



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Actor Jacqueline Fernandez faces total boycott by the Hindi film industry following multiple summons by Enforcement Directorate

LEISUREP2



TRADE TALKS SOON

The US government announces trade talks with Taiwan in a sign of support amid China's military drills

INTERNATIONALP10



INDIA CRUSH ZIMBABWE

India ride on a splendid show by bowlers and openers to beat Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the 1st ODI

SPORTSP12

SHORT TAKES

OPSC ASO examination postponed due to floods



Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) postponed Thursday the written examinations for Assistant Section Officer (ASO), scheduled for August 21 (Sunday), until further orders. The decision was taken considering the dislocation caused by the current flood situation in the state. The rescheduled date and time of the examination will be notified shortly, the OPSC notification said. It should be stated here that hundreds of job aspirants earlier had sought intervention of the government and OPSC demanding postponement of the examination. Several candidates from flood-hit districts took to Twitter and demanded for rescheduling the examination owing to the flood situation in the state.

Nandita-Kapil’s film to premiere at TIFF



MUMBAI: Kapil Sharma-starrer *Zwigato*, directed by Nandita Das, will receive its world premiere at the 47th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). A large portion of the film had been shot in Bhubaneswar. The film, which features Kapil in the role of a new food delivery rider; will screen in the ‘Contemporary World Cinema’ section at the prestigious festival. Nandita, who has directed critically-acclaimed films such as *Firaaq* and *Manto*, said she is looking forward to the premiere of her latest movie. “*Zwigato* is finally ready! I am thrilled that it will premiere soon at the Toronto International Film Festival. This means a lot to me personally,” Nandita said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No, not marigold, give the rose garland. It is for welcoming rape convicts

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	60298.00 ↑ 37.87
NIFTY	17956.50 ↑ 12.20
DOLLAR	80.11 ↑ ₹0.15
EURO	80.77 ↑ ₹0.05
GOLD	₹51,684 ↑ ₹141
SILVER	₹56,862 ↓ ₹53

WEATHER	
	BHUBCTK
TEMP	MAX 32.7°C 33.5°C
	MIN 25.7°C 27.0°C
Humidity	81% 80%
Rainfall	4.2mm Nil
Forecast Light to Moderate Rain	

Lady dies by suicide over son’s addiction

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The half-burnt body of a 50-year-old married woman was found Thursday under mysterious circumstances from her flat at Plot No. 24 of Madhusudan Nagar under Kharvela Nagar police limits here. The deceased, identified as Minushri Praharaj was a housewife. Police however, claimed it to be a case of suspected suicide.

The deceased was staying with husband, Bishnu Prasad, in the first floor of the building. The sister-in-law and mother-in-law of Minushri were staying on the ground floor.

“The deceased used to sleep in the dining hall after watching television late into the night. She had done so also Wednesday. However, when I found the door of the room locked around 11.45am today, I was surprised. Despite repeated knocking she did not open the door. Later, I called the neighbours who informed

the police,” said Bishnu Prasad. The police after getting information reached the spot and broke open the door; in the presence of locals and family members

“We found the charred body of Minushri and sent it to Capital Hospital for post mortem. We also recovered an almost empty bottle of kerosene near the body. The lady was under severe mental pressure

“The deceased was under acute depression due to her son’s addiction and a disease she was suffering from”
POLICE OFFICIAL

due to her son’s drug addiction. Her family members informed that she had once earlier tried to die by suicide three years back. She had slit her wrists then,” police said.

“Also the deceased was under acute stress due to a disease, suspected to be cancer. She was suffering from depression also. It may have led her to take the

tragic step,” a police official said.

Police have started an investigation into the matter after registering an unnatural death case. It should however, be added here that the family members are yet to file a case alleging any foul play.

BATTLE LINES DRAWN



An artist in Belfast, Northern Ireland, gives finishing touches to pictures of UK Prime Ministerial candidates Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss ahead of the upcoming election for the top post

Govt relief for flood-hit areas

The aid for the various districts devastated by floods will be in a phased manner with some getting relief for 15 days while others for a week

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik carried out an aerial survey Thursday of some of the flood-hit areas of several districts and announced relief for 15 days for the affected people. Patnaik made an aerial survey of the Mahanadi delta area falling between Luna, Chitratola and Paika rivers in Kendrapara district, Kujang and Naugaon in Jagatsinghpur district, Gop, Nimapara, Astarang, Delang, Pipili and Kanas localities of Puri district. Secretary to CM (ST) VK Pandian accompanied Patnaik during the survey which lasted for more than an hour.

Patnaik expressed concern over the large areas inundated by the floods and damage of crops and houses. He directed concerned officials to expedite the distribution of relief and cooked food to the affected people. He also asked officials to ensure proper healthcare services and drinking water supply in the flood-hit areas. He also asked officials to provide food and veterinary treatment to the affected cattle/livestock.

After making the aerial survey, Patnaik announced relief measures for the affected people. He said people who are residing in the marooned villages of Khurda, Puri, Cuttack, Kendrapara and



TAKING STOCK: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik makes an aerial survey of the flood affected areas Thursday

OP PHOTO

Jagatsinghpur districts will get government relief for 15 days. Similarly, a seven-day relief will be given to the flood-hit people of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Sonepur, Boudh and Angul districts.

“Both cooked and dry food, candles, match boxes, drinking water pouches, medicines, baby food and other essentials will be provided to the flood victims by the government,” Patnaik informed.

Patnaik has also directed the various district administrations to assess the damage within seven

days after the water level recedes and to provide relief for house and

MORE RAINS ON CARDS IN ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: The IMD said Thursday that a fresh low pressure area has formed over northeast and adjoining areas of east-central Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh and Myanmar coasts Thursday morning. In the next 24-48 hours, this system is likely to move west-north-westwards across Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha, Jharkhand and north Chhattisgarh. Under its influence heavy to very heavy rainfall would occur in many places of north, coastal and western Odisha in the next two days, the IMD said in a release.

crop damage within 15 days.

Around five lakh people in 12 districts of the state are reeling under the flood caused by the Mahanadi river.

MORE P3&4

LANDSLIDE CLAIMS 2 LIVES IN KORAPUT

Boipariguda: Two persons died and two were feared trapped under debris after a landslide occurred near the Kolab river under this block in Koraput district. The deceased were identified as Trilochan Durua of Doraguda village and Selemu Durua of Haladikunda village while those trapped are Madhab Durua and his wife Gura of Haladikunda village. Tragedy struck when a group of people had gone to collect forest produce near the river. The group while returning home, realised that four had gone missing. After family members failed to locate those missing, they informed the police Thursday. On being informed, police and a recovery team reached the spot and found two bodies. Efforts are on to locate the two others trapped under the debris.

Rape heat on former BJP minister Hussain

■ Delhi HC slams police for their reluctance to register an FIR and orders immediate investigation in the matter

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: The Delhi High Court has ordered that an FIR be registered forthwith against former Union Minister and BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain on a woman’s complaint in 2018 alleging rape. It has also chided the police for their complete reluctance to register an FIR against Hussain. This development comes as a double blow for Hussain, who was axed Wednesday from the BJP’s central election committee (CEC).

Hussain moved the Supreme Court immediately challenging the Delhi High Court order. His counsel mentioned the matter seeking urgent hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana. The counsel submitted that his client has a nearly three-decade long career in politics and registration of the FIR will destroy his reputation. The top court agreed to list the matter next week, but did not stay the HC order.

Earlier Justice Asha Menon of the Delhi High Court said there was no perversity in the 2018 trial order directing the registration of the FIR and vacated the interim orders of the court staying its operation.



“There is no merit in the present petition. The petition is dismissed. The interim orders stand vacated. The FIR be registered forthwith. The investigations be completed and a detailed report under Section 173 CrPC be submitted before the learned MM (metropolitan magistrate) within three months,” said the court in its order Thursday.

A Delhi-based woman had moved the lower court seeking registration of an FIR against Hussain on her allegation of rape. In its order, the high court said that while reference is made in the police status report to the recording of the statement of the prosecutrix on four occasions, there was no explanation as to why the FIR was not lodged.

“The FIR only puts the machinery into operation. It is a foundation for investigation of the offence complained of. It is only after investigations that the police can come to any conclusion. In the present case, there seems to be a complete reluctance on the part of the police to even register an FIR,” the bench observed.

Serial woman burglar ‘Babli’ nabbed, ‘Bunty’ still elusive

THE EXPLOITS OF THE ACCUSED WHO ROBBED MORE THAN 100 HOUSES, REMINDS ONE OF THE 2005 HIT FILM BUNTY AUR BABLI

AGENCIES

Ghaziabad, August 18: Police have finally managed to arrest a modern day ‘Babli’, a suspected serial burglar who worked as a domestic help and allegedly stole from around 100 houses, officials said here Thursday. However, his associate ‘Bunty’ has managed to remain elusive, though police is confident of nabbing him soon.

The woman (identified as Poonam Shah alias Kajal), has 26 cases registered against her in the National Capital Region (NCR) alone. She would travel by air to various cities she worked in, a police officer said. Poonam can easily be termed a ‘Babli’ referring to the hit film *Bunty Aur Babli* (2005). In the film ‘Bunty’ (Abhishek Bachchan) and ‘Babli’ (Rani Mukerji) worked as con artists to dupe people from var-

ious walks of life.

Poonam mainly stole gold ornaments from her employers, and built a house for herself in Delhi allegedly with the proceeds of the crime, a police official said Thursday. She hails from Bhagalpur district of Bihar and targeted people in various cities including Delhi, Jodhpur, Kolkata, and Ghaziabad.

The case which led to her arrest is related to the theft of gold ornaments worth ₹10 lakh from Poonam’s employer Vipul Goel’s house in Ghaziabad. The police officer said Poonam, who is in her late 30s, was arrested from the Amrapali Village Society on the basis of CCTV footage with stolen gold ornaments worth ₹3 lakh in her possession.

Police official Sandeep Mishra said that during interrogation Poonam said she had planned the theft with the help of her accomplice ‘Bunty’.



According to their plan, Poonam engaged Goel’s wife in an animated conversation, and ‘Bunty’ stole the ornaments from an almirah. They both decamped from the complex in an auto-rickshaw and divided the stolen gold ornaments. Before she got the job as a house help here, Poonam was living in Delhi’s Uttam Nagar.

According to the police, Poonam confessed she purchased a plot in Uttam Nagar and constructed a house on that using the stolen gold ornaments. She also said she had committed burglary at least in 100 houses and was booked in 26 cases across NCR districts, officials added.

Police said they will seize Poonam’s ill-gotten property and book her under the stringent Gangsters Act. Mishra informed that ‘Bunty’ and the jeweller who purchased the stolen ornaments are at large and will be nabbed soon.

15 sentenced to death in J’khand for murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur, August 18: Fifteen people were sentenced to death by a court in Jharkhand’s East Singhbhum district Thursday for killing an inmate of the Ghaghadih Central Jail here during a clash between two groups June 25, 2019.

The court of Additional District Judge-4, Rajendra Kumar Sinha sentenced the 15 to death by hanging after convicting them under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 120B (criminal conspiracy), additional public prosecutor Rajeev Kumar said. The court also sentenced seven others to 10 years in prison after convicting them under IPC section 307 (attempt to murder), Kumar added. Two of those sentenced to death are at large, police said.

Two groups of inmates clashed in the jail leading to inmate Manoj Kumar Singh, suffering grievous injuries. On the way to hospital, Manoj succumbed to his injuries.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will have too many choices today, if you are thinking on the lines of changing a job, or in business matters or even in relationships. Ganesha advises you to take into account long-term ramifications before making any commitments. There may be something romantic lined up for the evening.

TAURUS
Today, you may not find the courage to say no even when you disagree with people, predicts Ganesha. Important decisions may see procrastination due to lack of necessary inputs. A few long-standing deals will end on a happy note by evening, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
You will be more emotional today and people might play with your feelings. Therefore you need to rein in your emotions today when it comes to dealing with people. However, you will meet people who will reciprocate your feelings with equal ardour, if not more, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Today, you may have to pay a lot of attention to educational and intellectual activities, predicts Ganesha. There may be novel business proposals and job offers in the afternoon. The opposite sex will be attracted to you like iron pins are attracted to a magnet. However, you are likely to be loyal to the one you love.

LEO
Dashing off in a mad rush never got anyone anywhere. Hence, Ganesha advises you to slow down a bit on this cheerful day. On the business front, you may be slightly concerned about the state of your finances; after all, a smooth functioning of one's enterprise largely depends on the flow of money.

VIRGO
You're the magician when it comes to people and relationships, says Ganesha. Later in the day, you may become all hush-hush about certain affairs. The real worry might come at the end of the day when you realise fun and frolic have been big-tickets. Ganesha foresees a happy and cheerful day, nonetheless.

LIBRA
It's not an easy ride for you today. Expect to undergo a range of emotions that might even make you feel distressed and emotional. However, your academic intelligence will bear some fruit over the course of the day. Also, your charisma will finally bedazzle that special someone in your life. Do not ignore a chance to give a facelift to your home, says Ganesha.

SCORPIO
History beckons you, and unknown destinations stir up the adventurer in you, predicts Ganesha. At work, the spotlight shall be on you as you steal the show with your brilliant performance. Business will be fun and exciting for you, hopes Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
You are on an emotional leash, as you will be on the defensive line when it comes to the feelings of those you love. Chances are high that you will be foot-loose again - for business or pleasure. So pack your bags, advises Ganesha. In the evening, you may share some quiet time with those who share your opinions.

CAPRICORN
A dazzling day awaits you today! From meeting some reliable people to taking commendable initiatives at work, you will be at the centre of everything, and will bag the appreciation of your mentors for your good work. Given that all this will boost your morale and self-confidence by afternoon, you will go a step further to bring perfection to what has already been approved and kept aside, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You will transform abstract ideas into practical and tangible strategies today, and deserve all the credit. You will also appreciate and understand life a little more, says Ganesha. You may finally reach out for the Bhagwad Gita your mother has been pressing you to read.

PISCES
Your time today will be carved between dealing with the diverse challenges that your profession will conjure up, and in caring for your family members. However, you ought to come out of your worries at the end of the day smelling like a rose, says Ganesha.

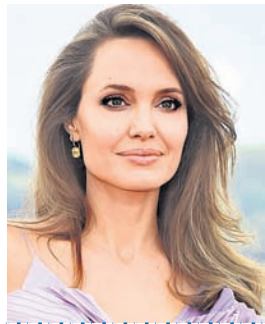


SWIFT WAS DENIED CAMEO IN TWILIGHT

Following the commercial success of 2008's *Twilight*, *The Twilight Saga's New Moon* became one of the highly-anticipated movies in 2009. Director Chris Weitz has revealed that the Grammy Award-winning artiste Taylor Swift wanted to become a part of *New Moon*, but he shot her down.

ANGELINA HIRES SONS MADDOX, PAX TO WORK ON HER NEW FILM

Hollywood star Angelina Jolie has hired her sons Maddox(18) and Pax(21) for her new film *Without Blood*. The two boys are thought to be working closely with mum Angelina who is directing the drama movie. The plot is being kept under wraps.



Jacqueline

faces threat of total boycott

Mumbai: Jacqueline Fernandez has been summoned repeatedly in a case of extortion by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which attached Rs. 7.27 crore worth of her assets in the extortion case against conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar. She now faces a threat of total boycott by the Hindi film industry.

The latest from the ED whereby Jacqueline has been named as one of the prime accused in the extortion case against Chandrashekhar, is being seen as more-or-less the death knell of her career.

A filmmaker who has worked with the actress in the past spoke on condition of anonymity. "She (Jacqueline) had been losing work rapidly after the ED's multiple summons. The recent films that she's been seen in like Bachchan Pandey and Vikrant Rona were all old projects. No one is signing her for new films considering the uncertainty."

With the ED naming Jacqueline in the extortion case against Chandrashekhar the chances of the actress' arrest are being scaled as "very high". Given the situation, it is unlikely that Jacqueline will bounce back from this severe setback.

"It's really sad. She is a very nice girl. She got embroiled in this without knowing what she was getting into," a female colleague of Jacqueline says.

AGENCIES



Nushratt's take on 'pan-Indian' wave

Mumbai: As the fever of pan-Indian films grip showbiz, Nushratt Bharuccha too shares her piece of mind.

Interestingly, she gave a nod to a pan-Indian film, even before the wave really hit the industry. She says, "None of these projects (*Pushpa: The Rise*, *RRR* and *K.G.F: Chapter 2*) had even released then. The markers had come to me during the lockdown. The brief was similar that they will set it on a huge scale, and the release will be in different languages across the country. It's the kind of a typical commercial film where the hero leads the story. I just agreed to be a part of the project. I didn't know then that post the lockdown we will witness this 'pan-Indian' wave. I just did the film, now let's see how it goes."

Nushratt feels that the success of such movies only points at what the audience is enjoying of late in terms of entertainment. She shares, "The success of the recent pan-Indian films is the barometer to audiences' tastes and choices. So, I think it is time even we make films that are at par and engage the whole of Indian audience than just the Hindi speaking lot."

AGENCIES

CHINTA O CHETANA'S MONSOON FESTIVAL



Soulful rendition by some popular singers like Debasish Mohapatra, Sangeeta Panda, Bijay Kumar Jena, Randeep Palit, Bandish Palit, Laxmikanta Palit, Jyotirmayee Nayak and Narayan Rath marked the third evening of 44th edition of Barsha, the monsoon festival organised by Chinta O Chetana, at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday. The evening was dedicated to former Chief Minister Harekrushna Mahatab. Among the dignitaries, former Indian Ambassador Abasar Beuria, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi Secretary Prabodh Rath, Ajay Bahadur Singh of Akash Byju's (Regional director EAST) and the office bearers of Chinta O Chetana were present on the occasion.

OP PHOTO

Nandita's *Zwigato* set for a TIFFF premiere

SET IN BHUBANESWAR, THE FILM CAPTURES WHAT AN 'ORDINARY' FAMILY FACES IN THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD



Mumbai: Actor-filmmaker Nandita Das' *Zwigato*, a movie set in Bhubaneswar, will have its world premiere at the prestigious 47th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) 2022.

