



ILEANA'S MYSTERY MAN

Actor Ileana D'Cruz, who is currently expecting her first baby, finally shares picture of her child's father

LEISURE P2



ALARMING HIGH TEMPERATURES

Global temperatures head towards alarming highs as extreme weather triggers wildfires forcing people to evacuate

INTERNATIONAL P10



ALCARAZ RETAINS TOP SPOT

Carlos Alcaraz holds onto No.1 in the ATP rankings by virtue of his victory over No.2 Djokovic in the Wimbledon final

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

Sensex, Nifty scale new lifetime highs

Mumbai: Benchmark Sensex and Nifty rallied for a third day in a row to close at fresh lifetime high levels Monday following buying in banking and oil stocks and FI inflows. Analysts said the first quarter results by Indian companies have been mostly in line with expectations, triggering a rally in local equities despite mixed global cues. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 529.03 points or 0.80 per cent to settle at its new all-time closing high of 66,589.93. The NSE Nifty also soared by 146.95 points or 0.75 per cent to close at a new record high of 19,711.45. P11

Fire in battery box of Vande Bharat

Bhopal: A fire broke out in the battery box of a coach of the Vande Bharat train heading from Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal to New Delhi Monday morning, a senior railway official said. This was the first instance of a fire breaking out in a Vande Bharat Express train. There were 37 passengers in the affected coach and they were shifted to other coaches immediately. No injury was reported to anyone in the incident, the official said. The fire was later doused and repairs were conducted. The train resumed its onward journey after remaining halted for more than three hours, the official said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Certainly, we are in favour of unity. We just do not support opposition unity

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	66589.93	▲ 529.03
NIFTY	19711.45	▲ 146.95
DOLLAR	82.10	▲ ₹0.05
EURO	92.17	▲ ₹0.01
GOLD	₹59,081	▼ ₹235
SILVER	₹75,565	▼ ₹403

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.7°C	31.0°C
TEMP MIN	25.2°C	25.0°C
Humidity	94%	89%
Rainfall	28mm	20mm
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

PROTESTING SCHOOL MERGER, GIRLS FAINT DURING SIT-IN



MERGER MESS: Girl students and parents stage a sit-in against the decision to merge the Girls' High School with the Boys' High School in Unit-9 area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Girl students of a school here and their parents staged a sit-in opposing the state government's decision to merge their institution with a boys' school, police said.

At least five students of Unit-9 Government Girls' High School fainted during the agitation. They were rushed to the Capital Hospital and their condition was stable, the police said.

The state government has decided to merge the Unit-9 Girls' High School with the Unit-9 Boys' High School to accommodate and relocate Rama Devi Women's Junior College.

The Director of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha, has already written a letter to the School & Mass Education Special Secretary on the separation of the infrastructure of RD Women's Higher Secondary School from Rama Devi Women's University.

As per the decision, the Arts and Commerce streams can be shifted to Unit-9 Government Girls' High School in the first phase. However, the classes for science students will be held at Rama Devi Women's University as there is no laboratory facility at the school for science education.

"Former Chief Minister Dr Harekrishna Mahatab had set up the girls' high school at Unit-9 for encouraging girls to continue study. The government cannot merge this school," Congress leader and Jatni MLA Suresh Routray who joined the girls' agitation said.

Bhubaneswar Block Education Officer, Pragyan Paramita Jena, who visited the agitation site, tried to convince the students and their parents to pave the way for the merger. However, her appeal was rejected by the agitators. "I will inform the government about the opinion of the girls," she said before leaving the place.

BJP boasts 38 as 26 Oppn parties meet

■ 'United We Stand' is Opposition's slogan as leaders begin 2-day brainstorming session

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Jul 17: Several new BJP allies, including Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), OP Rajbhar-led SBSP and the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), will join a key meeting of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) here Tuesday as the ruling party eyes a grand show of strength amid a get-together of 26 opposition parties in Bangalore ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in 2024.

At least 38 parties are expected to attend the NDA meeting. The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) became the latest entrant to the NDA with its leader Chirag Paswan meeting BJP president JP Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah Monday.

The Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, NCP led by



Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, Rashtriya Lok Janata Dal (RLJD) led by Upendra Kushwaha and the Jana Sena led by Pawan Kalyan will be among the new entrants that will be attending the NDA meeting. Some of these parties had partnered with the BJP earlier as well.

Meanwhile, with a call for unity, top leaders of 26 opposition parties began crucial deliberations Monday to chalk out their joint programme aimed at defeating the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee, who were seated next to each other, Congress president Mallikarjun

Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, chief ministers MK Stalin, Nitish Kumar, Arvind Kejriwal, Hemant Soren and RJD chief Lalu Prasad were among those who attended the dinner meeting where discussions were held to finalise the agenda for the formal talks starting Tuesday morning.

Sources said NCP chief Sharad Pawar was the only leader among the invitees not present at the meeting at Taj West End Hotel and he would arrive Tuesday along with his daughter Supriya Sule.

The leaders sat in front of a huge banner with "United We Stand" slogan, which was also put on posters that dotted the streets of Bangalore with pictures of opposition leaders.

IRCTC TRAVEL INSURANCE

Passengers now get automatic coverage

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, July 17: From opting in for ₹10 lakh personal accident insurance cover, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) has now changed the scheme to allow the option to opt out.

In other words, passengers booking their train tickets on the IRCTC portal are now automatically provided insurance cover for ₹10 lakh, a senior insurance industry official told IANS preferring anonymity.

Those not wanting the insurance cover have to opt out by clicking the appropriate button. Curiously, the premium charged for ₹10 lakh personal accident insurance cover is a paltry Re 0.35 paise. The policy covers death, disabilities and/or medical expenses due to a train accident during the travel.

The insurance cover is provided by two non-life insurers – SBI General Insurance Company Ltd and Liberty General Insurance Company Ltd.

According to the industry official, the change could be due to the tragic train accident in

The change could be due to the tragic train accident in Odisha last month **claiming 288 passengers**, in the aftermath of which, however, **no death claim has been lodged**

Curiously, the premium charged for **₹10 lakh** personal accident insurance cover is a paltry **₹0.35 paise**

Odisha last month killing 288 passengers and injuring over 1,000. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) had told IANS that a total of 624 passengers were having insurance cover under the IRCTC travel accident insurance scheme. A total of 22 claims totalling ₹60.52 lakh were reported to the two insurers for disability and hospitalisation due to the Odisha train accident and no death claim has been lodged.

Even though they would like to have insurance cover, not many passengers while booking a Tatkal train ticket on the IRCTC portal will be inclined to click on the insurance cover box as their main goal to reserve a ticket in hurry, the insurance official said.

'Fake doctor' held in Ganjam; clinic sealed



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 17: Digapahandi police Monday arrested a man in Dengausta of Ganjam district for impersonating as an allopathic doctor without any proper medical qualification or registration.

The accused identified as Subhrajit Panda, 29, is a native of Hindol Road under Parjang police limits in Dhenkanal and resides at Nua Bazar in Cuttack city. He was running clinics named as Best Poly Clinic at Dengausta of Ganjam and Ranihata area of Cuttack for the last one year.

As per reports, he was visiting the Dengausta-based clinic in Digapahandi and another in Aska twice a month to see patients. He used to take the medicine representative's help to prescribe medicines and treat the patients. A case was registered in this connection and the accused was produced in the court, the police said.

Notably, a woman suffered kidney ailments and had to undergo dialysis in Bhubaneswar after consuming the medicines prescribed by the fake doctor. Following this incident, the family members of the patient lodged a complaint before the police.

When the police conducted a sting operation in Panda's clinic at Dengausta, it was found that all his medical certificates and other documents were fake.

"We found that his MBBS certificate, specialisation from Germany, orthopaedic certificate and some fellowship documents are fake. We caught him red handed in his clinic," said Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M.

He was earlier arrested in 2020 by Telangana Police in Hyderabad for impersonating as a doctor. He was in jail for 15 days and is out on bail now. The trial of the case is still going on, he said. The SP appealed to people to inform the police whenever they come across any such fake doctor.

Moscow halts grain deal after bridge to Crimea struck

REUTERS

Moscow, July 17: Russia halted participation Monday in the year-old UN-brokered deal which lets Ukraine export grain through the Black Sea, just hours after a blast knocked out Russia's bridge to Crimea in what Moscow called a strike by Ukrainian sea drones.

Russia said two civilians were killed and their daughter wounded in what Moscow cast as a terrorist attack on the road bridge, a major artery for Russian troops fighting in Ukraine.

The Kremlin said there was no link between the attack and its decision to suspend the grain deal, which it says must also ease restrictions on Russian food and fertilizer exports.

"In fact, the Black Sea agree-

ments ceased to be valid today," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call. Unfortunately, the part of these Black Sea agreements concerning Russia has not been implemented so far, so its effect is terminated.

Images showed a section of the road bridge had come down and traffic was halted in both directions, although a parallel railway bridge was still operational. Bombs were reported before dawn on the 19-km bridge, which Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered built after seizing and annexing the peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

Kyiv gave no official account of the blasts. It typically does not comment on reports of attacks in Crimea or in Russia,



but has long maintained that the bridge was built illegally, and its use by Russia for military supplies makes it a legitimate target. Russia reopened the bridge after it was last hit by a massive explosion and fire in October.

Russia's suspension of the Black Sea grain deal could drive up food prices across the globe, especially in the poorest countries. Ukraine and Russia are both among the world's biggest exporters of grain and

- Russia halts grain deal, Erdogan says talks continue
- Parents dead, girl injured in attack on bridge
- Russia blames Ukrainian security forces
- Ukrainian media says Ukraine organised attack
- No comment from Kyiv

other foodstuffs.

The grain deal was hailed as preventing a global food emergency when it was brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last year, halting a de facto blockade of Ukrainian ports by Russia, which agreed to let ships pass after inspections in Turkey.

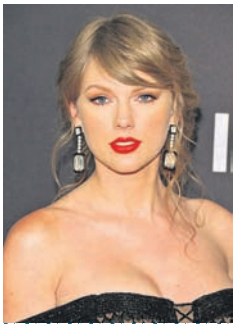
Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, the deal's powerful sponsor, said he still believed

Putin wanted it to continue. The Russian and Turkish foreign ministers would talk later Monday, he told reporters.

Global commodity food prices rose Monday, though the increase was limited, suggesting traders did not yet anticipate a severe supply crisis.

Putin had threatened last week to suspend participation in the grain deal, while also saying Russia could return to it if its demands were met for easier rules for its own agriculture and fertilizer exports.

Alongside the Black Sea grain deal, a three-year deal was struck last year under which UN officials agreed to help Russia get its food and fertiliser to foreign markets. Moscow says those terms have not been fully implemented.



TAYLOR SWIFT MAKES HISTORY

Singer Taylor Swift continues to make her mark in history as her re-recorded *Speak Now* made its debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart joining three of her other albums in the Top 10. She became the first woman to achieve it in 60 years and only one of three living artists to have ever scored such a feat.

OPPENHEIMER SELLS 90K TICKETS IN INDIA

Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* will release in cinemas this Friday. It's enjoying tremendous hype, and if advance booking indicators are anything to go by. The film has booked as many as 90,000 tickets across all three multiple chains - PVR, INOX and Cinepolis - for the opening day itself.



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ARIES

Today you will have to give in to your spouse's demands for improving the environment at home. In your own interest it will be advisable, says Ganesha, to hasten the measures needed to be taken and stay focussed on them as you are the one who is guilty of neglect.

TAURUS

You will be fondly thinking about your close friends, particularly about the ones of the opposite sex. It may suddenly dawn upon you that you are in love, says Ganesha. If per chance, there is a romantic encounter, go ahead and dive fearlessly in the pool of love.

GEMINI

Your family members and your friends will have much higher expectations from you today, and trying to fulfill the same will make you irritable. However, you will figure out creative ways to juggle the many demands made upon you and come out on tops at the end of it all, says Ganesha.

CANCER

You will tackle with ease, even the most confounding challenges today. You may be the scapegoat, though, fears Ganesha. Beware, or this may shake you and lower your self-confidence. Try to shake off your weaknesses, and you should see yourself obtaining energy and positivity.

LEO

People involved in Sales and Marketing related jobs will attend productive meetings and will make effective presentations. However, delays in journeying are a possibility. It is a good time to recognise your inherent capabilities. You will be able to prove your worth in the next 2-3 days, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

In all likelihood you will indulge in some writing or artistic work, which will bring about wonderful results. As you are passionate about these things, you may convert them into your hobbies, if you are not involved in them as a professional. Ganesha gives you the green signal to enjoy the clout that you wield over others with your sweet words.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will spend time with your family members by putting them above other commitments. There may be plans made to go out for dinner or for a short excursion with them. Ganesha says that the health of a close relative maybe a cause of concern for you today.

SCORPIO

The one thing that we neglect the most about ourselves is health. But today you are unable to do that. Your health needs to be paid enough attention as you may be suffering from ailment/s. Try to regularise your routine along with healthy food and regular exercise, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

You are all set to groom your skills as a professional. Talking about work, determination and dedication are likely to rule you today. Putting your heart and soul, your work speaks volumes about your efforts. Appreciation, though slow in pace, is on its way to encourage you.

CAPRICORN

You'll be popular today at your workplace. Your honesty and efforts will be recognised, which will be fulfilling for you. But, tomorrow will be a different day and times may not be favourable for you. It is, therefore, necessary for you to understand the importance of today and utilise it to the maximum, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

You will go through some heavy mood swings today. And the people who know you well will get shocked and find it difficult to deal with you. Keep your guards on, and don't take uncalled-for decisions, advises Ganesha, rather get your current assignments cross the finishing line.

PISCES

Today will be a hectic day for you. Most of your time will be spent in making your relationships on the business as well as the personal front more meaningful. You will likely find yourself attending social events. There is also the possibility that you will attend some religious ritual today. Apart from this, nothing substantial is likely to occur today, says Ganesha.

'Being beautiful is not being born beautiful'

Mumbai: Celina Jaitley marked 22 years of being a runner-up at the Miss Universe pageant recently. Recalling her tryst with showbiz, Celina shared in her Instagram post, "I entered the fashion industry at a very young age (15) after being scouted at an army party."

Speaking about her challenges, the *Jawani Diwani* actress continued: "While others would enjoy weekends I would take up shoot and ramp show offers in Kolkata and work for meagre amounts. Many a times I wouldn't even end up getting paid for my hard work and unauthorised use of images due to lack of industry regulations. Then there was the constant criticism and rejection either I was too white, too thin, not tall enough or too tall etc. For a child in her teens it was truly over-

whelming hence the journey to the crown was a very intense one."

Concluding on a positive note Celina said, "Crowns... after all are not made of sparkling stones, they are made of sheer determination, strength, dedication, devotion, struggle and immense courage too. Beauty is a "Powerful Tool of Persuasion" & I am so thankful for having the opportunity to represent my country on various platforms.

Having said that: Being beautiful is not being "born beautiful" It is striving, lifelong to live & achieve your maximum potential as a human being."

AGENCIES



FSB's children's film fest from July 20

IN ADDITION TO FILM SCREENINGS, THE EVENT WILL HOST INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS AND ENGAGING ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO NURTURE THE CREATIVE TALENTS OF YOUNG ATTENDEES

Bhubaneswar: The Film Society of Bhubaneswar (FSB) will conduct a three-day children's film festival from July 20 here at Odisha Research Centre from July 20.

This will be FSB's third addition to its annual festival calendar; alongside two other film festivals dedicated to Indian non-fiction and fiction categories.

With a carefully curated selection of captivating films from around the world, alongside engaging workshops about pre-film animation devices, and stop-motion animation filmmaking with clay models, the festival aims to engage



young minds, encourage storytelling, and foster an appreciation for different perspectives on the film form, said the organisers.

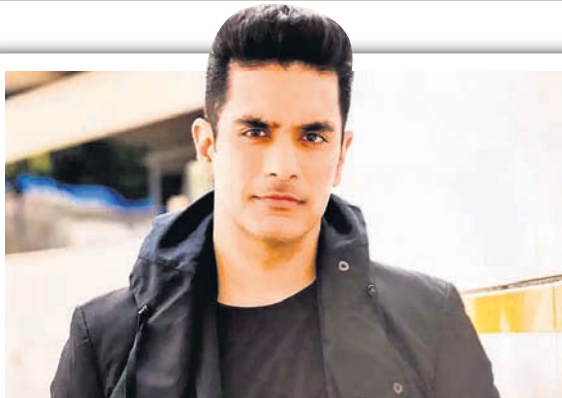
"Our objective is to provide a platform where children can explore the magic of cinema, encounter diverse stories, work together to create stories, and be inspired by the

power of film. This festival promises to be an enchanting experience that will stay with them for a lifetime," said Subrat Beura, the Festival Director narrating the purpose of the festival.

