears in documents related to the Epstein case. Trump and Epstein were friends for years before falling out.

"The only people who can't seem to shake this story from their one-track minds are the media and Democrats," said White House spokesman Harrison Fields.

Before leaving for a trip to Scotland Friday, the president again urged people to turn their attention elsewhere.

"People should really focus on how well the country is doing," Trump told reporters, lamenting that scrutiny was not being given to others in Epstein's orbit. "They don't talk about them, they talk about me. I have nothing to do with the guy."

Trump in recent weeks has employed a typical diversion playbook.

He chastised a reporter for asking about Epstein in the White House Cabinet Room. He claimed in the Oval Office that he was not paying close attention to the issue. And, with help from Tulsi Gabbard, his director of national intelligence, he explosively accused Obama of treason for how he treated intelligence in 2016 about Russian interference in the US election.

On Thursday Trump took his distraction tour to the Federal Reserve, where he tussled with Chair Jerome Powell about construction costs and pressed for lower interest rates.

That, said Republican strategist Brad Todd, was more effec tive than focusing on Obama in 2016, which voters had already litigated by putting Trump back

Democrats have seized on Trump's efforts to move on, sensing a political weakness for the president and divisions in the Republican Party that they can exploit while their own political stock is low in the wake of last year's drubbing at the polls.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll this month showed most Americans think Trump's administration is hiding information about Ep stein, creating an opportunity for Democrats to press.

Trump's supporters and ma ny Democrats are eager to see a release of government files related to Epstein and his case which the Justice Department initially promised to deliver.



Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings

Cambodia's Information

The 800-kilometer frontier

Why Macron went alone on Palestine

business



MSMEs are the backbone of India's economic progress and employment generation. With our Mega Outreach Programme, we aim to ensure that every deserving entrepreneur, trader, and self-employed individual gets timely access to credit, tailored solutions, and expert handholding

SHOT IN THE ARM FOR STARTUPS

The government said that a net commitment of ₹9,994 crore has been made to 141 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) supported under the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) scheme (till June 30), as it aims to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation



sectors, including

making fast progress

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND

imposition of export restric tions on key rare resulted in supply chain bottlenecks



COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, RAIYA SARHA



be built on the health, productivity, and well-being of its people SATISH KANNAN I CO-FOUNDER & CEO.

Q1 **RESULTS**

IDFC First Bank net profit drops 32%

New Delhi: Private sector IDFC First Bank Saturday reported a 32 per cent slump in net profit to ₹463 crore during the first quarter of the current financial year, impacted by slippages in the micro-finance book. The Mumbai-based lender had earned a net profit of ₹681 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. The total income rose to ₹11,869 crore during the June quarter of 2025-26 from ₹10,408 crore in the same quarter of FY25, IDFC First Bank said in a regulatory filing. Interest earned by the bank improved to ₹9,642 crore compared to ₹8.789 crore in the June quarter FY25. The bank's asset quality showed deterioration as gross nonperforming assets (NPAs) declined to 1.97 per cent of gross advances at the end of the June quarter from 1.90 per cent a year ago.

SAIL net profit sees multi-fold jump

New Delhi: SAIL, country's largest steel maker, Friday reported a multi-fold rise in consolidated net profit at ₹744.58 crore in the quarter ended June 2025 on the back of improved operational efficiency, better cash flow and strong growth in sales volume. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹81.78 crore in the year-ago period, Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a filing to BSE. The consolidated income of the company during April-June period rose to ₹26,083.90 crore compared to ₹24,174.80 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal. Total expenses during the quarter rose to ₹25,189.19 crore from ₹23,871.60 crore in the yearago period, the filing said.

Kotak Mahindra's profit falls 39% YoY

Mumbai: Kotak Mahindra Bank's net profit for the first quarter of the current financial year (Q1 FY26) stood at ₹4,472.18 crore, down over 39 per cent year-on-year, the private sector lender said in an exchange filing Saturday. The bank had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹7,448.16 crore in the corresponding quarter a year earlier (Q1 FY25). The lender's profit also declined by over 9 per cent quarteron-quarter from ₹4,932.76 crore in the January-March period (Q4 FY25). Meanwhile, the 52-week high and low of the stock were ₹2,301.90 and ₹1,679.05, respectively.