An official selection, the film will be screened under the 'Contemporary World Cinema' section. Written and directed by Nandita Das, the film features Kapil Sharma, who is a new food delivery rider, ex-

ploring the world of gig economy. Shahana Goswami plays his wife, a homemaker, who to support his income, starts to work for the very first time. Set in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, the film captures what an 'ordinary' family faces in the post-pandemic world. It is the story of relentless struggle of life, but not without shared

moments of joy.

Nandita said, "*Zwigato* is finally ready! A story about new urban India that is not just about the gig economy, but also about everything that we normalise around us. I am thrilled that it will premiere soon at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). This means a lot to me personally as I have debuted there both as an actor and director, with *Fire* and *Firaaq*, respectively."

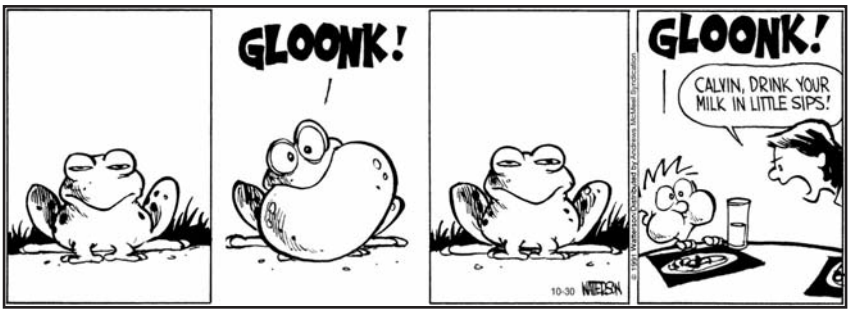
IANIS



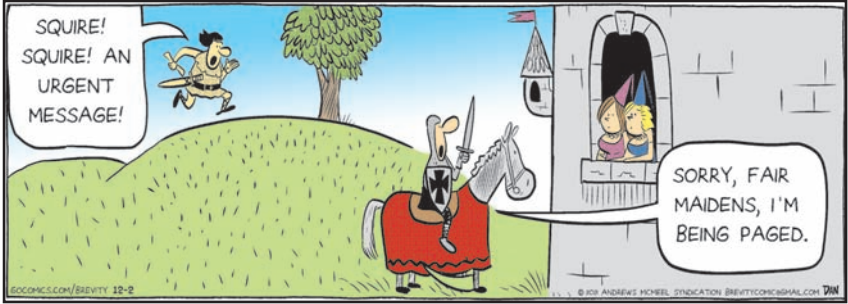
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

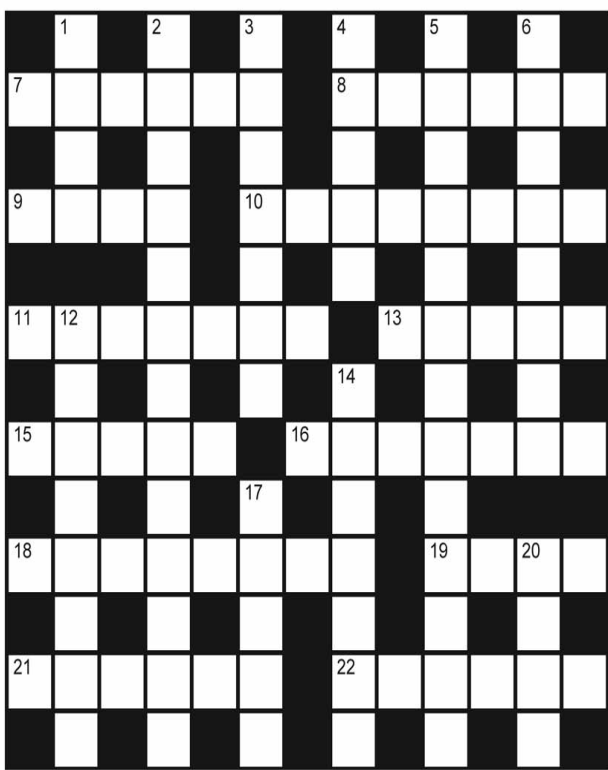


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

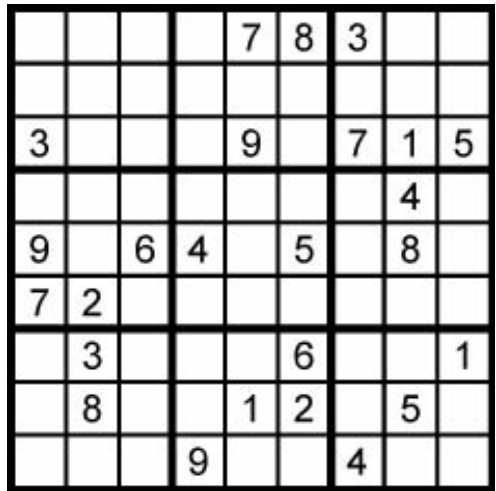


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- Across**
- 7 Caviar source
 - 8 Cattle enclosure
 - 9 Angler's bait
 - 10 Closet resident?
 - 11 Field game
 - 13 Aragon locale
 - 15 Old Roman port
 - 16 Sporting dog
 - 18 Forgetful person?
 - 19 Uncertain
 - 21 Fakes
 - 22 Tuileries, e.g.
- Down**
- 1 Roman Emperor
 - 2 Uzi or sten, e.g. (10,3)
 - 3 Wetlands
 - 4 Felt pain
 - 5 Feckless
 - 6 Medicinal plant
 - 12 Meat seasoning
 - 14 Delivery aid
 - 17 Wash cycle
 - 20 Model's asset

SUDOKU

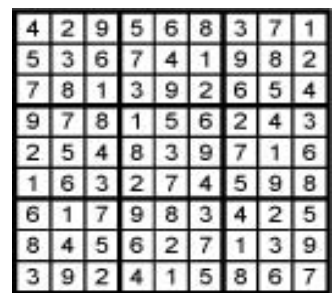
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



JANMASHTAMI FERVOUR

Devotees offering diyas at ISKCON temple in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, on the occasion of Janmashtami

COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	59,83,49,264	57,23,54,775	64,64,663
India	4,42,98,864	4,36,70,315	5,27,206
Odisha	13,24,069	13,12,449	9,160

Red alert for 2, orange for 14 dists

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 18: A fresh spell of torrential rain over the next two days, owing to the formation of a new low pressure area (Lopar) Thursday, may exacerbate the flood situation in the state.

The weather system, third in two weeks, took shape over the northeast Bay of Bengal Thursday morning and is set to concentrate into a well-marked low pressure, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

It is expected to intensify into a depression over the northern Bay Friday morning and move north-westwards across the Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha and Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, according to a bulletin.

The Met office asked fisherfolk, who are in deep sea, to return to the coast by Thursday. They have been advised not to venture off the coasts of Odisha and West Bengal for the next two days as the sea can be very rough. Squally weather with wind speed of 45-65 kmph is expected over the northern Bay.

The weatherman issued a red



Khurda Collector K Sudarshan Chakravarty visiting the flood-affected Padhansahi under Jatni block of the district, Thursday

DEPRESSION LIKELY

The Lopar is expected to intensify into a depression over the northern Bay Friday morning and move north-westwards across the Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha and Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand

The weatherman issued a red alert of extremely heavy rain in parts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts, Friday

This may lead to rise in water levels of rivers, flash floods, landslides or mudslides in vulnerable hilly areas, and cause damage to susceptible roads and houses

12 Hirakud gates closed

With the rains letting up in the upstream of Mahanadi river in Chhattisgarh 12 of the 40 gates of Hirakud dam were closed, special relief commissioner PK Jena said. The reservoir level will be brought to 622 ft by 9am Friday, he added. Water Resources department chief engineer BK Mishra said there are seven breaches on the embankments of the Mahanadi river and its tributaries, and workers have been deployed to repair them. With the flood inundating over 1,757 villages and 10 urban areas, the state government has strengthened rescue teams of the NDRF, ODRAF and Fire Services, officials said.

The department predicted pouring rain in eight districts and heavy showers in seven Saturday.

Around five lakh people in 12 districts have already been affected by the flood in the Mahanadi river system due to incessant rain since last week due to low pressure and depression.

alert of extremely heavy rain in parts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj Friday. This may lead to rise in water levels of rivers, flash floods, landslides or mudslides in vulnerable hilly areas, and cause damage to susceptible roads and houses.

It put out an orange alert of downpour at a few places in 14 districts, including Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Sambalpur: A yellow warning of heavy rain has been issues for seven districts, including Khurda and Puri.

Youth drowns in Khuntuni

POST NEWS NETWORK

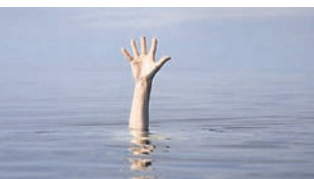
Khuntuni, August 18: A youth drowned while taking bath in a stream along with his friends here Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Pradyumna Rout, 18, of Brahmanbasta village. He was a student of second year Arts at Kakhadi College.

Sources said five youths of the village under Mancheswar panchayat of Athagarh block in Cuttack district had gone to have some fun in the floodwaters under a bridge near an old pond with a truck tube. However, Pradyumna was swept away by strong currents while four of his friends somehow managed to swim back.

Srinibas Khatua, a teacher from their village, saw them drowning and jumped into the stream to rescue them. Though he helped the four to swim back to the bank, he couldn't find Pradyumna. Later, after intense search, Pradyumna was fished out and rushed to Athagarh hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead. The body has been handed over to his family members. No complaint has been lodged in this regard, said the police.

Kid falls in tank dug up for govt project, dies



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, August 18: In a tragic incident, a five-year-old boy drowned after falling into a 10-ft deep water tank filled with rainwater at Begunia village under Nilagiri block of Balasore district, Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Kiran Singh, 5, son of Gobinda Singh of the village. The incident occurred when the minor was playing near the water tank while his family members were busy working inside the house.

Family members searched for him frantically after they failed to find him. Later, they found the child floating in the tank and rushed him to the nearby hospital where the doctors pronounced him dead. The tank had been dug up by a consultancy agency engaged in construction of a mega drinking water project. It was filled with rainwater and the kid fell into it Thursday morning.

The incident sparked tension in the area as villagers and kin alleged that the kid died due to the negligence of the contractor and demanded compensation for the bereaved family members. On being informed, Nilagiri police reached the spot and placated the irate residents and sent the body for post-mortem.

BJD appoints 6 leaders as senior observers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Thursday appointed six party leaders as senior observers for 30 districts.

In supersession of all previous orders issued in this regard earlier, BJD President Naveen Patnaik has been pleased to appoint the party functionaries as senior observers for the districts, party's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash

Das said in a statement, Thursday. Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari has been appointed as senior observer for Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Bargarh districts while Prasanna Acharya will look after the party affairs in Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Balasore districts.

Similarly, Revenue Minister Pramila Mallick has been appointed as the senior observer for Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur,

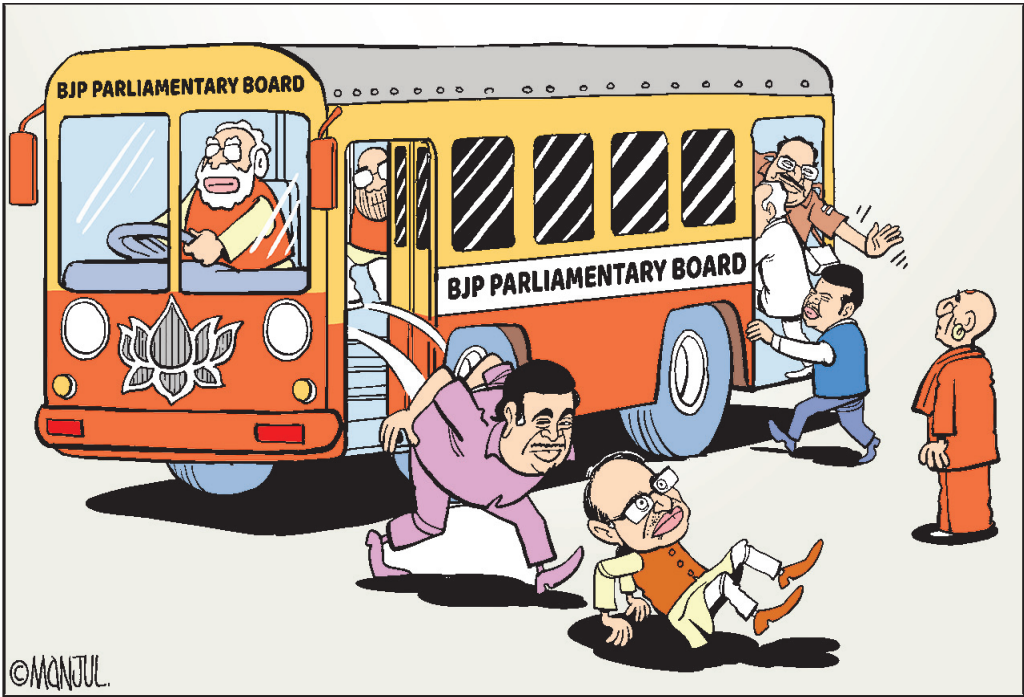
Rayagada and Gajapati districts. Senior legislator Debi Prasad Mishra is the party's senior observer for Ganjam, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Khurda, Puri and Boudh districts while Maheswar Mohanty has been given the charge for Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar.

Besides, Mahanga MLA Pratap Jena will look after the organisational affairs in Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Deogarh, Angul and Dhenkanal districts.



Members of Red Cross Society packing relief materials in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, for people affected by floods across the state

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'Stories at My Doorstep' released

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Writer Deepthi Paikray's book 'Stories at My Doorstep' was released at a literary event organised at Gitagobinda Sadan here under the aegis of Bhubaneswar Sahitya Samaj Trust, Thursday.

Paikray opined that creativity is an inward journey of the self and an outcome of spiritual inspiration. She said she expects her writing will resonate with readers.

Rural cops may lose power to penalise traffic violators

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The state government is taking steps to withdraw the power bestowed upon the rural police to impose penalty on traffic rule violators as per Motor Vehicles (MV) Act.

This was discussed at a high-level meeting held recently under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra.

The state government has noticed that the police are harassing the staff of buses on the road throughout the state by issuing challans in fabricated manner.

It was decided that the notification issued by the Transport department in September 2019 for this purpose will be modified and the power will be delegated only on selected accident-prone stretches of national and state highways as notified in 2022 and in urban local bodies (ULBs), official sources said here Thursday.

The Transport department has sought views of the Director General of Police (DGP) and transport commissioner on the above issue for issuing government orders in the matter.

During the meeting, it was decided that sleeper class buses will be allowed to ply during daytime subject to the condition that overload will not be allowed and no passenger can be seated on the sleeper berth.

It was also decided at the meeting that the permits of 15-year-old buses will be renewed by the State Transport Authority (STA) subject to the condition that the distance to be covered by such buses



- It was decided that sleeper class buses will be allowed to ply during daytime subject to the condition that overload will not be allowed and no passenger can be seated on the sleeper berth
- Permits of 15-year-old buses will be renewed by the State Transport Authority subject to the condition that the distance to be covered by such buses will be restricted up to 200 km

will be restricted up to 200 km one way.

Very old buses will be granted temporary permits from time to time up to 20 years if they are found fit. A fitness test will be conducted every year, they said.

As per the provisions of Rule 50 of Central Motor Vehicle (CMV) Rules, it is mandatory to affix high security registration plates (HSRP) in all the vehicles and therefore the transport commissioner has set December 31, 2022 as the deadline for this. It was decided that the said timeline will be extended for stage carriages if required.

The guardian angels of Gundalba forests in Puri

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Puri, August 18: Sitting in her house in the nondescript Gundalba village in Puri district, Charulata Biswal, 55, speaks with poetic creativity. A noted environmental crusader, she has received numerous accolades, but the awards and recognitions have not made her shun the simplicity. Her testimonials reflect the culture and aesthetics of her work, more than scientific references.

"The cool breeze under the shade of the tree on a hot summer afternoon, the soft rustling of leaves as wind brushes past, the melodious chirping of the birds nested in the tree... These are the little joys in life that only a tree can provide," she articulates her emotions in Odia, in a near melodic cadence.

For over two decades now, Charulata and a group of 75 women from adjacent villages have been guarding a casuarina forest in Gundalba from timber mafia. Additionally, they protect the mangroves around the coastal belt that lies in close proximity to the village, which comes under Astaranga block.

The Super Cyclone and its aftermath

The devastating Super Cyclone of October 1999, which swept away several villages along Odisha's coast, was their wake-up call. Though inundated, Gundalba,

which lies half a km from Astaranga beach, was not cut off. "The mangroves saved us. They reduced the pace of the waves entering our village. If not for these trees, our village could have been washed away," says Charulata.

Two years later, under the aegis of Pir Jahania Van Surakhya Samiti - it was named after the spiritual shrine situated near the village - women from each household of Gundalba joined the green drive. Their counterparts from other villages joined in gradually. The areas of conservation were demarcated for the convenience of the participant villages.

The thengapali method

Women in Gundalba use the thengapali method to protect the casuarina forest. In local parlance, thenga means a stick and pali means turn. So, armed with sticks a group of 10 to 12 women stay on guard throughout the day. Each week, a group takes up the task of patrolling the woods. They watch out for anyone trying to cut a tree. They work in two shifts: from 8am to noon and post-lunch to sunset.

"Sometimes, we also venture out in the dark, if we get information about anyone sneaking into the forest. Those in our village follow the rules, but outsiders cause trouble at times," says a woman associated with the group.

STICK & TURN METHOD

Women in Gundalba use the thengapali method to protect the casuarina forest

In local parlance, thenga means a stick and pali means turn

ARMED WITH STICKS A GROUP OF 10 TO 12 WOMEN STAY ON GUARD THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Since the women also have households to look after, their duty hours have to be managed efficiently.

