



Lessons learned

Actor Avika Gor stresses balancing reason and intuition in film choices, while valuing lessons from each experience in her acting journey

LEISURE | P2



Nine months of war

Marking nine months since the war in Gaza started, Israeli protesters block highways across the country

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Hindenburg vs Sebi

Hindenburg Research had shared an advance copy of its damning report against Adani group about two months before publishing it, says Sebi

BUSINESS | P11



Abhishek shines

Abhishek Sharma scores a brilliant century as India defeat Zimbabwe by 100 runs to restore parity in the 5-match T20 series

SPORTS | P12

Sibling deities on Badadanda

Rath Yatra is a two-day affair this year after 53 years due to some special celestial arrangements

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, July 7: Lakhs of people pulled forward giant chariots from Srimandir towards Gundicha temple, around 2.5 km away, in Puri Sunday as the sibling deities set out on their annual sojourn.

The chariot pulling started around 5.20pm after Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalanada Saraswati visited the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra with his disciples and the Puri's titular king completed the 'Chhera Pahanra' (chariot sweeping) ritual.

The wooden horses were fitted to the chariots and the servitor pilots guided the devotees to pull the chariots in the right direction.

President Droupadi Murmu performed a 'parikrama' of the three chariots and bowed before the deities. This is the first time the country's President has participated in the Puri Rath Yatra.

The President, Governor Raghuraj Das, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan



PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

symbolically started the mammoth exercise by pulling the ropes of 'Nandighosh' -- the chariot of Lord Jagannath. Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik also had a 'darshan' of the sibling deities.

The 'yatra' stopped after moving a few metres, and will resume Monday morning in a departure from the tradition. Some of the rituals, including

'Nabajouban Darshan' and 'Netra Utsav', were conducted Sunday. These rituals are generally held ahead of the Rath Yatra.

"With the blessings of Lord Jagannath, all the rituals have been completed on time Sunday. A large number of devotees have reached the town to witness the festival and the weather condition has also remained favourable," said Chief Secretary

Manoj Ahuja.

The sibling deities ascended their respective chariots after the completion of the three-hour-long 'Pahandi' ritual at 2.15pm.

Rhythmically beating brass cymbals and hand drums, priests surrounded the gods on the canopied chariots as the procession made its slow way through the main street of the temple town. The air rent with 'Jai

Jagannath' and 'Haribol' as frenzied devotees tried to get a glimpse of the holy occasion.

Different artiste groups performed 'kirtans' (religious songs) and Odissi dance in front of the chariots before the procession started. Around a million devotees are estimated to have converged on this town for the annual car festival. While most of the devotees were from Odisha and

the neighbouring states, many from abroad also joined in what is considered one of the largest religious processions globally.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator V Yadav said, "All happens as per the wishes of Lord Jagannath." Rath Yatra is a two-day affair this year after 53 years due to some special celestial arrangements.

Stampede claims devotee, over 300 suffer suffocation

AGENCIES

Puri, July 7: In a tragic incident, one person died due to suffocation while several others sustained injuries in a stampede-like situation during the pulling of chariots in Rath Yatra at Puri Sunday, officials said.

According to sources, several other devotees were injured in the incident while some of them are reportedly critical. They are currently undergoing treatment at the Puri district headquarters hospital.

The incident occurred as there was a mad rush among devotees to pull the chariot of Taladhwaaj of Lord Balabhadra.

The administration identified the deceased as Lalit Bagarti from Saintala in Bolangir district. Expressing deep grief on the death of a devotee during Rath Yatra, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh for his family.

A similar stampede-like situation also occurred during the pulling of Nandighosh, the chariot of Lord Jagannath.

Sources also said that due to extremely humid conditions in the holy city and the huge gathering, more than 300 persons were admitted to hospitals after feeling uneasy during the Rath Yatra till evening, Sunday.



HIV BREAKTHROUGH

Injection twice a year 100 per cent effective

THE CONVERSATION

Cape Town, July 7: A large clinical trial in South Africa and Uganda has shown that a twice-yearly injection of a new pre-exposure prophylaxis drug gives young women total protection from HIV infection.



The trial tested whether the six-month injection of lenacapavir would provide better protection against HIV infection than two other drugs, both daily pills. All three medications are pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP) drugs.

Physician-scientist Linda-Gail Bekker, principal investigator for the South African part of the study, tells what makes this breakthrough so significant and what to expect next.

The Purpose 1 trial with 5,000 participants took place at three sites in Uganda and 25 sites in South Africa to test the efficacy of lenacapavir and two other drugs.

Lenacapavir (Len LA) is a fusion capsid inhibitor. It interferes with the HIV capsid, a protein shell that protects HIV's genetic material and enzymes needed for replication. It is administered just under the skin, once every six months.

During the randomised phase of the trial none of the 2,134 women who received lenacapavir contracted HIV. There was 100 per cent efficiency.

TWIN ENCOUNTERS IN J&K

6 terrorists, 2 soldiers killed

AGENCIES

Srinagar, July 7: Six terrorists and two soldiers were killed in twin encounters in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said Sunday.

The bodies of two terrorists were recovered from the Modergam encounter site while four bodies were recovered from the Chinnigam site Sunday, they said.

The twin encounters in the two villages of Kulgam district began Saturday.

Earlier, the officials said that four terrorists of Hizbul Mujahideen, including one commander of the outfit, were killed Saturday in the ongoing gunfight with the security forces in Chinnigam village.

Two army soldiers, including an elite para commando, laid down their lives while battling the terrorists, the officials said. They were identified as para

commando Lance Naik Pradeep Nain and Hawaldar Raj Kumar of 1 Rashtriya Rifles.

"The operation is still going on in Chinnigam village. Drones and other surveillance equipment are in place at both the encounter sites," officials said.

Both encounters erupted when the security forces started CASO (Cordon and Search Operation) at Modergam and Chinnigam villages following information about the presence of terrorists hiding in these two villages

nearly 12 km apart from each other in Kulgam district.

Speaking about the operations, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police RR Swain said the neutralisation of such a big number of terrorists was a major achievement.

Undoubtedly, this is a big milestone in the efforts towards strengthening the security environment. These successes are very meaningful both substantively as well as in terms of messaging, he said.



Remove encroachments on govt land: DMs told

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 7: The state government has asked all district Collectors to identify encroachments on government land in both rural and urban areas and remove encroachments as per extant rules expeditiously.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Revenue and Disaster Management department, Satyabrata Sahu, has written a letter to all Collectors in this direction Saturday.

Sahu wrote the letter after serious concerns were raised about large-scale encroachments of government land at a high-level meeting.

He mentioned that one of the primary works of officers is optimum management of land resources and allocation of adequate land to developmental purposes in different sectors of the economy.

However, due to encroachment of government land in both urban and rural areas, at times, smooth allocation of land for developmental purposes is impaired, the ACS said.

"Moreover, the opportunity cost of encroached government land is unrealised in such cases. Also, the concomitant litigation arising out of illegal encroachment remains a challenge to all of us," Sahu told the Collectors.

Keeping this in view, he has asked the Collectors to make a realistic survey of rural and urban encroachments and remove encroachments as per extant rules. Consequent upon removal of such encroachments, they have been further asked to protect such government land by suitable fence and conspicuously displayed board by utilising the funds received for the same purpose.

The Collectors have been instructed to submit an action taken report to the department every fortnight

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, we were there when he threatened the minorities. We're taking action and will provide him ample security

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.0°C	34.5°C
Min Temp	25.8°C	24.5°C
Humidity	100%	95%
Rainfall	52.6	46.2

FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

Soon, get a satellite image of your backyard at click of mouse

PIXXEL'S EARTH OBSERVATION STUDIO IS EXPECTED TO GO LIVE LATER THIS YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Want a satellite picture of your backyard? It may soon be possible as Bangalore-based space start-up Pixxel plans to unveil an online software suite to browse through images of earth captured by its satellites and also order customised pictures.

In an interaction with PTI editors here, Pixxel Space Chief Executive Officer and co-founder Awais Ahmed said the start-up's earth observation studio 'Aurora' was part of efforts to make space-

based data accessible to the common person for a small fee.

Pixxel's earth observation studio is expected to go live later this year and make the hyperspectral images of the earth taken by its satellites and data analysis accessible to everyone.

It would be as simple as using Google Earth but pictures and satellite imagery would be much more advanced, Ahmed, the 26-year-old CEO, who is among the handful of entrepreneurs making a mark in the space sector which was opened to private players about four years ago, said.

Users of the Aurora suite can browse through the satellite images already available in the database or place a tasking order for Pixxel's satellites going around the earth in the lower



earth orbit.

"I want to order an image for say Chikmagalur in the next week or next two weeks, then it will go to our satellites and they will deliver it, as long as you

can pay for it," Ahmed, who built the first satellite while still completing his masters in mathematics from BITS Pilani, said.

Pixxel has launched two satellites - Shakuntala and Anand - both capturing images of the earth in over 200 wavelengths and detecting minute changes taking place on the planet.

Come October or November of this year, anyone will be able to create an account online on our website, Pixel.SpaceAurora to access images of the earth taken by our satellites, Ahmed said.

The two satellites - Shakuntala and Anand - launched by Elon Musk's SpaceX and ISRO's PSLV respectively, were pathfinder spacecraft, demonstrating the company's capabilities to deliver on high quality hyper-spectral images.

Pixxel plans to launch six satellites - Fireflies - later this year, the company's first set of commercial spacecraft that will deliver earth images to its clients who range from the Ministry of Agriculture in India and the National Reconnaissance Organisation of the US.

The start-up also has plans to launch 18 more satellites next year, including a slightly heavier Honeybee spacecraft that will carry visible and shortwave infrared camera to increase the wavelength range of the satellite.

The sensors on these satellites are equipped to provide hyperspectral imagery of 250 plus bands in the 470-2500 nm range at a five-metre ground sampling distance, the company said.

Ahmed said conventional satellites can capture images in vis-

ible and some infrared range. Hyperspectral is taking all of this light coming in the visible and infrared range, and splitting them into continuous, very minute lengths, he said.

If, for example, I'm looking at a plant with a normal camera, I can tell that's a plant and there's a leaf there. But if a hyperspectral camera is capturing that, it has broken it into so many different wavelengths that I can now see if there are signs of pest infestation there, or if it's irrigated well enough and so on, Ahmed said.

So that's, in a basic sense, you're going from three wavelengths from human eyes to about 300 wavelengths in hyperspectral, which is just enabling us to see way beyond human sight, Ahmed said.



SWIFT PERFORMS MARY'S SONG FOR FIRST TIME IN 16 YEARS

Pop icon Taylor Swift finally treated her fans to a song they had waited years to hear live. The singer-songwriter surprised the sold-out crowd at her Eras Tour show in Amsterdam by performing a mashup of *Mary's Song, So High School*, and *Everything Has Changed* during the secret songs segment.

PRODUCER JON LANDAU PASSES AWAY AT 63

Oscar-winning producer of iconic films such as *Titanic* and *Avatar*, Jon Landau, passed away due to cancer at age 63. Landau was survived by his wife, Julie Landau, as well as their two sons, Jamie and Jodie Landau, according to *People.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You are in a position to affect other peoples' lives. Since you are very compassionate and caring, people will look up to you whether as a peer or a superior. Make good use of this excess energy to solve prickly issues. Ganesh encourages large-scale projects.

TAURUS
Be prepared for taking instant decisions and acting promptly on them. Today you are likely to meet several such situations Ganesh is pleased to see that you have the acumen and experience to deal with such contingencies. You will have no trouble finding the right solutions and seeing things through.

GEMINI
You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Minor ailments like cough and cold may bother you, warns Ganesh. So avoid cold or sweet items. People admire your helpful nature. Take special care of your health, says Ganesh.

LEO
You need to curb down on your expenses. You need to moderate the risks you take on in the share market. It is a good day for financial gains though. You need to understand the value of compromise, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
The thinking cap is on your head, and a passionate pulse shall run through you today. Yet, by the mid-day, expect a laid-back, cavalier attitude to grip you. Government officials and other professionals will have an inspiring assenting day. Your professionalism will shine through, and you may be in for some serious praise from the superiors. Smile and accept the positive feedback graciously.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that there are chances that today you might start some long-pending renovation project for your home. You may decorate your home with new paintings and items. There may be guests over in the evening that will make you very happy.

SCORPIO
You are all set to paint the town red as you feel romance and love creeping into your life slowly. You may bump into 'someone special' today and see love blooming for you. There are also chances of marriage proposals and meeting prospective candidates, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You are in a mood to spend money of home décor, paintings or artefacts. Go ahead, and decorate your home. Ganesh foresees success on your cards today. Workplace has never been such an interesting place before. Planning and implementation will make your day easier.

CAPRICORN
You'll have apparently no time for anything else, as partnerships and projects will keep you on your toes. You communication skills and diplomacy will fetch you accolades in meetings, and also enable you to judge a person or a situation correctly, and form the right opinion.

AQUARIUS
Today is the day to turn dreams into reality and how! With your talent, wit, and intelligence you will make a great impression on everyone's mind, feels Ganesh. Icing on the cake will be the cash inflow. You know your cards and you play them well to your advantage.

PISCES
You will communicate with your friends or relatives living abroad today. There is a chance that these communications could translate directly into substantial gain for you. You will find yourself in the mood for socializing. You will likely invite friends over to dinner at your place in the evening, says Ganesh.

Avika on balancing instincts, rationality

Mumbai: Actress Avika Gor emphasised the importance of maintaining a balance between being rational and following her instincts when selecting films to work on.

"When it comes to selecting movies to work on, I aim to strike a balance between being rational and following my instincts. I carefully consider all the offers that come my way, weighing factors like the script, the director, the cast, and the overall vision of the project," Avika told IANS.

"However, there are also times when I rely on my intuition, allowing my gut feelings to guide me towards projects that resonate with me on a deeper level. And while not every decision always works out as expected, I view each experience as a valuable lesson that contributes to my journey in this industry," the *Balika Vadhu* actress added.

Avika, who made her film debut in Tollywood in 2013 with *Uyyala Jampala*, subsequently appeared in Kannada and Telugu films such as *Lakshmi Raave Maa Intiki*, *Cinema Choopistha Mava*, *Care of Footpath 2*, *Ekkadiki Pothavu Chinnavada*, *Natasaravbhawma*, *#Bro*, and many others.

On the work front, Avika will be seen next in *Bloody Ishq* with Vardhan Puri. IANS



Manisha opens up on her toxic relationships

Mumbai: Actress Manisha Koirala, who is enjoying the success of her role in Netflix's *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, plays the ruthless Malikajaan, who brings toxicity to every relationship. In contrast, Manisha has also faced toxic relationships in real life. In a recent interview, she opened up about always dating the wrong men and ignoring red flags.

Reflecting on her past, she said, "I wondered why I kept falling for troubled men. I realised I needed to work on myself first. I've been single for five to six years, focusing on self-improvement."

When asked about her ideal partner, she expressed a desire for a genuine connection where both partners accept each other as they are and support each other's growth. She emphasised the importance of mutual dreams, ambitions, and passion. "I want someone with passion, as I am a very passionate person," she added.

Manisha also discussed her forgiving nature in relationships. As an outsider from Nepal, she initially felt loneliness that she thought a partner could fill. She shared how romantic promises often didn't materialise and how she repeatedly forgave red flags. Over time, she realised she had surrounded herself with unnecessary people and learned to be more selective.

AGENCIES



New Delhi: Veteran screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar hit out at a social media user who branded him 'son of gaddar' (traitor) and said his family has been part of the Indian freedom movement since the Revolt of 1857. Akhtar's retort came in response to the social media user's swipe at him over a post in which he commented on US President Joe Biden's chances of being re-elected. The social media user had commented on the industry veteran's post and called him the 'son of Gaddar', who divided our nation along religious lines. Akhtar, known for his vocal views on a range of topics, clapped back at the user, Saturday and replied, "It is difficult to decide whether you are totally ignorant or a complete idiot. Since 1857, my family has been involved with the freedom movement and has gone to jails and Kala Paani, when most probably your baap dadas were licking the boots of Angrez Sarkar." The 79-year-old writer is the son of lyricist-poet Jan Nisar Akhtar, who was an active part of the Progressive Writers' Movement in pre-Partition British India, and writer Safiya Siraj-ul-Haq. His great-grandfather, Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, was a freedom fighter who participated in the 1857 rebellion against the rule of the British East India Company. Khairabadi was sentenced to life in prison in the Cellular Jail, also known as Kala Paani, on the Andaman Islands, where he also died in 1864. PTI

The Big Book of Odia Literature unveiled

Bhubaneswar: A book titled *The Big Book of Odia Literature*, containing English versions of select Odia poems, plays, short stories, and essays, was released on the auspicious occasion of Rath Yatra here at a City hotel, Sunday.

