



Lure of big screen

Actor Pooja Batra says she's looking forward to make a comeback if the right role comes her way

LEISURE | P2



Venezuela Prez poll

Both President Nicolas Maduro and Opposition rival Edmundo Gonzalez claim victory

INTERNATIONAL | P9



Digital economy

India's digital economy is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026 from one-tenth at present, according to a Reserve Bank report

BUSINESS | P10



India aim series sweep

India seek to exploit Sri Lanka's weaknesses and push for a series whitewash in the inconsequential third and final T20I Tuesday

SPORTS | P12

ADR smells booth rigging in 538 seats

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 29: Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has claimed that there is a discrepancy in number of votes polled and number of votes counted in 538 Lok Sabha constituencies in the recently held General Elections.

According to an analysis released by ADR at a press conference Monday, in the recent Lok Sabha polls a total of 5,54,598 votes counted are less than the votes polled in 362 parliamentary constituencies while a total of 35,093 votes have been counted in excess of the votes polled in 176 parliamentary constituencies.

During 17th General Elections, for the first six phases of the election, the voter turnout app displayed the exact number of voters, but in the last phase (7th phase) only percentage figures were given and previous data was removed by the EC.

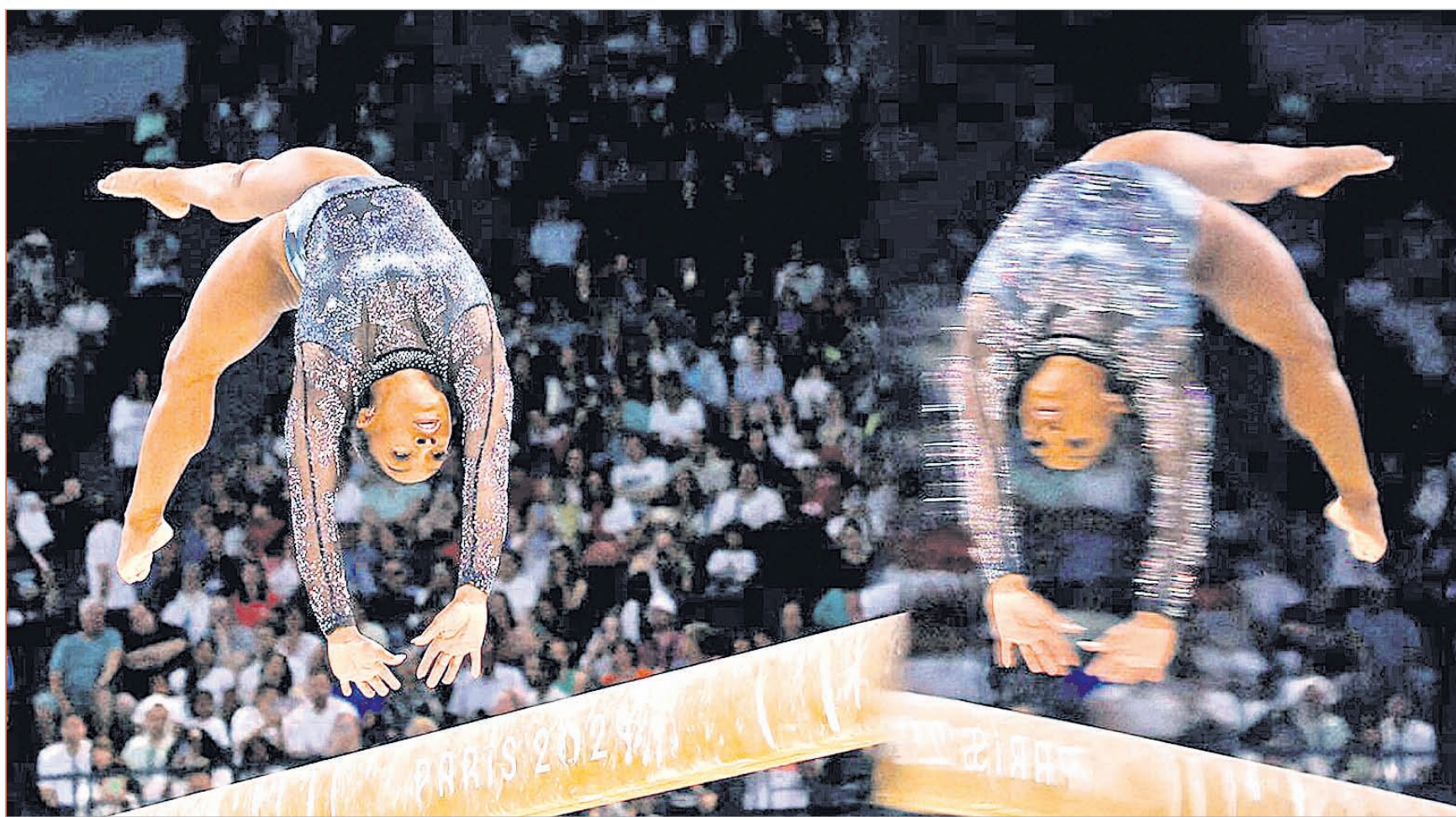
As per the research conducted

by a team of experts and ADR, serious discrepancies were found between the number of voters in different constituencies and the number of votes counted.

"The master summary of 542 constituencies showed discrepancies in 347 seats. 195 seats were without discrepancies whatsoever. The discrepancies ranged from 1 vote (lowest) to 1,01,323 votes at 10.49 per cent of the total votes (highest).

A reaction from the Election Commission was awaited on the matter.

"In addition, the inordinate delay in the release of final voter turnout data, absence of disaggregated constituency and polling station figures in absolute numbers and whether the elections results were declared based on final reconciled data have raised concerns and public suspicion regarding the correctness of the election results," said ADR founder Jagdeep Chokkar during the press conference.



UP IN THE AIR: Simone Biles of United States in action on the balance beam during the Women's Artistic Gymnastics qualifications

PHOTO: REUTERS

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He is very enthusiastic and hard-working. He comes prepared daily to visit the new accident site

MHA panel to probe coaching centre deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs Monday constituted a high-level committee, headed by an Additional Secretary, to probe the death of three IAS aspirants at a coaching centre here due to flooding of the building's basement and submit the report in 30 days.

The committee will inquire into the reasons, fix responsibility, suggest measures and recommend policy changes, a home ministry spokesperson said.

Apart from the Additional Secretary of Ministry of H&UA, the panel will have Principal Secretary (Home) of Delhi govt, Special CP of Delhi Police and Fire Advisor as members and a joint secretary in the home ministry as the convener. P7

DEBT TRAP

In what has come as a failure of the Union government to arrest the rising public debt and maintain fiscal prudence, in spite of expanding tax nets, the loan burden for FY2025, as estimated by the Centre, will touch a whopping ₹185 lakh crore that would further deteriorate the finances of the government as well as the common man

PTI & AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 29: Country's public debt will increase to ₹185 lakh crore during the current financial year from ₹171.78 lakh crore in the financial year that ended in March 2024, Minister of State (MoS) for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary told the Lok Sabha Monday.

"The government estimates its debt, including external borrowing, valued at current exchange rate and public account and other liabilities will increase to ₹185 lakh crore, or 56.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), during the current financial year," Chaudhary said in a written response to the Lower House.

The minister added that total debt stood at ₹171.78 lakh crore, or 58.2 per cent of the GDP at the end of March 2024.

Notably, India's internal as well as external debt and other

liabilities have been rising, if data from the 2018-19 Budget papers is any indication. The outstanding debt and other liabilities of the Centre at the end of FY2018-19 was estimated to be around ₹89.58 lakh crore as against ₹82.32 lakh crore at the end of 2017-18(RE).

Growth rate of the private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) at constant prices in FY2022-23 and FY2023-24 stands at 6.8 per cent and 4 per cent,



Total debt stands at ₹171.78 lakh crore or 58.2% of the GDP at the end of March 2024

respectively, Chaudhary said, quoting provisional GDP estimates for 2023-24 released by National Statistical Office.

The growth rate of PFCE at current prices in FY2022-23 and FY2023-24 is 14.2 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively, he said,

adding that the ratio of PFCE to GDP at current prices in 2023-24 is 60.3 per cent.

In response to another question, Chaudhary said the normal net borrowing ceiling (NBC) of the states for 2021-22 was fixed at 4 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP) as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission.

Of the normal NBC of 4 per cent of projected GSDP for 2021-22, the borrowing ceiling of 0.50 per cent of the projected GSDP was earmarked for the incremental capital expenditure incurred by states during 2021-22, for which, a target for capital expenditure was fixed for each state, he said. In another reply, he said the Centre under the head 'Special Assistance' under Demands for Grants 'Transfers to States' provide grants-in-aid to states for spillover committed liabilities for which Budget provision is not made and for other need-based assistance to states.

Further, NITI Aayog, in its report titled 'Report on Developmental Support to the Successor State of Andhra Pradesh under Andhra Pradesh Re-organization Act, 2014' dated December 1, 2015, has recommended "...a total assistance of ₹2,100 crore for the seven backward districts of Andhra Pradesh at the rate of ₹300 crore per district.

Latest tech for Ratna Bhandar scanning

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 29: In an attempt to clear the air over possible existence of secret or hidden chambers inside Srimandir's Ratna Bhandar, as historical indications suggest, the high-level committee headed by Justice Biswanath Rath recommended the use of advanced technology for a detailed inspection of the temple vault.

Justice Rath, chairman of the high-level committee overseeing this process, made the announcement after a crucial meeting held in Puri Monday.

The committee unanimously agreed to propose the use of lat-



est technology for a comprehensive inspection of Ratna Bhandar, he added.

"To clear such doubts, we have unanimously decided to recommend the temple managing committee to use latest technology and non-destructive instruments for proper inspection of the Ratna Bhandar," he said.

"If any such chambers are discovered, appropriate steps will be

taken; otherwise, necessary measures will be initiated for the repair and maintenance of the treasury," Justice Rath explained. The panel has decided to relocate empty cupboards and almirahs that require preservation. The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration has been instructed to identify a suitable storage space for these items, he said.

In response to the requirements identified, the committee recommended modifications to the existing SOPs, which did not originally address these aspects, clarified the committee head. He assured that utmost care would be taken to ensure that temple rituals remain unaffected during these procedures.

Breach of privilege against CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Congress MLA Taraprasad Baninipati Monday moved a breach of privilege notice against Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi accusing him of disrespecting the Assembly and making policy decision announcements outside the House July 26.

Congress and BJD members urged Speaker Surama Padhy to accept the privilege notice and forward it to the Privilege Committee. However, Padhy said she would examine the notice.

Amoyed over the Speaker's decision, Opposition parties created a ruckus in the House, following

which the House was adjourned first for 20 minutes till 12:20pm, and later from 12.24 pm to 4 pm.

When the House reassembled at 4pm, the Speaker allowed Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik to initiate the general discussion on Budget. As soon as Patnaik's speech ended, Congress members led by Bahinipati trooped into the well and tried to climb the Speaker's podium. The House was adjourned for 30 minutes. Similar scenes were witnessed when the House reassembled as Congress members demanded that the notice be sent to the Privilege Committee.

Later, Congress members staged a walkout from the House.

History beckons Manu



AGENCIES

Chateauroux (France), July 29: A confident Manu Bhaker placed herself in contention for a second Olympic medal as she combined with Sarabjot Singh to make the bronze medal play-off in the 10m air pistol mixed team event here Monday.

The 22-year-old Bhaker, who came into the mixed team qualifications after winning a historic bronze medal in the 10m women's air pistol event on Sunday, and Sarabjot finished with a total of 580 to make the medal round to be held Tuesday. The Indians will face Korea's Oh Ye Jin and Lee Wonho, who shot 579, in the bronze-medal match.

Bhaker was sensational with her 98s in the first two series, but a 95 in the third set pulled the team down a bit. However, the pair did enough to make the medal round in the end. Sarabjot, who missed out on gaining a spot in the finals of the men's 10m air pistol event by a whisker, shot 97 in the second and third, after a 95 in the first.

If Bhaker does win another medal Tuesday, she will create history by becoming the first Indian to win two medals in the same Olympics.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	81355.84 ↑ 23.12
NIFTY	24836.10 ↑ 1.25
DOLLAR	83.73 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	90.91 ↑ ₹0.08
GOLD	₹68,110 ↓ ₹76
SILVER	₹80,593 ↓ ₹778

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.7°C	31.0°C
Min Temp	27.0°C	25.4°C
Humidity	98%	92%
Rainfall	35.8mm	38.4mm

FORECAST
GENERALLY CLOUDY SKY WITH HEAVY RAIN

World's 1st black tiger safari in Mayurbhanj by Dec

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 29: If things go well, a melanistic tiger safari, a first-of-its-kind in the world, will come up on a 200-hectare land near Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district by the year end, official sources said Monday.

The state government's proposal for the safari has received in-principle approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), with the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) already granting its endorsement, Susanta Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), said.

Initially, melanistic tigers (black tigers) currently housed at Nandankanan Zoological Park at Barang on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar will be relocated to the proposed safari, spanning

200 hectare land adjacent to National Highway-18.

Official sources said the safari will be established over an area of 200 hectare. Around 100 hectare will be dedicated to display area, while the remainder will be used to accommodate veterinary facilities, a rescue centre, staff infrastructure and visitor amenities. Located about 15km from Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), the site mirrors its natural landscape.

STR is globally renowned as the sole habitat where wild melanistic tigers are found.

This initiative aims to bolster wildlife tourism in Odisha, offering a unique opportunity for conservationists, researchers, enthusiasts, and the public to observe this rare species up close.

In January, former chief minister Naveen Patnaik had un-



PHOTO: SUSANTA NANDA 'X' ACCOUNT

veiled plans for the melanistic tiger safari near Similipal.

The PCCF emphasised the significance of protecting state's forests as crucial corridors for tiger population migrating from

Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In a post on X, Nanda said, "Tigers are roaring back in Similipal Tiger Reserve- the one & the only place in the world to

host the famed wild melanistic tigers. Let's protect our gem. Odisha forests were & is a sink to source populations from MP & Maharashtra. Let's protect the corridors for them to populate."

According to the first All Odisha Tiger Estimation (AOTE) 2023-24, the population of Royal Bengal Tigers has increased to 30 in the past two years.

The All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) 2022 report, however, had put the number at 17 and these were largely confined to Similipal.

A total of 27 adult tigers were camera-trapped in Odisha during AOTE exercise. These big cats comprise 14 females and 13 males.

Moreover, proof of another three adult tigers was also found in the tiger reserve, the officials added.

leisure



WINFREY DOESN'T THINK SHE'S OLD

Media mogul Oprah Winfrey doesn't think of herself as old but noticed a shift in attitudes when she entered her 60s. The 70-year-old has seen a change in attitudes from other people since she entered her sixties, but she doesn't consider her advancing years very often herself.

LADY GAGA ENGAGED TO MICHAEL POLANSKY

Singer-actress Lady Gaga, who is ready to bring Arkham Asylum and Gotham City down along with Joaquin Phoenix in *Joker: Folie à Deux*, is now engaged. The 38-year-old singer and her longtime boyfriend, entrepreneur, and tech investor Michael Polansky, are set to tie the knot.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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ARIES

If your work has anything to do with money, today you will be busy counting your riches! If you've applied for a loan, it may get sanctioned today. Look for variety, says Ganesh, and you may find your day filled with smiles and what not.

TAURUS

You are likely to be mentally alert and watchful today, says Ganesh. Creativity will run through your veins no matter what you attempt. You may dabble in performing arts, designing, graphics or special effects. Your charm will play Pied Piper to the opposite gender today.

GEMINI

Your physical appearance and personal attitude will see a marked improvement today, predicts Ganesh. A well-groomed you will climb up the popularity chart among peers, friends and members of the opposite sex. You will keep people under your spell with your wit and wisdom both at the workplace and at social gatherings.

CANCER

You will be firing all cylinders in the creativity department, says Ganesh. Even your colleagues may pitch in, and will give you new ideas to make your work better. Those looking for a new job will ace the interview and clear the selection process as easily as clearing the fog from their glasses.

LEO

Karmic balance dictates an equitable distribution of joy and sorrow, says Ganesh. So if your day seems drab and depressing today, rest assured, your evening shall be all the more refreshing and exciting. Surround yourself with family and friends, as you will receive royal treatment from them.

VIRGO

Play dodge ball with prejudice today. Do not let intolerance find shelter in you today, advises Ganesh. Instead, chances are you will seek to find love, affection and goodwill among those around you. Stay away from negativity as it may bog you down. Ganesh counsels you to have the courage to stand by your convictions.

LIBRA

Lights, camera, and action! Be prepared as the limelight is focused on you on this very motivating and inspiring day, enabling you to attract excellent public praise. Today is an encouraging day to set in motion innovative projects, especially for those who desire to be their own masters and embark upon fulfilling self-financed ideas.

SCORPIO

You are most likely to resent the dominating and overbearing nature of your partner today. Patience will probably go to the dumps in this case then. But Ganesh advises you to sit together and resolve all personality clashes and quarrels in view of the larger scheme of things.

SAGITTARIUS

Expect a call to late-night revelry and a chance to binge. But you don't seem to be in the mood to let your hair loose and party, says Ganesh. However tempting it may be, your serious side will take over and you shall deny the offer. No wonder they like that sensible head on your shoulders.

CAPRICORN

You will start the day with verve and vigour, and will appear a completely different person at work. There will be a discernible change in your way of working, especially in terms of the level of energy and concentration you will put in. The switch to the new strategy will better your performance considerably and will make you feel that it was a good change after all.

AQUARIUS

A productive day, as you will receive unrestrained support from your bosses and colleagues. Your creativity will reach its zenith and the resulting work will augment your reputation.

PISCES

Happiness shared is double the joy; sorrows shared are half the burden. Your family is the foundation of your success, and it is to them you will turn to in times of failure as well. With their support, getting back to the top of the game will take no time, says Ganesh.

Sharvari Wagh drops major fitness goals

Mumbai: Sharvari Wagh begins shooting for the much-anticipated YRF Spy Universe action entertainer *Alpha* from today. A day before her adrenaline-pumping shooting schedule with superstar Alia Bhatt, Sharvari dropped major fitness goals again by posting images of her running on the beach in Mumbai flaunting her super-fit bod for *Alpha*. The rising star of the Hindi film industry had previously again broken the internet a couple of weeks earlier after she dropped some hot pictures of training for the film. People praised how fit and fab Sharvari was looking while training for *Alpha*. This time, Sharvari urged her fans and people on the internet to go that extra mile and train harder.



through a series of images of her running on the beach. Sharvari will be next seen in the much-awaited Nikkhil Advani film *Vedaa* which is set to release on August 15th and then in Aditya Chopra's *Alpha* being directed by Shiv Rawail of *The Railway Men* fame. For the unversed, the actress is basing in the twin successes of her recently released *Munhya* and *Maharaj*. While *Munhya* clocked Rs 100 crore at the box office, Sharvari's first, Aamir Khan's son Juaaid Khan star *Maharaj* has been garnering rave reviews from across the globe.