"In a household where only one member is female, she completes all daily chores before venturing into the forest. If the family has more women, we place them in different groups so that at least one of them is present in the house to manage chores," says Mehjabeen Nisa, a member of the group.

If any intruder is caught, he is usually let off with a warning. But if the situation gets out of hand, the local

administration is informed. Nisa recollects one such incident, which took place over two years ago. "A large group of people had come to the forest once to cut the trees down. When we tried to stop them, they behaved violently. We immediately informed the Forest department about the matter," she recalls.

Local residents are dependent on the forest for firewood, but they mostly rely on agriculture to make ends meet. The women on forest duty always allow people to collect broken twigs and dry leaves, but

ensure that no trees are touched.

A safe spot for Olive Ridley's

Women led by Charulata also offer their services to protect the nesting places of Olive Ridley turtles along Astaranga beach. "We all belong to the same village and help each other. The women who protect the forest also clean the beach area regularly. This is an important aspect in the Olive Ridley conservation," says Bichitrnanda Biswal, an Olive Ridley conservationist. Inside the forest, the women keep an eye on water bodies frequented by animals. If the ponds run dry, they alert the local administration.

Globally, there are numerous studies that highlight the successful implementation of community-led efforts to conserve local biodiversity. While it is difficult to ascertain accurate statistical data on what impact they make - since most such endeavours are voluntary in nature - studies and surveys by local NGOs report improvement in the overall health of the forests after such initiatives.

"Women and forests are dependent on each other. When there is a dip in forest cover, women are the first to know as they rely on forest resources a lot," says Sanjukta Basa, a subject expert from Odisha who has followed the thengapali closely.

A report suggests that the forest cover in Astaranga region is up

by 63 per cent - from 2.58 sq km in 1985 to 4.21 sq km in 2004. The women themselves have realised this positive change. "We now spot deer in the forests. Sometimes, they enter agricultural lands and damage crops, but we are still happy to provide them a habitat by protecting the forest," says Charulata.

A helping hand

The concept of Joint Forest Management is gaining ground, but there are challenges on the way, primarily due to the lack of co-ordination between different stakeholders and the conflicts in management. Being voluntary in nature, most community conservation efforts are driven by motivation, often due to cultural resemblances. The villagers of Gundalba also started off voluntarily, but were backed by the forest department since 2009. "We do not get any monetary support, but the forest department supports us in case of a rift with intruders. We are in a way recognised by them for the work we do," says Nisa.

"Our work is to protect the forest and that is all what we know. Today, a lot of people are recognising our efforts. We might not understand the technicalities, but we understand the forest and will work to conserve them till our last breath," Charulata concludes.

108 children among 482 new Cov cases



Bhubaneswar, August 18: The state's Covid-19 tally rose to 13,24,069 Thursday as 482 more people, including 108 children, tested positive for the infection, a health bulletin said.

The toll rose to 9,160 as a 72-year-old woman succumbed to the disease in Khurda. Fifty-three other patients have died due to comorbidities so far, it said.

Odisha had logged 280 infections and two fatalities Wednesday.

The state now has 2,909 active cases, while 553 more people were cured of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total recoveries to 13,11,947.

The daily positivity rate was at 2.67 per cent as 18,036 samples were tested for the infection in the last 24 hours.

The country saw a single day rise of 12,608 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 4,42,98,864, while the active cases declined to 1,01,343, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Thursday.

The national death toll climbed to 5,27,206 with 72 fatalities, including 29 fatalities by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The active cases comprised 0.23 per cent of the total infections, as the national Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.58 per cent, the health ministry said.

A decline of 3,715 cases was recorded in the active Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 3.48 per cent, and weekly at 4.20 per cent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have

The 43 new fatalities in the country composed of eight from Delhi, six from Maharashtra, five from Haryana, four each from Punjab and West Bengal, three from Karnataka, two each from Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and one each from Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand

recuperated from the disease has surged to 4,36,70,315. The overall fatality rate to date stands at 1.19 per cent.

According to the ministry, 208.95 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 2020. It crossed the grim milestone of two crore May 4, 2021, and four crore January 25 this year.

The 43 new fatalities composed of eight from Delhi, six from Maharashtra, five from Haryana, four each from Punjab and West Bengal, three from Karnataka, two each from Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and one each from Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand.



Balipatna area, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, inundated by flood waters, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Corporators' support sought for TB elimination in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The Resource Group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH) in collaboration with Odisha State TB Cell (STC) and Bhubaneswar District TB Cell (DTC) organised a consultative meeting on TB with the newly elected corporators of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday in the presence of around 35 corporators including Manjulata Kanhar, deputy mayor, BMC.

In the meeting, Kanhar called for TB pledge on behalf of all the present corporators and sought their support for TB elimination pro-

grammes in their respective wards.

The meeting was facilitated by PK Hota, state TB officer, and officials from the state and district TB Cell.

Addressing the corporators, Hota said that not even a single person with TB should be missed out. District TB officer Sooman Sundaray put emphasis on involvement of elected representatives in community for elimination of tuberculosis.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring together the elected representatives of BMC to discuss the issue of tuberculosis in Odisha and, in particular, the BMC area. The programme was organized as

part of the USAID supported AL-LIES project in state.

The discussions at the consultation included the basic disease dynamics, the disease burden, and issues such as transmission, risk factors and an overview of the National TB Elimination programme (NTEP) by WHO consultant, Subrat Kumar Panda. The socio-economic implications of TB, the stigma involved and the recent developments on nutrition support and private sector engagement were also discussed. Most importantly, the role of elected representatives in TB elimination programme was highlighted in the consultation.

3 express trains to stop at Nuapada Rd station

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 18: The Railway Ministry has informed Thursday that three express trains will have stoppage at the Nuapada Road railway station in Odisha for six months on experimental basis.

The Ministry said that Puri – Ahmedabad Express, Korba – Visakhapatnam Express and Bilaspur – Tirupati Express will have stoppage at Nuapada Road railway station on experimental basis. Puri – Ahmedabad Express will start halting at Nuapada Road station from August 24 and other two trains from August 23.

A close watch should be kept at the sale of tickets at the station and reports will be sent to board within five months for review, the Ministry informed.

Govt relief for flood-hit districts

Continued from P1

After his return from the aerial survey Patnaik tweeted in Odia that the flood has caused extensive damage to agriculture, roads, houses and other infrastructure.

Around five lakh people in 12 districts are reeling under the floods caused by the Mahanadi river after incessant rains lashed the state last week in the wake of a low pressure and a subsequent depression. There were reports of two minors missing in Cuttack and Balasore districts. The flood-hit districts are Angul, Bargarh, Boudh, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Khurda, Nayagarh, Puri, Sambalpur and Subarnapur.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary, Bhubaneswar, I have changed my name from Asis Agrawal to Ashish Agrawal for all purpose.

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary, Bhubaneswar, I have changed my name from Pooja Sanghai to Pooja Agrawal for all purpose.

LOST

I Parameswar Pradhan, S/o. Bikash Pradhan has purchased a property from Bijay Pradhan vide Regd. Sale deed No.6712, Dtd.09.11.2005. While I was preparing Xerox Copy of documents, I have lost it at that place or on the way. I found everywhere but unable to trace out the same. I have not mortgaged it any Bank for taking loan. Now I am searching customers to sell out this property. **Bimal Kumar Behera 9600183877**



Mayor Subhash Singh inspecting a big hole along the side of Justice Chhak road in Cuttack, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Outfit to target 'Food for All' in state by 2025

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: A one-day conclave on "Food for All" was organised by non-profit social organization, So Am I Foundation Trust, in collaboration with Odisha State Food Commission, government of Odisha, Utkal University and FICCI FLO at Utkal University, Thursday.

The conclave was organised to formulate a realistic plan of action for achieving the goals of a Hunger/ Malnutrition Free Odisha by 2025.

The proposed Conclave was held in the auditorium of Utkal University in the presence of dignitaries like Pramod Kumar Merkap, IFS (retired.), chairper-



son, Odisha State Food Commission; Jagadananda, Member of NITI Aayog Committee; Vishnu Swaminathan founder director, Nourishing Schools Foundation; Sabita Acharya Vice Chancellor, Utkal University; Sanjay Lath, president, Marwari Society of Odisha; Sathya Swaroop Patnaik, state president Shree Satyasai Seva Sangathan.

'Child labour, caste discrimination, poverty closely linked in India'

Child labour, caste-based discrimination and poverty are closely inter-linked in India, according to a UN report which highlighted contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, said that deep-rooted intersecting forms of discrimination, in combination with multiple other factors, are the main causes of contemporary forms of slavery affecting minorities.

They are often the result of historical legacies, such as slavery and colonisation, systems of inherited status, and formalised and State-sponsored discrimination, he said. Obokata said in the report to the UN General Assembly Wednesday that child labour (among children 5 to 17 years of age), including its worst forms, exists in all regions of the world.

In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, between 4 and 6 per cent of children are said to be in child labour, and the percentage is much higher in Africa (21.6 per cent), with the highest rate in sub-Saharan Africa (23.9 per cent).

"In India, child labour, caste-based discrimination and poverty are closely interlinked. Child labour among minority and migrant children have also been reported in Angola, Costa Rica, Honduras and Kazakhstan, in various sectors," the report said.

The report also notes that systematic discrimination has profound implications for the ability of affected individuals and communities to live a life of dignity and enjoy human rights on equal footing with others. Marginalised communities often remain overlooked in public policies and national budgetary allocations, and their access to justice and remedies in cases of human rights violations, including contemporary forms of slavery, is generally limited.

It said that the stigmatisation



of some communities is perpetuated by negative stereotypes in the media, textbooks, or on the Internet, which contributes to their disempowerment.

People discriminated against on the basis of work and descent represent one example. They are bound by their inherited status and subjected to dehumanizing discourses that refer to "pollution" or "untouchability", with no re-

spect for human dignity and equality. "Consequently, such people have limited freedom to renounce inherited occupations or degrading or hazardous work and are often subjected to debt bondage without sufficient access to justice," the report said.

"Additional intersectional factors, such as class, gender and religion are also affected by caste realities. Dalit women in South Asia

In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, between 4 and 6 per cent of children are said to be in child labour, and the percentage is much higher in Africa (21.6 per cent), with the highest rate in sub-Saharan Africa (23.9 per cent)

Dalits in Bangladesh are forced to undertake certain types of labour as a consequence of their assigned caste status and are almost exclusively working in "unclean" jobs in urban areas, like street sweeping and burying the dead

face severe discrimination, and as a result they are systematically denied choices and freedoms in all spheres of life," it said, adding that consequently their access to services and resources is very limited, increasing their risk of being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery.

The report further notes that bonded labour continues to be prevalent among people discriminated against on the basis of work and descent, such as Dalits in South Asia.

Dalits in Bangladesh are forced to undertake certain types of labour as a consequence of their assigned caste status and are almost exclusively working in "unclean" jobs in urban areas, like street sweeping and burying the dead.

"Manual scavenging, predominantly carried out by Dalit women, is widely regarded as forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery, entailing harsh working conditions that have a negative impact on mental and physical health."

Obokata said in the report rates of child marriage spike among marginalized communities in particular, such as Roma girls in South-Eastern Europe.

Official data collected by the Forced Marriage Unit of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland suggests that a large majority of forced-marriage cases relate to Pakistan and, to a lower extent, to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Somalia.

Forced marriage of women and girls is a concern in Asia, including Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

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National Waterway project non-starter as Centre mute

RESIDENTS HAVE TERMED IT AS SHEER EYEWASH WITH NO RESPONSE COMING FROM THE CENTRE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 18: Over three years have passed since the announcement but the National Waterways project in Odisha's two major rivers Mahanadi and Brahmani have remained a non-starter.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had announced this while laying the foundation stone for expansion of National Highway-53 at Sarangdhar Stadium in Kamakhyanagar of Dhenkanal district, February 6, 2019. Gadkari had said that the establishment of an inland waterway project is essential for the development of the state.

The Centre will spend over Rs 5,000 crore for this mega project which will open a new chapter in the field of import and export, he had declared, spreading cheers among the residents.

The aim behind including these two rivers in this Centre-sponsored project was to facilitate plying of cargo ships. The cargo ships would ferry manufactured goods and heavy equipment from the industrially rich Dhenkanal, Angul and Jajpur districts. The implementation of the National Waterway project will make way for cargo ships to sail smoothly in the river.

Implementation of the project will also help in hassle-free transport of coal, fertilizers and other products from these industrialised districts other than development of agriculture, tourism, industrialisation and arresting environmental degradation.

This will not only save time but will also help in drastic reduction in transport costs. After the an-



nouncement, a roadmap was prepared by the state Works department to construct new bridges on the rivers and upgrade the existing bridges to greater heights to facilitate plying of cargo ships. However, the project is yet to take off with Centre remaining silent on the project.

Accordingly, construction of new bridges has been started in Dhenkanal district. However, the project has remained a non-starter with no instruction yet available on upgradation of two old bridges. The project is mired in haze as no clear picture is yet available whether the heights of these old bridges will be increased as per guidelines or they will be dismantled to construct new bridges.

As per guidelines, if these old bridges will be dismantled then what will be the deadline for construction of new bridges and what will be the alternative to cross the river during the period of construction, locals expressed concern.

Meanwhile, three years have passed since Gadkari made this announcement and no report is available as to when and how it will be implemented.

The state government has written letters to the Centre asking it to clear the doubts surrounding the project but the latter is yet to reply. Residents have termed it as sheer eyewash with no response coming from the Centre.

Notably, the National Waterways Act received the approval of the Centre in 2016. This project has been named as the Talcher-Dhamara Jalmarg-5. Accordingly, a new bridge at an expense of Rs 205 crore is being constructed on the Brahmani river from Kaluria in Gondia block to Dighi in Bhuban block of Dhenkanal district. The height of the bridge has been raised to 9 metre and width to 62.7 metre to facilitate movement of the ships.

Similarly, construction of two other bridges from Badakamar under Parjang block to Khadagprasad under Odapada block and from Ballhar Square in Talcher to Sarang on the river is underway as per guidelines. An existing bridge Sarangdhar Setu near Dhenkanal-Kamakhyanagar road and another Baji Rout Setu connecting Mandar in Gondia block with Nilakanthapur under Bhuban block are yet to be upgraded as the Centre is yet to clear its stand and issue any guideline.

When contacted, Manoranjan Biswal, superintending engineer of Works department in Dhenkanal said that the three new bridges are being constructed as per the Centre's guidelines while the two new bridges will be upgraded after receiving any order from the Centre.

Works Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallick said the state government in a letter had urged the Centre to implement the project. However, not much headway has been made in this front.

Ambulance service eludes 165 villages sans road

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, August 18: The Centre and the Odisha government are trying their best to make healthcare accessible to all, but lack of motorable roads in parts of Nabarangpur district has affected the service.

Sources said that ambulance services are not available in 165 villages of Nabarangpur district due to lack of a proper road. This has happened due to negligent and apathetic attitude of the district administration and public representatives.

Out of the affected villages, only 77 have fair weather roads. Many villages are surrounded by rivers and streams and get cut off from the rest of the world during the rainy season due to lack of bridges on the water bodies.

The spreading of waterborne diseases like diarrhoea in many remote pockets of the district is a prime example of the lack of healthcare facilities due to the absence of a proper road. Healthcare professionals are ready to treat patients suffering from various diseases,



but the lack of a proper motorable road prevents them from doing so.

The sorry state of affairs was recently witnessed at Tulasipadar village under Papadahandi block where diarrhoea claimed one life and 20 others were severely infected. The disease wreaked havoc as it is very difficult to reach the village.

Sources said that one has to take National Highway-26 and travel for 1.5 km on a makeshift mud road and then cross a river to reach Tulasipadar village. The water level in the river has increased due to heavy rainfall lashing the dis-



known person had asked him to contact on a number, August 8. Prasad called the number and talked to

the person who identified himself as a staff of the power distribution company.

He asked him to deposit his outstanding energy bill by 9pm the same night failing which his power supply will be disconnected. The caller also asked him to deposit the money online and sent him a link for the purpose.

Later, he clicked on the link and sent Rs 10 as initial amount to the number via digital payment app GooglePay. Soon after, messages flashed on his mobile phone and he found that a total of Rs 99,600 had been withdrawn from his account in four phases. He realised that he had been defrauded and informed the bank authorities and later lodged a complaint in the Cyber Police Station.

LINEMAN HELD FOR RAPE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, August 18: Rambha police arrested an electric lineman on charge of rape of a woman at a seaside area under this police limits in Ganjam district, Thursday.

The accused was identified as Krushna Chandra Behera, a native of Purunabandha village and a lineman working under Huma electricity section office in the district. The incident occurred when the accused found the woman alone at her house and raped her. Behera was also arrested in the past in an ATM loot case.

Police registered a case and arrested the accused after the survivor lodged a complaint at the police station, Thursday, IIC P Swaroop Kishan said. A medical examination was conducted on the survivor and the accused and the latter will be produced in court, Friday, police said.



Tryst with tussar lets tribals earn with dignity

Over, 6,600 people are presently employed in tussar cultivation and silk manufacturing in Keonjhar district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, August 18: Tussar farming has turned out to be a boon and changed the lives of scores of landless tribals including women in Keonjhar district. It has enabled them to earn their livelihood with dignity.

Tussar farming involves growing cocoons from which the silk yarn is extracted to make silk. The fabric is in great demand both in and outside India.

Mamata Naik, 36, a poor landless woman of Dhaladihi village under Phulajhar panchayat of Bansapal block in the district is a case in this point. She was earning her livelihood by working as a casual labourer with her job being collection of tussar from nearby jungles.

Little did she know that the tussar she was collecting will one day change her life! The district administration officials one day contacted her and asked her to take up tussar farming. She was provided with 2.5 acre of land to start cultivation.

She planted 'Arjun' and 'Asana'



trees on the land with the financial assistance she received from the district mineral foundation (DMF) and Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Her tryst with tussar helped her increase her income substantially.