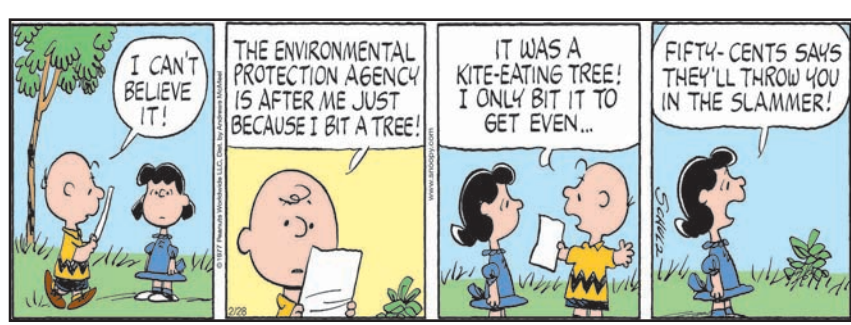
Eminent author Tarun Kanti Mishra, former Income Tax Commissioner Pradosh Chandra Mohanty, and retired IAS officer Jagadish Chandra Mohanty were among the guests, who graced the occasion to unveil the 725-page anthology. The book features the works of more than one hundred poets, thirty short story writers, two playwrights, and twenty-three essayists. The poetry of ten tribal languages, Sambalpuri-Koshli, Sanskrit, and poetry written in English by Odia poets are also included in this collection. This is a first-of-its kind anthology published by Penguin Random House India, claimed Manu

Dash, editor of the book. "It is a unique and inclusive attempt in the Odia anthology to include the poetry of tribal communities who form one fourth of Odisha's population, and the exclusion of their literature does not give the real picture of Odia literature and its composite culture," added Dash. He further said that this mega anthology will now address the needs of non-Odia speaking people and Odias staying overseas.

Many young and acclaimed translators, including Bikram K Das, Jatin Kumar Nayak, Kalidas Mishra, Chittaranjan Mishra, Ajit K Kullu, Samanjasa Das, Bidyut Bhusan Jena, Sanskruti Pujari, Tyagraj Thakur, and Himansu S Mohapatra, have translated original Odia articles for this collection. Some translators read from their works published in this anthology. PNN



PEANUTS



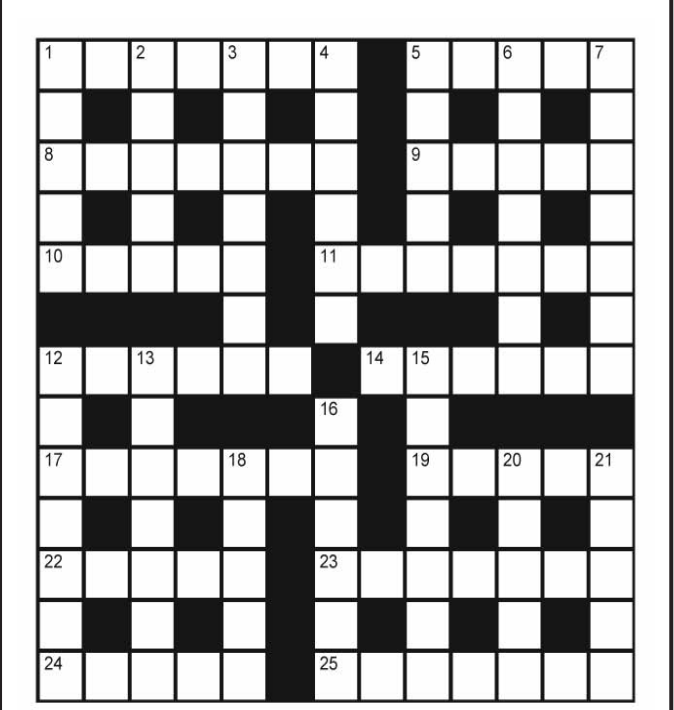
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



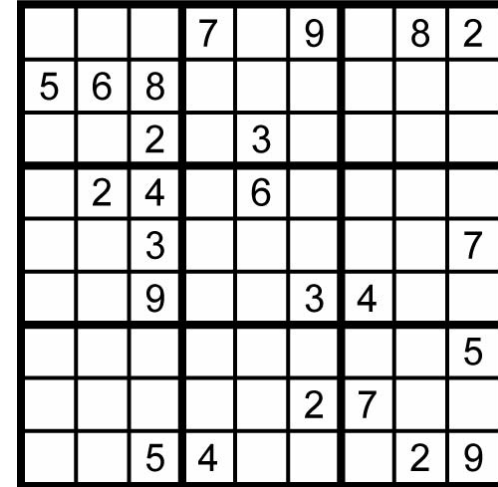
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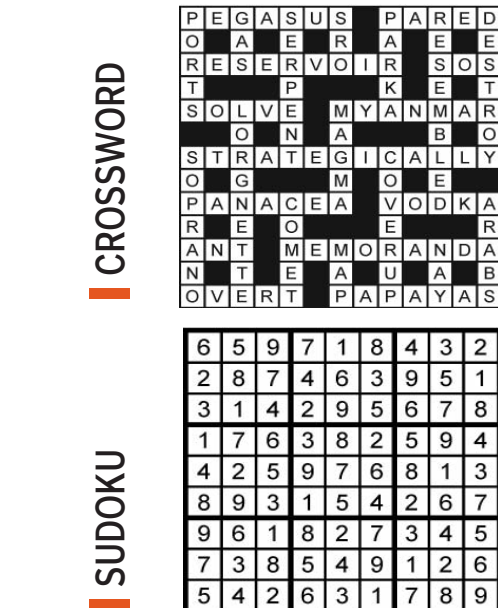
- Across**
- 1 Go on and on
 - 5 Cousin of a cockatoo
 - 8 Inee and atropine
 - 9 Basic belief
 - 10 Young pigeon
 - 11 Home-wrecker?
 - 12 Rakish
 - 14 Trojan hero
 - 17 Water separator (4,3)
 - 19 Condescend
 - 22 Early anesthetic
 - 23 Superior
 - 24 Its capital is Innsbruck
 - 25 Started up again
 - Down**
 - 1 Plumbing items
 - 2 "Farewell, mon ami"
 - 3 Can of worms
 - 4 Artificial
 - 5 Power mower need
 - 6 Plot
 - 7 Court attestor
 - 12 Mousse, maybe
 - 13 Wildcat
 - 15 Eternal
 - 16 Type of name or noun
 - 18 Shade of green
 - 20 Manner of speaking
 - 21 Wanderer

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Traffic on national highway moves at snail pace near ISKCON temple during Rath Yatra celebrations



downtown

Rath Yatra celebrated with festive fervour in Capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 7: Chariots were rolled at various places in the Capital city with festive fervour on the occasion of Rath Yatra, Sunday. Hundreds of devotees gathered at prominent places and pulled the splendidly adorned chariots with chants and hymns filling the air. The rain that lashed the City in the afternoon could not dampen the enthusiasm of devotees who milled around chariots and sought blessings of deities.

The Capital witnessed celebrations at more than 50 places. Major events were organised at Patiagarh, VSS Nagar, Old Town, Jagamara, Utkal University campus, Regional College of Management, Bhimatangi, Dumduma, Baramunda, Niladri Vihar, Laxmisagar and OUAT.

On this joyous occasion, a large number of devotees assembled at Shrivani Kshetra of KISS and took part in religious ceremonies like Mangala Arati, Mailama, Tadapalangi, Rosha Homa, Abakasha and Surya Puja.

Thereafter, devotees pulled forward the three chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra up to the newly-built Gundicha Temple near KIIT-Sikharchandi Road. The chariot of Devi Subhadra was pulled by women devotees only.

All rituals were performed as per the traditions of Puri Srimandir. For the construction



of the three beautiful chariots, special 'bindhani', 'maharana' and 'chitrakara' were engaged by the temple trust.

Starting from chariot construction to all activities including 'niti' and 'puja', were done with the consultation and guidance by the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, Dibyasingha Deba. Festival organisers informed that during the nine-day festival, 'Bhajan Samaroh' will be held every evening near Gundicha temple.

Similarly, Utkal University also celebrated the Rath Yatra on university premises. The ritual of sweeping the chariots was done by Utkal University VC Sabita Acharya.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) temple at Nayapalli was one of the major attractions in the City. The temple celebrated the festival in a grand way. Three chariots of the deities were pulled from the temple front to ISKCON's Mausima temple at Unit VIII.

Nimantran offers spl veg delicacies

BHUBANESWAR: In a novel initiative to celebrate the festive spirit of Rath Yatra, a special vegetarian platter was launched at Nimantran restaurant here, owned by Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC).

The platter containing more than 15 dishes, prepared without onion and garlic, will be exclusively served from July 7 to July 15 at the restaurant.

During the nine-day festive period, a variety of authentic Odia dishes will be served such as rice, kanika, dalma, poori, besara, saga and pachedi, apart from sweet dishes like Khasta Mitha, Chenna Mitha, khiri, and dahi torani as beverages.

OTDC general manager Lalatendu Sahoo, executive chef of Nimantran Sanjoy Sarkar, and other officials of the department were present during the inauguration. The restaurant won't be serving any non-vegetarian dishes during this period. The entire kitchen as well as the dining area was thoroughly cleaned. Handling of any non-vegetarian ingredients has been completely prohibited in the restaurant till Bahuda Yatra.

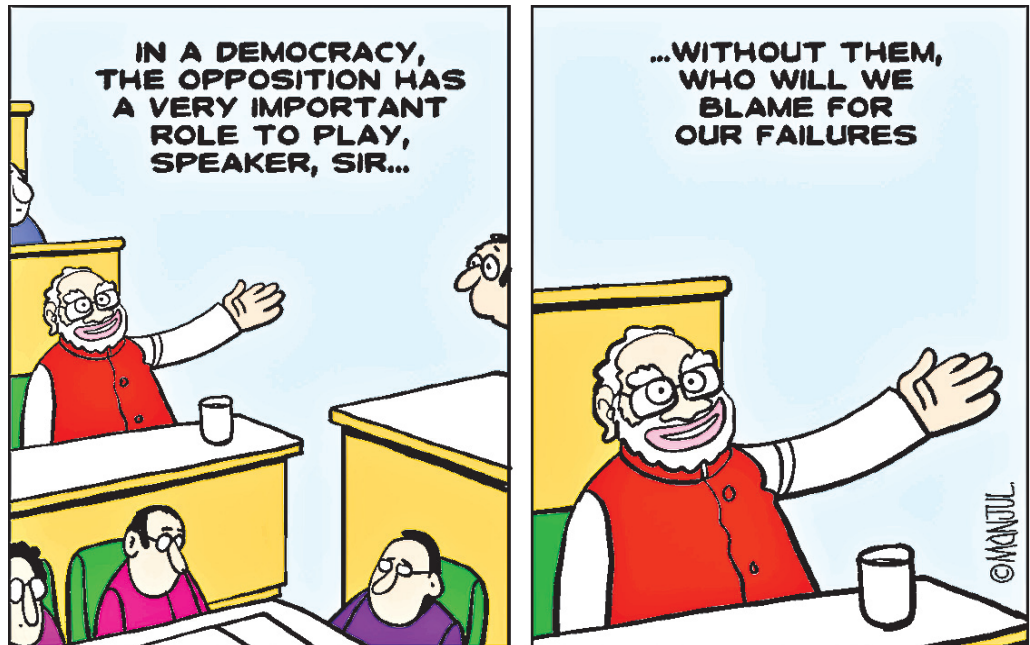
'Rain The Club' owner held for misbehaviour

Bhubaneswar: Laxmisagar police here, Sunday, arrested the owner of a nightclub for allegedly misbehaving with a woman Excise department official during a raid, late Saturday night. Laxmisagar inspector in-charge (IIC) P Shyam Sundar Rao said, "The accused was identified as Satya Ranjan Mohanty, 48, a resident of Bomikhal area here. A team of Excise officials led by Superintendent of Bhubaneswar Excise division, Sumati Tripathy, raided 'Rain The Club' as it was operating beyond the approved hours. During this, club owner Satya Ranjan attempted to stop the raid by abusing the officials. While Sumati requested Satya Ranjan to cooperate in the raid, the latter touched her inappropriately before the public." Later, Sumati lodged a complaint at Laxmisagar police station in this connection. Laxmisagar police booked Satya Ranjan under Sections 126 (2), 121 (1), 133 and others under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. He was produced in a local court Sunday.

IEMS to monitor reckless driving

Puri: To regulate reckless driving and road accident cases in the state, Commerce and Transport minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena inaugurated the Intelligent Enforcement Management System (IEMS) at an event, held at Malatipatpur here, Sunday. In the first phase, 548km of state and national highway roads from Panikoli to Rameshwar, Bhubaneswar to Puri, Puri to Konark, and Konark to Pipili have been included. In this regard, an estimated ₹88 crore has been sanctioned for the next five years.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Inter-state gang busted; 4 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, July 7: Bargarh police Sunday claimed to have arrested four members of an inter-state gang involved in looting and dacoity cases.

The arrested accused were identified as Indra Bhoi, 21, and Chaitanya Putta, 19, residents of Dangaramunda village, Lalit Sahu, 25, and Doleswar Sahu, 26, both residents of Banaras village under Saintala police limits in Bolangir district.

As per SP Prahlad Sahai Meena of Atabira police station, the gang's modus operandi was to target farmers and women who had withdrawn money from the bank. Briefing the media, Meena said that, the accused gang mem-



bers waylaid Chhayakanta Pradhan of Babebira village under Atabira police station when he was returning home after withdrawing cash from a bank June 20. At gun point, they looted ₹4,38,352 and fled the scene.

Upon receiving the complaint, the police launched a probe and managed to arrest four gang members. Cops found that the accused

were booked by various police stations on charges of loot and dacoity in other districts including Bolangir, Sambalpur and Subarnapur. The police recovered a pistol with lives bullets, five bikes, and several gold and silver items. A case (No-226/24) was registered by Atabira police station under Sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.



ENJOYING RAIN: Children cover themselves to protect from rain during Rath Yatra in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Talc probably cancer-causing: WHO

The link between talcum powder and ovarian cancer is plausible, as talc particles can travel through the reproductive system and cause inflammation and damage to the ovaries

The recent classification of talc as 'probably carcinogenic to humans' by the World Health Organisation's cancer agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), is a significant development in the ongoing debate about the safety of talcum powder, Salil Patkar, Consultant-Medical Oncology, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi (Navi Mumbai), said Sunday.

According to the doctor, the use of talcum powder is widespread, and many people are unaware of the potential risks associated with it.

"While the evidence is not yet conclusive, it is essential to err on the side of caution when it comes to public health," Patkar told IANS.

"The link between talcum powder and ovarian



cancer is plausible, as talc particles can travel through the reproductive system and cause inflammation and damage to the ovaries. This inflammation can increase the risk of cancer," he added.

The cancer agency classified talc as 'probably carcinogenic to humans' on the basis of a combination of limited evidence for cancer in humans (for ovarian

cancer), sufficient evidence for cancer in experimental animals, and strong mechanistic evidence that talc exhibits key characteristics of carcinogens in human primary cells and experimental systems.

According to the agency, numerous studies showed an increase in the incidence of ovarian cancer in humans self-reporting the use of body powder in the per-

ineal region. An increased rate of ovarian cancer was also observed in studies looking at occupational exposure of women exposed to talc in the pulp and paper industry, it added. Patkar mentioned that it is crucial for individuals, especially women, to be aware of the potential risks associated with talcum powder use.

"Alternative products, such as cornstarch-based powders, can be used instead. Additionally, manufacturers should take responsibility for informing consumers about the potential risks and providing safer alternatives," he said.

Based on the current evidence, the doctor suggested that it is essential to exercise caution and consider 'the potential risks associated with talcum powder use'.

IANS

Silt chokes Bhatrajore dam in Kalahandi

People protest botched drain work in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, July 7: The famed Bhatrajore dam in Junagadh block of Kalahandi district that ensures livelihood of thousands of farmers and supports habitat for hundreds of species of flora and fauna is getting choked.

According to reports, the landmark dam that irrigates farmlands in both Kharif and Rabi seasons is getting buried in the absence of any efforts to de-silt it. The garden adjoining the dam is home to many rare butterfly and bird species, reports said.

Sources said the Forest department has identified the dam for eco-tourism and has spent lakhs of rupees in improving the surroundings. However, no effort has so far been made to de-silt the dam which is creating resentment among the locals.

According to information, the



construction of the dam began in 1958 and it completed in June 1963. Initially, this dam was under the jurisdiction of the Minor Irrigation Department. However, from June 12, 2001 it was handed over to the Upper Indravati Project. Since then its upkeep has been envisaged under the

Upper Indravati Project. The 671-meters long dam irrigates around 1713.37 hectares of land in both Kharif and Rabi seasons. Water from the dam reaches up to 10.2 km by the south channel, while its left channel carries water up to 4.2 km.

The minimum water level in the dam has been recorded at 223.113 meters, while the maximum at 225.552 meters. Generations of fishermen from many villages have benefited by the 61-year-old dam. However, no de-siltation has been carried out in the reservoir since its inception.

As a result, not only has the dam been getting filled by slush every year, but its water retention capacity is also decreasing gradually. At many places inside the dam, plants and shrubs have appeared and islands are showing up above water level. It is said that if remedial steps were not taken up urgently, the irrigation system, fish population and natural beauty around the dam would be severely affected in the coming days.

It is worth mentioning here that people of Baxitulasipali, Meriabandhali, Charbhathi, Dedar, Junagarh NACs and Kaleigaon

panchayat of Junagarh block depend on this dam for their daily drinking water needs and irrigation purposes.

It is alleged that while both the Forest department and the Indravati authorities are trying to improve the dam's surroundings, they are silent on the contentious issue of de-silting the dam.

Indravati South Canal Assistant Executive Engineer, Nelson Tadingi said a DPR of ₹4.11 crores has been prepared and sent to the government for 'environmental improvement' of Bhatrajore dam. "Once approved, the work will begin," he said.

However, he made it clear that right now there are no proposals for the de-silting of the dam. Locals meanwhile, demanded that the government should focus more on removing silt from the dam than beautifying its surroundings.



WORK DURING MONSOONS AFFECTING TRAFFIC MOVEMENT IN THE TOWN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 7: Lack of proper drainage system is making the lives of residents miserable in this town. The faulty mechanism to clear water during the monsoons is putting the lives of people under a lot of stress. Locals alleged that not only are government funds being wasted, but at the same time they are being forced to face torrid times.