UK on the hook: **Seafood goes big**

India's seafood exports set to compete with Vietnam, Singapore after UK trade deal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 26: With India's vast production capacity, skilled manpower and improved traceability systems, the India-UK trade pact enables domestic exporters to seize a larger share of the UK market and diversify beyond traditional partners like the US and China, the government said Saturday.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), signed in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his UK counterpart Keir Starmer, marks a turning point for India's fisheries sector not just by offering duty-free access to a premium market but also by uplifting coastal livelihoods enhancing industry revenues, and strengthening India's reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality, sustainable seafood

"For fisherfolk, processors, and exporters alike, this is a unique opportunity to step onto a larger global stage. This agreement contributes meaningfully to India's broader goal of becoming a global leader in sustainable marine trade," said the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying in a statement.

Indian seafood now competes on par with countries like Vietnam and Singapore, which already benefit from FTAs with the UK (UK-VFTA) and UK-Singapore Free Trade

the industry estimates a 70% surge in marine exports to the UK in the coming years

provides Indian exporters with an opportunity to reduce their dependence on traditional markets, such as the US and China by diversifying into the UK

seafood exports in 2024-25 reached ₹60.523cr. amounting to 1.78MT. Marine exports to the UK were valued at ₹879cr However, India's share in the UK's \$5.4bn seafood import market is just

Agreement (UK-SFTA), respectively.

This levels the playing field and removes tariff disadvantages that Indian exporters previously faced, especially for high-value products like shrimp and value-added goods, said the ministry.

CETA offers zero-duty access on 99 per cent of tariff lines and opens up key services sectors.

Notably, for the marine sector, the agreement removes import tariffs on a wide range of seafood products, enhancing Indian exporters' competitiveness in the UK market. This is expected to particularly benefit exports of shrimp, frozen fish, and value-added marine products, boosting India's presence in one of its major seafood destinations alongside labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather, and gems and jewellery.

India's total seafood exports in 2024-25 reached \$7.38 billion (₹60,523 crore), amounting to 1.78 million metric tonnes. Frozen shrimp remained the top export, accounting for 66 per cent of earnings with \$4.88 billion. Marine exports to the UK specifically were valued at \$104 million (₹879 crore), with frozen shrimp alone contributing \$80 million (77 per cent).

NSDL IPO: SBI, NSE, others to receive whopping returns INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 26: The State Stock Exchange (NSE), Union Bank of India, and other stake holders will earn whopping re turns from their investments in the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) through its upcoming IPO. In the NSDL's IPO, SBI may

offload 4 million shares of the depository at ₹800 per share which were acquired at a nominal price of ₹2 per share. SBI can receive ₹800 apiece if the share's cut-off price falls at the upper price band. SBI is poised to receive ₹320 crore in proceeds against an original investment of just ₹80 lakh, delivering a staggering return of 39,900 per cent.

The NSE had acquired a 24 per cent stake in NSDL at an average cost of just ₹12.28 per share, and will sell 1.8 crore shares to earn a profit of ₹1,418 crore or a staggering 6,415 per cent return. A latecomer to the party, Union Bank of India, which has 5 lakh shares acquired at ₹5.20, will pocket ₹40 crore against an investment of ₹26 lakh, still delivering returns of over 15,000 per cent.

NSDL announced its initial public offering (IPO) price band at a steep discount of 22 per cent from its prevailing unlisted market valuation. The price band looks disheartening to the investors who hold the stock now at its unlisted market price of ₹1,025 per share. Institutional investors who

were early to the party stand to gain significantly, whereas retail investors who joined the bandwagon later will face losses.

IDBI Bank, which holds a 26 per cent stake in NSDL, had acquired its holding at an average cost of ₹2 per share, trans lating into a staggering return of over 39,000 per cent; its stake is now valued at ₹4,176 crore. up from an initial investment of ₹10.44 crore.

