

Jacqueline's strategy

Actor Jacqueline Fernandez says she copes with unwanted spotlight through faith, meditation, empathy, and staying calm

LEISURE | P2

Unstable SCS

The Philippines and China exchange accusations of intentionally ramming coast guard vessels in disputed waters of the South China Sea, Saturday

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Lower govt spending

Slowing of India's GDP growth to 15-month low in the April-June quarter was due to 'lower' government spending, says RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

BUSINESS | P11

NEUFC win Durand Cup

NorthEast United FC overcome a two-goal deficit to stun Mohun Bagan 4-3 to win their maiden Durand Cup title

SPORTS | P12



HOMEWARD BOUND: Candidates rush to board a train at the railway station after the UP police recruitment exam in Meerut, Saturday

Cow vigilantes lynch Bengal migrant worker

Chandigarh, August 31: A migrant worker from West Bengal was allegedly beaten to death in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri district over suspicion that he had eaten beef, police said Saturday, adding they have arrested five members of a cow vigilante group for the attack.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini dubbed the August 27 incident 'unfortunate' but said it is 'not right to say things like mob lynching'.

A senior police officer said the accused attacked Sabir Malik on the suspicion that he consumed beef. Police identified the five accused as Abhishek, Mohit, Ravinder, Kamaljit and Sahil.

The senior police officer quoted above said that on the day of the incident the accused allegedly called Malik to a shop under the pretence of selling empty plastic bottles and thrashed him there.

After some people intervened, the accused took Malik to another location and beat him again, leading to his death, the officer added.

Malik lived in a shanty near Bandhra village in Charkhi Dadri district and collected waste and rag for a living, the police informed.

All the five accused have been arrested, he said, adding that two juveniles have also been apprehended in the matter.

A case under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has been registered against the accused, according to officials.

Police have sent food sample for testing in a lab in Faridabad, the officer said.



SHORT TAKES

Rubina Francis bags bronze at Paralympics

Chateauroux: Indian para-shooter Rubina Francis secured the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 final after finishing third with a score of 211.1 here Saturday. She finished behind Iran's Sareh Javanmardi and Turkey's Aysel Ozgan who collected the gold and silver medal respectively. Francis started off strong and was placed in second position after Stage 1 at 50 points just .1 points behind Sareh but a dip in her second-stage performance had seen her slip to third position.

P12

3 Ghanaians detained at Paradip for hiding in ship

Paradip: The authorities of Paradip Port here have detained three Ghana nationals while 'attempting to hide' aboard a coal-laden cargo ship, police said. The Ghanaians are currently in the custody of the CISF, they added. The trio was apprehended when the vessel - MV Great Sheng Wen - had docked within a restricted area of the port Friday, a police officer said, adding, three were not listed among the 20 crew members of the ship, he.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Nothing left, sir! A rape accused got bail in our area today

WEATHER

| | BBSR | CTC |
|----------|--------|--------|
| Max Temp | 32.7°C | 34.0°C |
| Min Temp | 25.5°C | 25.0°C |
| Humidity | 86% | 87% |
| Rainfall | 0.6mm | 2.6mm |

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain

Extradite Hasina to save ties: BNP

Dhaka, August 31: Bangladesh National Party (BNP) Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said that it's crucial to start a new chapter in the Indo-Bangla ties, which should begin with the extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as her continued presence in India could further damage bilateral relations.

"Sheikh Hasina has to face the law of Bangladesh for all the crimes and corruption committed by her and her regime. To enable this and respect the sentiments of the people of Bangladesh, India should ensure her return to Bangladesh," he added.

After unprecedented anti-government protests that peaked August 5, Hasina resigned as PM and fled to India.

Alamgir, the second-in-command of the BNP, emphasised his party's desire for strong relations with India, stating they are prepared to "move past previous differences and collaborate."

He also assured that the BNP would never permit any activities on Bangladeshi soil that could threaten India's security.



In an interview with this agency at his residence in Dhaka, Alamgir said if the BNP is voted to power, it will review and re-evaluate the "questionable" Adani electricity deal signed during the Awami League regime, as it is putting "tremendous pressure" on the people of Bangladesh.

Claiming that it was a diplomatic failure on the part of New Delhi for failing to understand the psyche of the people of Bangladesh, Alamgir said that even after the fall of the Hasina government following a people's uprising, the "Indian establishment is yet to reach out to BNP even though China, the US, the UK, and Pakistan have already done so."

Alamgir asserted that the safety of minorities in Bangladesh is an 'internal matter,' contending that reports of attacks on Hindus are 'not accurate' since most incidents are politically motivated rather than communal.

Hasina's presence in India for over three weeks has given rise to speculation in Bangladesh.

"We want to start a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relations, and ensuring the return of Hasina to Bangladesh will be a new leaf in the bilateral ties," he said.

"Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League are both condemned here and standing by them will only worsen the perception of India in Bangladesh," he told this agency.

Alamgir said if India doesn't ensure the return of Hasina to Bangladesh, bilateral ties between the two nations will worsen.

Friday, the spokesperson for the External Affairs Ministry, Randhir Jaiswal, during a press briefing was asked if a formal request had been made from Bangladesh's interim government for the extradition of Hasina, but he did not give a clear answer.

State unveils PM-USHA



Bhubaneswar, August 31: The BJP government Saturday launched the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) in the state.

The state government signed a MoU with the Union Education Ministry for the launch of PM-USHA programme in the presence of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and state Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj.

The Centre will provide financial assistance of ₹500 crore for different higher education institutions across the state for infrastructural and other development activities, Pradhan said describing August 31 as a landmark day towards strengthening the higher education landscape in Odisha.

"PM-USHA is an important initiative of the Centre towards implementation of the National Education Policy, 2020, and carries Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the state higher education system with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. While 60 per cent of allocated grants will be released by the Centre and 40 per cent will be borne by the state," he said.

The Union Education Minister said the implementation of PM-USHA in Odisha will enable state universities to ramp up infrastructure and also their transformation into world-class multidisciplinary universities.

Odisha is blessed with talented human capital, he said, adding that both the Centre and the state are committed and working to make sure that Odisha's youth are equipped and empowered with 21st-century knowledge and skills.

"Odisha and its human capital will be a beacon of hope for the world in this knowledge-based century and the times ahead," Pradhan said.

He also mentioned about the Bonda tribe boy, who cracked NEET 2024 and secured a seat at MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.

Rename Ravenshaw, suggests Pradhan

Cuttack, August 31: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday suggested the renaming of Ravenshaw University, one of the oldest educational institutions in Odisha, a step towards upholding Odia Ashmita.

The BJP MP from Sambalpur, made the remarks during his visit to this city.

"The devastating famine of 1866 had taken place in Odisha during the tenure of TE Ravenshaw as the British Commissioner of the state. Many Odias succumbed to the calamity that had occurred due to the administrative failure of the British authorities including TE Ravenshaw. Why should a prestigious varsity of Odisha be named after a British Commissioner? People of Odisha should think over this," said Pradhan.

Pradhan, however, made it clear that it was his personal view. "Naming a university of Odisha after a British officer, who was responsible for causing miseries to the Odias, is not a matter of great pride for us," he added. Ravenshaw College was established in this city in 1868 and was granted autonomy in the 1990s.

Israeli airstrike leaves TikTok star dead

Cairo, August 31: Medo Halimy, a 19-year-old Palestinian TikTok star was killed in Israeli airstrike, a report said, Saturday.

As he often did in videos documenting life's mundane absurdities, Halimy walked to his local internet cafe — rather, a tent with Wi-Fi where displaced Palestinians can connect to the outside world — to meet his friend Murad. They snapped a selfie — "Finally Reunited" Halimy captioned it on Instagram — and started catching up.

Then came a flash of light, 18-year-old Murad said, an explosion of white heat and sprayed earth. Murad felt pain in his neck. Halimy was bleeding from his head. A car on the coastal road in front of them was engulfed in flames, the apparent target of an Israeli airstrike. It took 10 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. Some hours later doctors pronounced Halimy dead.

"He represented hope and strength," Murad said Friday, still recovering from his shrapnel wounds.

Japan coaxing citizens to try a 4-day workweek

Tokyo, August 31: Japan, known for its intense work culture and a term for working oneself to death — "Karoshi" — is making a significant shift in its approach to work-life balance by promoting a four-day workweek. This change comes in response to a growing labour shortage and a declining birth rate that threatens the country's future workforce.

The Japanese government first expressed support for a shorter working week in 2021, after lawmakers endorsed the idea. The concept has been slow to catch on, however; about eight per cent of companies in Japan allow employees to take three or more days off per week, while seven per cent give their workers the legally mandated one



day off, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Hoping to produce more takers, especially among small and medium-sized businesses, the government launched a "work style reform" campaign that promotes shorter hours and other flexible arrangements along with overtime limits and paid annual leave.

"By realising a society in which workers can choose from a variety of working styles based on their circumstances, we aim to create a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution and enable each and every worker to have a better outlook for the future," states a ministry website about the "hatarakikata kaikaku" campaign, which translates to "innovating how we work."

The department overseeing the new support services for

businesses says only three companies have come forward so far to request advice on making changes, relevant regulations and available subsidies, illustrating the challenges the initiative faces.

The government's official backing of a better work-life balance represents a marked change in Japan, a country whose reputed culture of workaholic stoicism often got credited for the national recovery and stellar economic growth after World War II.

Long hours are the norm. Although 85 per cent of employers report giving their work-

leisure



ORTEGA WEARS OUTFIT MADE OF 'WALLPAPER'

Actress Jenna Ortega, who is currently at the 81st Venice Film Festival, wore a dress by iconic designer Harris Reed. Talking about her look, she said, "This dress is a bit dramatic isn't it? A little secret about this outfit, this material is wallpaper. So everytime I walk it crinkles."

LUDACRIS FEELS LIKE 'SUPERMAN' AFTER DRINKING GLACIER WATER

Rapper and actor Ludacris said that he feels like superman after drinking fresh Alaskan glacier water after his fans expressed concerns over his health. Ludacris had posted a video on social media in which he drank fresh Alaskan glacier water without purifying it first.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
With your substantial interpersonal abilities, you will accomplish a great deal today, says Ganesh. Your power of expression will impress many people. Financial rewards are on the cards, but be cautious about minor accidents and illnesses.

TAURUS
You have a very pleasant day ahead. Though you are, by nature, restless and excitable you will be very steady and focused in whatever you do today. So says Ganesh. Later you will desire to enjoy the company of your friends and will call them over to chat and gossip with them.

GEMINI
You will spend your day fulfilling the demands made upon you by your family members and colleagues. You will need to devote time to matters at home. Pay attention to the needs of your relatives for they will be helpful to you in the near future, says Ganesh.

CANCER
A wondrous beginning of the day! A unique vibrations in romantic life. Ties with life partner will be cordial. Blissful moments of married life are indicated. Peace and happiness prevail in the family. The whole day will be blooming and jovial, says Ganesh.

LEO
You may have arguments with your family members today. You need to adopt an accommodating attitude today, since it is not a very promising day for you. Otherwise nothing may go in your favour. You will have to work harder than usual in the office, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Ganesh suggests that you take a much-needed break from the daily rigmarole. Introduce an element of the exotic in order to replace all the mundane work that fills up your day. You may attend private and social get-togethers, and Ganesh advises you to mingle with other people to keep your spirits high.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you shall pay more attention to your family and family issues. You will want to renovate and change the interior of your house or go in for purchasing new gadgets and décor for the home. You will spend time today with your family members. Ganesh says his best wishes are with you always.

SCORPIO
You nearly emerge as a superhero today, as you have the knack of balancing home and work just perfectly. Intellectual discussions and brainstorming with peers would provide food for thought today. You may look forward to merry-making and soiree with family and friends in the evening.

SAGITTARIUS
Whatever you take up today, you are on a winning spree, foresees Ganesh. A leader, you will guide and instruct your subordinates when they seek your advice. In a way, you even encourage and motivate them. All in all, you are a happy soul at the end of the day!

CAPRICORN
The hassle and bustle around you will not disturb you today. You've been holding your emotions in your heart and they have started suffocating you. Such an uncomfortable situation may hamper your logical reasoning power and make you feel trapped. But, this too shall pass. You will easily come out of the negative zone and move ahead on the path, foretells Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Flash warning signals to your arch rivals as you will be in a mood to prove you metal and give them a run for their money. Doubts and inhibitions - all will vanish in the air and you will be determined to make your mark, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
There is a thick chance that your day will be profitable on the monetary front. Money may pour in from business or even through overseas investments. Your knack for good public relations and networking will work to your benefit and good deals will come from far and unexpected sources as well.

Jackie on handling unwanted spotlight

Mumbai: Actress Jacqueline Fernandez has spoken about how she handles being in the spotlight for reasons unrelated to your work and which aren't positive in nature. Jacqueline said, "Positives and negatives are always going to be there... But what has helped me the most is giving up this constant desire and need to be loved and realising that this is truly the last illusion we all have and that we all face. This is what has kept me free, humble, and calm. I believe in God, I always have. It's an extremely strong force in my life. And because of that, I never really fear anything. I meditate often. Now I'm able to distinguish between right and wrong people, and I keep my family and good people



WOMEN'S SAFETY Raima bats for policy change

Kolkata: Recently, actress Ritabhari Chakraborty ignited a fresh debate on the ongoing row of women's safety, claiming that sexual abuse and harassment are just as prevalent in Bengali cinema as they are across industries. Responding to Chakraborty's statement, actress Raima Sen, who has worked in both Bengali and Hindi cinema, shared, "I am sure it's happening in all industries. I haven't faced it issues concerning women's safety, so I can't comment on it. But, the conclusion to all this remains the same." The 44-year-old goes on to share that she would like people's focus to shift to the bigger picture, one that goes beyond Bengali cinema or another #MeToo movement. "Strict laws for the protection of women is a priority right now. The #MeToo movement happened in India and nothing came about from it. The only way to stop rapes is to give harsher punishments even for 'lesser offences,'" she asserted. "Sexual harassment happens everywhere. There's no point in pulling off another #MeToo," said Sen, expressing her frustration with the continued cycle of systemic abuse. "Women need to feel safe," she added. She also emphasised that women should be included in the process of formulating policies and laws regarding women's safety. "Only women can make laws in India that can protect women. As long as men make the laws for women, women aren't safe. It can be any state and any politician, it doesn't matter. Rapes are happening all over the country and they are all handled badly in every state. We need intelligent women lawmakers and intellectuals to shape the law which will then be implemented by the government and judicial systems," she wrapped up.



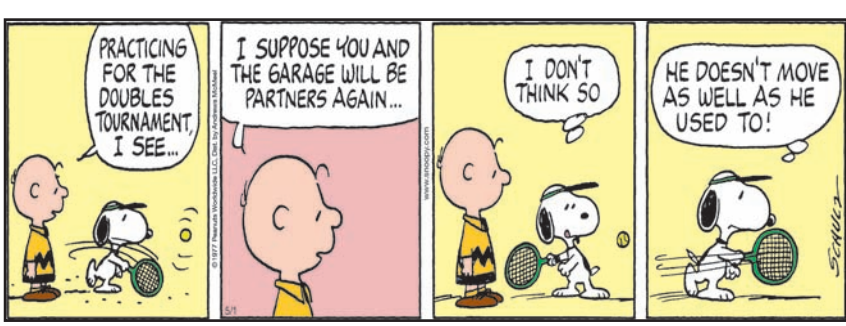
Srjan to host 30th GKCM Fest

BHUBANESWAR: The 30th Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award Festival 2024 is going to take place from September 5 to 11 at Rabintra Mandap here. The festival will be organised by collective efforts from Srjan—Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Nrityabasa and Sri Sri University. The 7-day festival will feature performances on classical dance and music, honouring the legacy of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra (GKCM) and to create awareness about classical traditions. Leaving the traditional five-day format, the festival this year has been extended to seven days, offering a diverse line-up of performances to celebrate the state's rich cultural heritage. "This year, the GKCM Award will be presented to four distinguished individuals: Kunkum Lal for Odissi dance, Guru Lakshmikanta Palit for music, Guru Dhaneśwar Swain for percussion, and Uttam Mohanty for his contribution to Odia cinema. The Yuva Pratiba Samman will honour four young talents in Odissi dance and music," said Guru Ratikant Mohapatra. "The festival will conclude with an ensemble by Srjan on 'Tantra,' an evocative Odissi dance performance exploring the divine feminine and Tantra traditions," he added. The festival will also feature performances by artistes including Chandan Dass, Vaibhav Arekar, OS Arun, Ambi and Bindu Subramanian, Rakesh Chaurasia, and Ashimbandhu Bhattacharjee.