Soon the efforts of the district administration paid off as many tribal and landless farmers got attracted to tussar farming and took up its cultivation to earn their livelihood. With funds available from the DMF, tussar plantation has now come up on vast tracts of land. A nursery

has also been set up and a cocoon-preserving unit has also been built.

The cloth prepared from tussar is in great demand among fashion connoisseurs. Sensing the enthusiasm among local people, the district administration is also planning to establish two mega nurseries at Bansapal and Harichandampur in the district.

The administration is also trying to spread tussar cultivation to other areas for which it has plans to establish a tussar seed production centre and a disease prevention centre. It is also planning to establish a



Children participate in 'Dahi Handi Bhanga' programme as part of Janmashtami festival organised by Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Buguda of Ganjam district, Thursday

Push for fruit farming under MGNREGS in Mayurbhanj

PNN & AGENCIES

Baripada, August 18: The horticulture department has planned to promote fruit farming in a big way through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj district in order to create scope of earning for local populace and farmers.

It will be executed under the rural job scheme, a good scope of work for scores of job card holders and local labourers will be created thereby, a report said.

The department has set a tar-

get to carry out fruit plantation on 2,950 hectare of land in 2022-23. Marginal and minor farmers will benefit from the scheme, sources in the department said.

In the current year, the department will plant cashew saplings in 1,960 ha; mango in 650 ha; lemon in 50 ha; guava in 25 ha and pomegranate in 15 ha.

The department has initiated the process to plant saplings of indigenous berries, jackfruit, lichi and custard apple in 250 hectares. The farmers will be encouraged to take up fruit plantation on their own land while wages will be paid for their work under MGNREGS.

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For registration, please contact: Bhabagrahi Sahoo, Mobile: 94397 06625.


Registration is compulsory.
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm.
It is mandatory to follow the COVID safety guidelines during the event.
No walk-ins will be allowed.

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“Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism”

SRI AUROBINDO



The Afghan Abyss

In the year since the United States’ disgraceful abandonment of Afghanistan to the Taliban, the country has gone down precisely the path any logical observer would have predicted: a medieval, jihadist, terrorist-sheltering emirate has been established. The US will incur costs for betraying its Afghan allies for a long time to come. But nobody will pay a higher price than Afghans.

The geopolitical fallout of America’s humiliating retreat from Afghanistan –after President Joe Biden followed through on the withdrawal commitment of his predecessor, Donald Trump – is still growing. By exposing the US as a power in decline, the withdrawal gave a huge boost to militant Islamists everywhere, while emboldening Russia and China. It is no coincidence that, not long after the fall of Kabul, Russia began massing forces along Ukraine’s borders, and China sent a record number of warplanes into Taiwan’s self-declared air defense identification zone.

But things are much worse in Afghanistan. Women and girls have lost their rights to employment and education, with many girls subjected to sexual slavery through forced marriages to Taliban fighters. Taliban death squads have been systematically identifying and murdering those who cooperated with US forces. Torture and execution have become commonplace. Afghanistan’s Hindus and Sikhs – descendants of those who withstood the medieval-era conversions to Sunni Islam by the country’s Arab conquerors – have been fleeing to India to avoid slaughter.

The regime’s cabinet is a veritable who’s who of international terrorists and narcotics kingpins. Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is responsible for Afghanistan’s internal security and preventing the country from becoming a safe haven for international terrorists, is the leader of the ruthless Haqqani network. The US has designated him a “global terrorist” and placed a \$10 million bounty on his head.

Not surprisingly, the Taliban continues to shelter known terrorists, as the recent Biden-ordered assassination of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in central Kabul showed. While Biden was quick to take a victory lap after al-Zawahiri’s killing, the assassination hardly reflects well on him. A year ago, when ordering US troops to beat a hasty retreat, he claimed that the US no longer had any interest in Afghanistan, because al-Qaeda was already “gone.” (No matter that, just weeks earlier, a United Nations Security Council report had shown that al-Qaeda militants were fighting alongside their Taliban associates.)

Compounding the danger to Afghanistan and its neighbours, the US left behind \$7.1 billion worth of weapons in its chaotic withdrawal from the country. According to a recent Pentagon report, the US has no plans to retrieve or destroy the equipment, despite recognising that the Taliban has already “repaired some damaged Afghan Air Force aircraft and made incremental gains in its capability to employ these aircraft in operations.”

In short, Biden’s decision to overrule his generals and withdraw from Afghanistan – a month before his own target date of September 11 – has created a security and humanitarian nightmare. And Biden is nowhere near finished making foreign-policy blunders in Afghanistan.

After Kabul’s fall, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that the US would judge its future engagement with the Taliban-led government based on “one simple proposition”: whether it helps the US advance its interests, including “seeing that women’s rights are upheld,” delivering humanitarian assistance, and pursuing counterterrorism. But even though the Taliban has failed on all three counts, the Biden administration is gradually easing sanctions on the regime.

At the UN, the US spearheaded a resolution providing for a humanitarian exemption to the sanctions imposed on Afghanistan. The US Treasury Department’s General Licenses, aimed at facilitating the provision of humanitarian relief, now allow financial transactions involving the Taliban and the Haqqani network. And the US is currently negotiating with the Taliban over the release of \$3.5 billion of Afghan central-bank reserves.

Meanwhile, the US refuses to target Haqqani or other leading terrorists in Kabul. Yes, al-Zawahiri was assassinated, but, contrary to the Biden administration’s narrative, he was not all that influential. He was largely retired, living with members of his extended family in a Kabul house under Haqqani’s protection.

What’s next? Will the US now reward Pakistan – one of America’s 18 “major non-NATO allies” – for opening its airspace to the drone that killed al-Zawahiri? True, Pakistan reared the Taliban and engineered the US defeat in Afghanistan, but now it wants an early International Monetary Fund loan dispersal to help it avert a debt default.

Likewise, will the US now continue to pursue the release of Afghanistan’s central-bank reserves to the Taliban, despite its indisputable harboring of terrorists and establishment of an oppressive and violent Islamic state? The Biden administration defends its engagement with the Taliban by speciously contending that the top terrorist threat in Afghanistan is the Islamic State-Khorasan. But ISIS-K has relatively few members, no state sponsor or Afghan allies, and controls no territory.

The Biden administration seems committed to striking a kind of Faustian bargain with the Taliban. But to what end? The Taliban’s political power and Islamist ideology make it a critical link in the international jihadist movement. And its rule is threatening to turn Afghanistan into a breeding ground for international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and mass migration. There is no justification for engaging with it.

Through its precipitous and bungling withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Biden administration handed Islamists worldwide their greatest victory. But the war in Afghanistan is hardly over. As the Taliban’s self-styled emir, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, recently declared, “This war never ends, and it will continue till judgment day.”

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Dani Rodrik

PRODUCTIVISM FOCUSES ON ENHANCING THE PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITIES OF ALL REGIONS AND ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY

I wrote recently about the possible emergence, from both the Left and Right of the political spectrum, of a new economic-policy paradigm that could supersede neoliberalism. The new framework gives governments and community organisations greater responsibility to shape investment and production – in support of good jobs, the climate transition, and more secure, resilient societies – and is much more suspicious of markets and large corporations than the outgoing paradigm is. I called it “productivism,” though others can no doubt think of sexier appellations.

Throughout history, the pendulum of economic ideology has swung from deification of markets to reliance on the state and then back again. Superficially, we appear to be in the midst of another periodic realignment. It was perhaps inevitable that neoliberalism’s excesses – increased inequality, concentration of corporate power, and neglect of threats to the physical and social environment – would trigger a backlash.

But establishing new paradigms requires developing novel approaches, not just emulating the old. When the New Deal and the welfare state replaced the free-wheeling capitalism that preceded them, policymakers did not simply revert to former mercantilist practices. They established new regulatory regimes and social-insurance institutions, and embraced explicit macroeconomic management in the form of Keynesianism.

Similarly if productivism is to be successful, it will have to move beyond conventional social protection, industrial policies, and macroeconomic management. It will need to internalise lessons learned from past failures and adapt to fundamentally new challenges.

State interventions aimed at reshaping an economy’s structure – so-called industrial policies – have traditionally been faulted for being ineffective and vulnerable to capture by special interests. “Governments cannot pick winners,” as the old adage goes. But much of this criticism is overdone. While there have been notable failures, recent systematic studies find



Establishing new economic-policy paradigms requires developing novel approaches, not just emulating the old. If productivism is to be successful, it will have to move beyond conventional social protection, industrial policies, and macroeconomic management

that industrial policies encouraging investment and job creation in disadvantaged regions have often worked surprisingly well.

Public-sector initiatives have been behind some of the most impressive high-tech successes of our time, including the internet and GPS. For every Solyndra, the US solar cell manufacturer that failed spectacularly after obtaining \$500 million in federal government loan guarantees, there is often a Tesla, the phenomenally successful electric battery and vehicle manufacturer that also received government support at a critical phase of its development.

Nevertheless, there is much room for improvement. The most effective industrial policies entail close, collaborative interaction between government agencies and private firms, whereby companies receive critical public inputs – financial support, skilled workers, or technological assistance – in exchange for meeting soft and evolving targets on investment and employment. This kind of industrial policy is likely to work much better – whether in promoting local economic development or directing major national technological efforts – than open-ended subsidies or tax incentives.

As the name suggests, productivism focuses on enhancing the productive capabilities of all re-

gions and all segments of society. While traditional forms of social assistance and especially better access to education and health care can help in this regard, connecting people with productive employment opportunities requires improvements on the demand side of the labour market as well as on the supply side. Policies must directly encourage an increase in the quantity and quality of jobs available for the less educated and less skilled members of the workforce, wherever they choose (or can afford) to live.

In the future, the bulk of these jobs will come not from manufacturing, but from services such as health care, long-term care, and retail. In the United States, virtually all net new job creation in the private sector since the late 1970s has taken place in services, and less than one in ten workers are currently employed in manufacturing. Even if US policy succeeds in reshoring manufacturing and supply chains, the effect on employment is likely to be limited.

The experience of East Asian manufacturing superstars such as South Korea and Taiwan provides a sobering example. While the share of manufacturing value added in GDP (at constant prices) in these two countries has increased rapidly, their manufacturing employment ratios have

steadily declined. This observation is important, because much US policy is focused on promoting high-tech manufacturing, including the bill recently passed by Congress that will provide \$52 billion in funding for semiconductors and related manufacturing. The initiative is aimed at both enhancing US national security vis-à-vis China and creating good jobs. Unfortunately, even if the first objective is met, the second is likely to remain elusive.

A similar point can be made about the subsidies for green technologies that are a core component of the Inflation Reduction Act, which President Joe Biden is likely to sign soon. The green transition is without question an urgent priority that the new paradigm needs to tackle. But here, too, governments cannot kill two birds with one stone. Policies that target climate change are not a substitute for good-job policies, and vice versa.

Shoring up the middle class and disseminating the benefits of technology broadly through society requires an explicit good-jobs strategy. It is too soon to tell whether a new productivism paradigm will jell, let alone prove adequate to the tasks at hand. Inflation worries may yet come to dominate policymaking and subordinate structural transformation. Price stability is a sine qua non for the pursuit of productivist economic policies. But a return to orthodox macroeconomic approaches focused on monetary tightening and deficit reduction will leave little fertile ground for policy innovation and experimentation.

Ultimately, what economies need is sound ideas, not necessarily a new paradigm. By the time any set of ideas becomes conventional wisdom, it is riddled with one-size-fits-all generalisations and truisms that are bound to be unhelpful and misleading. If the new thinking on productivism is successful, it will eventually be described as a “paradigm,” whether we call it that or not.

The writer is Professor at Harvard University

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SPECTRUM NATION

Whither Opposition parties

India is celebrating 75 years of its Independence. An apt time to reconcile the republic’s gains and losses and also access where the critics of the current government have gone wrong. India and Indians have travelled a long way on the road to democracy during the last 75 years. We have every reason to be proud of our country and its achievements.

However, the critics of the current government say that the Indian democracy is under siege. They point out further that Indian democracy is in serious decline according to major international democracy rankings, or that India may no longer be a democracy at all. They claim that the deterioration in the quality of democracy has only accelerated since the 2019 re-election of the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Critics also allege that due to the social engineering initiated by the BJP, historically oppressed Bahun (backward) are sought to be marginalised as do the religious minorities who find themselves identified as internal enemies. Bemoaning further they allege that liberals and leftists, activists who have raised issues of the environment and human rights, and anyone else perceived to be

“anti-national” have been included to the list of internal enemies.

They turn hoarse saying dissent is muzzled, increasingly through official edicts. Old controversies like in Mathura and Varanasi over temples and mosques are reignited, and claims that mosques were built upon the demolition of temples have resurfaced. They allege the social fabric knitted together by diverse communities is being torn and new religious flashpoints have been created.

It would be pertinent to note that India shares its democratic degradation with many other countries across the world. This process has been variously described as authoritarian, populist, ethnocentric, exclusionary and fascist. But to be sure, the dominant groups in ethnocracies value democracy - at least for themselves - and often take pride in their democratic institutions. But a polity based on the structural exclusion of a section of its population cannot reasonably be said to qualify as a democracy.

However, all these shrill noises of criticism and dissent beg a question. If all these accusations are true, then what has prevented other political parties to prevent this bulldozing by the BJP and adopt the practices and systems which have

made the BJP - a party which it is today? There is a good reason why the BJP is in power in 18 states out of 28, and has more than 400 members in Parliament, and 1,300 legislators in state assemblies. Driving the party is its ‘here and now’ approach. There is no room for political complacency - with an energetic PM who communicates with the people directly; there is simply no other option for karyakartas (workers). Contrast this with other political parties. BJP’s careful planning, managing its cadres and execution resulted in these victories, whereas the Congress had lost the plot much before the 2014 elections.

Before that the Communists, too had lost the plot completely. Their rout was more or less linked to the booming of the Indian economy after India opened up its economy and the market reforms rolled in. The middle class which now had access to more consumer goods and could aspire to a more lavish lifestyle, had no place for the politics of demonstrations and agitations.

Other smaller parties like the Samajwadi Party or the RJD or the NC, except the south Indian parties, were interested in furthering their own petty selfish goals and they were nearly deci-

mated under the BJP juggernaut.

As far as the minorities of India are concerned and particularly the largest minority – the Muslims, they themselves are to be blamed for their woes. After independence the community as a whole seems to have withdrawn into a shell. It was not seen as part of the mainstream, their self-promoting leaders kowtowed to their political masters by assuring them of Muslims’ votes for their own personal benefit. These leaders failed to drive their community to a path of greater learning and become an essential part in the country’s growth , as the others like Sikhs and Parsis did.

Right now it is a Right-wing push that is dictating the frenetic pace of statecraft now, but there is nothing wrong in this, as the Right wing has come to power using the democratic tools available to every party. This makes us ponder what has stopped the other political parties from adopting the same strategy and planning? If they are not up to it then they themselves are to be blamed. No one else! Stop bemoaning! Get your act together!

The writer is a New Delhi based political commentator

@IANS

WISDOM CORNER

“There are two different types of people in the world, those who want to know, and those who want to believe”

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

“The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life.”

CONFUCIUS

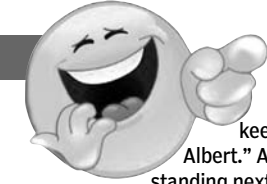
“The real question is not whether life exists after death. The real question is whether you are alive before death.”

OSHO

LOL

Calming your son

In the supermarket was a man pushing a cart which contained a screaming, bellowing baby. The gentleman kept repeating softly, “Don’t get excited, Albert; don’t scream, Albert; don’t yell, Albert;



keep calm, Albert.” A woman standing next to him said, “You certainly are to be commended for trying to soothe your son, Albert.” The man looked at her and said, “Lady, I’m Albert.”

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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

FIFA bombshell

Sir, FIFA’s red card for All India Football Federation (AIFF), citing “undue influence from third parties,” has come as a bombshell. AIFF’s repeated failures to get its house in order proved to be its undoing. This is the first time FIFA has banned the AIFF in the latter’s 85-year history. The embarrassing development means India loses the right to host the Women’s U17 World Cup beginning October 11. However, with FIFA indulging in constructive discussions with the sports ministry and the Centre scurrying to court seeking a review on the AIFF matter, there is hope yet.

NJ Ravi Chander; BANGALORE

Wily Nitish

Sir, Though the BJP conceded the CM’s gaddi to Nitish Kumar after the last Bihar Assembly elections despite bagging more seats than the JD(U), Nitish was smarting from the “humiliation” of finishing second to the BJP. Was the “sushasan babu” wary of a Maharashtra-like coup in Bihar? Did the BJP neglect him to the point of driving him almost to a point of no-return? Was RCP Singh, who breathed down the CM’s neck, an Amit Shah man? Was the Bihar CM promised “big”, and then overlooked? Or, is he nursing a prime ministerial ambition? Seen from any angle, that Nitish is not only an astute politician but also power hungry is in the open. His explanation on his latest move to his support base among the Dalits and women will be watched with interest over the coming days. The wily Nitish is not the one to sit still and watch the clever designs of the BJP. He will pull out all the stops to defeat the ulterior motives of his friends and opponents.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Chess champ

Sir, Indian chess player Harika Dronavalli won the 44th Chess Olympiad held in Chennai while being in advanced stage of pregnancy and made history in more ways than one. After winning she took to social media to post a message saying, it has been 18 years since her debut in the Indian women’s chess team at the age of 13 and having played in nine Olympiads so far. She always dreamt about being on the podium for Indian women’s team and finally made it this time. Kudos to Harika for her wholehearted effort in keeping the winning spirit.