FADA flags pvt banks for stalling rate relief



The automotive dealers' body seeks RBI intervention against private banks delaying rate cut transmission to auto buyers

New Delhi, July 26: The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations has sought the Reserve Bank of India's intervention against alleged delays by private banks in transmission of the interest rate cuts to automobile buvers. In a letter to RBI Governor

Sanjay Malhotra, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) also called for a review of private banks' repo-rate pass-through lags in the auto-loan portfolio and issue corrective directives to ensure uniform 100 per cent transmission to auto borrowers. "Under your leadership, the

RBI has delivered the fastest series of policy-rate reductions in its history, a clear positive signal for the economy. Yet, this benefit is not fully visible in the auto-retail sector. While public-sector banks pass on repo-rate cuts to auto borrowers immediately, many private banks delay transmission on the pretext of internal cost-offunds assessments," FADA Vice President Sai Giridhar said.

In order to ensure that private banks also transmit the benefit of the rate cuts, FADA urged the RBI to "monitor and enforce a strict, time-bound transmission of policy-rate changes across all banking institutions".

It also suggested making periodic, public disclosure of banks' cost-of-funds calcula tions to enhance transparency FADA also requested the cen-

tral bank to "conduct a focused review of private banks' repo-rate pass-through lags in the auto-loan portfolio, and issue corrective directives to ensure uniform, 100 per cent transmission to auto borrowers".

The automotive dealers body urged the RBI to issue clear guidelines to all banks to ensure uniform application of MSME lending benefits to eligible auto-retail businesses alleging that in several instanc es, banks have not extended preferential interest rates to MSME-registered dealerships, although auto workshops, ser vice centres and smaller deal erships are eligible for MSME registration under the Udyam

The guidelines must also cov er mandatory extension of concessional lending rates, priority sector classification and improved access to MSME-linked support schemes and grievance-redressal mechanisms, FADA said in the letter.

Markets see

Marginal drop

The Indian equity market ended

basis, showing decline for the

fourth consecutive week, due

to subdued O1 earnings and

cautious global sentiment.

analysts said Saturday. The

RBI extends tenure of oversight panel of IndusInd Bank by month



New Delhi, July 26: The RBI has extended the tenure of the oversight committee of IndusInd Bank by one month till August 28 as the lender looks to find new MD and CEO following resignation of incumbent Sumant Kathpalia.

The panel was formed after Kathpalia resigned April 29 taking moral responsibility of accounting lapses in the derivatives portfolio, having financial implication of ₹1.960 crore to the bank. The tenure of the committee was till July 28, 2025.

"We now wish to inform that the RBI vide its letter dated July 25, 2025, has granted its approval for extension of tenure of the Committee of Executives for a further period of one

month, with effect from July 29, 2025 upto August 28, 2025 or until the new MD&CEO is appointed and assumes charge. whichever is earlier "IndusInd Bank said in a regulatory filing

The bank with approval from the RBI had constituted the committee comprising Soumitra Sen (Head - Consumer Banking) and Anil Rao (Chief Administrative Officer) as its members, to oversee the operations of the bank till new MD & CEO assumes charge or for a period of three months from April 29, 2025

In March, the private sector lender reported that the accounting lapses in the derivative portfolio was estimated to have an adverse impact of 2.35 per cent of the bank's net worth as of December 2024.

₹ stays range-bound amid \$ strength; gold loses INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 26: Despite global gold prices easing, Indian bullion prices remained flat this week while the rupee slightly declined compared to the US dollar due to outflows of foreign funds

The price of 24-carat gold (10 gram) started the week at ₹98,896 Monday, rose to ₹1,00,533 Wednesday, and ended the week at ₹98,880, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).

"Gold traded weak by another \$25 at \$3345, down 0.70 per cent, as expectations of tariff deals between the US and trade partners like Japan and the EU reduced safe-haven appeal. These developments may keep gold volatile, especially at elevated levels," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst -Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

The focus now shifts to the upcoming Fed rate decision next week, which will be cru-



cial for future price direction. In the domestic market, rupee depreciation cushioned the fall, limiting the MCX gold decline to 0.50 per cent. With global cues softening, the shortterm range for gold has shifted lower to ₹97,000 to ₹99,000, the analyst added.