MCU fans shower love on *Deadpool & Wolverine*

Bhubaneswar: The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has once again captivated the viewers with its latest release *Deadpool & Wolverine*. Premiering worldwide, July 26, this R-rated comedy unites two iconic superheroes from different realms to save their universe. Directed by Shawn Levy, the film stars Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool and Hugh Jackman as Wolverine, bringing a fresh dynamic to Marvel's lineup. With the City abuzz with great anticipation, a few die-hard Marvel fans shared with Orissa POST their reactions after watching the movie in theatres. "Deadpool & Wolverine is more than just a superhero movie; it's a cultural phenomenon that will be remembered and celebrated for generations. It's a testament to what can be achieved when exceptional storytelling, visionary direction, and iconic performances come together to create something truly magical," said Vishal Kumar. Another movie enthusiast, Dipanjali, shared, "The movie is a blend of thrilling adventure, unexpected twists, and profound character development. It explores themes of redemption, friendship, and the struggle for identity." "Being a fan of Chris Evans, his cameo in the movie was a highlight for me. Ryan Reynolds delivered brilliant comic timing and action set pieces. It was a wonderful experience watching two different superheroes together," she added. "I am a huge fan of Marvel movies and grew up watching all of them. This movie showcasing 'bromance' works on every level. It's a perfect blend of emotion, action, and brilliant comic timing," said Subham Singh, a long-time Marvel fan.



Pooja looks forward to make a comeback

Mumbai: Actress and former beauty queen Pooja Batra said that she is looking forward to making a comeback on the big screen if the right opportunity arises. "I've been busy with my work commitments in the US, but I'm really looking forward to making a comeback. If the right opportunity arises, I'm excited to get back on the silver screen and reconnect with my fans," Pooja said during the song launch of *Nashe Mein High*, a track sung by Poonam Jha. The 48-year-old actress reflected on her career, noting that she has always followed her heart. "And I think everyone should. In a competitive world, it's easy to lose sight of our passions, but Poonam's new song proves that 'Apne Dil Ki Sunne Ki Koi Umar Nahi Hoti,'" said Pooja, who made her film debut with *Virasat* in 1997. The actress congratulated the singer for the hip-swaying number. Pooja made a name for herself in the film industry with films such as *Haseena Maan Jayegi*, *Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya*, *Kahin Pyaar Na Ho Jaaye*, *Nayak: The Real Hero*, and *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story*, which was showcased at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004, among others.



PeeCee has a koala named after her!

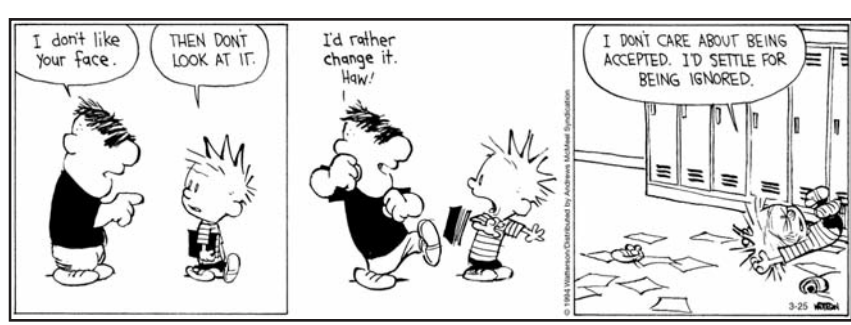
Mumbai: Actor, producer, activist, wife and mother: our global icon Priyanka Chopra aka PeeCee aces many hats. PeeCee, who is known for her love for animals, took to her IG handle earlier this morning, to reveal that an eight-month koala has been named after her. Yes, that is correct. In her post, PeeCee posted various pics and videos of her interaction with Meerkats, koalas, kangaroos, Tasmanian devils and Dingos. Earlier, the actress dropped a selfie as she woke up at 4.30 am, thus giving some motivation to netizens. Monday blues are for real, but here's PC showing some dedication as she heads to work. Priyanka shared a blurry selfie where she can be seen wearing a sheet mask. She wrote, "When the alarm wakes you up at 4.30 am #mondaymotivation". On the work front, Priyanka was last seen in *Citadel* and *Love Again* and has *Heads Of State* and *The Bluff* in the pipeline.

FUN post

PEANUTS



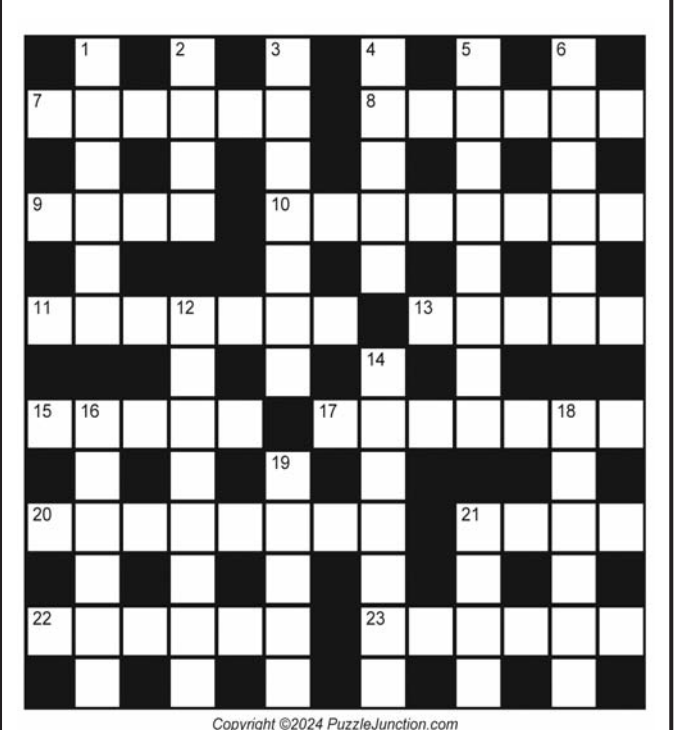
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



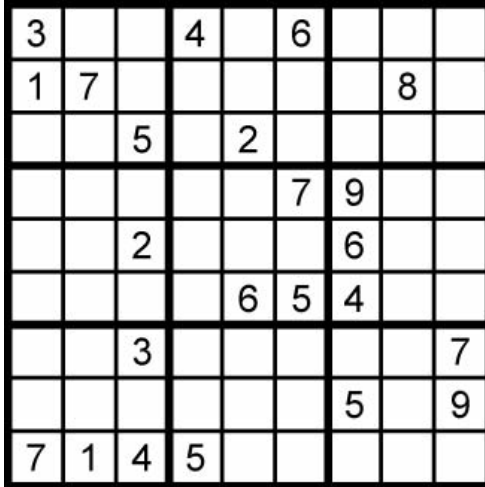
CROSSWORD



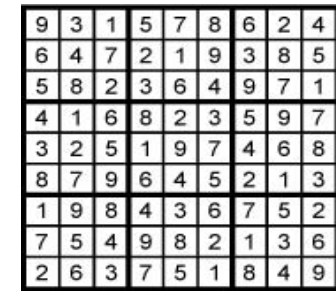
- Across**
- 7 Brow feature, at times
 - 8 Furnish
 - 9 Compassion
 - 10 Irish stout
 - 11 Prevails
 - 13 Silenus, e.g.
 - 15 Question
 - 17 Saltwater lake (4,3)
 - 20 Below decks area
 - 21 Mozart's "Madamina," e.g.
 - 22 Esophagus
 - 23 Emergency
 - 21 Don Quixote, e.g.
 - 6 Melting snow woe
 - 12 Bumbershoot
 - 14 Mother of Jacob and Esau
 - 16 Get away, maybe
 - 18 Magical drink
 - 19 Appetizing
 - 21 Zealous
- Down**
- 1 Podiatrist's concern
 - 2 Heavy cart
 - 3 Bluster
 - 4 Old Roman port

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

downtown

GOODS TRAIN DERAILS IN BHUBANESWAR

BHUBANESWAR: A goods train derailed in Bhubaneswar in the early hours of Monday, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) said. The incident happened at 1.35 am in the railway yard at Mancheswar station, it said in a statement. There was no loss of life or damage to properties due to the derailment, it added. Because of the derailment, two trains were cancelled and six trains were rescheduled, while the Puri-Rourkela Express was short-terminated in both directions, the statement said. The line was cleared for movement of trains at 5.05 am, it said.

Naveen: BJP ended up being name changer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the state Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, Monday claimed that the BJP came to power in the state promising to be a game changer, but ended up becoming just a "name changer".

He also alleged that the government did not provide enough funds in the budget for several schemes the saffron party promised in its election manifesto.

While participating in the general discussion on the annual Budget for fiscal 2024-25 in the Assembly, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president asserted that the BJP altered the names of 45 schemes of the previous BJD government.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented the BJP government's maiden Budget July 25.

"The BJP said its government will be a game changer, but unfortunately it has ended up being a name changer. It has presented a name-changing and colour-changing budget," said Patnaik who was the chief minister of Odisha for five terms.

He claimed that 80 per cent of the previous BJD administration's schemes were repeated in the BJP government's Budget.

"The BJP formed the government by promising people that they would bring paribartan (change). After going through the Budget documents, I find this government has changed the names of 45 schemes," said the BJD president.

It shows the robustness, pro-people and progressive character of the schemes designed and implemented by the BJD government, he claimed.

Though Patnaik did not explain what he meant by "colour change", he apparently referred to the change of the colour of LAccMI buses (an affordable



The BJD chief alleged that the government did not provide enough funds in the Budget for several schemes the saffron party promised in its election manifesto

bus service for villagers) from green to saffron after the BJP came to power in the state last month.

Mentioning several promises made by the BJP before the elections, Patnaik claimed that the budget did not provision for funds required to implement them.

The government will need ₹1 lakh crore to implement the Subhadra scheme but the budget mentioned only ₹10,000 crore, he said.

"This will cover less than 10 per cent of the over two crore women of Odisha. What about the rest 1.80 crore women?" Patnaik said.

Under the scheme named after Lord Jagannath's sister, cash vouchers of ₹50,000 will be provided to women of the state.

Patnaik said the BJP promised to increase social security pension to ₹3,500 per month. There are about 50 lakh pensioners in the state, out of which hardly one lakh will benefit as per the budget allocation, he claimed.

"What will happen to the rest 49 lakh pensioners between the age of sixty years to eighty years of age including widows, PWDs and distressed people? You need about ₹21,000 crore per year to fulfil this promise," he pointed out.

Referring to BJP's announcement of ₹3,100 as MSP per quintal of paddy to farmers, Patnaik said that the allocation kept in the budget will not be adequate to cover even 30 per cent of the peasants.

This apart, Patnaik said that the BJP has promised 3,000 units of free electricity. The Central government has planned free power for one crore houses for the entire country and Odisha's share may be three lakh houses, he said.

"We have one and half crore houses in the state. Is this the free electricity you promised to the people?" the former chief minister said.

Patnaik claimed that in the next five years, the BJP won't be able to cover even five per cent of Odisha's population under the 3,000 units of free electricity scheme.

To create 25 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis' (self-help group members) by 2027 as promised by the BJP, the government will need about ₹20,000 crore, while the allocation is only ₹1,000 crore for this, Patnaik said.

He also demanded that the government table the detailed list of 'Lakhpati Didis' in the Assembly.

Referring to the BJP's promise of a developed Odisha by 2036, Patnaik said the budget provides ₹20 crore for the industrial corridor connecting Rourkela-Sambalpur-Paradip and Dhamra by June 2027. A corridor like this will not cost less than ₹one lakh crore, he claimed.

Sharpening his criticism of the government, the BJD president described the BJP as a 'Jumla' (gimmick) party. "I am sorry, but you (BJP) have cheated the people of Odisha," the BJD chief said.



RAIN PAIN: A submerged road near Rasulgarh Square in Bhubaneswar following a spell of monsoon rains Monday evening

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Majhi to hold meeting with Naidu on Polavaram issue

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday said he will hold a meeting with his Andhra Pradesh counterpart, N Chandrababu Naidu, to resolve the Polavaram issue between the two states.

Majhi, upon his arrival from Delhi after attending the Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog July 27, said he had a discussion with Naidu on the Polavaram issue and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the potato crisis in Odisha.

"I held a discussion with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on the Polavaram issue. During the meeting, I placed Odisha's demands. I also proposed a chief ministerial-level meeting to resolve the issue, which he accepted," Majhi told reporters at the airport here.

Odisha is opposed to the Polavaram project as it fears that large tracts of land and some villages in Malkangiri district would be submerged if the project is im-



Odisha is opposed to the Polavaram project as it fears that large tracts of land and some villages in Malkangiri district would be submerged if the project is implemented in its present form

plemented in its present form.

The Centre, in its annual Budget, has promised all support for completion of the Polavaram multi-purpose project. The issue was also raised in the Assembly, with Congress and BJD members protesting the BJP-led Central government's support to Andhra Pradesh to complete the Polavaram project.

Leader of Opposition and former CM Naveen Patnaik, in a statement July 23, had said, "We have been fighting for justice on the Polavaram issue. Allocating more funds for Polavaram without sorting out genuine grievances of Odisha

shows partiality towards Odisha."

During Patnaik's BJD rule, the state government had shot off several letters to the Centre demanding that the problems faced by the people of Odisha because of the Polavaram project be resolved. However, Majhi said he does not believe that the issues could be sorted out by just writing letters.

Majhi also said that he met Banerjee and spoke to her in the presence of chief secretaries of both the states to resolve the crisis created due to the discontinuation of tuber supply to Odisha.

Heavy rain in 5 dists today: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 29: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted heavy rainfall for five districts of Odisha Tuesday, a bulletin said.

IMD's Bhubaneswar regional centre also issued a yellow warning (be updated) for the five districts of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur.

The weather office also predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Nayagarh, Angul, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Boudh, Khurda, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Deogarh, and Sundargarh districts July 31.

Apart from these districts, light to moderate rainfall would be experienced in many other parts of the state, it said.

Similar rainfall activity would continue in many districts of the state for another two days (till August 2), it said.

In view of the IMD's forecast, the office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) advised the district Collectors to keep the administrative machinery ready for any eventuality.

Male sterilisation up by 45% in last 3 yrs

Vasectomies	Year
991	2021-22
1,569	2022-23
1,792	2023-24

Tubectomies	Year
82,152	2021-22
92,915	2022-23
80,403	2023-24

pared to tubectomies, a permanent method of contraception for women.

In response to a query from BJD MLA Dhruba Charan Sahoo, Mahaling said 991 men underwent family planning operations in 2021-22, with the numbers rising to 1,569 in 2022-23 and further to 1,792 in 2023-24.

In contrast, tubectomy operations for women totaled 82,152 in 2021-22, increased to 92,915 in 2022-23, and then decreased to 80,403 in 2023-24, he added.

Overall, Odisha conducted 259,822 family planning operations from 2021-22 to 2023-24, comprising 4,352 vasectomies and 255,470 tubectomies, the minister said.

48 CUSTODIAL DEATHS IN 10 YEARS

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday informed the Assembly that 48 alleged police custodial death cases have been registered in the state in 10 years — between 2014 and 2023.

The BJP came to power in the state last month by dethroning the BJD which has been in power for the last 24 years.

While replying to a question from Congress

Mahaling emphasised the state's commitment to promoting family planning operations, noting the observance of World Population Day July 11 each year to raise

MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati, the CM said the highest of eight police custodial death cases were registered in 2015, while seven were filed in 2019 and 2020 each.

Similarly, five police custodial death cases each were registered in 2021 and 2022, four each in 2016 and 2023 and three each in 2017 and 2018.

The year 2014 saw the registration of two such cases, Majhi said.

The CM also presented the status of all 48 custodial death cases.

awareness about sterilisation procedures nationwide.

The government incentivises these operations, offering ₹2,000 for vasectomies, ₹1,400 for female sterilisation, and ₹2,200 for post-delivery sterilisation to beneficiaries.

Vigilance digs out unbelievable riches of senior Excise official

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Vigilance sleuths Monday carried out simultaneous searches at multiple locations linked to Joint Commissioner of Excise (Bhubaneswar) Rama Chandra Mishra, following allegations of possession of disproportionate assets (DA), and claimed to have found assets worth crores of rupees, including 52 plots, in possession of the senior government servant.

At least 10 teams of the anti-corruption wing, comprising 10 DSPs, 15 inspectors and other supporting staff, conducted the searches - on the strength of a warrant issued by the Special Vigilance Court, Bhubaneswar - which were on when reports last came in. "During the searches, both movable and immovable assets like six multi-storey build-



JAW-DROPPING WEALTH

- 52 plots
- 6 multi-storey buildings
- 2 flats in Bhubaneswar and Bargarh
- 230 gram of gold & 317 gram silver
- ₹22 lakh in bank deposits
- Household articles worth over ₹11.25 lakh

ings, two flats in Bhubaneswar and Bargarh, 52 plots, around 230 gram of gold, 317 gram silver and bank deposits of ₹22 lakh belonging to the officer were unearthed by the sleuths," Vigilance sources said.

These apart, three two-wheelers and household articles worth over ₹11.25 lakh were also recovered during the search operation. Out of 52 plots, two were in Sambalpur, three in Bolangir and 47 in Subarnapur; they said. The valuation of the build-

ings, and plots was being carried out by Vigilance technical wing, they said. Further searches were continuing by the Vigilance team and assessment of investments in shares and mutual funds and premium deposits in insurance companies was yet to be completed, they added.

"More assets are likely to be unearthed during the search operation which is still continuing and the overall valuation is likely to increase," they pointed out.

BJD seeks revision of Odisha's coal royalty

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 29: BJD Rajya Sabha member Sasmit Patra Monday made a strong case for revision of coal royalty for Odisha, saying it is pending for 12 years and the state was annually losing ₹10,000 crore.

Raising the demand for increase in coal royalty during Zero Hour in the Upper House, Patra said Odisha is among the top two states in the country that produce maximum coal.

"However, it's sad that despite its strong contribution to power generation, energy security and coal production, its rightful demand for coal revision of royalty has not been done for the last 12

years. Due to this Odisha is losing about ₹10,000 crore per annum," Patra said.

He said the rates of coal royalty for the state were last revised in May 2012.

Patra said over the last 12 years, Odisha has not been provided the rightful coal royalty revision, which is costing the state ₹10,000 crore per annum.

"I'm not trying to make it a political issue. It is a governance issue. And it needs to be looked into because it's a people's issue and those who are suffering in Odisha," the BJD MP said.

He said if Odisha starts getting the additional ₹10,000 crore, it could be used for development of the state.

Medical advice viewed as 'less reliable' if chatbot involved

People rated medical advice as "less reliable and empathetic" when they believed it was provided by AI-chatbots, a new study published in the journal 'Nature Medicine' has found.

Researchers found that this was also the case when patients or medical advice seekers were made to believe that a doctor took the help of artificial intelligence (AI) before sharing his guidance.

As a result, the individuals were also found to be less willing to follow AI recommendations, compared to advice from human doctors provided solely on their medical expertise, found

the study led by the University of Wuerzburg in Germany.

The results suggested that people trust medical guidance less if they suspect AI involvement, even as people around the world are increasingly turning to ChatGPT for health-related information, the researchers said.

With AI acknowledged for its potential in reducing bureaucracy and day-to-day workload for doctors, the authors argued that the findings are important as "trust in medical diagnoses and therapy recommendations" are critical for successful treatment.

The setting of the study is based on a digital health plat-



form from where information on medical issues can be obtained, the researchers said.

For the study, over 2,000 participants received identical med-

ical advice and were asked to evaluate it for reliability, comprehensibility and empathy.

The participants were divided into three groups. While one

group of participants was told that the advice came from a doctor, the second was told that it came from an AI chatbot. The third was led to believe that a doctor provided the medical advice with help from an AI.

The researchers found that advice provided by human doctors also scored higher on empathy, compared to that when AI was involved.

The study represented a starting point for detailed research into the conditions under which AI can be used in diagnostics and therapy without jeopardising patients' trust and cooperation, according to the authors.

STA launches special drive against underage driving

SPECIAL TEAMS CAUGHT ALTOGETHER 153 UNDERAGE DRIVERS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE SPECIAL DRIVE



The officials seized seven vehicles in Rayagada, six each in Rourkela and Bolangir, five each in Balasore and Subarnapur, four in Kalahandi, three each in Talcher, Angul and one in Khurda RTO jurisdiction, said the STA.