The event features an impressive line-up of films that include Martin Scorsese's *Hugo* (2011), Satyajit Ray's *Pathar Panchali* (1955), Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* (2013), and Charles Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

Parents, teachers, and guardians are encouraged to bring their children to this event that celebrates the magic of cinema.

PNN



Angad to represent India at int'l sporting events

Mumbai: Actor Angad Bedi, who is receiving a lot of appreciation for his work in the streaming anthology *Lust Stories 2*, will be participating in two international sporting events.

The actor, who is now also a professional sprinter, will participate in the Asia Masters Athletics Championships in November 2023 in the Philippines and World Masters Athletics in Sweden.

Following his remarkable achievement of winning the silver medal in his maiden 400m sprinting tournament in Mumbai, Angad has set his sights to represent India in the two international events.

Expressing his enthusiasm about representing India in sprinting, Angad said: "I am honoured and thrilled to have the opportunity to represent my country in the 400m race next year. First, I am aiming for Maharashtra State in December then Nationals. The silver medal in my debut sprinting tournament has fueled my determination to pursue this sport at a professional level."

Angad has been undergoing rigorous and intensive training under the guidance of his coach, Brinston Miranda. Coach Miranda, a seasoned athlete himself, achieved the remarkable feat of securing the 5th rank at the World Masters Games in 2016.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Angad's release is a sports drama film titled *Ghoomer* in which he will share the screen with Saiyami Kher and Abhishek Bachchan.

AGENCIES

Ileana finally shares her partner's picture

Mumbai: Ileana D'Cruz has finally revealed her mystery man. The actor is currently expecting her first child but has not yet talked about the father of the child. She has now dropped hints about the man in her life by sharing new pictures with him from their 'date night'.

Monday, Ileana shared their pictures on Instagram Stories along with a heart emoji. While Ileana is seen in a strappy red dress, the man is in a black shirt and sports a beard. However, she didn't reveal his identity.

The man in the picture looks similar to the one seen in a blurred picture shared by Ileana last month. She had shared the picture along with a long note on her pregnancy journey.

Talking about finding support in her partner, she had written, "And on the days I forget be kind to myself, this lovely man has been my rock. He's held me when he feels me starting to crack. And wipes the tears away. And cracks goofy jokes to make me smile. Or just offers a hug when he knows that's ex-

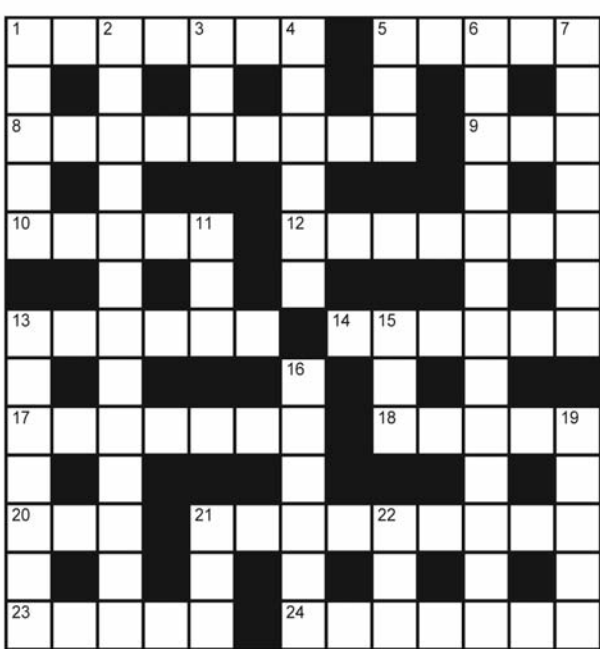
actly what I need in that moment. And everything doesn't seem so hard anymore."

AGENCIES



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Campsite
- 5 Shoulder motion
- 8 Mesozoic era reptiles
- 9 Send packing
- 10 Tall tales
- 12 New hire, usually
- 13 Tint
- 14 Outdoor activity
- 17 Tasty

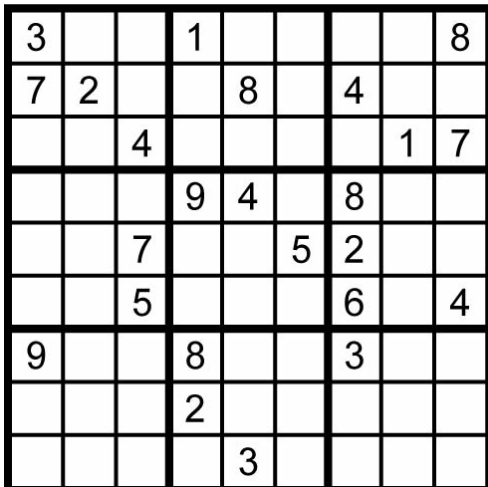
Down

- 1 Sidekick
- 2 Dummy animator
- 3 Increases
- 4 Vinegar dispensers
- 18 Clamorous
- 20 Life energy in China
- 21 Brotherly
- 23 Mr. or Mrs., e.g.
- 24 Puts down

- 5 Shipwreck signal
- 6 Fixed-up for resale
- 7 Medicinal Chinese herb
- 11 Old French coin
- 13 Emulator
- 15 Wayside stop
- 16 Maroon
- 19 Egg parts
- 21 Honorarium
- 22 Miscalculate

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.

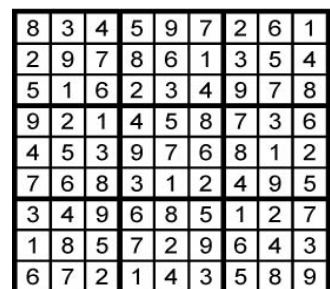


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Piped water for Barkote, Reamal by June '24

5T Secretary VK Pandian directs Sports dept to sanction a new hockey training centre for Deogarh district

Bhubaneswar, July 17: If things go as per plan, two mega drinking water projects worth Rs 367 crore in Barkote and Reamal blocks of the district will be commissioned by June 2024. This was revealed during a review meeting chaired by 5T Secretary VK Pandian during his visit to Deogarh, Monday. Mega pipe water supply projects are being constructed in Barkote, Reamal and Tileibani blocks of the district with a cost of Rs 609 crore, covering the entire district. While Barkote and Reamal projects will be commissioned by June 2024, Tileibani project, which will supply water to Deogarh town, will be com-

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While Barkote and Reamal projects will be commissioned by June 2024, Tileibani project, which will supply water to Deogarh town, will be commissioned by June 2025

missioned by June 2025. As per the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Pandian paid a two-day visit to Deogarh district. During his stay, he reviewed the progress of various ongoing projects in the district. He also visited Jhadeswar temple, offered prayer and interacted with servitors, trustee members and general public for holistic development of the shrine along with better facilities for devotees. He directed the

district administration to prepare a master plan for development of the temple. He then visited Kansar Ashram School transformed under the 5T initiative and interacted with the students and teachers. In his address, Pandian encouraged the students to aim high in life and work hard to achieve their goals. Then, he heard people's grievances at Kansar and directed the district administration for quick

disposal of the same. He also interacted with the young hockey players of Deogarh district. He expressed his happiness on learning that the area had produced some international players like Roshan Minz who was also present during the interaction. Pandian apprised the CM regarding the potential for hockey in that area and requested for a hockey training centre with Astro turf. The CM immediately directed the Sports department to sanction a new hockey training centre in Deogarh. Pandian also attended public grievance meetings at Parposi in Tileibani Block and Chhatabar in Reamal block. He heard the grievances and assured early action on the issues.



62.6L IN ODISHA PULLED OUT OF POVERTY IN 5 YRS: NITI

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, July 17: At least 62,62,852 people in Odisha were pulled out of multidimensional poverty in five years, according to NITI Aayog's 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review 2023'. According to the report released by NITI Aayog vice-chairman Suman Berry Monday, at least 13.5 crore people across the country exited the multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21. Odisha has registered a significant decline of 13.65 percentage points in number of multidimensionality poor in five years— from 29.43 per cent in 2015-16 to 15.68 per cent in 2019-21, it said. While rural Odisha registered the fastest decline in poverty – from 32.64 per cent to 17.72 per cent, urban areas saw

marginal decline – from 12.32 per cent to 5.42 per cent. Malkangiri topped the chart in the state with 45.01 per cent multidimensional poor population, while Puri has 3.29 per cent multidimensional poor people. The National MPI measures simultaneous deprivations across the

three equally weighted dimensions of health, education, and standard of living that are represented by 12 SDG-aligned indicators. India saw a significant decline of 9.89 percentage points in number of multidimensionally poor – from 24.85 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.96 per cent in 2019-2021.



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Inauguration of Hockey High Performance Centre

By **Sj. Naveen Patnaik**
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

18 July 2023

Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar



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Youth for Future”**



Hockey High Performance Centre



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Gymnasium



Dining Hall

Transforming The Sports Landscape | Empowering Athletes

OIPR-29001/13/0042/2324

Min hails OSAM Board for Skoch Award 2023

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Cooperation Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak congratulated the Odisha State Agricultural Marketing (OSAM) Board on winning the Skoch Award 2023 for e-NAM in silver category, official sources informed here Monday.

Functioning under the Cooperative department, OSAM has achieved new heights in the cooperative sector with successful onboarding of all 66 regulated marketing committees (RMCs) of the state to the e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) portal.

“Odisha has left behind many agriculturally advanced states in the country by achieving the unique feat of 100 per cent onboarding of agricultural markets under all RMCs. All the 66 Regulated Market Committees of the State have been successfully onboarded to the e-NAM platform,” said a department official.

The e-NAM is a pan Indian online platform developed by the central Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare Ministry to link all buyers and sellers of agricultural produce across the country, virtually, through the APMCs (agricultural produce



marketing committees) or RMCs (regulated market committees).

The Cooperative department has also onboarded 401 farmer producer organisations (FPOs) to the agri-marketing platform. As members of these FPOs, about 400 women self help groups (WSHG) can now reap the benefits of this online platform in marketing of their produce, the official said.

“The department has also initiated a project on agri-marketing network linking all 66 RMCs, 43 Krushak Bazaars, 76 Municipal Markets including 800 FPOs and WSHGs to boost agricultural marketing,” the

official added.

Besides, to promote modern ways of doing business in agriculture, the OSAM Board has entered into an agreement with the agri-business incubator wing of International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), an international organisation notified by the United Nations and Government of India.

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) also received “Gold Certificate” in Skoch Award for Integrated Sanitation System Safa App developed with the help of Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) to provide sanitation service to people under one platform.

Similarly, Skoch Silver Award in the ‘Transport’ category conferred upon State Transport Authority, department of Commerce & Transport for e-Detection. In order to detect vehicles plying without valid documents through national highways and state highways in Odisha, the transport department has developed the e-detection portal. The Skoch Silver Award in the ‘Water’ category conferred upon department of Water Resources for Mahanadi Chitrotpala Island Irrigation Project.



DEMOLITION DRIVE: An excavator deployed by BDA carrying out anti-encroachment operation in Chandrasekharpur area of Bhubaneswar, Monday OP PHOTO

Preparatory meet held for Prez visit

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 17: State Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena here at the Lok Seva Bhawan Monday chaired a high level preparatory meeting for President Droupadi Murmu’s visit to Odisha as the President is set to attend several programmes during her three-day visit starting July 25.

As per the scheduled programme, the President will arrive here July 25 and stay at the Raj Bhawan where she would meet the representatives of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

On July 26, she will have a day-long visit to Cuttack to see



the Chandi temple, birthplace of Madhusudan Das, birthplace of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, which has been converted into a national museum.

She will also grace the 75th anniversary celebrations of Orissa High Court, address the convocation of National Law University and attend the annual function of SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack.

On July 27, Murmu will lay the

foundation stone of Brahmakumari centre light house complex at Dasbatia near Tamando in morning and then proceed to Bhadrak to attend the diamond jubilee celebration of Bhadrak Autonomous College before returning to New Delhi.

This will be the President’s third visit to Odisha after assuming the highest office of the country. During her first visit to Odisha February 10 and 11, she had attended several programmes in Bhubaneswar and had addressed the national seminar at the National Rice Research Institute (NRI), Cuttack.

During her second visit to the state from May 4 to 6, the

President visited her native village, Simlipal National Park and attended the convocation ceremony of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University at Baripada.

The high level preparatory meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary Nikunj Kishore Dhal, DGP Sunil Bansal, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissioner Soumendra Priyadarshi, Odisha Governor’s principal secretary Saswat Mishra and Health secretary Shilini Pandit besides other senior officials who discussed security arrangements and other measures during her stay at Raj Bhawan and visit to various places.

Shah inaugurates NCB zonal office

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: With a view to widening the presence of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in the state, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday inaugurated the zonal office of the central agency at Sailshree Vihar here through virtual mode. The NCB sub-zone, Bhubaneswar has been upgraded to a full-fledged zonal office.

The Bhubaneswar sub-zone of NCB was functioning under the zonal office in Kolkata since its inception in 2012. The Union minister on the occasion thanked Odisha government for its co-operation in the construction of the new building of Bhubaneswar zonal office. The state government has also allotted another plot adjacent to the new building for further extension in future.

“Currently, NCB has about 14 officers and personnel including an assistant director, superintendent, intelligence officers, sepoys, havaladar and drivers. As the sub-zone office has been upgraded, the manpower of the unit’s operational and non-operational wings will be enhanced in the coming days,” said a senior NCB official.

Equipped with more manpower, the NCB, Bhubaneswar is planning to intensify its enforcement activities against rampant drug trafficking in the state. Odisha has been considered as a major transit route for trafficking of cannabis in the country.

“NCB’s Bhubaneswar unit has plans to intensify the drives against illicit trafficking of drugs and illegal cultivation of cannabis and opium in the state in coming days,” the NCB official added.

BMC respite for Market Building shop owners



SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: Following the assurance of action against the makeshift vendors by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange, the Market Building shop owners heaved a sigh of relief.

The shop owners staged a protest Monday by shutting down their shops and even threatened to continue their protest for an indefinite period.

Kulange, while assuring the shop owners, said, “We emptied the area during Hockey World Cup yet they are all back again and I believe this can only be addressed by rehabilitating the makeshift vendors. Legal action will be taken in the next 3-4 days. But by the time we expect co-

operation from the permanent shop owners. A decision in this regard will be taken after necessary legal consultation.”

In the protest, permanent shop owners demanded eviction of the makeshift vendors numbering more than 200 who create chaos leading to unnecessary crowd causing inconvenience to the customers. Incidents of chain snatching and other crimes have also been reported.

Significantly the Market Building had remained closed for an indefinite period following a brawl between the makeshift vendors and members of the traders’ association in June last year.

Later, the business resumed following a discussion with the BMC officials and Commissionerate Police.

NHRC showcauses Chief Secretary over electrocution

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Monday served a show-cause notice on the Chief Secretary in connection with death of a man after coming in contact with a live wire laid for poaching wild boar in Ganjam last year.

The rights body asked the Chief Secretary to show reasons within six weeks as to why Rs 5 lakh compensation should not be given to the next of the kin of Uma Charan Bisoi of Boutajholi village under Berhampur Sadar police limits of Ganjam.

The commission’s move follows a plea filed by human rights activist Rabindra Mishra who informed the commission that Bisoi and his female friend had gone to spend some quality time at the cashew forest near Baiganbadi in the district when the tragedy struck around 11pm December 13, 2022.

“While parking his motorcycle at the forest, Bisoi came in contact with a live wire laid for poaching wild boar and died instantaneously. After learning about the mishap from Bisoi’s female friend, his brother



Uma Charan Bisoi of Boutajholi village under Berhampur Sadar police limits of Ganjam died after coming in contact with a live wire laid for poaching wild boar in 2022

Dharma approached Berhampur Sadar police and a case (77/2022) was registered under Sections 302, 304 and 34 of the IPC and 135 of the Electricity Act,” Mishra informed the NHRC, quoting the police complaint.

The commission January 25, 2023 asked the Energy department Principal Secretary, and Ganjam Collector as well as Superintendent of Police (SP) to file action taken reports (ATRs) in connection with the mishap within four weeks.

The Ganjam SP March 27, 2023 informed the NHRC that they have registered a case and arrested Trinath Das, Sania Das and Kishore Das December 22, 2022 and the accused were

chargesheeted March 30, 2023 on multiple charges, including illegal laying of wire for poaching. The Ganjam SP also forwarded the inquest and autopsy reports of Bisoi which revealed the cause of death as ‘electrocution and complications thereof’.