Meanwhile, silver touched a new all-time high this week of over ₹1.15 lakh per kg. Silver has increased by more than 34

rupee traded weak, slipping below 86.50 with a 0.13 per cent per cent decline against the dollar, since as the USD traded higher near 97.68. Rising dollar strength and profit booking in capital Januarv 1 this markets weighed on year, when

IATEEN TRIVEDI | VP RESEARCH ANALYST was (COMMODITY AND CURRENCY), priced at LKP SECURITIES ₹86.055 per kg. Also, in the futures market, gold

and silver continued their up-

Niftv50 breached the key level of 24.900, and reached 24.837 when the market closed Friday, FIIs consistently remained net sellers for last five sessions, reflecting broad-based selling pressure. Mid-cap and small-cap indices saw steeper corrections. underperforming the benchmark.

ward trend "Market focus now shifts to next week's US Federal Reserve interest rate decision, where mixed views are expect ed amid US government pressure for a rate cut," said

ITR filing: New tax slabs, rules to keep in mind before submitting returns

INCOME

TAX

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 26: Taxpayers filing tax returns for FY25 should be aware of the new income tax slabs and capital gains tax structure brought in by the Union Budget 2024, according to experts.

As per new tax slabs, individuals with taxable income up to ₹12 lakh get full tax rebate under the new regime. Your entire income will be taxed slab wise, if your taxable income exceeds ₹12 lakh.

The slabs are zero tax for the initial ₹4 lakh, 5 per cent tax on ₹4 lakh and ₹8 lakh, 10 per cent on ₹8 lakh to ₹12 lakh, and 15 per cent on ₹12 lakh to ₹16 lakh,

and so forth. Following this revision, the

old tax regime will only be advantageous to taxpayers who are eligible to claim ₹2 lakh deduction for home loan interest under Section 24(b) or a large house rent allowance (HRA). Most other deductions are unlikely to justify remaining with the old regime, said experts.

Long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax on all financial and non-financial assets has been revised to 12.5 per cent (up from 10 per cent for equities). Short-term capital gains (STCG) tax on some assets, like equities, is now 20 per cent (up from 15 per cent). All listed financial assets held for more than a year would be classified now as long-term assets.

Further, the exemption limit for computing LTCG tax on stocks

and equity mutual funds was increased from ₹1 lakh to ₹1.25 lakh.

The LTCG tax rate on the sale of real estate assets was cut from 12.5 per cent to 20 per cent, but the indexation benefit for properties purchased after April 1, 2001, was removed.

From FY 2024-25, even pri-

vate sector employees who opt for the new tax regime and sign up for the corporate National Pension Scheme (NPS) stand to gain because employers' contribution to employees' basic salaries of up to 14 percent will be eligible for deduction. Earlier, this limit was only 10 per cent.

Tax compliance made easier for content creators, influencers

This tax season marks a significant change in the filing of returns for social media content creators and influencers, with their income now being classified under a specific category. The Income Tax Department has introduced a (AY 2025-26) for influencers who earn from promotions, product endorsements or digital content creation. This code can be accessed under the 'profession' category in both ITR-3 and ITR-4 (Sugam). This simplifies compliance for online coaches and bloggers. Now influencers must choose betwee ITR-3 or ITR-4 (Sugam), depending on their income level and whether they opt for presumptive taxation— a simplified scheme that allows professionals to declare a fixed percentage of their receipts as income and avoid maintaining detailed books. If an influencer is opting for presumptive taxation under Section 44ADA, he should use ITR-4. This applies to professionals with gross receipts up to ₹50 lakh and those with ₹75 lakh if their cash receipts are unde 5 per cent of gross receipts, according to experts. For those earning via busis income, Section 44AD allows a presumptive rate of 8 per cent (6 per cent for digital payments) for income up to ₹2 crore or ₹3 crore if cash receipts are under 5 per cent, they added. ITR-3 form is for individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) with business or profession income, including remuneration from partnership firm. Income from salary, residential property, capital gains, and other sources can be declared under ITR-3. However, only individuals and HUFs with business or professional income are eligible.

Gill, Rahul stabilise India

Skipper Shubman Gill and KL Rahul stitched a 174-run partnership to raise India's hopes of saving the fourth Test against England at Old Trafford



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manchester, July 26: Captain Shubman Gill and the ever-dependable K L Rahul gave India a glimmer of hope with resilient half-centuries after a well crafted hundred from Ben Stokes extended England's supremacy in the fourth Test here Saturday.