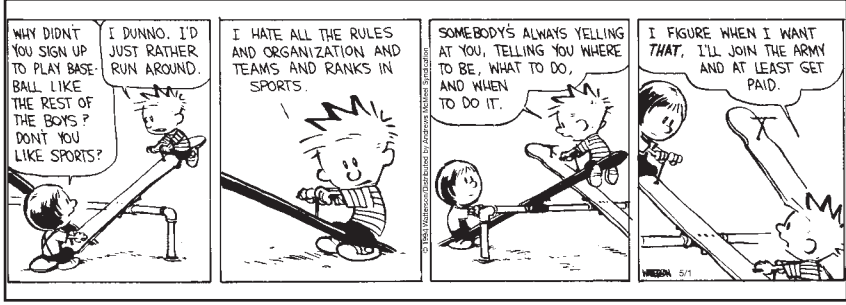
I'm an actor, not an activist: Ayushmann

Mumbai: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana was recently in Delhi to attend the FICCI Young Leaders Awards. In response to a question about the varied subjects he has chosen for his films, the actor said that he seeks to create something unique with every film. He explained, "I started my journey as a theatre actor, and during that time, we used to take up subjects that addressed social issues and take the road not taken." He added, "Also, as an outsider, I had to break through the clutter. I chose themes that hadn't been explored before and aimed to create something unique and palatable at the same time. So, I think that was a big challenge. There is no fun without any risk. With every story, I want to do something different, something that hasn't been achieved in Indian cinema before." In response to a question about how he has been using social media to voice his opinions, the *Dream Girl* actor said, "I'd like to reiterate that I'm not an activist; I'm an actor. So, whatever I have to say, I will express through my art - be it poetry, music or films. The expectation that an actor or artist should always stand up and voice their opinion is naive because in our artist community, we value EQ more than IQ. We deal with emotions, we sell emotions, we create emotions, and that's our core job." The actor, however, added that he tries to fulfill his social responsibilities through his association with organisations like UNICEF.

PEANUTS



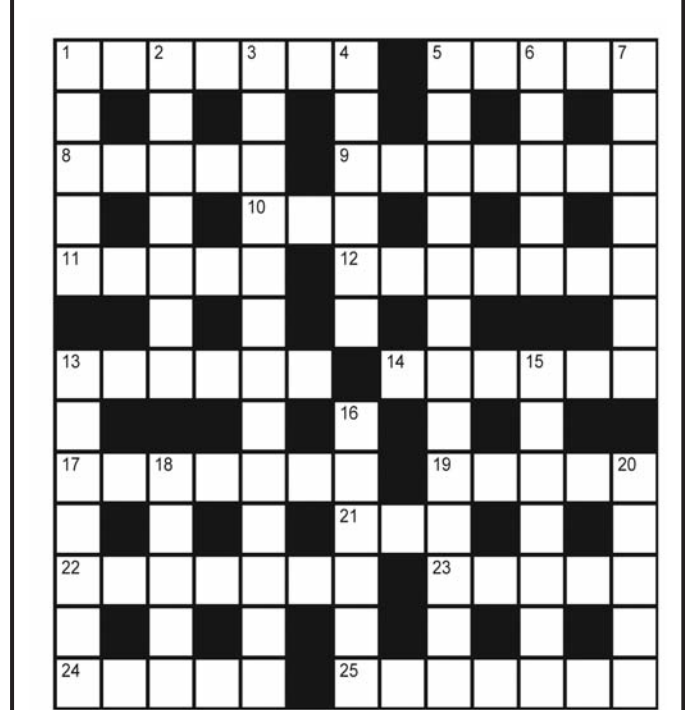
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



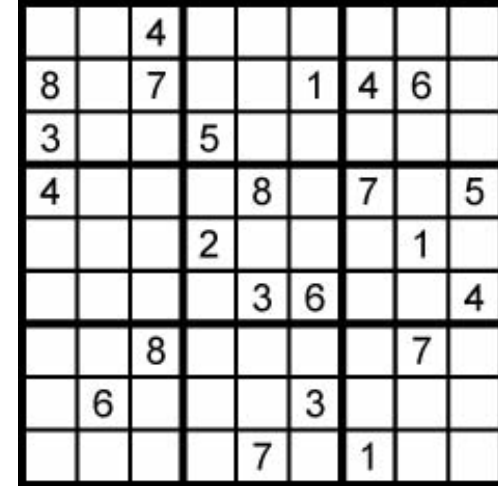
FUN post CROSSWORD



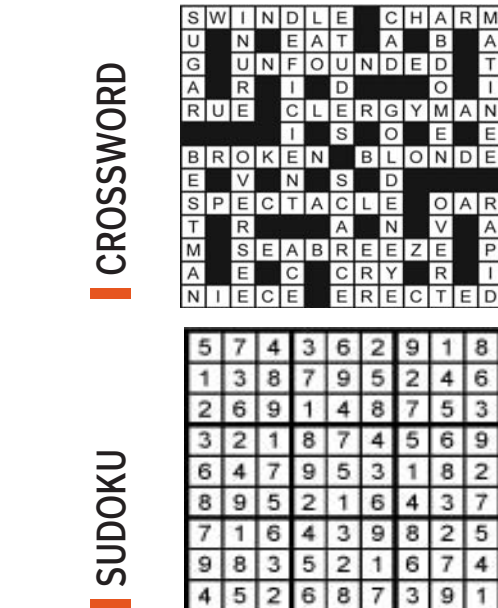
- Across**
- 1 Glisten
 - 5 Fritter away
 - 8 Three-toed flightless birds
 - 9 Eliminate, as a cause (4,3)
 - 10 Consume
 - 11 Nightstick
 - 12 Concise
 - 13 Schoolbook
 - 14 Garden decorations
 - 17 Saltwater lake 1292 feet below sea level (4,3)
 - 19 Outfit
 - 21 Small pouch
 - 22 Czarist Russia cavalry member
 - 23 Claw
 - 24 Wood nymph
 - 25 News
- Down**
- 1 Cancel
 - 2 Languor
 - 3 Get it wrong
 - 4 Seldom
 - 5 Friend of royalty? (4-9)
 - 6 Pass out
 - 7 Tempts
 - 13 Decreased
 - 15 Insincerely emotional
 - 16 Creel
 - 18 Analyse
 - 20 Trousers

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



BHUBANESWAR: A well-marked low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a depression, which is likely to cross north Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts around midnight, the IMD said Saturday afternoon. The system is likely to cross between Vishakhapatnam and Gopalpur close to Kalingapatnam, it said. The IMD issued an 'orange' alert for heavy to very heavy rain (7 cm to 20 cm) accompanied by thunderstorm for parts of Malkangiri, Koraput and Nabarangpur districts till 8.30 am Sunday. Heavy rain (7 to 11 cm) along with thunderstorm and lightning may also occur in Nuapada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Ganjam and Gajapati districts, it said.

downtown

Spurious liquor claimed 231 lives in 27 yrs: Min



433 country liquor shops are operating in Odisha and the government has collected ₹227 crore in revenue from those outlets during the current fiscal, which is 9% of the total revenue collected from liquor sales in the state

490 country liquor depots have got licenses for production of pouches and about 23 crore litre of Mahua produced in Odisha during 2023-24

Bhubaneswar, August 31: As many as 231 people died after consuming spurious liquor in the state in 27 years - between 1992 and 2019, Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan informed the Assembly Saturday.

In a written reply to a question of Congress MLA Nilamadhab Hikaka, the minister said the highest number of 134 people died after consuming hooch in Cuttack district in 1992. He said 41 people of Tukulipada village in Cuttack district lost their lives after drinking such liquor in 2012. The minister said spurious liquor also claimed 20 lives in Puri in 2001, 19 in Ganjam district in 2006, 10 (three in Khurda and seven in Bolangir) in 2009 and seven in Bhadrak district in 2019. Harichandan said that the government, at present, does not have any proposal to provide assistance and rehabilitation to people falling ill due to the consumption of hooch and those addicted to liquor.

A total of 433 country liquor (Mahua) shops are operating in Odisha and the government has collected ₹227 crore in revenue from those outlets during the current financial year, which is 9 per cent of the total revenue collected from liquor sales in the state, he stated.

The government has provided licenses to 490 country liquor depots for production of pouches and about 23 crore litre of Mahua liquor produced in Odisha during 2023-24.

Meanwhile, the toll due to alleged hooch tragedy in Chikiti area of Ganjam rose to three after another person died Saturday morning.

This issue was raised by BJD Chief Whip Pramila Mallik during the Zero Hour.

Mallik demanded the resignation of the Excise minister on moral grounds. She also sought a statement from the government in the House.

'Convene meet on women's safety'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday directed the police to convene a state-level conference to discuss issues related to the safety of women.

Majhi gave the direction in view of President Droupadi Murmu expressing concern over the rape and murder of the doctor at the RG Kar hospital in Kolkata, said a statement.

The CM also directed the authorities to ensure stern action against those accused of crimes against women.

Maintaining that his government has a 'zero tolerance' policy towards violence against women, he said strict action will also be taken against police officers found neglecting such cases. He also asked Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satyabrata Sahu and DGP YB Khurania to train police officers for specially dealing with women-related cases.

CM: Govt has alternate means to 'fix' criminals

AGENCIES



Bhubaneswar, August 31: Issuing a veiled warning to criminals, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday said they should mend their ways, or else, his government has alternate means to 'fix them'.

Blaming the previous BJD government for the rise in crimes in Odisha, he claimed that the law and order situation in the state was well under control at present.

Speaking in the Assembly during a debate on the demand for grants for the Home department, he said the state police was capable in doing its job but the previous BJD government 'lacked political will' and did not allow the police to do its job.

"I caution criminals to mend their ways, otherwise our government is all prepared with alternate means to fix them.

Licenses obtained by criminals under the previous government have already lapsed. There is no chance of getting a new license," Majhi said.

"During the previous government, there was no fear among criminals. I am not saying this, the NCRB report is saying this. It is a shame for us that the conviction rate is so low. The previous government is fully responsible for this," he said.

Majhi said his government will soon set up special courts.

Majhi said that to strengthen the state police, 3,000 personnel would be recruited in the next 100 days. He also said that the state gov-

ernment will soon recruit 2,298 home guards.

The CM said that at least seven motorcycles would be given to each police station, besides steps would be taken to provide high-performance four-wheelers.

He asked the police to intensify patrolling along the coast to check attempts of infiltration by Bangladeshi nationals.

He said that he has sought a report regarding such infiltration bids through the sea route.

Majhi said that a special battalion would be raised to upgrade the security of Srimandir in Puri.

Referring to BJD president Naveen Patnaik's concern over the law and order situation in the state, he said, "The LoP is questioning and seeking an answer from me, but he is not present in the House to listen. Maybe he has some other important work outside the Assembly."

Cong demands return of varsity land

Senior Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati Saturday demanded that the government return the land acquired for setting up Vedanta University to their owners. The BJD-BJP coalition government in 2006 had allocated land to the Anil Agarwal Foundation to set up the university near Puri-Konark marine drive. The project, however, failed to take off due to various reasons including opposition from local farmers whose land was acquired for the purpose. In the Assembly, Bahinipati urged Speaker Surama Padhy to issue a direction to the state government to return the land acquired for setting up of the proposed Vedanta University, to their owners. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Bahinipati said that the Orissa High Court and the Supreme Court had termed the land acquisition from farmers were illegal and directed that the land be returned to their owners. The state government, however, has not done so, he said. "I will consider the demand," the Speaker said when Bahinipati insisted that Padhy give a ruling on the matter. Bahinipati said Lord Jagannath's land was also given for the proposed varsity project.

Top US honour for Odia green warrior

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Environmentalist Soumya Ranjan Biswal has received the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Impact Award from the Meridian International Center and the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for his project - Community-led biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions education for climate resilience at Devi river mouth in India, off-



cial sources said, Saturday. Biswal's project was selected for its potential to create last-

ing local impact and build upon the important knowledge and experiences gained through his IVLP participation, the US Department of State said.

The young environmentalist also received a grant of USD 5,000 for the project, it added.

Biswal's project focuses on mobilising the coastal community in Odisha to conserve the critical mangrove ecosystem and associated coastal biodiversity for climate resilience in the Devi estuary landscape.

Biswal, who hails from Puri,

has made significant contributions to environmental conservation. He founded the Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshan Abhiyan (OPSA) in 2014, dedicated to marine turtle and mangrove conservation.

Launched in 1940, IVLP helps strengthen US engagement with countries around the world and cultivate lasting relationships by connecting current and emerging foreign leaders with their American counterparts through short-term visits to the United States.

Building Suposhit Bharat Together
Rashtriya Poshan Maah

From 1 to 30 September 2024

Why is Poshan Maah important?

It will free us from malnutrition

6 Successful Years of the POSHAN Abhiyaan

- » Over 100 crore nutrition-related activities conducted under the Jan Andolan
- » Monthly growth measurements of over 8 crore children
- » Integration of Shree Anna (Millet) into supplementary nutrition programme

“ Better nutrition in childhood leads to better mental development. It is essential for mothers to receive proper nutrition for the proper nourishment of children ”

- Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Activities at Anganwadi Centers during 7th Poshan Maah

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Breastfeeding and complementary feeding</p> <p>Workshops to promote breastfeeding and provide correct information on complementary feeding</p> | <p>Nutrition-related Competitions</p> <p>Competitions on meal planning and healthy cooking</p> |
| <p>Anaemia</p> <p>Understand and combat anaemia together</p> | <p>Community-Based Programs</p> <p>Community radio activities, cycle rallies, morning processions, Haat-Bazaar (market) activities, and street plays/folk shows</p> |
| <p>Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam</p> <p>Plant a tree to honour your mother and protect the environment</p> | <p>Growth Monitoring</p> <p>Understand growth monitoring and get accurate weight and height measurements for your children at Anganwadi centres</p> |
| <p>Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi</p> <p>Workshops on how nutrition helps education. Learn about government's Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi scheme</p> | <p>Nutrition Workshops and Seminars</p> <p>Expert-led nutrition seminars addressing key health concerns</p> |

Durgapur airport now connects City

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durgapur/Bhubaneswar, August 31: The Durgapur airport in West Bengal got two new flights, connecting Bhubaneswar, Bagdogra in Siliguri and Guwahati, a statement said Saturday.

IndiGo will operate the two flights on Bhubaneswar-Durgapur-Bagdogra and Bhubaneswar-Durgapur-Guwahati routes, it said.

The Bhubaneswar-Durgapur-Bagdogra flight commenced operations Friday, and will operate four days a week - Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

The Bhubaneswar-Durgapur-Guwahati route began operations Saturday. This flight will operate three days a week - Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

These routes are set to enhance travel convenience for passengers, contribute to the region's economic growth and strengthen the connectivity in eastern India, the statement said.

481 developmental projects worth ₹1,151 crore launched

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday launched 481 developmental projects worth Rs 1,151 crore across different districts during an event organised here to celebrate local self-governance day.

The chief minister also gave appointment letters to 27 newly-recruited municipal service officers.

Speaking on the occasion, Majhi highlighted the importance of self-governance in providing basic facilities to citizens and underscored the need for elected public representatives to work above politics to fulfil people's expectations.

The elected public representatives need to shoulder the burden of Panchayati Raj and

the existing self-governance system in urban areas, he said.

Majhi also advised all elected public representatives, including councillors, vice-chairpersons and chairpersons of urban local bodies to rise above politics and work with the municipal administration towards fulfilling people's expectations.

Majhi also underlined the need for decentralisation and empowerment of municipalities to plan and provide services for urban infrastructure.

Referring to rapid urbanisation in Bhubaneswar, the chief minister acknowledged the challenges faced in providing basic facilities to residents.

Majhi assured that his government is committed to developing all cities of the state including Bhubaneswar.



EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES: Dignitaries including Minister of Housing and Urban Development Krishna Chandra Mohapatra, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das, and Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil attend the Local Self Governance Day celebrations at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

'Identify alternate production systems'

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 31: An eminent agricultural scientist has called for alternate agricultural production system so as to ensure that there is no over-exploitation of the existing natural resources in the country.

"At present, we are exploiting our natural resources to an extent that it is beyond repair because we have to feed a population of over 140 crore people," Puranjan Das, former Deputy Director General of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) said.

"To ensure that there is no further damage to our natural resources, we need to identify alternate production systems," he said while delivering the seventh MS Swaminathan Memorial Lecture at the Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAS), SOA's faculty of agricultural sciences here recently.

Govt hosts consultation workshop

THE EVENT FOCUSES ON CREATING ENABLING ECOSYSTEM FOR SERVICE IN TIER II AND TIER III CITIES

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 31: The state government hosted a consultation workshop on 'Creating Enabling Ecosystem for Services in Tier II and Tier III Cities' here, Saturday.

The workshop is part of a series of high-level discussions being organised in the run-up to the fourth National Chief Secretaries' Conference scheduled later this year, official said.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary in the Government of India S Krishnan, Development Commissioner-cum-ACS Anu Garg, Electronics and Information Technology department Principal Secretary Vishal Dev, and senior government officials from 24 states and Union Territories participated in the event.

According to officials, the workshop focused on initia-



tives in areas of skilling, infrastructure development, ease of doing business, and policy and regulatory reforms to foster a robust services ecosystem in states.