Locals pointed out that the construction of drains has been carried out in a faulty manner. Hence efforts to rectify those mistakes are not giving any results. On the other hand, funds allotted for the rectification are going to waste, they added.

Meanwhile, with Rath Yatra being celebrated Sunday, the drain work has hampered the smooth movement of traffic in the town.

One such example is evident from the drain under construction near Gandhi street in this city. The Public Works department (PWD) had allotted the responsibility to a private company to construct the drain and a fund of ₹10 crore had been allocated. However, unnecessary delay in construction of the drain is adding to the woes of the people, locals said.

Sources pointed out that initially the drain was given a 'V' shape. Later the construction company realised that it would be better if the drain was

straight. By the time, the fault was detected a lot of money had already been spent. And by the time the rectification process started the rains had arrived.

Locals stated that the entire area has now turned into a slush-filled zone with vehicles regularly getting stuck in the mud. They pointed out that the area has become accident prone and police are struggling to control the traffic.

"If the drain had been straight, water could have flown out easily. As it was 'V' shaped, the water stagnated inside the drain and overflowed. We have repeatedly pointed this issue to the engineers involved in construction work. However, no one listened to us," alleged locals Pintu Sharma and Anil Shankar. They added that if the work is done in such arbitrary manner it will just be a waste of large amount of money and the main problem of draining out of water will never be solved.

Other locals pointed out that the fault lies with the engineers as they decided to construct a 'V' shaped drain. "Now after so many months, they have realised that they had gone horribly wrong and have decided to rebuild the drain. But it is the people who are suffering," the locals added.

"We have laid special emphasis on a proper drainage system. The present problem has arisen because of delay in work. The contractor has been asked to complete the road within 15 days. We are hopeful that the problems will soon be resolved," said Bikram Murmu, assistant engineer of the PWD department.

Cash, jewellery stolen from retired tehsil worker's home



POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi, July 7: Burglars allegedly looted cash and gold ornaments late Saturday night from the house of retired tehsil employee Jatindra Baitha in Gopa village under this panchayat in Keonjhar district. The ornaments worth ₹10 lakh and ₹10,000 cash had been kept in an almirah which the burglars allegedly broke open before escaping with the valuables.

A complaint in this regard was lodged at the the Nandipada police station Sunday morning. Police after registering a case (No-217/2024) have initiated a probe.

According to information available, Baitha had kept the money and the ornaments for

his daughter's marriage. When he and other family members were asleep Saturday, the robbers entered the room, where the almirah was, by cutting the window grill. They then looted the money, locked the room from inside and escaped through the same window.

When family members tried to enter the room Sunday morning, they found the door locked. On looking into the matter they found the window grills cut, the almirah broken and the cash and ornaments missing.

Police later said that the stolen items include two gold necklaces, gold bangles, three pairs of gold earrings and a number of gold rings. Police stated that efforts are on to nab the burglars as soon as possible.

Spreading eco-friendly message on Rath Yatra

Trader crafts Lord Jagannath's chariot with matchsticks, discarded wood

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 7: On the occasion of Rath Yatra, a Berhampur-based businessman unveiled Sunday an exquisite piece of eco-friendly artistry - a miniature chariot and deity of Lord Jagannath - meticulously crafted from matchsticks and discarded wood.

This intricate replica of Lord Jagannath's 'Nandighosh' chariot stands as a testament not only to the businessman's remarkable craftsmanship but also to his unwavering commitment to environmental conservation.

The miniature 'Nandighosh', crafted by 47-year-old Satya Narayan Moharana, stands three inches tall and two inches wide, with the deity measuring just one inch in height.

Moharana replicated all the elements of the chariot, including 16 wheels, four horses, and a charioteer (sarathi). Except for the wheels, which are made from discarded wood, the entire chariot and its components were constructed using matchsticks. The artist used gum to attach the sticks and water colours to paint the deity and other parts of the chariot to make them look vibrant.



"By making this sculpture, I want to give a message to society to celebrate Rath Yatra in an eco-friendly way without using banned plastic items," said Moharana. A businessman by profession, he has been making miniature chariots and deities of Lord Jagannath for Rath Yatra for the past 10 years.

Earlier he has used materials such as gambhari and sal wood, old newspapers, bamboo, ice-cream sticks and shirt buttons

to construct the chariots.

"Every year, I make miniature 'Nandighosh' chariots using common and discarded items. Through this, I want to spread the message to celebrate the festival in an eco-friendly manner," said Moharana.

Sudhir Rout, a green activist, praised Moharana's efforts to promote the non-use of plastic materials through his artworks during Rath Yatra and other festivals over the past few years.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Cuttack dated 05.07.2024, I, Pradeep Kumar Sengupta, aged about 41 years, S/o - Late Bapapada Sengupta, resident At-Kendudhipi, PO - Kendudhipi, PS - Itamati, Dist - Nayagarh, Odisha, PIN - 752079 have changed my daughters name/surname from Sumana Sengupta to Srimitra Sengupta. Henceforth, my daughter shall be known as Srimitra Sengupta for all purposes. Pradeep Kumar Sengupta

LOST

I Anita Mahapatra, At/PS - Chikalkhandi, Ganjam, I lost my original sale deed (11831800518/2018), C.C. No.2018183002133 during travelling in Auto-Rikshaw near Kalpana Square, Bhubaneswar on Dtd 05.07.2024. Any body found please contact 9861264032 / 7008751435.

Policeman performs chariot sweeping

AGENCIES

Jajpur, July 7: The annual Rath Yatra of the holy trinity - Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, and Devi Subhadra - at Dharmasala in the district is unique as the ceremonial sweeping ritual of the chariots, known as 'chhera pahanra', is performed by none other than the inspector-in-charge (IIC) of the local police station. This year, IIC Tapan Kumar Nayak performed the ceremonial

sweeping on the chariot.

Nayak was escorted to the Jagannath temple at Bhalukhai in a specially decorated vehicle from the police station, located about 2 km from the shrine. Clad in royal attire, the inspector received a warm welcome along the road.

"Nayak ascended the chariot and conducted the traditional sweeping ceremony of Lord Jagannath's chariot with a golden-handled broom amidst chants by priests.



SEA OF DEVOTION: The chariot of the Trinity mounted on twin boats being carried on Chilika lake in a unique Rath Yatra traditionally organised by the Jagannath temple trust at Kankanashikhari near Nairi village under Balugaon tehsil in Khurda district, Sunday

Sagarpali VSS bags top honour for forest protection, conservation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, July 7: The Sagarpali Van Suraksha Samiti (VSS) in Sundargarh district has been conferred with the prestigious Biju Patnaik Award for exemplary contributions to forest protection.

Recognised as the best Van Suraksha Samiti in Odisha, Sagarpali VSS received a trophy and ₹1 lakh cash award at the state-level Van Mahotsav programme held recently at Dumduma government high school campus in Bhubaneswar.

Presenting the award, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi commended the Sagarpali VSS

for its dedication and pioneering efforts in environmental conservation and community development. Set up in Sagarpali, a small village in Sundargarh district nestled within Mangasapur gram panchayat of Tangarpali panchayat samiti, this VSS has a rich history of forest conservation, spanning over 204 years.

The journey formally began in 1993-94 when Sagarpali VSS was registered following proactive measures by the Sagar Youth Club against deforestation in 1975.

The transformation of the barren 'Kurladungri' hill into a lush green area stands testament to the dedication and collaborative efforts of Sagarpali



VSS with the Forest department and a local NGO, a press release stated.

The impact of Sagarpali VSS extends beyond environmental conservation. Through initiatives supported by the Odisha Forestry Development Project-II (OFSDP-II), the village has wit-

nessed significant socio-economic development. Programs promoting dairy farming, turmeric cultivation, vermi-composting, mushroom cultivation, and millet cultivation have not only reduced dependency on forest resources but also empowered local women and

improved the economic condition of all 130 families in the village. Moreover, Sagarpali VSS has been proactive in raising awareness about forest fire prevention and wildlife protection, organizing community-led initiatives like 'Shramdaan' for forest and plantation development. The village has also pioneered the innovative 'muthi dhana system', where every household contributes paddy monthly towards forest development.

Ramasamy P, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF), Rourkela, heaped praises on Sagarpali VSS for its outstanding achievement, and said, "Your efforts in promoting sustainable

forestry practices and fostering a deeper connection between people and nature are truly commendable."

Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Mirase attributed the success to cooperation and unity. Mirase has recommended Sagarpali VSS for a state-level award and extended his heartfelt congratulations to the villagers and all involved for the exceptional achievement.

According to information, the Sundargarh Forest division has created a unique record by bagging the best VSS award at state-level two times in the last three years. In 2022-23, Jhurimal VSS had won the best state-level VSS award.

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SOAKED IN DEVOTION

The air in Puri reverberated with chants of 'Jay Jagannath' and 'Haribol' as around a million devotees converged on Badadanda to get a glimpse of the sibling deities – Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra – on the holy occasion of Rath Yatra. Various artiste troupes performed 'kirtans' and Odissi in front of the chariots ahead of the 'pahandi' procession. While a majority of the devotees were from Odisha and the neighbouring states, many from abroad too joined the celebrations in what is considered one of the largest religious congregations on earth



PAHANDI OF LORD BALABHADRA IN PURI



PAHANDI OF DEVI SUBHADRA IN PURI



PAHANDI OF LORD JAGANNATH IN PURI



SEA OF HUMANITY IN PURI OP PHOTO



GAJAPATI MAHARAJA DIBYASINGHA DEB PERFORMING 'CHHERA PANHARA' IN PURI



CHANDNICHOWK, CUTTACK



KENDRAPARA



(From left) Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, President Droupadi Murmu, Governor Raghubar Das, Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy, Deputy CM Pravati Parida, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Deputy CM KV Singh Deo in an ecstatic mood after having a glimpse of the deities on the chariots in Puri

PTI PHOTO



Former CM Naveen Patnaik during Rath Yatra in Puri

PTI PHOTO

FOCUS DIPLOMACY

CEMENTING TIES



It is a fact that a stronger Russia is in the interest of a stronger India and a stronger India is in the interest of regional and world peace and prosperity

The long overdue summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Russia Vladimir Putin commencing on Monday is poised to further enhance the special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries to greater heights. In the 22nd summit meeting in Moscow, the two leaders are expected to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relationship including defence trade, investment, energy exploration, education, science & technology and people-to-people contact. Modi is participating in the summit meeting at the invitation of Putin.

The summit meeting has traction and strategic significance on many counts. In the first place, the two popular and powerful leaders are meeting for the first time after their historic electoral victory and consolidation of power in respective countries giving stability and continuity to the bilateral relations. Secondly, this is the first visit of Modi abroad after assuming the office of the Prime Minister for the third time. This is suggestive of the strategic importance that India and Modi attach to Russia and Putin. The meeting is also taking place close on the heels of the meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the margins of the SCO meeting in Astana last week, where the two top diplomats discussed a plethora of issues including the ensuing summit meeting.

Despite COVID-19 challenges and difficulties arising out of the conflict in Ukraine, there has been regular meetings and interaction between India and Russia at various levels physically, virtually and telephonically at various levels including between Modi and Putin. It is worth a while to recall that Prime Minister Modi's telephonic conversations with President Putin in February and March 2022 helped in the evacuation of stranded Indian students in Ukraine and also had a sobering effect on the tension in the conflict zone. India's reasoned and thoughtful abstention in the US-sponsored UN resolution on the Ukraine crisis and nuanced stance on the Ukraine issue had also earned the goodwill and appreciation of Russia signifying the enduring strategic trust between the two countries. Later, India's well drafted resolution on Ukraine which was adopted at the G20 summit held in New Delhi in September last year under India's Presidency was also liked by Moscow and leaders of other member countries.

contract to buy the S-400 defence missile system from Russia in spite of the US imposed sanction. Yet another instance of India's unwavering commitment to Russia is India's decision to buy Russian crude notwithstanding Western sanctions. Over the years, India and Russia have shared a comprehensive and robust strategic partnership touching upon every aspect. While in the post-Independent India, the erstwhile Soviet Union had helped in establishing core industries, like steel, petrochemicals, heavy industries, space and nuclear energy, in recent years it has helped India in beefing up in its defence and naval capability and in indigenisation of defence production. Mention may be made of the BrahMos missiles which are jointly manufactured by India and Russia and also the cutting edge AK 203 assault rifle under the India-Russia joint venture. Russia is helping India in realising its visions of Atmanirbhar Bharat

Earlier in September 2021 while addressing the 6th Eastern Economic Forum, Prime Minister Modi had expressed happiness that the connectivity project - the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor along with the International North-South Corridor would bring India and Russia physically closer. This will help augment President Putin's vision for development of the Russian Far East. Some rumination on this connectivity project by the two sides is a possibility. Be that as it may, it is a fact that a stronger Russia is in the interest of a stronger India and a stronger India is in the interest of regional and world peace and prosperity.

The writer is a foreign policy expert and former senior fellow of Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Indian Council of Social Science Research.



Rup Narayan Das

OVER THE YEARS, INDIA AND RUSSIA HAVE SHARED A COMPREHENSIVE AND ROBUST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TOUCHING UPON EVERY ASPECT

New Hope

In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action

THE MOTHER



The victory of the Labour Party in the parliamentary elections of the UK could not have come at a better time when Europe is on the cusp of change from liberal democracy to Far Right Neo-Nazi and Neo-Fascist politics of intolerance and xenophobia directed against immigrants of all hues. That the political pendulum would swing to the Left in the UK was becoming clear as indicated by opinion polls, but no one could imagine the Labour could clinch the issue so decisively with a landslide victory. Under the leadership of Keir Starmer, who had promised to present a "changed labour party," it repeated a record score equivalent to Tony Blair's in 1997 (418 seats) and won 412 of the 650 seats. As Starmer delivered his first speech after meeting King Charles III, he made his intentions clear. During the run-up to the polls he had refrained from promising the moon to the electorate, but assured them he would do his best to save the country from the chaos, instability and almost irresponsibility that marked the ousted Conservative rule. People had become tired of the frequent change of Prime Ministers - four since 2019 - without any substantive change in their livelihood.

In this sense the victory is not as much for Labour as it is a resounding rejection of the Conservative. The people opted for a change of government after 14 years of Conservative rule. They wanted first and foremost to punish the ruling dispensation for its disastrous record of fiscal austerity and Brexit that left the country fractured, isolated and weakened. Infrastructure and public services turned miserable with sluggish wage and investment growth.

In hindsight, the Tories' decision to leave the European Union will be haunting the country. The scandal of Downing Street parties during lockdown under Boris Johnson's leadership and the failure by his successors severely damaged the Conservative's reputation.

On the other hand, Starmer is a proponent of budgetary orthodoxy and "wealth creation," while he is favoured by the business community. At the same time Britons affected by austerity, precariousness and the collapse of the National Health Service (NHS) pin their hopes on Starmer whose modesty seems to augur well for the many challenges he will have to face. The party had campaigned on a minimalist platform intended to keep expectations low. Even its campaign rhetoric of "change" was vague about Labour's proposed means and ends withholding many policy specifics. Not raising the expectations too high could be a smart tactic. The results, however, offer the new Prime Minister the opportunity to do what he likes as he has the parliamentary strength to be daring.

In a sense it is not bad politics of the Labour Party not to excite too much expectations from it as it has promised too little. But the risk is that if Labour is too timid in office to produce meaningful change, it could lose the goodwill.

In any case, the UK under the new dispensation is all set to embark on a new trajectory of development on both domestic and international fronts.

The mood of the moment is one of optimism for a better Britain. In the words of Starmer there is now the "sunlight of hope" in a darkened sky. At a time when the Far Right is advancing across Europe and Donald Trump's hope of defeating his rival Democrat in the November US presidential poll is rising, the Labour in the UK has got a chance to show to the world that it can work on a liberal social democratic project that offers a light in the presents global gloom.

SPECTRUM POLITICS

Putting public interest first

After US President Joe Biden's stumbling and unconvincing performance during the debate with former President Donald Trump on 27 June, it is no exaggeration to say that the future of our planet may depend on a decision he must make. Does he want to go down in history as the man who was responsible for the disastrous consequences of a second Trump presidency? Will he join others whose life-long efforts to do good were undone by their refusal to put the public interest first?

For progressives like me, Ralph Nader was once a hero. His first book, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, was a devastating exposé of how the US auto industry put profits ahead of safety. Nearly 50,000 people were killed on US roads in 1965, the year it was published. The book spurred a crucial public debate that led to legislation to improve road safety. By 2011, the death toll on US roads had fallen to 35,000, and, on a per capita basis, was less than half what it had been 45 years earlier.

Nader deserves much of the credit for changes that have spread worldwide. The total number of lives saved since the 1960s must now be in the tens of millions; the number of injuries prevented will be sev-

eral times higher. Yet that is not Nader's legacy today. The US presidential election in November 2000 was a contest between the Democrat Al Gore, who was the incumbent vice president, and George W. Bush, the Republican nominee. Nader, though, rejected Gore, even though Gore had long made environmental protection his overriding concern, and ran for the Green Party. Whereas Gore had written the 1992 bestseller *Earth in the Balance*, a book that urged strong action to address climate change and other ecological crises, Bush was the candidate of the oil industry.

When the votes were counted, the election came down to which candidate would win Florida. Bush won the state, and thus the presidency, by 537 votes, after the US Supreme Court stopped a recount. In Florida, Nader received 97,488 votes. There can be no doubt that if Nader had not been a candidate, many more of his votes would have gone to Gore than to Bush, and Gore would have been elected president.