Having lost Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan for no run in the second innings, Gill (78 batting off 167 balls) and Rahul (87 batting off 210 balls) showed plenty of patience in their 174-run stand to substantially cut England's massive 311-run lead. At stumps on day four, India stood at 174 for two after the Indian captain found county games here produc- Zak Crawley 84; Ravindra

trailing the hosts by 137 runs. England were all out for

669 in the morning session following Stokes' special 141 off 198 balls that came after a five wicket haul Friday.

The highly skilled duo of Gill and Rahul could have taken more risk against left-arm spinner Liam Dawson but both did play some sizzling drives against the fast bowlers.

England tried plenty of back cuts were regal and things in the final session was on par with Gordon Greenidge and Virender including peppering the Sehwag, two of the best well set pair with short exponents of shots square balls but Rahul and Gill were unfazed. off the track.

England have purposefully targeted Gill's pads sensing a weakness but two wicketless sessions, still a way to survive a lethal ing a result. India will have Jadeja 4/143).

that piece of information at the back of their mind. In the afternoon session,

Gill overcame initial jitters for a hard fought fifty leading India's show of resistance in a wicketless afternoon session to leave the visitors at 86 for two.

England fast bowlers, especially Jofra Archer, hurled inswingers into Gill's pads but the Indian captain was able to survive those testing moments before

playing sumptuous strokes. Gill also had the luck on his side as he was dropped by Dawson off Brydon Carse at backward point on 46.

In the morning session, India made a disastrous start to their second innings after Stokes struck a stroke-filled hundred following his five-wicket haul to help England take a massive 311-run lead.

With England posting a mammoth 669 in the morning session, India came out roughly 20 minutes before lunch.

It was hara-kiri in the middle as Jaiswal and Sudwith a water-tight defence. harsan departed in successive balls in the first over of India's innings. ment in the air and off the

With England collecting boundaries for fun, it also marked the first time since 2014 that India conceded 600 runs in an innings

India 1st innings: 358 all out & 174/2 in 63 overs (Gill batting 78, KL Rahul batting 87; Woakes 2/48) vs The nature of the surface England: 669 all out in 157.1 has been slow and dry this overs (Joe Root 150, Ben season with none of the four Stokes 141, Ben Duckett 94,

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

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



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

his day marks the death anniversary of the former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who passed away in 2015 while delivering a lecture at which institute?

ANSWER TO SATURDAY'S QUESTION

Odisha High Court

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



SURENDRA PRADHAN HIMANSU SEKHAR BEHERA

Others who answered correctly are

Akash Kumar Behura, Suvendra Kumar Mahapatra, Prayag Das, Anjubala Mohanty, Pinky Nayak, Vibhu Anand Dash, Abinash Das, DebasishaTripathy, Soumendu Sarkar, Barun Kumar Behera, Alok Ranjan Sahoo, Sourav Nayak, Sidhartha Kumar Das, Subash Chandra Sahoo, Ayush Kumar Nayak

SHORT **TAKES**

Golfers make history

Sunningdale: The Indian golfing trio of Arjun Atwal, Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa made history with all three making the cut at the ISPS Handa Senior Open, the final Major for the Seniors (over 50 vears) here. This is the first time that three Indians have made the cut in a Major. Atwal, who also played the US Senior Open earlier this year where he made the cut, had rounds of 67-72 at the Par-70 course and is T-36 after being in the Top-10 at one stage. Jeev. with 71-69. was T-49, while Randhawa. who holed a tense 15-footer on rounds of 70-71. The cut fell at

Messi upset with MLS

New Delhi: Inter Miami coowner Jorge Mas has revealed Lionel Messi is 'very upset' after being given a one-game ban for missing out on the Major league Soccer (MLS) All-Star game, a punishment which he believes is 'draconian.' Messi and Jordi Alba will miss the game against MLS **Eastern Conference leaders** FC Cincinnati Sunday (IST) as MLS rules state that any player who does not participate in the All-Star Game without prior approval from the league is ineligible to compete in his club's next match. "Lionel Messi is very upset, like we all are in the club, with the fact that they won't be able to play tomorrow night. But I think what we have to do as a club is to get together as one, have an attitude that is us against the world," Mas said at a news

Satwik-Chirag lose to nemesis Aaron-Soh

spell from Archer.