The Energy department June 26, 2023 informed the NHRC that the death occurred due to unlawful activities of miscreants who laid the live wire. The report also blamed the failure of electricity authorities to detect such theft and lodge police complaint against the culprits even after the accident under Section 135 of the Electricity Act, 2003.

EOW cautions people against cyber fraud

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17:The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of state police Monday issued an advisory cautioning people about online cyber fraud. The EOW has also urged the victims who have already fallen in the trap of cyber crooks to contact police without getting panicked.

“All are advised to remain alert and not to fall in the traps of these cyber thugs. And, in case, they fall in the trap, they should immediately inform police/112/1930 (Cybercrime helpline). They should never panic because these cyber thugs can’t do anything if you remain strong and don’t surrender to their illegal demands,” the EOW advises.

The cops have also drawn the attention of the people towards various modus operandi of cyber fraudsters. According to EOW, the criminals create websites/apps to run their schemes and also promote those on social media. The fraudsters usually communicate with their associates and victims through WhatsApp and Telegram channels to avoid getting tracked by law enforcement agencies. “They use fake SIMs and mule bank accounts wherever required to ensure anonymity. They control and do business through numerous mule bank accounts (traded on dark market in some Whatsapp groups and Telegram channels)”, revealed EOW.

Bohra takes over as PCSC of EcoR

Bhubaneswar: Alok Bohra has taken over as the Principal Chief Security Commissioner (PCSC), East Coast Railway (ECoR) recently. Prior to this, Bohra, a 1997-batch IRPF officer, was working as General Manager (A&S) in Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Limited, a Central PSU on deputation. He also worked in various posts in Railway Protection Force. Bohra also received many awards like Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 2018, Director General (RPF) Insignia in 2005 and many others during his career due to his dutifulness. ECoR expects that Bohra would keep security as his top priority.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Nabjul Khan Rabbul Khan, S/o Rabbul Khan, At/PO- Lataharan, PS- Kakatpur, Dist-Puri- 752119 declare by this affidavit 20377, dated 21.06.2023 that now onwards I shall be known as Nabajul Khan for all future purposes.

Moviegoers’ happy snacking again at PVR INOX

SMRUTI REKHA BARIK, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 17: The unduly high priced snacks have prevented the theatergoers in the Capital city to gorge on the delicious snacks and beverages in theatres while watching a film, significantly affecting the overall cinema experience.

The ever sky-high prices of food items in the PVR INOX has now come to an end over a tweet of a journalist who shared the exorbitant bill of a Pepsi and a popcorn (Rs 460 for 55gm of cheese popcorn and Rs 360 for 600ml of Pepsi). Study says it is because of the skyrocketing prices of the food menu that the majority of crowd has been shift-

ing to local theatres where the snacks and beverages are cheaper.

PVR Cinemas has introduced lower prices for drinks and snacks following criticism on social media regarding inflated costs. Addressing the issue, PVR offered two promotions where it reduced the prices of food and beverages by 40 per cent making it a fair deal.

We have introduced two food combos starting from Rs 99 from Monday to Thursday between 9 am and 6 pm, while on weekends the offers will be ‘bottomless popcorn’ with ‘unlimited refills’ and ‘bottomless Pepsi’, said a PVR official.

“It is obvious that a cinema



watched in a theatre has a whole different

experience and feel to it than watched on OTT platforms. The food prices don’t do justice for a middle class family; it doubles the prices of tickets for the cinema. That is one reason why the middle class prefers going to a local theatre or wait till the



OTT release. But the new promotions offered by PVR are somehow a relief now and I am sure there will be queues now in front of food gates”, said Nitesh, an architecture student of a private college.

“There is not much difference in the ticket prices when compared with a local theatre.

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Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-SaiAudio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Babuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Map-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemana-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Locals suffer as cement firm turns back on promises

Jobs and other sops assured to displaced land owners remain a distant dream



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, July 17: A cement manufacturing firm having its plant at Kalinganagar in Jajpur district has fraudulently deprived the displaced land owners of various benefit, including employment, sources said Monday. When the plant was set up, lucrative sops were promised to those who parted with their lands. Now only a handful of them have been employed as casual labourers with minimal wages. Sources added that the officials and security personnel of the cement firm now do not even allow the displaced land owners or their family members come near the premises of the factory. The firm now belongs to ‘Nuvoco’ who bought it from the Emami group. Authorities of the cement plant had earlier promised to supply clean drinking water and appoint local people on priority basis. It had also vowed to provide, skill development training, control pollution in the area, organise health camps on a regular basis. However, nothing has

materialised so far. There are many families who have lost their lands and are suffering from acute financial crunch due to lack of employment. Among them are the families of Krupasindhu Jena, Santosh Jena, Mahendra Jena, and Premanand Jena. Their problems have compounded as the advisory committee on rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) have not conducted a single meeting in the last seven years, sources said. When the cement plant was being set up, Emami, sources alleged, had promised in writing to give employment and other benefits to the displaced land owners at a meeting held, December 20, 2016. However, seven years have elapsed, yet nothing has materialised for the locals. Emami started operations in 2017, but then sold the plant to Nuvoco in 2021. Demanding employment and other benefits, the affected families have staged a number of demonstrations outside the plant, but in vain. Sources said that

the plant management is trying to hoodwink the villagers, by promising sops. However, till date nothing has been delivered. Demanding regularisation, pay hike and other benefits, the displaced employees staged an agitation in front of the plant gate, June 28 but their pleas have still not been addressed. This has created simmering tension in the Kalinganagar locality. Locals said that industrialisation of the district or for that matter, the Kalinganagar area, has spelt doom for them. Sources said that hope of employment among the locals is slowly dying while people are becoming increasingly disillusioned over industrial development. ‘Nuvoco’ bought the cement plant at Dasmania under Mantira mouza of Danagadi tehsil in Jajpur district at an investment of ₹401 crore and started production in 2021. Officials had said that approximately 500 people will be employed for the running of the plant and 58 of them will be permanent. It had also promised one job each for the 50 displaced families. But till date, jobs haven’t been provided and locals alleged that the management of the firm, because of its close affinity to some influential political leaders is running the show with impunity. When contacted, Kalinganagar ADM Santosh Kumar Mishra said additional compensation has been given to those who have lost their land for establishment of the plant. He however, asserted that not a single family has been displaced for the cement plant. Mishra also said that if promises have not been kept, he would take steps to ensure it.



CIVIC WOES: Devotees wading through a waterlogged road to the Shiva temple at Durgapali on the holy month of Shravan as rains lashed Sambalpur, Monday

Prison terms for ponzi directors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, July 17: A special OPID (Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors) court here sentenced Monday each of the three directors of a ponzi firm to three years in prison after convicting them of defrauding depositors by luring them to invest in attractive deposit schemes. The convicts have been identified as Bijay Kumar Jena, 38,

of Tikayatpur village, Kadu Marndi, 36 of Patharsahi village under Baisinga police limits and Somnath Naik, 32, of Tentulidinga village under Kulinga police limits. They were working as directors of ponzi firm ‘Shine India Agro-Industries Ltd’. Judge Biswajit Das also slapped a fine of ₹1.21 lakh each on them, apart from the prison term. The three had opened an office of the firm at Betanoti



Square in Mayurbhanj district. They used to lure people to invest money in various deposit schemes promising high returns.

A complaint was filed before the Betanoti police, May 10, 2013. Betanoti police registered a case which was taken up for hearing in the Balasore OPID court. The judge passed the order after examining the statements of seven witnesses and 42 documents. This was stated by special public prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda.

Government gets back land which was controversially sold

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 17: One of the most controversial land deals in the city seems to have reached a logical conclusion. The questionable land has finally gone back to its logical owner, the Odisha government. Only a couple of years back, the land measuring 60 decimals had become the cynosure of all eyes, the way it had been given to a private party flouting all norms. The irregularity of the deal had been highlighted by BJP spokesperson Dhiren Senapaty. He had alleged that the piece of land, which was meant for construction of the IDCO Tower, had been given away to a private party at a very nominal price in comparison to the existing rates at the Civil Township locality, one of the primary housing locations in the city.

ernment demanded the money for the land from IDCO. The land was given to IDCO with certain conditions. One of them was that 20% of the built-up area would be given to the Odisha government to house different offices. However, no proper deed was signed regarding the transfer of the land. Out of the blue, one private business house approached the state Tourism department to construct a hotel keeping in mind the upcoming Hockey World Cup in 2023. The department informed IDCO that it had no objection to the project. Under the industrial promotion act, the price of the land was fixed at ₹1lakh per decimal for 60 decimals of land. However, the existing rate then was ₹22 lakh per decimal. “I came to know about this wrongdoing from my sources and had invited all the media for that press conference in which I blew the cover from the deal,” said Senapaty. A PIL was also filed at the Orissa High Court by Ramachandra Kundu. Hearing all the sides the high court directed the revenue secretary to initiate an enquiry in 2022. In May of the same year, the revenue secretary after scrutinising all documents found that the land was grossly undervalued and everything mentioned in the PIL was valid. Then he instructed the LAC here to take the right decision. However, it got delayed, said Senapaty. “Finally a few days back the revenue secretary wrote to the Collector, who is also the chairman of the LAC, to take action within three weeks. Following this the LAC has requested the government to take back the land,” said a lawyer who spoke on condition of anonymity.



FILE PHOTO

“At least IDCO now can reclaim the land and construct a tower. This issue was raised by me. I have the information that the land has gone back to the government following the intervention of the Orissa High Court,” Senapaty said Sunday. It was Senapaty who had raised the issue before the media about the illegality in the deal. In 2014 IDCO was given one acre of land for construction of the tower. However, in 2015 the gov-

13 injured in group clash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi, July 17: Thirteen persons were injured after members of two families clashed with each other over a long-standing property dispute at Modasahi village under Guamal panchayat in this police limits in Bhadrak district, Monday. The condition of one of the injured is stated to be critical. Police have arrested two persons over separate complaints filed by the two families. Those held have been identified as Raghunath Prusty and Sanjay Prusty. The injured persons have

been admitted to Bhadrak district headquarters hospital for treatment. Sources said that the families of Shayam Sundar Prusty and Nrusingha Prusty fought with each other Sunday morning. Later, the two families lodged complaints with police the same day. However, police did not register any case or took any action. This escalated the tension between the two families. They fought again Monday following which 13 persons were injured. Locals alleged that the fight could have been prevented had the police intervened Sunday.

Locals save girl from kidnapper



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 17: Locals prevented Monday an alleged act of kidnapping by a man who was travelling to Jamshedpur from this town with a minor girl. Other passengers detained the man at the Barbil bus stop suspecting something amiss and handed him to the cops at the police station in Barbil. The accused has been identified as Mohammed Dildar a resident of Banka town in Bihar. As per information available, Dildar and the girl were travelling to in the bus which goes to Jamshedpur. However, locals noticed that girl was wearing her school dress under her burqa. When questioned, the girl narrated her plight and said that she was being forcibly taken by Dildar in the bus and that she had no idea where she was going. The passengers then stopped the bus at Barbil and took the minor girl and Dildar to the police station. Later on Town police station IIC Sunil Kar said that police are investigating the matter. Dildar however, has not been arrested till the time of filing the copy, as no official complaint has been lodged against him. Police are also trying to ascertain the identity of the girl and are trying to contact her parents.

Man awarded 10-yr RI for raping minor

AGENCIES

Baripada, July 17: A court in Mayurbhanj district Saturday sentenced a 31-year-old man to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a girl eight years ago. District Special POC SO Court Judge Sumita Jena also imposed a fine of 7,000 on the convict, Special Public Prosecutor Abhinna Kumar Pattnaik said. The court also directed Mayurbhanj District Legal Services Authority to pay ₹2 lakh to the survivor as compensation. According to the prosecution, the girl, who was 15 years old then, was kidnapped by the convict from Sunagaria Sahi in

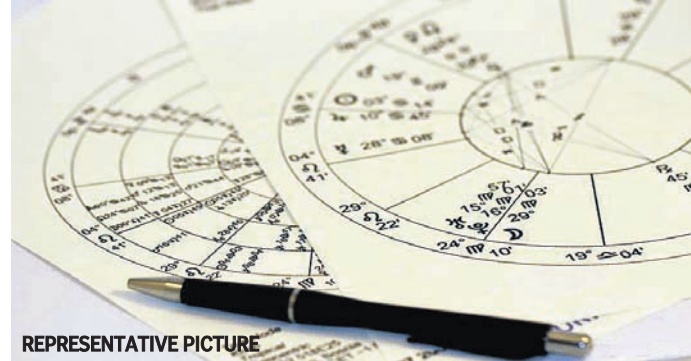


Baripada town police station area March 5, 2015 and raped multiple times. The survivor’s mother lodged an FIR with the police. A case under POCSO Act was registered, the accused was arrested and the girl underwent a medical examination.

Rourkela woman conned off valuables by ‘astrologer’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, July 17: A lady was robbed off the gold ornaments she was wearing here Monday by a couple of persons, one of whom posed as an ‘astrologer’. In fact the audacity of the act by the two men completely left the victim mesmerised and shocked and it was she who parted with her jewellery as the man promised to ‘purify them’. The victim, whose identity has been kept secret for sake of investigation, has filed a complaint at the Chhend police station here.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

her. The man convinced her that she had fault in her ‘stars’. “The man told me that I will lose valuables and my husband will be in trouble. I got bewildered and scared,” the victim said. While this was going on, another man arrived at the spot. He lavished huge praise on the first person only to confuse the victim. The second man told the alleged ‘astrologer’ that he is happy and safe now following the latter’s instructions. “All this completely baffled me and I started believing the man who had first approached me,” the

lady informed. To top it all, the ‘astrologer’ asked the victim to get some camphor so that he could ‘purify’ the valuables. When the woman got it, he asked her to remove all the jewellery that she was wearing. “I was so mesmerised that I obeyed the man blindly. The man then asked me to walk backwards 81 steps and then again return to the spot. By the time, I came back, the man and his accomplice had vanished,” the woman stated. By that time, the woman realised that she had been duped and then she lodged a police complaint.

PANCHAYAT SAMITI, BARIPADA
At-Palbani, PO-Baripada, Dist-Mayurbhanj, Pin-757001
Ph:06792-252238, Email:ori-baripada@nic.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE
No.I-242:BDO, Baripada invites sealed tender on behalf of Govt. of Odisha for the following work in conformity with the DTCN.
BID Identification No.03/2023-24/BDO, BARIPADA
Name of the work : “Repair and Renovation of Pilgrim Infrastructure Development of Krushna Chandrapur Church of Roman Catholic Christian Community of Badjode GP under Baripada Block”
Date of Receipt of Tender: 18.07.2023 10.30 AM to 26.07.2023 up to 5 PM via Drop Box at Block Office
Date of Opening of Tender: 27.07.2023 11 AM in the Conference Hall of BDO, Baripada
Terms and Conditions : Details of the Bid documents can be downloaded from the official website of the district (www.mayurbhanj.nic.in) from 18.07.2023 to 26.07.2023. All the terms and conditions can be seen from the above website.
Sd./-Block Development Officer, Baripada
OIPR-19109/11/0003/2324

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL PANCHAYAT SAMITI COLLEE, BELPARA, DIST.: BALANGIR
Phone: 06658264888, E-mail: psc_belpara@yahoo.co.on
No. 525 Date: 17.07.2023

CORRIGENDUM
The last date of submission of Tender invited vide Order No. 419 Dt.29.06.2023 for supply of science laboratory equipment, Electronic items and office items is extended upto 27.07.2023 due to unavoidable circumstances. The distributors/Dealers/Registered firm/supplier are requested to submit the sealed quotation on or before 27.07.2023 by Registered Post/Speed Post. Contact Mob. No. 9937731266 in office hour for detailed list of items.
Sd./- Principal
P.S. College, Belpara

No.B-489

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SAMBALPUR (R&B) DIVISION NO.-I, SAMBALPUR
e-procurement notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No. SE / R&B / SBP / 13 / 2023-24
E-mail – exeengsbp@rediffmail.com

Order No.4332/ Dated 10.07.2023

1. The Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.-I, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Double Cover System in ONLINE MODE for construction of Civil/ Electrical/ P.H. Work as detailed in the DTCN from the eligible Class of Contractors.

2. No. of works :- 05 (Five)

3. Tender Cost :- Rs.10,000/- & Rs.6,000/- & Rs.4,000/- (On Line)

4. Class of Contractor :- "B" Class Contractor, "C" & "B" Class Contractor & "D" & "C" Class Contractor

5. Date and time available in Website & receipt of Bids :- 11.00 Hrs. 19.07.2023 to 11.00 Hrs. of 29.07.2023

6. Date of Opening of Tender :- 29.07.2023 at 12.00 Hrs.

7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website.

8. Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in only.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division - I
OIPR-34112/11/0008/2324

“What you are not able to do today, you will achieve tomorrow. Persevere and you shall conquer.”

THE MOTHER

Bothersome Backyard

The deafening silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the half-hearted, partisan approach of his government towards the ethnic violence in Manipur; over the past two months, are responsible for the apparently uncalled for resolution of the European Union Parliament urging the Centre to “take all necessary measures to promptly halt the ongoing ethnic and religious violence.” It did not even stop at that and sent out a strong message to the Indian government to protect all religious minorities, such as Christians in Manipur. This is no mere expression of concern, but a warning that if the humanitarian crisis is not stopped immediately, it would impact the economic ties between India and EU. It is also true that the EU Parliament does not have any teeth and cannot do much beyond economic strangulation. The European lawmakers asserted that human rights should be an important part of ongoing negotiations between India and the EU on the free trade agreement.

Meanwhile, the reaction of Ministry for External Affairs (MEA) to the EU resolution, terming it as unnecessary interference in India’s internal affairs and a reflection of “colonial mindset”, smacks of arrogance and foolhardiness. When the BJP-led government has been making tall claims for digitising India, it should have realized that in today’s social media world it takes only a few minutes for the whole world to know the exact extent of ethnic violence in Manipur and the seemingly deliberate inaction of the double engine BJP government – since it is ruling both in that state and the Centre.

No wonder the resolution described with hard statistics the situation in Manipur where the ethnic violence has left over 120 dead, 50,000 people displaced and 1,700 houses and over 250 churches and several temples destroyed. The statistics are no figment of imagination, but facts that cannot be hidden by the government or denied with the brazenness that characterises the current dispensation.

The MEA may dismiss with utter contempt the EU advice to Indian political leaders to refrain from making inflammatory statements and try to re-establish trust. But, the diagnosis of the EU Parliament that the violence had been instigated by “politically motivated, divisive policies promoting Hindu majoritarianism” and increased activity by militant groups is on target.

The BJP’s brand of pseudo-nationalism and communal polarisation has been mainly restricted to Moslem-bashing since that community is the largest among the minority groups in the country. The lack of mutual trust and even hatred born out of the partition have helped the BJP sway the minds of majority Hindoo community, mostly in the Hindi speaking belt, for successfully re-capturing power.

But, the situation in Manipur is different and the communal polarisation there is between majority Hindoos, the Meiteis, comprising 53 per cent of the state’s population and predominantly Christian Kukis, accounting for about 30 per cent of the state’s 28.5 lakh population. The Chief Minister of the BJP government in Manipur, N Biren Singh, belongs to the Meitei community and he has been accused of partisan handling of the conflict. The root cause of the ethnic strife is the demand by the majority community for a tribal status that would enable it to get a greater share of the state’s land in the hills given to the Kukis through constitutional arrangement. The BJP-led government at the Centre is supporting the Meiteis’ demand, seemingly for vote-bank politics.

This is the reason why the EU Parliament resolution has observed that partisan involvement by security forces in the killings have increased distrust towards the authorities.

In a way, the intervention of the European lawmakers is not wholly welcome but because the ruling group seems not to care two hoots about criticism of its polarisation politics by political opponents and civil society groups, it may seem acceptable. It is not a question of interference from outside, since human rights issues transcend geographical boundaries. The government would do well to listen to voices of criticism, both internal and external, and stop playing with fire and pitting one community against another for capturing power. Right-wing forces across the globe have been raising their ugly heads to trample down minorities and immigrants. Post-independent India had a favourable tradition of managing unity in diversity. This should not be allowed to be destroyed as the world today, since our Prime Minister would understand it best, has truly shrunk and looking into each other’s backyard is no more considered ‘interference in internal matters’.

WISDOM CORNER

- “Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go.”

HERMANN HESSE
- “Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

ROBERT FROST
- “People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy.”

ANTON CHEKHOV

WORDSWORTH

Magnetar

This word, not often seen outside the specialist field of cosmology till the late 1990s, has since then become a hot topic. Reports have appeared of a colossal burst of gamma rays which hit the Earth’s upper atmosphere on 27 August 1998. The pulse lasted about five minutes, ionised the atmosphere on the night side to levels normally seen in daytime, disrupted some radio traffic, sent detectors on several spacecraft off scale and caused one to shut down completely. What is astonishing about this phenomenon is that it was traced to a star some 20,000 light years away, of a strange and rare kind known as a magnetar. Astronomers think they are young neutron stars, formed in supernova explosions, which are rotating at speeds that approach a thousand times a second. This rotation generates immense magnetic fields. The heat generated by the movement of the field through the iron crust of the neutron star quickly becomes so great that it cracks apart in what has been dubbed a starquake, the stellar equivalent of an earthquake. This causes the release of vast amounts of gamma rays. Though our atmosphere protects us from the radiation, such huge bursts can, as we’ve seen, knock out satellites. The name is a blend of magnetic and star; it was coined by Robert Duncan and Christopher Thompson in a paper in the Astrophysical Journal in 1992; these exotic stars are also called soft gamma repeaters, a name which was given to them after a huge radiation burst was observed in 1979 and long before their true nature was realised. Here are two examples of the word’s use in publications in the late 1990s. “In ordinary neutron stars the crust is stable, but in magnetars, the crust is stressed by unbearable forces as the colossal magnetic field drifts through it,” said Duncan (published in Space Science News, May 1998). A young magnetar would be very hot, because of frictional heat generated by mobile material, redistributed by the powerful magnetic field (published in New Scientist, August 1998).

FOCUS BANKING

INDIA’S NPA SAGA

This is the money of the people of India, and if banks can’t monitor the genuineness of projects and end-use of funds, then the lender and the borrower must both be held to account

THIS IS A SECTOR WITH A UNIQUE EFFICIENCY IN CHASING THE SMALL BORROWERS AND LETTING FREE THE BIG ONES

Jagdish Rattananai

It is not uncommon to hear in banking circles that non-performing assets, or NPAs, are a part of the business of banking. Some loans will go bad, and that is just inherent in the very nature of the business of giving out loans. This is a fair view, except that theory does not always translate to practice in the manner intended, at least not in the Indian banking sector. This is a sector with a unique efficiency in chasing the small borrowers and letting free the big ones, a true coming to life of that famous quote: “If you owe the bank \$100, that’s your problem. If you owe the bank \$100 million, that’s the bank’s problem.”

Has this ground reality changed in recent times? It would appear so, in the light of a set of news reports in the last few weeks that tell us that the NPAs in the Indian banking sector have fallen dramatically, down to a 10-year low, quoting the RBI’s Financial Stability Report that was released June 28, 2023. The report says gross NPAs were 3.9% in FY23, down from a high of 11.5% in 2018. The period also saw gross advances grow, from Rs 83.6 lakh crore in 2018 to Rs135 lakh crore in 2023, so that falling percentages of gross NPAs on an increased base of advances may not tell the full story. Yet, the drop in the gross NPA percentage is a turnaround of sorts. A different picture might emerge if the issue is studied from the numbers of new NPAs that are even now being created in the system. If the old NPA number fell because of huge haircuts and write-offs, and new NPAs continue to be added in the system, then that poses a different set of questions on the what, how and why of the management of NPAs and the protection of what essentially are public funds. All the funds that the banks have belong after all to the people of India, ordinary citizens

who provide the capital from their savings to be lent out to businesses, which must invest them to power economic growth.

So, what has caused the fall in gross NPAs percentage? Robust recoveries would be good. Write-offs would be bad. Strict follow-ups and penal or criminal action where warranted would signal a resolve to come to grips with the problem of rising NPAs, which can of course be genuine business failures but are often tangled with loose governance and the unique Indian idea of “wilful defaulters” – those who can pay back but refuse to do so and continue to roam free.

Consider that gross NPAs were 5.8% in 2021-22, which translated to a total NPA figure of Rs 7.44 lakh crore. This number was down from Rs 8.35 lakh crore at the beginning of the year. The single largest contributor to the lowering of the number was write-offs, which were reported at Rs 1.79 lakh crores. More significantly, Rs 2.83 lakh crore new NPAs were added in 2021-22, the latest for which data is available.

In fact, in last five years (2018-2022), the period when gross NPAs have fallen from 9.2% to 5.8%, the total write-offs have been of the order of Rs 10.25 lakh crore. In the same period, new NPAs of just under Rs 20 lakh crore have been added. Year on year in the given period, new NPAs added were higher than the numbers written off or recovered from the gross NPAs. While the older holes are sought to be patched, newer and probably bigger ones are emerging in the ship. This cannot be a stable let alone a robust vessel to sail the seas.

The problem of NPAs may not be getting better from a systemic view either. We are nowhere closer to better assessment, monitoring, supervision, controls and governance systems that the banking sector must work with if it is to be called sound. The looseness the numbers suggests and the lack of alarm at the state of affairs signal that NPAs have been normalised and that the system appears to have imbibed the message that this is the way it works in India. This encourages a loose system to get looser, not tighter and more efficient. Signals from the authorities can make a big difference. The willingness to act against at least the wilful de-

faulters, and to name and shame them, just isn’t there. Instead, the regulator has allowed banks to “undertake compromise settlements or technical write-offs in respect of accounts categorised as wilful defaulters or fraud without prejudice to the criminal proceeding underway against such debtors.” The very idea of a “settlement” where the defaulter is categorised as a fraudster or a wilful defaulter sends a signal that we are open to a deal, and you can be back for more loans after a short cooling period.

All of this may be regular banking parlance but none of this will inspire confidence in the people of India. Added to the political-business nexus that plays a powerful influence on public policy, the image it creates if of Indian’s financial institutions rotting and going to seed. This weakens the fabric of the nation, co-opts only those who can play the game by bending the rules and is a breaker on growth that is good, sustainable and open to all players.

In a nation where small subsidies to deserving citizens are being called to question, where the political debate is deliberately created around stopping these inputs and deriding them as the “revdi” culture, as if the people of India are beggars looking for small freebies, the management of NPAs comes across as a sorry exercise. This is the money of the people of India, and if banks can’t monitor the genuineness of projects and end-use of funds, then the lender and the borrower must both be held to account. Anything short of this is tantamount to robbing the poor to pay the rich – which is how the grossness of gross NPAs comes across as.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM DEVELOPMENT

Financing childhood growth

In 2020, chronic undernutrition stunted the growth of nearly a quarter of the world’s children under five years old. Being too short for one’s age, as a result of chronic undernutrition, can cause irreversible physical and cognitive damage and increases the risk of dying from common infections.

Improving the lives of these children is not a question of food supply. Current cereal grain production, about 2.8 billion tonne, provides enough calories to feed 11-14 billion people – more than meeting humanity’s current needs. But less than half of the world’s grain is eaten by humans, with the remainder fed to animals or burned as fuel. Almost every gallon of gasoline in the US, for example, contains 10% corn ethanol.

Too poor to affect grain prices in global markets, the chronically hungry are economically invisible. To avert the devastating and long-lasting effects of poor nutrition and health, we propose an innovative financing mechanism that will attract impact investors and ensure adequate food for these malnourished children.

In 2019, two World Bank economists, Emanuela Galasso and the late Adam Wagstaff, found that childhood stunting reduces

adult economic productivity, estimating a per capita income loss of between 5-7% in developing countries. And that figure does not account for the millions of stunted children who die young. Galasso and Wagstaff also conducted a cost-benefit analysis of applying ten tested nutrition interventions over ten years in 34 countries that together account for 90% of the world’s stunted children. According to their estimates, the benefits would outweigh the costs by a ratio of at least five to one, and the annual rate of return would be 12%.

Such high payoffs could induce investors to buy development impact bonds focused on ending childhood stunting in low-income countries. The idea behind this type of financial instrument, in which investors provide financing for development programmes and receive returns only if agreed-upon outcomes are achieved, is “to generate a positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.”

Returns on investments in nutrition-intervention bonds would be tied to programmes’ projected economic benefits. After all, effective nutrition interventions should boost productivity and

increase the tax base in the participating country. For example, governments could contract with bond issuers to establish and operate anti-stunting programmes and then gradually increase payments to these issuers for their nutrition interventions as the expected economic benefits materialise.

Of the many possible models for “childhood growth” bonds, the majority of these bonds would be jointly issued by a parent entity in the developed world and its subsidiary in the local country. Together, they would design the programme in consultation with the participating government and recognised experts in child nutrition, field interventions, and data evaluation.

After receiving the invested funds, the parent entity would channel them tax-free to the subsidiary to implement the nutrition interventions alongside the government. That could mean buying food from local producers or markets and delivering it to poor pregnant women and undernourished children. Supplying food, at least in part, through monitored childcare programmes outside the home could reduce misappropriation.

Under the contract with the parent and the subsidiary, government payments would be in

a hard currency. A “sinking fund” would cover interest payments until the government begins to see results. The government would also have the right to assume control of the programme at any time in exchange for repaying the bonds.

The simplest model would offer fixed principal and interest payments, backed by fixed contractual payments. But investors with a greater appetite for risk may prefer governments to reward better-than-expected improvements in child nutrition and related tax revenues with larger contractual payments, triggering larger payments to the bondholders. Of course, poorer-than-expected improvements would result in smaller payments.

Nutrition-intervention bonds are an innovative financing vehicle that promises to put food on the table, prevent childhood stunting, and yield high returns for investors. If well-structured, they can be powerful catalysts for economic growth and improving the welfare of the world’s most vulnerable people.

Joel E. Cohen is Professor of Populations at Columbia University. John E. Rogers is Senior Counsel at Clark Hill PLC.

Letters
TO THE EDITOR

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

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Tennis sensation

Sir, Many congratulations to the young tennis sensation Carlos Alcaraz for winning his maiden Wimbledon title, prevailing over the veteran Novak Djokovic in a grueling five sets. It was the men’s Wimbledon finals that tennis lovers world over were eagerly awaiting. It was the final deemed the prodigy vs. the master, who was chasing history and had been winning Grand Slams for fun, securing two Majors already this year. But in the end, the prodigy dethroned the master. It was to the credit of Alcaraz, who kept his nerves to overcome his first set jolt, and won some big points in key moments in the final set that made the difference. There is a reason why Alcaraz is always high on the odds-makers’ list to win titles. He has the skill, talent, and tools to do so, which were evident when he adapted so well to the grass surface and made proper adjustments to win his first Wimbledon title. Carlos Alcaraz’s journey thus far has been nothing short of phenomenal. The Spanish prodigy has demonstrated time and again that he is more than capable of taking on the world’s best players and emerging victorious. The future of world tennis seems to have finally arrived in a highly talented youngster, who combines flash, grit, guts and grace.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Opposition unity

Sir, This refers to the news report “Larger Oppn meet today”(OrissaPOST, July 17). I think, the Opposition unity will no doubt gain the required momentum after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) decided to join the crucial meeting to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In the larger interest, the Congress has now deviated from its earlier stand of not opposing the Centre’s impugned Ordinance for it fully realised the impending danger due to the BJP’s continued threat to democracy. The Congress being the oldest party in the country can be expected to be more liberal to other Opposition parties for the sake of achieving a common goal.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA



AIMPLB seeks Akhilesh's support against UCC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 17: A delegation of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) called on Samajwadi Party (SP) national president Akhilesh Yadav and sought his co-operation to oppose the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill when it is tabled in Parliament.

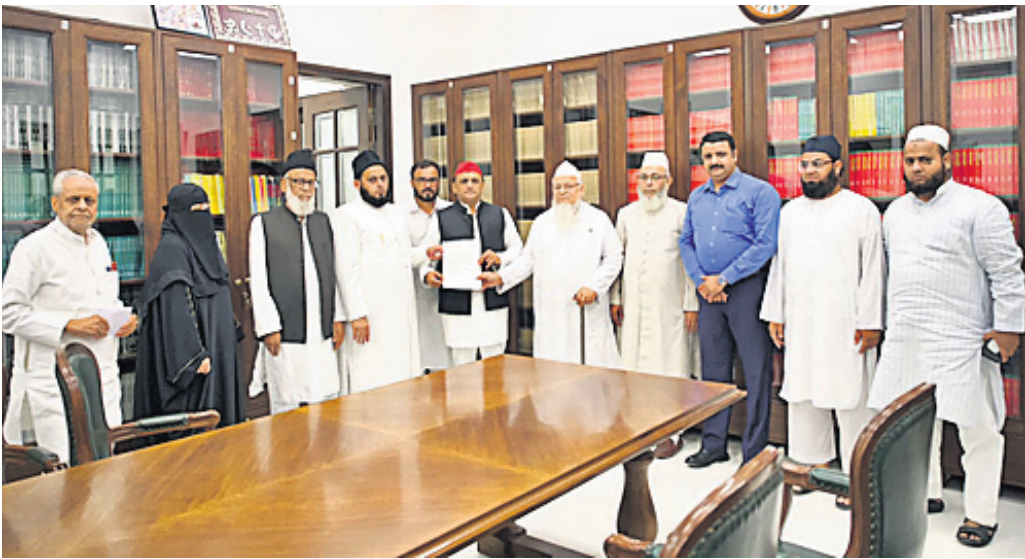
Akhilesh, according to party sources, informed the delegation Sunday evening that the SP was in favour of religious freedom to all as enshrined in the Constitution and was opposed to forcing any law which is opposed by the people it is meant for.