MR Jayanthi, COIMBATORE

of the day **quote**

The EC was dishonest. It did not hear Opposition voices. A large number of votes were cut from the electoral rolls. In Rampur, Samajwadi Party workers were not allowed to cast votes while in Azamgarh, red cards were issued to Samajwadi Party workers. Was the EC sleeping? It did not pay heed to our complaints

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

My aim is to serve people till my last breath, to wipe their tears. If the person is poor I am standing with that person, this is my thinking

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

Earlier this flood water would go to waste. Now, it will recharge the groundwater for 2 to 3 meters

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Rape accused beaten to death

Guwahati: A man accused in several cases, including for rape and murder, was beaten to death by a mob in Assam's Lakhimpur district Thursday, an official said. The deceased has been identified as Raju Baruah alias Gerjai, who had fled from police custody Tuesday. Lakhimpur SP BM Rajkhowa said that Baruah was hiding near a stream in Kilakili village under the Ghilamara police station area, where he was spotted by some locals. They immediately got hold of him and thrashed him badly before handing over to the police in a critical condition. The police took him to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors.

Class 12 girl raped in Assam

Nagaon: A class 12 girl was allegedly raped by a youth in Hojai district of Assam, police said Thursday. According to a senior official, the youth allegedly raped the school girl at a pharmacy located in Lanka Tinali Wednesday. The police has already arrested the accused youth for allegedly raping the girl student and also one staff of the medicine shop for his role in the gruesome incident, he added.

Cong postpones mega rally in Delhi

New Delhi: The Congress Thursday said it has postponed its mega rally at the Ramliila Maidan here against price rise and unemployment to September 4 in view of the Covid situation in the national capital. The rally was earlier scheduled for August 28. "The 'Mehangai Par Halla Bol rally', which was to be held at Delhi's Ramliila Maidan August 28, will now be held September 4 at the same venue due to the Covid situation in the national capital and elsewhere," Congress general secretary of communications Jairam Ramesh told reporters.

Priest sets himself on fire in Jaipur

Jaipur: A temple priest named Girraj Sharma sustained 60 per cent burn injuries after he set himself on fire in the early hours of Thursday outside the house of a former chairman of the temple development committee of Laxmi Narayan Mandir in Jaipur's Shankar Vihar area. Sharma, who is a priest at the temple, was rushed to the Sawai Mansingh (SMS) Hospital where he is undergoing treatment.



The BJP's support to criminals displays the party's mindset towards women
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

RAJU SRIVASTAVA CRITICAL

Popular comedian-actor Raju Srivastava, who has been in the intensive care unit of AIIMS for nine days following a heart attack, continues to be on the ventilator and is critical, sources said Thursday



Power outage threat looms for defaulting states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Power System Operation Corporation Ltd (POSOCO) has asked three power exchanges -- IEX, PXIL and HPX -- to restrict electricity trading by 27 discoms in 13 states having outstanding dues towards gencos, sources said.

The directive from POSOCO to Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), Power Exchange of India (PXIL) and Hindustan Power Exchange (HPX) is given to restrict trade of electricity by utilities of 13 states, including those in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rasjasthan,

Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

POSOCO, a public sector enterprises under the Union power ministry, manages integrated operation of Indian power system.

In a letter shot off to the three exchanges, POSOCO said that buy and sell transactions in all products of power market for the discoms (27 discoms in 13 states) shall be entirely restricted till further notice from the delivery (of power) date of August 19, 2022.

The letter explains that the decision is taken in view of outstanding of these utilities as per the



information available on PRAAPTI portal.

PRAAPTI stands for Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power

Govt blocks 8 YouTube channels for fake news

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has blocked eight *YouTube* channels, seven Indian and one Pakistan based, for spreading disinformation related to the country's national security, foreign relations and public order.

The Ministry, utilizing the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, had issued orders for blocking the eight *YouTube* news channels, one *Facebook* account, and two *Facebook* posts.

The blocked *YouTube* channels had a cumulative viewership of over 114 crore, and were subscribed by over 85 lakh users. Analysis of content revealed that the purpose of the content published by some of these *YouTube* channels was to spread hatred among religious communities in India.

False claims were made in various videos of the blocked channels and content was found to have the potential to create communal disharmony and disturb public order in the country.

The channels were also used to post fake news on various subjects such as the Indian Armed Forces, Jammu and Kashmir, etc. The content was observed to be completely false and sensitive from the perspective of national security and India's friendly relations with foreign States.

The content blocked by the Ministry was found to be detrimental to sovereignty and in-



■ The channels that were blocked under the Information Technology Rules-2021 include seven Indian news channels, a statement from the Information and Broadcasting ministry said

■ The blocked channels are Loktantra TV, &V TV, A M Razvi, Gouravshail Pawan Mithilanchal, SeeTop5TH, Sarkari Update, Sab Kuch Dekho and Pakistan-based News ki Duniya

■ The blocked YouTube channels had over 114 crore views and 85.73 lakh subscribers and the content was being monetised, it said

tegrity of India, security of the State, India's friendly relations with foreign States, and public order in the country.

Accordingly, the content was covered within the ambit of section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

The blocked Indian *YouTube* channels were observed to be using fake and sensational thumbnails, images of news anchors and logos of certain TV news channels to mislead the viewers to believe that the news was authentic.

All the eight channels were displaying advertisements on

their videos having false content detrimental to communal harmony, public order and India's foreign relations.

With this action, since December 2021, the Ministry has issued directions for blocking 102 *YouTube* based news channels and several other social media accounts.

"The government of India remains committed towards ensuring an authentic, trustworthy, and safe online news media environment, and thwarting any attempts at undermining India's sovereignty and integrity, national security, foreign relations, and public order," the Ministry said.

'Family planning is not a cruelty'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 18: In a major development, Karnataka High Court has observed that a husband asking his wife to pursue higher education and talking to his wife on when to have baby can not be considered as cruelty.

The bench headed by Justice HB Prabhakara Shastri Wednesday also quashed charges alleging ha-

arrassment by husband and mother-in-law levelled by his wife. The bench considered the petition of the accused husband and his mother seeking relief from the punishment given by the lower court. The bench said that the couple are educated and have spoken to each other before marriage about their future. Therefore, a husband asking his wife to pursue her education and join the job can't be considered as cruelty.

The husband had spoken to wife about not having a baby for 3 years. But, the wife had alleged that her husband's family tortured her for the matter of having the baby. The court observed that, in the larger interest of family, husband talking to his wife on when to have baby can't be considered as cruelty or torture.

1Kcr freebies for docs to prescribe Dolo tablets: SC told

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Thursday was told by an NGO that the Central Board of Direct taxes has accused the Pharma company manufacturing popular Dolo tablets, an anti-inflammatory, fever reducer drug, of distributing ₹1000 crore freebies to doctors for prescribing a dosage of its 650 mg tablets.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna was told by senior advocate Sanjay Parikh and advocate Aparna Bhat, appearing for petitioner 'Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India', that the market price of any tablet up to 500mg is regulated under price control mechanism of the government but the price of drug above 500mg can be fixed by

manufacturer Pharma Company.

He said that to ensure a higher profit margin, the company distributed freebies to doctors to prescribe the Dolo drug of dosage 650mg capacity. Parikh added that it is an "irrational dose combination" and said that he would like to bring more such facts to the knowledge of the court after a response is filed by the Centre.

Justice Chandrachud said, "What you are saying is music to my ears. This is exactly the drug that I had when I had Covid recently. This is a serious issue and we will look into it".

The bench asked Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj to file his response to the plea in ten days and gave one week time thereafter to Parikh to file his rejoinder. It listed the matter for further hearing September 29, 2022. A



counsel sought permission from the court to file an intervention on behalf of the Pharma companies, which the court allowed saying it would like to hear them also on the issue.

On March 11, the top court agreed to examine a plea seeking direction to the Centre for formulating a Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices to curb unethical practices of Pharma companies and ensure an effective monitoring mechanism, transparency, accountability as well as conse-

quences for violations. The top court had said that it wants to know what the government has to say on this issue.

Parikh had said that this is an important issue in the public interest and there is a recent judgement by this court which said that bribe-giver or bribe-taker both are prohibited. He had submitted that Pharmaceutical companies are saying that they are not liable as the bribe-takers are the doctors and in foreign countries, they have legislation to curb these unethical

marketing practices.

Parikh said that the government should look into it and the code should be made statutory in nature as "we all know what happened with Remdesivir injections and other drugs of those combinations". The top court had then asked the petitioner why can't representation to the government be made to which Parikh had said they have already done it. He had said that they have been pursuing the issue with the government

A PIL filed by the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India, stated that DOLO had invested 1,000 crores in freebies to have its anti-fever drug prescribed to patients

since 2009 and till the time the government comes out with the code to regulate, this court may lay down some guidelines. The plea filed through advocate Aparna Bhat sought direction that till an effective law is enacted as prayed, this Court may lay down the guidelines to control and regulate unethical marketing practices by pharmaceutical companies or in the alternative make the existing Code binding with proper and reasonable modifications/additions, which should be followed by all the authorities/courts under Articles 32, 141, 142 and 144 of the Constitution.

Judicial remand of Partha, Arpita extended by 14 days

AGENCIES

Kolkata, August 18: A special court of Enforcement Directorate (ED) Thursday extended the judicial custody of Partha Chatterjee and Arpita Mukherjee, both tainted in the multi-crore West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) scam, by another 14 days.



Surprisingly, although Partha Chatterjee's counsel moved a bail plea on behalf of his client, a similar approach was not evident of Arpita Mukherjee's counsel.

Chatterjee's counsel moved the bail plea on his client's health grounds. However, ED's counsel objected to the plea claiming that despite having some chronic illness, Partha Chatterjee's condition is not that critical that he will have to be granted bail. Finally, after hearing all parties, the court rejected the bail plea and ordered the extension of judicial custody for both by another 14 days.

The court also approved the ED counsel's plea that the central agency officials be allowed to interrogate Partha Chatterjee and Arpita Mukherjee in the prisons.

The ED counsel furnished fresh documents relating to the financial involvement between Partha Chatterjee and Arpita Mukherjee. They even furnished a document that showed that the premium for a life insurance policy held by Mukherjee with Chatterjee as a nominee, was paid from a bank account held by Chatterjee.

On Thursday afternoon while Chatterjee was brought to the court, Partha Chatterjee told media persons that everything will come clear some day or the other. "None will be spared," he added.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lakhimpur Kheri (UP), August 18: Farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh Thursday began a three-day protest, demanding the sacking of Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra over the violence here last year for which his son is in the dock.

The SKM had spearheaded the year-long sit-in at Delhi's borders which forced the Centre to withdraw three new agri laws.

Speaking to news persons at the dharna site, BKU national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait vowed that the SKM would continue its fight for justice to the farmers across the nation. The Lakhimpur agitation was primarily to press for the dismissal of Ajay Kumar Mishra from the Union Cabinet, Tikait said. "Moreover, a law on minimum support price (MSP) to the farmers was also a major demand of the SKM," he added. Mishra is the Union minister of state for Home. "The (Modi) government is bent on handing over power supply to the private sector through the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022. BKU and SKM would oppose this move as this would adversely affect the farming sector," Tikait said. BKU (Lakhewal) state vice-president Avtar Singh Mehlo, who arrived at the dharna along with his sup-

- ▶ The protesters, who included farmers from Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu as well, also demanded a law on minimum support price (MSP) for their crops and withdrawal of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022
- ▶ Bhartiya Kisan Union-Tikait and other constituents of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) gave the call for the 75-hour-long sit-in from August 18 to 20 to seek 'justice' in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case

porters, said, "Our fight is for justice to the farmers killed in the Tikunia violence October 3, 2021."

"We demand the sacking of Union MoS for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra, compensation to the families of farmers who died in the farmers' agitation, a law on MSP and roll-back of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022," Mehlo said.

The Union minister's son, Ashish Mishra, is an accused in the violence that left eight people, including four farmers, dead at Lakhimpur Kheri last year.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



Students dressed as Lord Krishna and Goddess Radha celebrate the festival of 'Janmashtami', at a school in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

PFI PHOTO

J&K most internet censorship intensive region globally

Internet disruptions and restrictions were recorded in 10 countries -- 85 per cent being from India, especially Jammu & Kashmir -- making Asia the most internet censorship intensive region

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: Led by India and Jammu & Kashmir in particular, Asia suffered most internet censorship shutdowns in the first six months of the year, a report showed Thursday.

Internet disruptions and restrictions were recorded in 10 countries -- 85 per cent being from India, especially Jammu & Kashmir -- making Asia the most internet



censorship intensive region. Asia also led in terms of social media disruptions over the period of seven years in H1 2022, according to cybersecurity company Surfshark. Out of 72 internet disruption cases in 2022, social media platforms were targeted six times twice in Europe and Africa, and once in Asia and South America. Despite a decrease in cases, new internet disruptions affected more

citizens - 1.89 billion compared to 1.54 billion in the last six months of 2021. Globally, internet restriction cases decreased by 14 per cent in the first half - from 84 in the second half of 2021 to 72 this year. "We see a positive trend of internet restriction cases going down this half of the year. Nevertheless, the number of countries that use internet disruptions as a weapon to silence citizens' unrest remains

worryingly high," said Agneska Sablovskaja, lead researcher at Surfshark. Most cases are of national or local magnitude where the internet is slowed or completely shut down, leaving its people without most of their means of communication, Sablovskaja said in a statement. In the first half of 2022, Surfshark registered 66 internet blackouts in six countries and territories --

Burkina Faso, India (Jammu & Kashmir), Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Sudan. Internet was shut down locally in Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan. In comparison, three countries (Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, and Sudan) chose to cut down internet connections nationwide, even though it cripples the economy the most. The slight decrease in observed nation-scale internet shutdowns in early 2022 follows a period of unprecedented reliance on the internet during the pandemic, said Alp Tokar, CEO of NetBlocks, the global Internet watchdog organisation. Research shows that social media censorship cases this year spread through all continents. According to the report, 5.7 billion people in 76 countries have been deprived of Internet access since 2015.

Anyone 'ordinarily residing' in J&K eligible to vote: Govt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 18: Amid controversy over inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls, government officials Thursday cited rules to assert that any citizen of India who has attained the qualifying age and ordinarily residing at a place is eligible to get registered as a voter.

Upping its ante, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah has convened an all-party meeting here August 22 to formulate a common position on the issue of inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls.

The meeting will discuss the future course of action on this new development.

With the abrogation of Article 370 and applicability of Representation of the People Act 1950 and 1951, any citizen of India who has attained the qualifying age and 'ordinarily residing' at a place is eligible to get registered in the electoral roll of that place, if not disqualified otherwise, a senior government official said.

The official said prior to the abrogation of Article 370, the assembly electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir were made under the ambit of Jammu and Kashmir Representation of People Act 1957, wherein only permanent residents were eligible to get registered in the assembly rolls and possessed consequential voting rights in assembly elections.

The official said it is in this context, the media was briefed that any person who fulfils the requirements of registration and

This is the last nail in the coffin of democracy here. Earlier, they did half the rigging through the delimitation commission. The head (of the commission) has been duly rewarded. Democracy is being finished

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

is ordinarily residing in the Union territory (owing to any reasons such as profession, studies, posting, etc), can get registered in the electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is provided he gets his name deleted from electoral roll of his native constituency, as registration at two places is not permitted under law, the official said.

At a press conference Wednesday, Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Electoral Officer Hirdesh Kumar said the Union territory is likely to get around 25 lakh additional voters, including outsiders, after the special summary revision of electoral rolls being held for the first time after the abrogation of Article 370.

Prior to the abrogation of Article 370, these people were eligible to get registered in the electoral rolls, if they were ordinarily residing in any of assembly segments of Jammu and Kashmir; but had the right to vote only in parliamentary elections and were categorised as Non Permanent Resident (NPR) voters, officials said, adding during the last parliamentary elections, there were approximately 32,000 such NPR voters.

Scare as crew-less Yacht with weapons drifts on Maha shore



The state government has ordered a high alert in Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Pune and other places as a precaution in view of the festivities Friday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Raigad (Maha), August 18: A crew-less Australian-couple owned speed-boat with some sophisticated weapons -- adrift in the Arabian Sea for 52 days -- washed ashore at Harihareshwar Beach in Raigad coastal district, sounding alarm bells Thursday, a day ahead of the crowded 'dahi-handi' celebrations.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde promptly ordered a probe into the incident while Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has tentatively ruled out any terror angle, though questions of maritime and coastal security are being raised.

The incident suddenly revived the chilling memories of the 1993 Mumbai serial terror strikes when huge quantities of arms, ammunitions and explosives had been surreptitiously offloaded at certain small ports or beaches on the Raigad coast.

The UAE-based Neptune P2P Group said Thursday evening that it had provided private security to the vessel 'MY Ladyhan' in June, which was damaged during monsoon in the Arabian Sea and the Captain declared an emergency.

The suspicious speed-boat was first noticed by some local fisher-folk Thursday morning leading to a flutter in the sleepy coastal village and they alerted the local police who rushed there.

A quick initial search and later

detailed investigations cleared the mystery of the speedboat which is stated to belong to an Australian couple, the government said subsequently in the evening.

Fadnavis informed the legislature that the speedboat, named 'Ladyhan' is owned by an Australian woman Hannah Laundergun and her husband James Horbert was sailing it.

He added that the Raigad Police have recovered 3 AK-47 guns and some quantities of ammunition from the speedboat.

The Deputy Chief Minister further said that the speedboat was reportedly slated to sail from Oman to Europe, but June 26, around 10 am, it suffered an engine failure at an unknown location in the sea.

The vessel crew called for help, and after 3 hours that day, a Korean warship in the vicinity had picked them up and dropped them off to Oman.

Owing to the rough seas, the Australian couple reportedly could not arrange to tow the vessel and after remaining adrift over seven weeks in the choppy Arabian Sea waters, it finally landed up Harihareshwar Beach Thursday.

The issue is being probed by the Raigad Police and Maharashtra Anti Terrorist Squad, and in view of past incidents, the police are put on high alert, said Fadnavis.

A nagging question is how the sophisticated arms and ammunition landed on the vessel, whether

they belonged to the owner or crew, the purpose of sailing with such weapons, especially since there are vital Indian offshore installations like the Mumbai High Fields, or if the weapons were dumped on board the speed-boat later after it was adrift and lost on the high seas.