Rahul, on the other hand,

England pacers seemed to

has looked chanceless in the

series, playing the ball late

be getting plenty of move-

pitch but batting became

easier in the final session

with sun emerging from the clouds at Old Trafford.

Rahul's square cuts and

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Changzhou, July 26: India's top doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the China Open Super 1000 badminton tournament after suffering a straightgame defeat to Malaysian second seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in the semifinals Saturday The Asian Games cham-

pions once again found themselves on the losing lists Aaron and Soh. side against the world No hurdle in their path.



down 13-21, 17-21 to 2022 World champions and twotime Olympic bronze medal-

2 Malaysian duo, who have between the two pairs, with reached the semifinals of the proven to be a persistent—the Malaysians maintaining—India Open, Singapore Open,—ing in the second and final— Satwik and Chirag went record. Notably, Aaron and this year.

Soh had also ousted the Indian pair in the quarterfinals of the Tokyo Olympics.

Despite the setback, Satwik and Chirag can take heart from another strong campaign at the Super 1000 level. The Indian pair had booked their place in the semifinals with a hardfought win over another Malaysian duo, Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi, in the quarters Friday.

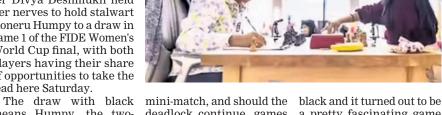
It has been a season of consistent performances This was the 14th meeting for the Indian pair, who also a dominant head-to-head and Malaysia Open earlier

FIDE WOMEN'S Humpy draws with Divya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Batumi, July 26: Young Indian International Master Divya Deshmukh held her nerves to hold stalwart Koneru Humpy to a draw in game 1 of the FIDE Women's World Cup final, with both players having their share of opportunities to take the lead here Saturday.

game under the classical chess rules in the two-game



means Humpy, the two-deadlock continue, games a pretty fascinating game time World Rapid champi- of shorter duration will be right out of the opening as on, holds a slight edge go- played to determine the Divya, 19, came up with a signed, while the player winner.

Humpy employed the Queen's gambit accepted as

Xavi application for

India coaching job

tion (AIFF) confirmed Sat-

celona manager and Spain

midfielder Xavi Hernandez

for the India head coaching

director said, Thursday that

Xavi's name was on the list

of applicants. The report

also quoted an AIFF tech-

nical committee member

saying that his candidacy

The AIFF's national team

role was a hoax.

was a hoax: AIFF

REUTERS

ny the black king the right

and, according to computers, Divya had things under control on the 14th move. However in her bid to recover the extra material, the Nag pur girl, who has secured a place in the Candidates tournament with her sterling performance here, missed a promising continuation. With the top two posi-

Humpy was the first to err

tions sealed for the Indi ans, the berth to the next Candidates is also aspiece sacrifice early to de-- finishing third will also get an entry to the premier

East Bengal edge Mohun Bagan in thriller

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kalyani, July 26: East Bengal got the better of arch-rivals Mohun Bagan in a fivegoal thriller to clinch 'Kolkata Derby' bragging rights with a 3-2 win in their Calcutta Football League Premier Division clash at the Kalyani Stadium Saturday. In an end-to-end contest

filled with drama, goals and cards, Bino George's East Bengal side rode on a fast start and a resilient finish to seal three crucial points in Group A.

Jesin TK (9'), Sayan Banerjee (45+6') and David Lalhlansanga (69') scored ball into an open net after for the Red and Golds, while Leewan Castanha (55') and er, capping a swift count-

the net for the Deggie Cardozo side.

With this win, the Bino George-coached East Bengal climbed to eight points from five matches in Group A, while Mohun Bagan remained on 10 points from six outings.

East Bengal started with attacking intent and were rewarded when Jesin, captaining the side, tapped in after a neat build-up between Edmund and Baneriee.

The lead was doubled deep in first-half stoppage time (45+6') as Sayan turned scorer, calmly slotting the skipping past the goalkeep-



Mohun Bagan regrouped the break, and Castanha pulled one back converting from close range after Dippendu set him up with a header from a corner.

Kiyan then restored parity with a well-placed header, bringing Mohun Bagan back on level terms and igniting hopes of a comeback.

