



Wake-up call

Actress Manasi Parekh says her National Award win is a call for working women that they can achieve their dreams

LEISURE | P2



Successful launch

ISRO successfully launches an Earth observation satellite on board a small satellite launch vehicle, giving a boost to India's space programme

TWO STATES | P7



Mpox in Pakistan

Pakistan's health ministry says it has identified the country's first case of a new mpox variant

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Trouble mounts

SEBI chief earned revenue from a consultancy firm during her tenure, potentially breaching rules for regulatory officials, documents show

BUSINESS | P11

Woman immolates self in front of police station

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahanga, August 16: In a shocking incident, a woman allegedly set herself on fire in front of the Mahanga police station in Cuttack district, Friday, a day after the cops arrested her husband on theft charges.

The woman, with more than 50 per cent burns, was initially taken to the Salipur Community Health Centre in a serious condition, and subsequently shifted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after her condition worsened.

The woman had pleaded with the police, asserting her husband's innocence, but they did not heed her request.

Frustrated, the woman resorted to attempting suicide by dousing herself in kerosene and setting herself ablaze in front of the police station.

The police managed to rescue her and get her medical attention. Doctors at the Salipur Community Health Centre, where she was first admitted, reportedly described her condition as 'critical'.

The police have launched an investigation into the events and circumstances leading to the incident.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Indeed, during your regime, my income doubled...yet my expenses grew six times

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	80436.84	↑ 1330.96
NIFTY	24541.15	↑ 397.40
DOLLAR	83.90	↓ ₹0.05
EURO	92.20	↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹71,170	↑ ₹1,034
SILVER	₹82,266	↑ ₹2,205

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	31.6°C	29.8°C
Min Temp	25.4°C	23.0°C
Humidity	97%	98%
Rainfall	14.8mm	57.4mm

FORECAST: GENERALLY CLOUDY SKY WITH HEAVY RAIN



OUTRAGE EVERYWHERE: NSUI students take part in a protest march against the incident of rape and murder of a young medic in Kolkata, in Jaipur, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Khurania takes charge as DGP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Senior IPS officer Yogesh Bahadur Khurania Friday took charge as Odisha DGP, hours after a Home department notification.



Khurania, a 1990-batch officer, succeeds AK Sarangi, who had held the position since December 2023.

Upon his arrival at the state police headquarters in Cuttack, Khurania was accorded a guard of honour and introduced to senior police officers.

Outgoing DGP Sarangi formally handed over charge to Khurania in a simple ceremony attended by senior IPS officers.

Khurania said, "My priority is to provide better services to people of Odisha." He highlighted the need for police personnel to maintain courteous behaviour with visitors, as urged by the Chief Minister.

Khurania outlined his priorities, including maintaining law and order, improving crime investigation and control, and adopting scientific methods to enhance the quality of investigations. He also noted the rising trend of cybercrimes and pledged to implement measures to address these challenges effectively.

Docs across India go off duty today

REUTERS

Mumbai/Kolkata, August 16: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has called for more than a million colleagues nationwide to provide only essential services Saturday, in a protest over the brutal rape and murder of a medic that is set to be the biggest such strike in recent times.

Anger over the crime showed no signs of dying down a week after the 31-year-old doctor was found dead on a blood-soaked mattress in the medical college where she worked in Kolkata.

She had settled down for a short nap on a carpet in a college lecture hall after working for nearly 20 hours of a 36-hour shift, staff at the RG Kar Medical College. Anger at the failure of tough laws to deter a rising tide of violence against women has fuelled protests by doctors and women's groups.

"The emotions are different this time," RV Asokan, president of the IMA, the largest grouping of practitioners, with 400,000 members, told Reuters.

"Women form the majority of our profession in this country. Time and again, we have asked for safety for them."

Late Thursday, the IMA called on practising doctors in India, a figure it estimates to exceed

Nurse raped, killed in Uttarakhand

Dehradun: A nurse was raped and murdered while she was returning from a private hospital in Uttarakhand to her home near the Uttar Pradesh border. She left the hospital in the evening of July 30 and was seen in CCTV footage taking an e-rickshaw from Indra Chowk in Rudrapur but did not reach her house in Uttar Pradesh's Bilaspur where she lived with her 11-year-old daughter. The next day, her sister filed a missing complaint. Eight days later August 8, the Uttar Pradesh police found the nurse's body in a field, about 1.5 km from her house in Dibdiba village.

a million, to shut down all services nationwide, except emergency departments, for 24 hours from Saturday morning.

Film actors, other celebrities and politicians have voiced shock at the crime, calling for stricter punishment for perpetrators.

A low-earning police volunteer, designated to help local police officers and their families who needed to be admitted to the hospital, has been arrested and charged with the crime, but protesters say that is not enough. **MORE P9**

J&K to vote after 10 yrs

3-PHASE J&K ELECTIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 18; HARYANA POLLS OCTOBER 1; COUNTING OCTOBER 4

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: Assembly elections will be held in Jammu and Kashmir after a decade in three phases from September 18, setting the stage for the people of the Union Territory to elect a government after the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019.

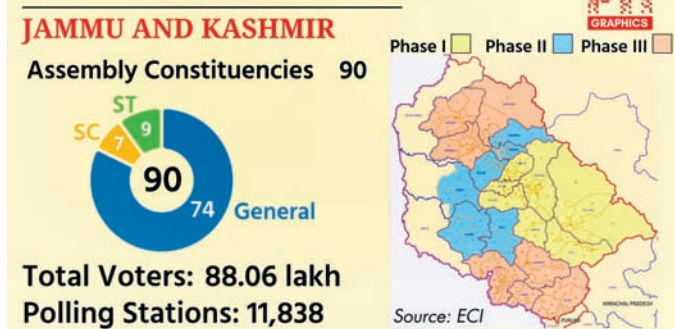
The Election Commission also announced that elections to the 90-member Haryana Assembly will be held October 1 and results for both the polls will be declared October 4.

The two Assembly elections will be the first popularity test for the BJP and the INDIA bloc following the Lok Sabha polls.

The three-phase elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be held September 18, September 25 and October 1, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told a press conference in the presence of Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

After suffering reverses in the Lok Sabha polls, including in Haryana, the BJP is keen to regain political momentum by retaining power in the state and putting up a strong show in Jammu and Kashmir, where its

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2024



strongholds have been traditionally confined to the Jammu division.

The Congress, however, is hoping to continue with its political revival by toppling the BJP from power in Haryana after 10 years and inflicting losses on its rival in the Jammu region where the two parties are the main contestants.

Two regional parties, the National Conference and PDP, have won most of the seats in the Kashmir Valley between them in past elections. Both parties are part of the INDIA bloc along with the Congress but all three of them fought separately in the Lok Sabha elections, a scenario likely to persist in the Assembly polls too.

In the 2019 polls in Haryana, the BJP had 40 of its 90 seats and formed the government in alliance with the Jananayak Janta Party. In the last Assembly in J&K in 2014, the BJP had won 25 of its 87 seats and had joined hands with the PDP to form government under the leadership of the regional party's leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Its Assembly now has 90 seats following delimitation.

CEC Kumar said Assembly elections in Maharashtra, which were held along with Haryana in 2019, will be announced later due to security requirements for J&K. Elections are also due in Jharkhand and Delhi.

Kumar said the next set of elections will be announced after

the completion of the polls in J&K and Haryana.

The last Assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in November-December 2014 in five phases.

The announcement by the Election Commission comes months after the Supreme Court upheld the Centre's decision to scrap J&K's special status and directed that Assembly elections be held by September 30, 2024.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed the announcement of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and said the polls will further strengthen the roots of democracy and open the doors to a new period of development for the region.

While referring to polls in Jammu and Kashmir, the CEC told reporters that in the Lok Sabha elections, people in the UT repudiated faith in ballot and rejected bullets and boycotts.

He said the voter turnout in the parliamentary elections in the UT proved the people's faith in democracy.

Political parties across Jammu and Kashmir Friday hailed the Election Commission's announcement as marking a significant step towards restoring democracy in the region after six years of Central rule. **MORE P8**

ED arrests 2 from state in ₹400cr online scam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: Four persons, including two from Rourkela, have been arrested in connection with a ₹400 crore online betting and gaming app scam allegedly linked to some Chinese nationals, Enforcement Directorate (ED) said Friday.

Arun Sahu and Alok Sahu, both from Rourkela, Chetan Prakash from Patna and Joseph Stalin from Chennai were taken into custody under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the case related to the app named 'Fiewin', ED said in a statement.

"An amount of ₹400 crore was generated from the Fiewin app fraud and thereafter was credited into eight Binance (global crypto exchange) wallets in the name of Chinese nationals. These wallets were operated from the Chinese mainland as revealed by the access IP logs. The Chinese nationals communicated with and instructed the four accused persons through digital communication especially groups on Telegram (social communication app)," the ED said.

The ED did not say when these persons were arrested but added a PMLA court in Kolkata sent them to 14 days of ED custody.

DAMaN bags National Award for Best Odia film

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Babushaan-starrer Odia movie DAMaN directed by Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad Lenka won the National Film Award in the Best Odia Feature Film category.

The movie that tracks the journey of Dr Siddharth Mohanty to eradicate malaria in the tribal districts of Malkangiri and Koraput was released in 2022. DAMaN is an acronym for Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakarana (malaria control in inaccessible areas), a government programme which has benefited around 8,000 villages in Odisha.

Directed by the young duo of Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad



Lenka and produced by Deependra Samal, DAMaN also

stars Dipanwit Das Mohapatra and members of local tribal com-

munities of Malkangiri and Koraput districts who have acted in a film for the first time.

The film was released November 4, 2022 in theatres in Odisha and Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Surat, Raipur, Pune and Hyderabad.

Following the appreciation the film garnered both in and outside Odisha, the filmmakers decided to release the movie in Hindi. Hindi film actor Ajay Devgn launched the Hindi dubbed trailer of the film, and the movie was released February 3, 2023. The Odisha government had declared 'DAMaN' tax-free in the state. Regional cinema dominated

the National Film Awards with best feature film going to Malayalam movie 'Aattam: The Play' and Rishabh Shetty bagging best actor for the Kannada hit 'Kantara'.

The Best Actress award was shared by Nithya Menen, for the Tamil film 'Thiruchitrambalam', and Manasi Parekh for the Gujarati movie 'Kutch Express'.

The lone Bollywood presence in the top categories for the 70th edition of the National Awards was 'Uunchai' with Sooraj R Barjatya named Best Director. The adventure film, centred on four aging friends readying to scale Mt Everest, also won Neena Gupta a Best Supporting Actress award. **MORE P2**

leisure



RIHANNA'S MOM WORKED IN A PERFUME SHOP

Singer Rihanna shared that her mother Monica worked in a perfume shop. "She used to always bring home the testers when they were almost empty, so there was always a bottle in the house. I have always loved this perfume," she added.

AGUILERA: I'M NOT HERE TO BE A PROGRAMMED ROBOT

Popstar Christina Aguilera has said that she doesn't pay attention to what people say about her music or her appearance. "I just feel more aware and more understanding. I'm not here to be a programmed robot. I'm here as a human being first before being a celebrity," she shared.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Life sometimes smiles down upon you, and today seems to be such a day. Though you will remain occupied with your work, there will be no pressure. Same is the case with your personal life. What more does one need? Ganesha is probably trying to teach you to be content.

TAURUS
Your health and fitness cannot be taken for granted this day, asserts Ganesha. Be careful of what you eat and drink. Avoid dust and smog. You could get indisposed in any number of ways. If there are signs of illness, consult a medical specialist with wasting any time. You may become too free and in spending money.

GEMINI
Unlike the last few days, today will be hectic and demanding. You will need to attend a few social get-togethers and functions. Socializing with friends and relatives is on the cards. However, you need to be careful about your health. Expenses on medicines are indicated, says Ganesha.

CANCER
An auspicious day to begin new ventures, which will be of long duration and also profitable. You may buy a new house or a car. Gain is also likely through your friend circle. Students may excel and may be able to concentrate well on their education.

LEO
You will be worried on account of issues related to your business. You need to work in the right direction to solve these issues. You will be able to put an end to your concerns with the right attitude. You will be unable to finish your tasks unless you concentrate fully upon your projects, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
You will gain a lot by way of goodwill by helping your mates at work. Besides, your work will make your seniors supremely happy. Your interaction with colleagues and friends will hold a special value for you. And, Ganesha says, you will enjoy your association with people you love.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be full of joy and enthusiasm today to fulfill all your ambitions. You will be able to plan trips and excursions with friends or family members. Ganesha says that it is a good idea to plan the trip and go forth with it as soon as possible. Towards evening you will be able to visit a lovely place. You day today will go well and with no stress at all.

SCORPIO
You may call it an 'awesome' day, while Ganesha may call it just perfect. Unexpected financial gains on cards today. Academically and professionally, you may push your limits higher, proving your expertise. You may be on an emotional high, express yourself freely.

SAGITTARIUS
You get your rivals and competitors thinking for your sheer smartness in the professional field. It's time to clink glasses as you have the knack to survive the cut-throat competition. Evening will be spent rejoicing with near and dear ones at a social gathering.

CAPRICORN
You are practical and wise. With your worldly wisdom and intellect at display, you will be able to guide your near and dear today, says Ganesha. Your belief of working in a harmonious environment will inspire you to spread the message of love, peace, and joy. The extraordinary management skills that you possess will ensure cordial and healthy relationships.

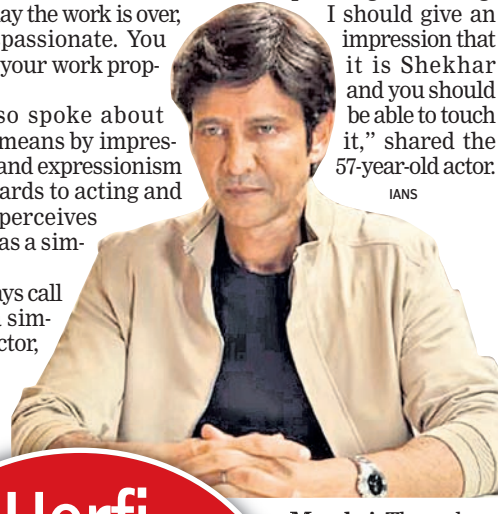
AQUARIUS
You possess a nice quality of eloquence. Today, you will make a speech/presentation or conduct a discussion forum where everyone will love to hear your opinions. Your communication skill will help you get through the heart of someone you like. But, don't blow your own trumpet all the time, advises Ganesha.

PISCES
The day will start off on a sour note for you. But as the day progresses you will find your mood elevated. If you wish to progress in life, you need to stop minor setbacks from upsetting you disproportionately. Keeping your emotions in check will be vital for taking critical decisions and in meeting your deadlines today, says Ganesha.

I'm dispassionately passionate: Kay Kay

Mumbai: Actor Kay Kay Menon has talked about maintaining his essence in the industry, saying he doesn't put himself on a pedestal, calling himself a 'dispassionately passionate actor'. Kay Kay, who was recently seen in the series *Shekhar Home*, shared: "I really don't get too buttered because people are the way they are. You cannot take on the onus of changing things or people. I don't put myself on a pedestal, nor do I think I am the worst. So, it's a midway

but simulator. That's my job. Everything I am doing, say I am playing Shekhar, is a simulation. I am not that, I am Kay Kay Menon. It is an impression I am giving to the audience. It's not by expressing something. I should give an impression that it is Shekhar and you should be able to touch it," shared the 57-year-old actor.



Uorfi shares her game plan

Mumbai: The makers of the upcoming show *Follow Kar Lo Yaar* starring Uorfi Javed have dropped the trailer Friday. The Internet sensation said that becoming famous, shaking up the glamour world has been my game plan from day one.

The nine-episode series is an unfiltered and unabashed peek into the vibrant, amusing, and at times scandalous life of Uorfi.

"I've always dreamed big, even when people said I couldn't make it. Becoming famous? Shaking up the glamour world? That's been my game plan from day one. Trust me, it hasn't been easy. I've had more downs than ups, moments that would've crushed anyone else. But I bounced back every single time, stronger and more determined," said Uorfi Javed.

70TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

Manasi's big win as working mom

Mumbai: Actress Manasi Parekh can't contain her excitement as she talks after the 70th National Awards announcement Friday. She has bagged Best Actress for her 2023 Gujarati film *Kutch Express*.

"I am shooting for my new film and I am still processing it, I can't believe it," shared the 38-year-old with a news portal.

She has been in showbiz for two decades now, and looks at this award as a vindication for her struggle and hard work, "I work very hard, I love what I do. What makes this win even sweeter is that my husband and I have produced *Kutch Express* as well! I want to do the best work, produce the best of things."

The journey ahead will be easier courtesy this win, she feels, "This will make people believe 'these guys are legit' My recent film *Jhankudi*'s success and now this award makes it both box office and critical acclaim. It's a great win for me."

Parekh emphasises that this is also a big win for her as a working mother, "I have a seven-year-old daughter who has supported me in my work. My husband has been my backbone. This is a call for working women that they can achieve their dreams. Time cannot slow you down."