Accepting the memorandum, the SP chief assured the delegation of his support on the issue on all forums.

He said for the BJP government at the Centre and in the state, religion and religious affairs are only a medium of politics.

"BJP uses religious beliefs and public trust to its convenience. SP, since its inception, has been and will continue to be committed to uphold democratic values and secularism," Akhilesh said.

The memorandum primarily highlighted five important points including the AIMPLB's decision to effectively oppose any attempts to do away with the fundamental rights that provide freedom of religion and culture.



The memorandum strongly condemned the intentions with which the BJP government at the Centre keeps raising the issue of UCC from time to time which are aimed at curbing the fundamental rights of the minorities and the tribals.

"Implementing UCC without the consent of any section of the society is a direct attempt to do away with the very identity of the particular community," the memorandum said.

It also condemned attempts

of certain sections to forcibly occupy and stake claim over religious places of another community and said such attempts will be opposed collectively. The memorandum further demanded that the government must ensure that all waqf land is freed from encroachment and returned to the community it belongs to.

BJP uses religious beliefs and public trust to its convenience. SP, since its inception, has been and will continue to be committed to uphold democratic values and secularism

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

No guard of honour for VIPs for 2 months: Sukhu tells police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, July 17: Dignitaries in Himachal Pradesh will not be greeted with a guard of honour for the next two months. The state police has been told to focus instead on relief work after the devastating rains.

The state government has suspended the guard of honour till September 15, with Independence Day as the only exception, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said in a statement issued here Monday.

Guard of honour is given by the police to dignitaries, including the governor, the chief minister and Union ministers during their field visits in the state.



State government has suspended the guard of honour till Sept 15, with Independence Day as only exception

Police personnel should refrain from engaging in tasks such as guard of honour and focus their efforts solely to aid affected people, Sukhu said in the statement.

Emphasising the increased deployment of the police force in the ongoing rescue efforts, Sukhu said the decision aims to prioritise and streamline the state's resources to effectively address the aftermath of the floods.

The chief minister said the state government remained steadfast in its resolve to provide essential support to affected people.

Heavy rains, landslides and flash floods have damaged roads and other infrastructure as the state received 30 per cent of the total seasonal rainfall of monsoon in three days.

So far, 118 persons, including 79 in rain related incidents and 39 in road accidents, have died in the state since the onset of monsoon June 24, as per the state emergency response centre. The state has suffered a loss to the tune of Rs 4,415 crore.

HP CM calls for life term to drug peddlers

SUKHU ADVOCATES FOR MORE POWERS TO THE STATE UNDER THE NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES ACT

AGENCIES

Shimla, July 17: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Monday called for life imprisonment to drug peddlers and several other changes in the NDPS Act.

Advocating for more powers to the state under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he said punishment for drug offences should be increased from five years to life imprisonment.

Addressing virtually the regional conference on 'Drug smug-

gling and National Security' chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi Monday, the CM said such offences should be made non-bailable regardless of the quantity involved, a statement issued here said.

Smuggling of psychotropic substances/synthetic drugs especially 'chitta' (adulterated heroin) in 'intermediate' quantity has become a bane for the state police as in 95 per cent of cases the drug is smuggled in 'consumable or intermediate quantities,' an offence which is bailable under the NDPS Act.

Sukhu also stressed on the importance of addressing drug overdose cases leading to deaths and called for necessary changes in the Act to address the matter.

The CM also spoke of the need to delegate powers of confiscation to the states as well as inserting into the Act a provision of fine of Rs 5 lakh and confiscation of properties.

SHORTAGE OF FUNDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 17: The paucity of funds has forced the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation Trust to defer the construction of a hospital in Ayodhya's Dhannipur, the location where the Waqf Board was granted land after the Supreme Court's historic Ram Mandir verdict in 2019.

The Trust is handling a mega project under which a mosque, a charity hospital, and a community kitchen are supposed to be built. According to its members, the trust had originally planned to build the hospital first, and a mosque later, but was held back by the lack of money it is required to pay in fees and development charges.

Athar Hussain, the secretary and spokesperson of the trust, said the project will now be taken up in several small phases.

"We have put the project on

Seema, Sachin questioned by UP Anti-Terrorist Squad

SEEMA HAS BEEN FACING THREATS FROM PAKISTAN AND FROM RIGHT WING ACTIVISTS IN INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, July 17: The Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) of Uttar Pradesh Police Monday questioned Pakistani citizen Seema Haider, who entered India illegally in May and is now living with her Indian partner Sachin Meena in Greater Noida, officials said.

The interrogation was still underway in the evening with Sachin and his father Netrapal Singh also being questioned, they said.

This comes a day after UP ATS arrested a suspected agent of Pakistan's intelligence agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Lucknow on charges of supplying 'vital information about defence establishments' to his handlers in the neighbouring country.

Seema's questioning also comes at a time when a little-known right-wing fringe group in Greater Noida has threatened a protest if Haider, who illegally entered India with her four children, is not evicted from the country "within 72 hours".



A senior police officer confirmed to PTI that Seema, Sachin and Netrapal Singh were being interrogated by the ATS on Monday and that the local police were not involved in it.

"They may or may not be arrested after the questioning, depending on the outcome of the interrogation in the sensitive matter that pertains to national security," a UP ATS official told PTI.

Local police are separately investigating the case and are yet to file a chargesheet, the officer said.

Meanwhile, a little-known fringe group issued a threat that

if Seema Haider and her four children are not evicted from the country 'within 72 hours', they will start a protest.

In a purported video posted on social media that surfaced Monday, a man who identified himself as the national president of the group claimed that "Seema is a spy" and "part of some conspiracy" against the country.

When asked about security arrangements for Haider and Meena, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Saad Miya Khan told PTI that no additional security has been provided to the couple.

UP Waqf Board's Ayodhya hospital project on hold



hold for now due to paucity of funds. Despite the difficulty, we will not shelve the project, but will change the strategy. We will divide the project into several small projects," Hussain told PTI. "We will submit a new map of the mosque to the Ayodhya Development Authority. The mosque will take less money to build. It will be very easy to arrange it," he said.

According to Hussain, the mosque, to be built over 15,000 square feet, will cost Rs 8-10 crore and will be powered with solar panels. Hussain said the mosque was supposed to come after the hospital, but the trust could not shore up Rs 300 crore needed to build it. "Our effort was to build the hospital before the mosque, but it is an ambitious project involving Rs 300 crore. The land where the mosque is proposed to be built already has many mosques, so we had thought of building a char-

ity hospital and community kitchen first," he said.

Zufar Farooqui, the chief trustee of the foundation and also the chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board, said the trust members will start seeking donations from the public next month onwards across the country.

He said a meeting of the board will be held at the end of July to prepare a strategy to that end. November 9, 2019, the Supreme

Court in its verdict in Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case had ordered to give the disputed site for the construction of the temple and granted five acres of land in Ayodhya to the Muslims for the construction of a mosque. The district administration had given Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board land in Dhannipur village in Sohawal tehsil, some 25 kilometers from the Ram Temple site, in compliance of the verdict.

Dumping debris in mountains multiplies mudslides: Experts

HAPHAZARD MUCK AND DEBRIS DUMPING ALONG STREAMS AND RIVERS OFTEN MULTIPLIES HAZARDOUS LANDSLIDE CHAIN REACTIONS DOWNSTREAM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, July 17: The roaring rapids of rivers relating to climate related risks in Himachal Pradesh have been evidently triggered by extremely wet southwest monsoon rainfall this season. Even the cold desert Lahaul-Spiti, the rain-shadow zone, had to face a deluge, say meteorologists and climate scientists.

They say in recent years flash floods have intensified as the mountains are getting older and they contribute to more silt and sand. The haphazard muck and debris dumping along streams and rivers that disturbs the natural course of rivers and streams often multiplies hazardous landslide chain reactions downstream. Also debris from blasting and construction of hydropower projects and national highway projects is dumped on slopes, damaging the vegetation too.

They say incessant downpours in the mountainous states are now a reality due to global warming and the local communities may now have to unlearn their former ways of living and the authorities must stop unwanted construction. This time frightening visuals of bridges, residential and commercial buildings, vehicles and highways collapsing like a pack of cards and being swept

DEADLY DELUGE

■ In less than a month since the onset of monsoon June 24, 53 landslides and 33 flash floods have occurred in Himachal that claimed 108 lives with 12 people missing

■ As per the Revenue Department, the total monetary loss is Rs 3,738.28 crore and the property loss comprises 663 houses and 104 shops

■ This time the deluge reminded the locals of the 1995 floods in Kullu-Manali that wreaked havoc on an unprecedented scale



away in mudslides indicate how bad is the debris management. Floodwaters are receding, but they are leaving a coating of mud with boulders that has to be cleaned up from fields, villages and towns.

Blaming global warming for the increasing intensity of the flash floods and the unusually high soil erosion in the hill states, disaster risk reduction and management expert Rajnish Ranjan told IANS that during the summer the higher terrains witness contractions and extractions, while the mountains observe freeze-and-thaw action during winter.

Freeze-thaw weathering is a process of erosion that happens in cold areas where ice forms.

However, due to increased global warming, the process of weathering and exfoliation has increased manifold.

"Thus, whenever there are intermittent torrential rains in mountain regions nowadays, we see more sand and silt. Secondly, mountains are also getting older and that also contributes to more silt and sand," Ranjan explained.

Global science related to climate change says the scale of the rise in extreme weather events in India has been charting new highs with every passing year. 2023 began on a hotter note, with temperatures in February breaking the 123-year-old record. The humid heatwaves in April and June over East and Central India

were made 30 times more likely due to climate change. Then the formation of cyclone Biparjoy lasted for 13 days in the Arabian Sea and became the longest-duration cyclone since 1977. With extremely heavy rainfall wreaking havoc across northwest India, science blames the increasing levels of global warming.

Anjal Prakash, lead author of two UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports released between 2019 and 2022, told IANS that the relentless downpour has transformed picturesque landscapes into a battleground of resilience, as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi-NCR and parts of Uttarakhand currently bear witness to the havoc. "As the rain clouds persist, it is a stark reminder of the urgency to address climate change and its far-reaching consequences."

According to Prakash, communities, especially people on the margins of society, are impacted by these severe precipitation events, which cause disastrous floods, landslides, and extensive devastation as the globe sees. "It serves as a sharp reminder that immediate action is required to curb climate change's causes, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and prepare for the new normal of increasingly frequent and extreme downpour events."

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KORAPUT (R&B) DIVISION, KORAPUT
Bid Identification No. S.E (R&B) KPT-03/2023-24
1. Name of the work : Building works
2. Total No. of works : 11 Nos.
3. Estimated cost : Rs 5.60 to 12.61 lakhs
4. Period of completion : 1 (One) to 04 (Four) months
5. Date & Time of availability of bid document : From 25.07.2023 at 11.00 hours to 08.08.2023 upto 17.00 hours in the portal
6. Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 08.08.2023 upto 17.00 hours
7. Date of opening of Tender : 09.08.2023 at 12.00 hours
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Koraput (R&B) Division
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Koraput (R&B) Division
OIPR-34096/11/0003/2324

OFFICE OF THE DHENKANAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DHENKANAL
No.C-831: E-Procurement Notice
Tender Call Notice No.2619/DKLMPLTY/Date 14.07.2023
1. Name of the Work : Individual Civil Construction work Published the website
2. No. of works put to tender : 23 Nos. individual works
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 3.04 lakh upto 12.50 lakhs
4. Period of completion : Two Months
5. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : from 11.00 hours of Dt. 17.07.2023 to 17.30 of Dt.27.07.2023
6. Last date/Time for receipt of bids : 17.30 hours of Dt.27.07.2023
7. Date and time of opening of bid : 11.00 hours of Dt.31.07.2023
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Officer, Dhenkanal Municipality, Dhenkanal
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tenderorissa.gov.in>
Sd./- Executive Officer Dhenkanal Municipality
OIPR-13146/11/0017/2324



Flood affected villagers use a boat to reach a safer place at Mayong village in Morigaon district of Assam



Flood affected people receive cooked food at a makeshift camp in the Mayur Vihar area flooded by the Yamuna River in New Delhi



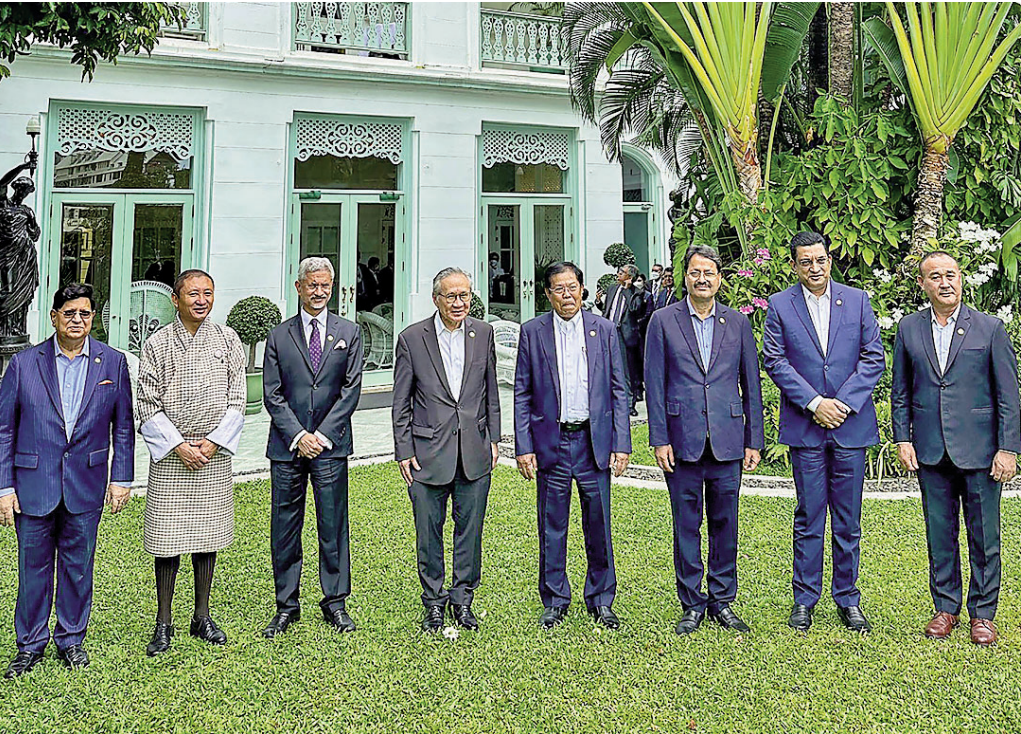
Cultural artists perform during the procession of goddess Mahakali marking the Bonalu festival in Hyderabad



Indian antique 'Sambandar' at its repatriation by the US to India during repatriation ceremony at the Indian consulate in New York



Police detain Rashtriya Loktantrik Party members who were protesting over a gangrape case in Jodhpur, Rajasthan



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with other delegates at the BIMSTEC Retreat in Bangkok, Thailand



China team compete in the team acrobatic final of artistic swimming at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan

of the day quote

Lok Sabha Elections are still 8-9 months away. Let's see
H D KUMARASWAMY | JANATA DAL (SECULAR) LEADER

We strongly condemn ED raids on TN Education minister now. They are trying to break parties and scare everyone with ED
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

In today's meeting with Sharad Pawar, we again asked him to ensure that the NCP stays united
PRAFUL PATEL | RAJYA SABHA MP

SHORT TAKES

1 dead, 7 hurt in clash between forest guards

Tezpur/Nagaon/Goalpara (Assam): One person was killed and at least seven others were injured Monday in a clash between alleged encroachers and forest guards at the Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonitpur district of Assam, officials said. Nagaon Wildlife Divisional Forest Officer Jayanta Deka claimed that alleged encroachers, who were earlier evicted from the forest, have been "trying to occupy land again" inside the sanctuary in the past few days. A police officer said that at least four people from the crowd sustained bullet injuries in the clash.

Infiltration bid foiled, two terrorists killed

Jammu: Two terrorists were killed after an infiltration bid was foiled by the Army and police in a joint operation at the Line of Control in the Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Officials said that alert troops of the Army foiled the major infiltration bid this morning after which searches were mounted by Army and police in Bahadur sector of the LoC.

