



Shruti's preference

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-run partnership to raise India's hopes of saving the fourth Test against England

SPORTS | P12

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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, 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,

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-in-charge 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

NCERT plans special module on Op Sindoor

New Delhi, July 26: The 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 students from class III to VIII and another one for students from class IX to 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 Pahalagam 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 would be taken up in the Lok Sabha from Monday after a weeklong virtual washout of Parliament proceedings.

Woman gangraped in moving ambulance

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 Saturday.

Two persons, identified by the complainant who had appeared at a recruitment drive for home 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. After she regained consciousness, 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. The woman also identified them. Their reply was not satisfactory, so they were arrested and booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Samhita," he added.

Kaushal said the medical examination of the complainant has been completed, and based on the findings of the reports, further action will be taken.

Meanwhile, the incident drew strong criticism from Union minister Chirag Paswan, who supports the NDA government in the state, as well as the Opposition.

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 prevent such crimes. The situation is scary, and I regret that I am supporting a regime that is incapable of controlling law and order."

Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, shared on X a news clipping of the incident with the hashtag "vote out of power the Nitish Kumar government to protect the girl child (Nitish sarkar Hatao beti bachao)".

Superhero films ignite fan rivalry

Comic 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 shape-shifter character named Mystique from Marvel's X-Men comics, at the San Diego Comic-Con. "But I have a little white dog at home, so I love me

some 'Superman' as well. And 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 as Superboy, voiced his support for 'Superman'. "I've already seen 'Superman'

three times, and I'm very, 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 thrilled that both of us are coming out this month," director Matt Shakman of 'Fantastic Four: First Steps', told Reuters

at the London premiere. '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 million to \$135 million.

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 to 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

ance cover of ₹10 lakh, assistance of ₹30 lakh for loss of life in the field," he said.

They will also be given mobile phones and allotted houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), he added.

Majhi said a 15-day statewide campaign will be held from August 15 to make sanitation workers aware of the benefits.

He said the Jagannath culture also spreads the message of cleanliness.

The CM said the Odisha government's social welfare scheme for sanitation workers, Garima Yojana,

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, police said.

The two students of Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla, were identified as Monica Meena, a native of Rajasthan, and Sandeep Puri from New Delhi, an officer said.

According to Jujomura Police Station inspector-in-charge (IIC) Sanjay Rout, a group of six students had gone to the popular waterfall 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 students of the group and several tourists immediately alerted the fire service and 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 visited the waterfall site.

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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
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.

TAURUS
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 your 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.

GEMINI
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 between 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.

CANCER
You will begin the day with a definite plan for a bright future. 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 will succeed in every endeavour today.

LEO
Your natural self-confidence 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.

VIRGO
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 amicably. Ganesha says you have learned the lessons of life on staying level-headed, and that you keenly believe that opposition eventually leads to progress.

LIBRA
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 for your family members and 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 singer. 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." She adds, "Music is my saviour, I don't know if I'd be alive with-

out it." 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 authentic with people."



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 seen doing serious roles. 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. "I'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 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, Tahir reacted by saying that every genre has its own challenges. 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 to push their boundaries."

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 devalue it.



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.



MUMBAI: The two ladies from Bollywood who never shy away from speaking their mind - Kajol and Twinkle Khanna have joined forces for an exciting chat show, *Two Much with Kajol and Twinkle*.

Before Kajol and Twinkle's show premieres, let us turn back the clock and look at an old conversation between the two ladies when the *DDLJ* actress opened up about age anxiety. When Twinkle asked Kajol if being an actor, she ever worries about aging, she revealed that, as a matter of fact, she does worry about it.

Kajol shared that, according to her, aging has to do with energy more than the lines on your face. "I think people look at how you are saying what you'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 added.

Kajol's take on aging anxiety



Radhikka wanted career in dance



MUMBAI: Actress Radhikka Madan hosted filmmaker Farah 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 dancer.

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." The Shiddat star further recalled how she bagged her first television serial, Meri Aashiqui Tumse Hi.