It is also not clear whether the purported Australian owners, plus another person whose identity or nationality is not known, had informed the Indian maritime, coast guard or naval authorities of their speedboat which remained adrift in the Arabian Sea for at least 52 days, posing a potential maritime hazard.

Meanwhile, the state government has ordered a high alert in Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Pune and other places as a precaution in view of the festivities Friday.

The Neptune P2P Group said while the crew was rescued, the yacht could not be salvaged due to the extreme weather conditions, and the vessel was presumed sunk till this morning the company learnt that it had washed ashore in India (Raigad).

Neptune P2P Group is working with the owner of the vessel and the Indian and UK authorities to determine the official recovery procedures of the vessel and controlled items, said the company.



Students of Kamala Mehta School for Blind form a human pyramid to break the 'dahi handi' during 'Krishna Janmashtami' festival celebrations, in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

MUMBAI GETS AC DOUBLE DECKER BUSES

Enthusiasts rue loss of upper deck 'breeze'

The dual colour tone of the new double-decker buses are also coming in for some criticism from enthusiasts who believe black dominates in comparison to red

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 18: The breeze on the face of passengers on the upper deck of Mumbai's famed double-decker buses will be a thing of the past as the electric ones set to be introduced by the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking are air-conditioned with a giant wind-screen playing spoilsport.

However, transport enthusiasts who have been using the conventional double-decker for years now, agreed that the breeze apart, views will be better with bigger windows.

These 65-seater buses will replace the existing double-decker fleet of the civic-run undertaking



after undergoing registration and requisite tests, officials said. "As a child I used to love sitting on the front row seats. The view, the breeze and the branches of trees brushing past used to give me a rush. I used to leave my grandmother's arm and run to get these seats on the upper deck. It will be missed in the new buses," said architect Vivek Pai. Meanwhile, the dual colour tone

of the new electric double-decker buses are also coming in for some criticism from enthusiasts who believe black dominates in comparison to red that stood out in the Undertaking's fleet.

The bus has red below the lower deck windows on all sides, but most of the upper deck is painted black and the latter dominates as the windows also have a strong black tint. "The double decker has too much

black. The portion between two decks should be red," Akshay Marathe, a public transport enthusiast, tweeted.

Other changes in the new buses include two stairs, one in the rear and another just behind the driver, and pneumatic doors, one wide near the rear wheels and a standard size opening at the front.

Existing double decker buses have a single wide door, while some conventional buses with double doors had seen one of them being sealed by BEST authorities.

The interior of the new double-decker buses set to be introduced are white with green hued seats with belts, and passenger amenities include laptop and mobile phone charging points and a passenger address (PA) system.

However, head space for those on the lower side due to the AC duct, which may cause some problem for tall passengers on the stairway behind the driver as well.

The BEST ferries around 30 lakh passengers every day with a fleet of 3,700 buses.

DAHI HANDI FESTIVAL

Shinde, Uddhav supporters gear up for show of strength

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, August 18: Thane, the home turf of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, will Friday witness Dahi Handi events being organised by his faction as well as the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena.

Supporters of both the sides are busy making preparations to attract maximum crowds for the Dahi Handi, which is part of the Janmashtami festival where youngsters called Govindas, dressed in colourful attire, make human pyramid to reach an earthen pot containing buttermilk and hung mid-air, and break it.

This year, the supporters of Shinde are putting up a Dahi Handi at Tembhi Naka, while the rival camp of Thane MP Rajan Vichare



is organising a similar event just about 200 metres away at Jambli Naka in Thane city.

Kalyan MP Shrikant Shinde, who is the CM's son, and former Thane mayor Nareish Mhaske told reporters Wednesday that their Handi depicts respect.

On the other side, Vichare said their reflects loyalty, unity, culture and the voice of Hindutva.

The city police have made elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the festival.

Shrikant Shinde and Mhaske said the winning team of their events in Thane and Mumbai will get Rs 2.51 lakh each. The parliamentary also said he would make efforts to get Dahi Handi included in the adventurous sports category. Vichare said the winning team

at their event will get a prize of Rs 1.11 lakh. He said there will be arrangements of safety ropes, doctors will be on standby and beds reserved in hospitals in case of any eventuality. He also said that besides participants, the audience will also be insured.

Local organisation Swami Pratishthan is organising another Dahi Handi carrying a total prize money of Rs 51 lakh, including Rs 11 lakh for the winning team.

The MNS has also announced a total prize money of Rs 55 lakh for a Dahi Handi event being organised by it and that the winning team may also get a chance to go to Spain.

Another Dahi Handi event to be held by an organisation of Thane Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Saranaik carries a total prize money of Rs 21 lakh.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aurangabad, August 18: A 22-year-old man died Thursday, hours after collapsing while running as part of a physical test for the 'Agnipath' defence recruitment scheme in Aurangabad city of Maharashtra, a police official said Thursday.

Karan Pawar, a resident of Vitthalwadi village in Kannad tehsil of Aurangabad, died while undergoing treatment in a government hospital here in the morning after he collapsed during the physical test in the wee hours, he said.

Pawar had come to Aurangabad to take part in the 'Agniveer' recruitment programme. This process has been underway in Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar



Marathwada University campus since the last couple of days, the official said.

Pawar, who was running as part of one of the fitness tests for the recruitment process, collapsed on the ground around 1 am Thursday. He was taken to the Government Medical College and Hospital for treatment, but

died in the morning during treatment, he said.

After the post-mortem, his body was handed over to his family members this evening, a senior official of Begumpura police station said, adding that a probe will be conducted into the death.

The scheme seeks to recruit youngsters in the age bracket of 17-and-a-half to 21 years for a four-year period, with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years. For 2022, the upper-age limit has been extended to 23 years.

Several parts of the country had witnessed violent protests against the scheme that largely provides for a four-year tenure on a contractual basis and does not offer pensions and other benefits that regular soldiers are given.

of the day quote

People of India know that the era of Deve Gowda, I K Gujral and V P Singh is gone. The country now wants stability, development, honesty and effective leadership. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided it and enhanced India's prestige



RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | UNION MINISTER

We plan to start a dedicated university for sports so that the younger generations, who are interested in sports, do not have to go anywhere else. I promise you that we will always try to support every dream of our sportspersons



MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

The situation in Himachal Pradesh is not different from that of Punjab, prior to March 2022, as there had been a bi-polar contest between traditional parties



BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

India, Vietnam carry out military drills

New Delhi: The armies of India and Vietnam carried out a nearly three-week military exercise in Chandimandir in Haryana in sync with growing defence and security ties between the two countries. The Indian Army said it was for the time that the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) undertook a field training exercise with a foreign army. Vietnam, an important country of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), has territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea region.

India, Philippines to expand ties

New Delhi: India and the Philippines have vowed to expand their ties in sectors like civil aviation, fintech, education, and defence and security. The decision was taken at the 13th India-Philippines Foreign Office Consultations and fourth Strategic Dialogue that took place in Manila Wednesday and Thursday. The Indian delegation at the talks was led by Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

4 of family killed in road accident

Ghaziabad (UP): Four members of a family, including a minor, were killed and another was injured Thursday when the SUV they were travelling in collided with a stationary vehicle on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway (DME) in this district, police said. The accident took place near Kushaliya village, they said. Five people were travelling in the SUV at the time of the accident.

Ganja peddler hacked to death

Chennai: The Greater Chennai Police Thursday took into custody four persons after they allegedly hacked to death a 22-year-old youth, Karthick. Investigations revealed that the youth used to peddle ganja and other substances.

Man lynched

North Lakhimpur: A 45-year-old man, who escaped from court two days back and was accused of rape and murder, was lynched by a mob Thursday in Assam's Lakhimpur district, police said. Gerjai Barua alias Raju Barua, who the police identified as a dreaded criminal, was hiding near a stream in Kilakili village in Ghilamar police station area when some locals nabbed him during the early hours, a police officer said.



We have a proud humanitarian tradition of welcoming & embracing refugees for millennia. BJP, please don't betray Indian civilization

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

RAJESH VERMA APPOINTED AS SECY TO PRESIDENT

Senior IAS officer Rajesh Verma, holding the post of Secretary in Ministry of Corporate Affairs, was Thursday appointed as Secretary to President Droupadi Murmu, an order issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, said. The appointment of Verma, a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Odisha cadre, was cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet



OPS offers olive branch, EPS defiant

PALANISWAMI REJECTED PANNEERSELVAM'S CALL FOR JOINING HANDS AND LISTED OUT A SERIES OF REASONS, INCLUDING ALLEGING OPS WAS BEHIND THE ATTACK ON THE PARTY HEADQUARTERS HERE LAST MONTH. HE PLAYED HIS RIVAL FOR SEEKING "POSTS WITHOUT EFFORTS"

AGENCIES

Chennai, August 18: AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam Thursday extended an olive branch to his rival, "dear brother" Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) to run the party jointly and said "let bygones be bygones" but the latter ruled out any association with OPS and even blamed him for the party's defeat in the 2021 Assembly polls which the DMK-led bloc swept. Incidentally, Panneerselvam's call for unity also pertained to deposed AIADMK leader VK Sasikala and her nephew TTV Dhinakaran.

Palaniswami also moved the Madras High Court against a single judge order on Wednesday which declared as not valid the AIADMK General Council resolutions of July 11, which among others, 'expelled' Panneerselvam and picked EPS as the party's interim general secretary.

A day after securing the High Court order in his favour, OPS informed there had never been an issue with the earlier dual leadership but said the arrangement of "joint leadership" was brought in to steer the party in the absence of late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. "After Amma's death (in December 2016), dear brother Palaniswami became CM and we travelled along extending good cooperation. Many democratic duties were discharged



by us," he said.

"After Amma's death, Dharmayudham was undertaken (by him against deposed leader VK Sasikala and her family) and as per the wishes of party workers and leaders, it was decided as a policy that AIADMK will function under joint leadership," he told reporters here. As a result, the Coordinator (OPS) and the joint coordinator (EPS) posts were created, Panneerselvam added.

There was no shortcoming in this aspect from either leaders as they diligently performed the roles in the interest of the party and within the ambit of its laws, the former CM said.

AIADMK workers had set their political path as "brothers" of the party founder, the late CM MG



Ramachandran and "sons" of Amma (Jayalalithaa), but due to some "difference of opinion" there was an "abnormal situation," OPS said, in an apparent reference to the differences with Palaniswami.

"Let bygones be bygones...Would never say it affected us...1.5 crore party workers and the people who desire the good rule of MGR and Amma want this movement to remain united. Without holding any grudges of the past bitterness, we should throw them away (as) the party's unity should be the sole idea," he said.

Such an association was the desire of the party's 1.5 crore workers, Panneerselvam said. Asked if his invitation extended to Sasikala and Dhinakaran also, the senior leader said it applied to all those

6,000 URGE REPEALING CONVICTS' REMISSION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Over 6,000 citizens, including grassroot workers and Women and human rights activists, have urged the Supreme Court to revoke the remission of sentences for 11 men convicted of rape and murder in the 2002 Bilkis Bano case.

"The remission of sentences for the 11 men convicted of gang-rape and mass murder will have a chilling effect on every rape victim who is told to 'trust the system', 'seek justice', and 'have faith'," they said in a joint statement. The statement was given by activists Syeda Hameed, Zafarul-Islam Khan, Roop Rekha, Devaki Jain, Uma Chakravarti, Subhashini Ali, Kavita Krishnan, Maimoona Mollah, Hasina Khan, Rachana Mudraboyina, Shabnam Hashmi, among others.

The civil rights groups include Saheli Women's Resource Centre, Gamana Mahila Samuha, Bebaak Collective, All India Progressive Women's Association, Uttarakhand Mahila Manch, Forum Against Oppression of Women, Pragatisheel Mahila Manch, Parcham Collective,

Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan, Amoomat Society, WomComMatters, Centre for Struggling Women and Sahiyar.

Demanding that the remission must be revoked, the citizens noted that the early release of these murderers and rapists only strengthens the impunity of all men who commit rape and other acts of violence against women.

"We demand that women's faith in justice be restored. We demand the remission of sentences for these 11

BILKIS BANO CASE

convicts be immediately revoked and they be sent back to prison to serve the remainder of their life terms," the statement said. Eleven convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment, walked out of the Godhra sub-jail on August 15 after the Gujarat government allowed their release under its remission policy.

They had completed more than 15 years in jail. A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in Mumbai on January 21, 2008 had sentenced the 11 to life imprisonment on charges of gang-rape and murder of seven members of Bilkis Bano's family.

LOVE FOR NATION



People holding the national flag sail along Hooghly river as they celebrate their Independence Day, in Nadia district, Thursday. Due to a cartographic error by the British, in some villages of West Bengal bordering Bangladesh, Independence Day is celebrated August 18

PTI PHOTO

RAJASTHAN DALIT BOY DEATH

Dirty picture of politics or curse of casteism?

A HUGE ROW HAS ERUPTED IN RAJASTHAN OVER THE KILLING OF A 9-YEAR-OLD STUDENT FOR DRINKING WATER FROM THE POT KEPT FOR HIS TEACHER, A SO-CALLED 'UPPER CASTE'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 18: The death of Class 3 Dalit student in Jalore district of Rajasthan after being bashed up by his school teacher is opening up new revelations each day, nullifying the claims being made earlier.

The initial fact being circulated around that the school teacher bashed the student for touching his water pot has fallen flat as villagers and school students unitedly had claimed that there was no water pot in school. Students, since years, have been using one water tank installed in school premises, without any bias, said a local villager talking to IANS.

In fact, police officials and the education department team also maintained silence and have not confirmed anything about the water pot. In fact, they are yet to receive a single clue in that direction.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Jalore, Harsh Vardhan said, "The theory of water pot is yet to be verified. Our investigation is on."

Similarly Rekha Shankar Garg, chief block education officer Sayla, said, "We went to school Sunday and could not find out water pot for teachers or any caste based discrimination in school. There is a water tank and everybody drinks water from it, we have learnt so far." Another student of the school



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Rajesh Tailor said, "The deceased had a fight with him over a textbook after which school teacher Chhail Singh slapped two of them. After that, the child did not come."

In fact, the audio going viral on social media highlighting conversation between father of the deceased and school teacher Chhail Singh, also proves that the child

was beaten due to indiscipline and the school teacher had offered financial help for treatment of the student.

One Ajmal from Surana village in Jalore said, "The child had an ear infection and he was undergoing treatment for the last two years. He was coming to school with cotton in his ear for the last

few months."

In fact, there is another myth busted in the matter. The school where the incident was reported was Saraswati Bal Vidhya Mandir and many considered it to be the RSS-run school as Saraswati-named schools are generally RSS-run schools in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Congress leader Udit Raj also mentioned the school to be run by RSS and tweeted, "A 9-year-old Dalit student was beaten to death by a caste teacher because he drank water from teachers's pot at the Saraswati Vidya Mandir by RSS in Jalore, Rajasthan. Discrimination is taught in their schools and the government should take over all the schools," he said and share a media report.

Later, when he realised that the school is run by a private body, he apologised and said, "Usually Shishu Mandir and Saraswati Vidya Mandir are run by the Sangh. The name of the school where the incident happened with

the Dalit student in Jalore is also Saraswati Vidya Mandir. Later I came to know that this school does not belong to the union, so I apologize for this mistake," he said.

Meanwhile, a private school association of Block Sayla has given memorandum to tehsildar Kaushalya Jangid in the name of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot claiming that there is no caste discrimination in any school in the district.

However, there is another angle to the story. A source confirmed to IANS that a professor associated with Delhi-based JNU aggravated the issue. He hails from Jalore and has worked with Jodhpur University too.

Meanwhile, the villagers are quite disheartened with the overall episode. "What happened with our son is sad, but the worst part is that it has been given a casteist touch which has brought ill fame to our village. This should be stopped," said residents of village Surana.

CBI conducts searches in missing coins case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The CBI Thursday conducted searches at 25 locations in connection with a case of coins worth Rs 11 crore going missing from the vaults of an SBI branch in Karauli in Rajasthan, officials said Friday.

The searches were spread across Delhi, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Udaipur and Bhilwara at the premises of around 15 former bank officials and others, they said.

The matter came to light after the State Bank of India (SBI) branch decided to carry out counting of money after a preliminary enquiry indicated discrepancy in its cash reserve at Mehandipur branch in Karauli district in August 2021. Alarmed bank officials had roped in a Jaipur-based private vendor to do counting of coins supposed to

be Rs 13 crore according to account books.

To their shock, the vendor found only 3,000 bags carrying coins worth about Rs 2 crore coins while over coins of Rs 11 crore were missing from the branch.

It is also alleged that the employees of the private vendor who were doing the counting were threatened in the night on August 10, 2021 at the guesthouse where they were staying and were asked to refrain from the counting, the FIR has alleged

SBI had approached the Rajasthan High Court seeking a CBI probe into the matter as the missing amount was higher than Rs 3 crore, the threshold for seeking a probe by the agency.

On the high court's directions, the CBI has taken over the FIR earlier registered by the Rajasthan Police.

of the day quote

The government has been making efforts to increase forest cover in the country to counter the adverse impacts of climate change

ARIF ALVI | PAKISTAN PRESIDENT

India envisages a free, open, inclusive and peaceful Indo-Pacific built on a rules-based order, sustainable and transparent infrastructure investment

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh to Myanmar is still not safe

MICHELLE BACHELET | CHIEF OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SHORT TAKES

16 killed, 36 missing

Beijing: At least 16 people were killed and 36 others remained missing after a flash flood hit a county in China's northwest Qinghai province, local authorities said Thursday. Heavy rainfall, starting 10:25 pm on Wednesday, lashed Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County, triggering flash floods and mudslides and causing rivers to change courses, according to the county's publicity department. A total of 6,245 residents in six villages have been affected by the natural calamity, the publicity department said.

Suu Kyi testifies

Bangkok: Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi testified Thursday in a prison courtroom in the capital for the first time in her official secrets case, a legal official said. Suu Kyi, who has been detained since the military ousted her government last year, is being tried in Naypyitaw with Australian economist Sean Tunnell and three former Cabinet members on the same charge, which is punishable by up to 14 years in prison. Suu Kyi denied all the accusations in the case against her and pleaded not guilty, said the legal official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to release information.