One of Bush's first acts as president was to announce that the US would not implement the Kyoto Protocol, which set binding emissions targets for industrialised countries. Without

a strong lead from the US, international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases soon fell apart, and they have never recovered to the level necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change.

As a result, despite the immense good that Nader did as a campaigner for road safety, his overriding legacy is that he prevented the election of the only American presidential candidate who regarded climate change with the seriousness that it required, at a time when the window of opportunity to prevent disaster was wider than it is today.

Likewise, when Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a Supreme Court justice, I admired her for her advocacy of women's equality and reproductive rights. By 2013, however, she was 80, the oldest person on the Court, and had twice been treated for cancer. At a private lunch at the White House, President Barack Obama told her that at the coming mid-term elections, the Democrats were likely to lose control of the Senate. The implication was obvious: if Ginsburg were to resign, Obama could appoint a much younger replacement who would uphold, for decades to come, the liberal values that she and the president shared.

Others made the same suggestion to Ginsburg, but she did not resign. After her death, President Trump nominated her replacement, Amy Coney Barrett. The conservative majority on the Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which had extended constitutional protection to abortion for nearly a half-century, and soon state governments imposed draconian restrictions. Now that conservative majority is undermining the power of the Environmental Protection Agency to do its job.

If Biden is true to his word, and stopping Trump from regaining the presidency is his overriding goal, he needs to announce that at the Democratic Convention in August, he will release his delegates from their obligation to vote for him, and instead ask them to vote for the candidate with the best chance of defeating Trump. Gretchen Whitmer, the popular governor of Michigan, or Governor Gavin Newsom of California, and probably others would have a better chance of stopping Trump than Biden now has.

The writer is Founder of the organisation *The Life You Can Save*.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Peter Singer

DOES BIDEN WANT TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE MAN WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES OF A SECOND TRUMP PRESIDENCY?

Peace Still Distant

With the victory of reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian in a runoff presidential election, one can hope for some relief to the people of Iran who are reeling under a radical Islamist regime amid strained ties with the West and heightened tensions with the country's sworn-enemy Israel.

Pezeshkian emerged victorious in Friday's runoff election by securing 53.6 per cent of the 30.5 million votes counted. This marked a narrow win over the ultra-conservative candidate, Saeed Jalili, who received 44.3 per cent of votes. The runoff was held as no candidate could secure a majority in the first round of election conducted on 28 June which saw the lowest voter turnout ever since the Islamic Republic was established in 1979. The snap-election was necessitated by the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May.

A trained heart-surgeon, Pezeshkian will assume leadership in a country grappling with growing global isolation, domestic restlessness and a deteriorating economy. He rose to prominence due to his vocal opposition to the suppression of the 2009 pro-democracy demonstrations and the brutal crackdown on protesters by the infamous morality police in 2022 following the tragic death of 22-year-old Iranian woman of Kurdish origin Mahsa Amini. Amini died while in custody of the morality police after she was apprehended for failing to comply with the strict dress code imposed on women by the Shiite theocracy. Hundreds lost their lives and thousands were detained as the authorities attempted to quell the uprising.

Pezeshkian, who is fluent in Azeri, Farsi, and Kurdish languages, emphasised reaching out to Iran's diverse ethnic groups during his campaign. Being the first president from western Iran in years, his election is seen as a potential benefit to the country, as people belonging to the western part, home to several ethnicities and religions, are known for their tolerance.

Experts believe that having a moderate figure in the presidency could help to improve communication between Iran and Western nations. Pezeshkian has expressed his willingness to implement social reforms, including easing of the mandatory headscarf for women, although experts note that such changes are not certain to materialise as it is the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who has the final say over all policy decisions. It is precisely for this reason that Western nations do not anticipate a significant shift in their ties with Iran following the election. In the words of a US State Department spokesperson: "We have no expectation these elections will lead to fundamental change in Iran's direction or more respect for the human rights of its citizens." Nevertheless, Pezeshkian is seen as a better alternative compared to his hardliner opponent, who, in all likelihood, might have exacerbated the current tensions with Israel and its Western allies. Tensions between Iran and Israel have been fuelled by the recent conflict in Gaza and the progress of Iran's nuclear programme. Just a few months ago, Iran and Israel engaged in their first armed conflict amid the war in Gaza.

However, with limited powers at his disposal, Pezeshkian altering his country's current course of relations with Israel and its allies remains an unlikely eventuality.

WISDOM CORNER

- Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. **STEPHEN HAWKING**
- Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content. **HELEN KELLER**
- The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm. **ALDOUS HUXLEY**

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
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Step in right direction

Sir, This refers to "New UK PM Starmer scraps Rwanda deportation policy," Orissa Post, July 7. Britain's policy of the Rwanda bill to deal with illegal migrants had sparked a wave of criticism. One of the clauses of the law involves sending migrants on a one-way ticket to Rwanda - 6,500 km away - which will process their asylum claims. This controversial programme offers financial aid to low-income country Rwanda in Africa in exchange for their cooperation in processing asylum applications which are alleged to have been business deals - lacking humanitarian concerns. Notwithstanding Rwanda's claim that it solves global migration and asylum crisis, experts lambasted this programme which turns humanitarian causes into business deals with financial motivation - dehumanising the plight of people trying to escape persecution or natural disasters. It is also pointed out that Rwanda's internal security and economic conditions are not very promising. Rwanda is among the most densely-populated nations in Africa, and competition for land and resources has, in the past, fuelled long periods of ethnic and political tensions.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Digital revolution

Sir, Digital marketing is essential in engaging customers, especially in India where over 82 per cent shop and research online. The Digital India initiative has boosted private sector growth and job creation, potentially increasing GDP by up to \$1 trillion by 2025. AI's evolution accelerates disruptions, driving growth in India's digital marketing job market as businesses expand online. Successful digital marketing integrates traditional strategies to drive business growth and resonate with customers, boosting website traffic. As mobile and internet usage rises, demand grows for content marketing specialists, brand marketers, and digital planners like copywriters and Google Ads managers. E-commerce skills are crucial as businesses shift online, with digital media managers enhancing sales through online advertising. The future of digital marketing in India looks promising, driven by an expanding user base and technological advancements, particularly in social media. Essential skills like email marketing, social media management, and SEO will be pivotal in enhancing brand presence and driving sales. Growing e-commerce and mobile commerce sectors will further drive demand, offering ample opportunities for young professionals.
Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Fate of J&K's political start-ups uncertain UP fraudsters pull off a 'Catch Me If You Can' act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, July 7: In a growing trend over the past decade, Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a proliferation of 'political start-ups' in the Valley but these outfits have failed to make a significant impact during elections, politicians and analysts said Sunday.

The decades-long unrest in Kashmir has witnessed the rise of several political parties and fronts, including the Jammu and Kashmir Nationalist People's Front, Bharat Jodo Party, JK Peoples Movement, Jammu and Kashmir All Alliance Democratic Party, Jammu and Kashmir Workers Party, Jammu and Kashmir Peace Party and the Awami Awaaz Party.

Many of these have either refrained from contesting elections or have faced defeat in the recently held Lok Sabha polls. Veteran politician and CPI(M) leader Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami said the leaders of these political start-ups often begin with a bang, enjoy patronage like security and other things, and then disappear like 'lost planets when elections are held'.

Instead of floating political start-ups, "we should concentrate on strengthening democratic institutions in the entire Jammu and Kashmir," he asserted.

Echoing similar views, PDP leader Waheed Para said these start-ups have a 'negative impact' on the democratic space



and highlighted their lack of popular support and legitimacy. Para said these political start-ups only demolish and discredit the democratic space. "The recent Lok Sabha election has shown them the mirror clearly," he added.

In a veiled reference to businessman-turned-politician Altaf Bukhari's JK Apni Party and the veteran politician Ghulam Nabi Azad-led DPAP, Para said almost three parties were created by breaking up the PDP which only led to demolishing the democratic space in Kashmir and discrediting those left behind.

"Results reflect that only people should be given the right to choose and elect. Parties created in hybrid form don't enjoy the popular support or legitimacy," he added.

Noted Kashmiri Pandit leader and lawyer Titoo Ganjoo said the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 saw the emergence of top-down

political start-ups in Jammu and Kashmir that lack organic growth and fail to resonate with the local populace.

"These new entities were predominantly composed of disenchanted politicians engaging in exploratory efforts, ultimately doomed to fail in gaining significant political traction," he said, adding that these start-ups never pose a challenge to the established political order.

The leadership of these political start-ups, conceived to be driven by some government agencies, failed to reflect the genuine aspirations of the local populace, Ganjoo added.

These leaders exhibit a significant disconnect from the region's realities, focusing more on reclaiming their political relevance rather than addressing the core issues faced by the people, according to prominent social activist Firdous.

Ganjoo argued that the behaviour and conduct of these

leaders highlight their opportunistic tendencies and lack of substantial commitment to the region's long-term stability and development.

"Their efforts were perceived as superficial and self-serving, failing to foster genuine political engagement or meaningful change," he said, adding that the lack of inspirational leadership and substantive direction has left the region in a state of disillusionment with no coherent or compelling vision for the future emerging from these political start-ups.

Dr Touseef Bhatt, a socio-environmental activist, said that despite representing a new wave of political innovation in a conflict-ridden region, political start-ups in Kashmir face challenges in making a meaningful impact due to their limited experience and resources.

Their dependence on external funding raises concerns about their autonomy and long-term sustainability in a volatile political environment, he said. While these start-ups aim to engage young Kashmiris in the political process and address local concerns, questions remain about their potential influence on the existing political dynamics and the peace process in the region.

As Kashmir grapples with ongoing challenges and aspirations for change, the fate of political start-ups in the region remains uncertain, raising questions about their ability to effect meaningful political change.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, July 7: In the 2002 hit Hollywood film "Catch Me If You Can", Leonardo DiCaprio plays the role of a conman in the late 1960s who makes millions of dollars by forging cheques.

Cut to now and a 10-member gang in Uttar Pradesh used the same modus operandi to swindle people of crores of rupees, only its techniques being a bit more sophisticated than those used in the film by Frank Abagnale Jr, the character played by DiCaprio.

The gang's members were arrested Saturday by the Bulandshahr district police for scamming people across the country of crores of rupees by 'cloning cheques', Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shlok Kumar told PTI.

Explaining their modus operandi, he said they used to steal chequebooks ordered by customers before it reached them from banks. When a customer lodged a complaint, the bank cancelled the previous chequebook and issued a new one, Kumar said.

The gang's members used to get the details of the new chequebook from their accomplices before it was delivered to a customer, the SSP said.

After removing the details from the cheques of the can-



celled chequebook using a chemical, the gang's members printed the details of the one delivered and received by the customer. They then put a forged signature of the customer on the cheques and withdrew money, the official said.

In the movie, Abagnale, to make a counterfeit, used glue to stick symbols and stencils to get the lettering correct on a paper that had the dimensions similar to that of a genuine cheque.

SSP Kumar said an investigation was launched after a local lodged a complaint that ₹15 lakh had been withdrawn from his account through a cheque not issued by him.

"The complainant said he did not receive any message from the bank. The man got to know that ₹15 lakh had been withdrawn when he updated his passbook," the official said.

It was a well organised gang and its members worked in teams, each having a name like in a company or an office, the SSP said.

To swindle people, its members first acquired the know your customer details of a person from banks and then "for getting the SIM cards, they would produce forged documents of the person on whose name a number is allotted and show him or her as dead," Kumar said.

"After that, this number would be purchased in the name of a new person so that any call or message from the bank would be attended by the accused and while posing as the bank account holder, verify fund transfers illegally started by them," he added.

Giving details of the units the gang was divided into, Kumar said a 'layering group' was involved in transferring the money received fraudulently into different bank accounts so that it became difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace and recover it.

"Then there was the 'asset creation group'. It was tasked with cleverly investing the ill-gotten money into making assets like purchasing land or property or other asset somewhere," he added.

Nitin Kashyap, Prem Shankar Vishwakarma, Awadhesh Kumar, Shah Alam, Uruj Alam, Bhupendra Kumar, Kalicharan, Alok Kumar, Brijesh Kumar and Chatar Singh have been arrested, police said.

Monsoon: UP rivers in spate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 7: At least 12 women working in a field and their children were rescued from floodwaters in Uttar Pradesh's Shravasti district amid a rise in water levels in many rivers at several places as the monsoon gathered pace in the state, an official report said Sunday.

With the monsoon becoming fully active and causing heavy rain, water levels of several rivers have begun rising in many areas of Kushinagar, Balrampur and Shravasti districts, triggering floods and flood-like situations.

According to a report from the Relief Commissioner's Office, the water level of the Gandak River in Kushinagar crossed the danger mark, flooding 13 villages in the Khadda tehsil.

It said 66 people were trapped by floodwaters on an island in the district's Narayanpur area.

Of them, 62 people were rescued, and an operation was underway to bring the remaining four to safety.

The Rapti River crossed the danger mark in Shravasti, affecting 18 villages.

Meanwhile, the UP government in a statement said that it had successfully rescued 87 people trapped in floods in Shravasti and Kushinagar districts in the state caused by the sudden release of over five lakh cuses of water following heavy rains in Nepal. The rescued included 76 persons in Kushinagar and 11 in Shravasti.

During this operation, 400 villagers stranded in 18 villages of Shravasti were moved to safer places while 20 cattle trapped in the Kushinagar floods were also rescued, the UP government said in a statement Sunday.

A team of the National Disaster Response Force and two of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) are deployed in the flood-affected areas.

Nineteen flood posts have been set up in the district, and the level in the Rapti barrage is being continuously monitored, it said.

The report said the operation to rescue the 12 women labourers and their children from a flood-hit Shravasti village began late on Saturday and was completed at 3 am.

The Rapti river has crossed the danger mark in Balrampur as well, leading to floods.

Teams of the State Disaster Response Force and the Flood PAC are deployed for relief in the affected areas. Thirty-two medical teams have also been formed, the report said.

Meanwhile, due to heavy rainfall in Nepal, river Sharda in Lakhimpur Kheri district witnessed heavy water discharge on Sunday. The immediately affected 45 villagers of Azadnagar village in Palia Tehsil were successfully shifted to safer and higher areas in the adjacent village of Srinagar.



A security personnel stands guard as devotees arrive during the annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath, at Baltal, in Ganderbal district, Sunday

How Hathras figured in Swami Vivekananda's life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 7: From witnessing the ignominy of the recent stampede that claimed 121 lives, Hathras is also known for giving Swami Vivekananda one of his first disciples - Swami Sadananda, who transformed himself from a station-master to a monk. Swami Sadananda is also credited with introducing the tradition of addressing the monks as 'maharaj'.

"These days, Hathras is in the news and is making headlines for negative reasons. But it is the same place where the seeds of divinity and spirituality germinated at its railway station when destiny virtually handed over to Swami Vivekananda one of his first disciples, whom the world today knows as Swami Sadananda," Swami Muktinathananda who heads the Ramakrishna Math in Lucknow told PTI.

In the book titled 'Monastic Disciples of Swami Vivekananda' written by Swami Abjakananda, the author says, "In the latter half of 1888, a wandering monk was travelling to Rishikesh from Vrindavan, when he got down from the train at the Hathras station. How, and with whose help he was to proceed further was uncertain. Despite this, the monk was absolutely calm, and there was no sign of anxiety on his face. On the contrary, his eyes radiated a strong air of detachment and self-confidence. However, his journey had tied him, and he was sitting on a bench on the platform."



"The station master happened to see the monk. His bright eyes and his happy countenance attracted him, so he went to him and started a conversation. 'Well, Swamiji' he said, 'Why are you sitting here? Won't you go further?' 'Yes surely I will go,' answered the monk. Slightly encouraged, the station master came closer and asked, 'Swamiji, would you like to have a smoke?' This time the monk answered in a detached way, 'Yes, if you offer me one', the author says further in the book.

Unveiling the mystery in the subsequent paragraphs, the author says, "This wandering monk was none other than the famous Swami Vivekananda, and the station-master was Sharatchandra Gupta, who later became Swamiji's disciple and was given the name 'Sadananda'. He was

also known in the Ramakrishna Order as 'Gupta Maharaj'. This is how the first meeting between the guru and disciple took place. It is believed that this station-master of Hathras had the honour of being the first disciple of Swami Vivekananda."

However, the author in the footnote also mentions a different account of the first meeting between Swami Vivekananda and Sadananda. The footnote reads, "In the reminiscences of Swamiji, entitled 'Swamiji Vivekananda As I Saw Him', Sister Christine gives a slightly different account of Sadananda's first meeting with Swamiji."

According to her, Sadananda saw Swami Vivekananda sitting in a railway compartment, and being captivated with his bright eyes, pleaded with him to get

down. It seems that only a few nights before, he had dreamt of those very eyes.

Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, the publisher in a note also mentions that "the present volume is a translation of the original Bengali book, Swamijir Padaprante by the late Swami Abjakananda, which was published on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary."

Throwing light on the premonk life of Swami Sadananda, the author said, "Sharatchandra Gupta was born in Kolkata on 6 January 1865. His father Jadunath Gupta, migrated some time in the year 1869 to Jaunpur, a place near Varanasi, along with his family, and had settled there. Being brought up in North India, Sharatchandra, though a Bengali

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

by birth, was more familiar with the Hindi and Urdu languages." The author also says in the book that "in those days there was no fixed mode of addressing the Swamis. Swami Sadananda, following the customs prevalent in western part of India, started addressing the monks as 'Maharaj'. Slowly, this became the accepted mode of addressing them."

Mentioning another incident related to Sharatchandra, the author said, "Seeing his determination and sincerity, Swamiji said: 'Can you really follow me? Then take my begging-bowl and go and beg for our food from the porters of the station.' No sooner was the order given than Sharat went to beg from his own subordinates."