"We are requesting all parents and educational institutions to take serious measures to prevent juvenile driving. This enforcement drive will continue in the coming days. The enforcement will not be limited to juvenile driving but will also cover fitness, helmet, seat belt, speeding and drunken driving issues," said Transport commissioner Amitabh Thakur.

"Moreover, insurance companies do not compensate for accidents involving vehicles without valid fitness and registration certificates. Therefore, it has been decided to strictly control such vehicles and take firm action against lawbreakers," he said.

Earlier, Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena directed officials to take strict measures to reduce road accidents following with STA is taking steps in this regard.

The special teams caught altogether 153 underage drivers on the first day of the special drive. The juvenile drivers were mainly riding bikes and scooters to their educational institutions. "The officials of the Transport department issued 153 challans and 60 vehicles in this regard," said the STA in a statement.

The officials caught 11 underage drivers in Khurda district which include Capital city Bhubaneswar, 12 in Kalahandi, 10 in Cuttack, eight in Koraput, seven each in Ganjam and Rayagada district.

Bhubaneswar/Cuttack, July 29: The Transport department Monday launched a two-day special enforcement drive to check underage driving in the state. The State Transport Authority (STA) has constituted special teams to keep a check on underage driving in cities like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Balasore and under the territorial jurisdictions of 38 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs).

Funkwal inspects Khurda Road-Palasa rly section

Bhubaneswar: East Coast Railway (ECOR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal Monday conducted a detailed inspection of the Bhubaneswar-Palasa Railway section. During the inspection, Funkwal reviewed the progress of the Amrit Stations project, emphasising the importance of adhering to the targeted timelines. The stations inspected included Balugaon, Bhubaneswar, Brahmapur, Chatrapur, Khurda Road, Lingaraj Temple Road, Palasa, and Ichhapuram. The current status of ongoing construction works at these stations was also reviewed. Additionally, he inspected infrastructural and developmental works related to traffic facilities and passenger amenities at various railway stations. He advised officials to take necessary steps to ensure the early completion of these projects, underscoring the importance of providing enhanced services and facilities to passengers.

Special Consultative Status to KIIT DU

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 29: KIIT Deemed to be University has been granted the prestigious Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) at a meeting held recently at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta said, "It is a matter of pride that KIIT, the only technical university in India, achieved UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status. Both KIIT and KISS are proud to get this prestigious award. KISS has already been awarded with UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status in 2015 and has been continuing with this status till date."

He also said that KIIT is the only university in South Asia to get UNV status for engaging students for internship.

"ACYPL is a very prestigious thing for KIIT to engage political diplomats and leaders to visit KIIT and KISS and have an internship programme," he added.



Meanwhile, KIIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN Volunteers (UNV). The partnership will open an opportunity for students of KIIT DU to engage with various UN agencies to serve as

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) Secretary TK Ramachandran, during his maiden visit to Paradip Port Authority (PPA), laid the foundation stone of several projects worth over ₹13 crore. On this occasion, he inaugurated the Trauma and Burn Care (TBC) Centre in the newly-constructed Annex building of Paradip Port Hospital.

Constructed at a cost of ₹2.90 crore, the centre will provide curative and rehabilitative services for trauma and burn victims in and around Paradip. Ramachandran laid the foundation stone for the Water Treatment Plant of PPA. The project, being constructed at a cost of ₹10.50 crore, will receive raw water through Taldanda Canal and will have the capacity to filter 16 million litres of water per day. The plant is expected to be completed by the end of

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Stone laid for projects worth over ₹13 crore

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this year. It will supply quality drinking water to the citizens of Port Township. He reviewed the functioning of the PPA and interacted with heads and deputy heads of department. He also inspected and

reviewed port operations, planning, and expansion at the Mechanized Coal Handling Plant, Twin Wagon Tipplers at JSW-PTPL, and KICT silos. He suggested system improvement measures to increase productivity. He suggested several measures aimed at improving the overall performance of the port operations. These recommendations are expected to enhance the capacity and streamline the workflow, contributing to Port's long-term growth and success.

MoU with UN Volunteers will equip KIIT students with valuable professional experience in international development, shaping their future career paths with proper stipend

able professional experience in international development, shaping their future career paths with proper stipend. This initiative is a first-of-its-kind by any private university in South Asia," they said.

Similarly, the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), a global leader in fostering international understanding and diplomacy has announced its historic collaboration with the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and KIIT, the institute officials said.

Over 8,900 leaders in the US and in 129 countries have so far visited the institute till date, they added.

Wonderla's spl offer for Friendship Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 29: Wonderla Holidays Limited, India's largest amusement park chain, Monday announced special offers and exclusive attractions for the upcoming Friendship Day celebrations across all its parks including at Bhubaneswar.

The park has announced 'Buy 1 Get 1 free ticket offer' on online bookings for Friendship Day falling August 4.

The limited special offer is available online only and visitors can secure their spot by booking their entry through park's web portal <https://bookings.wonderla.com>. They can also buy tickets directly from the park counters or can contact at 0674-6640300, the organisers said.

"A host of activities including live DJ, special Zumba sessions, fun games and thrilling rides among others will take place on the occasion," said park officials. "To top it all off, all the



parks will remain open for an extended duration, granting an extra hour in the evening for everyone to revel in the festivities," they added.

Wonderla managing director Arun K Chittilappilly said, "Our goal is to create a lively atmosphere where people can come together to enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. Every moment at Wonderla is crafted to make your day extraordinary. Come celebrate the bonds of friendship with us at Wonderla."

Social media hampers identity development among teens

SOCIAL MEDIA HAVE PROVIDED A PLATFORM FOR ADOLESCENTS - PARTICULARLY THOSE HIGH IN FOMO, OR FEAR OF MISSING OUT - TO OBSESS OVER HOW THEY COMPARE TO MANY MORE PEOPLE, INCLUDING APTLY NAMED 'INFLUENCERS'

There's some research that suggests social media can be helpful for certain young people to connect with like-minded peers.

However, there are reasons to counter this view. The most compelling is evidence showing inappropriate screen time and social media use are linked to poor mental health in children and young people, including depression and anxiety.

Overuse or misuse of social media can damage many areas of psychological wellbeing including one that's not often considered: identity development.

Identity development has long been regarded as the core psychological business of adolescence. You decide who you are, what you want to become, what underlying values you stand for and what you want out of life as you move toward adulthood. But the study shows that this process

can be hampered by social media.

Developing an identity Between the ages of about 11 and 15, the human brain becomes increasingly sensitive to attention and feedback from peers. The parts of the brain responsible for developing perspective, judgment, critical thinking and self-control will not fully mature until a person's early to mid 20s.

Teenagers have always compared themselves to others. They seek validation from peers as they explore their values, develop their personalities and seek to express themselves. But social media have provided a platform for adolescents - particularly those high in FOMO, or fear of missing out - to obsess over how they compare to many more people, including aptly named 'influencers'.

It can be difficult for a young person to develop a clear sense



of self when they're constantly comparing themselves to and following others.

Similarly, young people are developing many of their opinions based on what they see on social media. An individual's tendency to conform to other people's opinions is sometimes

called the "bandwagon effect".

While plenty of social media content can be harmless enough, social media - like the real world - are becoming increasingly political and polarised, with little tolerance for opposing ideas.

Some teens may find themselves latching onto ideologies fed

to them via marketing algorithms.

Living in the public sphere Harry Triandis, a psychology researcher who died in 2019, proposed differences between the 'public' and 'private' self that we all embody. Most people can relate to keeping their real opinions or values to themselves while in public or in an unknown group of people.

According to study, once a person is confident that his manner of speaking and underlying value systems won't be misconstrued, he starts to reveal himself bit by bit. This process is the basis of forming friendships.

A person's private self is the basis for quiet reflection, learning and changing his mind. But nowadays teens play out their entire lives in the public sphere - essentially skipping this step.

Not only are they developing many of their opinions based

on what they see on social media, but they often broadcast them online instantly. At a later time, they may be forced to defend these ideas.

In a 24/7 virtual world, there's less opportunity for today's teenager to critically think about what they see online, self-reflect, explore and change their mind. There is little room to make mistakes, test boundaries, explore ideas and analyse information to forge their own identity.

These concerns are among the reasons many medical experts, parents and politicians alike want to limit access to social media for children.

While social media can continue to have detrimental effects for people older than 16, the earlier part of adolescence is an important time for the development of a young person's identity and self-worth.

(THE CONVERSATION)

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AWESTRUCK: A boy sits on a stone plaque and watches floodwater swirling in the Mahanadi at Ayodhya Sarovar in Sambalpur as Hirakud Dam continues to discharge water through 20 gates, Monday

CAMERAMAN MURDER

Yet another witness testifies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, July 29: Yet another witness deposited at Bhadrak district court Monday and recorded his statement in the much-hyped cameraman Manas Swain murder case.

The witness was identified as Pradip Barik, a native of Gopei village under Patkura police limits in Kendrapara district and a senior assistant posted in the office of national highway at Cuttack.

Barik in his statement said that he was present when prime accused Sharmistha Rout was brought on remand and interrogated during the Crime Branch probe. Sharmistha revealed during interrogation how and from where Manas was kidnapped and admitted burying his body at Badhupatna village in Nayagarh after the murder.



She also admitted buying pick mattock, weeding hoe and salt from Sunakhala market, burying the body and later disposing off the tools at Chandikhole, Barik said. Sharmistha, accompanied by Jhuna Bhoi, Ranjan Nayak, Bhagyadhar Nayak and Vivek

Nayak in her car, went to bring Manas from Chandbali, February 6, 2022. They waited all night for Manas at Palashpur and asked him to hand over the camera's memory chip when he came to meet them the next day.

They forcibly took him in their car when he refused to hand over the camera chip. Later, they returned to Bhubaneswar and held Manas hostage at Dayal Ashram. After murdering him there, Sharmistha and Jhuna visited Unit-1 market and purchased gunny bag, gloves, threads and a plastic bag. They sent caretaker Sony to market after the inmates of the Ashram had their food. Later, they stuffed the body of Manas in a gunny bag and left for Bhagyadhar's Badhupatna village in Nayagarh to bury the body.

15 injured as bus hits roadside tree

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rupsa, July 29: 15 persons including the driver and helper of a bus were injured after the vehicle hit a roadside tree near Putura Chowk under Singla police limits in Balasore district, Monday. According to sources, the bus 'Nupur' carrying 30 passengers from Baliapal was heading towards Balasore Monday morning. The driver of the bus lost control of the vehicle after the front

tyre burst all of a sudden and dashed against a roadside tree. Following the impact, the front portion of the bus was severely damaged and the driver struck inside the mangled cabin for long. Locals reached the spot, rescued all the injured and rushed them to Basta community health centre in an ambulance. On being informed, Singla police reached the spot and initiated an investigation into the incident.



Water cess over ₹ 8K-crore outstanding on industries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 29: Water cess amounting to over ₹7,262.424 crore is outstanding on 223 industrial firms in the state from 2020-21 to 2023-24 FY. Similarly, ₹797.72 crore is outstanding on 55 mining firms during the same period. The startling figures came to the fore in the reply of Engineer-In-Chief (EIC) Bhakta Ranjan Mohanty of Water Resources department to a star question-262 made in the state Assembly, July 25. Mohanty in his reply to the star question said that only ₹859.02 crore has been collected towards water cess by March 2024 while a total of ₹8,060 crore is outstanding.

In a bid for one time settlement of water cess, the state government showed favour to some firms and waived off their water cess. The state government waiving off ₹56.4 crore as water cess outstanding on Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) in November, 2015 is a case in this point.

However, IDCO, which looks after water supply to the industrial firms at Kalinganagar in Jajpur, is still left with an outstanding amount of ₹62.45 crore. The Water Resources department has been trying to recover



the outstanding water cess from September 2020 but with little success.

Sources said several thousand cusecs of water drawn through high-power motor pumps from various rivers and other water bodies is being sold to various industrial firms. IDCO has been drawing water from Brahmani river and supplying to various industrial firms at Kalinganagar for last 25 years after signing an agreement with the Water Resources department. This has raised question marks

as to what ails the IDCO and other industrial firms in making timely payment of water cess.

According to the report of the EIC, over 40 industrial and mining firms in the state have maximum amount of outstanding water cess. Among them, ₹11.46 crore is outstanding on Bindal Sponge Iron at Talcher, ₹138.16 crore on NTPC, Champala, ₹19.89 crore on ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd, ₹78.18 crore on Rathi Steel and Power, and ₹130.98 crore on Maheswari Ispat Ltd at Joda.

Similarly, ₹66.62 crore water cess is outstanding on ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd at Paradip, ₹269.24 crore on Shyam Metallics and Energy at Sambalpur, ₹211.89 crore at Orient Paper Mill, ₹1,070 crore at NLC India Ltd, ₹145.91 crore on Tata Steel BSL Ltd in Brajarajnaragar, ₹32.47 crore on BRB Iron and Steel in Khuntumi, ₹11.56 crore on Utkal Asbestos in Dhenkanal, ₹50.46 crore on Tata Steel at Kalinaganagar, ₹160.24 crore on Adhinuk Metallics in Sundargarh, ₹204.77 crore on

Jindal Steel and Power in Angul, ₹37.31 crore on Aska Cooperative Sugar Factory, ₹239.08 crore on JK Corporation Ltd in Rayagada, and ₹1,149.09 crore on Ballarpur Industries in Chowdwar.

Furthermore, ₹702.54 crore is pending on Odisha Power Consortium, ₹235.16 crore on Ahati Steel at Ghanthikal in Athagarh, ₹192.48 crore on Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd in Sambalpur, ₹167.82 crore on Tata Refractories Ltd at Belpahar, ₹77.59 crore on Biraj Steel and Energy in Sambalpur, ₹28.71 crore on Reliance Industries in Dhenkanal, ₹2,198.86 crore on Sewa Paper Mill and ₹211.89 crore on Orient Paper Mill in Jeypore.

The mining firms with outstanding water cess are Lingaraj OCP, MCL (₹136.65 crore), Bharatpur OCP (₹ 78.40 crore), Bhubaneswar OCP (₹30.01 crore), Ananta OCP (₹26.57 crore), Jagannath Colliery (₹32.13 crore), Hingula OCP (₹17.28 crore), Balarampur OCP (₹18.46 crore), Talcher Colliery (₹21.60 crore), Nandira Colliery (₹37.21 crore), Orient Area in Jharsuguda (₹36.05 crore), TPLS Ltd (₹27.49 crore), ITPS at Banharipali (₹28.03 crore), Tata Steel Mines division at Joda (₹223.55 crore) and MCL at Sundargarh (₹14.70 crore).

Woman dies in lightning strike

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalipada, July 29: In a tragic incident, a 55-year-old woman died due to lightning strike at Sunarui village under Baliapal police limits in Balasore district, Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Basanti Jena, 55, wife of Kalicharan Jena, a resident of Sunarui village.

According to information, Basanti had gone to a farmland for transplanting paddy saplings. Suddenly heavy rain started with thunder and lightning. While returning home, Basanti was struck by lightning and fell unconscious.

Family members rescued her in a critical condition and rushed her to Baliapal community health centre (CHC) where the doctor pronounced her dead on arrival.

Villagers have demanded government assistance to the next of the keen of deceased Basanti as her family is extremely poor.

Rare albino crocodile Malli awaits motherhood

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, July 29: In what may come as exciting news for animal lovers, 29-year-old rare albino crocodile 'Malli' has laid eggs in anticipation of motherhood in Bhitarkanika National Park.

Living a solitary life in an enclosed pond within the park, Malli has built a nest and laid eggs, continuing her unique behavior in pursuit of motherhood despite being without a male mate for 29 years. This situation raises questions on the likelihood of the eggs hatching as she has laid eggs six times in the past without success.

In 1975, Bhitarkanika National Park commenced the world's first artificial crocodile breeding programme, spearheaded by Australian biologist Dr HR Bustard and Indian crocodile researcher Dr Sudhakar Kar. In 2003, two albino hatchlings were found inside a forest adjacent to Dangamal Crocodile Breeding Centre near Bankuakula village. Forest department staff cap-



tured the hatchlings and kept the brighter one of them in a pen and released the second one into a creek near Suajora. When the higher ups of the breeding centre saw the albino crocodile in the pen, they were very much excited and named her 'Malli'.

Distinguished for her distinct white coloration, Malli has become more popular among the visiting tourists than another well-known albino crocodile Gori. Malli has been living in a 50-decimal enclosed pond connected to the Bhitarkanika river, which

allows fish to enter into the pond during high tides. This year, Malli laid eggs in an elevated area of the pond after building a nest with twigs and leaves. The forest officials who feed Malli were surprised as she was exhibiting unusual behavior for the past 7-8 days by ignoring their calls.

In 2018, Malli had laid 18 eggs for the first time, followed by 24 in 2019, 18 in 2020, 27 in 2021, 29 in 2022, and 23 in 2023. However, none of the eggs hatched due to the absence of a male partner. This year, she has laid eggs again and is diligently guarding them, raising concerns about her ability to become a mother without a mate.

The Forest department is considering finding for her a suitable male companion to fulfill her maternal instincts. According to DFO Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav, the head of the Rajnagar Wildlife Division, discussions are going on with crocodile experts to find an appropriate mate for Malli.

Female kanwariya dies in road accident

Kendrapara: A 22-year-old female kanwariya died on the spot while four other kanwariyas were injured, two of them critically, after a speeding vehicle ran over them Sunday night. Police Monday said the tragic incident took place near Nischintakoili tehsil chowk on Cuttack-Chandbali road under Nischintakoili police station limits. The deceased female kanwariya has been identified as Chinmayee Behera of Jighnipur under Nischintakoili police limits. The critically injured kanwariyas have been admitted to the hospital, the IIC of Nischintakoili police station said.

Dengue outbreak: RMC steps up inspection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 29: Since the onset of rainy season, Rourkela has been witnessing a rise in dengue cases. Recently, a number of dengue patients from areas like Rourkela Industrial Estate, Railway Colony, and Bondamunda were admitted to the Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) and other health centres.

Stepping up the preventive measures to control the disease, the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) and the Health department have been conducting inspections in various areas.

During inspection, mosquito larvae were found in waterlogged areas, coolers and water tanks in various areas raising concern about controlling the vector population. Inspections were conducted in several areas including Sector-16, Khatala Basti, A and E Blocks, Jagannathpali, Tumkela Basti, Subhadrapali Basti, and Shivaji Nagar. On the second day of the inspection campaign, Magistrate and Rourkela tehsildar Nivedita Pradhan along with RMC health officer Dr Sushil Parida and over 50 health workers focused on raising awareness about cleanliness and preventive mea-

sures against mosquito bites. Doctors and healthcare professionals provided important advice on hygiene, including information about dengue symptoms and treatment. Dr Parida mentioned that steps are being taken to prevent the spread of dengue. The two-day dengue control campaign was conducted in five sectors of Rourkela and surrounding areas. However, some sectors have been identified as dengue hotspots, particularly areas under the jurisdiction of the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). These issues will be brought to the attention of RSP authorities.

केन्द्रीय पेट्रोसायन अभियांत्रिकी एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान (सिपेट)
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PETROCHEMICALS ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY (CI PET)
 (Dept. Of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers, Govt. of India)
 S-3/79, Sec-A, Zone-B, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Email: cipetsat@cipet.gov.in

ITI ADMISSION - 2024-25
Sponsored by MAHANADI COALFIELDS LTD. (MCL), Sambalpur

Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CI PET) : CSTS, Bhubaneswar, Odisha invites applications from eligible candidates of various Operational Area's of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) like Talcher, Hingula, Kanika, Jagannath etc. Area's of Angul District, Lakhanpur & IB Valley of Jharsuguda District and Basundhara of Sundargarh District.