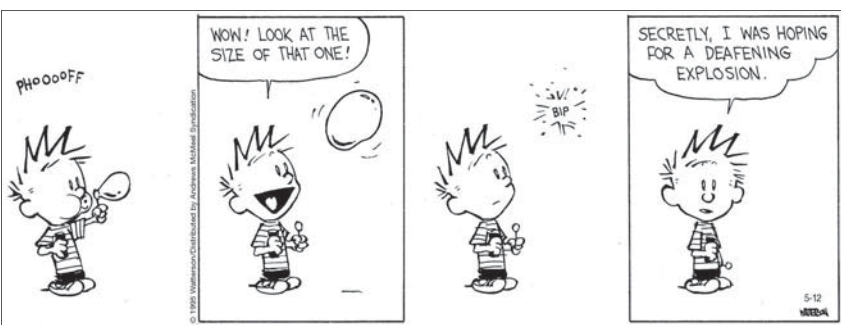
She revealed that a casting person sent her a direct message for an audition in Delhi. "The audition was taking place at a rather shady location, and at that time, I used to watch a lot of *Crime Patrol*. So I went with two of my friends, carrying hockey sticks. In Delhi, getting into a scuffle is not 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.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

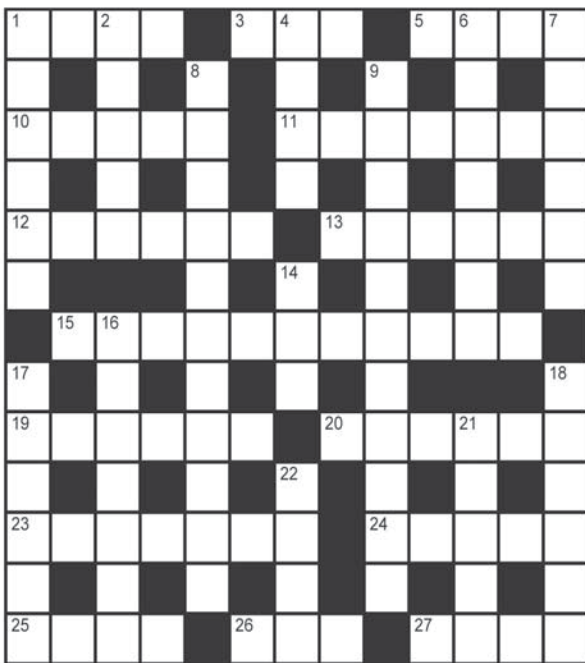


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Sound rebound
 - 3 "Ciao!"
 - 5 Farm newborn
 - 10 Turbine part
 - 11 Gun dog
 - 12 Glass ingredient
 - 13 Martial art (3,3)
 - 15 Pamper
 - 19 Angel of the first order
 - 20 Fencing word
 - 23 Spotted wild cat
 - 24 Estuary
 - 25 Ocean menace
 - 26 Hilo garland
 - 27 Aid in crime
 - Down**
 - 1 Means of escape
 - 2 Overnight stop
 - 4 Puppy sounds
 - 6 Kind of illusion
 - 7 Rutabaga
 - 8 Cactus type (7,4)
 - 9 Quinine water drink (3,3,5)
 - 14 Frigid
 - 16 Dinghy thole
 - 17 Place of refuge
 - 18 "Get lost!" (4,2)
 - 21 Movie star, briefly
 - 22 Not engaged

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

Z	L	S	S	M	S
C	E	R	E	A	L
R	T	E	E	R	R
D	O	G	H	O	U
A	T	R	E	N	
W	E	A	L	T	H
N	S	J			E
S	T	A	C	K	
T	H	A	U	E	
A	R	I	A	P	A
E	R	A	N	I	E
U	L	S	T	E	R
Y	S	T	Y	M	L

2	8	6	7	4	9	1	5	3
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
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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SAIMUN-2025 ends

POST NEWS NETWORK

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 youth-led 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," she added.



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 Sanjay 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



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.

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.

INTERNATIONAL MANGROVE DAY

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



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."



Kambhampati also highlighted 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 sword," said Harichandan.

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 support—many 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 Gayendra Kumar Sahu remarked, "This is the first visit by the Law Minister to our college in the past eight years. 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 painting, tattoo making, rangoli, and more.



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 presented 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 reflects what dedication and co-operation among teachers, students, and parents can achieve."

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.

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 Pollution 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.

WEATHER

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

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

SRI AUROBINDO



Showing The Mirror

Joint-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 daughters-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 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.

CHRIS BRADFORD

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.