HP: One killed, three injured in cloudburst

Shimla: A cloudburst occurred in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district early Monday morning, leaving a man dead and three others injured, officials said. The incident was reported around 3:55 am near Kayas village in Kullu, washing away vehicles and blocking a road, according to the state emergency response centre. The deceased was identified as Badal Sharma, a resident of village Chansari, they said, adding that two of the injured are in a serious condition.

Balaji shifted from hosp to Central Prison

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a cash-for-jobs case, was Monday shifted to the Puzhal Central Prison here from a private hospital, official sources said. The minister has been accorded 'A' class facilities in prison. The stipulated amenities would be made available to him in compliance with the norms. For instance, a medical check-up has been completed in accordance with mandated procedures, jail sources said.

Kota coaching student ends life

Jaipur: Another Kota coaching student, Pushpendra Singh, committed suicide by hanging himself Sunday. Pushpendra Singh had come to Kota seven days back for NEET coaching. He was living in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar in the hostel with his uncle's son.



It is the government's duty to provide necessary assistance and support to those affected by the flood disaster
GOPAL RAI | DELHI DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

BILKIS BANO CASE: SC'S FINAL HEARING AUGUST 7

The Supreme Court Monday fixed August 7 for the start of the final hearing on a batch of pleas challenging the remission granted last year to all the 11 convicts in the case of Bilkis Bano gang rape and the murder of her family members during the 2002 Gujarat riots



Rise above 'political bickering': Top court to Delhi L-G, Kejriwal

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 17: The Supreme Court Monday asked the Lieutenant Governor and Delhi Chief Minister to "sit together" and "rise above political bickering" to mutually decide on the name of the Chairman of Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).

"Why don't two constitutional functionaries (Delhi L-G and CM) sit down and make it work? They have to rise above political bickering. We do not want to step into this, we want both sides to arrive at a solution," said a bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Manoj Misra.

"We will approach the Delhi L-G tomorrow," said senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who represented the Delhi government, in response to the suggestion put forth by the court. "It will only be miraculous that both of them (Delhi L-G and CM) agree on a name," he added further. The reservations expressed by Dr Singhvi were opposed heavily by senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Delhi L-G. "It is unfortunate that the Delhi government lawyer (Dr. Singhvi) starts by saying that he has no hope. The first reaction should be yes, we'll do it," he said.



The appointment of Justice Umesh Kumar as the DERC chairperson has become yet another flashpoint in the turf war between the city's AAP government and the Centre

The court has posted the matter for further hearing July 20.

Earlier July 4, the Supreme Court had asked the Delhi Lieutenant Governor to not administer oath of office to the newly appointed DERC Chairman Justice (retired) Umesh Kumar. It had directed that the administering of oath to the former judge of Allahabad High Court will stand deferred till July 11. The top court was hearing the petition moved by the AAP-led Delhi government's plea claiming that appointment of the DERC Chairman was 'illegal and unconstitutional'.

On June 22, L-G V.K. Saxena had appointed Justice (Retd.) Umesh Kumar of the Allahabad High Court as the Chairman ignoring Delhi's government's recommendation to appoint retired MP High Court Judge, Justice Rajeev Kumar Shrivastava.



FLOOD MAYHEM: The flooded area of Rajghat in New Delhi. The water level of the Yamuna in Delhi rose slightly to 205.58 metres Monday morning from 205.52 metres the night before

PTI PHOTO

Governor questions legality of Assembly session, sits on Bills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 17: Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit Monday told Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann that calling the special assembly session last month was a likely "breach of law and procedure" and indicated that he may not sign off soon on the Bills passed during that sitting of the House.

In a letter set to intensify the tussle between the state's Aam Aadmi Party government and the Raj Bhavan, Purohit questioned the legality of the Bills and said he was "actively considering" seeking the Attorney General's advice on them – or referring them to the President.

Purohit's response came two days after CM Mann urged the governor to sign the Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Bill,

PUNJAB CM, RAJ BHAVAN TUSSLE

2023, aimed at ensuring free-to-air telecast of Gurbani from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. This was one of the four Bills passed during the June 20-21 session.

In his reply to Mann's letter, Purohit wrote he will take action on the Bills after the legality of the session held last month was first examined. As governor, he was enjoined by the Constitution of India to ensure Bills are passed "in accordance with law," he said.

Bills passed in the House need the governor's assent before they become law.

"In order to discharge my duties conscientiously, I have proceeded to receive legal advice which gives me to believe that

your calling of Vidhan Sabha session on 19-06-2023 and 20-06-2023 when these four Bills were passed was in breach of law and procedure, thereby casting doubt on the legitimacy and legality of those Bills," the governor wrote.

"In the background of the legal advice received," he added, "I am actively considering whether to obtain the legal opinion from the Attorney General of India, or as per the Constitution, to reserve these Bills for the consideration and consent of the President of India".

The two-day special session of the Punjab Assembly was technically an "extension" of the Budget session, which had not been prorogued. Therefore, it did not require the approval of the governor, it was argued.

ED raids TN minister, MP son in money laundering case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 17: The Enforcement Directorate Monday conducted searches at the premises of DMK leader and Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister K Ponnudurai and his MP son Gautham Sigamani in a money laundering case linked to alleged illegal sand mining, official sources said.

The 72-year-old minister was late night taken by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to its office at Haddows Road for a detailed session of questioning.

The agency, according to the sources, has seized fixed deposit receipts of Rs 41.9 crore, around Rs 70 lakh cash and some foreign currency, including pounds (worth about Rs 8-10 lakh), from the linked premises of the minister.

Ponnudurai is the second minister in the cabinet of Chief Minister M K Stalin to come under the scanner of the federal probe agency after Senthil Balaji. Balaji, who was the Tamil Nadu electricity and prohibition minister, was raided and arrested by the ED in June as part of an alleged cash-for-jobs linked money laundering case investigation pertaining to his earlier stint as the state's transport minister.

The raids were undertaken at the premises of the father-son duo in state capital Chennai and in Ponnudurai's stronghold of Villupuram, the sources said.

The ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) dubbed the action "political vendetta".

The ED teams were escorted by armed personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). They also made seizures of some documents containing details of around two mines each owned by Sigamani and his brother-in-law and one such alleged benami asset. The agency, as per the sources, has also seized documents that link them to an Indonesia-based mining company and sale transactions worth more than Rs 100 crore.

MANIPUR CRISIS

Apex court refuses to interfere with order lifting internet ban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The Supreme Court Monday asked the Manipur government to raise its grievance before the high court with regard to an earlier order passed by HC on limited restoration of the internet in the state.

On July 7, the Manipur High Court had directed the state government to carry out physical trials to check the feasibility of providing internet services.

When the matter came up for hearing Monday before a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Manipur government, said the situation in the state is very sensitive and a decision to provide or not to provide internet depends on the prevailing situation.

Row over Assam CM's 'Miya' remark

AGENCIES

Guwahati, July 17: The CPI(M) and an Independent Rajya Sabha MP Monday lodged police complaints against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the BJP leader has made a "hate speech" against the 'Miya' community on the previous day.

AIUFD chief and Lok Sabha MP Badruddin Ajmal has also been named in one of the complaints for making 'hate speech' while commenting on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

While Ajmal said 'Miyas' have been 'hurt' by the chief minister's comment, the Congress and other opposition parties sniffed a collusion between the BJP and the AIUFD in 'communal politics' ahead of next year's Lok Sabha elections.

'Miya' is originally a pejorative term used for Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam. In recent years, activists from the community have started adopt-



Sarma, while responding to reporters' questions last week on the high price of vegetables in Guwahati, had said, "Vegetables are not priced so high in villages. Here the Miya vendors charge us more. Had it been Assamese vendors selling vegetables, they wouldn't have fleeced their own people"

"I will clear all the footpaths of Guwahati and I urge our Assamese people to come forward and start their businesses," Sarma added

ing this word in a gesture of defiance. Independent Rajya Sabha MP from the state Ajit Bhuyan said the complaint, filed at Dispur police station here against Sarma, was regarding "certain statement made by Constitutional functionaries of

our state which are clearly hate speeches against a particular community".

Bhuyan claimed that such remarks are intended to create a division among different communities in the state and are prejudicial to national integra-

Tomato travails, forked tongues and faked distractions

Tangy tomatoes spice both kitchens and ketchups. Yet this peppy part of taste and tables hogged a front page banner headline in a prominent Gujarati daily recently when its price smashed the vegetable ceiling, clocking past Rs150 a kilogram from one-sixth of the price, a month ago. While the price continues to rise over the Rs 200 mark, as if competing with the flood waters of the Indo-Gangetic plain after twice-over jump past those of petrol, a national daily devoted its Sunday magazine main page to 'Tomato travels' with the additional offer of scanning the code for a 'cooking without it' recipe video.

"Seasonal cycle, will cool down soon", said the government but wiser counsel prevailed thereafter and it stepped in with discount sale through national cooperative bodies.

On the other hand, loyalists among the converts soon had one state elected

head find reason enough to blame Muslim vendors for rising price of vegetables in his own state. In the meantime, if tomato prices are chasing the Chandrayaan, onions are plumbing the depths in their quest for oil. The same woes when in the Opposition had a diametrically opposite take on both the rise and the fall, and therein lies the rub of forked tongues, faked distractions and contrasting realities!

So you have a scenario where it takes a rap on the knuckles from the Gujarat High Court to curb the free reign of stray cattle on Ahmedabad roads. Last week the court had hauled the civic body and the state government over the coals over this growing menace. In Ahmedabad the stray cattle policy was revived, elsewhere in the state nothing moved. The Gujarat government announced stringent steps to curb cattle menace on city roads in December 2021, passed a Bill



in the Gujarat Assembly in April next year to this effect. Faced with a cattle rearers agitation in an election year, the Bill was withdrawn September 21, 2022. The exigencies of election opportunism prevailed over the road users wellbeing.

This is not a scenario restricted to Gujarat. Walk into any town of India and you will find bovine 'mata-pitas' ruling the road while humans skirt and swerve at their beck and call. Also woe-betide if you are not a part of the majoritarian echo-system!

Contradictions abound. While the ruling BJP, both in the country and

the north-eastern state remains tightlipped on the fratricidal warring, it is shouting itself hoarse on the local self-government body elections in Trinamool Congress (TMC) ruled West Bengal. Again, no less than the Prime Minister Narendra Modi guarantees action against NCP leaders in Maharashtra involved in a Rs 70,000 crore scam. Within days the NCP leaders led by Ajit Pawar, under the glare of corruption charges, breakaway to join the Shinde-Fadnavis government with the blessings of the BJP national leadership. There is not a word from the fount on the mount.

Opposing any leniency to the convicted, the Gujarat government had in February this year sought the death penalty from the Supreme Court for 11 of the 31 persons convicted in the Sabarmati bogie burning incident of 2002 after their death sentences were commuted to life term by the Gujarat

High Court in 2017.

Months earlier in October, 2022 the Gujarat government

told the Supreme Court that it had decided to release the 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case as they had completed 14 years and above in prison... their behaviour was found to be good and the Centre has also approved. In its affidavit filed in response to a petition challenging the remission granted to the prisoners the state also conceded that the CBI as well as the Special Civil Judge (CBI), City Civil and Sessions Court, Greater Bombay had opposed the earlier release of the prisoners. The CBI's stance was that the offence committed was "heinous, grave and serious" and hence they cannot be released prematurely and no leniency may be given" to them. In the pursuit of power politics, hypocrisy, as they say, is the art of preaching virtues while practicing vices.

of the day quote

What we're trying to do is find ways we can cooperate to actually address the crisis of climate. China is critical to our being able to solve this problem.



JOHN KERRY | CLIMATE ENVOY, US

The war in the heart of Europe throws a blanket of uncertainty over the world and channels resources that were essential for the economy and social programs to war purposes



URSULA VON DER LEYEN | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

This is nothing but interference by foreign states into the internal affairs of Solomon Islands. Australia and the United States should not fear China's police support to Solomon Islands



MANASSEH SOGAVARE | PM, SOLOMON ISLANDS

SHORT TAKES

Scribes in danger

Mexico City: Another journalist was killed in Mexico, adding to a growing list of reporters who have lost their lives amid an intensifying drug war in the country, authorities and a press freedom organisation said. Nelson Matus was shot to death on the fringes of Acapulco in southwestern Mexico Saturday, officials and Article 19 confirmed. Matus' death comes just a week after the grisly killing of another journalist in western Mexico, something the Committee to Protect Journalists said "underscores the crisis of deadly violence and impunity that continues to plague the Mexican press." In the past five years alone, CPJ documented the killings of at least 52 journalists in Mexico. Last year, Mexico was one of the deadliest places in the world for journalists, second only to Ukraine.

China economy up

Hong Kong: China's economy grew at a 6.3 per cent annual pace in the April-June quarter, much lower than analysts had forecast given the slow pace of growth the year before. The world's second-largest economy is expected to slow further in coming months given slack consumer demand in China and weaker demand for Chinese exports in other economies as their post-pandemic recoveries lose momentum. The 6.3 per cent growth in China's gross domestic product from April to June outpaced a 4.5 per cent rate of growth in the previous quarter, according to government data released Monday.

S'pore mins quit

Singapore: Two senior lawmakers from Singapore's ruling party have resigned over their "inappropriate relationship", Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Monday, the latest high-profile scandal in a city-state otherwise known for its political stability. Lee said the resignations of house speaker Tan Chuan-Jin and lawmaker, Cheng Li Hui, were necessary to uphold the standards of his People's Action Party (PAP).

SK flood toll rises

Seoul: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol Monday blamed authorities' failure to follow disaster response rules as the death toll from days of torrential rain rose to 40, including a dozen people found dead in a submerged underpass. Deluges have pummeled central and southern regions since Thursday as the rainy season that started in late June reaches its peak.



The United States should stop a foolish act that could put its security at risk by provoking us

KIM YO JONG | SISTER OF LEADER KIM JONG UN, NORTH KOREA

POD OF 55 PILOT WHALES DIES

A pod of 55 pilot whales have died after they were found washed ashore on a beach in Scotland in the worst mass whale stranding in the area, marine experts said Monday. Marine rescuers, the coast guard and police were called to Traigh Mhor beach after receiving reports that dozens of the mammals were in difficulty there early Sunday



HEATWAVE HORROR

World reels under fires

Scientists have long warned that climate change, caused by CO2 emissions from burning fossil fuels, will make heatwaves more frequent, severe and deadly

REUTERS

Madrid, July 17: Global temperatures headed towards alarming highs and extreme weather proliferated as the world's two biggest polluters, the China and the United States, sought on Monday to reignite climate talks.

With scientists saying the target of keeping global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels is moving beyond reach, evidence of the crisis was everywhere.

A remote town in China's arid northwest, Sanbao, registered a national record of 52.2 Celsius (126 Fahrenheit).

Wildfires in Europe raged ahead of a second heat wave in two weeks that was set to send temperatures as high as 48C.

In the United States, a quarter of the population fell under extreme heat advisories, partly due to a heat dome that has settled over western states.

In a resumption of diplomacy on global warming between the two superpowers, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry met Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua in Beijing, urging joint action to cut methane emissions and coal-fired power.

"In the next three days we hope we can begin taking some big steps that will send a signal to the world about the serious purpose of China and the United States to address a common risk, threat, challenge to all of humanity created by humans themselves," Kerry said, noting the proliferation of storms and fires.

"It is toxic for both Chinese and for Americans and for people in every country on the



In many parts of the world, today is predicted to be the hottest day on record. The #ClimateCrisis is not a warning. It's happening. I urge world leaders to ACT now

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESU | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

WEATHER EXTREMES EXPERIENCED AROUND THE WORLD

BIGGEST POLLUTERS UNITED STATES AND CHINA MEET

planet." Prolonged high temperatures in China are threatening power grids and crops and raising concerns about a repeat of last year's drought, the most severe in 60 years.

Typhoon Talim was gaining strength and due to make land at night along China's southern coast, forcing the cancellation of flights and trains in the regions of Guangdong and Hainan.

In South Korea, torrential rains left 40 people dead as river levees collapsed causing flash floods. They followed the heaviest recorded rain in the capital Seoul last year.

An anticyclone nicknamed Charon - who in Greek mythol-

ogy was the ferryman of the dead - could cause Europe to break its highest recorded temperature of 48.8C, possibly on the Italian island of Sardinia.

Greek authorities issued evacuation orders for at least six seaside communities Monday as wildfires threatened vacation homes near Athens, with gusts of wind up to 70 kph (45 mph) pushing flames through hillside scrub and pine forests parched by extreme heat.