"Having collected some food he brought it to the Swami Vivekananda, who in turn blessed him heartily and accepted him as his disciple. Sharat resigned from his job, dyed a few clothes ochre, and made himself ready to accompany Swamiji as a monk. He was later formally initiated into the monastic vows and given the name Sadananda," the author wrote.

According to the official website of the Hathras district administration, "In the memory of Swami Vivekananda's first arrival at Hathras a 'shilalekh' was established at Hathras City Railway station, which reveals that Swami Vivekananda has given the name Sadananda to his first disciple, who was the station master of Hathras City Railway station."

LANDSLIDES HIT TRAFFIC IN J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, July 7: Excavators have been mobilised in more numbers to restore the landslide-hit Kishtwar-Paddar road near Kishtwar district and open it for vehicular traffic within the next few days, officials said Sunday.

A massive landslide blocked Kishtwar-Paddar road near Nagseni June 30, halting vehicular movement and impacting essential supplies to the Paddar sub-division.

The alternative road from Himachal Pradesh remained open for essential supplies but a few days ago, the Singhrah bridge was washed off by a flash flood causing a disruption of road connectivity at the Sohla area affecting the supply.

Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner Devansh Yadav on Sunday went to the landslide spot at Nagseni to reach the Paddar side, overseeing the repair of the Singhrah bridge by

General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) authorities.

Yadav said essential items loaded in light vehicles have resumed the supply chain to Paddar from Himachal Pradesh.

On Kishtwar-Paddar road, he said additional excavators have been mobilised from hydroelectric projects to clear the road at Nagseni on a war footing.

"The repair work, continuing day and night, at Nagseni is expected to take 2-3 days, with the efforts of GREF and hydroelectric power projects' personnel under the district administration's supervision," he said.

However, he said the supply chain of essential items for the public will not be affected, as it is ensured from the Himachal side.

"Vehicular movement between Kishtwar and Paddar will remain affected until the road is fully restored. The general public is requested to remain patient until the completion of the repair works," the deputy commissioner said.



of the day quote

This year, we have experienced temperatures soaring to 45 to 50 degrees Celsius in many parts of the country. In the race for development, humans have built concrete cities on earth but destroyed the greenery

BHUPENDRA YADAV | UNION MINISTER

Delighted to speak to UK Foreign Secretary @DavidLammy. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhance our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Look forward to an early in-person meeting

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

TDP which was born for Telugu people should be in Telangana. I am asking you whether the party which was born on the land of Telangana should function or not (in the state)? There were several people who worked for the party. We will restructure the party very soon

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | CM, ANDHRA PRADESH

SHORT TAKES

Building mishap: Death toll rises to 7

Surat: The death toll in the collapse of a six-storey building in Gujarat's Surat city has gone up to seven with the recovery of six more bodies overnight, police said Sunday. The residential building, located in Pal area, collapsed at around 2.45 pm Saturday. While a woman was rescued soon after the collapse, the body of a man was pulled out Saturday night, an official earlier said. Rescue teams later pulled out six more bodies from the debris, according to police. Seven bodies have been recovered in the operation that continued through the night, Sachin GIDC police station inspector Jignesh Chaudhari said.

Water tragedy in UP

Agra: Four children drowned while taking a bath here in a pond Sunday morning, as five others who attempted to save them had to be rescued by police and locals, officials said. The incident occurred near the Yamuna Expressway under the Khandauli Police Station limits in Agra district. All four children were around 10-12 years of age, they said. The deceased children were identified as Hina, Khushi, Chandani and Riya.

Temple vandalised

Jammu: A temple was allegedly vandalised in a village on the outskirts of Jammu triggering protests by locals, police said Sunday, adding the perpetrator was caught within hours of the incident. This was the second such incident in the past week in Jammu region. Officials said some unidentified persons vandalised the place of worship in Narain Khoo area of Nagrota near Jammu late Saturday night. Locals protested and demanded stern action against the culprits.

Woman killed as BMW hits bike

Mumbai: A woman died after the two-wheeler on which she was travelling with her husband was hit by a BMW car in Mumbai's Worli area in the early hours of Sunday, a police official said. The woman, identified as Kaveri Nakhwa (45), was travelling with her husband Pradip on the arterial Annie Besant Road when the luxury car driver lost control at around 5:30am, the Worli police station official said. The driver of the car, Rajesh Shah, and one more occupant identified as Rajrishi Rajendrasingh Bidawat have been booked and detained, the Worli police station official said.



The statement of Minister of Home Affairs Shri Amit Shah regarding the tragedy in Assam shows a lack of knowledge and sincerity. More than 70 people have died due to the floods yet the Minister chooses to describe the current disaster as flood-like situation

GAURAV GOGOI | CONGRESS LEADER

SC TO HEAR NEET UG PLEAS TODAY

The Supreme Court will hear Monday a batch of pleas related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam NEET-UG 2024, including those alleging irregularities and malpractices in the May 5 test and seeking a direction to conduct it afresh



Congress slams govt over unemployment

RAMESH SHARED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT WHICH STATED THAT INDIA MUST CREATE 1.2CR JOBS PER YEAR FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS TO EMPLOY OUR YOUTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: The Congress Sunday alleged that the Modi government had accentuated India's "unemployment crisis" with the decimation of job-creating MSMEs through the "Tughlakian demonetisation, a hastily rushed GST, and rising imports from China".

In a statement, Congress general secretary, in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh cited a new report by Citigroup, a global bank, to flag "alarming numbers", which he claimed confirmed what the Congress stated throughout the recent election campaign.

"The Indian National Congress has been sounding the alarm on India's unemployment crisis for the past five years at least. The crisis has been accentuated with the decimation of job-creating MSMEs through the Tughlakian demonetisation, a hastily rushed through GST, and rising imports from China," Ramesh said.

'JOBLESS GROWTH'



With his economic policies that favour only large conglomerates, the non-biological prime minister has created India's highest unemployment rate in 45 years, with the unemployment rate for graduate youth at 42 per cent

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

"With his economic policies that favour only large conglomerates, the non-biological prime minister has created India's highest unemployment rate in 45 years, with the unemployment rate for graduate youth at 42 per cent," he said.

Ramesh shared highlights of the report which stated that India must create 1.2 crore jobs per year for the next 10 years to employ our youth.

"Even 7 per cent GDP growth will not create enough jobs for our youth - under the non-biological PM's government, we have averaged just 5.8 per cent GDP growth. The failing Modi economy is the root cause of the

unemployment crisis," Ramesh said. "There are 10 lakh central government job vacancies - which is not just a travesty for our educated youth, but a constraint on our government's functioning," he said.

Only 21 per cent of India's labour force has a salaried job, lower than the 24 per cent pre-Covid, Ramesh said, citing a report.

"The post-Covid recovery has been K-shaped - the billionaire class has been the only beneficiary, even as the road to the salaried middle class is disappearing," Ramesh claimed.

Rural wages in rural areas are decreasing by 1-1.5 per cent per year, he said, alleging that "Modi

is making rural Indians poorer".

The Citigroup report also finds that many "overhyped Modi schemes" have delivered absolutely no benefits on the ground, and provides suggestions for reform, Ramesh said.

Citing the report, he claimed that Skill India has been a complete failure with only 4.4 per cent of young Indians having any formal training.

"A new skilling initiative is desperately required - the Right to Apprenticeship? promised in the Indian National Congress's Nyay Patra is the need of the hour," Ramesh said.

"The MUDRA and SVANIDHI jumlas have completely failed to deliver credit to small businesses, and a 'large-scale revamp' is required," he said.

Indians working in low-wage service jobs are suffering, and a "living wage" law is a necessity, he said.

Ramesh said the Congress's guarantee of a national minimum wage of Rs 400/day would be a good start.

"India should be creating more jobs in the construction sector. The government should initiate a large-scale social housing programme," he further said in his statement.

"The non-biological PM and his drumbeating economists have consistently attacked the idea of jobless growth. The reality of what we have seen since 2014 is perhaps even more stark jobless growth," Ramesh said in the statement.

BSP LEADER MURDER

Mayawati says real culprits not arrested, demands CBI probe



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 7: BSP supremo Mayawati Sunday demanded a CBI probe into the death of her party's slain Tamil Nadu president K Armstrong, who was hacked to death here Friday.

She claimed those who have been arrested so far were not the real culprits and urged Chief Minister M K Stalin to refer the probe to the Central agency to ensure justice to the victim.

Mayawati, former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, paid homage to Armstrong here and placed a wreath before the body of the 52-year-old leader at a private school in Perambur in the city.

Expressing anguish over Armstrong's death, she also said the way he was killed, by a group of assailants late in the evening, showed "there was nothing called law and order" in the state.

CM Stalin must ensure justice for Armstrong and transfer the probe to the Central

The Madras High Court Sunday held a special sitting to hear a plea of the wife of slain Tamil Nadu BSP president K Armstrong, seeking to bury his body at the party office here. The HC allowed the burial to be held in neighbouring Tiruvallur district

Bureau of Investigation.

"The way he was killed, shows there is nothing called law and order in Tamil Nadu. Those who have killed him, the real culprits have not been nabbed," she said.

"The real culprits have not been nabbed. Transfer the probe to CBI. We are not hopeful that the state government will ensure justice. So, refer the matter to CBI immediately," she demanded.

INDIA bloc to raise loco pilots' issues in Parliament



Gandhi had met a group of loco pilots, who complained of 'inadequate rest due to understaffing'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Sunday flagged the plight of loco pilots and asserted that the INDIA bloc will raise its voice in Parliament to improve their rights and working conditions.

Gandhi's remarks on X came as he posted a video of his recent interaction with loco pilots at the New Delhi Railway Station.

"In Narendra Modi's government, the train of the life of loco pilots has been completely derailed," the former Congress chief said.

He said loco pilots are forced to work 16 hours a day sitting in cabins boiling with heat.

"The people on whom millions of lives depend have no confidence in their own lives. Deprived of even basic facilities like urinals, loco pilots have

no limit on working hours and neither do they get leaves. Due to which they are getting physically and mentally broken and are falling ill," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi.

In such a situation, making loco pilots drive trains is putting their lives and that of the passengers at risk, he said.

The Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will raise its voice in Parliament to improve the rights and working conditions of loco pilots, Gandhi asserted.

"By watching this small discussion, you can also feel their pain," Gandhi said as he shared the video of the interaction.

In the video, the loco pilots complain to Gandhi about lack of rest, no leaves and "inhuman working conditions".

All India Loco Running Staff Association's South Zone president Saturday had loco drivers handed a memorandum to Gandhi, blaming poor working conditions for recent train accidents.

Assam flood situation grim: 24 lakh affected



Villagers shift from a flood affected area to a safer place following heavy rainfall, in Nagaon district

PTI PHOTO

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam remained grim Sunday with close to 24 lakh people reeling under waters, official sources said. Several major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, were flowing over the danger level across the state. The toll in this year's flood, landslide and storm is at 70, the sources added. Twenty-nine districts were affected by flood, with Dhubri being the worst hit where more than 7.95 lakh people were reeling under waters. Among other severely affected districts are Cachar and Darrang, with over 1.50 lakh people hit in each of the districts. More than 53,000 people are taking shelter in 577 relief camps. Major rivers including the Brahmaputra were flowing over the danger level at multiple locations across the state from Jorhat to Dhubri. Other rivers like Burhidingeh, Dikhou, Disang, Dhansiri, Jia Bharali, Kopili, Barak and Sankosh have also breached the red mark in different places. Animals, including poultry, have also been affected in the deluge, with vast tracts of cropland also under water. Damage to infrastructure, including roads and bridges, have also been reported from different parts of the state, the sources said. A total of 129 wild animals have died so far at Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park due to the devastating flood, an official said Sunday.

North India lost 450 cubic km of groundwater in 2 decades

CLIMATE CHANGE, SHORTAGE OF RAINFALL, AND WARMING WINTERS WILL CAUSE FURTHER 'SUBSTANTIAL DECLINE' IN GROUNDWATER RECHARGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: About 450 cubic kilometres of groundwater was lost in northern India during 2002-2021 and climate change will further accelerate its depletion in the years to come, according to a new study.

This is about 37 times the quantity of water the Indira Nagar dam - India's largest reservoir - can hold at full capacity, lead author Vimal Mishra, Vikram Sarabhai Chair Professor of Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences at IIT Gandhinagar, said.

Using on-site observations, satellite data and models, researchers found that across north India, rainfall in the monsoon season (June to September) has reduced by 8.5 per cent during 1951-2021. Winters in the region have become warmer by 0.3 degrees Celsius over the same period, they found.

The team, comprising researchers from the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) in Hyderabad, said lesser rainfall during the monsoons and warming of winters will increase irrigation water demand and reduce groundwater recharge, further stressing the already depleting groundwater resource in north India.

While a drier monsoon leads to more reliance on groundwater to sustain crops during rainfall-deficit periods, warmer winters result in relatively drier soils, again requiring more irrigation - something the researchers observed during the unusually warm winter of 2022, the fifth warmest for India since the India Meteorological Department started records in 1901.

"The accelerating trend of depleting groundwater is expected to continue as the planet warms



because even though climate change causes more rainfall, most of it is projected to occur in the form of extreme events, which does not support groundwater replenishment," Mishra told PTI.

The shortage of rainfall in the monsoons followed by warming winters, both driven by climate change, is projected to cause a "substantial decline" by about 6-12 per cent in groundwater recharge. The study's manuscript, accepted for pub-

lishing in the journal Earth's Future, was shared exclusively with PTI.

Changes in groundwater levels are known to be largely dependent on rainfall received during summer monsoons and groundwater pumped out for irrigating crops during their respective growing seasons - June to September for Kharif crops and December to March for Rabi.

The combined effect of intensified irrigation demands

under continued warming, monsoons drier by 10-15 per cent and winters warmer by 1-5 degrees Celsius will together spike irrigation water demands by 6-20 per cent

A warming of 1-3 degrees Celsius across north India will also hamper groundwater replenishment considerably by 7-10 per cent

and reduced groundwater recharge in the future, therefore, can put more strain on an already fast-depleting resource, he said.

The findings challenge the optimistic perception that climate change-driven increase in rainfall will solve our water problems, the lead author of the study said.

In 2009, a monsoon drier by almost 20 per cent, followed by an unusual winter that was warmer by a degree, had "detrimental" effects on groundwater storage - it had reduced by 10 per cent, the authors found.

Moisture lost from soil during winters also was found to have significantly increased over the past four decades, suggesting the potential role of warming and

stepped-up demands in irrigation. The authors have projected that under continued warming, monsoons drier by 10-15 per cent and winters warmer by 1-5 degrees Celsius will together spike irrigation water demands by 6-20 per cent.

A warming of 1-3 degrees Celsius across north India will also hamper groundwater replenishment considerably by 7-10 per cent, they said.

"The findings have policy implications as the water crisis witnessed during this year's heatwave highlights the need for cautious and judicious exploitation of the groundwater," Mishra said.

Groundwater, vital for food and water security in India, will become a more crucial resource in a warmer climate because of increased demands for irrigation and industry alike, the author said.

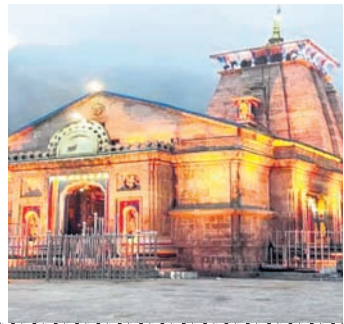
"This is because surface water storage, such as in reservoirs and dams, is insufficient to meet demands during summer, as seen in cities such as Delhi and Bengaluru. Not paying attention to the resource could pose water security challenges in the future," Mishra added.



Greetings on the start of the sacred Rath Yatra. We bow to Mahaprabhu Jagannath and pray that His blessings constantly remain upon us
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

RAIN ALERT: CHARDHAM YATRA PUT ON HOLD

The Chardham yatra was temporarily suspended Sunday in view of the Weather department's prediction of heavy to very heavy rains in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand July 7-8. Garhwal Commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey said it has been decided to postpone the Yatra for the safety of pilgrims



of the day quote

I know this government (in Karnataka is) unnecessarily quarrelling with the Central government. First of all, I request the Karnataka government that -- quarrelling will not help. Or throwing mud against the Central government will not help. Whatever is the issue, come, discuss with us

The Congress has no moral right to speak on corruption. We saw scams in coal allotment, Commonwealth Games, Augusta helicopter purchase etc. Congress rule was about cut, commission and corruption

Not accepting the mandate, showing intolerance, abusing Sanatan Dharma. The public has made them sit in the opposition three times in a row but look at their arrogance

X POST OF THE DAY

Dhankar: Criticised Chidambaram's statement that part-timers drafted the three criminal laws was an 'inexcusable insult to the wisdom of Parliament'. We are all part-timers Dhankar ji! And who insults parliamentary procedures on a daily basis? Not us!

SHORT TAKES

Delhi records year's lowest AQI at 56

New Delhi: The AQI in the national capital was recorded at its lowest of the year at 56, with the air quality in the "satisfactory" category for the entire first week of July, according to monitoring agencies. Delhi's AQI (Air Quality Index) was under 100 for seven days in June and has improved further due to the weather in July. The AQI was recorded in the "satisfactory" category with a reading of 56 at 6 pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. The AQI has been in the "satisfactory" category from July 1-7, with Sunday being the lowest of the year. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe". The city recorded a maximum temperatures of 35.8 degree Celsius Sunday, 0.8 notch below the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Three killed, 8 hurt in building collapse

Deoghar: At least three persons were killed and eight others were injured after being buried under the debris of a two-storey building that collapsed in Jharkhand's Deoghar district Sunday, officials said. The rescue operation that began at 6 am concluded around 4 pm, they said. Deoghar Deputy Commissioner Vishal Sagar said 11 people were trapped under the rubble after the building collapsed in the town early this morning. "Four children were rescued by the local people. We immediately deployed a National Disaster Response Force team which retrieved seven people from under the debris," Sagar said.