Participants also shared their perspectives on new initiatives that can be implemented to further strengthen the services ecosystem in Tier II and Tier III cities across sectors such as IT, semiconductors, tourism, BFSI, civil aviation and logistics among others, officials said.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahuja underlined the importance of discussions in brid-

ging the gap between Tier I and Tier II cities, highlighting state's commitment to fostering geographically distributed service-led growth.

He underscored the state's proactive approach in creating robust infrastructure, streamlining regulatory processes, and enhancing skill development initiatives tailored to the unique needs of smaller cities.

Krishnan said, "The event provides a platform for states to voice industry concerns to the Central government."

He emphasised the critical role of collaboration between

1.3qtl ganja seized; 5 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 31: The Special Crime Unit (SCU) of twin city police Saturday busted an inter-state ganja smuggling syndicate with the arrest of its five operatives. A total of 1.3 quintals of the contraband has been seized following the arrests, police said.

The accused were identified as Pushpak Srichandan, 25, Milan Nayak, 23, SK Zamirullah, 36, Ajmer Sheikh, 28, and SK Samir, 39. Police Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda said the prime accused Pushpak, who is a B.Tech graduate, established contacts with suppliers for the business. Two four-wheelers and other incriminating materials have been seized from the accused.

"The conduits of the syndicate procured the contraband from Kandhamal and sold those to suppliers in West Bengal," Panda said, adding that the accused used to splurge their earnings on lavish lifestyle, and hire models from Kolkata to make social media reels.

The commissioner said the sleuths received tip-off around Friday midnight that the syn-



dicate members were on their way from Tapanga area of Khurda to deliver a big contraband consignment in West Bengal. Accordingly, a trap was laid near Bomikhal area of the City. When the vehicle was sighted in the area, the waiting sleuths intercepted it and rounded up the occupants. A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of the ganja kept in the boot of the car.

Investigations have revealed that the syndicate members purposefully chose afternoon hours - between 12 noon and 4 pm - to plan the transport of contraband consignments with a view to evade suspicion and police surveillance. They would earn around ₹1 lakh per each delivery. The accused were booked under relevant sections of the NDPS Act and produced before a local court Saturday for remand.

KIIT holds meet to address NMR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) here Saturday hosted the 15th National Conference of the Neonatology Chapter of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP).

The three-day event brought together around 600 delegates from across the country and 12 international dignitaries from different countries including, USA, UK, Dubai and Poland. The con-

ference aims to address the concern of Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR), and set a target to reduce the rate from 26 to single digits by 2030, by improving the newborn care facilities.

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta graced the occasion as chief guest. Other attendees included Honorary Secretary General of Central IAP Yogesh N Parikh, and Chairperson of the Neonatology Chapter of IAP Naveen Bajaj. Vice President of IAP South

Zone M Singaravelu, and Chief Organising Secretary of IAP Neon Arjit Mohapatra were also present at the event.

In his address, Samanta expressed his gratitude to the dignitaries and doctors present, emphasising the critical role of medical professionals in saving lives, particularly in neonatal care.

He said, "Doctors are a gift to mankind, especially those who work in neonatal care, as they give life to the most vulnerable. The work done by KIIT and KISS in the field of education and healthcare is something I am immensely proud of."

The ceremony also included the release of souvenir and two books on Neonatal care. Students who passed the IAP Neochap Fellowship Exit exam recently were also felicitated on the occasion. Doctor SN Parida was conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award during the event.

Appointment of spl educators sought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Odisha Special Educator Federation for Divyang (OSEFD) recently asked the state government to explain why the number of students with disabilities in general schools is decreasing. OSEFD also demanded appointment of permanent special educators in every general school of the state.

Federation secretary Jeevankumar Behera said, "In the last Assembly session July 27, 2022, in response to a question, the former Minister of School and Mass Education (S&ME) Samir Ranjan Dash said that 97,828 Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are enrolled in general schools in the state, and March 1, 2023, in response to another question, he said that 92,611 CWSN were enrolled."

"The number of students with disabilities in general schools has been decreasing, mainly because special trained teachers have not been appointed till date," Behera said.

Make statement on quality of Chhatua in Anganwadi centres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 31: Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy Saturday directed Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida to come up with a statement on actions taken against agencies providing inferior quality 'Chhatua' (a food item) to children in Anganwadi centres.

The Speaker directed Parida to make a statement in the House about programmes undertaken to check the quality of the food item during the last five years and actions taken against the erring supplying agencies.

Parida also holds the portfolio of Women and Child Development Department. The Speaker's direction came



after several MLAs alleged that poor quality 'Chhatua' are being distributed to children in Anganwadi centres under a supplementary nutrition programme.

BJP MLA Padmalochan Panda alleged that sub-stan-

dard 'Chhatua' was distributed to the children by the previous BJD government during the last 24 years and the suppliers have become crorepaties. Panda demanded engagement of new suppliers while removing the existing agencies.

Senior Congress legislator Taraprasad Bahinipati said Chhatua is being supplied to the children as a nutritional food but no one is ready to take it as the quality is poor.

He urged the government to supply some alternative nutritional food to the children.

In her reply, the deputy chief minister said the quality of Chhatua will be checked across the state and the report will be submitted to the House.

CLASSIFIED LOST

The original RSD No. 608/2001 of Mouza-Korian in the name of Preeti Devi Agrawalla and RSD No. 10501903842/2019 of Mouza Badasathiebatia in the name of Ghanashyam Hota, lost anywhere on 29.08.2024 when going to xerox to Jawahar chouk, Dhenkanal Town, Anybody found please contact- 9937408107.

TPCODL launches MDAG to tackle electricity theft

Bhubaneswar: TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the state government, has recently established the Meter Data Analysis Group (MDAG) to strengthen its efforts in combating electricity theft. The specialised team consists of highly experienced employees who analyse consumer energy meter data using advanced, in-house developed software capable of processing large datasets. "The primary function of the consumer meter is to record and generate consumption data for billing and tariff purposes. However, the meter also collects a significant amount of data that, when combined with various logics based on different scenarios, and can be utilised not only for billing but also to assess the quality of supply at the consumer end, the quality of installation, the quality of the meter, electricity theft, and technical losses," said an official. The role of the MDAG group is to identify potential cases of electricity theft, which is currently a significant challenge for the company.

National conference on governance held at UU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 31: The two-day national conference on 'Governance in India: Priorities, Policies and Prospects' concluded at Utkal University here, Saturday.

Organised by the postgraduate department of Public Administration of the varsity, the conference was attended by more than hundred participants from different parts of the country.

Almost 75 papers were presented during the sessions. The event was held in collaboration with World Bank-supported



Odisha Higher Education Programme for Excellence and Equity (WB-OHPEE) of Utkal University.

The second day of the conference was chaired by noted academician Pratik Kumar Mishra, and associate professor

of Humanities at IIT-Bhubaneswar Naresh Chandra Sahu.

The closing day witnessed a diversity of papers on 'shrinking resources of smart cities', 'policy dilemma over leave associated with working women profes-

sionals during menstrual days', natural calamities, mitigation and preparedness by the state, confidence disparity in education between vernacular medium and city-educated learners and youth mental health and policy stalemates.

The valedictory ceremony was chaired by Utkal University Registrar Kahnur Charan Dhir; in presence of chief speaker E Venkatesu and convener Pratima Sarangi. On the occasion, two participants received 'Best Paper Presentation Award'. Organising secretary Hemanta Kumar Dash delivered vote of thanks.

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FOCUS CIVIL UNREST

POLITICAL 'YOUTHQUAKE'



These movements are unsettling conventional views of politics, transcending traditional ethnic and political divides, and often shunning traditional political parties and civil-society organisations

Nonetheless, there are striking similarities. In each case mentioned above, people between the ages of 15 and 34 constitute at least one-third of the total population. Despite strong economic growth of around 6% per year, Bangladesh struggles with 15% youth unemployment. And many of these countries are weighed down by heavy debt burdens, using between 20% and 60% of government expenditures to keep their creditors at bay – a sum that dwarfs public spending on education, health, and urgently needed climate action. It's no coincidence that these protests are taking place in some of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world.

The protests were sparked in many cases by the announcement of new measures that would have inflicted more economic pain on young people – whether it was regressive taxes in Kenya, the unfair allocation of jobs in Bangladesh, or the rising cost of living in Nigeria. But these moves merely set aflame a tinderbox of grievances that had accumulated over decades. Young people are despairing not just the lack of economic prospects, but also their rulers' greed, the state's brutality, and a general unresponsiveness to their needs. There is an impatience with the status quo. They want to sweep away old, outdated orders and reimagine their political systems.

But this change will not come easily, nor is it guaranteed. A decade ago, youthful revolts also broke out across the Arab world, toppling dictatorships and rousing hopes for a more just and equitable order. To avoid those failures, the openings this moment has created will have to be quickly seized and built upon – and the dangers will have to be carefully navigated.

The writer is President of the Open Society Foundations.

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President William Ruto's plan to introduce new taxes on essential items. As in Bangladesh, the authorities responded with lethal violence, killing dozens and injuring hundreds. Ultimately, though, Ruto was forced to withdraw the bill. Now attention has turned to Nigeria, which has been jolted by protests over the rising cost of living.

A new generation is asserting itself in parts of Asia and Africa. Young people are spontaneously forming protest movements and forging rare coalitions. This is the first generation that has not known life before the internet, and they are using social media not just to announce and live-stream street protests, but also to organise and debate. In the process, they are devising innovative tactics, including the use of artificial intelligence, and creating new spaces by holding digital demonstrations when the streets are closed off to them. In response, governments have unleashed their own techno-repression, from throttling the internet to shutting it down altogether.

These movements also are unsettling conventional views of politics, transcending traditional ethnic and political divides, and often shunning tra-

ditional political parties and civil-society organisations. It is typically assumed that populism and authoritarianism are complementary forces, yet here we see expressions of populism challenging authoritarianism – and by a generation that is proving to be both fearless and uncompromising. Far from deterring them, state violence has often hardened their resolve.

Of course, it would be a mistake to overstate this "youthquake" or to generalise across two vast continents. Gen Z protesters are not monolithic, nor are they all idealistic in their ambitions. Like any other age cohort, the young are politically divided. In Bangladesh, for example, the ruling party's thuggish youth wing, the Chhatra League, was partly responsible for the violence.

While Senegal had a relatively smooth transition, owing to the resilience of its institutions, Bangladesh is on a more uncertain path, with the threat of violence and civil disorder still hanging over the country. Recent reprisals against members of the Awami League and attacks on the Hindu minority show how the taste of victory can lead some to temptations of vengeance.

Six months ago, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's grip on power in Bangladesh appeared unbreakable. The ruling Awami League had just won a fourth successive term in an uncontested election, allowing it to remain in full control of the country's institutions. With journalists, human-rights defenders, opposition members, and other critics facing politically motivated prosecution, prison, exile, and forced disappearance, the country's continued descent into authoritarianism seemed certain.

But suddenly, last month, student-led protests erupted across the country, fueled by outrage over a quota system that allocates government jobs to the ruling party's allies. The state's response – a violent crackdown that claimed more than 400 lives – revealed the brittleness of Hasina's 15-year rule. In scenes reminiscent of the Sri Lankan "Aragalaya" mass protests that ended the rule of the Rajapaksa family in 2022, young Bangladeshis forced Hasina to resign and flee into exile.

Bangladesh is the latest in a series of youth-driven uprisings that have shaken countries in Asia and Africa this year. In February, young Pakistanis delivered a shock result when, defying the military, they voted en masse for the imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan, giving his allies the highest number of votes and seats in parliament.

The following month, young Senegalese voters reclaimed their democracy in an election that was nearly stolen from them. Bassirou Diomaye Faye, a little-known tax inspector, was catapulted from prison to the presidency in the space of just a few weeks.

Then, in June, the tremors reached Kenya, where protesters, proudly identifying themselves as "Gen Z," took to the streets to express their outrage against



Binaifer Nowrojee

BANGLADESH IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF YOUTH-DRIVEN UPRISINGS THAT HAVE SHAKEN COUNTRIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA THIS YEAR



Aakar Patel

I have come away from the experience with disappointment at how shallow the RWI environment is. Intellectually, it is stunted and does not offer to the viewer or listener (or reader) anything particularly useful

Let nothing short of Perfection be your ideal in work and you are sure to become a true instrument of the Divine

THE MOTHER



Baffled Bhakts

Like many of you I have avoided social media content produced by those referred to as "right wing influencers," more colloquially called "bhakts," but referred to in this column as RWIs. There was no occasion to do so in the period after 2014, because we already had the government beating its own drum. Why listen to the melodies of those participating in the chorus? But after the Bharatiya Janata Party lost its majority on 4 June, I felt I should examine the prime minister's most dedicated ambassadors. So much of the last week has been spent in watching this content and what follows is a collection of reflections on it.

First it is important to note that the major figures among them are not large in number, many are anonymous and the most popular among them often struggle to get a fraction of the views that people like Ravish Kumar and Dhruv Rathee get. The reasons for this appear to me to be two things. One, that at the core they repeat the government's claims (on things like its performance and delivery) and so their base audience is limited. Why should one listen to sycophancy second-hand when the primary source is available? The other is that they seem to be always angry or sulking, and that does not make for particularly watchable content.

The second thing, and this is unfortunate, is that the RWIs remain even in the first week of September quite shattered with the results of 4 June. Supporters of another party, any other party, would be delighted to have retained office and kept all the ministers. But the RWIs require the master to have total domination of the sort that 240 seats cannot give him or, by extension, them. They are baffled at the result and unable to contextualise it because all the "new India" stuff and the rest of it have vanished overnight.

The third thing is that RWIs are convinced that it was conspiracies by the Opposition's social media teams that led to the loss of the BJP's majority. In particular the two things that were spread as fake news were that the BJP would end reservations and change the Constitution. Indeed it is extraordinary the extent to which they seem to think that narrative and media affect voting patterns. Their belief is that if this "fake news" had received firm response from the BJP it would have won 300 seats again, if not more.

It should be noted that these creators are themselves anti-reservation. This is because they are urban upper caste people protecting their class interests. It does not appear that they are conscious of the fact that they, Modi's bhakts, speaking angrily against reservations would likely affect voters. Their sentiment is also targeted at an individual named Amit Malviya who apparently runs the BJP's social media, but I could not understand why they were angry at him.

The fourth thing is that they have a dislike of turncoats that the BJP has taken into the party, in states like Maharashtra. Here one must agree with them that it has harmed the BJP, however their sentiment is driven as much by a rejection of corruption as by a desire for ideological purity.

This is linked to another aspect, which is their hatred of any talk of inclusion and secularism by the BJP. The party president JP Nadda spoke during the campaign of the BJP not needing the RSS, of the BJP not being synonymous with saffron and following "sabka saath." This has not gone down well.

The fifth thing is that the RWIs appear to feel personally humiliated at all the U-turns the Modi government has taken since the results. They have not registered the fact that the decade of top-down ideological government has concluded and a new form of working will need to be found by the prime minister. On matters like the Waqf bill and on lateral entry they are particularly agitated.

The sixth thing is that Modi's image remains intact with them. Perhaps they see this setback as a passing phase, but it is hard after having gone over hours and hours of their content to find any criticism of the prime minister or his manner of functioning. Actual issues, like employment or inflation do not seem to them to be important. They have only praise for his ability to govern. Corporate capture of politics and media and nepotism inside the BJP also do not seem to register with the RWIs. Perhaps that is one reason for their bafflement: that the election result was voter rejection of Modi, his performance over the decade and his guarantees for the future do not appear to have crossed their mind.

The seventh and final thing is that they are quite rabid. And this is not only because of their views but also their words. The language they use for minorities, for marginalised communities and so on is nasty. Their worldview is dark and does not accommodate middle ground, compromise or moderation.

I have come away from the experience with disappointment at how shallow the RWI environment is. Intellectually, it is stunted and does not offer to the viewer or listener (or reader) anything particularly useful. It does not and will not be able to offer support to the prime minister as he navigates a new path of inclusion. Indeed, RWIs will likely add to his troubles as he tries to do something fresh while his devotees ache for an era that has passed.

SPECTRUM UPI

Shaping the future of transactions



Dharendra Kumar Sahoo

UPI'S USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE AND SINGLE-CLICK TRANSACTIONS MADE DIGITAL PAYMENTS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

In a significant leap forward for India's digital payments ecosystem, the RBI has proposed setting up a 'delegated payments' facility under the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). This feature will allow a primary user to authorise a secondary user, such as a family member, to make UPI transactions directly from the primary user's bank account up to a specified limit.

This innovative feature enables users to authorise third-party apps to make payments on their behalf, streamlining transactions and enhancing convenience. Delegated payments allow users to delegate their payment authority to trusted third-party apps, such as e-commerce platforms, bill payment services, or fintech companies.