Water-dropping planes and helicopters tackled the flames near Lagonisi, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) southeast of the capital, in an area with thousands of seaside vacation homes. Tourists in the Italian capi-

tal cooled themselves under giant fans set up outside the Colosseum and took turns to drink from a fountain near the Spanish Steps.

In Spain, temperatures could rise to as high as 44C in some regions. However, a forest fire on the island of La Palma in the Canaries that forced the evacuation of 4,000 people was being brought under control as temperatures fell, local official Sergio Rodriguez said in an interview on TVE.

The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service says 2022 and 2021 were the continent's hottest summers on record. As many as 61,000 people may have died in Europe during heatwaves last summer, with a repetition feared this season.

The heat dome across the western United States also helped to generate heavy rains in the northeast, claiming at least five lives. The heat warnings spread as far as Florida.

KREMLIN SAYS IT WON'T CUT TIES WITH WEST

REUTERS

Moscow, July 17: The Kremlin said Monday that it knew "very well" that NATO and the United States were providing intelligence to Ukraine but this was not a reason to cut off diplomatic ties with them following an attack on the bridge linking Russia and Crimea.

"In the most acute moments, we need channels for dialogue," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Peskov was asked about a comment by Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova who, without providing evidence, accused Ukraine of carrying out the overnight attack on the bridge with the involvement of Britain and the United States.

"We know very well how deep the coordination is between the Kyiv regime, Washington, a number of European capitals and NATO," Peskov said.

"We know perfectly well how



much information comes from NATO and Washington to Kyiv on a permanent basis. Therefore, we have no illusions here."

But a reporter's question about the possibility of cutting diplomatic relations with the West was "not quite correct" because of the need to keep dialogue channels open, he said.

India gives \$1mn to UN for promoting Hindi language

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, July 17: India has contributed \$1 million as part of a voluntary contribution to the United Nations to promote the use of the Hindi language in the world organisation and to foster inclusive dialogue and understanding, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said Monday.

Kamboj handed over the cheque of \$1 million to Under Secretary General of the United Nations Department of Global Communications Melissa Fleming.

"The Indian Government is delighted to make a substantial voluntary contribution to the @UN, with a focus on promoting the usage of Hindi. A step towards fostering inclusive dialogue and understanding," Kamboj tweeted.

She said the Indian government will continue to promote the use of the Hindi language in



the United Nations. "For this purpose, we are pleased to partner with the United Nations," she said.

According to a press release issued by the Permanent Mission of India, the amount was given to the UN "towards the expansion of usage of the Hindi language in the United Nations".

Hindi@UN project, in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information of the UN, was launched in 2018, with the objective of enhancing the public outreach of the United Nations in the Hindi language and spreading greater awareness about global issues among millions of Hindi-speaking peo-

FUTURE IN LIMBO

Taliban raises curbs on women, girls: UN

The UN said it has recorded instances in which the Taliban have enforced previously announced limitations on women's freedom of movement and employment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Islamabad, July 17: Taliban authorities have further increased restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan in recent months, including in education and employment, the UN said in a report on the human rights situation issued Monday.

Taliban's Ministry of Public Health has announced that only males will be allowed to take exams to pursue specialised medical studies, the UN mission in Afghanistan said in the report, which covers developments in May and June.

That follows a ban on female medical students taking graduation exams announced in February and a prohibition on women attending universities issued last December, the report said.

In early May, two Afghan fe-

male staff of an international non-governmental organisation were arrested by Taliban forces at an airport because they were travelling without a male companion, or mahram, the report said.

In June, a midwife was detained and interrogated for five hours by the Taliban's intelligence service, which threatened her with death if she continued her work with an NGO. She resigned two days later as a result, the report said.

There have also been reports of physical violence against women, including an incident in which members of the Taliban's vice and virtue department beat a woman with a stick and forced her to leave a public park, it said.

FALSE PROMISES

Despite initial promises of a more moderate rule than during their previous period in power in the 1990s, the Taliban have imposed harsh measures since seizing Afghanistan in August 2021 as US and NATO forces were pulling out.

They have barred women from most areas of public life and work and cracked down on media freedoms.



Govt to hand over power to caretaker setup before tenure ends: Pakistan PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, July 16: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Sunday announced that his government would hand over the power to a caretaker setup before the completion of its tenure next month, indicating the National Assembly is going to be dissolved days before the completion of its tenure to pace the general election in November.

Just a couple of days ago the premier had announced that his government would complete its tenure which is ending August 13.

However, Shehbaz's change of mind appears to be an advice from his allied Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Asif Ali Zardari.

Zardari in a meeting with PM Shehbaz Saturday asked him to dissolve the National Assembly a couple of days before the government completes its tenure so that elections can be held in November, a senior PPP leader told PTI Sunday.

Under the Constitution, if the National Assembly completes its term, polls are to be held within 60 days. But if the assembly is dissolved prematurely, even if by a day, it would give the government 90 days to conduct elections.

The five-year term of the National Assembly commenced under the then-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government of Imran Khan August 12, 2018 and is set to be completed under the ruling coalition led by Shehbaz.

Addressing a laptop distribution ceremony in Sialkot, Shehbaz said "Our government will complete its term next month. We will hopefully go before the tenure's completion and the new interim government will take over."

He further said if his party (PML-N) wins the upcoming general elections, it will change the destiny of the country.

Shehbaz recently said that his government's tenure would come to an end next month and the Election Commission of Pakistan would give the date for elections.

Cats test positive for bird flu in Poland: WHO

WHO STRESSED THAT THE RISK OF HUMAN INFECTIONS FOLLOWING EXPOSURE TO INFECTED CATS HAD BEEN ASSESSED AS LOW

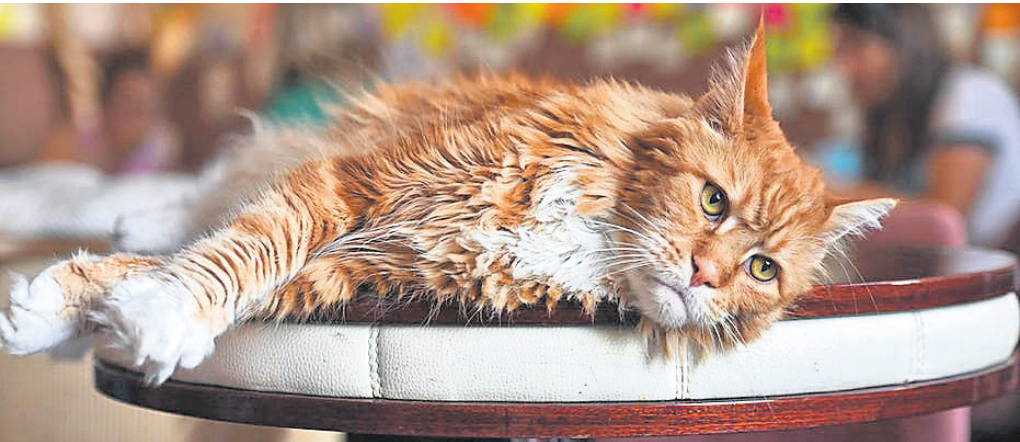
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Geneva, July 17: Poland is the first country to report "high numbers" of cats infected with bird flu across a large area, the WHO said Monday, adding that the risk of human infection remained low.

The World Health Organization said that since Polish health authorities informed it last month of unusual cat deaths across the country, 29 cats had tested positive for H5N1 bird flu.

They were among 46 cats and one captive caracal tested for the virus, it said, adding that 14 of the infected animals were reported to have been euthanised, while another 11 had died. The last death was reported June 30.

"The source of the exposure of cats to the virus is currently unknown and epizootic investigations are ongoing," WHO said



in a statement.

Since late 2021, Europe has had its worst-ever outbreak of bird flu, while North and South America have also experienced severe outbreaks.

This has led to the culling of tens of millions of poultry worldwide, many with the H5N1 strain

of the virus, which first emerged in 1996. There has recently been a worrying spike in infections in mammals.

The UN health agency pointed out that sporadic infection of cats with H5N1 had previously been reported.

"But this is the first report of

a high numbers of infected cats over a wide geographical area within a country," it said.

As of July 12, no human contacts of infected cats had reported symptoms, the WHO said, adding that the surveillance period for all contacts had been completed.

It stressed that the risk of human infections following exposure to infected cats had been assessed as low for the general population in Poland.

The risk for cat owners, veterinarians and others who might be exposed more regularly to H5N1-infected cats without using personal protective equipment was meanwhile seen as low to moderate, it said.

Bird flu infections in humans are rare, but when they occur can cause severe disease with a high mortality rate.

Human H5N1 cases are usually the result of direct or indirect exposure to infected live or dead poultry or contaminated environments.

Since 2020, the WHO said it had received 12 reports of human H5N1 cases worldwide. Four of them were severe cases, while eight were mild or asymptomatic.

of the day quote

As a leading bank in the industry, undertaking environment-friendly initiatives not only aligns with our corporate social responsibility but also presents significant opportunities for business growth

ATUL KUMAR GOEL | MD, PNB

In recent years, the growth of livestock, fisheries and horticulture sectors has been higher. We will focus more on these sectors so that we achieve higher growth and farmers also get benefits

HIMANSHU PATHAK | DIRECTOR GENERAL, ICAR

We have secured orders from the Indian Army. The Defence business has been a strong pillar of growth for us, and this win further establishes our leadership in Defence mobility vehicles business

SHENU AGARWAL | MD AND CEO, ASHOK LEYLAND

SHORT TAKES

HDFC Bank net profit jumps 29%

Mumbai: Core income growth and trading gains helped HDFC Bank post a 29 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the June quarter at ₹12,370 crore. On a standalone basis, the largest private sector lender reported a 30 per cent jump in net profit for April-June period at ₹11,952 crore. This is one of the fastest profit growths reported by the city-headquartered lender, which recently completed merger of its mortgage financier parent HDFC into itself with effect from July 1 onwards. A few years ago, it had a multi-quarter run of having a 30 per cent jump in net profits till the slowing economy tempered it to around 20 per cent levels.

Central Bank Q1 profit rises 78%

New Delhi: State-owned Central Bank of India Monday reported a 78 per cent rise in net profit at ₹418 crore for the June quarter due to decline in bad loans and increase in interest income. The Mumbai-based lender had posted a net profit of ₹235 crore in the year-ago period. Total income during the quarter under review increased to ₹8,184 crore from ₹6,357 crore in FY23, Central Bank of India said in a regulatory filing. Interest earned by the bank grew to ₹7,225 crore over ₹5,527 crore in the June quarter a year ago. Net interest income of the bank increased by 48 per cent to ₹3,176 crore in Q1 FY24, it said.

Govt eases norms for exporters

New Delhi: The government Monday simplified norms for exporters to avail benefits of an advance authorisation scheme under which free imports of input materials are allowed. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) implements this scheme under the Foreign Trade Policy. The eligibility of inputs is determined by sector-specific norms committees based on input-output norms. To make the norms fixation process more efficient, the DGFT said that it has created a user-friendly and searchable database of ad-hoc norms fixed in the previous years. These norms can be used by any exporter without approaching the norms committee, it added. The database is hosted on the DGFT website (https://dgft.gov.in) and allows users to search using export or import item descriptions, technical characteristics, or Indian tariff classification codes.



We are planning to provide round-the-clock power offerings by blending green energy with thermal

RAJIB KUMAR MISHRA | CMD, PTC INDIA

GOVT ORDERS INSPECTION OF BYJU'S

The corporate affairs ministry has ordered an inspection of the books of BYJU'S, a senior government official said Monday amid the edtech major facing multiple headwinds, including delay in submitting financial statements and concerns over corporate governance issues



‘Developed’ dream a distant future

INDIA NEEDS AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH OF 7.6% TO BECOME DEVELOPED NATION BY 2047, SAYS RBI ARTICLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 17: India could become a developed country by 2047 with an average annual real GDP growth of 7.6 per cent over the next 25 years, said an article published by the Reserve Bank in its July bulletin.

The task, however, may not be easy, given the current level of capital stocks, infrastructure and skill sets of the people, said the article titled 'India @ 100'.

Addressing the nation August 15, 2022 -- the 75th year of India's independence -- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid down a vision for the next 25 years to become a developed nation by 2047.

"India's real GDP needs to grow at 7.6 per cent annually over the next 25 years to achieve the per capita income level to become a developed economy," the article, authored by Harendra Behera, Dhanya V, Kunal Priyadarshi and Sapna Goel, said.

The authors are from the RBI's Department of Economic and Policy Research.

The central bank said the views expressed in the article are those of the authors and do not represent its views.

The article, the authors said,

provides an indicative road map for enabling India to become a developed country by 2047-48.

"India must rebalance its economic structure by strengthening its industrial sector so that its share in GDP rises from the current level of 25.6 per cent to 35 per cent by 2047-48.

Agriculture and services activity would have to grow at 4.9 per cent and 13 per cent per annum, respectively, in the coming 25 years with their sectoral shares in GDP at 5 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively, in 2047-48," the article said.

It also said that to become a developed country by 2047, India's per capita GDP needs to rise by 8.8 times from the current level. In other words, the current per capita GDP of \$2,500 needs to rise to \$22,000.

"This article explores the potential drivers of growth over the next 25 years and the challenges that may crop up necessitating timely and targeted policy responses to tackle them effectively," it said.

Further, the article said the sustainable path to development requires investment in physical capital and comprehensive re-



CURRENT PER CAPITA GDP OF \$2,500 NEEDS TO RISE TO \$22,000

PCI OF \$13,205 OR MORE IN 2022-23 IS CLASSIFIED AS HIGH-INCOME COUNTRY

forms across sectors covering education, infrastructure, healthcare and technology to raise productivity.

Collaboration between the government, private sector, civil society and citizens is essential for driving this transformation.

No unique criterion is used to define a country as a 'developed' one. The World Bank classifies countries as low-income, lower-middle-income, upper-middle income and high-income based on Per Capita Income (PCI).

As per World Bank classification, a country with a per capita income of \$13,205 or more in 2022-23 is classified as a high-income country.

India, US resolve all six trade disputes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: India and the US have mutually resolved all six trade disputes pending at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in line with the commitment made by the two countries during the US visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month, an official said.

The official said that both countries have informed the WTO's dispute settlement body about the resolution of all the pending disputes. The WTO has already issued a communication with regard to one of the disputes related to the imposition of additional customs duties by India on 28 US products, according to a communication of the WTO dated July 17.

STOCKS SHINING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 17: Benchmark Sensex and Nifty rallied for a third day in a row to close at fresh lifetime high levels Monday following buying in banking and oil stocks and FII inflows.

Analysts said the first quarter results by Indian companies have been mostly in line with expectations, triggering a rally in local equities despite mixed global cues.

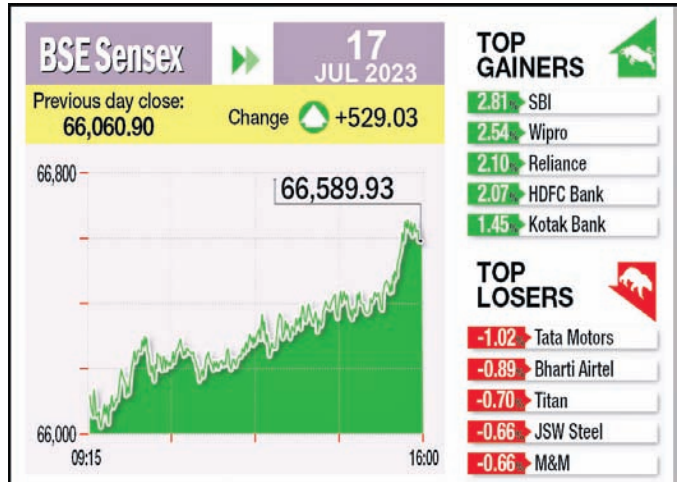
The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 529.03 points or 0.80 per cent to settle at its new all-time closing high of 66,589.93. During the day, it climbed 595.31 points or 0.90 per cent to hit its lifetime intra-day peak of 66,656.20. As many as 18 Sensex shares closed in the green while 12 declined.

The NSE Nifty also soared by 146.95 points or 0.75 per cent to close at a new record high of 19,711.45. During the day, it rallied 167.35 points or 0.85 per cent to its record intra-day high of 19,731.85.

From the Sensex pack, State Bank of India rose the most by 2.82 per cent. Gains in Wipro, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and IndusInd Bank helped the index closed at record levels.

HDFC Bank climbed 2 per cent after the company reported a 29.13 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the June quarter at ₹12,370.38 crore. Tata Motors, Bharti Airtel, Titan and JSW Steel were among the laggards.