HATHRAS STAMPEDE

RAHUL WRITES TO UP CM

The Leader of Opposition seeks increase in compensation for families of victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to increase the amount of compensation for the victims of the Hathras stampede and demanded that those responsible for the incident be given severe punishment.

In a letter to Adityanath, the former Congress chief said the compensation should be given as soon as possible and the injured be given proper treatment.

A total of 121 people, mostly women, died in the stampede at self-styled godman Baba Bhole's 'satsang' in Hathras Tuesday.

Gandhi had met the victims of the stampede in Hathras here Friday morning.

Adityanath earlier announced that the families of the deceased would receive Rs 2 lakh each and the injured would receive Rs 50,000 each in compensation.

In his letter to Adityanath dated July 6, Gandhi said, "The compensation announced by the Uttar Pradesh government is very inadequate. I urge that the amount of compensation be increased and it should be given as soon as possible."

At the same time, the injured should be given proper treatment and they should also be given proper compensation, the Congress leader said.

"I am shocked by the news of the death of more than 120 people in the stampede incident in Hathras. I am writing this letter to you with pain in my heart and I know that you too must be feeling the same pain," he said.

NTA to hold CUET-UG retest if grievances found correct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: The National Testing Agency will conduct a retest for CUET-UG candidates from July 15 to 19 if any grievance raised by them about the conduct of the exam is found correct, officials said Sunday.

The NTA also announced the answer key for the undergraduate entrance exam, paving the way for the announcement of the results, albeit delayed.

The candidates can submit their challenges for the answer key by 6 pm July 9, a senior NTA official said.

The NTA is also addressing public grievances regarding the exam conducted for CUET-UG that were received up to June 30. If a grievance is found genuine, the NTA is committed to redoing the exam for these candi-



Cans of poisonous substance in crowd triggered stampede: Bhole Baba's lawyer

Self-styled godman Bhole Baba's lawyer AP Singh alleged Sunday that witnesses told him some people opened cans containing a poisonous substance in the crowd during the July 2 Hathras 'satsang', triggering the stampede. Addressing a press conference in Delhi, Singh also alleged a conspiracy, which he attributed to Bhole Baba's "rising popularity", behind the stampede. "Witnesses have reached out to me and said there were 15-16 people carrying cans of a poisonous substance that they opened in the crowd. I have seen post-mortem reports of those killed and it showed that they died of asphyxiation and not because of injuries," Singh claimed. Alleging a conspiracy behind the stampede, he said, "There were vehicles parked at the site to help the men escape. We have proof and we will submit it. This is the first time I am speaking about it." Singh claimed the witnesses who reached out to him requested anonymity. "We will demand security for them."

Gandhi said he had met many aggrieved families of Aligarh and Hathras districts and tried to share their pain.

"The victim families also shared with me that the negligence and insensitivity of the local administration is responsible for this entire incident. A proper and transparent investigation in this case will not only

be a step towards preventing such incidents in the future, but it will also restore the faith of these victim families in the justice system," the Congress leader said.

From the viewpoint of justice, it is also necessary that the guilty persons be given "severe punishment", Gandhi said.

"In this hour of grief, it is the responsibility of all of us to sup-

'Dreaming of Khalsa Raj not a crime'

AMRITPAL DISOWNS MOTHER'S STATEMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 7: Radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh has distanced himself from his mother's statement in which she had said that her son was not a Khalistani supporter, according to a statement issued by the Khadoor Sahib MP.

"When I came to know about the statement made by 'Mata ji' (mother) yesterday, I felt hurt. Though I believe that 'Mata ji' made this statement unknowingly, even then such a statement should never come from my family or anyone who supports me," read the statement issued by Singh through his team Saturday night.

"Dreaming of 'Khalsa Raj' is not a crime but a matter of pride. Lakhs of Sikhs sacrificed their lives to fulfill this dream and we cannot think of stepping aside from this path. I have said many times from stages that if ever I had to choose between 'Panth' and family then I will



always choose the 'Panth'," said the statement issued under the title 'official statement by Bhai Amritpal Singh'.

Singh's mother Balwinder Kaur Friday, when he took oath as a member of Lok Sabha, had told reporters in Amritsar that her son is not a Khalistani supporter and demanded that he be released immediately so that he can work on the issues on which he fought the elections.

Kaur later in a video message said the media twisted her statement. In his statement, the jailed 'Waris Punjab De' chief also said, "It fits well with a historical incident in which Sikhs accompanying Banda Singh

FESTIVE FERVOUR



Devotees take part in the annual Rath Yatra, in Ahmedabad



Artists perform during Rath Yatra organised by ISKCON, in Kolkata



The chariot carrying the idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra is seen during ISKCON 'Rath Yatra', in Surat

FIR against Moitra for 'derogatory' post on NCW chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Delhi Police has registered an FIR against TMC Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra for her "derogatory" social media remark on National Commission for Women chief Rekha Sharma, officials said Sunday.

Moitra was booked under Section 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that deals with a word, gesture or act intended to insult modesty of a woman. This was the first FIR registered under the BNS by the Delhi Police's Special Cell since it came into force July 1.



The Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader commented on a video posted on X that showed Sharma arriving at the site of a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras July 4. Moitra later deleted the post, which referred to a man holding an umbrella and walking behind the National Commission for Women (NCW) chief.

A senior officer said the FIR was registered on the basis of a complaint to the police commissioner by the NCW.

"The commission is mandated to monitor and look into the matters relating to deprivation of women's rights... and provide protection to women," the officer said, referring to the FIR's contents.

Saying the NCW took suo motu cognisance of Moitra's "derogatory remarks", the FIR stated, "The crude remarks made by Moitra are extremely outrageous and a sheer violation of a woman's right to live with dignity."

According to the officer, the commission observed that the remark attracted Section 79 of the BNS. "The commission strongly condemns the defamatory remarks made by Moitra. Therefore, you are requested to take strict action against Moitra... a detailed action-taken report may be communicated to the commission within three days," the FIR stated.

Moitra's now-deleted comment drew a sharp response from the BJP, with the saffron party demanding that she be "sacked" from the TMC.

Heavy rains in early July bridges monsoon deficit

INDIA, WORLD'S TOP PRODUCER OF CRITICAL CROPS SUCH AS RICE, WHEAT AND SUGARCANE, LOGGED A RAINFALL DEFICIT OF 11% IN JUNE, WITH NORTHWEST INDIA RECORDING A SHORTFALL OF 33%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Heavy rainfall across large parts of India has compensated for the June deficit, bringing the overall monsoon precipitation into the surplus category.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), more spells of heavy to very heavy rain are likely over northwest India and the western parts of the peninsular India during the next two-three days and over the northeast during the next five days.

India, the world's top producer of critical crops such as rice, wheat and sugarcane, logged a rainfall deficit of 11 per cent in June, with northwest India recording a shortfall of 33 per cent.

Heavy rain in the first week of July compensated for the shortfall but caused flooding in many northeastern states.

Since the four-month monsoon season began June 1, the country has received 214.9 mm

of rainfall against a normal of 213.3 mm, according to IMD data.

Northwest India and the southern peninsula have recorded 3 per cent and 13 per cent above-normal rainfall, respectively.

The heavy rain in the east and northeast region has reduced the deficit from 13 per cent June 30 to zero July 6.

The rainfall deficit in central India has decreased from 14 per cent to 6 per cent during this period.

The IMD data showed that 23 per cent of the sub-divisional area of the country experienced excess to large excess rainfall, 67 per cent received normal rainfall, and only 10 per cent experienced deficient rainfall.

After making an early onset over Kerala and the northeastern region May 30, and progressing normally up to Maharashtra, the monsoon lost momentum.

This delayed the rains in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh and exacerbated the impact of a scorching heatwave in northwest India.



Monsoonal winds stalled from June 10 to June 18 and made slow progress until June 26-27. The annual rain-bearing system covered a major part of northwest India after June 25, according to IMD data.

The northeastern states are already grappling with severe floods.

Assam's flood situation remains critical, with over 2.45 million people affected and 52 lives lost in the second wave of flooding this year.

Heavy rainfall in Manipur, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh has caused rivers to reach warning levels and triggered landslides.

The IMD earlier this week

The Weather department said heavy rainfall will continue in northeast India over the next five days

international



It is evident that democracy is not in good health in today's world. Ideologies are seductive. Some people compare them to the Pied Piper of Hamelin. They seduce you, but they lead you to deny yourself
POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

ELEPHANTS GO OUT OF CONTROL

A Hindu religious festival in Sri Lanka ended in chaos after an elephant in the procession panicked, with 13 people in the crowd injured as they fled, police said Sunday



of the day quote

Production from local reserves will save Pakistan's valuable foreign exchange and fuel and gas will become affordable for the common man
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

Only one leader possesses the knowledge to solve Sri Lanka's economic crisis. That is Ranil Wickremesinghe. He has proved it with his actions
RUWAN WIJEWARDENE | FORMER MP, SRI LANKA

While sending a strong message against military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, (we) will discuss ways for cooperation with NATO to respond to this
KIM TAE-HYO | PRINCIPAL DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, SOUTH KOREA

Gaza war marks 9 months

ISRAELI PROTESTERS BLOCK HIGHWAYS, CALL FOR CEASE-FIRE TO RETURN HOSTAGES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv, July 7: Marking nine months since the war in Gaza started, Israeli protesters blocked highways across the country Sunday, calling on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to step down and pushing for a cease-fire that could bring back the hostages held by Hamas.

The demonstrations come as international mediators have renewed efforts to broker a deal. Hamas over the weekend appeared to have dropped a key demand for an Israeli commitment to end the war, according to Egyptian and Hamas officials who spoke to The Associated Press.

Sunday's "Day of Disruption" started at 6:29 am, the moment that Hamas militants launched the first rockets toward Israel in October. Protesters blocked main roads and demonstrated outside of the homes of members of Israel's Parliament.

Near the border with Gaza, Israeli protesters released 1,500 black and yellow balloons to



symbolize those who were killed and abducted.

Hannah Golan said she came to protest the "devastating abandonment of our communities by our government." She added "It's nine months today, to this black day, and still nobody in our government takes responsibility."

About 120 hostages remain captive after more than 100 hostages were released as part of a November cease-fire deal. Israel has already concluded that more than 40 of the remaining hostages are dead,

and fears spread the number may grow as the war drags on.

The Israeli Prime Minister had previously said while he was open to pausing the war as part of a hostage deal, Israel would press on until it reached its goals of destroying Hamas' military and governing capabilities and bringing home all those held captive by Hamas.

Meanwhile, fighting in Gaza continued, with nine Palestinians reported dead from Israeli strikes overnight and into the early

Israeli strike kills 16

At least 16 people were killed in an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in central Gaza Saturday, the Palestinian health ministry said, in an attack Israel said had targeted militants. The health ministry said the attack on the school in Al-Nuseirat killed at least 16 people and wounded more than 50. The Israeli military said it took precautions to minimize risk to civilians before it targeted the gunmen who were using the area as a hideout to plan and carry out attacks against soldiers. Hamas denied its fighters were there.

hours of Sunday.

Six Palestinians were killed in central Gaza after a strike hit a house in the town of Zawaida, according to the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. Another Israeli airstrike early Sunday hit a house west of Gaza City, killing another 3 people, the strip's Hamas-linked civil defense said.

France votes with far right seeking power



It is the highest midday turnout level since 1981, pollster Harris Interactive and Ipsos says

REUTERS

Paris, July 7: Voter turnout in France's Parliamentary run-off election Sunday rose sharply from the last time in 2022 in a ballot that could see the far-right National Rally (RN) emerge as the strongest force.

Although the RN is expected to win the most seats in the National Assembly, the latest opinion polls indicated it may fall short of an absolute majority.

A hung Parliament would severely dent President Emmanuel Macron's authority and herald a prolonged period of instability and policy deadlock in the euro zone's second-biggest economy.

Should the nationalist, eurosceptic RN secure a majority, it would usher in France's first far-right government since World War Two and send shockwaves through the European Union at a time populist parties are strengthening support across the continent.

Turnout stood at 26.3% by around noon, up from 18.99% during the second voting round in 2022, the interior ministry said, highlighting the population's extreme interest in an election that has highlighted polarised views in France.

It was the highest midday turnout level since 1981, pollster Harris Interactive and Ipsos said.

Voting closes at 6 pm in towns and small cities and 8 pm in bigger cities. Pollsters will deliver initial projections based on early counts from a sample of voting stations at 8 pm.

"The country is facing three radically opposed views of society", said Olivier Grimal, a retiree, as he walked towards his polling site in the middle-class town of Conflans Sainte-Honorine, west of Paris, with his wife.

"There's the far right, there is Macronism which in my view has also dangerous and has dictatorial tendencies and then there's the left which is also not great," he said.

Opinion polls forecast Marine Le Pen's RN will emerge the dominant force in the National Assembly as voters punish Macron over a cost of living crisis and being out of touch with the hardships people face.

However, the RN is seen failing to reach the 289-seat target that would outright hand Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella the Prime Minister's job with a working majority.

The far right's projected margin of victory has narrowed since Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) pulled scores of candidates from three-way races in the second round in a bid to unify the anti-RN vote.

"France is on the cliff-edge and we don't know if we're going to jump," Raphael Glucksman, a member of the European Parliament who led France's leftist ticket in last month's European vote, told France Inter radio last week.

SHORT TAKES

Heavy rain in Nepal kills 11

Kathmandu: Heavy rains triggered landslides and flash floods killing at least 11 people in the last 36 hours in Nepal and blocking key highways and roads, officials said Sunday. Eight people were missing, either washed away by floods or buried in landslides, while 12 others were injured and being treated in hospitals, police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki said. "Rescue workers are trying to clear the landslides and open the roads," Karki told Reuters. At least 50 people across Nepal have died in landslides, floods and lightning strikes since mid-June when annual monsoon rains started.

Iranian naval destroyer sinks

Tehran: Iranian naval destroyer has sunk while it was being repaired in a port near the Strait of Hormuz, state media reported Sunday. State-run IRNA news agency reported that the Sahand destroyer, being repaired at a wharf lost its balance due to water infiltration into the tanks. The agency added that due to the low depth in the waters, it is possible to bring back the destroyer to balance. It also reported that injured people were transferred to hospital.

Afghan bid to stabilise currency

Kabul: Afghanistan's central bank announced in a statement that it will inject \$15 million Monday into the local market to boost the national currency afghani. "The bidders including moneychangers and private banks should deposit the necessary money in cash in the form of afghani in the central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank," the statement added, reports Xinhua news agency. According to the statement, the bank was requesting all eligible banks, foreign exchanges and monetary service providers to participate in the auction.

Ukraine hits arms depot inside Russia

Kyiv: Ukrainian drones hit a munitions depot inside Russia overnight and there was a "high chance" of explosions at Russian military-industrial sites in the near future, a security source said Sunday. The source, who asked to remain anonymous, told Reuters the 9,000 sq. metre munitions storage facility was in the Russian region of Voronezh, which borders a chunk of northeastern Ukraine occupied by Russia since 2022.

FIRST KYIV VISIT

Dutch mins pledge support for Ukraine

REUTERS

Kyiv, July 7: The newly appointed Dutch defence and foreign affairs ministers have said the Netherlands' support for Ukraine is "rock solid".

The Netherlands has been a key ally to Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022, but a far-right election victory last year cast doubt on its commitment.

On their first visit to Kyiv, Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans and Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp held meetings with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other senior Ukrainian officials.

"My message to all the officials in the Ukrainian government is that the Netherlands stands by Ukraine and will continue to support Ukraine in political, military, financial and moral ways," Veldkamp told Reuters.

Brekelmans said active work was underway to supply F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine and help further strengthen its air defences.

"I wanted to stress that our support for Ukraine is rock-solid. Our support to Ukraine is beyond any doubt," Brekelmans told Reuters as he stood in the center of Kyiv near an open-air exhibition of destroyed Russian military equipment.

The Netherlands has been one of the driving forces behind an international coalition to supply Ukraine with F-16s. The outgoing Dutch government has said that the first of 24 promised jets would be supplied soon.

Brekelmans declined to give any details or specific dates for security reasons.



Indian Navy personnel pose for a photo upon their arrival for the multinational maritime exercise RIMPAC 2024, in Hawaii, USA

Sri Lanka to lift ban on foreign research ships from next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, July 7: Sri Lanka has decided to lift from next year a ban on the visit of foreign research ships imposed after strong security concerns raised by India and the US following frequent docking requests from hi-tech Chinese surveillance vessels, the Japanese media reported.

The change in position was conveyed by visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry to the NHK World Japan.

With the increased movement of Chinese research vessels in the Indian Ocean, New Delhi had expressed concern that those might be spy ships and urged Colombo not to allow such vessels to dock at its ports.

After India raised concern, Sri Lanka banned the entry of

foreign research vessels from docking at its port in January. Earlier this year, it had made an exception for a Chinese vessel but said the ban would continue otherwise.

Sabry said his government cannot have different rules for different countries and only block China. He added that his country will not take sides in a dispute between others, the NHK World Japan said in a report Friday.

The moratorium is till January next year. Sri Lanka will then no longer ban foreign research ships from its ports next year, Sabry said.