Fresh strikes in UK

London: Thousands of train workers in Britain began a fresh round of strikes Thursday, paralysing rail service across the country in an ongoing dispute over pay and work conditions exacerbated by a deepening cost-of-living crisis. Only around one in five trains ran across the UK as a result of the walkout by union members, who have already staged multiple strikes in recent months. A strike planned for Friday is expected to affect the London Underground subway network as well as bus service in the capital, while another walkout on Saturday is set disrupt national train travel again.

Wildfires kill 26

Algiers: Wildfires raging in the forests of eastern Algeria have killed 26 people, according to a "provisional report" by the north African country's interior minister. Most victims were reported in the wilaya, or region, of El Tarf, near the northern Algerian-Tunisian border, where 24 people have been found dead, including eight of them on a public bus surprised by the flames as it was driving in a mountainous region. Interior Minister Kamel Beldjoud also said on public television late on Wednesday that two people died in the region of Setif, about 300 kilometers east of Algiers.



We completely reject any attempts to settle displaced Syrians in Lebanon as we previously did with the settlement of Palestinians on our land

MICHEL AOUN | LEBANESE PRESIDENT

COVID RISK

Covid patients have an increased risk of developing some neurological and psychiatric conditions, including psychosis, dementia, 'brain fog' and seizures, for two years after the infection compared to other respiratory diseases, suggests a study



UN CHIEF IN UKRAINE AMID NUCLEAR PLANT ALARM



REUTERS

Kyiv/Lviv, Ukraine, August 18: U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday he was gravely concerned by the situation at Europe's largest nuclear power station after it came under shelling at the front lines in Ukraine.

Russia, which captured the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant soon after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, said it could shut down the facility - a move Kyiv said would increase the risk of a nuclear catastrophe. Guterres, speaking to reporters after talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv, said military equipment and personnel should be withdrawn from the plant. "The facility must not be used as part of any military operation. Instead, agreement is urgently needed to re-establish Zaporizhzhia's purely civilian infrastructure and to ensure the safety of the area," he said.

Moscow had earlier rejected international calls for a demilitarised zone around the plant, which is still operated by Ukrainian engineers under Russian occupation,

LOOMING RISK

UN chief met Zelenskyy, Turkey's Erdogan in Lviv

Turkish leader said discussed ways to end conflict

Russian 'nuclear blackmail' could cause disaster - Zelenskyy

Moscow rejects calls for demilitarised zone around plant

Both sides accuse each other of planning 'provocation' at site

as "unacceptable".

The power station sits on the Russian-controlled south bank of a huge reservoir; Ukrainian forces hold the north bank. Recent days have seen several incidents of shelling at the plant, which both sides blame on each other. Ukraine also accuses Russia of using the plant as a shield for its forces to launch strikes across the reservoir on Ukrainian-held cities, which Moscow denies.

Reuters cannot independently confirm the military situation there or responsibility for shelling. Zelenskyy said after meeting

Rushdie's attacker says he acted alone

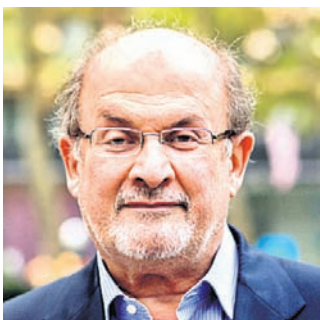
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, August 18: The 24-year-old man charged with the attempted murder of Salman Rushdie has denied being in contact with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and said that he acted alone when he stabbed the Mumbai-born author, whom he disliked for being "disingenuous".

Hadi Matar, of Fairview in New Jersey, was arrested last week and charged with second-degree attempted murder and assault after he stabbed Rushdie, 75, onstage at an event at the Chautauqua Institution in New York state.

In a video interview to the New York Post from Chautauqua County Jail, Matar said that "When I heard he survived, I was surprised, I guess." Rushdie suffered three stab wounds to his neck, four stab wounds to his stomach, puncture wounds to his right eye and chest, and a laceration on his right thigh, Chautauqua County District Attorney Jason Schmidt said during the suspect's arraignment.

Matar did not respond on whether he was inspired by Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who had issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie's death in 1989



after "The Satanic Verses" was published.

"I respect the Ayatollah. I think he's a great person. That's as far as I will say about that," Matar told The Post. He noted that he had only "read like two pages" of Rushdie's controversial novel. "I read a couple of pages. I didn't read the whole thing cover to cover," he said.

The report said that Matar, who was born in the US to parents from southern Lebanon, denied being in contact with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and alluded to acting completely alone.

The IRGC is a major military and political force in Iran. However, no link has been definitively established between Matar and the IRGC.

Guterres Thursday that they had agreed parameters of a possible mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the plant.

'RADIATION DISASTER'

In Moscow, the defence ministry said Russia could shut the plant down if it came under further attack. Ukrainian officials have accused Russia of planning to shut the plant to sever it from Ukraine's power grid and switch it over to Russia's - effectively stealing its output.

Ukrainian state nuclear energy company Energoatom said shutting down the plant would increase the risk of "a radiation disaster at the largest nuclear power plant in Europe". Disconnecting the complex's generators from Ukraine's power system would prevent them being used to keep nuclear fuel cool in the event of a power outage at the plant, it said. Shutting down a nuclear power plant is a complicated operation that requires halting nuclear chain reactions while protecting fuel from heating up and causing a meltdown.

"Should Russia take actions to force (the plant) off the Ukraine power system, that could threaten the operational safety of the station, in addition to escalating Ukraine's energy crisis into the winter," Mark Hibbs, senior fellow at the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, told Reuters in an email. Russia's defence ministry and Ukraine's main intelligence agency both accused the other side of planning some form of incident at the nuclear plant as a "provocation" to take place during Guterres' visit.

Gotabaya applies for Green Card to settle in US, says report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, August 18: Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country last month amidst massive anti-government protests calling for his resignation, is awaiting to obtain a US Green Card to return to America and settle there with his wife and son, a media report said Thursday.

Sri Lankan newspaper Daily Mirror, citing highly-placed sources, claimed that Rajapaksa's lawyers in the United States had already begun the procedure last month for his application to obtain the Green Card as he was eligible to apply due to his wife Loma Rajapaksa being a US citizen.

In 2019, Rajapaksa renounced his US citizenship to contest the 2019 presidential polls. Rajapaksa took early retirement from the Sri Lanka Army and moved into the field of information technology, before immigrating to the United States in 1998. He returned to Sri Lanka in 2005. "The procedure will also now involve his lawyers in Colombo submitting the additional documents here in order to go ahead with the procedure, the daily said. The former President will return to Sri Lanka August 25, cancelling his initial plan to remain in Thailand at least till November; the report said.



IT'S RAINING WOES: People wearing raincoats walk during a downpour in London

REUTERS

SIGN OF SUPPORT

US to hold trade talks with Taiwan



Chinese President Xi Jinping's government criticised the planned talks as a violation of its stance that Taiwan has no right to foreign relations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

China will take resolute measures to uphold its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. We advise the United States to stop making misjudgements

WANG WENBIN | DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OF CHINA

Hualien (Taiwan), August 18: The US government Thursday announced trade talks with Taiwan in a sign of support for the island democracy China claims as its own territory, prompting a warning by Beijing that it will take action if necessary to "safeguard its sovereignty."

The announcement comes after Beijing fired missiles into the sea to intimidate Taiwan after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi this month became the highest-ranking American official to visit the island in 25 years.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government criticized the planned talks as a violation of its stance that Taiwan has no right to foreign relations.

It warned Washington not to encourage the island to try to make its de facto independence permanent, a step Beijing says would lead to war.

"China firmly opposes this," said Ministry of Commerce spokeswoman Shu Juetting. She called on Washington to "fully respect China's core interests."

Also Thursday, Taiwan's military held a drill with missiles and cannon simulating a response to a Chinese missile attack.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations but are bound by billions of dollars of trade and investment.

The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the ruling Communist Party says it is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Indo-Pacific region, Kurt Campbell, said last week trade talks would "deepen our ties with Taiwan" but stressed policy was n't changing.

The United States has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan, its ninth-largest trading partner, but maintains extensive informal ties.

21 killed in Kabul mosque bombing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, August 18: A bombing at a mosque in the Afghan capital of Kabul during evening prayers killed at least 21 people, including a prominent cleric, and wounded at least 33, eyewitnesses and police said Thursday.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack Wednesday night, the latest to strike the country in the year since the Taliban seized power. Several children were reported to be among the wounded.

The Islamic State group's local affiliate has stepped up attacks targeting the Taliban and civilians since the former insurgents' takeover last August as US and NATO troops were in the final stages of their withdrawal from the country. Last week, the IS claimed responsibility for killing a prominent Taliban cleric at his religious center in Kabul.

Khalid Zadran, the spokesman for Kabul's police chief, gave the figures to The Associated Press for the bombing at the Sunni mosque. According to the eyewitness, a resident of the city's Kher Khanna neighborhood where the Siddiquiya Mosque was targeted, the explosion was carried out by a suicide bomber. The slain cleric was Mullah Amir Mohammad Kabuli, the eyewitness said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid also condemned the explosion and vowed that the "perpetrators of such crimes will soon be brought to justice and will be punished." There were fears the casualty numbers could rise further. On Thursday morning, one witness to the blast who gave his name as Qyaamuddin told the AP he believed as many as 25 people may have been killed in the blast.



For Gaza children, another round of violence reopens trauma

Israel this month launched a series of airstrikes against the Islamic Jihad movement in Gaza, in response to what Israeli authorities said was a concrete and imminent threat from the group following the arrest of one of its senior leaders

REUTERS

Gaza, August 18: When Israeli missiles started landing in Gaza in early August, shattering glass and collapsing buildings, Jouman Abdu put on headphones, covered her eyes with a blindfold and stretched on the couch.

The 8-year-old Palestinian girl said she came up with this ritual to escape the bang of the blasts, the second round of steady violence she had experienced in 15 months. "I didn't want to hear the sounds of ex-

plosions," she told Reuters as she sat with her mother. "I was afraid they would bomb our house."

The latest outbreak of hostilities lasted only a weekend but buttressed the trauma faced by Palestinian children growing up in the densely populated strip in the years since 2007 when Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade, cutting it off from outside, four people, including parents and experts, said.

"If you are a child in or around Gaza and you are 15 years old, in your life you have already gone

through five different conflicts," said Lucia Elmi, special representative of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, in Palestine.

Islamic Jihad, a militant group committed to Israel's destruction and the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state, fired more than 1,000 rockets towards Israel and held Israel responsible for the escalation, saying it had informed Egyptian mediators it was about to call off a state of high alert among its fighters when the Israeli strikes began. The Western-backed Palestinian Authority also condemned Israel's attacks.

Asked for comment on the mental health impact of the blockade and repeated violence in Gaza, the Israeli military said the reality of fighting was difficult for Palestinians in Gaza and Israelis



REUTERS

who live around the strip. In a statement it said it "took every feasible effort to reduce damage to civilians and civilian property". Reuters was unable to independently confirm the claims made by

Israel and Islamic Jihad.

At least 49 people, including 17 children, were killed and more than 360 people, among them 151 children and teenagers, were wounded, Gaza health officials

of the day **QUOTE**

India holds the immense potential to reduce 40 per cent imports (around \$35 billion) from China in the coming times as there are various product categories that India also produces but at a lower volume

PRADEEP MULTANI | PRESIDENT, PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Nifty on August 18 extended its winning streak for the eighth day, the longest in 20 months. Nifty opened lower and swung between gains and losses for the bulk of the session before closing near day's high

DEEPAK JASANI | HEAD OF RETAIL RESEARCH, HDFC SECURITIES

India is a vast country with a diverse demography. Just like cuisine and culture, customer requirements and preferences also change from place to place. While SUVs have definitely gained popularity in recent times, a large section of customers still prefer hatchbacks

HISASHI TAKEUCHI | MD & CO, MARUTI SUZUKI

SHORT TAKES

RBI turns net seller of dollar

Mumbai: Reserve Bank of India turned net seller of the US currency in June after it sold \$3.719 billion on a net basis, the central bank data showed. In the reporting month, the central bank purchased \$18.96 billion from the spot market and sold \$22.679 billion, according to the RBI monthly bulletin for August 2022 released Thursday. In June 2021, RBI was net buyer of the greenback after it purchased \$18.633 billion on a net basis from the spot market. In May 2022, the central bank net bought \$2.001 billion.

Gold demand rises 43% in Q2

Mumbai: Coming out of the grip of economic slump brought in by the coronavirus pandemic, India's gold demand for the second quarter (April-June) increased by 43 per cent compared to the corresponding quarter last year, revealed the latest report by World Gold Council. Value-wise India's second quarter (Q2) 2022 gold demand value was ₹79,270 crore, an increase of 54 per cent in comparison with Q2 2021 (Rs 51,540 crore). Total jewellery demand in India for Q2 2022 was up by 49 per cent at 140.3 tonne as compared to Q2 2021 (94 tonne).

PLI for specialty steel in limbo

New Delhi: The government has for the fifth time extended the deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme for specialty steel till September 15. The government had last year approved a ₹6,322-crore PLI scheme to boost the production of specialty steel in the country. Initially, March 29 was the last date for manufacturers to apply for the benefits under the PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) scheme for specialty steel. It was later extended till April 30, and again to May 31, 2022. It was further extended till June 30 and July 31.

Air passengers in July dips to 97.05L

New Delhi: More than 97 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air in July, 7.6 per cent lower than the 1.05 crore who travelled in June, aviation regulator DGCA said. Overall, 6.69 crore people travelled on domestic flights in the January-July period of 2022, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said.



As much as 35 per cent of the pollution in the country is due to diesel and petrol, this is why we need import-substituting, cost-effective and pollution-free and indigenous products

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

NOW INDIANS CAN USE UPI IN UK

Expanding further outside India, the indigenously developed real-time payments solution UPI will foray into the UK market starting with QR code-based transactions. The NPCI International Payments Ltd has forged a partnership with payments solutions provider PayXpert to internationalise the acceptance of its payment solutions in the UK



Shiprocket becomes India's 106th unicorn

Launched in 2017, Shiprocket delivers packets to more than 66 million consumers annually and is growing 3 times YoY and raised about ₹270 crore in its latest funding round

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: Zomato-backed logistics technology platform Shiprocket Wednesday became India's 106th unicorn after raising \$33.5 million (about ₹270 crore) in a funding round co-led by Temasek and Lightrock India.

Shiprocket was valued at around \$1.2 billion with the fresh round of funding.

The fresh funds will help Shiprocket extend its operating system by building newer software and intelligence products



along with deepening its capability on the fulfilment and same-day delivery experience, it said in a statement.

The Series E2 funding round also saw participation from existing investors, Bertelsmann India

This investment will help accelerate our roadmap and will also help us bring world-class e-commerce experiences to every direct commerce retailer in India

SAAHIL GOEL | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, SHIPROCKET

Investments, March Capital, Moore Strategic Ventures, PayPal Ventures and Huddle.

Last month, Shiprocket acquired omnichannel commerce company Arvind Internet Limited's tech-

nology business called 'Omuni' for ₹200 crore in a stock and cash deal.

The deal will leverage both companies' technology and resources to enable quick, efficient, hassle-free deliveries from the closest store/warehouse in a larger D2C commerce enablement segment, Shiprocket said in a statement.

In June, Shiprocket acquired a majority stake in Pickrr, an e-commerce software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform for D2C brands and SME e-tailers for around \$200 million (nearly ₹1,560 crore).

Mcap of BSE-listed firms at all-time high of over ₹280.52L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reached an all-time high of over ₹280.52 lakh crore Thursday, helped by a continuous rally in equities.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 60,298. This is the benchmark's fifth straight session of gains.

Tracking rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped to ₹2,80,52,760.91 crore Thursday. Earlier January 17, the market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms had reached a lifetime high of ₹2,80,02,437.71 crore.

"Recent gains in Indian indices have been helped by a combination of factors, including encouraging macro data, fall in commodity prices, slowing inflation that may lead to central banks globally softening their monetary policy stance earlier than expected etc. Return of buying by FPIs has also helped," said Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO, HDFC Securities on BSE market cap reaching at a new all-time high.

Persistent foreign fund inflows have further bolstered investor sentiment of late.

Kotak Mahindra Bank was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing 3.45 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, State Bank of India and ITC.

On the other hand, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Wipro, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank and Nestle were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge gained 0.42 per cent and the smallcap index climbed 0.34 per cent.

Sectorally, BSE realty jumped 1.76 per cent, followed by utilities (1.09 per cent), capital goods (0.91 per cent), industrials (0.90 per cent), bankex (0.68 per cent) and telecom (0.57 per cent). Energy, healthcare, IT, auto, metal, tech and oil & gas were the laggards.

Big bang privatisation of banks harmful: RBI

Recent mega merger of PSBs has resulted in consolidation of the sector, creating stronger and more robust and competitive banks. The government has already announced its intention to privatise two banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 18: Big bang privatisation of public sector banks can do more harm than good, an RBI article has warned asking the government to take a nuanced approach on the issue.

While private sector banks (PVBs) are more efficient in profit maximisation, their public sector counterparts have done better in promoting financial inclusion, the article in the latest RBI Bulletin said.

"Privatisation is not a new concept, and its pros and cons are well known. From the conventional perspective that privatisation is a panacea for all ills, the economic thinking has come a long way to acknowledge that a more nuanced approach is required while pursuing it," it said.

The gradual approach to privatisation adopted by the government can ensure that a void is not created in fulfilling the social objective of financial inclusion and monetary transmission, it said.