Delegated payments enable a primary user to set a UPI transaction limit for a secondary user on the primary user's bank account. This solution is anticipated to enhance the accessibility and utilisation of digital payments nationwide. The RBI has made another significant announcement by increasing the limit for tax payments using UPI from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction. The RBI stated that this action was taken due to the widespread, frequent, and substantial nature of direct and indirect tax payments. By delegating payment authority, users reduce their exposure to sensitive

banking information. Additionally, UPI's robust security measures, including encryption and two-factor authentication, ensure that transactions are secure.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised the financial system from paper-based to virtual, enabling fast and safe money transfers between bank accounts. Moreover, ICT enabled a variety of electronic payment mechanisms, commonly called digital payment services, within which UPI has gained popularity. It instantly transfers money between bank accounts through a single mobile application with a unique UPI ID or Virtual Payment Address (VPA). It operates 24/7, ensuring that transactions can be completed instantly at any time, irrespective of banking hours. Developed by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), UPI has transformed the way Indians make transactions, fostering financial inclusion, and innovation. UPI's user-friendly interface and single-click transactions made digital payments accessible to all.

UPI has a larger user base of 424 million individual users. The transactions grew from Rs 1 lakh crore in FY18 to Rs 139 lakh crore in FY23 in value, at a CAGR of 168%. In terms of volume, UPI transactions have grown from 92

crore in FY18 to 8,375 crore in FY23 at a CAGR of 147%. During FY24, UPI achieved a significant milestone by exceeding 100 billion transactions for the first time ending the year at 131 billion, compared to 84 billion in FY23.

In the present day, over 40% of all payments in India are digital, with UPI accounting for the majority. This service is utilised by over 30 crore individuals and over five crore merchants. The data from NPCI also indicated that the average daily transaction value via UPI in July 2024 amounted to 466 million, amounting to Rs 66,590 crore. The UPI payment system is undoubtedly an Indian innovation that has garnered global attention in recent years.

In 2020, the NPCI established an entity known as NIPL (NPCI International Payments Limited) to expand the payments system beyond the country, following the success of UPI on a domestic scale. NIPL and RBI have since engaged into agreements with financial entities in over 30 nations to expand UPI-based transactions beyond India's borders. France, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Singapore, Bhutan, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka have recently embraced the UPI movement. UPI's entry into France is a significant development, as it enables the company to establish a presence in Europe for the first

time. PM Modi has advocated for the expansion of UPI into the BRICS grouping, which recently added six new member states.

The continuous growth of UPI transactions and new achievements reflect the collective efforts of technological visionaries, financial institutions, and regulators. UPI's success story in India serves as a model for digital payments globally. Its impact on financial inclusion, convenience, and innovation has been remarkable. While UPI has achieved significant success in India, its global adoption is still in the early stages. As NPCI continues to expand UPI's reach, it has the potential to transform the way people make payments worldwide.

The proposed delegated payments through UPI mark a significant milestone in India's journey towards a cashless economy. By enhancing convenience, security, and user experience, this feature is poised to drive increased adoption of digital payments and financial inclusion. As the ecosystem continues to evolve, delegated payments will play a vital role in shaping the future of transactions in India.

The writer is a Senior Research Associate at Lok Sabha Secretariat, Parliament of India.

WISDOM CORNER

- There are only two kinds of men: the righteous who think they are sinners and the sinners who think they are righteous. **BLAISE PASCAL**
- Be regular and orderly in your life, so that you may be violent and original in your work. **GUSTAVE FLAUBERT**
- It is better wither to be silent, or to say things of more value than silence. Sooner throw a pearl at hazard than an idle or useless word; and do not say a little in many words, but a great deal in a few. **PYTHAGORAS**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1923:** A great earthquake struck the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area; the death toll from the shock was estimated at 142,800.
- 1952:** Life magazine published Ernest Hemingway's Old Man and the Sea, his last major work of fiction; it was also released as a book, and in 1953 it won a Pulitzer Prize.
- 1954:** The thriller Rear Window, directed by Alfred Hitchcock and starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly, opened in American theatres, and it became a film classic.
- 1969:** A group of young army officers led by Muammar al-Qaddafi deposed the king and made Libya a republic.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Demearing competition

Sir, This refers to "Mamata writes to Modi again," Orissa POST, August 31. Mamata Banerjee is agitating for death penalty for rape convicts, and setting ultimatums for investigators in the RG Kar case. Before that, TMC and BJP sparred over fast-track courts. As political rivalry hits fever pitch, outrage over sexual violence has been reduced to an instrument, rather than being seen for the pervasive crisis it is. Instead of justice, we witness a demearing competition over which leader asked for the quicker fix, who demanded the more dire punishment. Setting summary deadlines to punish culprits, fighting over fast-track courts and so on, are about playing to a mob, not furthering justice. Our unforgivably slow, interrupted judicial process does let down victims of sexual crime, and this needs redress. But legal trials are about examining evidence, sifting the claims of defence and prosecution — where hurry is as bad as delay. The need for speed can cause cases to collapse because of shoddy investigation. The idea of 'settling scores' or delivering rough justice to pre-decided targets, rather than the patient labour of a fair trial, erodes the legitimacy of law enforcement. The rule of law should not be disfigured by those who opportunistically claim to speak for the public.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Nurture talent

Sir, Avani Lekhara made us all proud again as she defended her 2020 Tokyo Paralympics gold medal. She is now the first Indian to claim successive gold medals in Paralympics. India was abuzz when Manu Bhaker won two bronze medals in the recently concluded Olympic Games but the same fervor was not seen for Avani which is very saddening. Not to compare but the Indian Paralympic brigade has already bettered the recently concluded Olympic medal tally. Looking at our country's sports budget these types of results are no less than miracles. Sports still plays second fiddle to studies in Indian schools. Our country boasts of a large number of river systems but we have not yet produced a star swimmer. Talents are bounty in our country, the onus is on the government to nurture them.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

J&K ASSEMBLY POLLS

BATTLE LINES DRAWN FOR 1ST PHASE OF J&K POLLS

Tickets get BJP in tricky situation

2 MORE LEADERS QUIT BJP OVER SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 31: Two more BJP leaders, including a district president, submitted their resignations from the primary membership of the party Saturday, citing their resentment against the choice of candidates in their constituencies for the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a related development, hundreds of BJP workers took out a rally in the Khour block of the Chhamb Assembly constituency in the outskirts of Jammu against fielding former MLA Rajeev Sharma from there. The BJP is facing resentment over its ticket distribution in the Union Territory immediately after it started releasing the list of candidates for the Assembly elections August 26, with party leaders and workers protesting in several districts of the Jammu region.

In a damage control exercise, the party mobilised several top leaders, including Union ministers, to reach out to disgruntled leaders to defuse the situation. Two of its rebel leaders have already filed their nominations as Independent candidates from Ramban and Padder-Nagseni Assembly constituencies, which are among 24 constituencies going to polls in the first phase



of the three-phased elections September 18.

"With a heavy heart, I am submitting my resignation from the primary membership of the party for which I have worked for 42 long years. I was compelled by the circumstances after the party gave ticket to a person who had come from the National Conference (NC) and vociferously opposed our ideology for decades," party's Samba district president Kashmir Singh said.

The BJP has fielded former minister Surjit Singh Slathia, who joined the party in October 2021 after quitting the NC, from the Samba constituency which was opened in the general category after being reserved for the Scheduled Castes for 28 years.

"We strengthened the BJP in Samba and made numerous sacrifices to carry forward the ideology of Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mukherjee and

the BJP. We held demonstrations and organised strikes for the revocation of Article 370 and the ticket was given to the one who was always against our ideology and the revocation of Article 370. This is not justice with ordinary workers," Singh alleged.

However, Singh said he will take back his resignation if the party leadership decides to change the candidate and give ticket to any senior member of the party, otherwise he said, "I am going to take forward this struggle and file my nomination papers as an independent candidate against him."

He said it was a difficult decision for him to leave the party which he had nourished with "my blood and sweat".

In his resignation letter to Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina, he said he asked for "one reason for denying me the ticket, but no one was able to

give a reply." "The party valued me as a leader only when work was needed, but when it came to distributing tickets, they brought in someone from outside. If the ticket had been given to any party worker, I would not have taken this step, but bringing an outsider has left me with no other option," he said, alleging that the BJP has become a place where favouritism overshadows dedication.

Another BJP youth leader Kanav Sharma also resigned from the party to protest against ticket to a "corrupt leader".

Kanav Sharma, Jammu district president of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, said he is a third generation member of his family associated with the organisation and its ideology but the decision of the party to give ticket to Yuhvir Sethi from Jammu East is not acceptable to his conscience.

"Sethi is well known for his corrupt practices when his wife Priya Sethi was education minister... I hereby tender my resignation along with my team members and my team is dissolved with immediate effect," Sharma said in his resignation letter posted on social media.

The BJP faced strong resentment from party workers from Jammu North, Jammu East, Padder, Ramban, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Chhamb and Akhnour constituencies over ticket distribution.

OBSERVERS FEEL THAT THE CONTEST IN MOST SEATS IN KASHMIR IS EXPECTED TO BE MULTI-CORNERED, AS THE DELIMITATION OF SEATS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE NEW COMPLEXITIES

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 31: The battle lines have been drawn for the first phase of polls in Jammu and Kashmir, with most seats expected to witness multi-cornered contests.

The Assembly elections in J&K, being held after a decade, will see polling for the first phase September 18.

As the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers for 24 Assembly constituencies in the first phase ended Friday evening, a total of 219 candidates remained in the fray.

In Kashmir, 155 candidates are contesting across 16 Assembly constituencies spread over four districts of Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, and Shopian.

The highest number of candidates—14—are contesting in the Pampore Assembly constituency in Pulwama district, while the lowest—three—are contesting in the Srigufwara-Bijbehara Assembly constituency



in Anantnag district. The key contestants in the first phase include senior Congress working committee member Ghulam Ahmed Mir, Iltija Mufti, daughter of Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti, CPIM leader Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, PDP youth leader Waheed Para, former MP and National Conference leader Hasnain Masood, senior NC leader Sakeena Itoo, BJP leader Sofi Yousuf, and Talat Majeed, a former member of banned Jamaat-e-Islam, among others. Observers feel that the con-

test in most seats in Kashmir is expected to be multi-cornered, as the delimitation of seats has contributed to the new complexities.

With Congress and the National Conference entering into a poll alliance with the NC bagging 51 seats and the Congress 32; two seats were left for allies CPI(M) and Panthers Party, it would face a tough contest from PDP and Independents.

While the NC-Congress alliance looks good, it will be interesting to see whether this translates into collaboration at the level of party cadres.

Fortnight-long study begins at 6 high-risk glacial lakes in Sikkim



As per the assessment carried out by the NDMA, there are 189 high-risk glacial lakes in India, of which 40 are in Sikkim alone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: A fortnight-long study was launched Saturday to evaluate the volume, depth and longitudinal profile of six high-risk glacial lakes in Sikkim, according to the officials.

Being conducted at the behest of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Glacial Lake Susceptibility Assessment Study (GLSAS) will help characterise the physical dimensions of the lakes using a bathymetry survey, they said.

The study will perform a geophysical assessment of the moraine

dam to evaluate its stability and potential risk factors using an Electrical Resistivity Tomography survey (ERT) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR).

The objective of this expedition to Mangan district is to conduct a detailed susceptibility assessment of the high-risk Tenchungkha, Khangchung Chho, Lachen Khangtse, Lachung Khangtse, La Tsho and Shako Chho glacial lakes.

If time permits, a rapid assessment of a few other lakes will also be attempted, the officials said. The expedition will make a slope stability assessment of the glacial lake to assess mass movement hazards.

Besides, the study will conduct a morphometric survey of the glacial lake and its adjacent landscape, measure lake discharge and assess the outlet flow dynamics to understand the lake's hydrology and use a drone for 3D terrain mapping to build a high-resolution terrain

model, the officials said. The high sensitivity of glaciers to a changing climate is leading to widespread glacier retreat across the globe.

Glacial lakes are rapidly growing in number and area as a direct consequence of this glacier recession.

These lakes pose a significant risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF). These floods can be catastrophic and threaten lives, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment.

Sikkim was impacted by a glacial flood event October 4, 2023, from the South Lhonak Glacial Lake, severely impacting lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and the fragile ecosystem.

The state is yet to recover from the catastrophic effects of this GLOF as it has crippled the road infrastructure, hydropower development and the tourism economy, the officials said.

Unlike other disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, cloudbursts and landslides, GLOF disasters can be prevented.

Reducing the water volume in glacial lakes is crucial to mitigate the risk of GLOFs, which can be achieved through structural and non-structural measures.

As per the assessment carried out by the NDMA, there are 189 high-risk glacial lakes in India, of which 40 are in Sikkim alone.

These lakes are located in remote, high-altitude areas with complex topography and frigid climate.

1962 war era Chinese mortar smoke bomb found in Assam



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tezpur (Assam), August 31: A mortar smoke bomb, believed to be of the 1962 Indo-China war era, was recovered from a river bed in Assam's Sonitpur district, a top police official said Saturday.

The bomb, which was found in Dhekiajuli area, has been safely blasted with the help of Army personnel, he added. Sonitpur Superintendent of Police Barun Purkayastha

Top Army officer takes stock of Chenab valley

JAMMU: A top Army officer Saturday reviewed the security situation in the Doda and Kishtwar districts of Chenab valley, which is going to polls along with south Kashmir districts in the first phase September 18, officials said. General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Jammu-based White Knight Corps Lt General Navin Sachdeva also assessed the annual three-day Kailash Kund Yatra which commenced from Dudu-Basantgarh in the Udhampur district Friday amid heightened vigil and aerial surveillance, the officials said. Sachdeva along with GOC, counter-insurgency force Delta, conducted a security review of the operational preparedness in the Sulgarh and Patnazi sectors of Doda-Kishtwar.

said the two-inch-long explosive was discovered by a person from Jougapur village while fishing in the Sesa river Friday evening.

"The area comes under Missamari police station. The bomb most likely is Chinese-made and from the 1962 war," he said. The war was fought in Arunachal Pradesh, neighbouring Assam.

Mortar smoke bomb is a type of ammunition used for variety of purposes, like creating a smoke screen to evade enemy fire or to prevent enemy reconnaissance and surveillance.

"It has been safely blasted with the help of an Army team from Missamari camp, led by Lt. Col. Abhijit Mishra," the SP added.

EAST COAST RAILWAY E-TENDER FOR CATERING STALLS. SI. No. 1: Station & Location-BHADRAK, Platform-1&2 (Near RMS Office), SI. No. 2: Station & Location-PURI, Platform-5&6 (In between pole no. 19 & 20), SI. No. 3: Station & Location-ANGUL, Platform-2&3 (Middle). Category of Reservation: GUMU (for all SI Nos.). E-Tender Date & Time: at 1100 hrs. of 23.09.2024 (for all SI Nos.). Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in and check all the details regarding eligibility criteria, detail of site and any other information. Divisional Commercial Manager-II, PR-483/P/24-25, Khurda Road

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - BALANGIR. Address: Office of the Balangir Municipal Council, Balangir, Opp. of Rajendra Park, Balangir, Pin : 767001, Ph. No. : 06652 232720, Email ID : bgrme1972@gmail.com. Letter No. - 3371 Date - 29.08.2024. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL. No. C-522 : Balangir Municipality invites Request for Proposal (RFP) in Double Covers from reputed NGOS/CBOs/Agencies/Joint Ventures/Company/Service Providers for Providing Sanitation Services in the Designated Zones under Balangir Municipality. The sealed RFP document supported by relevant details and proof of their eligibility is to be submitted in closed covers addressed to the Executive Officer, Balangir Municipality, Dist. - Balangir (Odisha), PIN-767001 on or before 1.00 PM 01.10.2024 through Speed Post/Registered Post only. The complete RFP document can be downloaded from the Balangir District website (https://balangir.odisha.gov.in/) from 31.08.2024 onwards. Any changes/correction/corrigendum in respect the above shall be placed on Balangir District website (https://balangir.odisha.gov.in/) only. All bidders are requested to go through the RFP before submission of proposal. Balangir Municipality reserves the right to reject any or all the RFP without assigning any reason thereof. Sd./ Executive Officer Balangir Municipality. OIPR-13169/11/0012/2425

ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ପରିଷଦ, କୁନାଗଡ଼, କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି. ପବିତ୍ର ନିଖୁଳ ଭାରତ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଶାସନ ଦିବସ ୨୦୨୪ ପାଳନ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଓ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି। ଏହା ସଙ୍ଗେ ମା'ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ତ ସହରବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ସୁଖ ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିରେ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରଖିବା ବୋଲି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବା ସହିତ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ବିଷୟ ପ୍ରତି ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ବିନମ୍ର ନିବେଦନ କରୁଅଛୁ। ୧. ନିଜ ପରିବେଶକୁ ପରିଷ୍କାର ରଖନ୍ତୁ ଓ ସହରକୁ ପରିଷ୍କାର ରଖିବା ଦିଗରେ ପରିଷଦକୁ ସହଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ। ୨. ଅଧିକ ଆବର୍ଜନା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କିମ୍ବା ନର୍ଦ୍ଦମାରେ ନ ପକାଇ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଭାଗ୍ୟମାଗ ଆବର୍ଜନା ସଂଗ୍ରହ ଯାନରେ ପକାନ୍ତୁ। ୩. ପରିଷଦର ବିନା ଅନୁମତିରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ। ୪. ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ପରିଷଦର ଟିକସ ଓ ପରିଷଦର ଦେୟ ପୈଠ କରି ସହରର ଉନ୍ନୟନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ସହଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ। ୫. ଗୃହ ଉପକରଣ ସାମଗ୍ରୀ ରାସ୍ତା ଉପରେ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ ଓ ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ରାସ୍ତା ଅବରୋଧ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ। ପ୍ରମୋଦ କୁମାର ଖୁଲୋ ହିମାଦ୍ରୀ ନାଏକ ନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଉପାଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷା ତଥା ସମସ୍ତ ପାରିଷଦସଭ୍ୟ, କୁନାଗଡ଼ ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ

Assam to get its newest wildlife sanctuary

Known for its rich wildlife, Poba Reserve Forest serves as an important migratory route for various animals, particularly elephants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, August 31: The Poba Reserve Forest, a rainforest located in the northeastern part of Assam, will soon be notified as a wildlife sanctuary, state Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

The proposed Poba Wildlife Sanctuary will encompass an area of 257.29 sq km, including the Poba Reserve Forest, Kabu Chapri Proposed Reserve Forest and the surrounding riverine areas, he said.