Courses offered with eligibility requirements are as follows :

Sl.No.	Name of the Trader	Qualification	Duration	Age Limit as on 01-08-2024
1.	FITTER	10th passed & above	2 Years	ITI - 14 to 40 Years
2.	ELECTRICIAN	10th passed & above	2 Years	ITI - 14 to 40 Years

Free Training, Lodging & Boarding: The cost of training programme along with lodging & boarding will be funded by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), Sambalpur.

How to apply: Eligible candidates may send their applications with self-attested copies of all necessary document viz. qualification certificate/Mark Sheet, Income certificate, Residential certificate, Aadhar Card, Bank Passbook Photocopy and 05 nos. of colour passport size photographs to CI PET at the above mentioned address through post/email: mclt@cipet.gov.in, cipetsat@gmail.com on or before **06.08.2024**. CI PET reserves the right to cancel or modify the advertisement & the application of candidates without assigning any reasons thereof.

For further details contact to : 977779477 / 9938608594

भारतीय खाद्य निगम / FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA
 क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, भुवनेश्वर / REGIONAL OFFICE, BHUBANESWAR

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना / Notice Inviting e-Tenders

सहायक महाप्रबंधक (सीई) भा खा नि, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, भुवनेश्वर निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए निगम की ओर से ऑनलाइन प्रतियोगिता दर पर निविदाएं आमंत्रित करता है।
 The Assistant General Manager (CE) FCI, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar invites on behalf of Food Corporation of India online percentage rate tenders under two bid systems at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> for following works.

NIT NO. CE-02 (01)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Changing of AC roof sheet of Godown No. 3 to 7 and verandah roofing of G.No. 1 & 2 (rail side) along with Provision of Verandah roof (Road side) for G.No 1 to 4 at FCI FSD Balijhori. Estimated Cost Rs. 2,83,52,783/- (Rupees Two Crores Eighty-three lakhs Fifty-two thousand Seven hundred Eighty-three Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 5,67,060/- (Rupees Five lakhs Sixty-seven thousand Sixty Only). Period of Completion 180 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 12/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

NIT NO. CE-02 (02)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Replacement of CGI Sheets with profile sheets of Godown no. 1, isolation shed and Cycle stand at FSD Jagannathpur. Estimated Cost Rs. 39,12,819/- (Rupees Thirty-nine lakhs Twelve thousand Eight hundred Nineteen Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 78,260/- (Rupees Seventy-eight thousand Two hundred Sixty Only). Period of Completion 150 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 01/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

NIT NO. CE-02 (03)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Replacement of CGI Sheets with profile sheets of Godown no. 1 at FSD Hirakud. Estimated Cost Rs. 37,08,943/- (Rupees Thirty seven lakhs Eight thousand Nine hundred Forty-three Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 74,180/- (Rupees Seventy-four thousand One hundred Eighty Only). Period of Completion 120 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 01/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

NIT NO. CE-02 (04)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Replacement of AC roof sheet of Godown No. 3 & 4 with Profile sheet at FSD Bhubaneswar. Estimated Cost Rs. 29,37,865/- (Rupees Twenty-nine lakhs Thirty-seven thousand Eight hundred Sixty-five Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 58,760/- (Rupees Fifty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Only). Period of Completion 150 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 01/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

NIT NO. CE-02 (05)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Replacement of damaged AC sheets of Godown No. 1 with profile sheet at FSD Jaleswar. Estimated Cost Rs. 21,31,188/- (Rupees Twenty-one lakhs Thirty-one thousand One hundred Eighty-eight Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 42,270/- (Rupees Forty-two thousand Two hundred Seventy Only). Period of Completion 120 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 01/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

NIT NO. CE-02 (06)/ 2024-25. Name of Work- Replacement of damaged AC sheets of Godown No. 2 with profile sheet at FSD Phulbani. Estimated Cost Rs. 21,13,249/- (Rupees Twenty-one lakhs Thirteen thousand Two hundred Forty-nine Only). Earnest Money- Rs. 42,270/- (Rupees Forty-two thousand Two hundred Seventy Only). Period of Completion 120 Days. Last time and date of submission of bid: 01/08/2024 upto 2:00 pm.

बोली प्रपत्र एवं अन्य विवरण www.eprocure.nic.in के वेबसाइट से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।
 The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website www.eprocure.nic.in.
 नोट: किसी भी विवादित स्थिति में मूल अंग्रेजी पाठ ही मान्य होगा।

FOCUS POLITICS

LOWER THE TEMPERATURE



This is a time for the government to recognise and respect the new reality of the new Lok Sabha and to understand that long term success in politics and complex issues of governance demand the approach of give and take



Jagdish Rattanan

INDEED, ACCOMMODATION AND CONCILIATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE APPROACH EVEN WITH A BRUTE MAJORITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID HAVE IN ITS PREVIOUS TERM

The elections are behind us and a minority government styled as Modi 3.0 has taken office. A reinvigorated Opposition has already seen the presentation of the Union Budget, which has picked ideas from the Congress manifesto, like the apprenticeship programme to address the burning crisis of jobs for millions. This should be a good sign in democratic politics. Good ideas can come from everywhere. The government could give credit to the Congress and earn some goodwill from the party in return. This is a time for the government to recognise and respect the new reality of the new Lok Sabha and to understand that long term success in politics and complex issues of governance demand the approach of give and take. The first pre-requisite for this is to lower the political temperature to get some real work done. But instead, the government has contributed to raising the political temperature even more. All indications are that the bitterness of the election season isn't going away. The new attack quite obviously targeting the Congress on the Emergency by proclaiming 25 June as "Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas," and the Union Home Minister's latest political attacks on Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, all appear to indicate that it's compulsion and/or "business as usual" for Modi sarkar, and to that extent it mocks the nation and its people who clearly decided not to give the incumbent a clear mandate for the third term. The government's answer is to keep the pot boiling as it lives a Rip Van Winkle story –almost as if it slept through the election results,

and now wants to live an old reality in a new world. Indeed, accommodation and conciliation should have been the approach even with a brute majority that the government did have in its previous term. But that brought hubris, and it is the hubris in large part that brought the political defeat. No lessons have been learned. Indeed, they cannot be, because learnability does not go with a self-righteousness that digs in and a greed that wants to grab it all, be it votes, attention or narratives. This is a command and control mind at work; national issues are pictured as war and everything is fair because the only outcome must be for the leader to win at all costs. In many ways, the story is reflection of the internal emptiness of the BJP, which has not been able to fix accountability for its showing in the Lok Sabha, and has been rendered incapable of reflection or raising hard questions for itself. The vice-like grip that the Prime Minister has on

the party is at one level a political success for him personally, because which leader doesn't like a party that asks no questions of the leader? There are some internal noises emerging: an important group has raised questions on the working of UP CM Yogi Adityanath, and for the electoral losses in that state, the RSS chief has yet again offered remarks not seen as favourable to the Prime Minister but all these are oblique signs of an internal unease. Direct questions and downright analysis are missing. For all the accusations of the Congress being a family-run party, the BJP has only followed the path it seeks to condemn, becoming in little time the preserve of the vagaries of the Modi-Shah thinking. This capture tells us a lot about the party and its fibre, more than any history-telling can. It is not difficult to see that the duo has survived by constantly distracting attention. This has inevitably brought us an unending game of bogey-hunting. Consider the latest

example of just how much the break and bitterness is with the Opposition on the simple issue of a NITI-Aayog meeting – which was the ninth governing council meeting, and was chaired by Modi just last week. This is one place where the government could and should have worked hard so that all the CMs of all the states were respectfully accommodated. Instead, as many as 10 CMs did not attend. The only Opposition voice present, Mamata Banerjee, walked out and complained that her mic was muted and she felt insulted. The arrogance in the later remarks of the NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam speaks for itself: "For those who did not participate, I always say that it is their loss." Where do these ideas come from? The slanging match on why she walked out and if the mic was muted is an example of how lower order conversations are fuelled and relished. It is for the government of the day at the Centre to stop this slide, to build confidence and to earn some credibility with Opposition parties, who are as much representatives of the people. Soon after the elections, one view was that the BJP appropriately cut to size by the electorate would be now forced to listen and be mindful of boundaries. That has clearly not happened. The other view then may hold, which is that a diminished BJP at the Centre, unable to handle criticism and unskilled in charting the middle path, may end up doing more harm to the nation and its democratic traditions. **The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.** ©THE BILLION PRESS

Kamala Changes

US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump and his team have been forced to review their campaign strategy and come up with a misogynist, racist campaign to attack the new Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris who has compelled change in the election strategies of both parties. The endorsement by former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama of Harris' candidacy last week has seemingly led to the sharpest attacks by Trump and his campaign managers. The new strategy is using gender discrimination and racism as the main propaganda against Harris.

Trump was seemingly caught off guard when President Joe Biden suddenly opted out of the race and let Harris throw the gauntlet at the former. The move was so unexpected that for the next few days, the Republican campaign was clueless on how to take on Harris as it had long used all its resources and energies to target Biden, who was determined to run for the second term. But once the shock of his withdrawal from the campaign was over, Team Trump is now seen stacking misogynist and racist cards against Harris.

Samples of Trump's rhetoric make it obvious how venomous the attack against Harris is going to be. In his first campaign rally since Biden's exit in North Carolina, Trump called Harris "a radical-left lunatic who will destroy our country." He also branded her "lyin' Kamala Harris" and repeatedly pronounced her name wrong. This was his old tactic of racist ridicule of Harris whose first name he had deliberately distorted as "comma + la and whatever." While immigration is meant to be a central line of attack for Trump, he did not even mention it once in an interview with Fox News last Monday. This suggests Republicans are yet to settle on a message that is likely to sway undecided voters. At the moment, they are testing a number of messages and have not yet been able to narrow down which ones would resonate with the people most.

Four years ago, Donald Trump articulated his anti-feminine bias with the remark that Republicans "are not going to have a socialist President, especially any female." Now, his running mate JD Vance has stooped low in his attempt to run down Harris. He has described her as one of the "childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they have made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable too." It may be noted that Harris has no biological children of her own. This was a cue given to the supporters who have become even more vicious. However, this strategy may boomerang as it may alienate moderate voters. On the side, in an international survey it was suggested that in many developed countries, including the US, women aged 18 to 30 are on an average 30 percentage points more liberal than men of the same age range.

Harris in her first campaign ad has sought to draw a sharp contrast with Trump through her advocacy of freedom. The tune of Beyoncé's song of the same name is played in the background as she talks about "the freedom to be safe from gun violence, the freedom to make decisions about your own body." It is to be noted that this call for freedom to make decisions about your own body does not stop at abortion. It extends to the extreme sickness that is being viewed in the activities of the Alphabet community as was evident in the opening of the Olympic Games at Paris last week. The call of Harris was an obvious reference to Trump's record of exhorting his supporters to overturn the electorate's verdict last time, his open support for the gun lobby and his role in abolition of the abortion rule by Supreme Court judges appointed during his presidential tenure. She has described Trump's vision of America as "a country of chaos, fear and hate."

It is interesting that the scale of the fundraising has remarkably improved for Harris – \$200m in the week since she was endorsed by Joe Biden. The bulk of the money has come from first time donors numbering nearly 900,000. A national poll conducted by the New York Times and Siena College shows Harris is closing the Biden-Trump gap by five points.

It is too early to predict the voters' mood at this stage with many white conservatives and older voters known for their support for Trump. On the other hand, Harris is getting traction from the coloured population of African and Asian origins. Battle lines are drawn for the most crucial contest ever.

WISDOM CORNER

Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality. **DESMOND TUTU**

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. **CONFUCIUS**

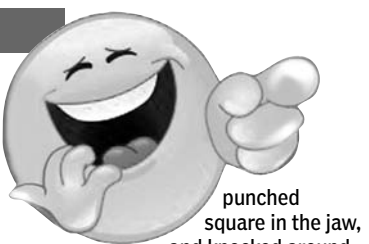
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1863: American industrialist and automobile manufacturer Henry Ford, who revolutionized factory production with his assembly-line methods, was born.
- 1921: Insulin was first isolated as a pancreatic extract by the Canadian scientists Sir Frederick G. Banting and Charles H. Best.
- 1930: Uruguay defeated Argentina to win the first World Cup in football (soccer).
- 1932: Summer Olympics open in Los Angeles. The tenth Summer Olympics was officially opened. This was the second time that the city of Los Angeles was hosting the multi-event international sports meet.
- 1945: The USS Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese submarine shortly after delivering the internal components of the atomic bombs that were later dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; some 900 men died, many of whom succumbed to shark attacks, dehydration, and salt poisoning as they awaited rescue.

LOL

A crowded store

It was the day of the big sale. Rumours of the sale (and some advertising in the local paper) were the main reason for the long line that formed by 8:30, the store's opening time, in front of the store. A small man pushed his way to the front of the line, only to be pushed back, amid loud and colourful curses. On the man's second attempt, he was



punched square in the jaw, and knocked around a bit, and then thrown to the end of the line again. As he got up the second time, he said to the person at the end of the line... "That does it! If they hit me one more time, I won't open the store!"

SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

The critical-minerals race



Tom Achoki

WITHOUT ROBUST ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND PUBLIC-HEALTH PROTECTIONS, THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MINING OPERATIONS CAN ERODE THE GREEN TRANSFORMATION'S EXPECTED ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Global efforts to combat climate change are primarily focused on phasing out fossil fuels and shifting to renewable energy. The accelerated pace of this transition, particularly in high-income countries, has led to a growing demand for critical metals and rare minerals, which are crucial for clean-energy infrastructure like batteries and semiconductors. According to the World Bank, more than three billion tons of minerals and metals will be needed by 2050 to develop the technologies required to limit the global temperature rise to 2°Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Leading countries such as the US and China are seeking strategic partnerships with resource-rich countries, many of them low- and middle-income economies grappling with competing priorities and limited financial resources. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, remains the world's leading source of mined cobalt, an essential input for electric-vehicle batteries. But the absence of robust governance and accountability structures in mineral-rich countries prevents the equitable distribution of the gains from mineral extraction, driving local communities into poverty and fueling violent conflicts. Despite their vast mineral wealth, countries such as Angola, Chad, and the DRC have been plagued by incidences of corruption, authoritarian repression, militarisation, and civil wars. Moreover, mining operations

often take place in remote locations, where marginalised local communities lack the necessary negotiating power and tools to deal with well-resourced and sophisticated multinational corporations, resulting in lopsided deals with far-reaching economic and environmental implications. Consequently, unscrupulous extractive-industry actors may cut corners or do the bare minimum to comply with regulatory frameworks aimed at protecting the environment and the health of the communities in which they operate. Without robust environmental, social, and public-health protections, the harmful effects of mining operations can erode the green transformation's expected economic benefits. There are many examples of communities around the world whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by social and environmental degradation caused by reckless resource-extraction practices. If allowed to continue, this could result in a pyrrhic victory, with a privileged few reaping the rewards of the clean-energy transition while most of the world is left behind. Crucially, unregulated mining can have far-reaching public-health implications for low-income countries. Viral epidemics such as Ebola and yellow fever have often been linked to environmental degradation, which forces local communities to venture deep into wildlife sanctuaries to make a living. A 2021 Stanford University

study, for example, identified gold mining in the Brazilian Amazon as a major contributor to malaria outbreaks across the region. In addition to these public-health effects, environmental degradation caused by harmful mining practices has also been linked to reduced economic opportunities for local communities in affected countries. Research shows that unregulated mining can lead to a wide range of negative consequences, including reduced food production, poor nutrition, social apathy, delinquency, forced migration of large populations, and violent conflicts. Considering the far-reaching effects of mineral extraction, national governments and international policymakers must take steps to safeguard vulnerable communities throughout the broader value chain. While wealthy countries go to great lengths to procure, develop, and adopt clean-energy technologies for their citizens' benefit, mineral-producing countries could face devastating consequences if adequate protective measures are not implemented. Given this reality, countries benefiting from mineral extraction must ensure that affected communities can also enjoy the fruits of the clean-energy transition. Existing global frameworks, such as those addressing conflict diamonds, could be easily adapted to maintain the integrity of such initiatives. Similarly, emerging technolo-

gies like blockchain could help provide clear visibility and accountability, ensuring that the minerals essential for a lower-carbon future are sourced and distributed ethically. Encouragingly, many stakeholders have recognised the urgent need to bring this issue to the forefront of global policy discussions. Through its Climate-Smart Mining Initiative, the World Bank supports investment and provides technical assistance to mineral-rich developing countries, facilitating the sustainable extraction and processing of essential minerals and metals and minimising mining's social and environmental impacts. Similarly, the World Economic Forum recently launched a global multi-stakeholder platform aimed at promoting the green agenda by facilitating collaborative risk management and international cooperation. While these global efforts hold great promise, it is crucial to align the economic and social objectives of the energy transition. To achieve this, international policymakers must ensure that green programmes fit the specific context in which they will be implemented by encouraging local communities affected by mineral extraction to participate in their design. Only by doing so can we build a clean-energy future that is truly inclusive and sustainable. **The writer is a former Sloan fellow at MIT.** ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

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
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Monumental moment

Sir, Assam's Charaideo Maidam has achieved international recognition by being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This marks a monumental moment in India's efforts to preserve and celebrate its cultural heritage. Notably, this is the first cultural site from Northeast India to receive such an honour, highlighting the region's unique contributions to the country's history. The site represents the late medieval mound burial tradition of the Tai Ahom community, offering a window into the past and the customs of a significant historical dynasty. The Charaideo Maidam serves as the final resting place for the royalty of the Ahom dynasty, an illustrious ruling family in Assam's history. These mound burials, akin to the grandeur of Egypt's pyramids, house not only the remains of Ahom kings and nobles but also valuable artefacts. The architectural and engineering skills exhibited in the construction of these Moidams are exceptional, reflecting a high degree of sophistication and artistry in their creation. This recognition by UNESCO underscores the importance of preserving such sites that provide deep insights into ancient cultures and their practices. The inclusion of Charaideo Maidam in the UNESCO World Heritage List ensures that this cultural treasure will receive enhanced protection and preservation. With this status, the site is now poised for global recognition, which is anticipated to boost tourism significantly. **Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH**

Difference of opinion

Sir, This refers to "Modi urged to bring back Netaji's remains from Japan by August, 18" (Orissa POST, July 29). I would like to comment that by making an appeal to the Prime Minister for bringing back the mortal remains of Netaji, Chandra Kumar Bose, the grand-nephew of Netaji, has ignored the basic fact that the Government of India has not yet come to the definite conclusion that Netaji died in a plane crash on 18 August, 1945. The former BJP leader Chandra Kumar Bose is trying to suppress the fact that there are serious differences of opinion among the family members of Netaji about his reported death and they have evidence handy with them to disprove his reported death. **Arun Gupta, KOLKATA**

national

of the day quote

After 3 years, the statistics speak for itself; unemployment is down to 6.1% and will further dip in the coming days when the results of our policy interventions will start to show up. We are always committed to the youth of Assam



HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CM, ASSAM

I was not aware of my appointment as the new governor of Telangana before PM Modi first called me on Saturday night. He told me that I have to work outside Tripura and I said that I was ready to perform whatever responsibility is given to me



JISHNU DEV VARMA | FORMER DEPUTY CM, TRIPURA

The 10 per cent quota given to Marathas by the Maharashtra government will stand legal scrutiny. As an OBC, I oppose extending benefits of OBC quota to the Maratha community



BHAGWAT KARAD | FORMER UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

2 'kanwariyas' dead in road accident

Morena: Two 'kanwariyas' died and 14 were injured after a truck hit a tractor-trolley in Morena in Madhya Pradesh Monday, a police official said. The incident took place at 5am on National Highway number 44, some 10 kilometres from the district headquarters, which led to enraged villagers beating up the truck driver and also blocking the arterial road for some time, the official said. The tractor-trolley was trailing the kanwariya procession to provide assistance.