Market breadth was positive



as of the total 3,856 stocks traded, 2,068 stocks advanced and 1,606 declined while 182 scrips closed unchanged on BSE. As many as 288 stocks hit their 52-week highs in the record rally while 18 stocks hit their upper circuit limits.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 1.62 per cent to \$78.58 a barrel.

The rupee gained 14 paise to close at 82.03 against the US dollar Monday, as domestic equity benchmarks scaling all-time high levels and weakness in the American currency overseas boosted investor sentiments.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 99.79.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets Monday as they purchased shares worth ₹73 crore.

FPIs' flow into the Indian equity market remained unabated as they invested over ₹30,600

'BHARAT DAL' BRAND

Subsidised chana dal at ₹60/kg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal Monday launched the sale of subsidised chana dal at ₹60 per kg under a brand name 'Bharat Dal' to provide pulses at an affordable rate to consumers.

Chana dal is being sold in Delhi-NCR through the retail outlets of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED). It will also be available at retail stores of NCCF, Kendriya Bhandar and Mother Dairy's Safal.

According to an official statement, Goyal launched the "sale of subsidised chana dal under the brand name 'Bharat Dal' at the rate of ₹60 per kg for one kg pack and ₹55 per kg for 30 kg pack."

The introduction of 'Bharat Dal' is a major step taken by the Central Government towards making pulses available to consumers at affordable prices by converting chana stock of the government into chana dal, it added.

The milling and packaging of the chana dal is undertaken by NAFED for distribution through its retail outlets in Delhi-NCR and also through the outlets of NCCF, Kendriya Bhandar and Safal.

Foxconn proposes ₹8,800cr mfg plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, July 17: Foxconn, a major iPhone assembler for Apple, has proposed to set up a ₹8,800 crore supplementary plant to that of the unit at Devanahalli Information Technology Investment Region (ITIR) in Karnataka, the state's Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil said Monday.

The Chief Minister Siddaramaiah chaired a high-level meeting with the delegates of Foxconn Industrial Internet (Fii), headed by its CEO, Brand



Cheng, in this regard, he said. As per the proposal, Fii, a subsidiary of Foxconn (formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. Ltd), has a plan to invest ₹8,800 Crore. "This would create 14,000 jobs and the land required for the project is about 100 acres," Patil said.

The delegates of the Fii would

be taken to Tumakuru to examine the available land at Japan Industrial Township near the district headquarters town.

The Information Technology Minister Priyank Kharge and Chief Secretary Vandita Sharma were also present in the meeting.

"Fii will engage in manufacturing screens, and outer coverings apart from making mechanical components needed for phones. This would operate as a supplementary plant to the 'end assembly' unit at Devanahalli (ITIR)", the Minister said in a statement.

G20 FM's deliberate on risks to global economy

FOREIGN MINISTERS FLAGGED THAT ECONOMIC FRAGMENTATION WILL BOTH UNDERMINE GROWTH AND MAKE IT HARDER TO TACKLE PRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES, FROM RISING SOVEREIGN DEBT CRISES TO THE EXISTENTIAL THREAT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gandhinagar, July 17: Finance ministers of G20 nations Monday deliberated on global economy and risks, as well as policy measures for promoting green and low carbon technologies on the opening day of the ministerial conference.

The meeting of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors in the first session deliberated on issues pertaining to global economic outlook, economic risks, and key policy responses to support recovery, the Finance Ministry said in a tweet.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva last week



in a blog said that the IMF forecast for global growth over the medium term is around 3 per cent -- well below the historical average of 3.8 per cent during 2000-19.

The G20 finance ministers meeting in the second session deliberated on sustainable finance, infrastructure and policy measures for deployment of green

and low-carbon technologies. The ministers of 20 developed and developing countries also discussed issues concerning timely and adequate resources for climate finance, and framework for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-aligned finance, the Finance Ministry tweeted.

Last month, a G-20 working

DEADLOCK OVER DEBT RESTRUCTURING

The failure of the G20 to achieve a breakthrough on debt restructuring for vulnerable countries is a "grave concern", the head of a United Nations agency said Monday as the body seeks pauses in debt repayment for poor nations amid rising poverty. The debt restructuring talks made little progress during the third finance meeting of the G20 countries in India, reports said Monday, as the bloc was unable to overcome key differences and low attendance due to domestic issues adding to the roadblocks. "I think the G20, so far, the finance ministers (and) central bank governors' negotiations have not really been able to advance a breakthrough on this question of debt and debt restructuring," Achim Steiner, administrator of the UN Development Programme, said.

group on sustainable finance made a case for facilitating flow of private capital to fund investment in green carbon technologies through policies and financial instruments with a view to mitigating the impact of climate change. It also un-

derlined the need for creating an enabling framework for start-ups to come up with new technologies to reduce carbon emissions.

In her inaugural address at the meeting, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday

pitched for coordinated international efforts to navigate the challenges of food, energy and climate change, while highlighting that global economic growth is below its long-term average and remains uneven.

"... We need ... Coordinated international efforts to navigate this challenging period. In this context, the G20 framework Working Group explored the issue of tackling macroeconomic challenges related to food and energy insecurity, and those related to climate change and transition pathways. The policy lessons that have emerged from these issues clearly underpin the need for enhanced international economic cooperation," Sitharaman said.

DJOKOVIC rues missed chances

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wimbledon, July 17: Regrets? Novak Djokovic has two. There was that tie-breaker pretty early in the Wimbledon final Sunday, when the 36-year-old Serb was one point from taking a two-sets-to-none lead over his 20-year-old opponent, Carlos Alcaraz. And then there was that missed volley on break point early in the fifth set with all the momentum at that stage going the seven-time Wimbledon champion's way. "Some regrets," Djokovic said after losing 1-6, 7-6(8-6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 in a high-energy and highly entertaining championship match on Centre Court. "I had my chances. I think I could have closed out that second-set tie-breaker better. But credit to him for fighting and showing

some incredible defensive skills, passing shots that got him the break in the fifth. He was a deserved winner today, no doubt." Djokovic has been a deserved winner on so many occasions in the past. Seven times right here at the All England Club, where he was one victory from matching Roger Federer with a men's record eight titles at the grass-court Grand Slam. And 23 times overall at major championships, tied with Serena Williams for the most in the Open era, which began in 1968. Back in 2019, for instance, Federer was going for his ninth Wimbledon title while Djokovic was the defending champion. Federer had two match points in the fifth set, but Djokovic saved them both, forced a tie-breaker at 12-12 and then ran away to claim his fifth championship.

"I've won some epic finals that I was very close to losing," said Djokovic, who had earlier mentioned those match points in his on-court interview during the trophy ceremony. "Maybe this is kind of a fair-and-square deal, I guess, to lose a match like this for me here." After breezing through the first set on a windy day, the pair traded breaks of serve early in the second ahead of the eventual tie-breaker. With a set point and Alcaraz serving at 6-5, Djokovic put a backhand into the net. And then another: "The backhands kind of let me down, to be honest," Djokovic said. "Set point, I missed the backhand. He did play a backhand that was quite long in the court, had a little bit of a bad bounce. But I should not have missed that shot.

"Then on 6-all, again, another backhand from middle of the court in the net. Just two very poor backhands. That's it. The match shifted to his side. It turned around." Djokovic hasn't missed too many of those shots over the years. In fact, his last loss at Wimbledon was way back in 2017 when he retired in the second set from his quarterfinal match with an injury. His last loss on Centre Court was in the 2013 final against Andy Murray. That other point Djokovic mentioned? The other regret? That miss was even more surprising — especially coming from a guy who has made a career of making shot after shot and waiting for his opponents to mess up. Alcaraz was serving in the second game of the final set and

Djokovic had what looked to be an easy volley to break for a 2-0 lead — the kind of lead he doesn't often relinquish. But his forehand went into the top of the net instead of over it, allowing Alcaraz to recover. "I managed to regroup and regain the momentum midway in the fourth (set)," Djokovic said. "I felt that the momentum shifted to my side. That was my chance. That was my opportunity. That break point, I think I played a really good point, kind of set up that drive volley. "It was very, very windy today. The wind kind of, yeah, took it to an awkward place where I couldn't hit the smash, I had to hit the drive volley kind of falling back. I saw him perfectly running to the opposite corner. I kind of wanted to wrong-foot him with that drive volley, and I missed."

Alcaraz retains top spot, Vondrousova up to 10th

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wimbledon, July 17: Carlos Alcaraz held onto No.1 in the ATP rankings Monday by virtue of his victory over No.2 Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final, and Marketa Vondrousova's first Grand Slam title pushed her all the way up to a career-high No.10 on the WTA list. Vondrousova jumped 32 places from No.42 thanks to her 6-4, 6-4 win against Ons Jabeur in Saturday's final at the All England Club. Vondrousova, a 24-year-old from the Czech Republic, was the lowest-ranked and first unseeded women's champion at the grass-court major. Alcaraz's victory over Djokovic Sunday marked the third time in the past four major tournaments that the men's title match determined who would be at No.1. At last September's US Open, Alcaraz became the first teenager to lead the ATP by beating Casper Ruud in the final. At January's Australian Open, it was Djokovic — who has spent more weeks atop the rankings than anyone in tennis history — who assured himself of being at No.1 by defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas. Alcaraz, a Spaniard who turned 20 in May, and Djokovic, a 36-year-old from Serbia, have been trading the highest spot this season. Alcaraz now enters his 29th week there.

"He's proven that he's the best player in the world, no doubt," said Djokovic, who had won four consecutive titles at Wimbledon and was seeking a 24th Grand Slam trophy overall. Iga Swiatek could have relinquished her 15-month hold on the WTA's No.1 ranking to No.2 Aryna Sabalenka at Wimbledon but remained there Monday. Swiatek lost in the quarterfinals; Sabalenka lost in the semifinals. The top seven slots in the women's rankings stayed the same Monday, with 2022 Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina remaining at No.3, followed by Jessica Pegula, Caroline Garcia, Jabeur and Coco Gauff. Elina Svitolina, who made it all the way to the semifinals just three months after returning to the tour from maternity leave, rose 49 places from No.76 to No.27. The big mover in the men's rankings was Chris Eubanks, a 27-year-old from Atlanta who played college tennis at Georgia Tech. His run at the All England Club allowed Eubanks to go from a career-high No.43 to a new personal best of No.31. Making his Wimbledon debut, Eubanks eliminated No.5 seed Tsitsipas and No.12 seed Cam Norrie on the way to his first major quarterfinal before losing to No.3 Daniil Medvedev. There were no changes among the first 13 ATP ranking spots.



US Open loss has left significant emotional impact on me: Sindhu



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 17: The quarterfinal loss at the US Open has "left a significant emotional impact" on PV Sindhu but the premier Indian shuttler has vowed to finish the season on a high. Sindhu has looked off colour this season after returning from a five-month long injury layoff following a stress fracture on her ankle. With more than half the year gone, the former World Champion and two-time Olympic medalist is still searching for her first title this season. The World No.12 made a quarterfinal exit after going down in straight games to China's Gao Fang Jie. "This loss has left a significant emotional impact on me, especially considering the challenging and demanding year I've had," Sindhu wrote on her Twitter. "It's disheartening to experience a disappointing defeat after each successful tournament. However, I am determined to channel my emotions into redoubling my efforts and making the remainder of the year truly remarkable," she added. Sindhu was part of India's bronze medal win at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships at Doha in February but has missed a few World Tour events this year. Her best result this year has been a sliver at the Madrid Masters Super 300 event in April.

Sindhu reached the Canada Open semifinals earlier this month and looked in good nick but lost to World No.1 Akane Yamachi before the last eight loss to Jie at the US Open. "My US Open journey came to an end in the quarterfinals, where I faced the talented Gao Fang Jie. Despite having previously defeated her in Canada, she outplayed me in straight sets this time, making effective use of my weaknesses. "I must commend her for being fully prepared and delivering an impressive performance. Next time I face you Gao, should be a battle," Sindhu wrote. The 27-year-old also lavished praise on compatriot Lakshya Sen, who struggled this season due to the effects of a nose surgery before winning the Canada Open. "I want to express my genuine happiness for Lakshya, who has been performing exceptionally well despite the difficulties he has faced. Witnessing his strong performances has been truly inspiring." Sindhu will next compete at the Korea Open Super 500 in Yeosu this week. "As I look ahead, I am eagerly anticipating the upcoming competitions in Korea and Japan. I will continue to push forward, driven by the unwavering support and encouragement of Indian fans everywhere I go. Your support means the world to me, and I am deeply grateful for it."

Messi introduced by Inter Miami, MLS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fort Lauderdale, July 17: Lionel Messi walked out from behind a curtain, took a few steps along a rain-slicked runway set up over the field at Inter Miami's stadium and headed toward David Beckham for a big hug. His journey was complete. Inter Miami's wait was over. At long last, Messi has arrived. Inter Miami — after years of plotting, pleading and hoping — introduced arguably the game's biggest star Sunday night, presenting their new franchise player with his pink No.10 jersey that millions of people will be buying over the coming weeks and months. "I'm sure we're going to have many wonderful experiences," Messi told the crowd. Sunday was the first one. Almost every seat was filled despite horrible weather conditions that delayed the show, and nobody seemed to mind soaking rain that pounded down throughout the evening. Beckham, the team's co-owner and president, had huge dark blotches on his blue blazer because of the rain. It was going to take more than a downpour to ruin this party, one where fans roared and music boomed. "Tonight is a typical



Miami welcome for one of the greatest players to ever have played the game," Beckham said during the telecast of the show. Added primary owner Jorge Mas: "When David and I first met and we dreamt of what Inter Miami represents, it started off with the freedom to dream. And we dreamed of not only bringing elite players and the best players but the best player to ever don boots — and his name is Lionel Andrés Messi." When Inter Miami began floating the notion that it would be

the team to land Messi and bring the World Cup champion to Major League Soccer (MLS), there were no shortage of people who were, to put it mildly, skeptical about how realistic a plan that was. Among them was MLS Commissioner Don Garber. Yes, even the man running the league had a bit of doubt. Not anymore. It happened, with Messi now tasked to lift a team that currently has the fewest points in the MLS standings and is mired in an 11-game winless streak. "Here we are today with a

Men to compete in artistic swimming at Paris 2024

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fukuoka, July 17: Snicker if you wish. Guffaw for good measure. Bill May and other male synchronized swimmers — now called artistic swimmers — have heard the putdowns before. But they're getting the last laugh. Men have competed in synchro at the lower levels for decades. Now they're being included in the Olympics, meaning next year's Summer Games in Paris. "I think it's a huge opportunity for the sport to grow and attract more men," May told the Associated Press at the World Aquatics Championships. "By keeping men out you're limiting the sport. By including men you're going to see an upshift in the popularity and the numbers." May looks like a lean bodybuilder. He was among the first men to compete when synchro was included in the worlds for the first time in 2015. And he worked



for 17 years at Cirque du Soleil doing water-themed shows. He has come out of competitive retirement for a chance to compete at the Olympics. "There has always been that misconception that it's a female-only sport, or that it's for wimps, or that it's not a difficult sport," the 44-year-old May said. "Anyone that has anything negative to say about the sport — boy, fe-

male, anyone. Just try it and you'll know it's the most difficult sport in the world." This is not the synchronized swimming that your parents or grandparents watched — the water ballet that made few waves below the flowery rubber caps and permanent smiles. It's estranged from the sport introduced at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The acrobatic team event, in

particular, features lifts, throws and flips, and diving routines launched off the shoulders of teammates treading water below. It's gymnastics on water and concussions are a risk. Interested men often confront the stereotypes. Beginning in elementary school, 18-year-old American Kenny Gaudet dreamed of being a synchronized swimmer. He made it, but it wasn't easy. "It makes me emotional just to think about the problems we all went through and the struggles we all had just to get a chance to swim and do what we love," said Gaudet who competed at this year's worlds. "So much bullying. So much slander. So much hate," he added. "Just because of my gender; just because I'm a male in artistic swimming. When I first started I wanted to quit so many times. Growing up my peers would ask why I'm doing a female sport, why am I being like a girl and degrade

me for doing what I love to do." A few countries at the World Championships have male swimmers including the US, Japan, Germany and China. Spain and Italy also have top competitors. Another fear, apparently unfounded, is that women might resent the men competing in the sport. Men will compete in only team events at the Olympics. Teams have a maximum of eight members — with a limit of two men — which means men might crowd out some women. There is no requirement for men to be included. Asked about any acrimony, two-time American Olympian Anita Alvarez replied: "No, not at all." Men can add some physicality to routines, and their presence could lead to a wider audience. Alvarez also credits May with choreography skills that he picked up with Cirque du Soleil. And we're about to see more men trying it.