AGENCIES



Babushaan, Vishal react to nat'l honour



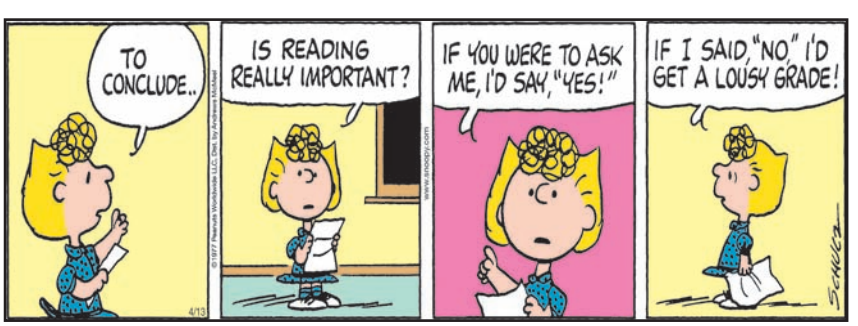
Bhubaneswar: The success of Odia blockbuster *Daman*, headlined by Babushaan Mohanty, at the 70th National Film Awards Friday brought a lot of joy to the Odia film industry. Expectedly, the makers interacted with the media at a presser to share their experience. Apart from director duo Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad Lenka, lead actor Babushaan was also present at the event.

a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of everyone involved in bringing this story to life. Proud and grateful beyond words!"

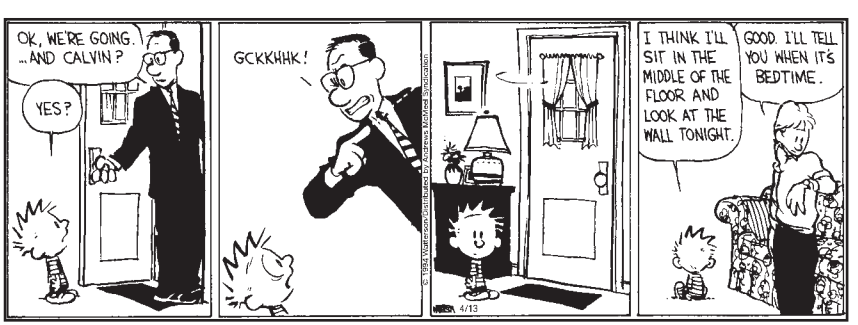
Babushaan said, "Honoured and humbled. DAMAN was a labour of love, created to shed light on the social issue the film addresses, and we are deeply grateful that its message has resonated so strongly."

For the uninitiated, most parts of the movie were shot in the underdeveloped regions of Koraput and Malkangiri districts. Interestingly, several actors from local tribal communities with a theatre background made their debut in a feature film. Needless to say, they won the hearts of millions through their natural performance.

PEANUTS



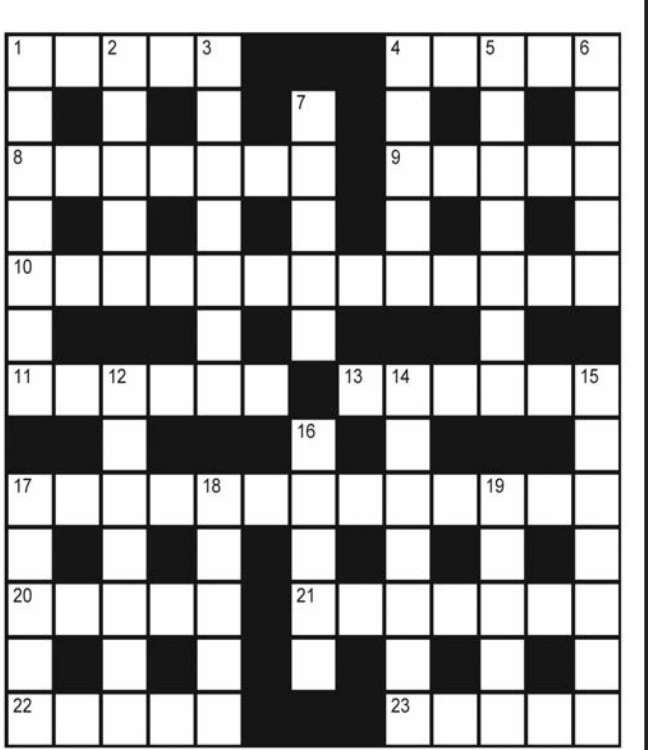
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



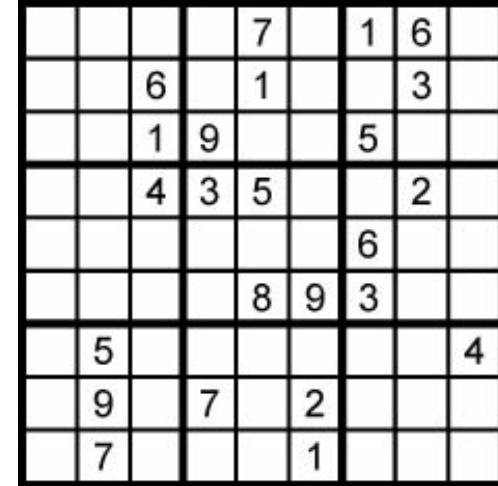
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Rocker
 - 4 Scenes
 - 8 Durazzo locale
 - 9 Irritate
 - 10 Simple sugars
 - 11 Vacation spot
 - 13 Creepy-crawly
 - 17 Type of plant
 - 20 Family member
 - 21 Burst
- Down**
- 1 Neighbour of Israel
 - 23 Rapier
 - 6 Flower holders
 - 7 Forest god
 - 12 Motorcycle attachment
 - 14 Some trucks
 - 15 Ebbed
 - 16 Back street
 - 17 Units of time
 - 18 Alpha's opposite
 - 19 Sine or cosine

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

- CROSSWORD**
- ODIOUS OFFSET
RNNRRLAUA
BICYCLE OWNER
TURTLE EVACUEE
SARAN
IMPROVEMENT
AIAAACA
FANBELT NUTTY
FDNIMWIG
ASSET ORATION
IRETURNMENT
- SUDOKU**
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 4 |
| 8 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 9 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Medical students' stir affects health services

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Healthcare services across the state were severely disrupted Friday as junior and senior resident doctors from various medical colleges joined the strike demanding justice for the Kolkata doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered at a state-run hospital there last week.

Doctors from AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) in Burla, and PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada participated in the cease-work, also calling for a Central Act ensuring the safety and security of medical students and doctors.

While junior doctors have stopped work, postgraduate doctors continued to provide emergency services. However, the

strike has led to significant disruptions in outpatient department (OPD) services, operating theatres, and other medical activities.

At AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, around 500 junior and senior resident doctors joined the strike, affecting approximately 4,000 patients who visit the OPDs daily.

Odisha doctors are also supporting the Indian Medical Association's call for a 24-hour service suspension across both public and private hospitals nationwide.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said they are in communication with various doctors' associations and are closely monitoring the situation.

Director of Medical Education and Training (DMDT) Santosh Mishra added that senior faculty members have been instructed to run the emergency services in the hospitals to maintain critical care.

KOLKATA DOC MURDER



FOR A CAUSE: Junior doctors of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack go off duty and stage a sit-in on the hospital premises, Friday, in protest against the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata

AT LORD'S ABODE

Actor Juhi Chawla after paying obeisance to the sibling deities at Srimandir in Puri, Friday



UPHOLDING PRIDE, ODISHA TO REACH PINNACLE OF DEVPT: CM

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: The state has embarked on a journey for change and development while upholding its 'Asmita' (pride), Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said.

After hoisting the Tricolour and taking a salute from the security forces during the Independence Day celebration at the Mahatma Gandhi Marg here, Majhi also announced several development programmes.

"Today is a very important day for Odisha. The state has embarked on a path of change. The people of Odisha have left the path of propaganda," the Chief Minister said.

This is the first Independence Day function under the BJP government in the state.

While paying tribute to the great sons and daughters of the soil who sacrificed for the nation, Majhi said, "Odisha has vowed to reach the pinnacle of development with Asmita (pride) and Swaviman (self-respect)."

Noting that he does not believe in showing big dreams to the people, Majhi said he is committed to fulfil promises made to the state.

"For the sake of my land, I know how to fight," he said.

The Chief Minister said that his government has set a goal to reach a 500 billion dollar economy by 2036 and a 1.5 trillion dollar economy by 2047.

To achieve this target, there will be massive industrial development in the state, in which the semiconductor industry will play a major role, Majhi said, adding that the next two decades will be a golden chapter in the



Noting that he does not believe in showing big dreams to the people, Majhi said he is committed to fulfil promises made to Odisha

history of Odisha. "We have also taken up a programme to develop 500 tribal villages under the 'Ideal Tribal Village' scheme in the next five years," Majhi said.

He also announced that the state government has decided to build a new multipurpose stadium at ₹1,000 crore. It will have Indoor Velodrome, Mountain Biking, Swimming Pool, Football Ground, Archery Arena, Badminton Court and Fitness Park, in which players as well as the general public can practice. "The state government has taken steps to fill up 1.5 lakh vacant posts in government services. Along with that, in the next 5

years, a wide range of employment opportunities will be created for the youth of Odisha," he said.

Majhi also announced that the state government will provide pensions, free health care and free bus passes for those who were jailed under the MISA Act in 1975.

He said that the state government is preparing two vision documents - one for 2036 when Odisha becomes 100 years old, and another for 2047, the year India's independence completes 100 years.

"The definition of freedom is broad. Economic freedom is very important along with political freedom. Apart from this, our intellectual freedom and spiritual freedom are also important," he said.

Stating that Odisha's aim is to emerge as a gateway to East and South East Asia, the chief minister said his government will develop the port and port-based industries.

The chief minister mentioned that the state has integrated Ayushman Bharat scheme with Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojan to ensure that no eligible individual is deprived of quality healthcare service.

Lauding the Indian hockey team's bronze medal in the Paris Olympics, Majhi said the state is proud of Amit Rohidas, the Odia player of the hockey team.

While mentioning that Odisha has extended its sponsorship of the Indian hockey team till 2036, Majhi said the state has decided to launch 'Khel Ratna Khoja Abhiyan' to promote talented sportspersons of the state.

BJD, Cong to boycott MLA orientation prog

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Congress have decided to boycott the two-day orientation programme for the newly-elected MLAs starting Saturday.

Both the Opposition parties Friday alleged that the tradition and dignity of the Assembly have been 'lowered' as the programme would be inaugurated by a Union minister instead of the Chief Minister of the state, who is also the leader of the House.

Initially, it was decided that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan would

inaugurate the programme while Union Health Minister JP Nadda would give the valedictory address.

However, after the Opposition's protest, the names of Pradhan and Nadda were dropped from the guest list.

As per the modified schedule, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju will be inaugurating the programme and Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson Hariwansh Narayan Singh will deliver the valedictory address.

However, the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD maintained that its legislators would not attend the event. "The MLA orientation

programme is being held like a political programme," Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik alleged. Her party has informed the Speaker about the decision in a letter.

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Rama Chandra Kadam had earlier said that his party MLAs would also not attend the programme.

However, following modification in the schedule and guest list, he said that the issue would be discussed by the party.

Congress MLA CS Raazen Ekka, however, said they will boycott the orientation programme as Congress feels that the dignity of the House has

been lowered.

Reacting to the development, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling said, "BJD and Congress MLAs should attend the programme as it is being held for the newly-elected members. The BJD has been making an issue out of a non-issue. The Speaker has already requested the Leader of Opposition to attend the function."

Justifying her party's decision, Pramila Mallik, in a letter to the Speaker, said that like any other legislature in the country, the state's Assembly too has its own traditions and conventions. The orientation programme is being held for the 84 first-time MLAs.

7 SIM boxes found in City rented house; 1 detained



DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 16: The Laxmi Sagar police Friday detained a West Bengal native after seven "SIM boxes", which are normally used by scammers to make fraud calls, were recovered from his rented accommodation at Mahadev Nagar, here.

IIC Laxmisagar Police P Shyam Sundar Rao, who identified the detainee as Raju Mandal, said a police team, aided by scientific experts, is examining the device and the house at present. He said Mandal is being questioned by the special squad

to ascertain the purpose behind keeping so many illegal electronics devices and the involvement of more persons in, what is suspected to be, the trade.

According to a City-based cyber expert, a sim box is a device equipped to make over a dozen calls in a single minute. It is often used by fraudsters to bypass international call termination charges. Generally, they use the devices to evade GPS location trackers in a bid to give a slip to police action. With the help of advanced technology, the scammers manage to change the SIM numbers constantly to make detection quite challenging.

Enforcement agencies have strict policies against the use of SIM box by private persons, Rao said.

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City cops arrest four bike lifters

Bhubaneswar: In two separate cases, the Commissionerate Police Friday arrested four persons for allegedly lifting a couple of motorcycles under the City limits. The accused are habitual offenders and had been arrested in similar cases in the past, police said. In the first case, Kabindra Sethy, 33, and Chhabindra Kumar Nayak, 30, had allegedly sneaked into the complainant, Tusharkant Champaty's home in Tamando area Tuesday night. IIC Tamando police station, Subrat Kumar Meher said the duo used a duplicate key to rob the bike. On a complaint by Tusharkant, the suspects were arrested, he added. In the other case, Dasaratha Dalai and Kanha Das - both 26 years, had allegedly stolen a bike from a house in Bharatpur area August 11. IIC Dinakrushna Mishra said the accused were rounded up near Koliathia square on a tip off. During the interrogation, the duo confessed to lifting the bike for quick money on order to support their addiction to narcotic drugs, Mishra said.

SEED RAKHI New trend in sustainable celebrations



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 16: As a testimony to the growing concern of the young generation towards environment, a youth organisation in the City has come

up with a platter of eco-friendly rakhis made up of seeds which not only provide an alternative to the hazardous plastic/thermocol variants available in the market, but help spread the message of sustainable living.



These rakhis not only celebrate the bond between siblings but also contribute to environmental preservation. Once the celebration is over, these seed-based rakhis can be planted.

Gayanranjan Das, Chapter Coordinator of Youth for Seva, Bhubaneswar, said the rakhis are made of various plant seeds such as pumpkin, mint, coriander, or flowering plants that will blossom into new life rather

than harm the environment. "The joy of seeing a plant grow from a rakhi sown with love is a unique and fulfilling experience, adding a new dimension to the Raksha Bandhan celebrations," Das said adding that they organised workshops on making those eco-friendly rakhis with 39 participants joining to raise awareness about the importance of planting more trees to create a safer environment.

This year, the plantable or eco-friendly rakhis are made for raising awareness and not for any commercial gains, he said.

Volunteers of the organisation have plans to tie these rakhis on the wrists of CRPF jawans stationed at the Bhubaneswar camp who will be on duty on Rakhi Purnima. Additionally, the organisation also plans to tie rakhi to trees during the day emphasising the need for protection and preservation of environment, Das added.

'India saw alarming rise in lightning deaths in 2010-20'

The decade from 2010 to 2020 has been the 'deadliest' with an 'alarming' spike in deaths due to lightning incidents, according to an analysis of the data shared by the NCRB.

The data showed a rise in the average annual fatalities per state and union territory from 38 during 1967-2002 to 61 in the period from 2003-2020, the research showed. Additionally, average deaths due to lightning in Indian states and UTs almost tripled from 28 in 1986 to 81 in 2016, it noted.

A team of researchers, including those from Fakir Mohan University in Odisha, found that lightning caused 1,01,309 deaths between 1967 and 2020, with an 'alarming development' from 2010-2020, showing the highest increase.

"The data show an increase in the average annual fatalities



per states and UTs from 38 in the period 1967 to 2002, to 61 from 2003 to 2020. Notably, the decade from 2010 to 2020 emerges as the deadliest in terms of lightning incidents," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Environment, Development and Sustainability. "This amounts to an average of 1,876 deaths annually. The long-term national annual average fatality was 46 per state and UT, ranging from 28 (in 1986) to 81 (in 2016)," they added. Climate change, which is driving extreme conditions, is likely to worsen this situation in the

country in the coming years, they said. Discerning trends at both state and regional levels, the researchers found that Madhya Pradesh registered the highest number of fatalities due to lightning, followed by Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha. However, deaths per 1,000 square kilometres of area were found to be the highest in the "relatively small" states of Bihar (79 deaths), followed by West Bengal (76), and Jharkhand (42), compared to those in larger states, they said.

"Most vulnerable states, including Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu have not yet formulated a state lightning action plan as directed by the NDMA," the authors wrote.

14 dists on high alert as IMD predicts rain



"Instruct the field-level functionaries to remain prepared to meet any eventuality including possible landslide in hilly areas," the SRC told the district collectors. He said engineers in-charge may keep close watch over embankments especially weak and vulnerable points in rivers and canal embankments.

Quoting the IMD bulletin, the SRC also said, "Under influence of the low pressure, widespread rainfall activity with isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely over the districts during August 16 to 20."

A red warning (take action) has been issued, forecasting isolated extremely heavy rainfall (above 20 cm) in Balasore and Bhadrak districts by Saturday morning.

In a separate advisory, the SRC urged the fisheries and animal resources development department to ensure that fishermen do not venture into the sea between August 16 and August 20 due to rough sea conditions.

Coastal districts have been instructed to ensure the safety of fishermen, and those already at sea have been advised to return to shore. Meanwhile, heavy rainfall began affecting parts of the state Friday as the low-pressure system formed over the Northwest Bay of Bengal, influenced by a cyclonic circulation over South Bangladesh and adjacent Gangetic West Bengal.

A red warning has been issued, forecasting isolated extremely heavy rainfall in Balasore and Bhadrak districts

Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu cautioned that intense and prolonged rainfall could lead to flash floods, flood-like situations, and waterlogging, particularly in urban areas.

The SRC also urged the field-level functionaries to stay prepared for any eventuality, including potential landslides in hilly regions.

Bhubaneswar, August 16: The state government Friday placed 14 districts on high alert following a warning from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) of heavy rainfall due to the formation of a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal.