US woman found chained to tree in Sindhudurg forest

Mumbai: A 50-year-old American woman was found tied to a tree with an iron chain in a forest in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, and a set of documents, including an Aadhaar card with a Tamil Nadu address, were recovered from her possession, a police official said Monday. Police suspect the husband of the woman, Lalita Kayi, tied her inside the forest in the coastal district, around 450km from Mumbai, and fled. The woman, who appeared frail and said to be battling mental health issues, is originally from the United States and had been staying in Tamil Nadu, from where her husband hails, for the last 10 years, an official said.

Four children drown in pond

Jaipur: Four boys drowned while taking a bath in a pond in Rajasthan's Didwana district, police said Monday. According to the police, the incident took place Sunday in Kerap village when the victims had gone to play near the pond. When the children, aged between 12 to 15 years, did not return till late, their parents started a search for them and spotted their slippers near the pond, they said.

2 minor girls die in wall collapse

Sultanpur (UP): Two girls died and two others were injured when the wall of a kutchha house collapsed in the Chanda area of this Uttar Pradesh district, police said Monday. Eight-year-old Radhika and her cousins Darpan (10) and 17-year-old twins Babina and Beena were sleeping when the incident occurred Sunday night.



No festival, celebration, or 'sadhana' is complete without self-discipline. To ensure a smooth and safe journey, we must be devoted not only internally but also externally. 'Shivo Bhutva Shivam Yajet' (to worship Shiva, first become Shiva)

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

CONG WOMEN'S WING LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN

Congress' women's wing Monday launched a nationwide movement demanding an immediate implementation of the women's reservation law in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The campaign launched from Jantar Mantar would reach every state, district, city and village until the demands of half of the country's population are met and they are given their rights and security



Supreme Court commences special Lok Adalat

Allows media cameras inside courtrooms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: In a first, the first seven benches of the Supreme Court commenced a special Lok Adalat at 2 pm Monday for an amicable resolution of disputes, with media cameras being allowed inside courtrooms.

The week-long special Lok Adalat, celebrating 75 years of the Supreme Court, began with the aim to "facilitate amicable settlements of suitable pending cases", in matters that have "elements of settlement".

Earlier in the day, Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud said the first seven benches of the apex court will hear cases in the special Lok Adalat at 2 pm.

The top court will hold the special Lok Adalat till August 3,



in an effort to reduce the pendency of cases.

"From today till Friday, we will have the Supreme Court Lok Adalat and the first seven benches will sit for it. If lawyers have cases which can go before the Lok Adalat, please bring them," the CJI said at the outset of the day's proceedings.

Justice Chandrachud had earlier requested citizens, who have pending cases before the Supreme Court, to take part in the special Lok Adalat to get their disputes resolved amicably and speedily.

In a video message uploaded on the court's website, he had said, "From July 29 to August 3, the Supreme Court is or-

From today till Friday, we will have the Supreme Court Lok Adalat and the first seven benches will sit for it. If lawyers have cases which can go before the Lok Adalat, please bring them

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

ganising a special Lok Adalat. This is part of a series of activities which the Supreme Court is observing to commemorate the 75th year since the establishment of the Supreme Court."

Most significantly, the CJI had said judges dedicated to the institution of justice are concerned about the large backlog of cases.

"The Lok Adalat represents a very informal technology-based solution to resolve cases involving our citizens to their satisfaction in a purely voluntary, consensual mode."

"Therefore, on behalf of all my colleagues and the staff of the Supreme Court, I would appeal to all citizens who have cases before the Supreme Court or lawyers advocates on record to take the advantage and benefit of this opportunity in an attempt to resolve the cases speedily, in a manner which is acceptable to every contesting party," Justice Chandrachud had said. The top court said Lok Adalats are an integral component of the country's judicial system, enhancing alternative dispute resolution as a means of expediting and fostering amicable settlements.

It said cases with elements of settlement, including those relating to matrimonial disputes, property disputes, motor-accident claims, land acquisition, compensation, service and labour; pending before the apex court would be taken up to facilitate a speedy disposal.

Counselling for NEET-UG to start from August 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The counselling for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG) 2024 will start from August 14, according to an MCC notice issued Monday.

However the registration for the process of counselling is likely to start from the first week of August, Dr B Srinivas, Secretary of the National Medical Commission (NMC) said.

The candidates are advised to visit the MCC website for the latest news and notices for counselling. "The counselling will take place for the allotment of approximately 1.10 lakh MBBS seats in around 710 medical colleges across the country. Also, the counselling will be held for 21,000 BDS seats besides Ayush and nursing seats," Srinivas said.

COACHING CENTRE TRAGEDY

5 more held, bulldozer action on

THE MCD LAUNCHED AN ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE TO REMOVE ILLEGAL STRUCTURES COVERING STORM DRAINS IN THE AREA WHICH LED TO WATERLOGGING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: Five more people, including four co-owners of the basement of the coaching centre where three civil services aspirants died, were arrested Monday and bulldozers began demolishing encroachments as anguish over the deaths echoed across the city, from parliament to the streets of Old Rajinder Nagar.

The Ministry of Home Affairs constituted a committee to inquire into the incident and said it will look into the reasons, fix responsibility, suggest measures and recommend policy changes.

While Lok Sabha members across party lines demanded an inquiry, hundreds of students continued their protests near Rau's IAS Study Circle in the west Delhi locality where the horror unfolded Saturday night, killing the three students trapped in the basement illegally used as a library as floodwaters rose outside.

The driver of an SUV which drove through the flooded street, causing the water to swell and breach the gates of the three-storey building and inundate the basement, was among the five arrested. The SUV was also seized.

All five were sent to judicial custody for 14 days by a court.

With this, the number of arrests has gone up to seven. The



₹10L ex-gratia to kin of each victim

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena Monday announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh each for the families of three civil services aspirants who died after flooding of the basement of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar here. According to a Raj Niwas statement, the LG, who met the students protesting over the tragic incident, also assured action against responsible officials of Delhi Fire Services (DFS), police, and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) within 24 hours. A compensation of ₹10 lakh has been announced, the statement said.

owner and the coordinator of the coaching institute have already been nabbed and booked for culpable homicide.

The MCD, battling charges of negligence and not desilting storm water drains, terminated a junior engineer and suspended an assistant engineer of the area for alleged lapses on their part.

In the last two days, the MCD has sealed 20 basements of coaching centres in Rajinder Nagar and Mukherjee Nagar, hubs of coaching centres. These basements were illegally being used as libraries or for providing classes.

As authorities launched action against illegal basements, an air of uncertainty has gripped civil services aspirants in the city, as coaching institutes in Old Rajinder Nagar and Mukherjee Nagar have cancelled classes.

An official said that the encroachments covering storm water drains were demolished in

Old Rajinder Nagar, adding that the drive will continue in the next few days.

The MCD commissioner had told PTI earlier that storm drains were covered by encroachers, leading to waterlogging and rainwater entering the basement.

For many, the civic apathy was underscored by a civil service aspirant, Kishore Singh Kushwah, saying he had complained to the MCD about classes and libraries being operated from the basements of Rao's IAS Study Circle and other institutes June 26.

He said the three IAS aspirants would not have died had the authorities taken note of his complaint. In a video, he was demanding strict action against big UPSC coaching institutes which were allegedly putting the lives of students at stake.

The five accused -- Tejinder Singh, Parvinder Singh, Harvinder Singh and Sarabjeet Singh, the four co-owners of the

Hundreds squatted on the road near the coaching institute, demanding justice and compensation for the families of the deceased

basement of the coaching centre and SUV driver Manuj Kathuria - were sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) M Harsha Vardhan said each floor of the building is owned by a different person.

The police investigation has revealed that co-owners had rented out the basement to the coaching centre since 2021.

The co-owners had not set up any drainage system at the basement which was running as a library. In the document's with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), they had shown it as a store room of the coaching centre.

Not too far away from west Delhi, the tragedy found quiet denouement with the body of Nevin Delvin, the 28-year-old Jawaharlal Nehru Student who died, being handed over to his uncle at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

Security was beefed up in the area with angry students congregating to register their protest. Hundreds squatted on the road near the coaching institute, demanding justice and compensation for the families of the deceased.

Lt Governor VK Saxena met protesting students and assured them that no one responsible for the incident will be spared.

Police will also question municipal officials about desilting of drains and the clearance certificate issued to Rau's IAS Study Circle.

INDIA bloc will break govt's 'chakravyuh': Rahul



HE ENSURES MSP LEGAL GUARANTEE, CASTE CENSUS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: Using the 'chakravyuh' metaphor as a leitmotif, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Monday claimed that an atmosphere of fear prevails all around with a group of six trapping the entire country in a 'chakravyuh' he promised would be broken by the INDIA bloc.

Participating in the debate in the Lok Sabha on Budget 2024-25, Gandhi said the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will ensure that a legal guarantee for MSP as well as a caste census is passed by the House.

In a speech that invoked the Mahabharat and led to an uproar in the House, prompting Speaker Om Birla to intervene frequently, the former Congress chief alleged that the sole aim of the Union Budget is to strengthen the framework of big businesses, political monopoly that destroys the democratic structure, and the deep state or the agencies.

"There is an atmosphere of fear and that fear has pervaded every aspect of our country. In the BJP only one man is allowed to dream to be the prime minister. If the defence minister wants to be PM, there is a big problem, there is fear. This fear has been spread throughout the country...why is it that my friends in the BJP are terrified, ministers

are terrified, farmers, workers are terrified?" the Congress leader asked.

Thousands of years ago in Haryana's Kurukshetra, six people killed a youth, Abhimanyu, in a 'chakravyuh', he said, adding that a 'chakravyuh' has violence and fear.

He said the 'chakravyuh' is also called a 'padmavyuh' for its resemblance to a lotus (BJP's election symbol) formation.

"In the 21st century, another 'chakravyuh' has been prepared. It is in the form of lotus and the prime minister (Narendra Modi) wears the symbol on his chest. What was done with Abhinmanyu is being done with India, with its youth, women, farmers and small and medium businesses," he said.

Today also, there are six people at the centre of the 'chakravyuh', including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. Gandhi took the name of four more people but Speaker Om Birla disallowed it citing that they were not members of the House and hence cannot be named.

As the treasury benches erupted in protest, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said Gandhi was not following parliamentary procedure. The Congress leader was not showing him the courtesy of allowing him to intervene, Rijiju said.

"You create 'chakravyuhs' and we break them," he said and asserted that the best way to break 'chakravyuhs' was through the caste census.

1 in 9 Indians at risk of developing cancer: Experts

Tobacco consumption remains the foremost preventable cause of cancer in India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 29 July: Amid mounting cases of cancer in India, health experts Monday said that one out of nine Indians have a lifetime risk of developing cancer but most are preventable with early detection.

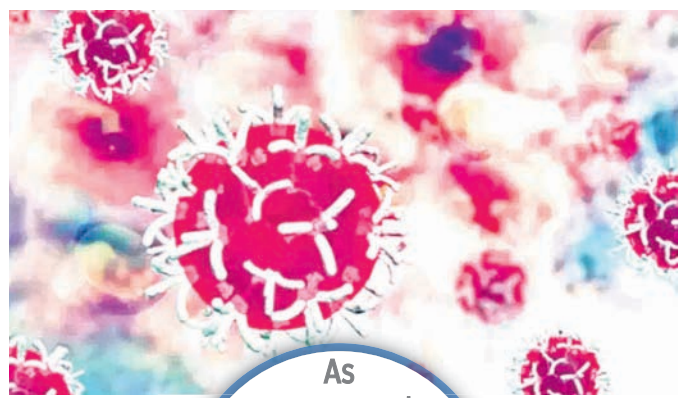
India is witnessing a rise in cancer cases. As per a recent Apollo Hospitals' Health of Nation Report, India is the "cancer capital of the world." It projected the number of annual cancer cases to rise from almost 1.4 million in 2020 to 1.57 million by 2025.

This alarming trend underscores the need for urgent and comprehensive government action to address the multifaceted causes and implement effective prevention and treatment measures.

Dr Indu Aggarwal, Head of the Department of Preventive Oncology at RGCIRC, said that tobacco consumption remains the foremost preventable cause of cancer in India.

"Nearly 267 million adults use tobacco, which is linked to a high incidence of oral, lung, and other cancers. Unhealthy dietary habits and sedentary lifestyles further increase the risk of cancers such as colorectal, breast, and pancreatic," she told IANS.

Increased life expectancy and an ageing population also contribute to the rising cancer rates,



as older individuals are more susceptible to various types of cancer. Oncogenic infections, such as Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

As per a recent Apollo Hospitals' Health of Nation Report, India is the 'cancer capital of the world'

and Hepatitis B and C viruses, significantly contribute to cervical and liver cancers, respectively. Promoting HPV and Hepatitis B vac-

Increased life expectancy and an ageing population also contribute to the rising cancer rates, as older individuals are more susceptible to various types of cancer

Oncogenic infections, such as Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Hepatitis B and C viruses, significantly contribute to cervical and liver cancers, respectively

nations to prevent cancer-related infections is crucial.

Increased funding for cancer treatment technology and quality post-treatment care is necessary for a larger patient population and improved well-being of cancer survivors, said the experts while lauding the government's recent efforts to exempt three more cancer drugs from customs duty.

"The recent Budget has seen

an increase in healthcare expenditure, including reducing customs duty on essential cancer drugs. This measure aims to make new treatments more affordable and accessible. However, more needs to be done to expand healthcare schemes and improve infrastructure," Dr Prathmesh Pai, Director at Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar, Head & Neck Cancer Institute of India, told IANS.

To combat this crisis, experts emphasise the importance of public awareness, organised screening programmes, and increased funding for cancer research.

"Prevention and early detection are crucial. By focusing on these areas, we can significantly reduce the cancer burden and improve patient outcomes," Dr Aggarwal said.

of the day quote

For our country to develop and strengthen its economy, social unity is essential. The current situation of tension and division is alarming. The growing discord in the country requires unity beyond caste, religion and language. The responsibility of fostering social unity lies with the government

Crimes against Dalits and tribals have increased. The crime percentage, which was 32.7 per cent in January 2024, rose to 33.7 per cent in February, 34.1 per cent in March, 19.5 per cent in April, 62.5 per cent in May and 53.37 per cent in June

I wrote again to Chief Secretary May 20 on importance of desilting and departments like Irrigation and Flood Control, MCD, NDMC, etc should share their plans about it but there was no response. After a fortnight, I again wrote to him but there was no reply

XPOST OF THE DAY

The reason why ground reporters have been put in a cage in Parliament is only because they were speaking to opposition leaders and carrying their statements. Those statements were getting a lot of traction too. This will obviously irk a government that is using to blanking out the opposition from TV channels. Noida anchors should immediately rush to the government's rescue and show how caging of journalists is a masterstroke and an act of patriotism

SHORT TAKES

Cong leader Arif Aqueel passes away

Bhopal: Former Madhya Pradesh minister and senior Congress leader Arif Aqueel passed away Monday at the age of 72 in a private hospital in Bhopal after prolonged illness, family sources said. Aqueel, who was elected from Bhopal North Assembly seat six times in his long political career, is survived by his wife, three sons and one daughter. He emerged victorious from Bhopal North seat in the 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018 assembly polls. He was a prominent Muslim face of the party and was cabinet minister in the Congress governments led by Digvijaya Singh (1996-2003) and Kamal Nath (2018-2020). Both Singh and Nath expressed grief at the death of Aqueel.

4 killed in blast at scrap dealer's shop

Srinagar: Four persons were killed in a blast in the Sopore area of Jammu and Kashmir Monday, officials said here. The blast occurred inside the shop of a scrap dealer at Sher Colony in Sopore town of Baramulla district. Some people were unloading scrap from a truck when the incident occurred, the officials said. While two persons died on the spot, two others succumbed to injuries later, they said.

14 Naxalites surrender

Bijapur: As many as 14 Naxalites, one of them carrying a bounty of Rs 1 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Monday, police said.



And definitely not for the Brahmin community. Because the oppression and neglect the community faced under SP and BJP governments is an open secret. In fact, their development and upliftment happened only during the BSP government. Therefore, these people (Brahmins) must be careful

MAYAWATI | BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF

INDIA LOST 528 ELEPHANTS IN 5 YEARS

India lost 528 elephants in the last five years due to unnatural causes, including poaching, poisoning, electrocution, and train accidents, the government informed Parliament Monday. Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh told the Lok Sabha that 392 elephants died from electrocution and 73 were killed in train accidents during this period



EXCISE POLICY CASE

CBI files final charge sheet against Kejriwal

The CBI has named Kejriwal, AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak, non-executive director of Aurobindo Pharma P Sarath Chandra Reddy, director of Buddy Retail Pvt Ltd Amit Arora, alleged hawala operator Vinod Chauhan and businessman Ashish Mathur as accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: Concluding its probe in the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, the CBI Monday filed its final charge sheet in the case against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and five others, including AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak, officials said. The federal probe agency had earlier filed a main charge sheet and four supplementaries in the case in which former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, Telangana MLC K Kavitha and 15 others have also been charged.

It said the charge sheet filed Monday is the final one in the case. The CBI has named Kejriwal, AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak, non-executive director of Aurobindo Pharma P Sarath Chandra Reddy, director of Buddy Retail Pvt Ltd Amit Arora, alleged hawala operator Vinod Chauhan and businessman Ashish Mathur as accused.

The probe agency has alleged that liquor businessman Magunta Sreenivasalu Reddy (now a TDP MP) met Kejriwal March 16, 2021, at his office in the Delhi Secretariat.

Reddy allegedly requested Kejriwal to provide support in his liquor business in the national capital by tweaking the Excise Policy 2021-22 which was then in the making, the CBI said in its charge sheet against K Kavitha.



Kejriwal assured support to Reddy and asked him to contact the accused K Kavitha as she was working with his team on the Excise Policy of Delhi, the CBI has alleged.

The Delhi chief minister, in turn, allegedly told Reddy to provide funds to his Aam Aadmi Party, the probe agency has alleged.

The CBI also claimed that kickbacks of around Rs 90-100 crore were paid in advance to some politicians of the ruling AAP in Delhi and other public servants by some persons in the liquor business from South India through co-accused Vijay Nair, Abhishek Boinpally and Dinesh Arora to tweak the 2021-22 Excise Policy.

The agency had alleged that these kickbacks are found to have been returned to them sub-

sequently out of the profit margins of wholesalers holding L-1 licenses through different modes, like issuance of excess credit notes, bank transfers, and outstanding amounts left in accounts of the companies controlled, by some conspirators from the South lobby.

The CBI had alleged that a cartel was formed between three stakeholders of the said policy -- liquor manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers -- by violating provisions and against the spirit of the policy.

All the conspirators allegedly played active roles in achieving the illegal objectives of the said criminal conspiracy. It resulted in huge losses to the exchequer and undue pecuniary benefits to the public servants and other accused involved in the conspiracy, the CBI has alleged.

RBI plans 5-episode web series to showcase 90-year journey



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is planning a five-episode web series to provide an in-depth presentation about its functions and its 90-year journey.

The web series is proposed to be for nearly three hours, with each episode having a duration of 25-30 minutes, according to an official document.

The RBI, which was set up in 1935, completed 90 years in April this year.

"The bank is desirous of creating a web series of five episodes of approximately 25-30 minutes each, which can be aired on national TV channels and/or OTT platforms, commemorating 90 years journey of RBI," it said in the document inviting bids through e-tendering for 'Production and distribution of Web Series Commemorating 90 years of RBI'.