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



Melanie W. Sisson

SOME TARGETS OF US MILITARY COERCION PROVED WILLING TO TOLERATE MORE PAIN THAN AMERICAN OFFICIALS ANTICIPATED



Aakar Patel

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

SPECTRUM

TRADE

India-UK FTA: The key takeaways



DK Giri

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

The 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 Co-operation.

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 reduc-

tion 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, Brit-

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-of-war 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.

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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 Iraqis.

Similarly, in the 1990s, NATO’s threats, blockades, and shows of force did not deter Serbian President Slobodan

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-year-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

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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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



Modi: India looks forward to boosting ties with Maldives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

“Our relationship continues to grow, shaped by people-to-people ties and cooperation in various sectors. India remains committed to supporting the aspirations of the Maldivians.”

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

"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.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

FROM COASTS **11**



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

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

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

Consequently the Congress party has continuously remained in a position of power in the major states, including Uttar Pradesh. Now, after losing power, they are suddenly remembering these communities, which can only be described as crocodile tears when their perpetual deceitful intentions and policies

YAWATI | **BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP)**
REMO

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) Sundarraaj 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.

Sagar (MP): Four members of a family, including a 45-year-old 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 Phulran police station in-charge Yogendra Singh Dangli 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 hospital but died en route, the police officer said.

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 questioned 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.

of the day

quote

News that Israel will allow countries to airdrop aid into Gaza has come far too late – but we will do everything we can to get aid in via this route



KEIR STARMER | UK PRIME MINISTER

Together with our US allies, we are now considering alternative options to bring our hostages home, end Hamas' terror rule, and secure lasting peace for Israel and our region



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

The US will now consider alternative options to bring the hostages home and try to create a more stable environment for the people of Gaza



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 Firaq 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 double-decker 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, Junín'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.



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

DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

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



Thailand, Cambodia trade fresh attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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.

Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings 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.

Cambodia's Information 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.

The 800-kilometer frontier 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 in Oddar Meanchey Province, Cambodia, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

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 countries 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, ASEAN'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 matter.

“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.

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 self-ruled 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.

Why Macron went alone on Palestine

REUTERS

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



United Nations conference. But despite weeks of talks he failed to get others on board.

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 con-

ference on a two-state solution in 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

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 well-worn 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-



President Donald Trump plays golf at the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland, Saturday

AP PHOTO

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 Har-

rison 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

Gaza: Israeli gunshots, strikes kill at least 25

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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 Benjamin 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



causes related to malnutrition.

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 Friday 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 humanitarian 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.

blasted France's move, branding 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 Palestinian 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.



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

ASHOK CHANDRA | MD AND CEO, PNB

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



of the day quote

India has protected all sensitive sectors, including dairy, rice and sugar, in the free trade agreement with the UK. Talks with the US on the proposed trade agreement are making fast progress

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER



The recent imposition of export restrictions on key rare earth magnets has resulted in supply chain bottlenecks impacting the user industries, including auto and electronics sectors

JITIN PRASAD | MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, RAJYA SABHA



India's journey towards becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047 cannot rest on economic metrics alone; it must be built on the health, productivity, and well-being of its people

SATISH KANNAN | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, MEDIBUDDY



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 non-performing 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 year-ago 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 quarter-on-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 on to 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



With the trade deal, the industry estimates a 70% surge in marine exports to the UK in the coming years

Indian exporters previously faced tariff barriers that put them at a competitive disadvantage, particularly for high-value products, including shrimp and value-added seafood goods

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

Total 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 2.25%

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).

RBI extends tenure of oversight panel of IndusInd Bank by month



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 Friday.

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.

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 crucial for future price direction.

TARIFF WAR WANES



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 short-term 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

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 buyers.

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-of-funds 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 calculations to enhance transparency.

FADA also requested the central 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 instances, banks have not extended preferential interest rates to MSME-registered dealerships, although auto workshops, service centres and smaller dealerships are eligible for MSME registration under the Udyam framework.

The guidelines must also cover 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 0.26 per cent lower on a weekly basis, showing decline for the fourth consecutive week, due to subdued Q1 earnings and cautious global sentiment, analysts said Saturday. The Nifty50 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.