The districts under alert are Angul, Bargarh, Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, and Sundargarh, Met officials said.

In a letter to the district collectors, Special Relief

STF recovers live pangolin, nabs 3



assistance of officials from the Koraput Forest division and Koraput district police, conducted a raid on the evening of August 14 at the Nandapur-Bodigoan road, under Semiliguda police station's jurisdiction.

During the search operation, the STF team apprehended three wildlife criminals and recovered a live pangolin from their possession.

The team also seized a vehicle and other incriminating materials. The three accused were arrested as they could not produce any authorisation for the possession of the live pangolin.

The three wildlife criminals were later forwarded to the Court of Judicial Magistrate First Class, Semiliguda. A case under Section 303(2)/317 (2)/61(2)(a) BNS was registered.

STF sources said the live pangolin has been handed over to the Koraput Divisional Forest Officer for safe custody and rehabilitation.

ECOR GM felicitates Amit Rohidas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: East Coast Railway (ECOR) sports officer and hockey Olympian Amit Rohidas, upon his return to the state, was felicitated by ECOR General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal here, Friday.



Rohidas, a crucial member of the Indian Men's Hockey team, played an instrumental role in securing bronze medal at the recently concluded Paris Olympics. Funkwal praised Rohidas and said, "Rohidas is an inspiration to young hockey players and enthusiasts alike."

Funkwal expressed confidence that under the guidance of Rohidas, the ECOR's sport programmes would reach new heights, further promoting the spirit of sportsmanship and excellence within the organisation.



RAISING VOICE: Odisha School College Teachers and Employees Co-Ordination Committee stage a protest at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar Friday, and submitted a memorandum to Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari for fulfillment of their charter of demands

City celebrates I-Day with patriotic fervour

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Several City-based educational and public institutions celebrated the 78th Independence Day here, recently.

Utkal University here, celebrated the Independence Day on its campus premises. Vice-Chancellor Savita Acharya attended the event as the chief guest and hoisted the national flag.

Highlighting the remarkable achievements of the university on this occasion, Acharya said, "Due to the high quality of teaching and research, with the joint efforts of faculties, non-teaching staffs and students, Utkal University received 'A+' status and secured 42nd rank in the public university category."

The day was also celebrated at the KIIT, KISS, KIMS, and KIIT International School campuses. KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta attended the celebration at KISS campus and hoisted the national flag.

Addressing the students, Samanta emphasised the crucial role of education in societal development. "Quality education is particularly important for the development of the underprivileged and tribal students.



Over 30 years, KISS has been working dedicatedly to uplift students from tribal communities by providing free education.

Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium (BJEM) school here, celebrated the Independence Day with a spirit of patriotism. On the occasion, school administrators, students, staffers, with the members of Lions Club paid tribute to the freedom fighters and remembered their contribution to the freedom struggle.

Chief guest at the ceremony and chairman of the school Raghunath Mishra hoisted the national flag. Speaking on the occasion, Mishra urged the students to show respect to the diverse socio-cultural fabrics of the country, crafted by the great freedom fighters.

Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR) also celebrated the 78th Independence Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour: The event organised at the OUTR campus was marked with a series of activities which reflected the spirit of freedom.

OUTR Vice-Chancellor BB Biswal, accompanied by the Registrar Renu Prava Nayak joined the event.

The university's faculties, staffers, and students participated in the parade and marched in unison, symbolising the unity and diversity of the nation.

The celebration was also marked in All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here, where Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas hoisted the

National Flag and joined as chief guest. Biswas commended the relentless efforts of AIIMS - Bhubaneswar in providing advance healthcare, medical education, and facilitating medical research.

"AIIMS-Bhubaneswar has consistently been at the forefront of delivering high-quality healthcare to the people of Eastern India. Our achievements are a testament to the unwavering dedication and commitment of our staff, who have transformed the institution into a beacon of medical excellence," Biswas remarked.

East Coast Railway (ECOR) also observed the day at Railway Stadium here. ECOR general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal hoisted the National Flag and exchanged salute in the parade organised by Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Bharat Scouts and Guides.

In his address, Funkwal highlighted the significance of the 78-years journey post-Independence, emphasising the resilience, determination, and perseverance that have shaped the country's progress. He underscored the critical role of Indian Railways in national development, stating that it truly serves as the 'Lifeline of the Nation'.



Dinosaur-killing asteroid formed beyond Jupiter's orbit

THE NEW FINDINGS ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF SEDIMENT SAMPLES FORMED AT THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE CRETACEOUS AND PALEOGENE ERAS, THE TIME OF THE ASTEROID'S CATAclysmic IMPACT



An intense debate surrounding the cosmic rock that killed the dinosaurs has stirred scientists for decades, but a new study has revealed some important - and far-out - data about the impactor's origin story.

Researchers, whose findings were published recently in the journal Science, used an innovative technique to demonstrate that the apocalyptic culprit which slammed into the Earth's surface 66 million years ago, causing the most recent mass extinction, had formed beyond Jupiter's orbit.

They also refute the idea that it was a comet.

The new insights into the apparent asteroid that cratered into Chicxulub, in what is present-day Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, could improve the understanding of celestial objects that have struck our planet.

"Now we can, with all this knowledge... say that this asteroid initially formed beyond Jupiter," Mario Fischer-Godde, lead author of the study and a geochemist at the University of Cologne, told AFP.

The conclusions are particularly notable, given how rarely

this type of asteroid collides with Earth.

Such information may well prove useful in assessing future threats, or determining how water arrived on this planet, Fischer-Godde said.

The new findings are based on an analysis of sediment samples formed at the period between the Cretaceous and Paleogene eras, the time of the

asteroid's cataclysmic impact.

Researchers measured the isotopes of the element ruthenium, which is not uncommon on asteroids but extremely rare on Earth. So by inspecting the deposits in multiple geological layers that mark the debris from the impact at Chicxulub, they could be sure that the ruthenium studied came '100 per cent from this asteroid'.

"Our lab in Cologne is one of the rare labs that can do these measurements," and it was the first time such study techniques were used on impact debris layers, Fischer-Godde said.

Ruthenium isotopes can be used to distinguish between the two main groups of asteroids: C-type, or carbonaceous, asteroids that formed in the outer solar system, and S-type silicate asteroids from the inner solar system, nearer the sun.

The study affirms that the asteroid that triggered a megaearthquake precipitated a global winter and wiped out the dinosaurs and most other life was a C-type asteroid that formed beyond Jupiter.

Studies from two decades ago had already made such an assumption but with far less certainty.

The conclusions are striking, because most meteorites - pieces of asteroids that fall to

Earth - are S-types, Fischer-Godde pointed out.

The study also dismisses the idea that the destructive impactor was a comet, an amalgam of icy rock from the very edge of the solar system. Such a hypothesis was put forward in a much-publicised study in 2021, based on statistical simulations.

Scientists believe water may have been brought to Earth by asteroids, likely of the C-type like the one that struck 66 million years ago, even though they are less frequent.

Studying past asteroids also allows humanity to prepare for the future, Fischer-Godde said.

"If we find that earlier mass extinction events could also be related to C-type asteroid impacts, then... if there's ever going to be a C-type asteroid on an Earth-crossing orbit, we have to be very careful," he said, "because it might be the last one we witness."

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Headmaster suspended as schoolgirls stage roadblock



RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, August 16: The headmaster of Balisankara Higher Secondary School was suspended after several girl students along with their parents Friday staged a road blockade near Chandini chhak on Balisankara-Chhattisgarh road alleging sexual harassment.

marks at them and subjected them to sexual harassment. "The girls complained that he was making improper comments on their dress, touching them inappropriately with bad intention and using filthy language," the DWO said.

severe traffic snarls. Despite rain, the students sat on the road holding posters in protest. They also filed an FIR at the Talsara police station. Talsara police, local BDO, tehsildar and other officials reached the spot and tried to pacify the students but to no avail.

Egyptian ship 'arrested' at Paradip Port

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paradip, August 16: An Egyptian ship, currently anchored at Paradip Port, has been 'arrested' following an Orissa High Court order, an official said Friday.



The arrest of the Egyptian ship is the third such incident at the Paradip Port in the last four months

ment of maritime claims that arise out of the ownership, construction, possession, management, operation, or trading of any ship. A senior judge of the local court has been appointed as admiral to oversee the detention, and the ship would remain under arrest until further notice, the official said.

The vessel arrived at Paradip Port August 6 and was facing legal action due to an outstanding debt of ₹3.96 crore to a German company related to the transportation of low-sulfuric marine gasoil, he said.

The German company had filed an appeal before the Orissa High Court, requesting the de-

14, the port official said. Under admiralty law, a ship can be arrested for the enforce-

Man gets life for killing elderly man

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, August 16: A local court in Mayurbhanj district Friday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for the murder of an elderly man.

March 25, 2023. Family members of Anil rescued him in a pool of blood and rushed him to Sirsa hospital. As his condition deteriorated he was later shifted to PRM Medical College and Hospital here. However, doctors declared him brought dead.



Mayurbhanj District Additional Sessions Judge Satyanarayan Patra also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on the convict identified as Rajesh Mohanta, 24. In case of failure to pay the penalty amount, the convict will have to undergo an additional 6-month imprisonment, the judge ordered.

As per the case diary, Mohanta had attacked 65-year-old Anil Mohanta with a billhook over past enmity at Nedabhadri village under Jharpokharia police station area

Anil's son Bikash lodged a written complaint in this regard at Baripada police station. Acting on the complaint, police arrested the accused on charge of murder and forwarded him to court. The case was registered under Section 302 of the IPC. Additional Public Prosecutor Krushna Chandra Das said the judgement was based on the testimonies of 16 witnesses apart from the medical, police investigation and scientific reports.

Injured elephant dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 16: A wounded wild elephant, which was undergoing treatment, succumbed to its injuries Friday morning in Tamda forest range under Bonai forest division.

The female elephant aged about 9-10 years was spotted by Forest officials during patrol. On physical verification it was found that the animal had injuries and was unable to move. Soon, Bonai DFO Lalit Patra pressed a mobile veterinary unit from Rourkela into service along with local hands. Treatment was started and a cover was raised over the animal to save it from rain. However, the animal succumbed to the injuries.

Speaking about the death, Patra said, "The autopsy report is yet to come. Samples have also been sent to OUAT, Bhubaneswar and the actual reason of the animal's death will be known once the report comes." However, prima facie the death might be due to festering of wounds on its front right leg which might have affected its internal organs, he added.

In a separate incident, a 35-year old man identified as Fakir Kishan was trampled to death by an elephant at Bhalupatra village under Kirmira block in Jharsuguda district, Friday.

Minor siblings burnt alive in house fire

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, August 16: In a tragic incident, two minor siblings were burnt alive in a house fire in Kendrapara district Thursday, police said.

The fire is suspected to have been caused by either an LPG cylinder leak or a short circuit at their thatched house in Balarampur village under Kurunti GP of Rajnagar police station. The victims were identified as Anupama Sahani (11) and her younger brother, Rishi (9). The incident took place when their parents were out at a market buying rations, police added. The two deceased children of Sumant Sahani were studying in Class V and III respectively at Balarampur Primary School.

The blaze was so intense that despite efforts of locals and fire brigade personnel, the fire could not be extinguished in time to save the children. Firefighters later reached the scene and extinguished the fire. The police then seized the charred remains of the victims and sent them for autopsy. Police have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the fire, with assistance from Fire department officials.

Informed, Kendrapara Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan and SP Siddharth Kataria rushed to the spot. Meanwhile, the district administration has expressed condolences and sanctioned ex-gratia of ₹60,000 to the next of kin of the deceased.

The local sarpanch sanctioned ₹6,000 under the Harishchandra Yojana, while the BDO provided ₹5,000 to the family of the deceased.

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Programme on environmental protection at UN College, Soro



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, August 16: On the occasion of Independence Day, a programme along with various competitions focused on mangrove conservation and impact of climate change was organised at Upendra Nath College in Soro area in this district, Thursday.

The event, held in collaboration with the EcoWalk Movement and ROSIA organisation, aimed to raise awareness about the importance of mangrove forests in countering tsunamis, storms and coastal erosion as well as in protecting marine biodiversity.

Students from more than 10 schools and two colleges under the Soro Municipality actively participated in the event. The event included school and college level drawing, speech, and quiz competitions with the participation of 56 students.

Shubham Supriti Dey, Asmita Kumar Behera and Bhavatosh Swain secured the first position in drawing, speech and quiz competitions, respectively in the junior category. In the senior category, Abhinash Nayak, Mamata Maharana and Bebina Nayak won the first prize respectively in drawing, speech and quiz competitions.

The event was graced by Gajendra Kumar Pradhan, Principal of Upendra Nath College, Jayabrata Banerjee, founder of 'Sorrota Coffee', and young environmentalist and 2023 Dharitri Climate Champion Jalendra Mahalik, founder of ROSIA and EcoWalk. The students also pledged to spread awareness and take action for the protection of the environment and mangrove forests.

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FOCUS CLIMATE FINANCE

DECARBONIZING PORTFOLIOS



Divestment campaigns often trigger partisan efforts to protect the fossil-fuel industry, whereas engaging with high-emitting companies and tracking their progress offers tangible climate benefits beyond portfolio decarbonization



Lynn Forester de Rothschild

INVESTORS MUST ACTIVELY SEEK EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS INSTEAD OF PASSIVELY INVESTING IN LOW-CARBON INDUSTRIES

Climate change is on the ballot in November's US presidential election. A second Donald Trump presidency could lead to an additional four billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030, erasing the progress made under President Joe Biden. Conversely, Vice President Kamala Harris, the presumptive Democratic nominee, established a record of being tough on polluters during her tenure as California's attorney general.

Meanwhile, Europe's rightward shift and complicated coalition politics are slowing global climate action. As Western democracies grapple with rising political uncertainty, it may be up to capital markets to save the planet.

Alas, our financial system is caught in a classic prisoner's dilemma: it is costly for any single institution to decarbonize on its own while others continue to profit from carbon-intensive portfolios. But if all asset owners and managers committed to reducing CO2 emissions and supporting a just climate transition that protects workers, communities, and consumers, they could create long-term value and deliver prosperity for all.

The inconvenient truth is that without robust climate policies — such as carbon pricing and elimination of fossil-fuel subsidies to reallocate capital toward clean energy — there is little incentive for collective action. In a world where it pays to pollute, investors will be tempted to support companies with unsustainable practices, shifting the burden of the energy transition to others and ultimately leaving everyone worse off.

Contrary to activists' hopes, climate action is not necessarily a win for everyone. A once-in-a-generation transition carries financial and political risks, as well as opportunities, creating winners and losers throughout the investment value chain. The question, then, is whether major asset owners and managers can steer markets toward achieving climate goals and generate sufficient financial returns.

The answer is yes, but achieving this requires three major strategic shifts. First, investors must engage with high-emitting companies rather than simply divesting from them. Divestment campaigns often trigger partisan efforts to protect the fossil-fuel industry, whereas engaging with high-emitting companies and tracking their progress offers tangible climate benefits beyond portfolio decarbonization.

Second, investors must actively seek emissions reductions instead of passively investing in low-carbon industries. As recent years have shown, exchange-traded funds focused on environmental, social, and governance investments not only underperform the market but also fail to accelerate climate action. Moreover, it has become abundantly clear that Big Tech companies like Meta (Facebook), Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Alphabet (Google) tend to dominate sustainable equity funds. Although these funds may seem environmentally friendly at first glance, research shows that by directing capital away from high-emitting companies, they have inadvertently deprived critical sectors of the resources they need to invest in the clean-energy transition.

By contrast, active funds that focus on encouraging carbon-intensive companies to decarbonize can drive climate action by channeling investments into sectors like renewable energy and waste management. A prime example of this approach is the \$100 Billion Climate Action Plan launched by the California Public Employees' Retirement System, which aims to improve cement production and retrofit fossil-fuel facilities. Importantly, there is little evidence that merely decarbonizing a portfolio translates into reduced greenhouse-gas emissions. To support the clean-energy transition, institutional investors must engage with both high- and low-emitting industries, incentivizing carbon-intensive companies to provide emissions disclosures to mitigate the negative impact of high emissions on their stock-market valuations. Given that the shift to a low-carbon economy requires significant long-term investment, institutional investors could also direct capital toward emerging technologies such as sustainable aviation and safe nuclear energy.

Lastly, investors must seize the unique market opportunities created by weak national climate policies. According to the International Energy Agency, clean-energy investments will exceed \$2 trillion in 2024 — roughly twice the amount invested in fossil fuels. To be sure, a second Trump administration could jeopardize the Biden administration's landmark Inflation Reduction Act. But a slowdown in green investment is not inevitable, given that the IRA's incentives — including \$369 billion in tax breaks and subsidies for clean energy — have won support from voters, investors, companies, state and local officials, and even some Republican lawmakers. The IRA's impact — catalyzing \$240 billion in clean-energy investments in its first year — cannot be ignored.

While green investments enable institutional investors to navigate domestic volatility, contribute to the fight against climate change, and generate returns, today's unregulated carbon markets might give the impression that companies are prioritizing carbon offsets over meaningful decarbonization that benefits local communities. Initiatives led by climate and finance experts, such as the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market, could thus play a pivotal role in setting standards for carbon credits and maintaining market integrity, helping to scale this essential climate-financing tool.

Regardless of the political climate, 2024 is set to surpass 2023 as the hottest year on record. In an economy that values financial returns above all else, it is natural for individual companies to focus on profits. But focusing exclusively on generating returns overlooks the catastrophic impact of increasingly frequent extreme weather events like hurricanes, floods, and wildfires.