But just two minutes later, David headed home from Aman CK's pinpoint cross to give East Bengal a 3-2 lead attributed to former Bar--one they would hold on to despite late pressure.

The match ended in fiery scenes as East Bengal's Aman CK was sent off after receiving a second vellow card in stoppage time.

Fans were seen celebrating the win in trademark fashion, waving flags and lighting their symbolic "moshals" (torches) in the stands, adding to the electrifying atmosphere.

to pursue. The AIFF received an email furnishing the applications from Spanish coaches Pep Guardiola and Xavi Hernandez. The authenticity of their applications could not be confirmed, and it has since emerged that the email applications were not genuine," the AIFF said in a statement.

It had not been previously The venue of the event was reported that the AIFF had also received an application purporting to be from Manchester City manager Guardiola

The AIFF Technical Committee said it had reviewed 170 applications for the In-

Verstappen outduels superior McLarens to win Belgian Sprint



REUTERS

Spa-Francorchamps, July 26: Formula One champion Max Verstappen won a "cat and mouse" Belgian Grand Prix sprint Saturday in Red Bull's first race under the leadership of Laurent Mekies following Christian Horner's dismissal.

was deemed too expensive McLaren's championship leader Oscar Piastri finished second, after taking a dominant pole position for the 100km race, with the Australian increasing his advantage over teammate Lando Norris to nine points.

Norris ended up where he started, in third place on a bright afternoon at the longest and second fastest track on the calendar.

Charles Leclerc was fourth for Ferrari with Haas's Esteban Ocon fifth and Carlos Sainz sixth for Williams. Haas's Oliver Bearman and Racing Bulls' Isack Hadjar completed the scoring positions. Qualifying for what could be a soggy main grand prix at Spa-Francorchamps

Sunday followed later. 'Well done Max. Very, Verstappen takes sprint win at Spa

Piastri second to extend championship lead by a Norris third for McL aren

First race for Red Bull since

Mekies replaced Horner

very impressive defence very well controlled. You didn't leave anything on the table there," Mekies told Verstappen over the team radio after the Dutch driver took the chequered flag.

Verstappen, starting second, used straightline speed to slipstream into the lead at les Combes on lap one and held off Piastri for the remaining 14, with the Australian 0.753 seconds behind at the flag. The win was Verstappen's first, in ei ther a sprint or grand prix, since Imola in May and it was knife-edge all the way

"I knew of course it was going to be very tough to keep them behind. So it's just playing like cat and mouse, DRS, battery usage," he said as the large contingent of

Asia Cup to be held in UAE from Sept 9-28 clubbed in the same group in group B. The ACC will

Karachi/New Delhi, July 26: The men's Asia Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 9 to 28, Asian Cricket Council chairman Mohsin Naqvi announced Saturday.

As per the draft itinerary in possession of PTI, the marquee group match between India and Pakistan will be held at the Dubai International Stadium Sunday (September 14).

The arch-rivals

and are expected to square off again in a Super Four game next Sunday

(September 21). India will start its campaign against UAE September 10 and are likely to play all its matches in Dubai.

India, Pakistan, UAE and Oman are clubbed in group A, while Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Hong Kong are

allow 17-member squads for the 19-match tournament and matches will be played in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Earlier, Naqvi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) took to 'X' to make a formal announce-

> "I am delighted to confirm the dates of Asia Cup 2025 in UAE. The the ACC Men's prestigious tournament will

Itinerary Sept 10: India vs UAE

Sept 14: India vs Pakistan Sept 19: India vs Oman

Super Four Schedule Sept 20: B1 vs B2

Sept 21: A1 vs A2 (likely India vs Pak) **Sept 23:** A2 vs B1

Sept 24: A1vs B2

take place from September 9th to 28th. We look to a spectacular display of cricket. Details schedule will be out soon," Naqvi posted.

decided at an ACC meeting July 24. All 25 member nations attended the meeting. BCCI is the host of the tournament but it is being

held in the UAE as India and Pakistan have mutually agreed to compete only at neutral venues till 2027 due narrowing the list to 10 beto the prevailing cross-border tension between them.

dian men's head coach role, fore short-listing three can-

Dutch fans celebrated.

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