The five-episode series will serve as a valuable resource for enhancing public understanding of the central bank's vital role in the economy, fostering greater engagement, and building trust and confidence in its operations and policies, it said.

For the web series, the RBI has invited proposals from interested production houses, TV channels, and OTT platforms.

The primary objective of this project is to create a comprehensive and engaging series that provides an in-depth exploration of the RBI functions and operations over its 90-year journey.

Haryana man dies on Russian frontline

The Indian Embassy in Moscow has confirmed the death of Ravi Moun but has not disclosed the circumstances

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 29: A 22-year-old Haryana man "sent to the frontline by the Russian Army to fight against Ukrainian forces" has died, his family claimed Monday.

The Indian embassy in Moscow confirmed the death of Ravi Moun, who hailed from Matour village in Haryana's Kaithal district, his brother Ajay Moun said.

Ravi Moun went to Russia January 13 after being "hired" for a transportation job but was inducted into the military, his brother claimed.

Ajay Moun wrote to the embassy July 21 for information on his brother's whereabouts.

"The embassy told us that he has died," he said.

The family said the embassy also asked them to send a DNA test report for identification of the body.

"Ravi went to Russia January 13. An agent sent him to Russia for a transportation job. However, he was inducted into the Russian Army," Ajay Moun said.

The family's claim comes days after Russia agreed to India's demand to ensure early release and return of Indian nationals inducted into the country's military. Ajay Moun alleged that the Russian Army asked his brother to go to the frontline to fight against Ukrainian forces or face 10 years in jail.

He was trained to dig trenches and later sent to the frontline, Ajay Moun said.

"We remained in touch with him till March 12 and he was quite upset," he said.

According to the Indian embassy's reply to Ajay Moun's let-



ter, "The embassy had requested the concerned Russian authorities for confirmation of his death and transportation of his mortal remains requested by you."

"The Russian side has confirmed his death. However, to identify the body, they need a DNA test from his close relatives," it added.

Ajay Moun also requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring his brother's mortal remains back to India.

"We do not have enough money to bring back his body," he told reporters.

The family sold off a one-acre land and spent Rs 11.50 lakh to send him to Russia, he said.

Earlier this month, Russia agreed to India's demand to ensure early release and return of Indian nationals working in the Russian military as support staff after Modi raised the issue with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia had promised early discharge of all Indian nationals from the army.

Last month, the Ministry of External Affairs said the issue of Indian nationals serving in the Russian Army remained a matter of "utmost concern" and demanded action from Moscow.

SNIPPETS

Supreme Court reprieve for Soren

New Delhi: In a relief to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, the Supreme Court Monday dismissed the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) plea challenging a High Court order granting him bail in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. The apex court said the Jharkhand High Court's June 28 order granting bail to Soren was a "very well reasoned judgement". "We are not inclined to interfere with the impugned order," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said.

UGC-NET exam cancellation: SC refuses to entertain PIL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday refused to entertain a PIL challenging the government's decision to cancel the UGC-NET examination following alleged question paper leak. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, however, said the dismissal of the PIL does not amount to a decision on the merits of the PIL as it was filed by a lawyer and not by aggrieved students.

Allahabad HC sets aside Afzal Ansari's conviction

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court Monday set aside a Ghazipur court order sentencing Samajwadi Party MP Afzal Ansari to four years' imprisonment under the Gangsters Act over the murder of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai in 2005. With Justice SK Singh allowing his plea against the conviction, the SP MP can now continue as a Member of Parliament. The court also dismissed pleas by the UP government and Piyush Kumar Rai, Krishnanand Rai's son, seeking enhancement of the Ghazipur MP's sentence.



Farmers during paddy cultivation, at Surul in Birhum district, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Education ministry notifies guidelines for bagless days

ALL STUDENTS WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE 10-DAY BAGLESS PERIOD SOMETIME DURING CLASSES 6-8 DURING WHICH THEY WOULD INTERN WITH LOCAL VOCATIONAL EXPERTS SUCH AS CARPENTERS, GARDENERS, POTTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The Union education ministry Monday notified guidelines for implementation of bagless days for classes 6-8 and making learning in schools more joyful, experiential and stress-free.

The guidelines, developed by PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education, a unit of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), were released on the fourth anniversary of the new National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

The NEP, 2020, had recommended that all students in classes 6-8 participate in a 10-day bagless period.

"The idea behind 10 bagless days is to make them an integral part of the teaching learning process rather than an add-on to the existing scheme of studies of education from classes 6-8. It will not only reduce the

boundaries between the bookish knowledge and application of knowledge but also expose children to the skill requirements in the work areas, thus helping them to decide the future career path," the guidelines stated.

"Every student will take a fun course during classes 6-8 that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational craft such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc, as decided by states and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs," they added.

The ministry said all students would participate in the 10-day bagless period sometime during classes 6-8 during which they would intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, etc.

"Ten bagless days activities can be accommodated in any number of slots in an annual calendar. But it is advisable to



keep two or three slots. While developing an annual work plan, all subject teachers may be involved. If necessary, indoor and outdoor activities may be clubbed in a day," the guidelines stated.

Visit and survey of vegetable markets; charity visits; survey and report writing on pet care; doodling, kite making and flying;

organising a book fair; sitting under a banyan tree; and visiting a biogas plant and solar en-

ergy park are among the recommended activities in the NCERT guidelines.

Among other initiatives launched on the NEP anniversary were dedicated TV channels to facilitate learning of various Indian languages; a Tamil channel; primers for early graders in 25 Indian languages; career guidance guidelines; National Mission for Mentoring and National Professional

Four books and lecture notes aimed at promoting Indian knowledge systems among students and teachers were also launched on the fourth anniversary of the new National Education Policy, 2020

Standards for Teachers in braille and audiobooks; school innovation marathon by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and a book on graduation attributes and professional competencies.

Four books and lecture notes aimed at promoting Indian knowledge systems among students and teachers were also launched.

"The four-year journey of NEP,

2020, has been about bringing in transformative change in the country's education system for nurturing a new generation of learners. NEP, 2020, stands as a symbol of hope for transforming the learning landscape, harnessing the country's demographic dividend, empowering the population and driving socio-economic development," Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said in a message.

"Implementation of NEP has made learning more vibrant and guided in making the country's education more futuristic, rooted, global and outcome-oriented," he added.

The Akhil Bharatiya Siksha Samagam has been conceptualised as an event to celebrate the adoption of NEP, 2020, to reinvigorate the commitment of various stakeholders for its effective implementation and to realise the collective strength for achievement of shared goals through collaborative efforts.

international

of the day quote

We must be very strong so that Israel can't do ridiculous things to Palestine. Just like we entered Karabakh, just like we entered Libya, we might do similar to them



TAYYIP ERDOGAN | PRESIDENT, TURKEY

I can assure you we are at a very good place on external financing for the next three years, including year one, year two and year three



MUHAMMAD AURANGZEB | FINANCE MINISTER, PAKISTAN

The Rapid Support Forces have raped, gang raped, and forced into marriage countless women and girls in residential areas in Sudan's capital



LAETITIA BADER | DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, AFRICA

SHORT TAKES

Russia train-truck collision hurts 140

Moscow: At least 140 people were injured in southern Russia Monday when a train carrying 800 passengers smashed into a truck on a level crossing, causing eight carriages to derail, Russian Railways said. The driver of the train, which was travelling from Kazan in Tatarstan to Adler on the Black Sea, slammed on the brakes when he saw the Kamaz truck, whose driver had broken traffic rules and entered the crossing despite alarms, Russian Railways added. The train hit the truck at about 65 kph near Kotelnikovo station, which lies in the southern Volgograd region about 1,200 km south of Moscow.

Rajapaksa's party withdraws support

Colombo: The political party of Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa family Monday decided not to back President Ranil Wickremesinghe in the September 21 presidential election, in a setback to his bid to return to power. The General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) Sagara Ariyawasam told reporters, "The party's Politburo which met today has decided to field our own candidate under its own symbol." He said despite views to the contrary made by several members, the consensus was that the party should field its own candidate.

Top radical leader booked in Pakistan

Islamabad: An FIR was filed against a top leader of the radical Islamist group Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan and its 1,500 workers for issuing death threats to Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa. The FIR was registered against Pir Zaheerul Hasan Shah, the Deputy Amir of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The charges against Shah include sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), inciting religious hatred, causing public disorder, intimidating the judiciary, threatening the judiciary, interfering in official duties, and obstructing legal functions.

Philippine oil spill reaches fishing town

Tanza: An oil spill from a marine tanker that capsized off the coast of Manila Bay in the Philippines has reached the shores of a nearby fishing village, threatening the health and livelihood of fishermen, as efforts began to mop up the fuel. Fishermen in the town of Tanza in Cavite province, south of Manila, were in distraught after the oil slick landed on the town's shores and they reported smelling a foul odour.



The fact is that there are a lot of such low-grade media, and even respected ones, that have recently not shied away from doing anything to blame Russia for everything (Paris Olympics sabotage) that is happening

DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN, RUSSIA

UK-INDIA FTA TALK

The process of getting negotiating teams back in the room will kick-start soon to deliver a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, the UK's newly elected Labour government announced



Political drama in Venezuela

GOVERNMENT, OPPOSITION BOTH CLAIM VICTORY

REUTERS

Caracas, July 29: President Nicolas Maduro and opposition rival Edmundo Gonzalez Monday both claimed victory in Venezuela's presidential election as Washington and other foreign governments cast doubt on official results that kept the incumbent in power.

The national electoral authority said just after midnight that Maduro had won a third term with 51% of the vote, a result that would extend a quarter-century of socialist rule.

But independent exit polls pointed to a big opposition win following enthusiastic shows of support for Gonzalez and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado on the campaign trail.

Gonzalez won 70%, said Machado, who had been barred from holding public office in a decision she says is unfair.

Gonzalez told supporters that rules had been violated on polling



day. "Our message of reconciliation and peaceful change still stands, our struggle continues and we won't rest until the will of the people of Venezuela is respected," he said.

It was not immediately clear exactly what the opposition's next move might be. Gonzalez also said he was not calling for supporters to take to the streets or commit any acts of violence.

But isolated incidents took place around the country before the announcement of results, including the death of one man in Tachira state and scuffles at polling sites in Caracas and other

Remember that you are always a welcome guest on Russian soil

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

- US and others call for transparency in vote count
- Maduro victory will extend socialist rule
- Opposition vows to fight on

places. Police dispersed a protest in Catia, traditionally a ruling party bastion in western Caracas.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington had serious concerns that the results announced by the electoral authority did not reflect the votes of the people. The authority is meant to be an independent body

but the opposition says it acts as an arm of Maduro's government.

Caracas and Washington have had an adversarial relationship dating back to the era of left-wing populist Hugo Chavez. Maduro, a 61-year-old former bus driver and foreign minister, took office on Chavez's death in 2013 and his 2018 reelection is

LEBANON RETALIATION

Israel seeks to avoid Hezbollah conflict

REUTERS

Jerusalem, July 29: Israel wants to hurt Hezbollah but not drag the Middle East into all-out war, two Israeli officials said Monday, as Lebanon braced for retaliation after a rocket strike that killed 12 children and teenagers in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Two other Israeli officials said Israel was preparing for the possibility of a few days of fighting following Saturday's rocket strike at a sports field in a Druze town that it blamed on the Iranian-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has denied any connection with the incident.

All four Israeli officials, who included a senior defence official and a diplomatic source, spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity and gave no further information about Israel's plans for retaliation.

"The estimation is that the response will not lead to an all-out war," said the diplomatic source. "That would not be in our interest at this point."

The incident has increased concerns that months of cross-border hostilities between Israel and the heavily armed Hezbollah could spiral into a broader, more destructive war.

On Sunday, Israel's security cabinet authorised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant to decide on the manner and timing of a response to the strike in the Golan town of



Flights at Beirut's international airport have been cancelled or delayed as airlines responded to the possibility of Israeli retaliation

Majdal Shams.

Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper quoted unidentified officials as saying the response would be "limited but significant".

The report said options ranged from a limited attack on infrastructure, including bridges, power plants and ports, to hitting Hezbollah arms depots or targeting Hezbollah commanders.

In a statement issued by his office Monday after he visited Majdal Shams, Netanyahu said "The state of Israel will not and cannot let this pass. Our response will come and it will be harsh."

Prompted by the Gaza war, the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah have been their worst since they went to war in 2006.

B'desh announces nationwide mourning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, July 29: For the first time, the Bangladesh government Monday officially acknowledged that 150 people were killed across the country during the students' unrest over the quota system.

Violence gripped Bangladesh recently and the government called in the army to quell protests against job quotas. The protests, which started in universities and colleges earlier this month, quickly turned into a more widespread agitation against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government. The unrest has left sev-



DEADLY PROTEST

eral thousand people, including policemen, wounded and major government installations damaged. "The government has decided that a nationwide mourning will be observed tomorrow. People have been urged to wear black badges to mourn the deaths (during the violence)," Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain told a media briefing after a meeting

chaired by Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

He said mosques, temples, pagodas and churches across the country were also urged to offer prayers for the departed souls and the wounded people.

The top bureaucrat said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal presented a report at the meeting about the overall situation and confirmed 150 deaths in clashes across the country.

However, other students, calling for a new protest, claimed their leaders were forced to announce while in police custody. Meanwhile, the government ignored an ultimatum to release their leaders and apologise for those killed in deadly unrest.

'No third party in India-China border dispute'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, July 29: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Monday ruled out any role for a third party in India's border dispute with China, saying the two neighbours have an issue and it is for them to find a way out.

"We are not looking to other countries to sort out what is really an issue between India and China," Jaishankar said while responding to a series of questions at a press conference in Tokyo.

Jaishankar, who is here to attend a Quad foreign ministerial meeting, also said that India's relationship with China is not good and it's not doing well.

"We have a problem, or, I would say, an issue between India and China. I think it is for two of us to talk it over and to find a way," he said. "Obviously, other countries in



the world would have an interest in the matter, because we are two big countries and the state of our relationship has an impact on the rest of the world. But we are not looking to other countries to sort out what is really an issue between us," he said, recalling

his meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi twice this month.

Jaishankar and Wang met last week in the Laotian capital where they participated in the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

During their meeting, they agreed on the need to give strong guidance to complete the disengagement process following the military standoff in eastern Ladakh in May 2020. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. Jaishankar's remarks came amid the dragging border row in eastern Ladakh that entered its fifth year in May.

On July 4, Jaishankar and Wang met in the Kazakh capital city of Astana on the sidelines of the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a standoff since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points.

Kim Jong-Un's daughter being groomed as successor: Lawmakers

THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE SAID IN THE PAST, AROUND 60 PERCENT OF JU-AE'S PUBLIC ACTIVITIES INVOLVED ACCOMPANYING HER FATHER TO MILITARY EVENTS WITH SOME OTHERS ECONOMY-RELATED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, July 29: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's daughter, Ju-ae, is being groomed to succeed her father, though the selection is not final and he could ultimately choose someone else, two lawmakers quoted South Korea's spy agency as saying Monday.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) made the report to the parliamentary intelligence committee, saying North Korea has suggested Ju-ae is a strong candidate to succeed her father by adjusting the frequency of

her public appearances to gauge public sentiment, Representative Lee Seong-kweon of the ruling People Power Party and Representative Park Sun-won of the main opposition Democratic Party said during a press briefing.

The NIS said it determined that Ju-ae is being groomed as Kim's successor by studying the appellations North Korea uses to refer to her, how frequently she has appeared in public and at which events, according to the lawmakers, reported Yonhap news agency.

The NIS said in the past,



around 60 percent of Ju-ae's public activities involved accompanying her father to military events with some others economy-related, but North Korea's use of the word "hyangdo," which translates as "guide," in reference to her suggested she was on the

path to becoming the next leader. The word "hyangdo" means to light the path forward in a revolutionary fight and is used for leaders or their successors, Lee explained.

Still, the NIS said it does not rule out the possibility Kim will

choose someone else as his next-in-line, given his other children could step forward or that North Korea has not finalized who the successor will be.

Meanwhile, the North Korean leader appears to have health issues, weighing 140 kilograms and at high risk of heart disease, likely due to stress, smoking and drinking, the NIS was quoted as saying.

Kim is believed to have shown systems of high blood pressure and diabetes since his early 30s, it said.

The NIS further reported signs Kim is looking for alternative medicinal substances, leading to speculation he could have conditions that are difficult to deal with using his current medicine.

On the pace of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile development, the NIS counted a total of 48 missiles being launched on 14 oc-

casions this year, according to Lee, reported Yonhap.

The spy agency also reported a total of some 3,600 trash-filled balloons launched toward South Korea this year, which the North has claimed is retaliation for South Korean activists sending propaganda leaflets across the border.

Since last month's summit between North Korean leader Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the two countries have been speeding up the implementation of follow-up measures especially in the military and economic fields, the NIS was quoted as saying.

For example, Russia has sent a military delegation and its top prosecutor to the North, while more than 300 Russian tourists have visited the North's border city of Rason following the resumption of tours previously suspended due to Covid-19.



The issue of blending ethanol with diesel is still at an experimental stage, and I can say categorically that at present there is no plan to mandate

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | MINISTER FOR PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

BITES, NHAI SIGN PACT

RITES Monday announced entering into a partnership with NHAI to provide consultancy services in highways, bridges and tunnels and road safety audits. In an exchange filing, RITES said, "This partnership aims to deliver consultancy services for NHAI projects in the areas of highways, bridges and tunnels and road safety audits." RITES Ltd, an enterprise under Ministry of Railways, is a multidisciplinary engineering and consultancy organisation.



of the day quote

We are at the beginning of a new era of AI PCs that will redefine what a personal computer can do. We believe this innovation is all set to unlock new possibilities and transform the future of work

IPSITA DASGUPTA | SENIOR VP AND MD, HP INDIA

With the world undergoing an energy transition, developing climate-friendly technologies will be highly mineral intensive, and the metals and mining sector will have a big role to play to support this transition

PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR | HINDUSTAN ZINC CHAIRPERSON

We will invest in big brands, strategic alliances and global partnerships that will allow us to democratise healthcare service

UMAG VOHRA | CIPLA MD AND GLOBAL CEO

Digital economy to be 1/5th of GDP: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 29: India's digital economy is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026 from one-tenth at present, according to a Reserve Bank report released Monday.

In the foreword of 'Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for the year 2023-24', Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised that digitalisation in finance is paving the way for next-generation banking and improving access to financial services at affordable cost.

India is at the forefront of the digital revolution, the report said.

The country has embraced not just financial technology (FinTech) by speeding up digital payments but has also celebrated India Stack comprising biometric identification, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile connectivity, digital lockers and consent-based data sharing.

The digital revolution is galvanising banking infrastructure and public finance management systems covering both direct benefit transfers and tax collections, the report said.

Vibrant e-markets are springing up and expanding their reach.

"It is estimated that the digital economy currently accounts for a tenth of India's GDP; going by growth rates observed over the past decade, it is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026," the report said.

Several enabling forces have



come together to energise this revolution. Although internet penetration in India was at 55 per cent in 2023, the internet user base has grown by 199 million in the recent three years.

India's cost per gigabyte (GB) of data consumed is the lowest globally at an average of ₹13.32 (USD 0.16) per GB. India also has one of the highest mobile data consumption in the world, with an average per-user per-month consumption of 24.1 GB in 2023.

In the foreword of the report, the RBI Governor also said the flagship UPI has revolutionised the retail payment experience for end-users, making transactions faster and more convenient.

In the digital currency arena, the Reserve Bank of India is at the forefront with pilot runs of the e-rupee, the central bank digital currency (CBDC).