Making the announcement Friday, the minister said it is a testament of the government's com-



mitment for conservation and sustainable development of the state's natural resources and biodiversity. Known for its rich wildlife, Poba Reserve Forest serves as an

important migratory route for various animals, particularly elephants, as it connects the D' Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, Kabu Chapri Proposed Reserve Forest

and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, an official statement said.

This corridor is the second significant elephant migration route from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra river, the other being the Panpur-Kaziranga route.

Herds of approximately 70-80 elephants migrate across the river at various times, while male elephants utilise these routes almost throughout the year.

Poba Reserve Forest is home to various arboreal species, including the slow loris and capped langur. Among the most common mammal species is the wild boar.

The forest is also a habitat for about 45 species of birds and reptiles, and the confluence of Siang and Lohit rivers supports a diverse range of fish species.

Moreover, the forest is renowned for its variety of orchids, making it an attractive destination for nature enthusiasts and researchers alike, the statement added.

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT NEW DELHI. JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024 INVITES SUGGESTIONS ON 'THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024'. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, as introduced in Lok Sabha has been referred to the Joint Committee of Parliament for examination and report. Considering the wider implications of the proposed Bill, the Committee under the Chairpersonship of Shri Jagdambika Pal, M.P. have decided to invite memoranda containing views/suggestions from the public in general and NGOs/experts/stakeholders and institutions in particular. 2. Those desirous of submitting written memoranda/suggestions to the Committee may send two copies thereof either in English or in Hindi to JOINT SECRETARY(JM), LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT, ROOM No.440, PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI-110001, TEL.No(s) 23034440/ 23035284, FAX NUMBER: 23017709 and mail the same to jpcwaqf-lss@sansad.nic.in within 15 days from the date of publication of this advertisement. Text of 'The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024' is available on the Lok Sabha website (link for English version- https://sansad.in/ls/legislation/bills and link for Hindi version- https://sansad.in/ls/hi/legislation/bills (Bill No. 109)) 3. The memoranda/suggestions submitted to the Committee would form part of the records of the Committee and would be treated as 'confidential' and enjoy privileges of the Committee. 4. Those who are desirous of appearing before the Committee, besides submitting memoranda, are requested to specifically indicate so. However, the Committee's decision in this regard shall be final.



The politics of dividing SCs and STs being done by the governments of Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu even before the Supreme Court's decision is not right
MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

EX-JMM MLA LOBIN HEMBROM JOINS BJP

A day after former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren joined the BJP, ex-JMM legislator Lobin Hembrom Saturday crossed over to the saffron camp. Hembrom was given membership of the BJP by the party's state chief Babulal Marandi in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma



of the day quote

Soon the salaries of the employees will be delayed frequently and finally the government will say that it has no money to pay the salaries
JAI RAM THAKUR | BJP LEADER

Sometimes we feel helpless at not being able to do anything for them. We represent the country at international levels but we could not do anything for our own family. It is a request that the government should listen to them
VINESH PHOGAT | OLYMPIC WRESTLER

I thank the Speaker of the assembly in Assam as well as the government of the state for taking the step. It is essential to have uniformity in law and no preferential treatment should be given to any religious community
GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER



Devotees during a religious procession as the idol of Lord Ganesha being carried to a pandal (temporary shelter) from the workshop ahead of the 'Ganesh Chaturthi' festival in Mumbai, Maharashtra

IMD predicts 'above normal' rainfall in Sept

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 31: After a wetter-than-normal August, India is likely to experience above normal rainfall in September, with heavy to very heavy precipitation expected in northwest India and the surrounding areas.

Above normal rainfall is likely over most parts of India, except for some areas in extreme northwest India, many parts of the southern peninsula, northern Bihar, and northeastern Uttar Pradesh, as well as most of northeast India, where below normal rainfall is expected, the IMD said.

Addressing a virtual press conference, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said that the country is expected to receive above normal rainfall in September, at 109 per cent of the long-period average of 167.9 mm.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is anticipated in the northwest region, including Uttarakhand, parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, and the adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh.

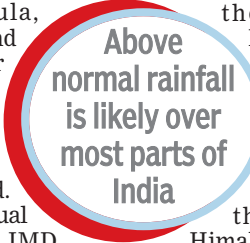
"There could be episodes of extremely heavy rainfall in these areas, potentially leading to floods. We should remain cautious of landslides, mudslides, and landslips," Mohapatra said.

"We anticipate a low-pressure system developing over the Bay of Bengal each week of the month, which will result in significant rainfall across the country," he added.

The monsoon trough is expected to remain in its normal position, with the possibility of several low-pressure systems developing in the Bay of Bengal, which may travel towards west-northwest up to Rajasthan. The trough could also shift towards the foothills of the Himalayas, and there is a potential for a western disturbance to affect the region in September, Mohapatra said.

Several districts in the foothills of the Himalayas and the north-east experienced below-normal rainfall as most of the low-pressure systems moved south of their usual position, and the monsoon trough also remained south of its typical position, the IMD chief said.

Many states in the northeast, along with Kerala and the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, experienced deficient rainfall, he added. The IMD chief said that six low-pressure systems formed in August, two of which intensified into monsoon depression or deep depression. There were 17 low-pressure system days this August, compared to the normal of 16.3 days.



CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

PM bats for speedy justice

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday underlined the need for swift justice in cases involving crime against women and said that it will give them greater assurance of their safety.

His remarks come against the backdrop of the rape and murder of a Kolkata doctor and sexual assault on two kindergarten girls in Maharashtra's Thane.

Modi also said the judiciary is considered a guardian of the Constitution, and that the Supreme Court and the judiciary have lived up to the responsibility. Addressing the inaugural session of a national conference of the district judiciary in the presence of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Modi referred to the "burning issue" of atrocities against women and safety of children and said it was a matter of serious concern.

Noting that stringent provisions have been made in laws for safety of women, the prime minister referred to the fast track special court scheme launched in 2019.

The district monitoring committees, comprising the district judge, the district magistrate and the superintendent of police, can play a key role, he said.

Pointing to the important role of the panel in coordinating between various aspects of the criminal justice system, Modi stressed on the need to make these committees more active.

The Kolkata incident has also become a flashpoint between the TMC government in West Bengal and the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday wrote to Modi, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment on heinous crimes like rape and murder

On Friday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to Modi, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment on heinous crimes like rape and murder. In response, Union minister Annapurna Devi asserted that existing laws were stringent enough to tackle violence and crimes against women and urged the West Bengal government to implement the same in "letter and spirit".

The government launched the Fast Track Special Court (FTSC) scheme in 2019 to tackle pending cases of crimes against women

and those filed under The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. Since its inception, these courts have disposed of more than 2.53 lakh cases.

Referring to the role of Judiciary in protecting the Constitution and the spirit of law, the prime minister said the people of India have never shown any distrust of the Supreme Court or the judiciary.

Describing the imposition of the Emergency as a "dark" period, he said the judiciary played a key role in upholding fundamental rights. On matters of national security, Modi said, the judiciary has protected national integrity by keeping national interests paramount. Terming the Judiciary as a "strong pillar" of the vision of a developed India, he said the district judiciary is the foundation of the Indian judicial system. "The common citizen of the country first knocks on your (the lower courts) door for justice. Therefore, this is the first point of justice, this is the first step," Modi said.

Andhra: Eight killed in rain-related incidents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), August 31: Eight persons have been killed in rain-related incidents in Andhra Pradesh Saturday including five in Vijayawada due to landslides, officials said.

Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra said five persons died due to landslides at Mogalrajapuram. "Here, it is five (deaths due to landslide). There may be more also," Dhyanaachandra told PTI and said debris clearance would be resumed Sunday morning.

According to the Municipal Commissioner, landslides occurred at one single point in Mogalrajapuram with large boulders falling on two houses due to heavy rain.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the kin of the landslide victims, said an official statement. The CM directed officials to shift people from places prone to landslides. At Pedakani village in Guntur district, a teacher and two students returning home in a hatchback car died after the vehicle was washed away while crossing an overflowing stream.

After elephants, monkeys found to 'name' each other: Study

Researchers found that marmoset monkeys, native to South America, use specific vocal calls, called "phee-calls", to identify and communicate with each other

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: After elephants, now monkeys have been found to make specific sounds to name each other, according to a new study.

Researchers found that marmoset monkeys, native to South America, use specific vocal calls, called "phee-calls", to identify and communicate with each other.

A study published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution in June showed that wild African elephants addressed each other with name-like calls, uniquely invented for each individual. Calls meant for other elephants did get responded to.

In this study, published in the journal Science, the researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, recorded natural conversations between pairs of marmosets, as well as interactions between monkeys and a computer system.

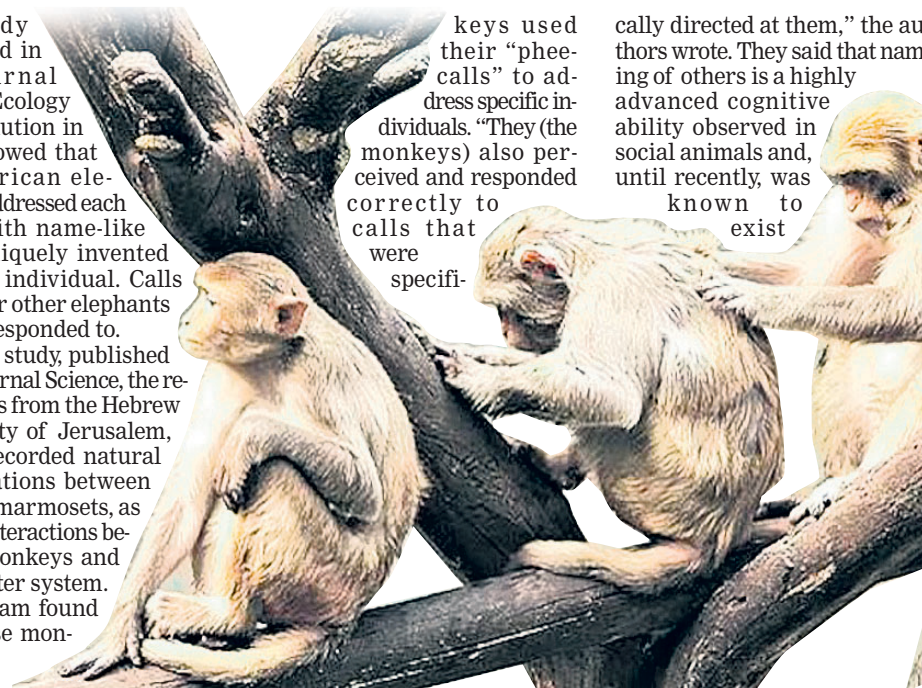
The team found that these monkeys used their "phee-calls" to address specific individuals. "They (the monkeys) also perceived and responded correctly to calls that were specifically directed at them," the authors wrote. They said that naming of others is a highly advanced cognitive ability observed in social animals and, until recently, was known to exist only in humans, dolphins, and elephants.

The discovery suggests that the marmosets' ability to vocally label each other may provide valuable insights into the evolution of human language, the researchers said.

"Marmosets live in small monogamous family groups and take care of their young together, much like humans do. These similarities suggest that they faced comparable evolutionary social challenges to our early pre-linguistic ancestors, which might have led them to develop similar communicating methods," lead researcher David Omer

from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem said.

The researchers also revealed that family members within a marmoset group use similar vocal labels to address different individuals and employ similar sound features to code different names -- similar to the use of names and dialects in humans. This learning appears to occur even among adult marmosets not related by blood, suggesting that they learn both vocal labels and dialect from other members of their family group, the team said. The authors believe that this vocal labelling may have evolved to help marmosets stay connected in their dense rainforest habitat, where visibility is often limited. By using these calls, they can maintain their social bonds and keep the group cohesive, the team said.



SHORT TAKES

Teen stabbed eight times over road rag

New Delhi: A 19-year-old youth was left critically injured after seven boys attacked him with knives in South Delhi's Neb Sarai area, police said Saturday. Yash, with multiple injuries on his body, has been admitted to a hospital, where his condition is stated to be critical, they said. Yash, a resident of Raju Park, was stabbed by a group of minors on Friday when he was out over a road rage incident that took place a day before. Four knives used in the stabbing have been recovered.

Five booked for assaulting Dalit

Shahdol (MP): Five persons, including three minors, were booked Saturday for allegedly assaulting a 17-year-old Dalit boy in Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh and forcing him to perform humiliating acts, a police official said. He was made to squat and hold his earlobes in a way that is called 'murga banana' in local parlance and is handed down as a punishment, and was also made to caw like a crow, the official said.

Man gets life term for rape of minor

Kota (Rajasthan): A POCSO court here gave life sentence to a 71-year-old man for raping his 5-year-old granddaughter in Baran city, a lawyer said Saturday. Judge Sonia Beniwal convicted Heralal for the crime committed at his home in October 2022 and slapped a fine of ₹50,000 on him Friday, he said. Public Prosecutor Harinarayan Singh said the mother and aunt of the minor caught Heralal in the act of rape in his room. The statements of 18 witnesses were recorded during the trial and 24 pieces of evidence were produced before the court, the lawyer said.

Yechury unwell

New Delhi: CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury continues to be under treatment at AIIMS, New Delhi, for a respiratory infection, the party said Saturday. He is currently in the intensive care unit (ICU) and recovering, a party source said. Yechury (72) was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) August 19 for treatment of a pneumonia-like chest infection. The exact nature of his ailment was not revealed by the hospital.

SNIPPETS

Two killed in explosion at TN firecracker godown

Thoothukudi: Two workers were killed and four others including two women injured in an explosion at a fireworks factory warehouse near Nazareth in the district Saturday evening, police said. The sudden blast occurred when the workers were handling the firecrackers. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin expressed grief over the incident and announced a solatium of ₹3 lakh each to the family of the deceased. While two of them, who were later identified as Kannan and Vijay were killed, four others have been rushed to the Tirunelveli Government Medical College Hospital and Sathankulam government hospital for treatment, police said.

PM Modi flags off three Vande Bharat trains

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually flagged off three new Vande Bharat trains Saturday to enhance connectivity on three routes -- Meerut-Lucknow; Madurai-Bangalore; and Chennai-Nagercoil and to save the time of commuters on these routes. PM Modi flagged off the three state-of-the-art Vande Bharat Express trains at 12.30 P.M. catering to the three states of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. The Meerut City-Lucknow Vande Bharat will help passengers save around one hour compared to the current fastest train between the two cities.

Rahul to visit Dallas, Washington DC

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit the US from September 8-10 during which he will hold numerous interactions in Washington DC and Dallas, including at the University of Texas. Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda shared details of Gandhi's first visit to the US after becoming the leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha in June. "Since Rahul Gandhi has become the leader of Opposition, I, as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, which has a presence in 32 countries, (have) been bombarded with requests from the Indian diaspora, diplomats, academicians, businesspersons, leaders, international media and many others, for interactions with him," Pitroda said in a video statement.

ECI revises Haryana poll date from Oct 1 to Oct 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: The Election Commission Saturday deferred the Haryana assembly poll date to October 5 from October 1, keeping in mind a centuries-old festival of the Bishnoi community.

The counting of votes for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana assembly polls will now be held October 8 instead of October 4, the poll body said.