Quoting various studies, it said, PSBs (Public Sector Banks) have played a key role in catalysing financial investments in low-carbon industries, thereby promoting green transition in countries such as Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, and in the European Union. Evidence suggests that public



MEGA MERGERS

In 2020, the govt merged 10 nationalised banks into four large lenders, thereby bringing down the number of PSBs to 12. There were 27 state-run lenders in 2017

United Bank and Oriental Bank was merged with PNB; Syndicate Bank was amalgamated with Canara Bank; Allahabad Bank was amalgamated with Indian Bank; and Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank was consolidated with Union Bank

IN A FIRST THREE-WAY MERGER, DENA BANK AND VIJAYA BANK WERE MERGED WITH BANK OF BARODA IN 2019

PRIOR TO THIS, THE GOVT HAD MERGED FIVE ASSOCIATE BANKS OF SBI AND BHARATIYA MAHILA BANK WITH THE STATE BANK OF INDIA

sector banks are not entirely guided by the profit maximisation goal alone and have integrated the desirable financial inclusion goals in their objective function unlike private sector banks, it said.

"Our results also point out the countercyclical role of PSB lending. In the recent years, these banks have also gained greater market confidence. Despite the criticism of weak balance sheets, data suggests that they weathered the Covid-19 pandemic shock remarkably well," it said. With regard to cleaning of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs), it said, establishment of National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) will help in cleaning up the legacy burden of bad loans from their balance sheets.

The recently constituted National Bank for financing infrastructure and development (NABFID) will provide an alternate channel of infrastructure funding, thus reducing the asset liability mismatch concerns of PSBs.

Overall, it said, these reforms are likely to help strengthen the PSBs further. The central bank said the views expressed in the article are of the author and do not

Rate hikes needed to tame inflation

Mumbai: Inflation is persistently at elevated levels that warrants appropriate policy responses to anchor expectations going forward, said an RBI article published Thursday. Retail inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) softened to 6.71 per cent in July, mainly on account of moderation in food prices. The Reserve Bank has increased the benchmark lending rate (repo) in three quick successions by 140 basis points to tame inflation, which remains above its tolerance level for the seventh month in a row.

"Perhaps the most heartening development in recent times has been the easing of inflation in July 2022 by 30 basis points from June 2022 and an appreciable 60 basis points from the average of 7.3 per cent for Q1-2022-23. This has validated our hypothesis that inflation peaked in April 2022," said the article on the 'state of the economy'.

represent that of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

RECORD HIGH Solar capacity zooms 59% in H1

INDIA'S CUMULATIVE INSTALLED SOLAR CAPACITY NOW STANDS AT 57 GW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Solar capacity installations in the country rose by 59 per cent to record 7.2 gigawatt (GW) during first half of 2022, according to Mercom India Research.

In January-June or H1 of 2021, the country had added 4.5 GW solar capacity; the research firm's 'Q2 2022 India Solar Market Update' released Thursday said.

The solar installations in April-

June period of 2022 also increased by 59 per cent to over 3.9 GW compared to 2.4 GW installed in second quarter of 2021. "The sector has witnessed the highest ever quarterly and half-yearly solar capacity additions," it said.

"Even with mounting challenges from supply constraints and rising costs, India had its best quarter and first half ever for solar," said Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group.

Cumulative large-scale solar PV



installations in Rajasthan reached almost 13 GW as of June 2022, and the state accounted for almost 27 per cent of the total installations in the country. In the first half of 2022, Rajasthan and Gujarat were the top states for large-scale solar; accounting for 53 per cent and 14 per cent of

ups across the country - regardless of size and geography - to thrive in the global app ecosystem.

"We will continue to evolve our tools to support developers' business decision making and evolve our business models to help them grow their businesses," Swamy mentioned.

More than 2 million developers

installations, respectively, followed by Maharashtra with 9 per cent.

Multiple government agencies announced tenders for about 9 GW in Q2 2022, which was 8 per cent higher year-on-year.

In 2021, the government had announced imposing a 40 per cent BCD (Basic Customs Duty) on solar modules and 25 per cent on solar cells with effect from April 1, 2022.

A subsidiary of US-based Mercom Capital Group, Mercom Communications India is a clean energy research and communications firm with expertise in clean-tech markets.

work with Google Play to build businesses and reach people across the globe.

The company said that in the past two years, it has seen apps across categories such as education, payments, health, entertainment, and gaming witness stupendous growth.

"There has been great momentum in gaming too. Ludo King became one of the first Indian games to cross 500 million downloads," said Google Play.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: Google Play Thursday said that the company will continue to invest in India on solving for local opportunities and challenges, as it celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Aditya Swamy, Director, Play Partnerships, said that local developers are finding global audi-

ences with Indian apps and games, seeing a 150 per cent increase in time spent by users outside India in 2021 compared to 2019 on Google Play.

"We will continue to invest in initiatives that enable a diverse range of developers to build helpful apps and successful businesses on Play," Swamy said in a blog post.

"We want to help every developer



with an idea capitalise on the potential to reach 2.5 billion monthly active users and 190 countries with Google Play," he added.

India is uniquely positioned to become a leading hub for global app innovation and there is tremendous potential for homegrown start-

‘Perfect’ show by India

Chahar shines on return as Men in Blue thump Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the first ODI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, August 18: Pacer Deepak Chahar (3/27) made an impressive comeback to international cricket with an incisive spell and openers maintained their consistency as India outclassed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the opening ODI, here Thursday.

Donning the blue jersey for the first time in six months after a long injury lay-off, Chahar hit the straps right away, which was instrumental in India restricting Zimbabwe to a sub-par 189 in just 40.3 overs.

With very little scoreboard pressure, it was a walk in the park for the Indians as the in-form opening pair of Shikhar Dhawan (81 n o, 113b, 9x4) and Shubman Gill (82 n o, 72b, 10x4, 1x6) knocked off the target in just 30.5 overs.

With skipper KL Rahul foregoing his spot at the top of the order to let the in-form pair maintain its momentum, Dhawan and Gill scored their third half centuries in last four games. Not to forget that it was also their third century-plus stand from the start of the West Indies series. Their lowest opening partnership had yielded 48 runs in second ODI in Caribbean.

On a track that had something for the bowlers, the Indian openers did start in a sedate fashion but with very little on the board, it did not take them much time to accelerate.

Dhawan played his signature square cuts off seamers and lofted shots off the slow bowlers during his knock while Gill played within himself for the first 30 deliveries before starting to chance his arms and surpassed his senior partner in terms of strike-rate.

Earlier, Chahar didn’t take long to find his rhythm on a Harare Sports Club track that offered steep bounce. The balmy morning conditions aided quality swing bowling. He was well supported by Mohammed Siraj (1/36), who worked up brisk pace while bowling the ideal ‘Test match length’.

Prasidh Krishna (3/50) and Axar



DEADLY COMBO: Shubman Gill (L) and Shikhar Dhawan during their unbeaten match-winning partnership, Thursday

Patel (3/24) also got their share of middle and lower-order victims while Kuldeep Yadav (0/36) was restrictive despite going wicket-less.

It was the record ninth-wicket stand of 70 runs between Brad Evans (33 n o) and Richard Ngarava (32) that took Zimbabwe close to the 200-run mark.

None of the Zimbabwe batters looked comfortable during those opening overs as Chahar got a lot of deliveries to dart back late while some straightened after pitching.

Opener Innocent Kaia (4) saw a ball climb up from back of length

Being away from the game is hard. Rehab and everything everyday gets boring. We’d rather be playing 365 days than be with the physio. For a few of us, it is great to be back in the Indian dressing room

KL RAHUL

and Sanju Samson caught it on second attempt. His left-handed partner Tadiwanashe Marumani (8) drove a fuller-length delivery that swung late and Samson had an easy catch.

Chahar’s best delivery was the one that got Wessly Medhevere (5) which seemed like drifting on pads but swung away late squaring up the right-hander, who was found plumb in-front.

Once Siraj had Sean Williams caught at first slip by Dhawan, there wasn’t much resistance left in the Zimbabwean batting although skipper Regis Chakabva (35) tried to put up a brief fight before Axar castled him.

BRIEF SCORES

Zimbabwe 189 (Regis Chakabva 35, Richard Ngarava 34, Brad Evans 33 n o; Axar Patel 3/24, Deepak Chahar 3/27, Prasidh Krishna 3/50) lost to India 192/0 (Shubman Gill 82 n o, Shikhar Dhawan 81 n o) by 10 wickets.



SPLENDID SPELL: Deepak Chahar appeals for a wicket against Zimbabwe

Warwickshire ropes in Siraj for 3 county games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, August 18: India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj will join the English county bandwagon as he gears up to play Warwickshire’s last three first-class games in September. Siraj is currently playing the ODI series in Zimbabwe but is not there in India’s T20 scheme of things.

“Warwickshire County Cricket Club has signed India international fast bowler Mohammed Siraj for the final three matches of the County Championship season. The 28-year-old will arrive at Edgbaston ahead of the Bears home fixture against Somerset, September 12,” the county club stated in a media release.

The right-arm fast bowler took 4/66 in the first innings of the fifth and final Test between India and England at Edgbaston in July, before adding a further six wickets in three ODI matches that followed.

A natural swinger of the ball, Siraj has played for his country 26 times in all formats, taking 56 wickets. In total, he has taken 403 wickets in 207 career matches with 194 of those in first-class cricket.

“I can’t wait to join up with the

Bears squad. I have always enjoyed playing in England with India and I’m excited to experience County Cricket,” Siraj said.

“Edgbaston is a world class stadium and the atmosphere it created this year for the Test was special. I am really looking forward to making it my home in September and hopefully helping the Bears end the season well. I would like to extend my gratitude to both Warwickshire County Cricket Club and BCCI for this opportunity.”

Paul Farbrace, Director of Cricket, Warwickshire said: “Siraj is a fantastic addition to the squad and we can’t wait to welcome him to Warwickshire. He is one of the best fast bowlers in the world right now and his knowledge and experience will help bring an added dimension to our line-up.

“It’s been clear that we needed to strengthen our bowling attack for the crucial run-in period and I am excited to see what Siraj can do in these three games.”

Siraj will be the second Indian player to represent Warwickshire this season after Krunal Pandya signed up for the Royal London Cup One Day Championship.



CORIC SPOILS NADAL’S RETURN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mason (USA), August 18: Borna Coric spoiled Rafael Nadal’s return from a six-week layoff, beating the Spanish star 7-6 (11-9), 4-6, 6-3 in the Western & Southern Open.

The winner of a men’s record 22 Grand Slam championships, including two this year, hadn’t played since July 6 after an abdominal tear forced him to withdraw from a semifinal match against Nick Kyrgios at Wimbledon. He was hoping to start putting the final touches on prepping for the upcoming US Open.

The second-seeded and third-ranked Nadal, 36, showed no signs of the injury that mostly plagued his serve. He reached 121 mph with one serve and needed several awkward body movements to return some of Coric’s shots.

Earlier in women’s play, US Open champion Emma Raducanu routed Victoria Azarenka 6-0, 6-2. The 19-year-old Raducanu won the final seven games against Serena Williams on Tuesday and the first 10 against Azarenka. Seeded 13th, Raducanu set up a match against No.8 Jessica Pegula.

“I try not to think about the score,” Raducanu said. “I just try to focus on collecting points. I’m always concerned when things are going well. I always feel like something could go wrong.”

Sixth-ranked Simona Halep withdrew because of a right thigh injury before facing Veronica Kudermetova. Halep won last week in Toronto.

In an all-English men’s second-round match, 11th-ranked Cameron Norrie outlasted three-time Grand



TWO SIDES OF EMOTION: Rafael Nadal looks disappointed during the match; (inset) Borna Coric is pumped up after getting a point against the Spaniard

Slam-champion Andy Murray 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. Also, Taylor Fritz beat Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios

6-3, 6-2, and 19-year-old wild-card Ben Shelton upset fifth-ranked Casper Ruud. Shelton is the youngest

American to defeat a top-five opponent since Andy Roddick beat No. 1 Gustavo Kuerten in 2001.

Barca look to rebound quickly after early setback

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 18: The expectations were high for Barcelona coming into the new season. The club’s financial maneuvers allowed for some high-profile signings that significantly boosted the squad after a trophyless campaign without Lionel Messi.

The new players performed well in the preseason and Barcelona president Joan Laporta said the club would meet the Spanish league’s strict financial fair play regulations.

Barcelona were back in their

place, seen as a reference in world football again, Laporta boasted a few days before the league opener.

But it didn’t take long for the hype to turn into more disappointment, and the Catalan club enters the second week of the season reeling and looking for ways to rebound. Another setback in a tough visit to Real Sociedad Sunday could leave the club in a deep hole early on.

Laporta was not able to register all the new signings as he had expected ahead of the opener, and on the field the team struggled yet again, beginning its league cam-

paign with a 0-0 home draw against Rayo Vallecano at the newly re-named Spotify Camp Nou.

To make it worse, Barcelona’s closest rivals all won their openers, with defending champion Real Madrid defeating promoted Almeria and Atletico Madrid routing Getafe, both in away matches.

It won’t help that Barcelona will have to face Sociedad without veteran midfielder Sergio Busquets, who was sent off in stoppage time against Rayo. It was also unclear if newly signed defender Jules Kounde would be allowed to be

registered in time. Of the team’s top signings, only Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha were added to the squad ahead of the opener.

MADRID’S MOMENTUM

Madrid opened by coming from behind to win at Almeria. The defending champions will stay on the road Saturday to visit a Celta Vigo team.

MORATA’S TIME

With striker Alvaro Morata red hot, Atletico host Villarreal Sunday in a match between clubs that

opened with big victories — Atletico won 3-0 at Getafe and Villarreal 3-0 at Valladolid. Morata scored twice against Getafe to practically secure the starting spot in attack over Antoine Griezmann.

OTHER MATCHES

Sevilla will try to rebound from their opening loss at Osasuna when they host Valladolid Friday. Real Betis will travel to face Mallorca Saturday. Athletic Bilbao will look for their first win since coach Ernesto Valverde returned when they host Valencia Sunday.

SUPREME COURT ORDERS STATUS QUO

CoA ‘won’t take over’ IOA affairs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: In an interim relief, the Supreme Court Thursday ordered the status quo and said the Delhi High Court-appointed three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) will not take over the affairs of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and CT Ravikumar took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the IOA, that the world sports body does not recognise any un-elected bodies like the CoA and consequently, India may be barred from taking part in international sports events.

“The Indian Olympic Association is a unit of the International Olympic Association and they have their own rules and according to them, if any national-level body like petitioner IOA here is represented by a non-elected body then it is treated as a third party interference,” the law officer said.

Every country is bound by the rules of the international body, Mehta said, adding that the high court’s intervention may or may not be for valid reasons which can be gone into by the bench at a later stage.

“But the moment they (CoA) takes over, India stands almost 99 per cent chance of being suspended from participating in any Olympic and international event,” the solicitor general said.

The CJI said that Justice Hima Kohli, the third judge of the bench, did not want to hear this case which originally arose from the Delhi High Court’s order. The law officer said that the interim relief can be awarded by the two judges on the bench.

“The counsel for the petitioner (IOA) and as well as the solicitor general submitted that by virtue of the present order (of the high court), there is a possibility of India losing the chance of participation in the Olympic and all international events... “We direct the parties to maintain the status quo. It is made clear that the charge is



not handed over to the CoA. We direct the matter to be listed before an appropriate bench on Monday (August 22),” the bench said in its order.

Consequently, the Delhi High Court-appointed CoA, comprising former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup, will not be able to take IOA over.

Earlier in the day, the solicitor general sought an urgent hearing and said the appointment of the CoA may lead to the Association’s suspension by the International Olympic Committee as happened in the case of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) recently.

The Delhi High Court, August 16, ordered the setting up of a three-

The IOA “welcomed” the interim relief granted to it by the Supreme Court, saying it will continue to challenge the “contentious” clauses of the National Sports Code, primarily related to “tenure guidelines for officials and voting rights” of state bodies. “It is a welcome order by the Hon’ble Supreme Court. The IOA and the government jointly approached SC. We had the full support of the government. We are happy that the Court took into consideration our submission,” IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told PTI.

member CoA to manage the affairs of the IOA. The high court had said the “persistent recalcitrance” of the IOA to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the CoA.

The high court had directed the executive committee of IOA to forthwith hand over the charge to the newly appointed committee and said that the members of the CoA will be assisted by three eminent sportspersons, namely, Shooter Olympian Abhinav Bindra, Long Jump Olympian Anju Bobby George, and Archer Olympian Bombayla Devi Laishram.

The IOA is recognised by the International Olympic Committee as the National Olympic Committee for India.

The high court, which considered in detail the issues concerning the tenure of office bearers and voting rights, struck down the post of “Life President” and any such permanent post for an individual in the IOA for being illegal and said that the maximum term for the President and likewise to all Office Bearers and members of the EC has to be limited to 3 tenures as per the law.

The honorarium payable to the CoA members and facilities to be extended to them will be akin to what may be fixed by the Supreme Court in the case related to the All India Football Federation and for the moment, as interim honorarium, a deposit of Rs 3 lakh per month shall be made with each CoA member and Rs 1.5 lakh each with the consultant sportsperson, the high court had said.

Praggnanandhaa beats Nieman in third round



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Miami, August 18: Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa beat Hans Nieman 2.5-1.5 in the third round to notch up a third straight win in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, here Thursday.

The 17-year-old Indian is on top of the standings with nine match points along with World No.1 Magnus Carlsen, a 2.5-1.5 winner over Levon Aronian.

Praggnanandhaa bounced back brilliantly after losing the first game to secure victories in game two and four after a drawn second game to pick up three points.

Having started his campaign with victory over World No.4 and the top ranked junior Alireza Firouzja, the Indian prodigy beat Anish Giri in the second round.

In other matches of the third round, Firouzja edged out Giri 4-3 in a tie-break in a thrilling match and Quang Liem Le of China defeated Poland’s Jan-Krzysztof Duda 2.5-1.5. Aronian and Firouzja trail Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa with five points while Duda has four.

The eight-player all-play-all tournament is the American finale of Champions Chess Tour. There is USD 7,500 at stake for each match win at the event. Each match will be played over four rapid games, with blitz tie-breaks in case of a 2-2 draw.