Two Chinese spy ships were allowed to dock in Sri Lanka ports within 14 months through November 2023, with one called for replenishment and the other for research.

POST POLL VICTORY

Starmer seeks 'immediate reset' with UK nations

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London, July 7: Newly-elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer Sunday began a whistlestop tour of UK nations, promising an "immediate reset" of relations with the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Starmer was due to meet Scotland's First Minister and leader of the pro-separatist Scottish National Party (SNP) John Swinney in Edinburgh ahead of trips to Cardiff and Belfast expected Monday.

The meeting comes as the SNP was almost wiped out at last week's election which put Starmer's Labour Party in power by a landslide. Labour, which crushed Rishi Sunak's ruling Conservatives at the polls, also overturned more



than a decade of SNP domination in Scotland by capturing the majority of its 57 seats.

Swinney lamented a "very, very difficult and damaging" election result for his party.

He had set the party's sights on winning 29 seats as a mandate for reopening negotiations with the British government for another independence referendum, but it returned only nine MPs. "Seat at the table" Under ex-premier Tony Blair,

Labour was the architect of devolving power to the regions in the late 1990s with the setting up of Parliaments or national assemblies in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. But under the Conservatives leaders in the three capitals complained that they were increasingly sidelined.

Starmer said disagreement could be turned into cooperation "and a genuine seat at the table" to deliver the UK-wide change he has promised.

"That begins today with an immediate reset of my government's approach to working with the first and deputy first ministers, because meaningful cooperation centred on respect will be key to delivering change across our United Kingdom."

Khan conspiring in prison to spread anarchy, claims PM's aide

THE AIDE SAYS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO AUDIO OR VIDEO EVIDENCE OF THE PLANNING BUT THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE AND PERFORMING DUTIES THERE HAVE THEM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 7: Jailed former premier Imran Khan was hatching plots inside the prison to create another "political chaos" in Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's advisor on political and public affairs has claimed.

Speaking on Geo News programme 'Naya Pakistan,' for-

mer interior minister Rana Sanaullah said that 71-year-old founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party was not permitted by the court to hold political meetings at the high-security Adiala Jail.

Khan, who faces over 200 cases and has been convicted in a few of them, has been in jail since August last year.

Sanaullah, who is the Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs, claimed that the PTI founder is not allowed to make such plans to create chaos while sitting in jail.

He claimed that evidence available with authorities concerned solidifies the claims of such planning underway in the jail.

The PM's aide, however, said that the government has no audio or video evidence of the planning "but those who are responsible and performing duties there have them".



Sanaullah's statement came after the leaders of the former ruling party said they were denied permission to meet the party's incarcerated founder in Adiala Jail despite waiting for a few hours outside the facility earlier this week.

Commenting on the planned rally by Khan's party in

Islamabad, the PML-N senior leader said that the PTI's decision to hold a power show in Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar which starts from Monday, was inappropriate.

PTI Saturday postponed its rally in the suburbs of Islamabad after revocation of its permission by the authorities, citing secu-

rity concerns. The party was set to organise its power show at Tarnol at 6 pm for which it had secured a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Islamabad deputy commissioner.

However, the city administration Friday cancelled the permission saying the NOC issued by the deputy commissioner was reviewed afresh in the wake of security concerns.

Earlier in the day, Khan's party filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking contempt proceedings against the Islamabad district administration and police for cancelling the NOC.

It stated that the party had approached the IHC for permission for the rally and during the hearing of its petition, the court was told by the administration that permission had been granted for the rally.

Separately, an anti-terrorism court has reserved its decision on Khan's interim bail requests related to the May 9 incidents, including the Jinnah House case and two other cases, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

During the hearing Saturday, Khan's counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar, argued that the PTI founder was being targeted for political reasons.

"In my entire career, I have never seen so many cases against a single individual. Those who were actually inciting against institutions at the scene were not arrested," Safdar alleged.

"How could a case be filed against him when he was in custody at the time of the crime?" the PTI chief's counsel questioned.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the court reserved its judgement on Khan's interim bail requests.

business



Rural demand continues to see gradual but slight green shoots as real rural wages remain muted

ABNEESH ROY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESEARCH), NUVAMA INSTITUTIONAL EQUITIES

INDIA-UK FTA TALKS THIS MONTH

With the new government taking charge in Britain, senior officials of India and the UK will hold the next round of talks this month for the proposed free trade agreement to resolve the pending issues and close the negotiations, an official said. The India-UK talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles



of the day quote

India's Union budget in July is a key event, with hopes pinned on growth-oriented policies and development of monsoon season, which will also be significant points of interest for investors and traders

PRAVESH GOUR | SENIOR TECHNICAL ANALYST, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

The company's commitment to clean energy goes far beyond this single pump. Plans are afoot to open a total of 5,000 green diesel and CBG pumps across the country in multiple phases over the next 10 years, with each pump costing around Rs 3 crore

PIVUSH DWIVEDI | CHAIRMAN, NEXGEN ENERGIA

The major rise in housing prices in the NCR region over the past five years reflects a robust demand driven by infrastructural developments and enhanced connectivity. This trend underscores the region's potential for sustainable growth and investment opportunities

AMAR SARIN | MD AND CEO, TARC

SHORT TAKES

Coal import rises 5%

New Delhi: India's coal import rose 5.3 per cent to 52.29 million tonne (MT) in the first two months of the ongoing fiscal as against the year-ago period. The country's coal import was 49.62 MT in April and May in FY24, according to data compiled by mjunction services ltd -- a B2B e-commerce platform from a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL. However, coal import in May dropped marginally to 26.19 MT, from 26.57 MT a year earlier. "Coal imports... were down 1.43 per cent as against 26.57 MT imported in May 2023," it said. According to mjunction MD and CEO Vinaya Varma, the demand for imports is likely to remain subdued in the coming weeks due to the onset of monsoon while the production growth should stay healthy in the domestic market.

PSB to open 100 arms

New Delhi: State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank (PSB) plans to open 100 branches across the country in the current financial year as part of the strategy to expand its reach. During the year, the bank also plans to add 100 new ATMs to its network. "With the addition of 100 branches, the total number of branches would reach 1,665 by the end of 2024-25, and similarly, the number of ATMs would touch 1,135," Punjab & Sind Bank Managing Director Swarup Kumar Saha told PTI. The bank will continue to focus on branch expansion, and new branches would come up in areas other than the northern region, he said.

ADANI ROW

Hindenburg vs Sebi gets uglier

The US short-seller shared Adani report with client two months before publishing it, says Sebi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: US short-seller Hindenburg Research had shared an advance copy of its damning report against Adani group with New York-based hedge fund manager Mark Kingdon about two months before publishing it and profited from a deal to share spoils from share price movement, according to market regulator Sebi.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), in its 46-page show cause notice to Hindenburg, detailed how the US short seller, the New York hedge fund and a broker tied to Kotak Mahindra Bank benefited from the over \$150 billion routs in the market value of Adani group's 10 listed firms post-publication of the report.

Sebi charged Hindenburg of making "unfair" profits from "collusion" to use "non-public" and "misleading" information and induce "panic selling" in Adani Group stocks.

KOTAK TWIST
Hindenburg, which made public the Sebi notice, in its response, has described the show cause as an attempt to "silence and intimidate those who expose corruption and fraud perpetrated by the most powerful individuals in India" and revealed that the vehicle used to bet against Adani's flagship firm Adani Enterprises Ltd belonged to Kotak Mahindra (International) Ltd (KMIL), a Mauritius-based subsidiary of Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

KMIL's fund placed bets on Adani Enterprises Ltd for its client Kingdon's Kingdon Capital



Management.

Sebi notice includes extracts of time-stamped chats between an employee of the hedge fund and KMIL traders for selling future contracts in AEL.

Kotak Mahindra Bank has stated that Kingdon "never disclosed that they had any relationship with Hindenburg nor that they were acting on the basis of any price-sensitive information".

CHINA LINK
Senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani, who had in the past spoken for the Adani group, in a post on X claimed that Kingdon had a Chinese link.

Kingdon is married to "Chinese spy" Anla Cheng, he claimed.

"Accomplished Chinese spy Anla Cheng, who along with her husband Mark Kingdon, hired Hindenburg for a research report on Adani, engaged the services of Kotak to facilitate a trading account to short sell Adani shares; made millions of dollars from their short selling; eroded Adani market cap enormously," he alleged.

K INDIA FUND
Kingdon, which had a controlling stake in KMIL's K-India Opportunities Fund Ltd, had a pact to share with Hindenburg 30 per cent of profit made from trading in securities based on the report, the Sebi letter said, adding this profit share was cut to 25 per cent due to the extra time and effort needed to reroute trades via the K India fund.

The market regulator said Kingdon transferred \$43 million in two tranches to build short positions in AEL. The K India fund

According to show-cause notice, Kingdon had a pact with Hindenburg. The research firm was to receive 30% of any gains from trading securities based on its research. However, for Adani short-selling, they had trimmed down the cut to 25%

built short positions for 8,50,000 shares ahead of the report release and squared off these positions soon after the report was released.

According to Sebi, Hindenburg published a report titled 'Adani Group: How the World's 3rd Richest Man is Pulling The Largest Con in Corporate History' January 24, 2023 during pre-market hours.

"Prior to the release of the Hindenburg Report, concentration in short-selling activity was observed in the derivatives of Adani Enterprises Ltd," it said. "Pursuant to the release of the said report, the price of AEL fell by around 59 per cent during the period from January 24, 2023 to February 22, 2023" -- from Rs 3,422 to Rs 14,04.85 per share.

Sebi said K India Opportunities Fund Ltd - Class F (KIOF Class F) opened a trading account and started trading in the scrip of AEL just a few days prior to the publication of the report and then squared off its entire short position post-publication of the Hindenburg Report, making significant profits of Rs 183.23 crore

(\$22.25 million).

"The net profit after trading and legal expenses comes to \$22.11 million," Sebi said.

As part of the deal, Kingdon owned Hindenburg \$5.5 million, of which \$4.1 million had been paid as of June 1, the notice said.

In its response to Sebi, Kingdon Capital said it had got legal option that it could "enter into a research services agreement with a third-party firm that publicly releases short reports on companies, pursuant to which Kingdon Capital would be given a draft copy of the report before it is made publicly available and would have the opportunity to accordingly made investments before the report's public dissemination".

A show-cause notice is often a precursor to formal legal action that may include imposing financial penalties and barring participation in the Indian capital market. Sebi can also seek government help to geoblock the research firm's website.

Sebi has given Hindenburg 21 days to respond to its allegations.

Hindenburg, which published the Sebi notice on its website, in its response stated that it made just \$4.1 million from its declared positions on Adani stocks and criticised the regulator for not focusing its investigation into the January 2023 report "providing evidence" of the conglomerate creating "a vast network of offshore shell entities" and moving billions of dollars "surreptitiously" into and out of Adani public and private entities.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most-valued firms jumps ₹1.83 lakh cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 1,83,290.36 crore in market valuation last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers, in line with a rally in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 963.87 points, or 1.21 per cent.

The market valuation of TCS jumped Rs 38,894.44 crore to Rs 14,51,739.53 crore, becoming the biggest gainer among the top-10 firms.

Infosys added Rs 33,320.03 crore taking its valuation to Rs 6,83,922.13 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries climbed Rs 32,611.36 crore to Rs 21,51,562.56 crore and that of ICICI Bank zoomed Rs 23,676.78 crore to Rs 8,67,878.66 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) rallied Rs 16,950.99 crore to Rs 6,42,524.89 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever surged Rs 16,917.06 crore to Rs 5,98,487.89 crore.

The mcap of ITC went up by Rs 10,924.13 crore to Rs 5,41,399.95 crore. State Bank of India's valuation climbed Rs 9,995.57 crore to Rs 7,67,561.25 crore.

However, the market valuation of HDFC Bank's mcap fell Rs 26,970.79 crore to Rs 12,53,894.64 crore. The mcap of Bharti Airtel declined Rs 8,735.49 crore to Rs 8,13,794.86 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC.

Small firms see sharp surge in digital deals

This shows an improved use of IT and digital platforms and indicates a fast rate of digitisation in the unincorporated enterprises

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 7: The use of internet for entrepreneurial purposes such as taking and placing orders online, carrying out transactions online or using UPIs by unincorporated enterprises has increased to 13.5 per cent from 7.7 in rural and to 30.2 per cent from 21.6 in urban sector during 2022-23, according to the latest survey released by the Ministry of Statistics.

This shows an improved use of IT and digital platforms and indicates a fast rate of digitisation in the sector, the annual survey of the unincorporated sector enterprises says.

According to the survey, the unincorporated sector has witnessed growth in the estimated number of establishments by 5.88 per cent, in the estimated number of workers by 7.84 per cent and in gross value added by



9.83 per cent.

The sector has also demonstrated enhanced capital investment, greater accessibility to loans, and increased utilisation of information technology.

Fixed assets owned by an unincorporated non-agricultural establishment, on average, have risen from Rs 2.81 lakh in 2021-22 to Rs 3.18 lakh in 2022-23 showing an improved capital investment in the sector. At the same time, outstanding loan per establishment has increased from Rs 37,408 in 2021-22 to Rs 50,138 in 2022-23, indicating an improvement in the availability of loans in this sector, the report noted.

The survey also points out that about 54 per cent of the proprietary establishments in the manufacturing sector were run by women entrepreneurs.

FM wraps up Budget consultations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has concluded consultations with various stakeholders, including representatives of industry and social sectors, as part of the Budget preparation exercise.

Sitharaman will present her seventh Budget July 23. This would be the first full budget of Modi 3.0 which is going to set the path for Vikshit Bharat (developed India) by 2047.

Last month, President Droupadi Murmu, while delivering her address to the joint sitting of Parliament, had said that many historic steps and major economic decisions will be taken in the upcoming budget session.

In her first address to the joint sitting of Parliament since the constitution of the 18th Lok Sabha, the President said, "This budget will be an effective document of the government's far-reaching policies and futuristic vision".

"Along with major economic and social decisions, many historic steps will also be seen in this budget," she said.

The Finance Ministry in a statement said the pre-budget consultations for Union Budget 2024-25 that started from June 19 onward concluded July 5, 2024.

FY25 BUDGET TO BE PRESENTED JULY 23



In the course of in-person consultations, more than 120 invitees across 10 stakeholder groups, including experts and representatives from farmer associations and agriculture economists; trade unions; education &

health sector; employment & skilling; MSME; trade & services; industry; economists; financial sector & capital markets; as well as, infrastructure, energy and urban sector, participated in the meetings, it said.

These meetings chaired by the Finance Minister witnessed the participation of Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary; Finance Secretary and Secretary Expenditure, TV Somanathan; Economic Affairs Secretary, Ajay Seth, DIPAM Secretary, Tuhin K Pandey, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi and Revenue Secretary, Sanjay Malhotra

Don't treat hotels as luxury: Hospitality

Hospitality players want the government to accord infrastructure status to hotels to make investments on new properties more attractive rather than categorising them as luxury or even 'sin goods' in the upcoming Union Budget considering the sector's potential to play a key role in India's growth. They also want the government to consider incentives in the form of tax breaks or subsidies for adopting sustainable and eco-friendly practices, while asserting that the upcoming budget must accelerate the tourism agenda saying it is an opportunity to make Indian hospitality the emerging engine for GDP growth and employment generation. "The sector is burdened with high taxation, expensive and multifarious licences, approvals and compliances. Hotels are capital intensive with a long gestation period. Cost of operating hotels is high and largely fixed. This makes investments in hotels risky. There is a need to make hotel investments more attractive with an improved rate of investment and to promote ease of doing business," Hotel Association of India (HAI) President KB Kachru told PTI.

among others. In the course of the consultations, Sitharaman expressed gratitude to the participants for sharing valuable suggestions and assured experts and representatives that their suggestions would be carefully examined and considered while preparing the Union Budget 2024-25.

Pharma seeks tax benefits

There is a need to incentivise R&D investments, offer corporate tax concessions and establish an effective intellectual property rights regime in order to push the growth of domestic pharmaceutical industry, as per the industry bodies. Outlining the sector's wish list for the upcoming Union Budget, Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) Director General Anil Matai urged the government to explore methods to incentivise R&D investments, such as deductions on R&D expenses, research-linked incentives for MNCs, and corporate tax concessions. The initiatives will help in accelerating R&D and innovation in the sector, he added. "Recognising the high-risk, long-gestation nature of R&D, we suggest extending the scope of section 115BAB of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to companies solely engaged in pharmaceutical research and development and providing a 200 per cent deduction rate on R&D expenditures," Matai said.

73% Indians read ingredient lists, nutritional value of snacks

AMID INCREASING NUMBER OF CASES REGARDING FOOD ADULTERATION, A WAVE OF CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION HAS EVOLVED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 7: As many as 73 per cent Indians prefer to read ingredient lists and nutritional value before purchasing any snack, reveals a new survey, highlighting the majority of Indians' growing inclination towards healthy snacking.

Based on a survey of over 6,000 people across India, the Healthy Snacking Report 2024, released Sunday, aims to examine

the ever evolving consumption trends in India.

"Seventy three per cent of those surveyed prefer to read labels for ingredient lists and nutritional value before making a purchase. Of this, 93 per cent expressed a desire to transition to healthier options, highlighting a correlation between label reading and conscious choices while pushing for transparency," read the report.

The report was released against the backdrop of an increasing number of cases regarding food adulteration that have come to the fore, be it in



spices, confectionaries or fast-moving goods. This, according to the report, has triggered a wave of conscious consumption, with shoppers checking food packets for potentially harmful substances.