The digital lending ecosystem

is becoming vibrant with initiatives such as Open Credit Enablement Network, Open Network for Digital Commerce and the Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit.

He said fintechs are collaborating with banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) as lending service providers. They are also operating platforms to facilitate digital credit. BigTechs are backing payment apps and lending products as third-party service providers.

"Digitalisation in finance is paving the way for next-generation banking; improving access to financial services at affordable costs; and enhancing the impact of direct benefit transfers by effective targeting of beneficiaries in a cost-efficient manner," Das said.

He noted that loans in the retail segment are being enabled by online payments and innovative

credit assessment models with instant disbursements. Also, e-commerce is being boosted through embedded finance.

"All these innovations are making financial markets more efficient and integrated," the Governor said.

At the same time, Das said digitalisation also presents challenges related to cybersecurity, data privacy, data bias, vendor and third-party risks, and customer protection.

"Increased inter-connectedness may lead to systemic risks. Additionally, emerging technologies can introduce complex products and business models with risks that users may not fully understand, including the proliferation of fraudulent apps and mis-selling through dark patterns," he said.

The report, on the theme 'India's Digital Revolution', said digitalisation is transforming India's financial sector by changing the way financial institutions operate and interact with their customers and provide financial products and services.

Amidst several benefits, digitalisation also brings new challenges in terms of complex financial products, greater interconnectedness, cybersecurity risks, financial frauds, and customer protection, with implications for macro-financial stability.

These issues need to be addressed to realise the full potential of financial digitalisation, it said.

Sensex, Nifty close flat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 29: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit intra-day record high levels before closing almost flat Monday due to profit-taking in FMCG and IT shares by cautious investors ahead of the key US Fed interest rate decision later this week.

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 23.12 points or 0.03 per cent at 81,355.84 - its all-time closing high - with 16 of its components advancing and 14 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 575.71 points or 0.70 per cent to hit a new intra-day record peak of 81,908.43 in late morning deals following a decline in US bond yields. However, investors preferred to book profits at record high levels amid high volatility dragging the index lower to close flat.

The NSE Nifty ended marginally up 1.25 points or 0.01 per cent at an all-time closing high of 24,836.10. During the day, it surged 164.9 points or 0.66 per cent to hit a fresh lifetime peak

of 24,999.75.

From the Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro rose the most by 2.77 per cent after it announced bagging new large orders worth Rs 2,500 crore to Rs 5,000 crore. UltraTech Cement, which announced the acquisition of 32.72 per cent stake in India Cements from promoters and their associates for Rs 3,954 crore, closed up 1.42 per cent. India Cements closed lower by 0.65 per cent.

Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries and Sun Pharma were among the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Titan Ltd fell the most 2.38 per cent. Bharti Airtel (2.22 per cent), ITC (1.33 per cent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (1.04 per cent) and HDFC Bank (0.68 per cent) were among the major losers, dragging the key indices from record highs. IT shares Tech Mahindra, TCS, Infosys, and HCL Tech fell up to 1 per cent ahead of the US Fed meeting on interest rates.

Q1 RESULTS CORNER

HPCL net profit slumps 90%

New Delhi: State-owned Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) Monday reported a massive 90 per cent drop in net profit in the June quarter, as refinery margins fell and a fuel price reduction slashed marketing margins. HPCL reported a consolidated net profit of ₹633.94 crore in April-June -- the first quarter of the current 2024-25 fiscal year -- compared to a profit of ₹6,765.50 crore a year back, according to a stock exchange filing by the company. Net profit also declined sequentially, when compared to an earning of ₹2,709.31 crore in the January-March period. Pre-tax earnings from downstream fuel retailing businesses slumped 90 per cent to ₹907.86 crore.

Indian Bank net profit rises 41%

New Delhi: State-owned Indian Bank Monday posted a 41 per cent jump in its net profit to ₹2,403 crore for the June 2024 quarter due to a decline in bad loans. The Chennai-based lender had earned a net profit of ₹1,709 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹16,945 crore against ₹14,759 crore a year ago, Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing. Its interest income grew to ₹15,039 crore during the period under review from ₹13,049 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. On the asset quality side, the bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) improved to 3.77 per cent of gross advances as of June 30, 2024, from 5.47 per cent in the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal.

ACC net profit down 22.5%

New Delhi: Cement maker ACC Ltd Monday reported a decline of 22.46 per cent in its net profit to ₹361.40 crore in the first quarter ended on June 2024. The company had posted a profit of ₹466.14 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from ACC, now a part of Adani Cement. Its revenue from operations was marginally lower at ₹5,154.89 crore during the quarter under review. It was ₹5,201.11 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. ACC's sales volume from Cement & Clinker in the April-June quarter was up 9 per cent at 10.2 million tonnes, which is the "highest ever volume" in Q1 over the last five years, according to an earning statement by the company.

Power Grid mulls subsea interconnection with Mideast



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 29: State-run Power Grid is planning an under-sea interconnection worth up to ₹40,000 crore with countries in the Middle East, a top official said Monday.

After the soft June quarter, which witnessed revenues being almost flat, the company sees the topline inching by only 4.5 per cent in FY25, its chairman and managing director RK Tyagi told reporters here after the earnings announcement Friday.

The company plans to invest ₹18,000 crore this fiscal year, which will help accelerate the growth rate going forward, Tyagi said, explaining that as projects become older, the earnings from transmission projects go down and the company has to keep commissioning new projects to have higher revenue growths.

On the interconnected projects front, it is looking at companies beyond the immediate neighbourhood and will be looking at countries in the Middle

East, Tyagi said.

He specified that discussions are ongoing with Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for the interconnection.

The company has a 'pulling station' near the Arabian Sea in Gujarat's Bhuj, which will be connected with a similar station on the shores of the Middle East country as well, he explained.

A high voltage direct current cable will go from the seabed with a capacity of up to 2,500 MW, he said, adding that it will cost ₹35,000-40,000 crore and will take up to six years to complete.

Speaking about revenues, he said the topline growth suffered as it had a 'capitalization' of commissioning of projects worth only ₹2,300 crore during the quarter, and added that it plans to take the number to up to ₹18,000 crore in the current fiscal.

It has won six of the ten transmission projects till July, he said, adding that the bids for three projects were won in the June quarter alone had levelised tariff of ₹4,172 crore.

INDIA LIKELY TO RECORD OVER 7% GROWTH: NCAER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The Indian economy could grow higher than 7 per cent and possibly closer to 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal on the back of normal monsoon and receded electoral uncertainty, economic think tank NCAER has said.

In its July 2024 issue of Monthly Economic Review (MER), NCAER said real GDP grew by 8.2 per cent in FY2023-24, driven by stable consumption demand and steadily improving investment demand.

"Based on the momentum in the high-frequency indicators, normalised monsoon, a relatively benign global outlook and receded electoral uncertainty, both in India and in the rest of the world, growth will likely turn out to be higher than 7 per cent, and possibly closer to 7.5 per cent," NCAER director general

Poonam Gupta said.

Gupta said the Union Budget 2024-25 lived up to the expectations of unwavering commitment to fiscal consolidation, prudence, and quality.

The Budget has kept the fiscal deficit target at 4.9 per cent of GDP and capital expenditure at 2.4 per cent of GDP during 2024-25.

According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the short to medium-term growth strategy is based on six key areas - private sector capital formation, green transition financing, MSME development, agricultural transformation, Education and skill development, and enhanced state capacity.

The NCAER-NSE business confidence index (BCI) increased to 149.8 in the first quarter (Q1) of FY25, up from 138.2 in the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24, in-

dicating an improvement in business sentiments.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised its growth projection for India upward to 7 per cent, while the Asian Development Bank (ADB) maintained its projection at 7 per cent as of July 2024 for FY2024-25. The range of projections for India for the current fiscal year is between 6.6 to 7.2 per cent.

As per the Economic Survey 2023-24, India's real GDP grew by 8.2 per cent in FY2023-24 due to stable consumption and improving investment demand, and it is projected to grow between 6.5-7 per cent in FY2024-25.

The Union Budget for FY2024-25 emphasised fiscal prudence and capex. Nominal GDP is projected to grow at 10.5 per cent in FY2024-25, while the fiscal deficit is budgeted at 4.9 per cent of GDP.

Govt puts Concor privatisation on backburner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 29: The government has put the privatisation of Container Corporation of India Ltd (Concor) on the backburner, an official said.

In November 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the strategic sale of a 30.8 per cent stake, along with management control, in Concor - a Navratna PSU under the Railways Ministry.



The government currently holds 54.80 per cent of Concor. "The government is unlikely to push Concor's strategic sale. There are some concerns from Railways Ministry as also investors," the official said.

The official further said that with the government holding in the company at 54.80 per cent there is little scope for coming out with an offer for sale (OFS) in Concor.

Although the Cabinet approval for the Concor sale was accorded in 2019, no worthwhile progress has so far been made, and even an Expression of Interest (EOI) has not been invited for the strategic sale. Shares of Concor closed at Rs 1,043.25 apiece, up 0.35 per cent over the previous close on the BSE.

Byju's founder faces reckoning as startup implodes

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 29: Byju Raveendran, an Indian mathematician who soared from teacher to startup billionaire before his education-technology company imploded this year, now faces his biggest test.

The future of Raveendran's eponymous Byju's online coaching firm rests with India's courts after the country's biggest startup, once loved by global investors who valued it at \$22 billion, crashed below \$2 billion in valuation. The 44-year-old founder has lost control of the company as a tribunal kick-started an insolvency process.

Accused of "financial mismanagement and compliance issues", the son of a family of teachers from a small village in south India faces a reckoning

that will test the ingenuity that made him a poster child for India's startups.

His formerly high-flying company was eventually brought low when it could not pay \$19 million in sponsorship dues to India's cricket federation, prompting a tribunal to suspend Byju's board and make Raveendran report to a court-appointed restructuring expert.

Raveendran denies the allegations of mismanagement and wrongdoing at his firm, which has in recent months faced lawsuits over unpaid loans and boardroom battles with foreign investors that went public.

Potential insolvency is a dramatic turn of events for an entrepreneur described by one person who has worked with him as an extremely passionate and goal-oriented person who might



adopt 'an abrasive approach' in a crisis.

Raveendran presented a 'suave, nice and polished' image, appearing to heed advice, but 'eventually there was a trust deficit', said another executive who quit last year as a Byju's senior vice president.

"He said things are improv-

ing, don't worry, we have the money," the former executive said. Raveendran and a Byju's spokesperson did not respond to requests for comment.

An engineer by training, he started Byju's in 2011 with physical classes after friends urged him to go into teaching.

Raveendran, who aced a pre-

mier Indian management exam "with a score of 100 percentile, not once but twice", according to the company website, started what would become his empire with his wife Divya Gokulnath, 38, a former student of his.

In education-obsessed India, Raveendran hit gold by offering online teaching programmes priced from \$100 to \$300. He got a mammoth boost when the COVID-19 pandemic sent students indoors. At the height of his fame in 2021, he and his wife had a net worth of \$4 billion, Forbes reckoned. Now all that is in tatters.

Behind the reversal of Byju's meteoric success, say executives and advisers who worked with Raveendran, is that he overruled associates and expanded the business through expensive acquisitions, splurging on marketing

and being slow to address problems such as sales agents adopting aggressive tactics to mis-sell courses that damaged the company's reputation.

With the backing of investors like General Atlantic, Prosus and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's philanthropy venture, Raveendran spent millions on acquisitions, and the company says it has 150 million students in over 100 countries.

"While growing fast, as I've accepted multiple times, we've made our fair share of mistakes," Raveendran told an interviewer last year at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

As he battled crises, the CEO also said decisions to lay off some of its then-50,000 employees and slash branding expenses would help strengthen loss-making Byju's and turn its cashflow positive.

Shooters' hit and miss day

MANU-SARABJOT DUO ENTERS BRONZE MEDAL ROUND; HEARTBREAK FOR BABUTA, RAMITA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chateauroux (France), July 29: A confident Manu Bhaker placed herself in contention for a second Olympic medal as she combined with Sarabjot Singh to make the bronze playoff of the 10m air pistol mixed team event but Arjun Babuta buckled under pressure to finish fourth in men's 10m air rifle competition here Monday.

In the women's 10m air rifle final, Ramita Jindal ended seventh.

Babuta shot a total of 208.4 in the air rifle individual final. A last shot of 9.5, in response to Croatian Miran Maricic's 10.7, put paid to his hopes of finishing on the podium.

Earlier, the 22-year-old Bhaker, who came into the mixed team qualifications after winning a historic bronze medal in the 10m women's air pistol event Sunday, and Sarabjot finished with a total of 580 to make the medal round to be held Tuesday.

The Indians will face Korea's Oh Ye Jin and Lee Wonho, who shot

579, in the bronze-medal match.

The other Indian pair of Rhythm Sangwan and Arjun Singh Cheema finished 10th with a score of 576 and failed to make it to the medal rounds.

Turkiye, after equalling Qualification Olympic Record with 582, and Serbia (581), who finished second, respectively, will contest the gold-medal match.

Bhaker was sensational with her 98s in the first two series, but a 95 in the third set pulled the team down a bit. However, the pair did enough to make the medal round in the end.

Sarabjot, who missed out on gaining a spot in the finals of the men's 10m air pistol event by a whisker, shot 97 in the second and third, after a 95 in the first. **Missed medal by one spot** The 25-year-old Babuta, who was the last Indian shooter to take aim Monday, started the 10m air rifle final with a 10.7 and followed that with a 10.2.

A third shot of 10.5 saw him take the fourth spot while a 10.4 in his fourth attempt lifted him to the third spot. He finished



the first series with a solid 10.6.

He started the second series with a 10.7, followed that with a 10.5 and shot a near-perfect 10.8 in the second shot of the first elimination series.

That effort propelled him into the second place while reducing the deficit between him and world record holder Chinese Sheng Lihao to 0.1 point.

However, he could not sustain the form and missed out on the medal.

Babuta, who took up rifle shooting at the insistence of Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra's coach JS Dhillon, will need time to recover from this heartbreak after having come so close to making his Games debut memorable with a podium finish. Lihao claimed the top hon-

ours in this event with an Olympic record of 252.2. Sweden's Victor Lindgren took the silver medal with a score of 251.4, followed by Maricic (230) at the third spot.

Ramita faces tough competition Young Indian shooter Ramita's score was 145.3 when she bowed of the high-quality eight-women final. She was placed seventh after 10 shots (104.0), when the elimination began.

In danger of being eliminated, a 10.5 pushed Ramita to sixth place even as Norway's Hegg Jeanette Duestad made an exit. But the Indian could not save herself after that.

She was placed fourth at one point but failed to maintain the momentum.

In the qualifications Sunday she performed exceedingly well to make the final in the fifth place.

Ramita, the Hangzhou Asian Games bronze-medallist in the event, beat World Championship medallist Mehuli Ghosh and Tilottama Sen at the domestic trials to make it to Paris Games.

Tondaiman placed 30th in trap Indian shotgum marksman Prithviraj Tondaiman stood 30th and last at the end of the three qualification rounds of 25 each with a score of 68/75 on the opening day of the trap competition.

The 37-year-old, who had secured a place in the Indian contingent after displacing Olympic quota winner Bhowneesh Mendiratta at the end of the selection trials, shot a poor 22 in the opening round before scoring a perfect 25 in the second round.

He again hit a bad batch in the third qualification round, missing four clay pigeons to be virtually out of contention for a place in the top-six.

Sweden's Rickard Levin-Andersson scored 74/75 to lead the field. The six finalists will be decided at the end of two more qualification rounds Tuesday.

CAMPAIGN ENDS

Bopanna's dream dashed

Indian tennis journey at Paris Olympics concludes in single day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 29: India's tennis campaign at the Paris Olympics lasted just one day as Sumit Nagal and the men's doubles pair of Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji bowed out after losing their respective opening matches to French challengers, here Sunday.

Nagal was first to take court, but his strong baseline game didn't seem to be enough against mercurial Corentin Moutet, who earned a stylish three-set win.

In his second appearance at the Olympic games, Nagal bounced back after losing the first set but fell 2-6 6-4 5-7 in two hours and 28 minutes at a packed court seven at the Roland Garros.

In the Tokyo Games, Nagal had lost in the second round to Russian Daniil Medvedev but could not make the most of a manageable opener today. He was up 2-0 in the decider with an early break but allowed Moutet to claw his way back and win.

Later in the day, Bopanna and Balaji went down fighting 5-7 2-6 against Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Gael Monfils, who replaced injured Fabien Reboul in the

home team at the last minute.

India have won only one Olympic medal in tennis, when Leander Paes bagged a bronze in the 1996 Atlanta Games.

It was the last time Bopanna represented India in a multi-sport event. The 44-year-old

has already announced his retirement from Davis Cup.

The doubles match featured several fiery baseline exchanges between Bopanna and both the French players.

The French ploy of engaging Bopanna in long rallies from the back took Balaji out of the picture on many points, and it largely denied the debutant opportunity of a quick finish at the net.

The Indians dropped serve first when Bopanna went down 0-40 in game six following a long rally that ended with Indian team's unforced error.

This will definitely go down as my last event for the country. I totally understand where I am and now, I am just going to be enjoying the tennis circuit as long as that goes

ROHAN BOPANNA



Archers' Olympic woes continue

India's archery campaign at the ongoing Olympics is unfolding on expected lines as the fancied men's team, comprising stalwart Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav, made a quarterfinal exit with a 2-6 loss to Turkey here Monday. The team's historic World Cup win over Korea in the final and Dhiraj Bommadevara's stunning victory over Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Mauro Nespoli, in the lead-up to the Paris Games, gave them a perfect launchpad as they came here as the World No 2 team. But once again, they could not cope with the famed Olympic pressure and suffered another quarterfinal exit. Indian archers have never crossed the quarterfinal hurdle in their nine Olympic appearances, having made their debut in Seoul 1988. With a full team in Paris, archers have three more medal events -- men's and women's individual and mixed team finals -- left. Earlier, the women's team of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, and Bhajan Kaur managed just one 50-plus score when they were knocked out in straight sets by the Netherlands in the quarters.

Second round exit for Desai

India's Harmeet Desai suffered a 0-4 loss against world no 5 Felix Lebrun of France in the second round of the men's singles table tennis competition, ending his maiden Olympic campaign here Sunday. The 31-year-old from Surat couldn't settle into a rhythm to go down 8-11 8-11 6-11 8-11 against the 17-year-old local hopeful in 28 minutes, which brought the curtains down on India's campaign in men's singles competitions. Harmeet, who was part of the side that clinched the team gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and 2022, had progressed to the second round after a convincing 4-0 victory over Jordan's Zaid Abo Yaman Saturday. However, his performance against Lebrun was a far cry from his showing in the opening round match.



OLYMPICS TIDBITS

Swimmer tests Covid +ve after medal win

British swimmer Adam Peaty has tested positive for Covid, Team GB said Monday, a day after he narrowly missed out on the 100 metres breaststroke gold at the Olympic Games in Paris. Peaty shared the silver with American Nic Fink after both finished 0.02 seconds behind Italy's Nicolò Martinenghi. The Briton had said he woke up unwell on the day of the race, although he declined to use that as an excuse. Peaty also struggled to speak after the race with a hoarse throat. "In the hours after the final, his symptoms became worse and he was tested for Covid early on Monday morning. He tested positive at that point," Team GB said in a statement.

Drone-spying: Canada coach 'heartbroken'

Embattled Canada women's soccer coach Bev Priestman apologized to her players Sunday and pledged to cooperate with an investigation into the drone-spying scandal at the Paris Olympics. The team was deducted six points and Priestman was banned for a year after two of her assistants were caught using drones to spy on New Zealand's practices before their opening game Wednesday. "I am absolutely heartbroken for the players, and I would like to apologize from the bottom of my heart for the impact this situation has had on all of them," Priestman said in a statement.