As climate-related disruptions intensify, large institutional investors are uniquely positioned to lead the green transition while still delivering financial returns, thus bringing us closer to meeting the emissions targets set by the 2015 Paris climate agreement. Now is the time for markets to rise to the occasion and help us win the defining fight of our time.

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The writer is founder and CEO of the Council for Inclusive Capitalism.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Ministers in a Bind

Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it.

SRI AUROBINDO



Several Union Ministers in the Modi 3.0 era are reportedly caught in a tricky situation regarding the appointment of their private secretaries (PS) and Officers on Special Duty (OSD). While these ministers have their own preferences for these crucial roles—often based on personal rapport or past working relationships—they find themselves constrained by a set of preconditions that limit their choices.

Before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls concluded, the Department of Personnel and Training (DOPT) prepared a comprehensive list of officers eligible to serve as PS and OSD. This list includes many who served ministers during the Modi government's previous term. According to sources, the Ministers have been subtly informed that they must choose their PS and OSD from this predetermined list. Those who quickly understood and accepted the rules have already secured their preferred officers. However, others, still hoping to navigate around these restrictions, are stuck in a state of indecision, unsure of how to proceed.

This situation underscores the ongoing tension between personal preference and bureaucratic protocol, a dynamic that's quietly shaping the inner workings of this government. Ministers must now balance their desire for trusted aides with the need to adhere to the guidelines, highlighting the complexities of governance under Modi, even in the most routine decisions.

IOCL's next leader

In the coming weeks, Shrikant Madhav Vaidya's extended tenure as Chairman of IOCL will wrap up, and the search for his successor is already in full swing. Last week, a three-member search-cum-selection committee, led by Mallika Srinivasan, Chairman of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), including Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain and former HPCL Chairman M.K. Surana, interviewed about a dozen candidates to find the right fit.

The selection process, held at Shastrri Bhawan—the heart of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas—saw a mix of internal candidates from IOCL and at least one strong external contender. While early signals suggest a frontrunner has emerged, it might be a while before we know for sure who will take the helm of this Fortune 500 giant.

Notably, when a search-cum-selection committee (SCSC) steps in, it has the authority and discretion to choose the best candidate for the job. Vaidya, originally set to retire on August 31 last year, was granted a one-year extension, pushing his retirement to this month-end, on a re-employment and contract basis. Rumour has it that he might stay on for a few more weeks to ensure a smooth transition, pending the final nod from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

So, while the wait continues, it's clear that the process is designed to be thorough, ensuring that IOCL's next leader is chosen with care.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

A new era for Cabinet Secretariat

When the Centre announced Dr TV Somanathan as India's 33rd Cabinet Secretary, it came as a pleasant surprise across the civil services. One Union Secretary humorously remarked, "The Finance Secretary-designate is now the Cabinet Secretary-designate."

Currently, Dr Somanathan, or TVS, as he's affectionately called within the service, serves as Secretary in the Department of Expenditure and was set to retire in May 2025. However, with this new role, his service has been extended. He will take over from Rajiv Gauba later this month and continue as Cabinet Secretary until at least August 2026. Given the recent trend of extensions, many expect his tenure to be extended further.

TVS' career spans over three decades and is marked by significant achievements. He has held key positions, including Joint Secretary in Corporate Affairs and Economic Affairs, and was one of the first to join the Prime Minister's Office under Narendra Modi in 2014. He played a critical role in shaping fiscal policy, especially during challenging economic periods, and contributed significantly to the Union Budget and initiatives like the Atma Nirbhar Bharat stimulus package and the National Monetisation Pipeline.

What's particularly interesting is that TVS might be the only Cabinet Secretary who has never served as a district collector, despite his extensive experience. With a PhD in economics, along with qualifications as a chartered accountant and cost accountant, there is no doubt that the economy will be of special focus during TVS' tenure.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same. ANNE FRANK

Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world. MALALA YOUSAFZAI

I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act. GRETA THUNBERG

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1807: The first serviceable steamboat—the Clermont, designed by American engineer Robert Fulton—embarked on its maiden voyage.

1896: George Washington Carmack unearthed gold in Bonanza Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River now in Yukon, Canada, setting off a gold rush into the Klondike valley.

1943: Robert De Niro, an American actor known for his uncompromising portrayals of violent and abrasive characters, was born.

1999: A 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck near İzmit, Turkey, killing more than 17,000 people and leaving some 500,000 homeless.

LOL

An extremely loyal fan

There was a Packers fan with a really crappy seat at Lambeau. Looking with his binoculars, he spotted an empty seat on the 50-yard line. Thinking to himself "what a waste" he made his way down to the empty seat. When he arrived at the seat, he asked the man sitting next to it, "Is this seat taken?" The man replied, "This was my wife's seat. She passed away. She



was a big Packers fan." The other man replied, "I'm so sorry to hear of your loss. May I ask why you didn't give the ticket to a friend or a relative?" The man replied, "They're all at the funeral."

SPECTRUM SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Decline in academic freedom

The findings of the QS World University Rankings released recently have shown that India experienced the highest growth in university representations among all G20 nations with a 318 per cent increase from 11 varsities in the 2015 edition of QS World University Rankings to 46 in the 2025 edition. Most Indian universities improved their rankings with 61 per cent rising, 24 per cent maintaining their position and only nine per cent dropping. It is indeed significant that 13 Indian universities featured among the top 200, including two in the top 15—Anna University and Indian Institute of Science. Even the country scored 39 for International Research Network, which is the highest average score by indicator.

But these do not reflect the real picture of the country's higher education system, especially those that are spread in semi-urban and rural areas of the country. And these universities cater to the largest sections of the country's population. Thus, there is need for not just the top tier of educational centres excelling

but the entire higher education system improving standards.

It is also a fact that since the last decade or so there has been decline in academic freedom and public debate in the country. Recently, Yamin Aiyar, former president and chief executive of the well-known Centre for Policy Research (CPR), pointed out the challenges faced by the universities citing a report by the India Academic Freedom Network (IAFN) in 2022 where it listed 78 instances in which seminars, lectures or talks at public universities were disrupted by politically aligned groups or permission to organise such events were denied. Twenty five cases of faculty arrests have also been cited in the report.

One may recall that in August last year, economists, Sabyasachi Das and Pulapre Balakrishnan quit Ashoka University over alleged breach of academic freedom.

Over 300 academics in a statement had then stated: "By backsliding on Dr Das' academic freedom because the topic he chose to study was inconvenient to one political party, the university violates several principles of ac-

ademic freedom."

Further, it said, "The fact of the matter is that the government is applying equal pressure on both private and public universities/institutions". It may be mentioned here that Das, an Assistant Professor of economics, quit after the varsity distanced itself from his working paper alleging electoral manipulation by the incumbent party in the 2019 general election and Ashoka's governing body initiated an inquiry into the matter. Though the government has set up a chain of high quality research centres known as IISER, the country lags in the promotion of basic science research. At one time — say around a decade back — basic research in biology and allied sciences got an impetus and there emerged a stream of outstanding PhDs in these fields.

It cannot be denied that the quality of research has declined in recent years with the penetration of Indian science by Hindutva followers. A 12-member panel of scientists stated recently that India is facing a systematic threat to its scientific and educational foundation, cit-

ing what they described as institutional promotion of pseudoscience.

The panel's statement comes against the backdrop of worry among sections of Indian scientists and educationists about what they view as attempts to allow pseudoscience to piggyback on some of the country's academic institutions, low budget allocations to scientific departments and misleading content in school science curriculum.

Further the panel's statement pointed out that change in school science syllabus had raised concerns about the quality and accuracy of future science education in India.

The present dispensation may change its outlook and adopt a genuinely scientific approach. Moreover, with its partner from the South, the TDP, the earlier pro-Hindutva approach towards education may not be valid in the new coalition government. This augurs well for the country but simultaneously, there has to be more funds for research and academic freedom, as is manifest in most global centres of education. INFPA



Dr Oishee Mukherjee

ACADEMICIANS BELIEVE, AND QUITE RIGHTLY, THAT EFFECTIVE CONSULTATIONS ARE VERY MUCH NECESSARY TO REVIVE THE MUCH-NEEDED ACADEMIC SPIRIT

Self-inflicted embarrassment

Sir, When the people of Bangladesh rose in clamour against the dictatorial regime of Sheikh Hasina, she fled the country to India and India has received her and allowed her to stay safe in our country, we thought that the interim government led by Dr Muhammad Yunus would become hostile to India for her gesture to Hasina. But the new government was graceful in saying that Hasina's stay in India would not hamper the good relationship between the two countries and looked forward to strengthening the relationship further. However, it is unfortunate that India has allowed Hasina to make a statement from our soil against the people, particularly the students, who revolted against her rule and also induce her supporters to topple the interim government in Bangladesh. Naturally this has not been taken kindly by Dr Yunus' interim government which has strongly protested against India allowing Hasina to issue such a statement from her own soil. Further, many criminal cases have been filed against Hasina for the killing of around 300 protesters including students due to her shooting orders to the police and the army. In view of the above, a spokesperson of the Interim government in Bangladesh has commented that a situation might arise very soon for them to seek extradition of Hasina from India which has placed our country in great embarrassment.

Tharcius S Fernando, CHENNAI

PM's speech

Sir, The Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 98 minutes Independence Day speech painstakingly unfurled the various aspects of his vision for a Viksit Bharat — a financial powerhouse respected by the globe, the third-largest economy driven by the enterprise of its vast young population, a country propelled by technological advancement and scientific innovation, a country not sullied by corruption, and many others. Modi projected confidence, focussing on his historic third term. Two of his biggest tasks — a uniform civil code to subsume the maze of personal codes that govern matters ranging from marriage to birth and inheritance, and for simultaneous elections to replace the chaotic poll calendar of India — will generate significant debate and legitimate concerns. Still, the early blueprint of India's centennial future was clear in his speech.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

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

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'3rd developmental flight of SSLV is 100% success'

The SSLV-D3 mission has been completed flawlessly, with ISRO's Chairman confirming that the rocket placed the satellites into their precise orbits as planned



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

1ST GAGANYAAN MISSION BY DEC

ISRO has targeted to launch the first mission of the ambitious Gaganyaan project by December, a top official said here Friday. Currently, some of the rocket hardware for the human space programme has reached the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here and the integration of the crew module was going on at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum, ISRO Chairman S Somanath said. "Today, we are working on the first mission of the Gaganyaan called G1. The first unmanned mission. The status today is the rocket, the S200 stage, the L1, C32 stage are all at Satish Dhawan Space Centre," he said. He said the Crew Module integration was going on at VSSC Trivandrum while Crew Escape hardware was also ready.

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh), August 16: ISRO Friday successfully launched an Earth observation satellite on board a small satellite launch vehicle (SSLV), giving a boost to India's space programme.

The third developmental flight carrying Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-08) along with a passenger satellite SR-0 DEMOSAT was successfully placed into the intended orbit as planned.

"The third developmental flight LV-D3 with EOS-08 satellite has been successfully accomplished. The rocket has placed the spacecraft in the very precise orbit as planned and there are no deviations in the injection of satellites," ISRO Chairman S Somanath said, addressing the gathering from the Mission Control Centre at this spaceport here.

He said the launch parameters of the satellite indicate that everything (mission launch) is perfect and the Earth Observation Satellite and the passenger satellite SR-0

DEMOSAT have been injected after the manoeuvres.

"Congratulations now to the LV-D3 project team and with this the third developmental flight of LV has been completed," he said. "We are in the process of transferring LV technologies to industries and so it is a very good beginning for the LV and the launch vehicle," he said.

The payload carried by the rocket has been designed and realised by the ISRO team, he said. "It is 100 per cent successful and the satellite has been placed into its intended orbit," Somanath told reporters later.

"As I am aware, solar panels (of the rocket) have already been deployed, further, we are looking for certain activities in the VTM stage and all that will be completed in due course of time. So congratulations once again for the entire team who worked behind the scene to develop this LV rocket and its culmination of developmental programme. Let us give a big round of applause to the entire (SSLV-D3) team," he said. Mission Director SS Vinod said, "Today we have achieved a major milestone in the journey of LV. The last and final developmental flight of LV-D3 has been successfully accomplished and with that we are moving into the operational phase."

He said the scientists have injected the EOS satellite and the passenger satellite into the precise orbit.

NIA attaches Hizbul Mujahideen worker's property in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday attached the property of an overground worker of terror group Hizbul Mujahideen in Kashmir.

The seizure came as part of the agency's probe in a case related to the targeted killing of the sarpanch of Adoora village in Kulgam, a statement issued by NIA said.

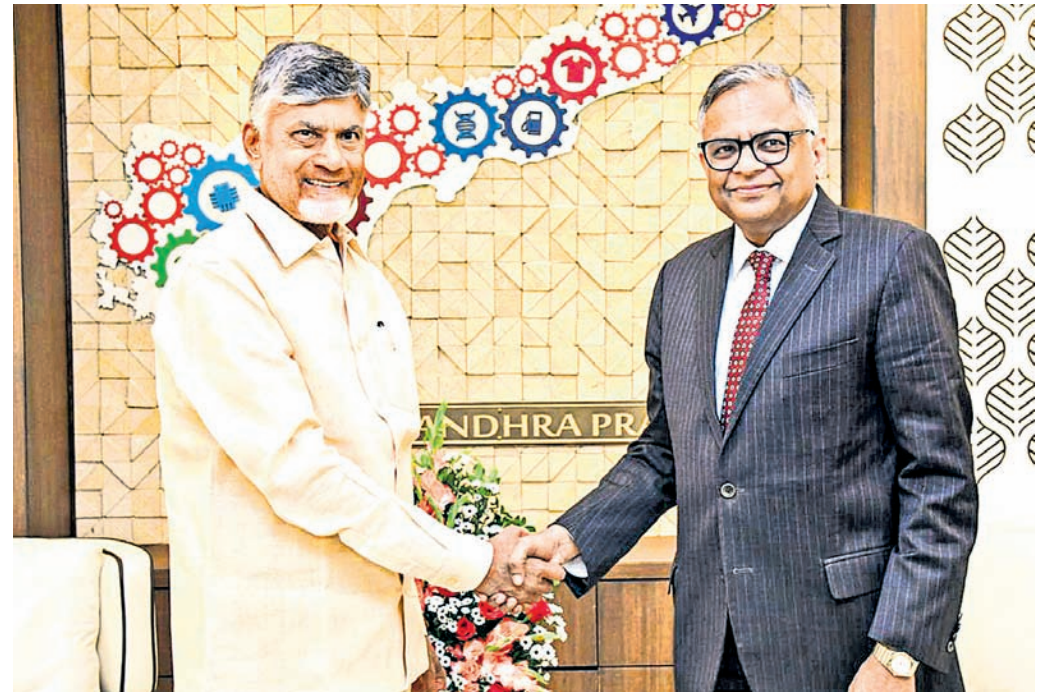
Nasir Rashid Bhat's property - a residential house in Tengpora village of Shopian -- was attached under Section 33 (1) of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1947, on orders of the NIA special judge of Jammu, it said. Bhat, along with other members of banned Hizbul Mujahideen, was involved in the killing of sarpanch Shabir Ahmad Mir March 11, 2022 with the aim of spreading terror among the people, the probe agency said.

Investigations by the NIA, which took over the case from Kulgam police, revealed that the targeted killing was part of a larger conspiracy by Hizbul Mujahideen to disturb India's integrity, sovereignty and security through violent attacks and killings. The NIA further found that Bhat had provided his Alto car to the terrorists, the agency said.

He was also involved in conducting a raze of the sarpanch's house and in informing the terrorists about his presence, the NIA said, adding Bhat used his car to take the assailants to the area around the sarpanch's house on the day of the attack.

The NIA has named six accused in the charge sheet in the case and the trial against them is on.

Andhra to form STF on industrial devtpt



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with Tata Sons Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran during a meeting, in Amravati

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amravati, August 16: The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to constitute a Special Task Force (STF) to provide suggestions to the government on industrial development and building 'Swarna Andhra Pradesh'. The decision was taken Friday by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, who will be heading the task force.

TATA Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran will be the Co-Chairman. This was decided during a meeting Chandrasekaran had with the Chief Minister at the state Secretariat.

The Tata Group Chairman had a detailed discussion mainly focussing on investments in the state.

Both Chandrababu Naidu and Chandrasekaran discussed industrial development and building Swarna Andhra Pradesh with Vision-2047.

The state government decided to constitute a Special Task Force (STF) to provide suggestions to the government on how to proceed and also formulate necessary plans to implement these suggestions.

The task force will be constituted with the Chief Minister as the Chairman, the TATA Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran as the Co-Chairman along with famous industrialists and experts in the relevant sectors.

Since the state government is planning to take Andhra Pradesh to the number one position in the country by 2027 with Vision-

2047, the Task Force will mainly focus on the steps to be taken to achieve this goal.

The state government also decided to establish the Centre for Global Leadership in Amravati with the active partnership of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in which the TATA company will become a partner.

A TATA Consultancy Service (TCS) Development Centre will also be set up in the port city of Visakhapatnam and the Chief Minister also discussed with the TATA Group Chairman over possibilities of the expansion of Air India and Vistara Airlines in the State.

Chandrababu Naidu also held discussions with him on establishing solar, telecommunication, and food processing units in the state.

LG grants cadre review of J&K administrative service

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 16: Jammu and Kashmir government Friday approved cadre review of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) with a view to strengthen the administrative set-up in the union territory, an official spokesperson said here.