It said the decision has been taken to honour both the voting rights and traditions of the Bishnoi community, which has upheld a 300-400-year-old practice in remembrance of their Guru Jambheshwar.

national

of the day quote

Arunachal Pradesh is more important from a defence point of view and the government of India is committed to extending all kinds of assistance for its economic growth

BHUPATHIRAJU SRINIVASA VARMA
UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR STEEL AND INDUSTRIES

The reason why I have emphasised on this issue is that the democratic fabric of a nation is dependent on the court's embracing the significance of liberty in the context of our polity. Liberty is the foundational substratum of a thriving democracy. Any attempt to throttle it impacts the quality of our democracy

KAPIL SIBAL | RAJYA SABHA MP, SENIOR ADVOCATE

The Kolkata Police following the directive of the state government had offered the father money while telling him that the body of his daughter be cremated without delay

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY
BENGAL CONGRESS PRESIDENT

X POST OF THE DAY

The repeated targeting of our people (Thadou in this case), often under the guise of peace rallies, is a deeply troubling trend. Such acts of provocation will not be tolerated. We will ensure that those responsible are held accountable. Moreover, action will be taken against the concerned officials who failed to provide adequate security, despite prior warnings of potential threats

@NBirenSingh

SHORT TAKES

Amrit Lal new chief secy of Bihar

Patna: Senior IAS officer Amrit Lal Meena Saturday took over as the new chief secretary of Bihar. A 1989 batch officer, who was previously on deputation to the Centre, Meena succeeded Brajesh Mehrotra who retires August 31. Earlier, Friday, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet had approved the repatriation of Meena, who was serving as the secretary in the Union Ministry of Coal to Bihar on the request of the Nitish Kumar government.

NIA conducts searches in Bihar

New Delhi: As part of a crackdown on the banned outfit CPI (Maoist), the NIA conducted searches at seven locations in two districts of Bihar and seized incriminating digital devices, documents and ammunition, an official statement said Saturday. Searches were conducted Friday at five locations in Kaimur district and two in Rohtas district in the case connected with the arrest of two key CPI (Maoist) leaders, Vijay Kumar Arya and Umesh Chaudhary, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said.

70 roads closed in HP

Shimla: Seventy roads have been closed in Himachal Pradesh following rains in the state, while more showers have been predicted at isolated places Monday, officials said Saturday. Of the 70 roads, 35 are closed in Shimla, 12 in Mandi, 11 in Kangra, nine in Kullu and one each in Una, Sirmour, and Lahaul and Spiti districts, according to the state emergency operation centre.



The fifth incident of rape of a minor has come to light in Jodhpur in 15 days. In the last incident, some scenes of the brutality with the girl came on social media which are very sad and disturbing

ASHOK GEHLOT | EX RAJASTHAN CM

HEMA PANEL REPORT

CPI (M) defends Mukesh; Mohanlal breaks silence

Noting the sexual abuse and harassment allegations of the Hema Committee report, the National Commission for Women (NCW) said it has sought the full report, only parts of which are publicly available



AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, August 31: As the aftershocks of the Justice Hema Committee report continued to rock Malayalam cinema industry Saturday, top actor Mohanlal broke his silence over the sexual abuse allegations against his industry colleagues, calling for action against the guilty. The ruling CPI (M) defended its MLA and rape accused actor M Mukesh against demands for his resignation. Eminent Malayalam director Ranjith was booked by police for a second instance of sexual misconduct, police said Saturday - this time on the complaint by a male actor. An earlier complaint by a Bengali actress not only saw the police file a case against Ranjith, but it also forced him to step down as the head of a state-run film academy.

Despite mounting clamour for his resignation by Opposition parties and women's outfits, CPI(M) said Mukesh need not step down just because a rape case has been registered against him.

Announcing the party's decision, CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan asked if the MLA resigns on moral ground, then will he be brought back on the same condition if he is proved innocent. However, said the party decided Mukesh should not be part of the film-making policy

committee and be removed from that in view of the allegations against him.

Opposition Congress and BJP and their respective youth and women wings intensified their state-wide protest demanding Mukesh's resignation as MLA, post the CPI (M)'s stance. A protest march took out by the Youth Congress activists in Kollam turned violent and many protesters and police personnel reportedly suffered injuries.

Top star Mohanlal, who had recently quit as the president of the AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) following sexual abuse allegations against some of its members, spoke on the Hema Committee report for the first time, days after was released. Its findings about exploitation and abuse of women had sent shock waves. The "Vanaprastham" actor said the entire film industry was answerable to the questions over the shocking revelations in the report.

Lamenting that only the actors' body was blamed for everything, he said Malayalam cinema is a huge industry where thousands of people work and AMMA cannot deal with every issue it faces. Talking to reporters here, he said cinema is part of the society and what happens every-

where else is happening in the industry also. The executive panel of the association headed by him resigned recently in the wake of "unnecessary allegations" being raised against it after the release of the report.

Justifying his alleged delayed response over the findings in the report, Mohanlal said he never ran away from his responsibilities but could not appear before the media in the past few days as he was away from the state due to personal and professional commitments.

The release of the Hema Committee report was a good decision of the government, he said. It has given several suggestions to guide the industry in the right direction. Meanwhile, the Film Employees Federation of Kerala (FEFKA) made it clear it won't protect its accused members.

An apex body of 21 trade unions working at various levels of the Malayalam film industry, FEFKA said it would voluntarily hand over relevant information to the police in this connection if the outfit comes to know about any such complaint. FEFKA general secretary B Unnikrishnan admitted that some of the Association members were also facing allegations.

M K Stalin visits Apple, Microsoft offices in US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 31: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin visited the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft and discussed opportunities for investment and partnerships with them.

Day 2 of his US visit led to the signing of a pact to skill two million youngsters in the state in AI under the 'Naam Mudhalvan' scheme, in partnership with Google.

The Chief Minister, currently on a visit to the USA to attract investments to Tamil Nadu, on Saturday described the visit to the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft as "awe-inspiring."

"Discussed various opportunities and exciting partnerships. Determined to strengthen these partnerships and make Tamil Nadu one of the foremost growth engines of Asia!" @TRBRajaa @Guidance_TN @TNIndMin @InvestInTN #ThriveInTN #LeadWithTN #DravidianModel," Stalin said in a post on the social media platform X.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of the Chief Minister, with Google for setting up Tamil Nadu AI (Artificial Intelligence) labs in Tamil Nadu.

Phogat joins farmers' protest



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 31: Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat Saturday joined protesting farmers at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders between Punjab and Haryana and said the central government should pay heed to their demands and address their issues on priority

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha held a 'kisan mahapanchayat' during the day to mark the completion of 200 days of their 'Delhi Chalo' agitation to press for their demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP.

The farmers have been protesting at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points since February 13, when their march was stopped by security forces.

Phogat, who was disqualified from the 50-kg final match in the recent Olympic Games held in Paris, was felicitated by the protesting farmers. In her address, the wrestler lent her support to the farmers, saying, "I want to tell you that your daughter is with you."

Speaking to reporters, Phogat said the farmers are holding the protest as their demands have still not been accepted. "It hurts to see them," she added. Phogat, who hails from Haryana's Balali, faced a heartbreaking exit after being disqualified on the day of her gold medal match at Paris. She was part of the agitation by wrestlers, mostly from Haryana, against the then Wrestling Federation of India chief and BJP leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh over allegations of sexual harassment last year.



Indian Army personnel during a rescue operation of flood-affected people at Naliya and Jakhau areas inundated with floodwater, in Kutch district, Gujarat

Modi promises reforms, stable policy for investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: While people in most countries that went to polls this year voted for a change, Indians preferred continuity, political stability and economic growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday, asserting that a new neo-middle class is driving the country's progress.

Addressing the ET World Leaders Forum, Modi said the country is writing a unique success story, and the impact of its reforms is visible in the economy's performance. He said the world's prosperity lies in India's prosperity, adding that his government wanted more companies to become global brands and the country to become a leader in every sector. Addressing investors, he promised facilitation, reforms, a stable policy regime and high



growth, and asked them, in turn, to promise innovation, performance, positive disruption and high-quality products. He described the unfolding third decade of this century as an era of the country's "lift-off" which will benefit everyone. "Today's India is a land of opportunity," he added.

"India today is the biggest land of opportunities in the world. We respect wealth creators," Modi said, asserting that it abides by the mantra of innovation, inclusion and international cooperation. Amid the opposition's fre-

quent swipes at his government over its reduced majority in the recent elections, he asserted that his dispensation has begun its third term with more determined intentions and is full of hope and confidence like the country's citizens. "In less than 100 days of third term of our government, we have taken big decisions for poor, women, youth and farmers," he said.

Modi said his government is working to make the country a global health and wellness centre, noting that it has added one lakh more medical seats in the last 10 years against the 60,000 that existed before. Over 75,000 more seats will be added in the next five years, he said. He also highlighted efforts to boost India's tourism profile and make it a global food basket. It is his resolve to ensure a 'Made-in-India' product on every dining table across the world, he added.

Won't allow daughters to be doctors: Protesters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: Doctors in the national capital gathered at Jantar Mantar Saturday to protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a Kolkata hospital, asserting that without a central law to protect healthcare workers, female doctors would never feel safe during work.

Protesters began gathering at Jantar Mantar from 3 pm onwards to demand justice for the victim of the incident at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and press the government to expedite the enactment of the Central Healthcare Protection Act, doctor associations said.

Dr Deepika, a protesting doctor, told PTI, "I will never allow my daughters to become doctors here... Can you imagine that all of us female doctors are scared now? We feel fearful while work-



ing, and we need protection. Can you imagine if she was raped and murdered at her workplace?" "We want protection so that all female doctors can work again without fear," she said. Chairman of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) Rohan Krishnan said they had earlier called off the protest due to the Supreme Court's intervention.

The apex court constituted a task force, which will take note of suggestions of all stakeholders while formulating a national protocol for the safety of healthcare professionals, including the associations representing resident doctors.

A statement by FAIMA issued on Saturday said it "is profoundly disturbed by this heinous

act, which has not only shattered the medical fraternity but also exposed the alarming vulnerabilities that healthcare professionals face daily."

"Our fight will continue until justice is served," said Manish Jangra, founder and chief advisor of FAIMA. He added that members of the Resident Doctors of India (RDA) from hospitals around Delhi-NCR, such as Aligarh and Rohtak, will be part of the protest.

Earlier this month, resident doctors across the country went on an indefinite strike August 12 after the body of the trainee doctor was found on the premises of the state-run hospital in Kolkata on the morning of August 9.

Following the incident, doctors held the strike for 11 consecutive days, during which all elective services, wards, and OPDs were suspended.

Kukis hold rallies in Manipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal/ New Delhi, August 31: The Kuki-Zo community people Saturday took out rallies in different parts of Manipur and in New Delhi demanding action against Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh over an audio clip in which he purportedly "declared his involvement in spearheading violence" in the state.

The protestors also sought a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo community. In Manipur, rallies were organised in Churachandpur district, Kangpokpi district and the India-Myanmar border town of Moreh in Tengenoupal. Markets and schools in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts remained closed in view of the rally organised by students. G Kipgen, a protestor in the Kangpokpi rally, said, "The demonstration is being held to press our demand for a Union Territory for the Kuki-Zo people. "We also protest against the viral audio clips in which objectionable comments were made," another protestor said.

In New Delhi, around 500 people, most of them wearing black clothes, joined the protest called by the Kuki Students' Organisation Delhi and NCR, at Jantar Mantar. They played pa-



triotic songs, chanted 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and raised slogans against Singh. They concluded the protest by playing the national anthem. In a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the KSO said the Kuki-Zo community has endured an "ethnic cleansing campaign and constant attacks against it by the majority Meitei community since May 3rd, 2023".

Over 200 people were killed and thousands rendered homeless in clashes between Meitei and Kuki communities since May last year.

The Manipur government has dismissed the recording as doctored.

The KSO also demanded a separate administration for Kuki-Zo areas and making them a union territory with a legislature. At the protest, Kuki Inpi Delhi spokesperson Kim Haokip said they cannot go back to live in Imphal after all the "atrocities" committed against them.

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Ref. 1130/MVSN Dt. 23.08.2024

CANCELLATION OF TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. CAD-997:- This is for information of all concerned that the Tender Call Notice No.342/MVSN Dt.02.03.2024 invited for procurement of "Computer Desktop & UPS" for the newly recruited Block Coordinator of Mayurbhanj, Balasore and Jagatsinghpur District is hereby cancelled on Administrative Ground.

Sd./- MANAGING DIRECTOR
Mahila Vikas Samabaya Nigam
OIPR-33003/11/0002/2425

international

of the day quote

I think she (Kamala Harris) would've been better off if she just did interviews, even if they weren't great it would have been better ... because now everyone's watching and now we see, she's defective

DONALD TRUMP
REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, US

Ukraine's incursion into Russia's Kursk region is legitimate and covered by Kyiv's right to self-defence

JENS STOLTENBERG
SECRETARY-GENERAL, NATO

Currently no proposal is under consideration in the Punjab Cabinet or Punjab Law Department to send Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) founder leader Khan's cases to military court

MALIK SOHAIB AHMAD BARTH
PUNJAB LAW MINISTER, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Hasina cases pile up

Dhaka: Two new murder cases have been filed against Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her former cabinet ministers for the killing of three people, including two BNP activists, during the quota reform protests in the country, according to media reports. The cases, filed in Dhaka courts Friday, were the latest in the slew of cases filed against the 76-year-old leader after her resignation and fleeing to India August 5 following a massive protest by students against a quota system in government jobs. With this, the tally of cases filed against Hasina has risen to 84, including 70 on murder charges, eight on allegations of crimes against humanity and genocide, three for alleged abduction, and three on other charges, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

Chopper crashes

Moscow: A search-and-rescue operation has been launched in Russia's far-east following the disappearance of a helicopter with 22 people on board, most of them tourists. The Mi-8T helicopter took off from a base near the Vachkazhets volcano in the Kamchatka peninsula, the emergencies ministry said Saturday. That area of the peninsula is a popular tourist destination, famous for its rich landscapes and active volcanoes. Officials say the helicopter disappeared from radar shortly after takeoff, adding that thick fog is hampering rescuers' efforts. The helicopter, owned by Vityaz-Aero, was carrying out a trip to the volcano. Designed during the Soviet-era, the Mi-8 helicopter remains popular and widely used in Russia.

ISI complicit with terrorists: Former US NSA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 31: There is an "undeniable complicity" of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) with terrorist groups, former US National Security Advisor Lt Gen (retd) HR McMaster has said, revealing that during his tenure under then President Donald Trump, the White House faced resistance from the state department and Pentagon over providing security aid to Islamabad.

Despite directions from Trump to stop all aid to Pakistan till it stops giving safe havens to terrorists, McMaster in his latest book 'At War with Ourselves: My Tour of Duty in the Trump White House' says that the then Defence Secretary Jim Mattis was planning to deliver a military aid package to Islamabad

that included over \$150 million worth of armoured vehicles.

However, the aid was stopped after his intervention, McMaster writes in the book that hit the bookstores this week.

"It was difficult to get State and Defence even to comply with Trump's directives to stop certain activities. I discovered that contrary to the South Asia strategy, which called for the suspension of all aid to Pakistan with a few exceptions, when Mattis visited Islamabad in the coming weeks, the Pentagon was going to deliver a military aid package that included more than \$150 million worth of armoured vehicles," he writes.

McMaster says soon after he came to know about it, he called for a meeting with Mattis, the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Gina Haspel,



With the governments' leadership and close cooperation between partners, we believe we can stop these outbreaks (Mpox) in the next six months

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

GAZA'S POLIO DRIVE

United Nations will start vaccinating some 640,000 children in the Gaza Strip against polio, a campaign that relies on daily eight-hour pauses in fighting between Israel and Hamas militants. WHO officials say at least 90% of the children need to be vaccinated twice for the campaign to succeed, but it faces huge challenges in Gaza, which has been largely destroyed by nearly 11 months of war



47 Indians rescued from cyber scam centres in Laos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Vientiane, August 31: At least 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres in Laos have been rescued from the Bokeo province of the country, the Indian embassy in the Southeast Asian country said Saturday.

Indian authorities have been cautioning its nationals against fake job offers in Laos and urged them to conduct thorough due diligence to avoid being deceived. The Indian mission has so far rescued 635 Indians from the country and ensured their safe return to India.



In the latest case, the embassy rescued 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres at the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Bokeo province, a statement from the Indian Embassy in Laos said.

"Of these, 29 were handed over to the Embassy by Laos authorities after their crackdown on illegal activities in Golden Triangle SEZ, while other 18 had approached the Embassy in distress, seeking help," the statement, which was posted on X, said.

It said the embassy officials travelled from the capital Vientiane to Bokeo to liaise with local authorities for their rescue.

The statement added that Prashant Agrawal, the Ambassador of India to Laos, met the group upon their arrival to discuss the challenges they faced and to advise further course of action.

The embassy has undertaken and completed all procedural requirements of Laos authorities for their repatriation to India, the statement said, adding that 30 of those have already safely returned to India or are on their way, while the remaining 17 are only awaiting travel arrangements to be firmed up and would be leaving the country soon.

Agrawal emphasised that "ensuring safety and well-being" of Indians was a matter of top priority for the Embassy, the statement said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar last month discussed the issue of trafficking of Indian nationals with Laos Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone during his visit to the Southeast Asian nation.

The Indian embassy in Laos last month rescued 13 Indians, who were lured into certain cyber-scamming centres in the country and sent them back home.

In Saturday's statement, the Indian Embassy urged the Laos government to take action at their end against unscrupulous elements.