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

JATEEN TRIVEDI | VP RESEARCH ANALYST (COMMODITY AND CURRENCY), LKP SECURITIES

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

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

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-

ivate 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 per cent 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 new code namely '16021' under Income Tax Return (ITR) utilities for FY 2024-25 (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 creators, online coaches and bloggers. Now influencers must choose between 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 under 5 per cent of gross receipts, according to experts. For those earning via business 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 two wicketless sessions, still

trailing the hosts by 137 runs. England were all out for 669 in the morning session following Stokes's 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 things in the final session including peppering the well set pair with short balls but Rahul and Gill were unfazed. England have purposefully targeted Gill's pads sensing a weakness but the Indian captain found a way to survive a lethal

spell from Archer. Rahul, on the other hand, has looked chanceless in the series, playing the ball late with a water-tight defence. England pacers seemed to be getting plenty of movement in the air and off the pitch but batting became easier in the final session with sun emerging from the clouds at Old Trafford. Rahul's square cuts and back cuts were regal and was on par with Gordon Greenidge and Virender Sehwag, two of the best exponents of shots square off the track. The nature of the surface has been slow and dry this season with none of the four county games here producing a result. India will have

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 Sudharsan departed in successive balls in the first over of India's innings. With England collecting boundaries for fun, it also marked the first time since 2014 that India conceded 600 runs in an innings.

Brief scores:
India 1st innings: 358 all out & 174/2 in 63 overs (Gill batting 78, KL Rahul batting 87; Woakes 2/48) vs **England:** 669 all out in 157.1 overs (Joe Root 150, Ben Stokes 141, Ben Duckett 94, Zak Crawley 84; Ravindra Jadeja 4/143).

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 years) 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 the 18th to make the cut, had rounds of 70-71. The cut fell at 1-over.

Messi upset with MLS

New Delhi: Inter Miami co-owner 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 conference.

Satwik-Chirag lose to nemesis Aaron-Soh

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 straight-game defeat to Malaysian second seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in the semifinals Saturday. The Asian Games champions once again found themselves on the losing side against the world No 2 Malaysian duo, who have proven to be a persistent hurdle in their path. Satwik and Chirag went



down 13-21, 17-21 to 2022 World champions and two-time Olympic bronze medalists Aaron and Soh. This was the 14th meeting between the two pairs, with the Malaysians maintaining a dominant head-to-head record. Notably, Aaron and

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 hard-fought win over another Malaysian duo, Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi, in the quarters Friday. It has been a season of consistent performances for the Indian pair, who also reached the semifinals of the India Open, Singapore Open, and Malaysia Open earlier this year.

FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL

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. The draw with black means Humpy, the two-time World Rapid champion, holds a slight edge going in the second and final game under the classical chess rules in the two-game

Humpy draws with Divya



mini-match, and should the deadlock continue, games of shorter duration will be played to determine the winner. Humpy employed the Queen's gambit accepted as

Humpy was the first to err and, according to computers, Divya had things under control on the 14th move. However in her bid to recover the extra material, the Nagpur girl, who has secured a place in the Candidates tournament with her sterling performance here, missed a promising continuation. With the top two positions sealed for the Indians, the berth to the next Candidates is also assigned, while the player finishing third will also get an entry to the premier event scheduled for 2026.

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 five-goal 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 for the Red and Golds, while Leewan Castanha (55') and

Kiyan Nassiri (67') found 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 Banerjee. The lead was doubled deep in first-half stoppage time (45+6') as Sayan turned scorer, calmly slotting the ball into an open net after skipping past the goalkeeper, capping a swift count-



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

Xavi application for India coaching job was a hoax: AIFF

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 26: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) confirmed Saturday that a job application attributed to former Barcelona manager and Spain midfielder Xavi Hernandez for the India head coaching role was a hoax. The AIFF's national team director said, Thursday that Xavi's name was on the list of applicants. The report also quoted an AIFF technical committee member saying that his candidacy was deemed too expensive 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 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 Indian men's head coach role, narrowing the list to 10 before short-listing three candidates.

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. 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 point
- Norris third for McLaren
- 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 either 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 Dutch fans celebrated.

Asia Cup to be held in UAE from Sept 9-28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 are

clubbed in the same group 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

in group B. The ACC will 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 announcement. "I am delighted to confirm the dates of the ACC Men's

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
Asia Cup 2025 in UAE. The prestigious tournament will

take place from September 9th to 28th. We look to a spectacular display of cricket. Details schedule will be out soon," Naqvi posted. The venue of the event was 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 to the prevailing cross-border tension between them.