The decision was taken by the Administrative Council which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The review will revise the strength and composition of JKAS in view of increased complexities and scale of operations as well as changes in work profiles due to new schemes and initiatives after specific recommendations from the Administrative Departments, the spokesperson said.

The revised strength will accommodate 87 new posts, with deletion of 50 posts coupled with creation of 46 posts, he said.

The decision will also upgrade 29 posts to ensure adequate administrative experience and efficiency in disposal of government business, he said.

The review will also enable career progression as well as employment avenues for the youth by releasing vacancies for direct recruitment through concerned recruiting agencies, the spokesperson said.

He said the Administrative Council further issued directions that the restructuring of Jammu and Kashmir Police Service cadre may also be fast



tracked by the Home Department.

The Administrative Council also approved creation of posts of different ranks (from Deputy Director Prosecution to class IV), totaling 83 posts, in the Prosecution Department to comply with relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS).

This would improve handling of matters related to Prosecution in various courts as per revised framework as per different provisions of BNSS to strengthen the Criminal Justice System, for ensuring timely delivery of justice, the spokesperson said.

The Administrative Council also approved creation of 772 posts of different categories for Government Railway Police (GRP) J&K to strengthen the railway security apparatus between Katra- Banihal segment.

The recommendations for creation of 772 posts for Katra-Banihal segment have also been made by the Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC), composed of members from Railways, Railway Protection Force (RPF) and J&K Police.

J&K ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 16: With the Election Commission announcing the schedule for the first-ever Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir after it was reorganised into a Union Territory, West Pakistani refugees - who will vote for the first time in these elections - are gearing up to participate in this democratic process.

A meeting of community members is scheduled for next week to strategise for the polls, marking a historic moment for the refugees who have long awaited the right to vote.

The elections will take place in three phases September 18, September 25 and October 1, with the votes being counted October 4.

Assembly elections are being held in Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since the abroga-

West Pakistani refugees to vote for 1st time

tion of Article 370, which granted special status to the region, in August 2019.

This is also the first time that West Pakistani refugees, alongside members of the Valmiki Samaj, will have the opportunity to vote in Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Laba Ram Gandhi, president of the Pakistan Refugees' Action Committee, expressed his enthusiasm for the elections.

"This is the first time we will be participating in the Assembly elections after more than seven decades of our settlement here," he said.

Gandhi emphasised the importance of internal discussions among community members to ensure effective representation in the new Assembly.

The meeting, expected to take place either August 20 or August 22, will gather around 200 delegates from across the Jammu



region. The topics of discussion will include potential candidates for support and the possibility of fielding their own candidates.

Historically, the community - primarily consisting of Hindus and Sikhs who migrated from Pakistan in 1947 - had only been eligible to vote in Lok Sabha elections until the recent changes in their status.

In 2020, they participated in the

District Development Council elections for the first time.

Garu Bhatti, president of the Valmiki Samaj Sabha, shared his sentiment about the election announcement, calling it a "joyous moment."

He highlighted the long-standing plight of the Valmiki community, which was brought to Jammu and Kashmir in 1957 for sanitation work but had been denied voting rights for decades.

SEVERAL SENIOR J&K POLICE OFFICERS TRANSFERRED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 16: In a major shakeup in the Jammu and Kashmir Police, several senior officers were transferred by the administration Friday while the intelligence wing got a new chief.

In three separate orders, the Jammu and Kashmir administration transferred senior police officers with immediate effect. This came a day after senior IPS officer Nalin Prabhat was appointed as Special DG of Jammu and Kashmir Police. He will assume the role of the force's chief

following the retirement of RR Swain September 30.

The developments in the Union Territory's police force as well as several transfers and posting of officials in the civil administration are seen by many as a precursor to the Assembly election in the Union Territory that has to be held before September 30, a deadline set by the Supreme Court. An order issued by the government said, "In the interest of administration, it is hereby ordered that Nitish Kumar, IPS (AGMUT: 1999) ADGP CID is posted as Head of CID, relieving

R R Swain, IPS (AGMUT: 1991) DGP, J&K of the additional charge of the post." In a separate document, the government ordered the transfer of 12 senior police officers including Inspectors General of Police (IGPs) and Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs).

Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, with additional charge of IGP (POS) and IGP Traffic, has been posted as IGP (POS) with additional charge of IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, IGP (Technical Services) and IGP (Telecom).

Sunil Gupta, DIG, Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, has been

posted as Incharge IGP Crime, while Sujit Kumar, DIG CID, has been posted as Incharge IGP Security. Shiv Kumar has been posted as the new DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range.

Vivek Gupta, DIG, north Kashmir range, has been posted as Incharge IGP Railways J&K, and M Suleman Choudhary, DIG Personnel (PHQ), has been posted as Incharge IGP traffic, the order said. The government also shifted the DIG of the Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA), Ajeet Singh, who has been posted as DIG Traffic Kashmir.

'No disruption to services by NTR Seva Trust'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, August 16: Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav Friday promised here that there would be no disruption to NTR Vaidya Seva Trust services as the state government is giving utmost priority to clear the pending dues of private hospitals.

NTR Seva Trust offers free healthcare to eligible poor people with the aim of achieving universal health coverage for below poverty line (BPL) families in the southern state. Several poor patients benefit through this scheme in private hospitals while the government foots their bills.

Immediately after coming to power, Yadav said the NDA government disbursed ₹162 crore in the first tranche and ₹200 crore today while another ₹300 crore will be paid in a week's time. "There will be no disruption to NTR Vaidya Seva services. Our government is according utmost priority to clear pending dues of hospitals," he said at a press conference at the Secretariat.

According to the minister, AP Speciality Hospitals Association had served 13 notices in the erstwhile YSRCP government over pending dues but met with little success.

J&K govt approves land rights for displaced persons of PoJK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 16: Jammu and Kashmir government Friday conferred proprietary rights over evacuees' land to the displaced persons of PoJK of 1947, 1965, 1971 and West Pakistan displaced persons.

The decision was taken by the Administrative Council which met here under the chairmanship of Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

In a landmark decision, the Council approved the proposal for transfer of Evacuees' land conferring proprietary rights to the displaced persons (DPs) of

1947, 1965, 1971 and West Pakistan Displaced Persons, an official spokesperson said.

He said this decision will confer absolute proprietary rights over Evacuees' land to DPs as already conferred over state land.

As per the decision, the custodian concerned will transfer the land in favour of the DPs in a time-bound manner. Custodian General shall ensure proper safeguards to prevent any misuse particularly unauthorized encroachments on the Evacuees' land, the spokesperson said.

The government has issued directions for time-bound processing of applications giving



proprietary rights to DPs over evacuee land in 30 days and the entire process is expected to be completed within six months, providing major relief to the

displaced persons, he said.

The decision fulfils demands of all connected families, which have been requesting for ownership rights since past so many

decades. The government has always remained committed to provide benefits to the DPs, the spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Council also approved transfer of land measuring 2292 kanals and 2 marlas for different departments. These include 1212 Kanal 12 Marla situated at Tehsil Dinga Amb, District Kathua, 1070 Kanal situated in Tehsil Samba and Vijaypur, in district Samba in favour of Industries & Commerce Department for establishment of Industrial Estates in these districts.

Establishing Industrial estate shall play an important role in the development of the area, cre-

ate various employment opportunities which shall be in the interest of the public and the government, the spokesman said.

The Administrative Council also approved transfer of land measuring two Kanal 14 Marla situated at Shuhama in District Ganderbal for construction of Police post and six Kanal 16 Marla and three Sirsai situated at Lar in District Ganderbal for construction of Police Station.

This shall ensure proper and secure accommodation for police personnel posted in these areas, to deal with the law & order and other public related issues as well, the spokesman added.



Our target in the 2026 Assembly elections is to win 200 seats. We have executed projects effectively and earned a good name for the people. The programmes/schemes were formulated and implemented to benefit at least one person per household across tamil nadu

M K STALIN | DMK PRESIDENT

INDIA, JAPAN TO HOLD '2+2' MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE AUG 20

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will hold the next edition of the '2+2' dialogue with their Japanese counterparts next week with a focus on further boosting overall strategic ties and reviewing the situation in the Indo-Pacific



of the day quote

The time has come, let us come out of the silos of seductive civil service jobs. We know the opportunities are limited but we have to look away and find there are enormous vistas of opportunities far more lucrative that enable you to contribute (to the nation) massively

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

I welcome the announcement of the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir made by the Election Commission of India today. In the last 10 years, the Modi govt through a series of relentless initiatives, has created a new era of peace, development and strengthening democracy in J&K

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

The incident that happened in Kolkata is very sad and the people of West Bengal and the entire country are in a state of shock. Mamata didi should avoid doing politics over the matter. She should focus on finding out who was behind the incident and fixing the accountability

HIMANT BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Two IED-like devices found in Guwahati

Guwahati: Two 'IED-like devices' were found in Guwahati Friday, taking the total number of 'bomb-like substances' seized across Assam in the last 24 hours to 10 after the banned ULFA (I) claimed to have planted 24 explosives to trigger serial blasts in the state, a top police official said. A minor has been picked up by Lakhimpur Police for questioning, while search operations for unearthing explosives were conducted in different places, including in Tinsukia district's Panitola residence of former self-styled general secretary of the outfit, Anup Chetia, who signed a peace pact with the government last year, officials said.

IMD forecasts more rain in K'taka

Bengaluru: With the India Meteorological Department predicting more rains in the coming weeks, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Friday chaired a meeting with senior officials and asked them to take all the necessary precautionary measures. The chief minister at the meeting stressed coordination among various departments and civic agencies in managing the situation.

Atishi inspects Narela school

New Delhi: Delhi Education Minister Atishi Friday inspected an under-construction school in Narela and said it was a testament to the city government's seriousness and dedication to providing "world-class education" to every child, regardless of their economic background. The condition of government schools in Delhi was deplorable before Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took office, with children studying in dilapidated buildings, she said.

3 arrested in murder case

New Delhi: Three people, including two shooters, have been arrested for allegedly killing a history sheeter over a personal rivalry in northeast Delhi's Zaffrad, police said Friday. While two shooters were arrested by the local police, their facilitator, who provided them the two wheeler, was nabbed by the Crime Branch, they said.

BANGLADESH VIOLENCE

Yunus assures Modi protection of Hindus

In talks initiated by Yunus, Modi reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh and underlined the importance of ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minority communities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: In his first direct contact with New Delhi over a week after becoming the head of Bangladesh's interim government, Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus Friday conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a phone conversation that Dhaka would prioritise protection and safety of Hindus and all other minority groups. The assurance by Yunus came a day after Modi, in his Independence Day speech, said 140 crore Indians are concerned over the safety of Hindus and minorities in the neighbouring country. "Received a telephone call from Professor Muhammad Yunus, @ChiefAdviserGoB. Exchanged views on the prevailing situation. Reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive



Bangladesh," Modi said in a post on X. In a series of posts, Yunus's office said he conveyed to Modi that the situation in Bangladesh has been brought under control and life is becoming normal across the country. It said "Yunus said that the reports of attacks on the minorities have been exaggerated and he is inviting Indian journalists to visit Bangladesh and report from the ground on the issues of the minority protection." "The Chief Adviser has told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that his government is committed to safeguarding every citizen of the country including the minorities when the Indian Prime Minister raised the issue of the protection of the minorities," Yunus's office said. It further added: "The Chief Adviser said his government is committed to making all state apparatus fully functional and effective and ensuring human

Communal tension erupts in Udaipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 16: A mob set fire to cars and pelted stones amid communal tension in Udaipur after a class 10 student stabbed another boy at a government school Friday. Prohibitory orders banning the assembly of people were imposed in the Rajasthan city. It was not immediately known what led to the stabbing at the government school located at Bhattiyani Chohatta. Members of some Hindu outfits gathered at Madhuban in the city to protest over the stabbing, police said, adding the victim has been admitted in the ICU of the district hospital. His condition is stated to be stable. Police said a mob pelted stones and set three or four cars on fire. As the tension escalated in the evening, markets were shut in Bapu Bazar, Hathipole, Ghanta Ghar, Chetak Circle and nearby areas. Some violent elements also pelted stones at a shopping mall in which the glass gates of the shops were damaged. Hundreds of people gathered outside the government hospital but they were dispersed by the police. Another police official said that force is deployed in almost all areas of the city and all police officers are in the field and keeping an eye on every activity. Divisional Commissioner Rajendra Bhatt, Collector Arvind Poswal, SP Yogesh Goyal, Rajya Sabha MP Chunnilal Garasia, Lok Sabha MP Mannalal Rawat, MLAs Tarachand Jain, Phool Singh Meena and other public representatives held a meeting regarding the situation.

J&K ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Parties welcome EC's poll schedule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar/Jammu, August 16: Political parties across Jammu and Kashmir Friday hailed the Election Commission's announcement of three-phase Assembly elections that will begin September 18 as marking a significant step towards restoring democracy in the region after six years of central rule. National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah expressed gratitude to the Election Commission for expediting the poll process. "Today, I thank God that they are deciding it. Earlier, people were saying that they would decide between the 20th and 25th. I am happy that they have pre-poned it," Farooq Abdullah said. He added that following India's recent Independence Day celebrations, he was hopeful for an end to central rule in Jammu and Kashmir. "This has been an unusually long gap. The last elections were held in 2014 and now, after a decade, we are holding an election." Farooq Abdullah emphasised his party's readiness, recalling its previous push for holding simultaneous elections with the parliamentary polls, which was not granted. He also expressed optimism about a robust voter turnout, stating, "Now, people will come out in large numbers to participate in the elections." Almost all major parties, including the National Conference, Congress, BJP, CPI(M) and the

National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah announced he will lead the party in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections

Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), welcomed the EC's announcement that they believe upholds the Supreme Court's directive mandating elections by September 30. The Assembly polls will be held in three phases September 18, September 25 and October 1, with the counting of votes scheduled for October 4. Omar Abdullah, former chief minister of the erstwhile state, remarked on the long wait for the announcement, saying, "It is better late than never." He noted that this election cycle might be the first since the 1987-88 elections to be conducted within such a condensed time frame. "It obviously will be a new experiment for the political parties. But as far as our party is concerned, the National Conference was prepared for this day and would soon start the electioneering," he added. Omar Abdullah also called on the EC to address the significant transfers within the police and the civil administration in the past 24 hours, voicing concern over potential biases that could favour the BJP, which governs at the Centre.

MVA MEET

Announce CM face first, says Uddhav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 16: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray Friday insisted that MVA decide its Chief Ministerial face first rather than going by the logic of which party wins most seats, asserting he would back any candidate announced by the Congress and NCP (SP). His Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally Sharad Pawar, who heads NCP(SP), did not touch upon the contentious issue but stressed the need for a single-point agenda to change the government in Maharashtra if the situation has to improve in the state. Pawar told the MVA cadres the three partners will take along the Left outfits, Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP) and Samajwadi Party by giving them due respect, and present a united face before the peo-

ple of the state. The Congress too pitched for focussing on unseating the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, with the party's state unit chief Nana Patole saying the leaders of INDIA bloc will decide on who will be the chief minister. Addressing party workers of the Opposition bloc MVA here, Thackeray said if the Lok Sabha polls were to protect democracy and the Constitution, then the Assembly polls are a fight to preserve Maharashtra's self-respect. The meeting virtually kickstarted the poll campaign of the MVA. Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly are likely to be held in October or November. The Sena (UBT) chief insisted the Chief Ministerial candidate must be decided first, rather than by the logic of the party that wins the most seats in the elections.



Women purchase 'rakhis' ahead of Raksha Bandhan festival in Nagpur, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

Hindu religious leader's remarks against Prophet sparks row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati/Nashik, August 16: A controversy erupted Friday over alleged objectionable remarks made by Hindu religious leader Ramgiri Maharaj against Prophet Mohammad and Islam, with police filing cases against him in two districts of Maharashtra following complaints by members of the Muslim community. The remarks were made re-

cently by Ramgiri Maharaj at Shah Panchale village in Sinnar taluka of Nashik district during a religious event and its video went viral on social media, police said. Amid the row over his comments, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde shared the dais with the religious leader during an event in Nashik district Friday, and called him a "saint", while minister Girish Mahajan and for-

mer Ahmednagar MP Sujay Vikhe Patil touched his feet on stage. Speaking at the function, Ramgiri Maharaj, the mahant of Sarla Bet Dham in Shirampur taluka of Ahmednagar district, defended his controversial remarks, saying that they were in response to the atrocities being committed against Hindus in Bangladesh, and that his objective was to unite members of the Hindu community. Speaking to

Marathi news channel ABP Majha on the controversy surrounding his statement earlier in the day, he said, "Hindus should remain alert. I am firm on it and I am ready to face its consequences." All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader Imtiaz Jaleel claimed that Ramgiri Maharaj's comments were part of a political conspiracy and demanded strong action against him.

Can't allow cows to graze on toxic waste: Delhi HC

The Delhi High Court Friday noted that cows cannot be allowed to graze on toxic waste, and that authorities must develop better infrastructure for dairies for the sake of the "next generation"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: The Delhi High Court said Friday that it is concerned about the health of the city residents and that cattle cannot be allowed to graze on toxic waste, which will prevent them from generating healthy milk. The court took strong objection to a residential colony being run in a dairy area and noted that there is huge encroachment and illegal construction in dairy

colonies. "When cows start eating toxic waste, they are not going to generate healthy milk. We are only doing it for the next generation and not for us. If you are aggrieved by the MCD's action (demolition), go to the Appellate Tribunal for MCD." "These people are not concerned with dairies. They are only concerned with their properties. These are all property brokers. This has nothing to do with the health of the citizens of

the city. We are concerned with the health of the citizens of Delhi," a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet P S Arora said. The high court extended till August 23 the interim protection, granted August 9, from demolition to certain individual dairy owners in Bhalswa who are willing to re-locate, subject to them making disclosures in an affidavit in relation to the extent of construction on their respective plots, number of cattle owned etc. As the court refused to grant any protection to others, they sought the liberty to withdraw their implementation applications and approach the Appellate Tribunal for MCD. During the hearing, the



MCD's counsel said they are not taking action against any dairy but against illegal and unauthorised constructions, including showrooms built on dairy land. The court also observed that the next generation should not suffer from life-threatening diseases due to the consumption of degraded milk.