CLASH OF THE TITANS

DJOKOVIC TRIUMPHS OVER NADAL IN STRAIGHT SETS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Paris, July 29: Novak Djokovic continued his quest for an elusive first gold medal Monday, overcoming long-time rival Rafael Nadal 6-1, 6-4 in the men's singles event of Paris Olympics at the Philippe-Chatrier court.

Their previous meeting on this court had seen Nadal triumph in a four-set quarterfinal win in 2022, but this time, it was Djokovic who dominated. The Serbian, currently ranked No 2 controlled the match from the start, taking the first set 6-1 and racing to a 4-0 lead in the second.

However, Nadal, who had only lost four times on Court Philippe-Chatrier before Monday, demonstrated his trademark resilience. The 38-year-old Spaniard began landing his heavy topspin fore-



hands, breaking Djokovic's serve and levelling the set at 4-4 in dramatic style.

Nadal retrieved a Djokovic smash with a smash of his own, followed by a forehand into the

open corner, igniting the crowd and shifting the momentum.

But Djokovic was not to be denied. He broke Nadal's serve again with a deft drop shot on his fourth breakpoint to lead 5-4 and then held serve to seal the match, improving to 31-29 in their ATP head-to-head series.

With this victory, Djokovic gained a measure of Olympic revenge on Nadal, who had beaten him en route to winning the gold medal in Beijing in 2008. Djokovic, who won bronze in Beijing, has now matched Steffi Graf's record for the most Olympic singles match wins since 1988, with 15 victories.

Next, Djokovic will face either Germany's Dominik Koepfer or Italy's Matteo Arnaldi in the third round as he continues his pursuit of Olympic glory.

Sen moves ahead, to face world no 3

Unruffled by 'deletion' of opening win, Lakshya Sen beats Belgium's Carraggi in straight games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 29: Forced to make a fresh start after his opening win was wiped off the record books, unfazed Indian ace Lakshya Sen stamped his class to defeat Julien Carraggi of Belgium in straight games in their men's singles group match of the Olympic Games' badminton competition here Monday.

The 22-year-old Sen, who is making his Olympic debut, beat Carraggi 21-19 21-14 in the Group L match that lasted 43 minutes. Sen's victory over Kevin Cordon, a Tokyo Olympics semi-finalist, in the opening Group L match Sunday was "deleted" after his Guatemalan opponent pulled out of the Olympics due to a left elbow injury.

Sen, a gold medallist at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and bronze winner at 2021 World Championships, will face third seed and world number three and reigning Asian champion Jonatan Christie of Indonesia in his final group match Wednesday.

The match will decide which of the two players moves forward in the competition as only one each from the 16 groups will qualify for the pre-quarters.

Sen didn't make the best of starts today and was trailing in the first game against his lower-ranked opponent. But he came out unscathed thanks to his tenacity.

Satwik-Chirag's clash cancelled Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Satwik Shetty's men's doubles Group C clash Monday has been cancelled following the withdrawal of German player Mark Lamsfuss due to injury.

The Indian pair was scheduled to meet the German duo of Lamsfuss and Marvin Seidel



Monday.

"German men's doubles player Mark Lamsfuss has withdrawn from the Olympic Games Paris 2024 badminton competition due to a knee injury," the BWF informed. Satwik and Chirag had opened their campaign with a 21-17 21-14 win over the French combination of Lucas Corvee and Ronan Labar Saturday.

They will take on Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto in their final game Tuesday.

Ponnappa-Crasto stare at early exit India's Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto were staring at an early exit after suffering their second consecutive group stage defeat in the women's doubles badminton competition at the Paris Olympic here Monday.

The Indians went down 11-21 12-21 to the world number four Japanese duo of Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in the 48-minute Group C match.

They had lost their opener against South Korea's Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong.

Ponnappa and Crasto, world number 19, are currently placed third in their group behind the Japanese and the South Koreans.

The two top ranked pairs from each group qualify for the quarterfinals.

Seine too dirty for triathletes; events cancelled

TRIATHLON CANCELS OLYMPIC SWIM TRAINING FOR 2ND STRAIGHT DAY DUE TO POOR WATER QUALITY IN RIVER SEINE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, July 29: The water quality in the Seine River remained a concern Monday as officials called off the swimming portion of an Olympic triathlon training session for a second straight day.

Event organisers overseeing the event at the Paris Games are optimistic that triathletes will be able to swim in the city's famed waterway when the competition starts Tuesday.

The sport's governing body World Triathlon and its medical team, along with city officials, are banking on sunny weather and higher temperatures over the course of the next 36 hours to improve the water quality and bring it below the necessary limits to stage the swim portion of a race that also includes biking and running.

World Triathlon made the decision to cancel the swim work-



out early Monday following a meeting over water quality. The representatives for Paris 2024 and triathlon's international federation said tests conducted in the Seine Sunday showed water quality levels leading into the training session that "did not provide sufficient guarantees to allow the event to be held."

The delegation said this was due to the recent rain that impacted Friday's opening cere-

mony.

Swimming in the Seine has been banned for over a century in big part because of the poor water quality. Organizers have invested 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) to prepare the river ahead of the Olympics. In addition to the swimming port of the triathlon Tuesday and Wednesday, the Seine will be used for the marathon swimming competitions August 8 and 9.

Daily water quality tests in early June indicated unsafe levels of E coli bacteria, followed by recent improvements. Some of the measures put in place to improve the water quality include the construction of a giant basin to capture excess rainwater and keep wastewater from flowing into the river, renovating sewer

infrastructure and upgrading wastewater treatment plants.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo went for a famous swim in the river less than two weeks before Olympic events were set to start, fulfilling a promise to show that the long-polluted waterway was clean enough to host swimming competitions.

Vandalism hits communication lines

The French government says multiple telecommunications lines have been hit by acts of vandalism, affecting fiber lines and fixed and mobile phone lines as cities around France are hosting events for the 2024 Paris Olympics. The scale of the impact is unclear, as is whether it has affected any Olympic activities. The vandalism came after arson attacks hit train networks around France Friday, hours before the Olympics opening ceremony. Marina Ferrari, secretary of state in charge of digital affairs, posted on X that damage in several regions overnight Sunday to Monday affected telecommunications operators. She said that led to localized impact on access to fiber lines and fixed and mobile telephone lines. A French police official said at least six of France's administrative departments were affected, which include the region around the Mediterranean city of Marseille, hosting Olympic soccer and sailing competitions. Telecom operators Bouygues and Free confirmed their services were affected. French media reports said lines operated by provider SFR also were hit. The parent company of Free said its teams are mobilised to restore services.

Harmanpreet saves India again

SKIPPER'S LATE GOAL HELPS INDIA ESCAPE WITH 1-1 DRAW VS ARGENTINA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 29: Skipper Harmanpreet Singh rescued India by converting a last-minute penalty corner as they held former champions Argentina to a 1-1 draw in a Pool B hockey match of the Paris Olympics here Monday.

India had fluffed as many as nine penalty corners before Harmanpreet found the net, firing the ball into the top corner.

Argentina were left to rue the missed penalty stroke by Maico Casella in the 36th minute.

It was Lucas Martinez, who had put his side ahead in the 22nd minute with a field goal and Harmanpreet, who had struck against New Zealand in the dying moments, found the net a minute before the final hooter.

Harmanpreet did not feel that India fared poorly.

"To be honest, we created a lot of chances. There were lots of open slots and counter balls. Finishing is where we need to do better. Even in 50-50 balls we have to give 100 percent and in 100 percent ball, we need to convert with effort. We will keep that in mind going forward," Harmanpreet told PTI.

The India captain was all praise for the Argentina defence.

"That is something we can learn, it was a good lesson from this game. They also play overhead and we do the same."

Coming into the match after losing to Australia, the Rio Olympic champions were desperate for a win but

had to be content with a draw despite dominating the proceedings for the better part of the match.

Argentina enjoyed possession as India struggled to penetrate the rival circle throughout.

The first quarter remained goalless with both teams failing to cash in on the short corners they got. India continued with their aerial clearances but suffered due to the lack of finishing skills in the opposition 'D'.

The Argentines were also on the lookout for aerial balls but a clear sight of goal eluded them too.

In the 10th minute, India earned a penalty corner but the Argentines saved the shot from Sanjay. Abhishek also took his chance but hit the crossbar. The South Americans got their first chance a minute later but Domene's shot went wide.

A couple of penalty corners came India's way in second quarter but the Argentine custodian Tomas Santiago was at it, saving a fierce shot from Harmanpreet with his right leg.

The deadlock was broken in the second quarter with Argentina taking the lead with a field goal.

India were in for a rude shock when Martinez's bumpy shot went inside, evading the outstretched hands of a diving PR Sreejesh, who should have saved it in the first place.

Martinez took a first-time shot from inside the 'D' after he was set up by Bautista Zubeldia Capurro's fine 3D skills on the right flank.

Jolted by the strike, India quickly

rushed to the rival circle but lost possession and it was back to mid-field. Mostly the game was being played in India's half.

Jarmanpreet looked for a shot from outside the circle on the right flank but failed to connect and India lost possession yet again.

The former champions led 1-0 after the first half. The South Americans increased the intensity of attacks in the third quarter. Manpreet and Abhishek also conjured a move but Santiago thwarted the attempt.

In the 36th minute, Argentina got a short corner but could not convert but, much to the shock of the team, Casella Schuth missed the penalty stroke. It was a great opportunity to go 2-0 up, but he bungled big time and shot wide.

"You can say, that was our comeback point. We stayed confident and kept trying. Things would have been different if we were down 0-2," admitted Harmanpreet.

The Argentines largely controlled the proceedings, smartly keeping the possession, but towards the end of final quarter, India produced an array of attacks.

However, they missed one more penalty corner as Harmanpreet's shot was deflected by the on-rusher.

A desperate India made another attacking move from the left flank but lost possession at the edge of the circle.

India seemed to be headed towards their first defeat but Harmanpreet saved the day for his side.

A CHANCE TO BE PART OF

METTLE MEET 2024

OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW

It's time for **METTLE MEET** – an initiative by the state's only homegrown English daily to revive quizzing in Odisha. This year, the **Preliminaries** will take place **August 3** and the **Grand Finale August 4**. Like in previous years, most of the top educational institutions of Odisha – both schools and colleges will be competing for the **Grand Prize of ₹1,00,000** in the Junior and Senior segments.

A QUIZ Extravaganza

RULES & REGULATIONS

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to mettlemeet@orissapost.com
- Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.
- Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.
- **Orissa POST's** decision on all entries will be final. No complaints will be entertained.
- Participants must send their entries with a **passport size photograph, mobile numbers and residential address**. Otherwise the entries will be rejected.
- There can be only one winner from one family.
- Invitation cards to the winners will only be issued on presentation of **Valid ID proof – Voter Card, Aadhaar Card, Driving License, Passport, School ID card** (In case of students till Class XI)
- No employee of **Orissa POST** or their family members can be part of the competition

As a reader of **Orissa POST**, this is a great chance for you to be part of the exciting **Grand Finale** if you can predict the correct answer. There will be one question on each day for you to answer till July 31, 2024. Every day there will be two winners. If there are more than two correct entries, then the winners will be decided by draw of lots. All the winners will be invited for the **Grand Finale** which will be conducted by nationally acclaimed quizzmaster **Ajay Poonia**. There will be prizes for the daily winners too. So buckle up your seatbelts and get set for some brainstorming.

TODAY'S QUESTION

The UN recognizes October 15 as the International Day of Rural Women. However, how is this day recognized as in India to commemorate the birthday of a former Indian high ranking government official? Internationally, November 17 is observed as such but in India it is October 15.

ANSWER TO MONDAY'S QUESTION

China

Others who answered correctly are: Sandeep Rout, Debasis Parida, Rajendra Das, Shoumik Jena, Subhashree Jena, Jaba Dasgupta, Subham Jena, Asit Kumar Satpathy, Arghyashree Jena, Abinash Prusty, Omm Swarup Das, Alok Ranjan Sahoo, Debdatta Tripathy, R Sekhar Rao, Sunil Kumar Nayak, Jitendra Nath Pradhan, Prithviraj Padhy, Akankshya Pradhan, Tanishna Bisoi, Santanu Kumar Nanda and Harish Chandra Tudu

THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS



MAYANK MANDAL KV RAMANA

OLYMPICS: INDIA

SCHEDULE - DAY 4

Shooting: Trap Men's Qualification: Prithviraj Tondaiman -- 12:30pm
Trap Women's Qualification: Shreyasi Singh and Rajeshwari Kumari -- 12:30pm

10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Bronze Medal Match: India (Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh) vs Korea -- 1pm

Rowing: Men's single sculls quarterfinals: Balraj Panwar -- 1:40pm

Hockey: Men's Pool B Match: India vs Ireland -- 4:45pm

Archery: Women's Individual 1/32 Elimination Round: Ankita Bhakat (5:15pm) and Bhajan Kaur (5:30pm)

Men's Individual 1/32 Elimination Round: Dhiraj Bommadevara (10:45pm)

Badminton: Men's doubles (Group stage): Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty vs Alfian Fajar & Muhammad Rian Ardianto -- 5:30pm

Women's Doubles (Group stage): Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto vs Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu (Australia) -- 6:20pm

Boxing: Men's 51kg Round of 16: Amit Panghal vs Patrick Chinyemba (Zambia) -- 7:15pm

Women's 57kg Round of 32: Jaismine Lamboria vs Nesthy Petecio -- 9:25pm

Women's 54kg Round of 16: Preeti Pawar vs Yeni Marcela Arias (Colombia) -- 1:20 am (July 31)

Clinical India eye series whitewash against wobbly SL

The fate of the series was decided after India swept aside Sri Lanka in the first two games, leaving the possibility of an embarrassing whitewash hanging over the hosts' heads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pallekele, July 29: There will be no let-up in intensity as a ruthless India, under the leadership of new coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Suryakumar Yadav, seek to exploit Sri Lanka's weaknesses and push for a series whitewash in the inconsequential third and final T20I here Tuesday.

India secured a seven-wicket victory Sunday in a rain-shortened match in the second T20I, thwarting Sri Lanka's charge once again.

Despite the hosts' flying start, their fight fizzled out for the second consecutive game due to subpar batting.

On the same day, the Sri Lankan women's team beat tournament-favourites India in the final for their maiden Women's T20 Asia Cup title in Dambulla but it



seemed to have no impact on the men's side which continued to grapple with existing issues.

Sri Lanka's batting collapses in the middle overs is the prime reason of their undoing in this series so far, while India have gone about their business like a true world champion side.

India has proven to be the superior side by a significant margin, demonstrating greater con-

fidence in their plans, skills, and execution, and never faltering under pressure.

There have been moments when Sri Lanka have appeared to be running away with the contest but each time India has found their way back, particularly with their incisive bowling, to keep their upper hand.

The 'bowlers' captain' Suryakumar has not only mar-

Sight on ODIs: Rohit, Kohli start training

India skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and a few other players started their training from Monday ahead of the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka starting August 2. While the Indian T20I team under Suryakumar Yadav will play the third and final match Tuesday in Pallekele, Rohit, Kohli and a few others like rookie Harshit Rana will train in Colombo after reaching the island nation's capital Sunday. Rohit, Kohli and Kuldeep Yadav hit the ground running nearly a month after they helped India win the T20 World Cup in the Americas for the second time.

shalled his troops with precision to make effective bowling changes, but he has looked to lead from front with the bat having scored 58 and 26 in the two outings so far.

UNDERWEIGHT CAR

Russell disqualified after Belgian Grand Prix win

AGENCIES

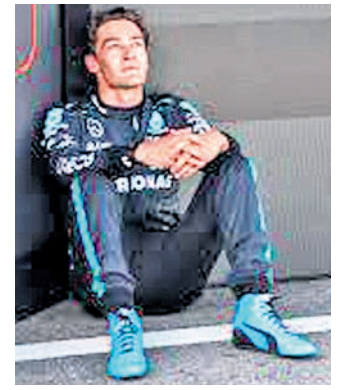
Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), July 29: George Russell has been disqualified from the result of the Belgian Grand Prix after his Mercedes was found to be underweight following the race, meaning that team mate Lewis Hamilton has been promoted to winner Sunday.

Russell had taken victory in the event following a one-stop strategy, which saw him nurse his hard tyres to the chequered flag and just hold off Hamilton by half a second.

However, a Technical Delegate's Report released after the race stated that, while the car had initially been found to be compliant with the minimum weight of 798kg, 2.8 litres of fuel were then removed.

The report then reads: "The car was not fully drained according to the draining procedure submitted by the team in their legality documents as TR Article 6.5.2 is fulfilled. The car was weighed again on the FIA inside and outside scales and the weight was 796.5 kg. The calibration of the outside and inside scales was confirmed and witnessed by the competitor. As this is 1.5 kg below the minimum weight requested in TR Article 4.1, which also has to be respected at all times during the competition, I am referring this matter to the stewards for their consideration."

After being referred to the stewards, it was confirmed that Russell had been disqualified from the race. As such, Hamilton is promoted to P1, while Oscar Piastri now takes P2 and Charles



Leclerc moves up to P3.

A document released following the stewards' hearing stated: "During the hearing the team representative confirmed that the measurement

is correct and that all required procedures were performed correctly. The team also acknowledged that there were no mitigating circumstances

and that it was a genuine error by the team. The stewards determine that Article 4.1 of the FIA Formula 1 Technical Regulations has been breached and therefore the standard penalty for such an infringement needs to be applied."

Speaking before the stewards' verdict had been confirmed, Mercedes boss Toto Wolff suggested that the team would accept the outcome, though acknowledged that it would be especially tough for Russell to take.

"We have to take it on the chin if the stewards decide against ourselves," said Wolff. "It is what it is, the mistake has happened." The Team Principal went on to add: "We have to learn from that. As a team there are more positives to take, obviously for George it's a massive blow."

HAMILTON PROMOTED TO WINNER

Dravid lauds cricket's inclusion in LA 2028

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paris, July 29: An ardent supporter of cricket's inclusion in the Olympics, former India head coach and batting legend Rahul Dravid says the "serious dressing room conversations" that he has heard indicate that players are going to "fight tooth and nail" to be there at the world's biggest sporting event.

Dravid was in the French capital Sunday to attend a panel discussion on "Cricket at the Olympics: Dawn of a New Era", celebrating the sport's inclusion



in the 2028 Los Angeles Games, at the recently inaugurated India House.

"I've already heard a few con-

versations in the dressing room. People are talking about the 2026 T20 World Cup, there is an ODI World Cup in 2027, and you hear people saying there is the Olympics in 2028," Dravid, who also caught up on some tennis action at the Games before coming for the event, said during the

discussion.

"People are going to want to win that gold medal, stand on the podium, and be a part of the Games Village, a great sporting event, and interact with so many athletes. As you get closer, I have no doubt that teams will be preparing and checking out facilities. They will take this seriously, and players will fight tooth and nail to be out there," he added.

The Test great had ICC CEO Geoff Allardice for company during the discussion at India House here.

"You grow up watching the Olympics, seeing Carl Lewis winning the gold medal, watching the great athletes perform. You always want to be part of

great events like this. The environment, the energy – it's a dream come true."

Dravid hoped that India would win both the men's and women's gold medals at the LA Games.

"The dream for me to have a fantastic cricket tournament, hopefully Indian men and women winning the gold would be nice. Unfortunately, I won't be able to play, but I will make every effort to be in LA in some capacity or another. If not anything else, I will try to get a media job," joked Dravid, who ended his tenure as India head coach after the recent T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies.

The men's and women's cricket competitions will run concurrently at the LA Olympics.