So, with 9 out of 10 respondents looking to find healthier alternatives to traditional snacks, the report records how nearly 60 per cent of Indians are now opting for "natural, additive-free products with wholesome ingredients like nuts, seeds and whole grains".

Makhanas (foxnuts) and dry fruits have emerged as stars in the healthy snacking segment, with 67 per cent of Indians reaching out for a bowl of these nutrient powerhouses.

"In a true testament to the growing popularity of makhanas in India, 59 per cent millennials called it their trusted snack, followed by Gen Z (49 per cent) and Gen X (47 per cent), indicating its popularity across people of all ages. Additionally, over 70 per cent revealed that their favourite time to snack was with their evening cup of tea/coffee," it added.

That said, the shift towards healthy snacking comes at a cost, which is why over 58 per cent of those surveyed highlighted "high retail costs" as a barrier to making the switch. The consumer insight study was conducted by snacking brand Farmley.

HYUNDAI MOTOR'S SALES HIT RECORD AHEAD OF IPO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, July 7: Hyundai Motor, South Korea's leading automaker, saw its sales hit a record in India in the first half of this year, according to industry data Sunday as it has filed for an initial public offering (IPO) worth Rs 25,000 crore for its India unit.

According to data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations of India (FADA), Hyundai sold 272,207 units in India from January to June this year, up 2 per cent compared to the 266,760 units sold in the same period in 2023.

The tally marks the largest

first-half sales figure for Hyundai Motor in the country, reports Yonhap news agency.

Hyundai Motor's investor relations data also showed that Hyundai's Indian plant sold a total of 259,659 units locally from January to May.

According to the FADA, Hyundai's market share in the Indian passenger vehicle market for the first

half stood at 13.8 per cent, ranking second behind Maruti Suzuki. Tata Motors ranked third, followed by Toyota Motor and Kia. Hyundai has shown a constant share decrease in India in the past few years, from 17 per cent in 2021 to 14.1 per cent by 2023.



Uruguay stun Brazil

10-MAN URUGUAY FIGHT RESOLUTELY TO SEND 9-TIME COPA AMERICA CHAMPIONS HOME

AGENCIES

Nevada, July 7: Uruguay beat Brazil on penalties (4-2) to reach the semifinals of the 2024 Copa America football tournament, after their game ended goalless Saturday. Uruguay, who finished the game with 10 men after Nahitan Nandez was sent off in the 74th minute, will face Colombia in Charlotte, North Carolina, in their semifinal Wednesday. Colombia beat Panama 5-0 in Saturday's other quarterfinal earlier in Arizona. The other semifinal Tuesday, in New Jersey, will see World Champions Argentina face surprise package Canada.

In a city better known for boxing than for the beautiful game, it was a bruising contest with little quality play and a tournament high of 41 fouls. A poor quality playing field at the Allegiant Stadium here hardly helped with both teams struggling to produce their best football on an uneven surface.

The first – and best – chance of a game of few opportunities came in the 35th minute when Uruguay striker Darwin Nunez had a clear header in front of the Brazil goal but mistimed his effort which flew wide off his shoulder.

Within moments, Brazil created an opening of their own, with Raphinha breaking clear, but Uruguay keeper Sergio Rochet stayed tall and made a vital save.

Marcelo Bielsa's Uruguay were as tenacious as always, harrying Brazil in midfield and never afraid to interrupt their flow with a foul. Brazil resorted too often to long balls but with only their 17-year-old talent Endrick, in for the suspended Vinicius Junior, as a central striker, they



STRETCHING FOR GLORY: Uruguay goalkeeper Sergio Rochet dives full length to save a shot from Brazil's Eder Militao during the shootout Saturday

lacked the physical presence to make that approach effective.

The game deteriorated the longer it went on with foul after foul, not deterred by lenient refereeing.

But Uruguay's hopes of wearing Brazil down were dealt a blow when Nandez hacked down Rodrygo with a dangerous slide into his ankle and after a VAR review the defender

was sent off.

From then on it was clear that Uruguay were simply trying to make it to full-time and penalties and with no extra-time in Copa America, they were able to achieve their aim.

After Federico Valverde scored with the first spot kick for Uruguay, Eder Militao saw his effort saved by the diving Rochet. When Douglas Luiz hit the

post for Brazil, they trailed 1-3 and Jose Gimenez had the chance to clinch the game for Uruguay. His effort was superbly saved by Alisson Becker.

Substitute Gabriel Martinelli scored to keep Brazil alive but midfielder Manuel Ugarte kept his cool to drive home the decisive kick and send the 15-times Copa champions into the last four.

ROHIT TO CONTINUE AS SKIPPER IN TESTS, ODIs

Split captaincy on cards with Hardik expected to lead India in T20 format

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

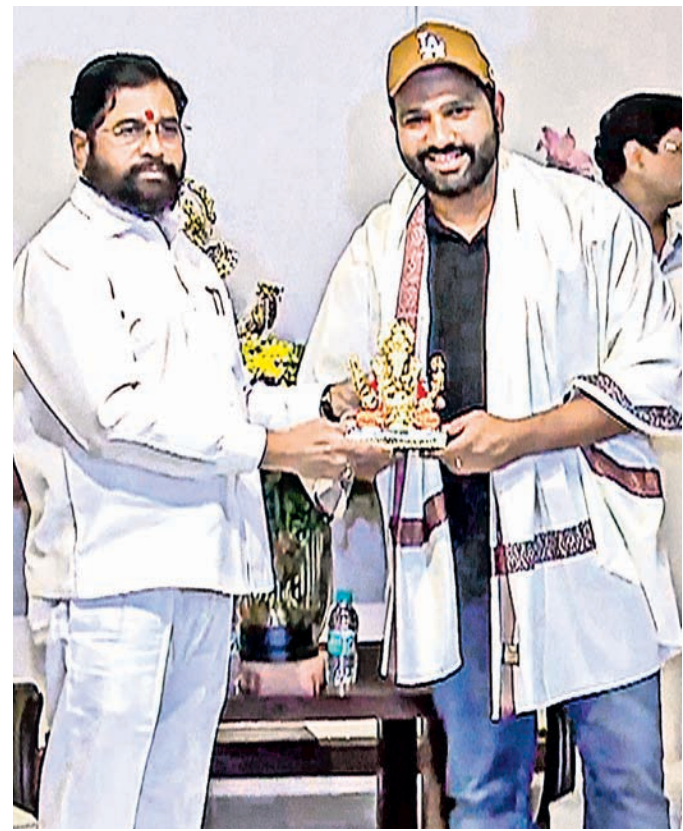
New Delhi, July 7: T20 World Cup-winning skipper Rohit Sharma will continue to lead India in the ODI and Test formats BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Sunday. He exuded confidence that the country will win next year's Champions Trophy and World Test Championships under Rohit's captaincy. With this declaration Shah clarified that there will be no change in the top at least till 2025.

The 37-year-old Rohit, who became the third Indian captain after the legendary Kapil Dev and Mahendra Singh Dhoni to win a global trophy, has announced his retirement from the T20 format.

"The next stage is the WTC final and the Champions Trophy. I have full faith in Rohit Sharma's captaincy, that we will be the champions in both these tournaments," secretary Shah said in a video message.

The Champions Trophy, scheduled in Pakistan next year, will be held after eight years (since 2017 in UK), and even though the draft schedule has been submitted to the ICC, the BCCI hasn't yet given its green light to it. It is understood BCCI will again push for the 'Hybrid Model' like 2023 ODI Asia Cup where India played all their matches, including the ones against Pakistan, in Sri Lanka.

Shah's message, in a way, has put to rest speculations about whether Rohit would quit leadership role in other formats. Till Rohit calls it quits, India will once again have split captaincy. Rohit will be leading in ODIs



Rohit Sharma being felicitated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in Mumbai

and Tests while Hardik Pandya is expected to take charge of the T20 outfit.

Rohit had also led India to the finals of the WTC and ODI World Cup last year. In the ODI World Cup, India lost the summit clash after winning 10 straight games.

Shah dedicated India's T20 World Cup triumph to the three cricketers, who quit the format after the title victory and outgoing coach Rahul Dravid. "I want to dedicate this victory to coach Rahul Dravid, captain Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja," Shah said. "This was our third final in the

last year. We lost the WTC final in June, 2023. In November, 2023 we won hearts after 10 wins but couldn't win the trophy. I had earlier said we will win the heart and also the Cup June 24 and install our national flag, and our captain installed the Indian flag," the secretary said.

Rohit, Kohli and Jadeja are expected to comeback for the ODI series against Sri Lanka slated for August. India will play six ODIs – three against Sri Lanka in an away series and three at home against England in early February before the Champions Trophy.

SHORT TAKES

Double crown for Abhay in Asian meet

Johor (Malaysia): Talented Abhay Singh performed admirably to win the double crown at the Asian Doubles Squash Championships here Sunday. Asian Games team championship gold medalist Abhay won the men's doubles crown along with Velavan Senthilkumar. The top-seeded pair made short work of Malaysian second seeds Ong Sai Hung and Syaifiq Kamal 11-4, 11-5. Later, Abhay and the experienced Joshua Chinappa, the third seeds, put it past the second-seeded Hong Kong duo of Tong Tsz Wing and Tang Ming Hong 11-8, 10-11, 11-5 in the mixed doubles final. "I'm very happy with the way Abhay and I performed this week. We were confident and got better as we advanced in the tournament," Senthilkumar said in a release.

Ankita, Aldrin in Olympics squad

New Delhi: Long jumper Jeswin Aldrin and 5000m runner Ankita Dhyani qualified Sunday for Paris Olympics through world ranking quota and are set to be included in the Indian athletics team that will now have 30 members. Long jump national record holder Aldrin and Ankita's name figured in the latest list published by World Athletics (WA) after the national federations notified the international body about their athletes who will not compete in Paris due to various reasons despite making the cut. One such example was top Indian long jumper M Sreeshankar who had to pull out of the Games due to an injury despite making a direct entry by breaching the qualification standard of 8.27m.

Jaded Rajawat bows out in semis

Calgary: India's campaign at the Canada Open Super 500 badminton tournament ended here Saturday after Priyanshu Rajawat suffered a straight-game loss to France's Alex Lanier in the men's singles semifinals. World No 39 Rajawat went down 17-21, 10-21 to Lanier, ranked 37th, in 45 minutes at the Markin MacPhail Centre here. Rajawat, who had top-seeded stunned Anders Antonsen of Denmark in the quarterfinals however, looked jaded and completely out of touch against Lanier. The Frenchman dominated the match from the start and never allowed Rajawat to come back. Initially Rajawat had a 3-0 lead in the first game, but that was the only time he looked good. From then on it was the French player all the way.

Long title drought ends for Hamilton

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Silverstone (England), July 7: Lewis Hamilton held off Max Verstappen's late charge to win a thrilling British Grand Prix here Sunday and secure his first victory since the penultimate race of the 2021 season.

Hamilton became the first F1 driver to win on any track nine times and also extended his F1 record to 104 wins. His last came at the Saudi Arabian GP in December 2021 – the year he lost the title to Red Bull driver Verstappen.

The seven-time F1 champion beat defending champion Verstappen by 1.5 seconds, with Lando Norris finishing third for McLaren ahead of teammate Oscar Piastri.

A tearful-sounding Hamilton thanked his team over radio and was still emotional several minutes later as he struggled to compose himself. "I'm still crying," Hamilton said as he addressed the crowd. "There's definitely been days between 2021 and here when I didn't feel I was good enough."

There were high hopes for a home win at Silverstone, with Hamilton's Mercedes teammate George Russell on pole position ahead of Hamilton and with Norris going from third and



Verstappen fourth. Russell's hopes of a second straight F1 win ended on Lap 34 of 52 with a suspected water system issue on his car. A few laps later, McLaren botched Norris' tire change.

Verstappen overtook Norris with four laps left but could not catch Hamilton, to the delight of most of the 1,64,000 fans attending the race.

Moments after crossing the line, Hamilton jumped into the arms of mechanics and then shared a long hug with his father. Then it was time to absorb the applause from the home fans. Carrying a British flag he jumped over a crash barrier and then held it aloft.

"I can see you lap by lap, there's just no greater feeling," Hamilton told the cheering crowd.

Abhishek, bowlers power India to victory

MEN IN BLUE RESTORE PARITY IN 5-GAME SERIES AFTER SUFFERING A LOSS IN THE 1ST MATCH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, July 7: Young Abhishek Sharma (100, 47b, 7x4, 8x6) announced his arrival on the big stage with a breathtaking 46-ball century as India pummeled Zimbabwe by a whopping 100 runs in the second T20I to restore parity in a resounding fashion here Sunday. The bowlers also came to the party with Avesh Khan (3/15), Mukesh Kumar (3/37) and Ravi Vishnoi (2/11) delivering when it mattered.

The young Indian side didn't carry the baggage of a shock-13-run defeat in the series-opener as left-handed opener Abhishek blended power with grace for a scintillating knock that propelled India to a massive 234 for two on a track where batting wasn't exactly easy. The ask was already stiff and Zimbabwe were bowled out for 134 in 18.4 overs.

The day certainly belonged to Abhishek, who mixed grace and power in equal measure. It made a normally stylish Ruturaj Gaikwad (77 n o, 47 b, 11x4, 1x6), look pale in comparison during their 137-run stand for the second wicket.

Abhishek's innings would also increase the headache for skipper Shubman Gill and stand-in coach VVS Laxman, who would need to take a tough call when Yashasvi Jaiswal is available from the third game.



Abhishek Sharma swivels to play a ball on the leg-side during the game Sunday; (Inset) Avesh Khan

After his century, there is no way that the Sunrisers Hyderabad opener can be dropped from the playing XI.

Having endured the disappointment of a four-ball duck on debut, Abhishek never looked under pressure on the slightly difficult track. The hallmark of his innings was fearlessness as he took calculated risks which paid off and allowed Gaikwad at the other end to get into the groove after playing and missing for the better part of his innings.

However, Abhishek got a reprieve on 27 when Wellington Masakadza dropped a regulation skier off Luke Jongwe. He never looked back after that.

The poor fielding effort also hurt Zimbabwe as they also dropped Gaikwad's catch, who took off from where Abhishek had left, creaming off 87 runs off 36 balls for the third wicket with Rinku Singh (48 n o, 22b, 2x4, 5x6), who also made merry with five huge sixes.

The Indian pacers despite

the use of the long handle by No. 3 Bennett (26, 9b) were on target as Mukesh cleaned up two batters with slightly back of the length off-cutters. Avesh's nasty snorter was something that Raza least expected while trying to fend being hit on the helmet.

Brief scores: Indian 234 for 2 (Abhishek Sharma 100, Ruturaj Gaikwad 77 n o, Rinku Singh 48 n o) beat Zimbabwe 134 in 18.4 overs (Avesh Khan 3/15, Mukesh Kumar 3/37) by 100 runs.

Dutch subdue stubborn Turkey

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, July 7: The Netherlands dug deep to come from behind and beat Turkey 2-1 here Saturday and book their place in the European Championship semifinals. They will play England next.

An own goal from Mert Muldur in the 76th minute, only six after Stefan De Vrij cancelled Samet Akaydin's first half header for Turkey, was enough for the Dutch in the last of the quarterfinals.

"It was really a battle today," De Vrij said. "The Turkish team they have a big heart, a lot of quality. In the end we did well and we deserved the win," he added.

The Netherlands turned the game around after 1.97-metre-tall (6-foot-5) striker Wout Weghorst made his entrance in the second half.



Stefan De Vrij rises above all the others to head in the equaliser for the Netherlands against Turkey

Turkey were without defender Merih Demiral, who was suspended for two matches by UEFA for making a nationalistic hand gesture after scoring in Tuesday's 2-1 win over Austria. It certainly hampered their show.

The Dutch made a better start, but Turkey's defenders dug in to

limit the impact of Cody Gakpo, Xavi Simons and Memphis Depay. Turkey lined up with five at the back without the ball, as they had in the win against Austria, and gradually improved.

Akaydin rewarded a period of Turkish pressure by scoring in the 35th minute.

Alcaraz, Sinner seal quarterfinal berths

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 7: Defending Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz came up with the big shots when it mattered most to hold off Ugo Humbert and reach the quarterfinals with a 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 win on Centre Court here Sunday.

The match had seemed all but over when Alcaraz clinched the second set by chasing down several seemingly out-of-reach shots on set point, even falling over after hitting one forehand and quickly getting back up to get to the next ball. Asked to describe his play on that point, Alcaraz just said: "Unbelievable, I guess."

But Humbert nearly staged a surprising comeback and threat-

ened to take the match into a fifth set when he held three straight breakpoints for a 5-3 lead in the fourth.

Alcaraz came back to win that game with the help of a couple of aces, then broke for a 6-5 lead by hitting a deep forehand winner. He set up match point with one of his delicate forehand drop shots and converted it with a service winner.

In another men's singles match played on the day, World No. 1 Jannik Sinner powered past American Ben Shelton 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (11-9). Only in the third set, did the American put up a semblance of a fight, but even then Sinner looked in control and closed out the match quite comfortably.

Sidheswar scripts win for Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 7: A fine spell of bowling by Sidheswar Behera (6/43) helped Sambalpur defeat Deogarh by six wickets in a match of the OCA Under-19 Inter-District cricket tournament at the Sunshine ground in Cuttack, Sunday. The other match of the day between Nayagarh and Mayurbhanj was abandoned due to rain.

Deograh after being put in were bowled out for a paltry score of 95 against the incisive bowling of Behera. Chasing the victory target of 96, Sambalpur reached it losing four wickets in the process. Aman Pandey (31) was the top-scorer for Sambalpur.