"Cows cannot be allowed to graze on toxic waste and we owe it to the next generation to develop infrastructure for dairies. Our focus is on the health of citizens rather than anything else," the bench said. The court was hearing various applications filed by people claiming to be residents of the Bhalswa Dairy colony and were aggrieved by the authorities' direction of demolition or sealing, which would render them homeless. The applications were filed in a pending petition relating to the poor condition of nine designated dairy colonies in Delhi -- Kakrola Dairy, Goela Dairy, Nangli Shakrawati Dairy, Jharoda Dairy, Bhalswa Dairy, Ghazipur Dairy, Shahbad Daultapur Dairy,

Madanpur Khadar Dairy and Masoodpur Dairy. Earlier, the court had directed the shifting of the Bhalswa dairy colony in view of the "inability" of the statutory authorities, including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the city government, to take action to stop milch cattle from feeding on garbage from the sanitary landfills near the Bhalswa and Ghazipur dairies, as also the removal of all unauthorised constructions from all dairy colonies. In its earlier order, the court had taken note of the "dingy" and "unhygienic" conditions of the dairy units, along with the existence of commercial construction there.

national



Our party did not break in difficult situation. The party will become stronger after Sisodia's arrival. He has become mentally stronger after spending time in jail and so will Kejriwal. AAP is country's future

MOSQUITO TERMINATOR TRAIN

The Delhi Rail Division has started a special train "Mosquito Terminator on Wheels" Friday to prevent the mosquito breeding along the railway tracks, a press statement said



of the day quote

BJP has a talent for doing politics on every incident. BJP has the talent of taking political benefit over every incident and dishonouring others

AKHILESH YADAV | MAHARASHTRA PARTY PRESIDENT

Many leaders of the BJP and its allies will join the Congress in the coming days

NANA PATOLE | MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS PRESIDENT

BRS members in Rajya Sabha too would merge with the BJP, which would facilitate KCR's daughter and MLC K Kavitha to enter the Upper House

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

X POST OF THE DAY

RBI Tightens Rules on Peer To Peer (P2P) Lending Platforms and NBFCs This Will

- Impact Companies Like • Liquiloans • Lenden Club • Lendbox • Faircent • Uni Cards (NDX P2P) • Few Entities Have Violated Regulations

@Ravisutanjani

SHORT TAKES

Delhi L-G writes to Assembly speaker

New Delhi: Lt Governor VK Saxena has flagged the delay in tabling of 11 CAG reports in the Delhi Assembly, saying it was a "clear violation" of constitutional and legal provisions, Raj Niwas officials said Friday. In a letter to Speaker Ram Niwas Goel, the lieutenant governor pointed out that the "lapse" by the Delhi government in laying the pending Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) reports before the assembly amounted to "gross dereliction of their constitutional obligations". The 11 CAG reports on state finances, pollution mitigation, regulation and supply of liquor in Delhi, performance audit report on children in need of care and protection are pending with Delhi Finance Minister Atishi, the officials said.

Manish Sisodia greets Kejriwal on birthday

New Delhi: Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia extended birthday wishes to the jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and said the party supremo has been fighting the "toughest battle against the dictatorship going on in the country". The Aam Aadmi Party will hold a series of events to celebrate Kejriwal's birthday, who turned 56 Friday. AAP workers gathered outside Tihar and cut a cake to mark his birthday.

Prashant takes on RJD

Patna: Prashant Kishor, the chief of Jan Suraj, who is looking to establish himself as another political force in Bihar ahead of the 2025 Assembly elections in the state, criticised the RJD and its leader Tejashwi Yadav Friday for stating that the ace poll strategist-turned-politician was offering financial incentives to involve its people in his campaign.

RG KAR HOSPITAL VANDALISM

Absolute failure of state machinery: HC

A group of people, posing as protesters, entered the hospital and vandalised the emergency department, nursing station, and medicine store, while also damaging CCTV cameras

AGENCIES

Kolkata, August 16: Observing that the mob violence in R G Kar Medical College and Hospital was an absolute failure of state machinery, the Calcutta High Court Friday directed the police and the hospital authority to file affidavits on the situation there.

A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam said it was hard to believe that the police intelligence did not have information about the gathering of 7,000 people, when the state's lawyer told the court that a mob of such a number had assembled at the hospital in the early hours of Thursday.

After knowing that there was some renovation work on one floor of the hospital after the body of a woman doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered, was found, the Chief Justice said the court can order closing down the medical establishment. The bench directed the police and the administrator of the hospital to file separate affidavits narrating the "true state of affairs" at the hospital and all connected matters August 21 when the matter will be heard again. The court, also comprising Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya, said that the police should place on record the entire sequence of events that led to the vandalism in the hospital. The mob also ransacked a stage where junior doctors had



Attempts on to hide truth: Mamata

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday accused the opposition CPI(M) and the BJP of orchestrating vandalism at RG Kar hospital and attempting to obscure the truth behind the rape and murder of a woman doctor by spreading fake news on social media. Reiterating her demand for capital punishment for the culprits involved in the crime, Banerjee commended the Kolkata Police for their investigation, which was later transferred to the CBI by the Calcutta High Court. She also urged the Central Bureau of Investigation to resolve the case by Sunday and demanded that the culprits be hanged.

been demonstrating since August 9. The body of a woman post-graduate trainee, who was allegedly raped and murdered, was found in the seminar hall of the RG Kar Hospital on that day. The CBI was also directed by the court to file an interim report about the progress of its investigation into "rape and murder" of the medic, which led to a cease-work by junior doctors in different government hospitals in the state demanding exemplary punishment to the culprits and security at the workplace. Stating that the

attack in the hospital was pre-planned and people were brought in lorries, in a bid to destroy the place of occurrence of the crime. The Chief Justice said that there is always an intelligence wing of the police and it should have had information about a huge mob gathering there. The court said that it was "an absolute failure of state machinery." The court observed that it was a "sorry state of affairs" if the police force could not protect their own men.

Colleagues involved in crime, parents tell CBI

KOLKATA: The parents of the doctor, who was allegedly raped-murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last week, told the CBI that several interns and physicians from the hospital might be involved in the crime, an officer said Friday. The parents also provided the central agency, which is investigating the case under an order from the Calcutta High Court, with the names of persons they suspect to be involved in their daughter's murder at the state-run hospital. "The parents told us that they suspect the involvement of multiple persons behind the sexual assault and murder of their daughter. They have given names of a few interns and doctors who worked with her at the hospital," the CBI officer said.

Sources: Low risk of Mpox surge in India at present

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: The risk for an upsurge of Mpox, once known as monkeypox, infection is very low in India at the moment and there is no need to panic, sources in the health ministry said in the wake of WHO declaring the disease a public health emergency of international concern.

Official sources said the last case of monkeypox in India was reported from Kerala in March this year. According to official data, 30 laboratory confirmed cases of monkeypox since 2022 have been reported in India since 2022.

The health ministry might write to points of entry such as airports, seaports to be alert and vigilant and deal with suspected cases of monkeypox as per the guidelines in terms of isolation and treatment, an official source told PTI. "At the moment, the risk of a surge in monkeypox infection is very low in India and there is no need to panic," the official source said.

Union Health Minister J P Nadda is likely to hold a meet-



ing with officials from the ministry, NCDC and ICMR Saturday.

On Wednesday, the WHO said the upsurge of Mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).

This is the second time the viral infection has been designated as PHEIC. According to WHO, monkeypox is a viral zoonosis - a virus transmitted to humans from animals - with symptoms similar to smallpox, though clinically less severe.

Monkeypox typically manifests itself with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications.

Cabinet clears airport projects worth ₹ 2,962cr in WB, Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: Continuing with its push for infrastructure development, the Union Cabinet Friday approved airport projects at Bagdogra in West Bengal and Bihta in Bihar for an estimated total cost of ₹2,962 crore.

At a briefing in the national capital, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said a new civil enclave will be developed at Bagdogra airport at a cost of ₹1,549 crore, besides a new civil enclave at Bihta for ₹1,413 crore.

The decisions were taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As part of the new civil enclave at Bagdogra airport, the proposed terminal building will span 70,390 square metres and will be able to accommodate 3,000 peak hour passengers (PHP), with an annual capacity to handle 10 million passengers, an official release said. An apron will

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said a new civil enclave will be developed at Bagdogra airport at a cost of ₹1,549 crore, besides a new civil enclave at Bihta for ₹1,413 crore

be constructed that can accommodate 10 parking bays suitable for A-321-type aircraft, two link taxiways and multi-level car parking.

The project is poised to significantly enhance the airport's operational efficiency and passenger experience, reinforcing its role as a pivotal air travel hub for the region, the release added.

Besides, the new civil enclave will be developed at a cost of ₹1,413 crore in Bihta. "This infrastructure project represents

a strategic move to address the anticipated saturation of capacity at Patna airport. While Airports Authority of India (AAI) is already in the process of constructing a new terminal building at Patna airport, further expansion is constrained by limited land availability," another official release said. The new integrated terminal building at Bihta will span 66,000 sqm and will be able to handle 3,000 peak-hour passengers and annually cater to 50 lakh passengers. The capacity will be further expanded by 50 lakh whenever it is required, and the ultimate capacity would be 1 crore passengers per annum.

"Key components of the project include the construction of an apron capable of accommodating 10 parking bays suitable for A-321/B-737-800/A-320 type aircraft, as well as two link taxiways," the release said.

Currently, there are 157 operational airports in India, which is one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets.

Centre effects major bureaucratic reshuffle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: Senior bureaucrat Punya Salila Srivastava has been appointed as the new Health Secretary as part of a major top-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre Friday.

Srivastava, who is currently Special Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, will initially take over as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Department of Health and Family Welfare, according to a Personnel Ministry order. She will take over as the Health Secretary after incumbent Apurva Chandra superannuates September 30, it said.

Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary for Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, has been named as new Defence Secretary.

He will initially take over as the OSD in the Ministry before assuming the post of the Defence Secretary following superannuation of incumbent Aramane Giridhar October 31, 2024.

Minority Affairs Secretary Katikithala Srinivas to be next Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary.

'High rates of mental health conditions among medics'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: Nearly 28 per cent of UG and 15.3 per cent of PG medical students reported having been diagnosed with mental health conditions, according to an online survey conducted by a National Medical Commission (NMC) task force.

The survey, which included 25,590 undergraduate students, 5,337 postgraduate students, and 7,035 faculty members recommended that resident doctors work no more than 74 hours per week, get a weekly one-day off and seven-eight hours of daily sleep.

Thoughts of self-harm or suicide in the last 12 months were reported by 16.2 per cent MBBS students while the number was recorded at 31 per cent in MD/MS students, according to the report by the National Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students.

Regarding adequate knowledge and skills for managing



SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY IS AN ISSUE FOR MANY, AS 8,265 (32.3 PER CENT) FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE OR MAINTAIN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND 6,089 (23.8 PER CENT) FIND IT 'SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT'

stress, 36.4 per cent reported that they feel lack of knowledge and skills to manage stress. Faculty or mentors are seen as extremely unsupportive by 18.2 per cent.

According to the survey, the majority of students (56.6 per cent), find their academic workload manageable but heavy, while 20.7 per cent consider it too heavy, and only 1.5 per cent find it light or too light, the survey showed.

Balancing academic work with

what inaccessible by 18.6 per cent students and the quality of these services is perceived as very poor or poor by 18.8 per cent.

The analysis of ragging and stress-related parameters for 25,590 undergraduate medical students provides significant insights into their experiences and stress levels.

A majority (76.8 per cent), reported not experiencing or witnessing any form of ragging or harassment, while 9.7 per cent reported such experiences.

Regarding institutional measures, 17,932 (70.1 per cent) students believe their college has adequate measures to prevent and address ragging, while 3,618 (14.1 per cent) disagree, and 4,040 (15.8 per cent) are unsure, the survey showed.

As for PG students, regarding academic stress, 20 per cent students admitted that they find the current academic workload frequently challenging, 9.5 per cent too intense, while 32 per

cent reported manageable academic stress levels.

Close to half the PG students (45 per cent) revealed working for more than 60 hours a week with more than 56 per cent not getting their weekly offs.

A significant number of PG students - 18 per cent - reported that ragging was still there and hurt them, the task force said underlining "this underscores the ongoing issue of ragging within some academic environments".

It said 1425 (27 per cent) reported experiencing harassment from senior PG students in clinical settings, while 1669 (31 per cent) reported similar experiences from faculty and senior resident doctors. Awareness regarding anti-ragging regulations is relatively high (84 per cent), but there is still a significant minority (nearly 20 per cent) unaware of these regulations, which suggests the need for increased education and communication efforts, the task force said.

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Tragic drownings claim lives of six children

Deoghar/Garhwa (Jharkhand): The bodies of six children were recovered from water bodies in Jharkhand's Deoghar and Garhwa districts Friday, police said. Three children drowned in a pond in Deoghar this morning. According to Deoghar Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Ritvik Shrivastava, the bodies of the children, aged eight and nine, were found in a pond in Dodia village in Sonaraitari police station area. Their parents said the kids were missing since Thursday and after they failed to trace them, they lodged a complaint with police. Another three children drowned in a dam in Jharkhand's Garhwa district Friday afternoon, police said. Sub-divisional Police Officer of Banshidhar Nagar Untari, Satyendra Narayan Singh said the bodies were recovered from Babhani Khand Dam in Banshidhar Nagar Panchayat area. The SDPO said that according to family members, the children left their houses around 11 am. When they did not reach home till 2 pm, the family members along with police started searching for them, he said.

international

of the day quote

India is an important partner when it comes to the Indo-Pacific and much of the NDS (National Defense Strategy) that continues to guide

SABRINA SINGH | PENTAGON DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY, US

Given the presence of Ukrainian armed formations in the border areas, there is a high probability of preparing and carrying out armed provocations on our territory

VIKTOR KHRENNIN | DEFENCE MINISTER, BELARUS

The transition ahead presents a historic opportunity to reform and revitalize the country's institutions, to restore fundamental freedoms and civic space, and to give all in Bangladesh a part in building the future

VOLKER TURK | UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Third murder case against Hasina

Dhaka: A murder case was filed against Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Friday over the death of a teacher, the latest in the string of cases filed against her after her ouster. The case was filed against Hasina and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader in Bogura. Hasina, 76, fled to India August 5 after she was forced to resign following a massive protest by students against a quota system in government jobs. Ninety-nine other local leaders and activists of her party were also sued in the case August 4.

Macron set to name new PM

Paris: President Emmanuel Macron has invited party leaders from France's two parliamentary chambers for talks August 23 with a view to appointing a new premier, his office said Friday. After a surprise July 7 election delivered a hung Parliament and a blow to Macron's centrist coalition, outgoing Prime Minister Gabriel Attal's government steered France through the Paris Olympics in a caretaker role. With a political truce in place for the Games, Macron had aimed to name a prime minister by mid-August.

Uganda landslide: Toll rises to 35

Kampala: The number of people killed when a mountain of garbage collapsed in Uganda's capital last week has risen to 35, 12 of whom were young people, police said Friday. At least 28 others are still missing. The accident occurred late last Friday, when a large chunk broke off the mound of trash at the Kiteezi landfill on the northern outskirts of Kampala. Dozens of homes near the dump were buried while residents slept.

Gunmen kidnap 20 students in Nigeria

Maiduguri: At least 20 students travelling for a convention were kidnapped by gunmen in Nigeria's north-central state of Benuue, the police said Friday, the latest in a spate of abductions in Africa's most populous country. Armed gangs have been causing havoc in northern Nigeria, where they kidnap villagers, students and motorists for ransom, with security forces unable to end the practice.



As far as the personal attacks (against Harris), I'm very angry at her because of what she's done to the country. I'm very angry at her that she weaponised the justice system against me and other people

DONALD TRUMP | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

BLINKEN TO VISIT ISRAEL

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will arrive in Israel Sunday for a visit to the country, an Axios reporter said on X Friday, citing Israeli officials



GLOBAL EMERGENCY

Mpox enters Asia via Pak

The World Health Organization has declared that an outbreak of mpox, a viral infection that spreads through close contact, represents a global health emergency for the second time in two years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 16: Pakistan's health ministry said Friday it has identified the first case of a new mpox variant that might be more easily transmitted, days after the World Health Organization declared the spread of mpox a global health emergency.

However confusion prevailed in Pakistan over the number of confirmed mpox cases in the county, as a federal government official confirmed only one patient with the disease, contradicting the three cases reported by provincial officials.

Health Ministry spokesperson Sajid Shah said the sole confirmed patient, found to have the mpox virus, belonged to the Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. However, Shah said, it was not clear so far which variant of mpox the patient had until the testing process was complete.



WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Scientists hope that the emergency declarations will speed up efforts to get more medical tools and funding to Congo to help the authorities there tackle the outbreak. Better surveillance is needed to study the virus and help stop the spread. But in 2022, a WHO appeal for \$34 million to fight mpox got no take-up from donors, and there was huge inequity in who had access to vaccine doses. Two years later that remains the case, although there are efforts to change that, the WHO said on Wednesday as it appealed for dose donations from countries with stockpiles.