DROUGHT CRISIS More than 700 wild animals to be killed for food in Namibia



AGENCIES

Washington, August 31: Namibia, a country known for its rich wildlife and stunning landscapes, is on the edge. It is facing a shortage of food due to drought, a crisis which has forced the government to take a controversial step to kill more than 700 wild animals, including hippos and elephants, to provide meat to its people.

This drastic action comes as the nation struggles with the worst drought in a century, pushing millions of people towards hunger and severe food shortages, as per reports.

The United Nations has highlighted the dire situation in Namibia, with a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres describing it as a "humanitarian crisis we've never spoken much of" during a media conference on Friday.

The drought has wiped out about 84 per cent of the country's food reserves, leaving nearly half of Namibia's 2.5 million people at risk of severe food shortages from July to September. In response to this crisis, the Namibian government has turned to its natural resources, specifically its wildlife, to help feed the hungry.

Southern Africa is experiencing its worst drought in decades, which began in October 2023. Rising temperatures, worsened by climate change and the El Niño weather phenomenon, have resulted in very low rainfall.

In February, when the region usually gets most of its rain, it received less than 20 per cent of what was needed, according to experts. Namibia, along with Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia, has declared a state of emergency due to the severe drought.

DOMINANCE GAME SCS dispute gathers steam

China, Philippines accuse each other of ramming ships in South China Sea

REUTERS

Beijing, August 31: The Philippines and China exchanged accusations of intentionally ramming coast guard vessels in disputed waters of the South China Sea Saturday, the latest in an escalating series of clashes in the vital waterway.

The collision near the Sabina Shoal was their fifth maritime confrontation in a month in a longstanding rivalry.

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. Portions of the waterway, where \$3 trillion worth of trade passes annually, are believed to be rich in oil and natural gas deposits, as well as fish stocks.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 found China's sweeping claims had no legal basis, a ruling Beijing rejects.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Jay Tarriela showed videos of Saturday's confrontation at a press conference, saying China Coast Guard vessel 5205 "directly and intentionally rammed the Philippine vessel" without provocation.

The ramming damaged the 97-metre (320-foot) Teresa Magbanua, one of the Philippines' largest coast guard



China has rejected a ruling by a UN-backed arbitration panel that negated almost all of Beijing's historically-based claims in the SCS

cutters, but no personnel were injured, Tarriela said.

Liu Dejun, a spokesperson for China's coast guard, said in a statement a Philippine ship, "illegally stranded" at the shoal, had lifted anchor and "deliberately rammed" a Chinese vessel. He called on the Philippines to withdraw immediately or bear the consequences.

"The Chinese coast guard will take the measures required to resolutely thwart all acts of provo-

cation, nuisance and infringement and resolutely safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests," Liu said.

Tarriela said Manila would not withdraw its ship "despite the harassment, the bullying activities and escalatory action of the Chinese coast guard".

US condemns Chinese 'violations' The US ambassador to the Philippines expressed Washington's support for the

Japan protests second territorial incursion by China in a week



Tokyo: Japan lodged a protest with China after one of its naval survey vessels entered Japanese waters Saturday, the second incursion into its territory by the Chinese military in less than a week. An uptick in Chinese military activity near Japan and around Taiwan in recent years has stoked concerns in Tokyo. Japan has responded with a defence buildup that it says aims to deter Beijing from using military force to push its territorial claims in the region. The ship was detected off the coast of Kagoshima Prefecture, in Japan's southwest, the country's defence ministry said. Tokyo registered its "strong concern and protest over this incident" with a Chinese embassy official, the foreign ministry said in a statement that also referenced the

first airspace intrusion by a Chinese military plane Monday. Tokyo told Chinese diplomats earlier this week that Monday's violation of its airspace was "utterly unacceptable." Saturday's incident was the tenth time in the past year that a Chinese naval survey ship has sailed through Japan's territorial waters, and the 13th time if submarines and other intelligence-gathering vessels are included, according to national broadcaster NHK.

Norway's Princess weds US spiritual guru

REUTERS

Oslo, August 31: Norway's Princess Martha Louise married her long-term partner, American spiritual guru Durek Verrett, Saturday in a ceremony attended by the Norwegian king and other royalty but marked by what critics saw as commercialisation of the event.

The wedding was the culmination of three days of festivities to honour Martha Louise, 52, fourth in line to the throne, and Verrett, 49, a self-styled shaman from California, after the couple first announced their relationship in 2019.

The couple were joined in the picturesque western town of Geiranger by royals from Sweden and Norway as well as friends, social media influencers and Norwegian celebrities.

Martha Louise, the daughter of King Harald and Queen Sonja, stepped down from official royal



duties in 2022 to allow her to more freely pursue her own business ventures, and said both she and Verrett would refrain from using her title as princess in a commercial setting.

But the couple has faced criticism from the Palace and members of parliament for linking commercial activities to Martha Louise's royal status.

propriate. Martha Louise's first marriage, to Norwegian author Ari Behn, with whom she had three children, ended in divorce in 2017.

Saturday's marriage ceremony, in a large outdoor tent, was open only to media sponsoring the event and was not broadcast on television, in contrast to the princess' first wedding in 2002 that was held at the country's largest cathedral.

Martha Louise stirred controversy in 2007 when she announced she was clairvoyant and had started a school to help people by teaching them how to talk to angels.

Verrett becomes part of the country's extended royal family, as designated by the Palace, but not of the core Royal House of Norway, which includes only the monarch and the next two in line to the throne as well as their spouses. He will therefore not become a prince.

Brazil blocks X after court order

REUTERS

Sao Paulo, August 31: Brazil's telecommunications regulator said Friday it was suspending access to Elon Musk's X social network in the country to comply with an order from a judge who has been locked in a months-long feud with the billionaire investor.

The popular social media platform missed a court-imposed deadline Thursday evening to name a legal representative in Brazil, triggering the suspension.

Musk has argued that Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes was trying to enforce unjustified censorship, while the judge has insisted that social media needs hate speech regulations.

"They're shutting down the #1 source of truth in Brazil,"



Musk said in a post on X Friday.

The judge's ruling could cause X to lose one of its largest and most coveted markets, at a time when Musk has struggled with advertising revenue for the platform.

X remained accessible in Brazil late Friday, though some Brazilians posted on other platforms that their access to X was already being blocked. Three of the country's top telecommunications carriers said they would begin blocking access from midnight, according to a report by

local news outlet UOL.

The feud has led to the freezing this week of satellite internet provider Starlink's bank accounts in Brazil. Starlink is a unit of Musk-led rocket company SpaceX.

In his ruling, Moraes ordered that X, formerly Twitter, be suspended in Brazil until it complied with all related court orders, including the payment of more than \$3 million in fines, as well as the designation of a local representative, as required by Brazilian law.

business



I think, the agriculture and allied sectors will see a rebound in their growth rates as we head further into the financial year
V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

IRON ORE OUTPUT RISES 9% IN APR-JULY

The country's iron ore production rose by 8.9 per cent to 98 million tonnes in the first four months of the ongoing fiscal, the government said. The country's iron ore output was 90 MT in the April-July period of the previous fiscal, according to the provisional data



of the day quote

While we remain committed to growing our core businesses, which include refining, marketing of petroleum products and upstream, we are equally focused on our big bets comprising petrochemicals, gas, green energy, non-fuel retail, and digital

G KRISHNAKUMAR | BPCL CHAIRMAN

To become a global artificial intelligence (AI) hub, India needs to leverage its vast talent pool and establish AI-focused centres of excellence in collaboration with academic institutions and industry leaders

STEPHEN IBARAKI | TECHNOLOGY FUTURIST

We are in advanced stages of launching Home Loans, which have been rolled out in Beta mode, and other products such as Loan Against Property and Loan on Securities are in the pipeline

HITESH SETHIA | JIO FINANCE LTD MD AND CEO

Slowing of GDP growth due to lower govt spending: RBI Guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 31: The slowing of India's economic growth to a 15-month low of 6.7 per cent in the April-June quarter was due to 'lower' government spending in the wake of the enforcement of the model code of conduct for the recent Lok Sabha polls, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said here Saturday.

The RBI had projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the April-June quarter of this fiscal. "The Reserve Bank projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the first quarter. However, the first advance estimation data released by the National Statistical Office showed the growth rate at 6.7 per cent," Das told reporters here.

The components and main drivers responsible for the GDP growth like consumption, investment, manufacturing, services and construction have registered a growth of more than 7 per cent, he said.

Only two aspects have pulled



the growth rate slightly down. Those are—government (both central and state) expenditure and agriculture, the RBI governor pointed out.

He said the government expenditure was low during the first quarter perhaps due to elections (April to June) and operation of model code of conduct by the Election Commission.

"We would expect the government expenditure to pick up in coming quarters and provide the required support to growth," Das said.

Similarly, the agriculture sector has recorded a minimal growth rate of around 2 per cent in the April to June quarter. However, the monsoon was very good and spread all over India except a few areas. So, everyone is optimistic and positive about the agriculture sector, he noted.

"Under these circumstances, we have reasonably confident expectations that the annual growth rate of 7.2 per cent projected by the RBI will be materialised in coming quarters," the governor asserted.

Aviva conspired to dodge India tax rules: Agency

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 31: An Indian tax agency has found that British insurer Aviva breached local regulations capping commissions to sales agents with a system of fake invoices and clandestine cash payments, according to a notice seen by Reuters.

In an attempt to grow operations, Aviva's India business paid about \$26 million between 2017 and 2023 to entities who purportedly provided marketing and training services, according to the tax notice sent to Aviva, dated August 3.

But the vendors, who did not perform any work, were actually a front for channeling funds to Aviva's agents, said the Directorate General of GST Intelligence, which is responsible for policing violations of indirect taxes.

"Aviva and its officials have indulged in a deep-rooted conspiracy and used the modus of fake invoices (without receipt of services) to pass on certain money to ... insurance distributors of Aviva," investigators wrote in the notice.

Details of the notice, which is not public, are reported by Reuters for the first time. Such 'show cause' notices typically require companies to explain why authorities should not issue penalties for their alleged acts.

The case is part of broader investigation into over a dozen Indian insurers for alleged evasion of \$610 million in unpaid taxes, interest and penalties. The roughly \$26 million in fake invoices were used by Aviva incorrectly to claim tax credits and evade \$5.2 million in taxes, the notice alleged.

In response to Reuters' questions, a UK-based Aviva



spokesperson said: "We do not comment on speculation or ongoing legal matters."

Its Indian operations did not respond to queries. A person familiar with the matter told Reuters the company intends to rebut the notice's allegations but has not yet responded.

The 205-page report included screenshots of emails and WhatsApp messages between Aviva executives and insurance distributors, in which they discussed ways to skirt compensation regulations. It also contained summaries of interviews conducted by tax officials with executives like Aviva India chief financial officer Sonali Athalye, who described how payments were made.

Then-Aviva India chief executive Trevor Bull was copied on a 2019 email discussing payments over regulatory limits, which indicates "senior management of Aviva is also aware about this," investigators wrote.

Bull and Athalye, as well as Indian tax and insurance authorities, did not respond to requests for comment.

The company faces roughly \$11 million in penalties, which is roughly its 2023 profit from selling life insurance in India.

Sebi revises rules for stocks in derivatives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: Capital markets regulator Sebi Friday revised the eligibility criteria for entry and exit of stocks in the derivatives segment to ensure that only high-quality stocks with sufficient market are allowed to trade in such segment.

To be eligible for entry into the derivatives segment, stocks must meet certain criteria based on their performance in the cash market over the previous six months on a rolling basis.

The stock's Median Quarter Sigma Order Size (MQSOS) must be at least ₹75 lakh, revised, from the current ₹25 lakh and the Market Wide Position Limit (MWPL) must be at least ₹1,500 crore, increased from the present ₹500 crore due to a rise in market capitalisation, Sebi said in circular.

Additionally, the stock's Average Daily Delivery Value in the cash market has been increased to at least R 35 crore from ₹10 crore, owing to a significant increase in the average daily delivery value.

Stocks, which meet the eligibility criteria in the underlying cash market of any stock exchange, would be permitted to trade in the equity derivatives segment of all stock exchanges.

The stock exchanges will settle the derivative contracts at a price calculated by the clearing corporations based on volume-weighted average price (VWAP) from the cash segment across all exchanges.

In addition, other aspects like any surveillance concerns, ongoing investigations, or other administrative considerations will be taken into account by Sebi, while considering a stock

ONGC seeks US nod to operate in Venezuela

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 31: ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) is seeking US approval to operate two projects in sanction-hit Venezuela to boost output, its managing director Rajarshi Gupta said Friday.

ONGC is seeking specific licenses similar to the one awarded to U.S. oil major Chevron to operate oil fields in Venezuela, Gupta added.

"We have made a request for a specific license that allow us to operate our two projects. Approval will give us exemption from sanctions and allow us to use U.S. entities, U.S. dollars, U.S. banking channels, etc. for operating the projects," Gupta said.

An approval would enable the company to manage the finances of its Venezuelan projects and help it recover a pending dividend of more than \$500 million, he said.

Venezuela has allowed ONGC to operate the San Cristobal project, while for the Carabobo 1 field, ONGC is in talks with Spanish firm Repsol for joint operatorship, he said.

ONGC Videsh, the overseas investment arm of India's top explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corp, holds a 40% stake in the San Cristobal project.



ONGC Videsh, the overseas investment arm of India's top explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corp, holds a 40% stake in San Cristobal project

In the Carabobo project, along with other Indian companies, it holds an 18% stake while Spain's Repsol has an 11% stake. Venezuela's national oil company, PDVSA, holds the remaining stakes in both projects. Gupta said that the two as-

sets produce about 12,000-15,000 barrels per day (bpd) oil that can be raised to about 30,000 bpd in a year's time, and to about 50,000 bpd in a few years.

Additionally, the MD expressed hope that OVL would soon receive approval from Russian authorities to pay its \$600 million share in roubles for the Sakhalin-1 project's abandonment fund. This approval is necessary for OVL to retain its 20% stake in the project in the Russian Far East.

Gupta said OVL wants to use some \$250 million pending dividend from its stake in the Russian oil project as part-payment for its share in the abandonment fund in roubles.

Govt grants Navratana status to NHPC, SJVN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 31: The government has granted 'Navratana' status to public sector undertakings NHPC, SJVN and SECI.

"As per order issued by the Department of Public Enterprise (Ministry of Finance) on August 30, 2024, NHPC has been declared a 'Navratna Company,' thereby giving it greater operational and financial autonomy," NHPC said in a statement. NHPC CMD RK Chaudhary said, "This is a historic moment for the NHPC and recognition of our remarkable financial and operational accomplishments. NHPC has been an important player in the Indian power sector and has played a key role in tapping the hydropower potential of the country."

Faridabad-based NHPC was operating as a Mini Ratna Category-I entity under the Ministry of Power. The company has also diversified in wind and solar energy options, Chaudhary added.

The conferring of Navratna status brings forth key advantages to NHPC. It will enable faster decision-making, increase efficiency and empower employees, the statement said.

It will support major Capex and investment plans, drive growth, expand market reach and achieve long-term gains.

Meanwhile, Shimla-based SJVN said it has also been granted similar status from the government. In an exchange filing, the company said, "Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance, Government of India vide its letter no PD-126/0004/2024-DPE dated August 30, 2024, has granted 'Navratna Status' to SJVN Limited."

SJVN Limited is a Mini Ratna, Category-I and Schedule -- 'A' CPSE, incorporated on May 24, 1988, as a joint venture of the Government of India and Himachal Pradesh.

SHORT TAKES

Windfall tax on crude cut

New Delhi: The government has cut windfall tax on domestically-produced crude oil to ₹1,850 per tonne, from ₹2,100 per tonne with effect from Saturday. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). The SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from August 31, 2024, an official notification issued late Friday said. India first imposed windfall profit taxes July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks.

Emami to acquire 49.6% in Helios

New Delhi: Home-grown FMCG major Emami Saturday announced the acquisition of the remaining 49.6 per cent stake in Helios Lifestyle, which owns male grooming brand 'The Man Company'. Helios Lifestyle is already a subsidiary of Emami with 50.4 per cent shareholding, according to a statement from Emami. "The completion of the acquisition of Helios by Emami will strengthen its presence in the fast-growing digital-first premium male grooming segment," it said. Emami had previously acquired 33.09 per cent equity stake in Helios in two tranches -- one in December 2017 and the other in February 2019. Later, it increased the stake to 50.4 per cent in 2022.

Wipro to hire 12K staff in FY25

New Delhi: IT firm Wipro Friday said onboarding freshers who were previously offered jobs is a "priority" for the company and added that it onboarded about 3,000 such 'next-gen associates' in Q1 FY25. The Bengaluru-based firm sees an overall intake of 10,000-12,000 NGAs in FY25. The comments assume significance as the technology industry undergoes continual rounds of job cuts. "At Wipro, our first priority is to onboard Next Gen Associates (NGAs), who had previously been made offers. In Q1 FY25, we onboarded approximately 3,000 such NGAs," it said in a statement to PTI. Wipro foresees an overall intake of 10,000-12,000 NGAs and will hire in the areas of GenAI, cybersecurity and cloud, it said.