It is not yet clear which strain of mpox the said patient con-

HOW WORRIED SHOULD ONE BE?

Fatality rates vary, and depend heavily on the healthcare available to the sickest patients. In Congo in this outbreak, the rate across both clade I and clade Ib has been around 4%. Clade II, which spread globally, was much less deadly. However, mpox is not Covid-19. There are tools that are proven to work to stop the spread and help those at risk, and it does not spread as easily. The challenge now, which the emergency declarations aim to highlight, is making sure those tools reach those who need them most, in Congo and neighbouring countries.

tracted and whether it is the same variant that was first con-

firmed outside of Africa in Sweden.

"Contact tracing of the affected person has been started and samples of more people are being obtained," the spokesman said. Pakistan's Ministry of Health also issued an advisory on the disease Thursday, which states that "the screening system at airports and entry points is being further strengthened."

Prime Minister's Coordinator for Health Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath says that federal hospitals have been instructed to take precautionary measures and the Ministry of Health and Border Health Services are "alert to deal with any kind of situation."

The WHO declared the outbreak of mpox in parts of Africa as a cause of international concern and a threat to public health.

The highly contagious disease, formerly known as 'monkeypox', killed at least 450 people in the Republic of Congo. It is caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same group of viruses as smallpox but is less harmful.

The virus was originally transmitted from animals to humans, but now it is also transmitted from humans to humans.

It is a viral infection that causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions, and while usually mild, it can kill.

European CDC raises mpox risk alert level

Frosunda: The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) raised its risk alert level for mpox Friday, and asked countries to maintain high levels of awareness among travellers visiting from affected areas. The agency said it now sees a "moderate" risk of mpox, compared to "low" earlier, for the broader population and travellers. It added that the likelihood of sustained transmission in Europe remained very low, provided the imported cases are diagnosed quickly and control measures implemented. The current outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo began with the spread of an endemic strain, known as clade I. But a new variant, clade Ib, appears to spread more easily through routine close contact, including sexual contact. "Due to the close links between Europe and Africa, we must be prepared for more imported clade I cases," said the agency's director, Pamela Rendi Wagner. The European CDC recommended that public health authorities plan and prepare for quick detection of any clade I cases that may reach Europe.

Children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV, are all at higher risk of complications.

Turkish MPs brawl over jailed Oppn lawmaker

The jailed MP, Atalay, was sentenced to 18 years in 2022 after being accused of trying to overthrow the government by allegedly organising the nationwide protests in 2013

REUTERS

Ankara, August 16: A fistfight broke out in Turkey's Parliament Friday when an Opposition deputy was attacked after calling for his colleague, jailed on charges of organising anti-government protests but since elected an MP, to be admitted to the assembly.

Video footage showed MPs for the ruling AKP party rushing in to punch Ahmet Sik at the lectern and dozens more joining a melee, some trying to hold others back. Blood spattered the white steps of the speaker's podium.

Atalay was sentenced to 18 years in 2022 after being accused of trying to overthrow the government by allegedly organising the nationwide Gezi Park protests in 2013 with philanthropist Osman Kavala, also now jailed, and six others. All deny the charges.

Despite his imprisonment, Atalay was elected to Parliament in May last year to represent the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP). Parliament stripped him of his seat, but August 1 the Constitutional Court declared his exclusion null and void. "We're not surprised that you



call Can Atalay a terrorist, just as you do everyone who does not side with you," Sik told AKP lawmakers in a speech.

"But the biggest terrorists are the ones sitting in these seats," he added. The deputy Parliament speaker declared a 45-minute recess after the fistfight.

The TIP also called for Atalay's release from prison. Though not often, brawls are not unheard-of in Turkish Parliament. In June, AKP lawmakers scuffled with pro-Kurdish DEM Party MPs over the detention and replacement of a DEM Party mayor in southeast Turkey for alleged militant links.

THAI PARL ELECTS YOUNGEST PM

REUTERS

Bangkok, August 16: Thailand's Parliament elected political neophyte Paetongtarn Shinawatra as its youngest prime minister Friday, only a day after she was thrust into the spotlight amid an unrelenting power struggle between the country's warring elites.

The 37-year-old daughter of divisive political heavyweight Thaksin Shinawatra sailed through a house vote and now faces a baptism of fire, just two



days after ally Srettha Thavasin was dismissed as premier by a judiciary central to Thailand's two decades of intermittent turmoil.

At stake for Paetongtarn could be the legacy and political future

of the billionaire Shinawatra family, whose once unstoppable populist juggernaut suffered its first election defeat in over two decades last year; and had to do a deal with its bitter enemies in the military to form a government. She will become Thailand's second female Prime Minister and the third Shinawatra to take the top job.

"I talked to Srettha, my family and people in my party and decided it was about time to do something for the country and the party," she told reporters.



MANY HUED CARPET: A 1,680-square-metre 'Art Nouveau' theme flower carpet, made by a team of about 100 gardeners using hundreds of thousands of dahlias and begonias, is seen at Brussels' Grand Place in Belgium.

Indian ensemble at Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

The Edinburgh Tattoo hosts over 200,000 visitors across 27 shows through a three-week showcase and is broadcast by the BBC to a viewership of over 18 million people across its television, radio, and digital platforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Edinburgh, August 16: The soul-stirring music of the Rajasthani bagpipers, an all-female Bhangra group from Punjab, and traditional Chhau dancers from West Bengal have added a touch of colourful Indian traditions and culture at the ongoing Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Announcing the fifth year of its collaboration with the Edinburgh Tattoo, one of The Edinburgh Festivals, production company Teamwork Arts said that it is "not just a performance, it is a celebration of cultural exchange, artistic excellence, and the journey of unity through diversity".

The Edinburgh Tattoo hosts over 200,000 visitors across 27 shows through a three-week showcase and is broadcast by the BBC to a viewership of over 18 million people across its television, radio, and digital platforms.

"In a showstopping extravaganza of energy and excitement, this performance is bright, bold and exciting from start to finish. Combining the traditional exuberance of Bollywood with powerful Bhangra folk dances, and the sounds of an Indian Rajasthani piper and folk mu-



sicians, we are thrilled to see Teamwork Arts from India illuminate Edinburgh Castle's Esplanade as they connect Scotland and India," Michael Braithwaite, creative director, The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, said in a statement. The eclectic programme opens

with the Rajasthani bagpipers, led by Shyopat Julia, who is known for blending traditional Rajasthani folk sounds with the distinct rhythm of bagpipes, joined by his son, Jekin, a master of the dhol.

An all-female Bhangra group, dressed in colourful Patiala suits,

execute energetic kicks, leaps, and body-bends to the syncopated rhythm of the dhol.

One segment in the programme features the glamour and grandeur of Bollywood. Choreographed by international performer-choreographer Gilles Chuyen, featuring elaborate costumes, the show will offer a glimpse of Bollywood dance, which draws from traditional Indian styles like Kathak and Bharatanatyam and has evolved to include elements from jazz, hip-hop, and contemporary dance.

Traditional Chhau dancers from West Bengal also take the stage. Led by Umesh Bisht, these dancers don large Purlia-style masks and costumes in hues of yellow and red, bringing their powerful, martial movements to life.

Teamwork Arts has been at the forefront of this association

UKRAINE SENDS AID TO RUSSIA'S KURSK REGION



REUTERS

Kyiv, August 16: Ukraine has set up storage facilities in its northern region of Sumy to hold and send humanitarian aid to Russian civilians in the Kyiv-held part of Russia's western region of Kursk, the interior minister said Friday.

Ukraine has said it has taken control of 82 settlements over an area of 1,150 square kilometres in the region after it launched a major cross-border attack August 6.

"The citizens abandoned by Russia are mostly elderly people, people with disabilities, and families with children. They need food, water and medicine," Minister Ihor Klymenko said on the Telegram messaging app.

He didn't specify how many of the storage facilities had been set up, or where they are, but a video posted on the ministry's Telegram account showed a large inflatable tent and Ukrainian military personnel carrying parcels and packing food.

During a trip to the Sumy region, which borders Russia's Kursk region, Klymenko said about 150 food parcels had been sent to civilians in the area.

Kyiv officials have said they plan to create evacuation corridors from the Kursk region and to open access to international humanitarian missions.

Russia has called the Ukrainian incursion a "major provocation" and vowed to retaliate with a "worthy response", more than 2-1/2 years since it launched a full-scale invasion of its smaller neighbour.

business

of the day quote

NBFCs have been grappling with gold prices, which have declined after the reduction in customs duty announced in the full Union Budget for this fiscal

MALVIKA BHOTIKA | DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

India has agreed to a zero tariff on unlimited quantities of platinum from Dubai, with the tariff set to decrease from 5 per cent today to zero by 2026 and this is a major concern for India because, according to WCO classification rules, any metal with just 2 per cent platinum can be classified as platinum

AJAY SAHAJ | FOUNDER, GTRI

Game development is on the rise in India which has about 500 million gamers. PM Modi's Independence Day push for the industry has come at the right time. It is a big motivation for young people who want to build their career in gaming

VISHAL PAREKH | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, CYBERPOWERPC

SHORT TAKES

Forex kitty plunges

Mumbai: India's forex reserves dropped by \$4.8 billion to \$670.119 billion for the week ended August 9, the Reserve Bank of India said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the kitty jumped by \$7.533 billion to an all-time high of \$674.919 billion. For the week ended August 9, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$4.079 billion to \$587.96 billion, the data released Friday showed. Gold reserves declined by \$860 million to \$59.239 billion during the week, the RBI said.

SBI ups lending rate

New Delhi: State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender, has raised the Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (0.1 percentage point), across tenors, making most of the consumer loans costlier. This is the third time in a row that the bank has increased MCLR. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans such as auto and personal, is now pegged higher at 8.95 per cent against the earlier rate of 8.85 per cent. The three-year MCLR is 9.10 per cent, while the two-year is now 9.05 per cent, up 10 basis points.

IPO frenzy to take over stock market

25 INDIAN COMPANIES GEAR UP TO LAUNCH IPOs WORTH ₹22,000 CRORE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 16: The initial public offering (IPO) season has warmed up and at least 25 companies, already approved by the market regulator SEBI, are planning to enter the market to raise about ₹22,000 crore in the coming few weeks, analysts said Friday.

Despite the ups and downs in global stock markets, the Indian primary market continues to be robust, they said.

In the first week of August, four companies launched IPOs worth over ₹11,850 crore, and they were all successful, according to Pantomath Capital Advisors.



In the first week of August, four firms launched IPOs worth over ₹11,850 crore, and they were all successful

"India's IPO success story is taking shape amid global economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions. Whether the country can keep up this momentum, amidst the global challenges, will depend on several factors, including economic growth, the regulatory landscape, and global market trends," the analysts noted.

Ola Electric Mobility shares saw a rally and were locked in the upper circuit of 20 per cent at ₹133.08 Friday, its new high.

The stock of Brainbees Solutions, the parent company of FirstCry, listed at ₹651 against the IPO price of ₹465, a premium of 40 per cent. While on the BSE it started trade at ₹625, a premium of over

34 per cent. Meanwhile, the Indian market is consolidating in narrow range for short term. On economic data front, the WPI for the month of July cooled in July on low food prices and primary articles.

According to market watchers, SIP contributions reaching an all-time high of ₹23,331.75 crores in July against ₹21,262 crore in June reflects the growing financial discipline among retail investors, helping them build wealth systematically over time.

Such kind of strong inflow is long-term positive for Indian equity markets. India's forex reserve stood around \$674.9 billion in the first week of August.

Indices jump to two-week high

EASING US RECESSION FEARS, RATE CUT HOPES BOOST INVESTORS' OPTIMISM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 16: Benchmark Sensex spurted by 1,330 points to close at a two-week high while Nifty jumped 397 points to settle above the 24,500 level Friday as easing fears of a recession in the US triggered buying in IT shares amid a sharp global stocks rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months. During the day, it zoomed 1,412.33 points or 1.78 per cent to 80,518.21.

The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15. As many as 47 Nifty shares closed in green while three closed in red.

From Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, ICICI Bank and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard. "The stability of the Japanese Yen has been instrumental in driving a global market recovery. Besides that, the strong US retail sales and a decline in weekly jobless claims have helped alleviate fears of a US recession. Further, the market sentiment has improved due to a decrease in US CPI inflation. On the backdrop of these, the Indian IT firms exhibited strong buying interest," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled significantly higher.

European markets were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended with sharp gains Thursday.

"The Indian frontline indices traded significantly higher today, mirroring the positive global market sentiment. The gains in the market were broad-based as the midcap and smallcap indices also moved higher. This upbeat market mood was primarily driven by reduced volatility, which stemmed from increased expectations of a US rate cut in September," Avdhut Bagkar, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, StoxBox, said.

On weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 730.93 points or 0.91%, the Nifty climbed 173.65 points or 0.71%

Investors' wealth soared by ₹7.30 lakh crore Friday, driven by a rally in equities, where benchmark Sensex jumped nearly 2 per cent amid easing fears of recession in the US. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged ₹7,30,389.86 crore to ₹4,51,59,833.55 crore (\$5.38 trillion).

Investors richer by ₹7.30 lakh cr

Investors' wealth soared by ₹7.30 lakh crore Friday, driven by a rally in equities, where benchmark Sensex jumped nearly 2 per cent amid easing fears of recession in the US. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged ₹7,30,389.86 crore to ₹4,51,59,833.55 crore (\$5.38 trillion).

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.80 per cent and smallcap index climbed 1.70 per cent.

All indices ended higher. IT index soared 2.72 per cent and realty jumped 2.45 per cent. Teck (2.23 per cent), auto (1.90 per cent), commodities (1.89 per cent), power (1.80 per cent), financial services (1.77 per cent) and consumer discretionary (1.74 per cent) also closed higher.

A total of 2,462 stocks advanced while 1,467 declined and 107 remained unchanged on the BSE.

SEBI chief in soup

BUCH FACES ALLEGATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST OVER CONSULTANCY EARNINGS

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 16: The head of India's markets regulator, Madhabi Puri Buch, continued to earn revenue from a consultancy firm during her seven-year tenure, potentially breaching rules for regulatory officials, according to public documents reviewed by Reuters.

Hindenburg Research has alleged a conflict of interest in Buch's investigations surrounding the Adani Group due to her previous investments. The allegations against the Gautam Adani-led conglomerate, made in January last year, triggered a big drop in the share prices of the flagship Adani Enterprises and other group firms which later recovered, prompting an ongoing investigation by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Buch, in a statement August 11, denied allegations of a conflict of interest and termed them as an attempt at "character assassination". Separately, the US shortseller, in its latest report, highlighted two consultancy firms operated by Buch and her husband - Singapore-based Agora Partners and India-based Agora Advisory.

Buch joined SEBI in 2017 and was appointed to the top position in March 2022. In those seven years, Agora Advisory Pvt Ltd in which Buch has 99% shareholding, earned a revenue of ₹37.1 million (\$442,025), according to public documents from the Registrar of Companies, analysed by Reuters.

Buch's holdings potentially violate a 2008 SEBI policy that prohibits officials from holding an office of profit, receiving salary or professional fees from other professional activities.

Buch in her statement said the consultancy firms had been



There was no justification for her to continue to own the firm after she joined the board. She could not have been allowed even after making disclosures

SUBHASH CHANDRA GARG | FORMER SEBI BOARD MEMBER

disclosed to SEBI and that her husband used these firms for his consulting business after retiring from Unilever in 2019.

Buch and the SEBI spokesperson did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

Hindenburg, citing Singapore company records, stated that Buch transferred all her shares in Agora Partners to her husband in March 2022. However, according to company records for the financial year ending March 2024, Buch still holds shares in the Indian consulting firm.

The documents, reviewed by Reuters, do not detail the business undertaken by the consultancy nor is there any available information to suggest these revenues had any link to the Adani Group.

Subhash Chandra Garg, a former top bureaucrat in the Indian government and a SEBI board member during Buch's tenure, described her equity in the firm and its continued business operations as a "very serious" breach of conduct.

"There was no justification for her to continue to own the firm after she joined the board. She could not have been allowed even after making disclosures," Garg said.

"This makes her position completely untenable at the regulator," Buch has not clarified whether she was granted a waiver to retain her shareholding in the Indian consulting firm. A specific query to her on this was also not answered.

Hindenburg's allegations have led to calls for Buch's resignation, including from opposition leaders. A spokesperson for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) called it a baseless attack.

According to Garg and a SEBI board member, no disclosures were made by her or any other officials to the board regarding their business interests.

"There was a requirement to make annual disclosures, but board members' disclosures were not placed in front of the board for information or scrutiny," the board member said, who declined to be identified as information on disclosures to the board is not public.

"To be sure, no members' disclosures were discussed. If the disclosures were made only in front of Ajay Tyagi, the then chairperson, I am not privy to that," Garg said.

Messages and calls to Tyagi about whether disclosures were made to him were not answered.

RBI tightens rules for P2P lenders

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 16: India's central bank Friday tightened norms for peer-to-peer (P2P) lending platforms as some of these entities have violated regulations.

P2P lending sidesteps banks and financial institutions by connecting individual lenders with borrowers.

Such platforms shall not assume any credit risk arising out of transactions, provide credit enhancement or guarantee, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement.

The entire loss of principal or interest or both, if any, in respect of funds lent will be borne by the lenders, the central bank said.

The RBI has been intensifying their scrutiny of rapidly-growing consumer finance services, including P2P lending, to prevent systemic risks and protect consumer interest.

Reuters had reported in December that the RBI had asked P2P lending platforms to halt certain activities after inspections found rule violations and misleading sales practices.

P2P platforms will not cross sell any insurance product in nature of credit enhancement or credit guarantee, the RBI said.

They are also not permitted to promote peer to peer lending as an investment product and should make disclosures pertaining to losses borne by the lenders on principal or interest or both.

The platforms shall not utilize funds of a lender for the replacement of any other lender, the RBI said. The revised norms come into effect immediately, the central bank said.

Ola makes foray into electric motorcycle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Krishnagiri, August 16: Ride-hailing to electric mobility player Ola Group Thursday announced its foray into the electric motorcycle segment with the launch of three models and two more in the pipeline.

The e-motorcycle launch is set to intensify competition in the world's second-largest two-wheeler market, where Ola Electric will face off with bigger rivals like Bajaj Auto, TVS Motor and Hero Motocorp.

The group has also rebranded its ride-hailing service as Ola Consumer, announced a partnership with ONDC and launched automated warehousing solutions to cater to quick commerce requirements. Besides, Ola said it will bring to the market the first indigenously designed and developed family of chips for AI, general computing and Edge by 2026 under its Krutrim venture.

Speaking at Sankalp 2024 - Ola's annual launch event, Ola Founder Bhavish Aggarwal said currently, two-thirds of India's two-wheeler market consists of

Coupled with the integration of our cells in our vehicles starting early next year, we are determined to chart a new course for mass EV adoption across India

BHAVISH AGGARWAL | FOUNDER, OLA

motorcycles, and it was imperative for the company to enter the segment.

"We have already been successful in accelerating the EV adoption in the scooter segment, and with our futuristic portfolio of products, we are now focused on supercharging the EV penetration through our motorcycles," he said.

Aggarwal also said Ola's indigenously developed 'Bharat 4680' cell and battery pack will be integrated with its own vehicles starting Q1 FY26. The company so showcased its all-new Gen-3 plat-

Iconic BSA debuts in India

Mumbai: Mahindra Group-owned iconic motorcycle brand BSA made its debut in India Thursday with the launch of 652-cc Gold Star 650 model at a starting price of ₹2.99 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). One of the oldest motorcycle companies in the world, Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA), was acquired by the Mahindra group's premium motorcycles arm Classic Legends in 2016. Classic Legends sells Jawa and Yezdi motorcycles in the country. The BSA Gold Star 650, which made a comeback in the UK in 2021, is currently being sold in Europe, Turkey, New Zealand, and the Philippines.

The latest bike will compete with the Royal Enfield Interceptor 650, which starts at ₹3.03 lakh, positioning itself as a strong contender in the 650cc segment. "Bringing BSA to India is about sharing a piece of world motorcycling history with India. That indomitable spirit of BSA, a brand built in the fires of battle, is imbued in the new Gold Star," said Anand Mahindra, Chairman of Mahindra Group at the launch. Stating that India is certainly on the rise and its time has come, he said, "There is enormous change and potential. We are like an oasis of growth, the fastest growing large economy in the world."

form for two-wheelers. Ola Electric's bike portfolio under the Roadster range comprises Roaster X, Roadster, and Roadster Pro with prices starting at ₹74,999, ₹1,04,999, and ₹1,99,999 respectively. Deliveries of these bikes will begin from Q4FY25



onwards. Roadster Pro delivery will begin in Q4FY26. The company also teased two new motorcycles.

Aggarwal said India is one of the fastest-growing digital economies and the company is stepping up efforts to provide consumer access to the best products and services without barriers of traditional commerce.

Ola also plans to deploy 1 lakh 2W EVs throughout the next two years.

Grand homecoming for Rohidas

ONLY HOCKEY PLAYER FROM ODISHA TO HAVE WON BACK-TO-BACK OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALS



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: The Indian men's hockey team's star defender Amit Rohidas returned to Odisha today after a record-extending Olympic campaign.

With a bronze medal win in Paris, the Indian men's hockey team claimed back-to-back medals for the first time since the 1972 Olympics in Munich and attained their 13th overall Olympic medal. He has played an instrumental role in India's historic Bronze medal feat in Paris 2024 Olympics.

The 31-year-old defensive mainstay, Amit who hails from Sundargarh, returned home to a rousing welcome at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar. He was received

by the senior officials of the Sports & Youth Services Department, Hockey Association of Odisha, hockey players, media and fans. The atmosphere was filled with pride and jubilation as the crowd celebrated this momentous occasion, recognising his contribution to Indian Hockey.

"Returning home to such a warm and rousing welcome is truly overwhelming. The love and support from everyone in Odisha has always pushed me to do more. This victory is not just ours; it belongs to each and every one of you who stood by the team. Thank you for making this homecoming so special," said the hockey star.

Thereafter he interacted with the Sports Secretary Bhaskar Sarma at the Kalinga Stadium

who not only congratulated him for his major achievement but also exchanged ideas on how to elevate hockey within the state and nurture more players who could be represent Odisha in the

national teams. The sports hostel and hockey high performance centre students had a fan-boy moment with Amit at the very turf where they had enjoyed several of his thrilling matches.

Felicitations by CM

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday felicitated Olympian hockey player Amit Rohidas upon his return to the state. "Amit is the pride of Odisha. He has brought laurels for both India and Odisha. We are hopeful that the Indian hockey team will win gold in the next Olympics," Majhi said. The Odisha government had earlier announced it will continue sponsorship to the Indian hockey team till 2036, as well as payment of ₹4 crore to Rohidas. Rohidas was the only Odia player to be included in the bronze medal-winning Indian team at the Olympics. The Odisha government has also announced ₹15 lakh each to players of the Indian hockey team who were a part of the Olympics, and ₹10 lakh for the support staff.



SHORT TAKES

Disappointing start

Irvine: India's Aditi Ashok opened with a disappointing round of nine-over 81 on the opening day of the Women's Scottish Open here Friday. At tied 128th, she virtually put herself out of the competition for the weekend as the projected cut was 2-over. Aditi, coming into Scotland straight from the Paris Olympics, had seven bogeys, a double bogey and no birdies for a 9-over. India's other Olympic star, Diksha Dagar, pulled out of the event to recover from a niggle and also to take some rest. Australia's Minjee Lee fired a round of 67 (-5) to sit at the top of the leaderboard as the first round was suspended due to weather.

Smith eyes IPL return

Sydney: Bolstered by his strong show at the Major League Cricket, veteran Australian batter Steve Smith is hopeful of making a return in the Indian Premier League next year. The 35-year-old, who was ignored for the T20 World Cup and the upcoming tour of Scotland and England, guided the Washington Freedom to their maiden MLC title, finishing the T20 tournament as the franchise's equal leading run-scorer with 336 runs at a strike rate of 148.67. "I'd certainly love another opportunity at IPL. I'll be throwing my name in the hat, and we'll see how we go," Smith was quoted as saying by FOX Cricket. Smith has not featured in the IPL since 2021, having gone unsold in the previous two auctions.

Mohun Bagan fixtures

New Delhi: Indian club Mohun Bagan Super Giant were Friday drawn alongside Al-Wakrah SC of Qatar, Iran's Tractor FC and FC Ravshan of Tajikistan in Group A of the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Two. The draw was conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur. Mohun Bagan SG qualified for the newly-rebranded second tier men's AFC club competition by virtue of winning the 2023-24 Indian Super League Shield. The Mariners finished third in the 2023-24 AFC Cup Group Stage and failed to qualify for the knockout stage.

Mannat reaches semis

Alwoodley: Mannat Brar, who trailed till the eighth hole in her quarter-final against Switzerland's Sarah Uebelhart, completed a fine 1-up win following a see-saw contest to enter the last-four of the R&A Girls' Amateur Championship here. Mannat will meet Poland's Krawczynska Matylda in the semi-final. Matylda beat Sweden's Amanda Gyllner 4&3 in another quarter-final match. In the other quarter-final matches, Kylee Choi of the US beat French player Celeste Bobo Lloret 3&2 and Havana Torsetsson of Sweden overcame Norway's Henriette Spilling Gjelten 5&3.

DURAND CUP

NorthEast United seal knockouts berth with win over Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kokrajhar, August 16: NorthEast United cruised past Odisha FC 5-1 to enter the knockouts from Group E of the 133rd Durand Cup which was played at the SAI Stadium here.

Jithin MS scored a brace while Guillermo Fernandez and Thoi Singh scored a goal each for the Highlanders and an own goal by Tankadhar Bag completed the scoreline. Paogoumang Singson scored the consolation for the Juggernauts.

With this win, NorthEast United finished Group E on top with nine points from three matches while Odisha FC finished their campaign with three points.

Jithin scored twice within the space of three minutes to hurt Odisha FC within the first 20 minutes of the first half. The Kerala winger received a simple through ball over the top and he expertly found the goal past the rushing goalkeeper for the first goal.

A couple of minutes later, Odisha FC gave the ball away on the edge of the box and Ajarai found Jithin unmarked inside the box. The winger tried to put the ball on a plate for his teammates but it was deflected back to him by Odisha captain Lalliansanga and the forward did not have much trouble in finishing past Niraj Kumar in goal for his second of the game.

Interestingly, Odisha FC had better possession statistics in the first half than NorthEast but the young side could not create any clearcut chances to trouble the Highlanders' defence.

PARALYMPICS GAMES

INDIA WILL BE REPRESENTED BY 84 ATHLETES AT THE PARIS PARALYMPICS, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST-EVER CONTINGENT, A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE FROM THE 54 WHO COMPETED IN TOKYO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: The Indian paralympic contingent was Friday accorded a grand send-off ahead of the Paris Games scheduled to be held from August 28 to September 8.

The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) and Sports Authority of India (SAI) hosted the ceremony for the Indian team comprising 84 athletes across 12 disciplines, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo.

"Our para athletes have a remarkable ability to overcome obstacles and turn challenges into opportunities. They have shown remarkable determination and perseverance in their preparation for the Paris Paralympics 2024," Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in a release.

"Many athletes have benefited from the Khelo India initiative, and a significant number from

Athletes accorded grand send-off



As they embark on this important journey, we stand united in our support and are confident they will bring honour to our nation. We wish them the very best as they strive for excellence on the global stage

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | SPORTS MINISTER

there will be going to the Paris Paralympics. The government is committed to providing them with the resources and support they need to excel at the highest level."

India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and PCI president Devendra Jhajharia hoped the country's athletes will produce another good show this time.

"We are immensely proud of our athletes who have trained

with unwavering dedication and passion. As they prepare to represent India on the world's biggest stage in Paris, they em-

body the spirit of resilience and determination that defines our nation," Jhajharia said.

India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics

Their journey to the Paralympics is a testament to their hard work, and we are confident that they will make the country proud. We wish them the very best and are sure they will inspire millions back home with their performances."

A special anthem, "Macha Dhoom," crafted by renowned music directors Vivek - Abhishek, was also launched during the event.

Additionally a commemorative book titled "Breaking the Barriers", which is authored by Abhishek Dubey and Mahavir Rawat, was unveiled to celebrate the achievements and aspirations of the Indian Paralympic team.

Bhagyashri, Sumit named flag-bearers

Defending javelin throw champion Sumit Antil and shot-put star Bhagyashri Jadhav have been named India's flagbearers for Paris Paralympics 2024 opening ceremony during the send-off event of the Indian contingent Friday. The Paralympic Games will take place from August 28 to September 8. Unsurprisingly, it's the Olympic venues that will be used to award the thousands of Paralympic medals. Sumit is a reigning Paralympic champion in the men's Javelin Throw F64 category. He also won the gold medal in the Men's Javelin Throw F64 category at the Para-Athletics World Championships in May. The 25-year-old is the world record holder in men's javelin (F64). In the last edition of the World Championships, Antil came up with an effort of 70.83m, the then world record mark, to clinch gold. Months later, he smashed his own record when he hurled the javelin to 73.29m at the Hangzhou Asian Para Games to clinch the gold medal. Bhagyashri, on the other hand, won a silver medal in the shot put F34 category at the 2022 Asian Para Games and finished seventh at the Tokyo Paralympics. She also won silver in Women's Shot Put F34 at the Para-Athletics World Championships in May this year.



Vinesh shares heartfelt note after Paris Olympics agony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: Feisty wrestler Vinesh Phogat Saturday said that under "different circumstances" she could see herself competing till 2032 because she still has a lot of wrestling left in her but is now unsure about her future as things "might never be same again".

Vinesh had announced her retirement from the sport after her disqualification from the women's 50kg final for being overweight by 100gms. She had challenged the decision in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) but her appeal was dismissed.

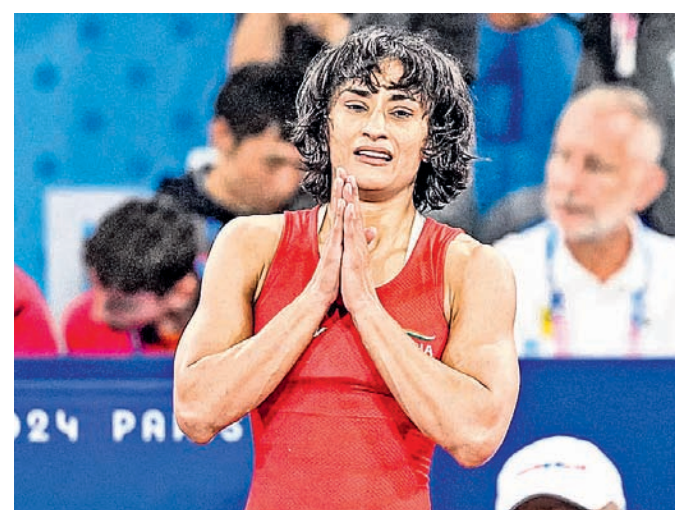
In an emotional post on social media, Vinesh shared her childhood dream, the hardships she faced after losing her father and also put on record the contribution made by people in her

extraordinary journey that ended in heartbreak in Paris.

"...all I want to say is that we did not give up, our efforts did not stop, and we did not surrender but the clock stopped and the time was not fair. So was my fate," she wrote, referring to the work she did with her team before the second day weigh-in.

"Maybe under different circumstances, I could see myself playing till 2032, because the fight in me and wrestling in me will always be there. I can't predict what the future holds for me, and what awaits me in this journey next, but I am sure that I will continue to fight always for what I believe in and for the right thing," she wrote.

Heartbroken she may be after her disqualification, but Vinesh paid a glowing tribute to all the people who were part of her extraordinary journey, saying her



unmatched fighting spirit had a lot to do with her mother.

She said her coach Woller Akos does not believe in the word 'impossible', and Dr.

Dinshaw Pardiwala was an angel. Dr Pardiwala, who headed the 13-member medical staff that IOA had arranged to help the Indian contingent in Paris, was

To my team, my fellow Indians and my family, it feels like: the goal that we were working towards and what we had planned to achieve is unfinished, that something might always remain missing, and that things might never be the same again

VINESH PHOGAT

recently subjected to unfair criticism for Vinesh ending up 100gms more than the 50kg limit.

IOA President PT Usha had come out in defence of Dr Pardiwala.

"For me, and I think for many other Indian athletes, he is not just a doctor but an angel in disguise sent by god. When I had stopped believing in myself after facing injuries, it was his belief,

work and faith in me that got me back on my feet again," Vinesh wrote.

"He has operated on me not once but thrice (both knees and one elbow) and has shown me how resilient the human body can be. His dedication, kindness and honesty towards his work and towards Indian sports is something no one will doubt including God. I'm forever grateful to him and his entire team for their work and dedication."

With Belgian coach Akos, Vinesh won two World Championship medals. He was instrumental in reshaping her game.

"Anything I write about him will always be less. In the world of Women's Wrestling, I have found him to be the best coach, best guide and best human, able to handle any situation with his calmness, patience and confidence," Vinesh wrote.

WFI to challenge HC decision to restore IOA's ad-hoc panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) Friday said it will challenge the Delhi High Court order that restored the mandate of IOA's ad-hoc committee to manage the affairs of the sports body, saying the "interference" could jeopardize the participation of Indian wrestlers at the upcoming World Championships.

The latest order came on a plea seeking a stay on the functioning of the WFI and prevent it from undertaking any activity as a national federation for the sport.

Justice Sachin Datta while passing the interim order on the plea by wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and her husband Satyawart Kadian, said it was open to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) re-constituting the committee which was earlier led by Bhupender Singh Bajwa.

The IOA had dissolved the ad-hoc panel April 4 while UWW had lifted its suspension February 13 this year after WFI conducted its elections.

"We are going to take it to double bench. The IOA had dissolved the ad-hoc panel. We will also approach world governing body UWW and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). They had warned that outside interference may impact out athletes," WFI President Sanjay Singh told PTI.



Two World Championships are approaching. Indian wrestlers' participation could be blocked

SANJAY SINGH | PRESIDENT, WFI

"Two World Championships are approaching. Indian wrestlers' participation could be blocked," he feared.

The U-17 World championship is set to be held in Amman, Jordan from August 19-25 while the U-20 World championship is scheduled in Pontevedra, Spain from September 2-8.

UWW President in his April 25 letter to WFI President had made it clear that ad-hoc panel running the show was not acceptable to them.

"In case any decision or order should be made against your federation, and a third party be designated to run the daily affairs of our sport in India in violation of the UWW Statutes, UWW would have no other option than to re-impose a temporary suspension of your federation until further notice, and which, this time, could maybe include your athletes," UWW president Lalovic wrote.