Ask Claude: Amazon turns to Anthropic's AI for Alexa revamp

REUTERS

San Francisco, August 31: Amazon's revamped Alexa due for release in October ahead of the U.S. holiday season will be powered primarily by Anthropic's Claude artificial intelligence models, rather than its own AI, five people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Amazon plans to charge \$5 to \$10 a month for its new "Remarkable" version of Alexa as it will use powerful generative AI to answer complex queries, while still offering the "Classic" voice assistant for free, Reuters reported in June. But initial versions of the new Alexa using in-house software simply struggled for words, sometimes taking six or seven seconds to acknowledge a prompt and reply, one of the people said.

That's why Amazon turned to Claude, an AI chatbot developed by startup Anthropic, as it performed better than the online retail giant's own AI models, the people said.

Reuters based this story upon interviews with five people with direct knowledge of the Alexa strategy. All declined to be named as they are not authorized to discuss non-public matters.

Alexa, accessed mainly through Amazon televisions and Echo devices, can set timers, play music, act as a central hub for smart home controls and answer one-off questions.

But Amazon's attempts to convince users to shop through Alexa to generate more revenue have been mostly unsuccessful and the division remains unprofitable. As a result, senior



management has stressed that 2024 is a critical year for Alexa to finally demonstrate it can generate meaningful sales - and the revamped paid version is seen as a way both to do that and keep pace with rivals.

"Amazon uses many different

technologies to power Alexa," a company spokeswoman said in a statement in response to detailed Reuters questions for this story. "When it comes to machine learning models, we start with those built by Amazon, but we have used, and will continue

to use, a variety of different models - including (Amazon AI model) Titan and future Amazon models, as well as those from partners - to build the best experience for customers," the spokeswoman said.

Anthropic, in which Amazon owns a minority stake, declined to comment for this story. Amazon has typically eschewed relying on technology it hasn't developed in-house so it can ensure it has full control of the user experience, data collection and direct relationships with customers.

But it would not be alone in turning to a partner to improve AI products. Microsoft and Apple, for example, have both struck partnerships with OpenAI to use its ChatGPT to power some of their products. The release of the Remarkable Alexa, as it is

known internally, is expected in October, with a preview of the new service coming during Amazon's annual devices and services event typically held in September, the people said.

Amazon has not yet said, however, when it plans to hold its showcase event, which will be the first major public appearance of its new devices chief, Panos Panay, who was hired last year to replace long-time executive David Limp.

The wide release in late 2022 of ChatGPT, which gives full-sentence answers almost instantaneously to complicated queries, set off a frenzy of investing and corporate maneuvering to develop better AI software for a variety of functions, including image, video and voice services.

PARIS PARALYMPICS

Rubina shoots into history books

FIRST WOMAN PISTOL SHOOTER TO WIN A PARALYMPICS MEDAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chateauroux, August 31: Rubina Francis shot down India's fourth medal from the shooting range, showing tremendous calm and composure in a high-class field to clinch a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event in the Paris Paralympics Saturday.

Competing in a top-class field consisting of the defending champion and world record holder among others, the 25-year-old Rubina held her own to score a total of 211.1 for a third-place finish in the eight-woman final.

She had qualified for the final at seventh spot in the qualification round earlier in the day.

Iran's Javanmardi Sareh won her third successive Paralympics gold with a total score of 236.8 while world record holder Ozgan Aysel of Turkey took the silver with 231.1 in a fierce competition between the two favourites.

Rubina's medal was India's fourth in shooting and fifth overall at the Paris Paralympics. She is India's first woman pistol shooter to win a Paralympics medal.

She had secured the Paris Paralympics quota under the bipartite (wildcard) rule a few days before the contingent's departure for the French capital.

In SH1 class, athletes are able to hold their gun without difficulty and shoot from a standing or sitting position in a wheelchair or chair.

A daughter of a mechanic in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, Rubina was born with an

impairment to her leg, and she took up the sport inspired by her admiration for legendary Indian shooter Gagan Narang's Olympic achievements.

Her story is an example of resilience, determination, and the transformative power of sport in overcoming adversity. She was competing in her second Paralympics, having finished seventh in the final in Tokyo three years ago.

Rubina was consistent all through the final. She was third at the end of stage 1 of 10 shots with 97.6 with Ozgan leading with 99.5.

The Indian briefly slipped to fourth spot at the end of the 14th shot. But, she recovered and returned to third spot in the next series of two shots.

On Friday, Avani Lekhara had created history by successfully defending her women's 10m air rifle gold medal which she had clinched in Tokyo Paralympics,

with compatriot Mona Agarwal winning the bronze. Manish Narwal then added a silver medal in the men's 10m air pistol (SH1).

Rubina trailed the top-eight shooters for most part but picked up speed at the fag end to sneak into the medal round.

She was placed 14th after the first series of 10 shots in the qualifying round, but gradually moved up and clinched a spot in the eight-shooter final with a score of 556. Born into a lower-middle-class family, Rubina faced the added obstacle of leg dysfunction. Her father Simon, initially a mechanic, struggled to support her growing passion for shooting due to financial constraints.

Her shooting journey began in 2015 as her determination and her father's tireless efforts led her to Gun for Glory Academy - founded by Gagan Narang - in 2017. Under the mentorship of Jai Prakash Nautiyal and Subhash Rana, she made quick progress and was selected at the MP Shooting Academy.

At the MP Shooting Academy her skills flourished. She won a gold medal at the World Shooting Para Sport Championships in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates in 2022.

Yet another proud moment for India as @Rubina_PLY wins a Bronze in the P2 - Women's 10M Air Pistol SH1 event at the #Paralympics2024. Her exceptional focus, determination, and perseverance have given outstanding results

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Fourth medal for India in shooting

Paris: In men's singles SL4 class, meant for athletes with lower limb impairments and minor balance issues in walking or running, debutant Sukant thrashed Thailand's Teamarrom Siripong 21-12 21-12 to top group B and set up a semifinal clash with compatriot Suhas Yathiraj, a Tokyo silver medallist.

This was Sukant's second consecutive win in the three-player group. Sukant had won a bronze in the Asian Para Games last year.

"It's my debut tournament. I am so happy to qualify for the semifinals. I was well prepared for today's game. The first match was much tougher than this. And against him I have played plenty of times and I was very confident. So, I wanted to go one point at a time and then I played really well," said Sukant after the match.

"The drift and the atmosphere of the hall is very different. I am happy that I was able to adapt well this time," he added.

In the men's SL4 competition, only the toppers from each of the four groups qualify for the semifinals.

Nitesh Kumar, who had won a silver medal in the Asian Para Games last year, also qualified for the semifinals of men's singles SL3 category after record-

ing a straight-game win in his last group match. Nitesh topped Group A after outplaying Mongkhon Bunsun of Thailand 21-13 21-14, notching up his third successive win.

Bunsun also qualified for the semifinals as the second-place finisher from group A.

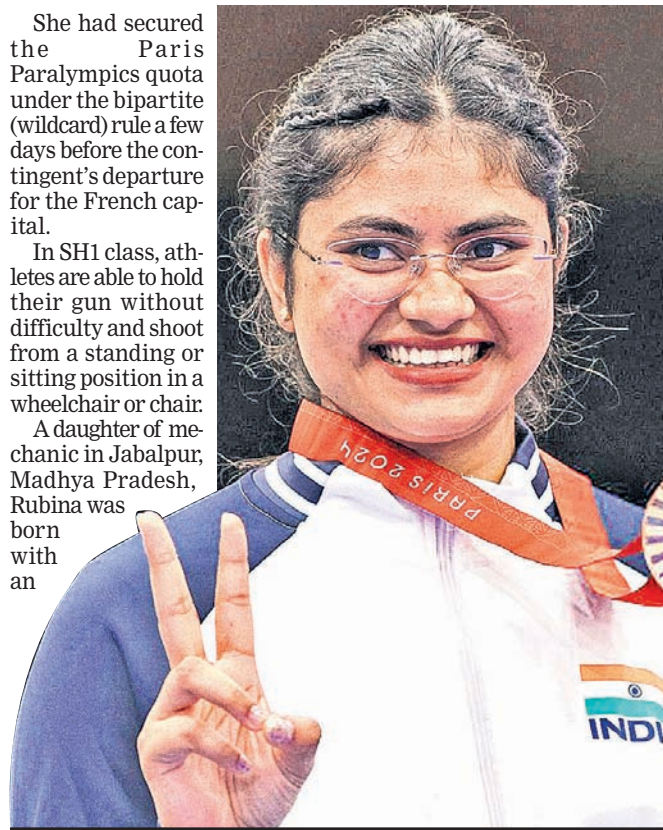
In SL3 class, which is meant for players with severe lower limb disability competing on half-width court, the top two finishers from each of the two groups qualify for the semifinals.

In the group A, Tokyo Paralympics bronze medallist Manoj Sarkar, who has already bowed out of the tournament, beat Yang Jianyuan of China 21-12 21-11.

Meanwhile, Mandeep Kaur entered the quarterfinals of the women's singles SL3 category. She regrouped to win her last group B match 21-23 21-17 against her Australia's Vivot Celine Aurelie.

The Indian finished second in the three-player group B to book a quarterfinal spot. Mariam topped the group to enter the semifinals. The toppers of group A and C directly advanced to the semifinals.

In women's singles, Manisha Ramdass and Nithya Sivan Sumathy will present their challenge.



Yet another proud moment for India as @Rubina_PLY wins a Bronze in the P2 - Women's 10M Air Pistol SH1 event at the #Paralympics2024. Her exceptional focus, determination, and perseverance have given outstanding results

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Fourth medal for India in shooting

Cyclists, rowers disappoint

Paris: The Indian cyclists and rowers, however, endured disappointing exits from the Paralympics. Arshad Shaik and Jyoti Gaderiya failed to make an impact in their respective track cycling events as they crashed out in the qualification round.

In the men's 1,000m time trial C1-3, Shaik could manage only a disappointing bottom-place (17th) finish with a timing of 1:21.416. On Friday, he had failed to progress in the men's 3,000m pursuit C2 event, managing a bottom-place (ninth) finish in qualifying round.

Jyoti too finished at the bottom (11th place) in the women's 500m time trial C1-3 qualifying event, with a timing of 49.233. On Thursday, she had finished at the bottom in the women's 3000m pursuit C1-3 qualifying event.

Shaik had suffered an accident in May 2004. Travelling in an auto, he suffered multiple injuries and his left leg had to be amputated above knee.

Jyoti had also suffered a bike accident in May 2016, resulting to left leg above knee amputation.

ARCHERY HEARTBREAK FOR INDIA

SHEETAL, SARITA CRASH OUT

Paris: India suffered heartbreak from the archery arena as Sarita Kumar's splendid run ended in quarterfinals, while armless wonder Sheetal Devi crashed out of the last-16 in the compound women's open category at the Paralympics here Saturday.

Faridabad's Sarita, who qualified as ninth seed, had a dominating outings in the first and second rounds before top-seed Ozgur Cure Girdi of Korea halted her



dream run in the last eight.

Ozgur, who smashed the world record to top the qualifying round with a score of 704 out of a maximum 720 points, shot three perfect 10s in the second end to take a healthy five-point lead.

Sarita took the third end and matched Ozgur's 30 with a perfect fourth end, but the Turkey archer remained four points in the lead, riding on her strong starts and wrapped it up with a 29 in the fifth end.

Sheetal, who draws the arrow with her toes, endured a blip in the second end where she shot the 7-point red ring to go down to Tokyo silver medallist Mariana Zuniga of Chile 137-138 in the quarterfinals.

THE TEAM FASHION DRAMATIC TURNAROUND TO STUN BAGAN IN A SHOOTOUT

NEUFC win historic Durand Cup title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 31: Goalkeeper Gurmeet Singh pulled off a couple of exceptional saves in the penalty shootout as NorthEast United FC overcame a two-goal deficit to stun Mohun Bagan 4-3 to win their maiden Durand Cup title after the regulation time ended with the score locked at 2-2, here Saturday.

The 24-year-old judged brilliantly and showed superb footwork to deny Liston Colaco in the third strike, and then in the fifth attempt, he stood like a wall to deny Mohun Bagan captain Subhasish Bose and seal the match in his team's favour: Guillermo Fernandez, captain Miguel Zabaco Tome, Parthib Gogoi and Alaeddine Ajarai struck the other goals in the shootout for NEUFC.

Jason Cummings, Manvir Singh and Dimitri Petratos were



on the target for the Mariners who had to settle for their 13th runners-up finish in the Asian's oldest tournament that completed its 133rd edition.

Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Vishal Kaith, who made simi-

lar saves in their quarterfinal and semifinal wins earlier, stood despondent at one corner as the NEUFC players ran on to the pitch to celebrate the historic moment. It was a tale of two halves as the Jose Molina-

coached side, that was eyeing a record-extending 18th title, dominated the start and went 2-0 up with goals from Jason Cummings (11th-penalty), Sahal Abdul Samad (45+5th). Chasing history, the Highlanders caught

For actor John Abraham's team, this was its first ever silverware in a decade after its inception, and it couldn't have been sweeter, coming in front of a full, passionate Mohun Bagan fans at the iconic Salt Lake Stadium

Mohun Bagan's defence sleeping right after the restart and turned up the heat with two quickfire goals in three minutes.

Gurmeet was awarded the Golden Glove for his stellar display in front of the goal all tournament while Kerala Blasters' Noah Sadaoui took home the Golden Boot.

1ST TIME IN 18 YEARS

Djoko's shock exit from US Open

2024 now becomes the first season since 2002 in which none of the Big Three of men's tennis - Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer - earned a Slam trophy



TENNIS STAR BLAMES OLYMPIC EXHAUSTION FOR POOR PERFORMANCE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New York, August 31: Defending champion Novak Djokovic admitted he had played "his worst tennis ever" as he slumped to his earliest exit at the US Open in 18 years Friday, sparking more questions over his long term future in the sport.

The 37-year-old Djokovic, a four-time champion in New York, lost 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 in the third round to 28th-ranked Alexei Popyrin of Australia, leaving him frustratingly short once again of winning a record 25th Grand Slam title.

His defeat, which saw him hit an uncharacteristic 14 double faults and commit 49 unforced errors, means that for the first time since 2017 he will end the season without a Grand Slam title.

"The way I played from the beginning of the tournament reaching the third round is a success," said a despondent Djokovic, who remains marooned on 24 Slam titles with Margaret Court. "I have played some of my worst tennis ever."

Djokovic admitted that the effort and aftermath of winning Olympic gold in Paris just four weeks ago impacted his lackluster

Bhambri, Bopanna win, Balaji exits

India's Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti advanced to the men's doubles third round of the US Open with a hard-fought win over 15th seeds Austin Krajicek and Jean-Julien Roger here. The Indo-French pair defeated the USA-Dutch team 4-6 6-3 7-5 in the second round that lasted two hours and five minutes Friday. This is only the second time that Bhambri has reached the third round at a Grand Slam, having reached the same stage at the Australian Open back in 2014. However, another Indian in the fray, N Sriram Balaji and his Argentine partner Guido Andreozzi exited the US Open after losing to Michael Venus of New Zealand and Neal Skupski of Great Britain.

tre New York campaign. "Obviously it had an effect. I spent a lot of energy winning the gold, and I did arrive to New York just not feeling fresh mentally and physically. But because it's the US Open, I gave it a shot and I tried my best. I didn't have any physical issues. I just felt out of gas."

The latest crushing setback comes in a year which saw Jannik Sinner succeed him as Australian Open champion before Carlos Alcaraz took his French Open crown and swept him off court in the Wimbledon final. Having defeated him in the Australian Open semi-finals, Sinner went on to also take his world number one ranking which Djokovic had held for a combined 428 weeks.

Teen named Hamilton's successor

Antonelli named as Lewis Hamilton's replacement at FI's Mercedes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, August 31: Italian teenager Andrea Kimi Antonelli will step up to Formula One next season and replace Lewis Hamilton at Mercedes, the team announced Saturday.

Antonelli, who turned 18 August 25, will partner George Russell, another product of the team's junior programme, after Hamilton moves to Ferrari after this year.

"Our 2025 driver line-up combines experience, talent, youth and out-and-out raw speed. We are excited about what George and Kimi bring to the team both as individual drivers, but also as a partnership," team chief Toto Wolff said in a statement.

Antonelli, who is from Bologna, has had a stellar youth career until a brief lull at the start of this season.

He won the 2022, Italian and German Formula 4 champi-



"I want to thank the team for the support they've given me in my career so far and the faith they've shown in me. I am still learning a lot, but I feel ready for the opportunity

ANDREA KIMI ANTONELLI

onships, the 2023 Middle East and European regional Formula championships.

This season, he skipped Formula 3 and went straight into the Formula 2 championship. After a slow start he

scored his first victory in the sprint race at Silverstone at the beginning of July, before winning the main race in Budapest two weeks later.

He is seventh in the championship with four rounds to go.