



Power of social media
Actor Shivangi Verma shares how social media played a significant role in her life and career, calling it a game-changer

LEISURE | P2



Kamala over Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris is the top alternative to replace US President Joe Biden if he decides not to continue his reelection campaign

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Koo falls silent
Social media platform Koo, which had pitched itself as a rival and viable alternate to X, is shutting down

BUSINESS | P11



Cup arrives today
The Indian cricket team with the T20 WC trophy will be arriving Thursday on a chartered flight in New Delhi where PM will meet them

SPORTS | P12

10 Bihar bridges collapse in 15 days

Patna: With the collapse of three more bridges in Siwan and one in Saran district Wednesday, a total of 10 bridges have collapsed in the last 15 days in Bihar. Officials said with the onset of the monsoon and the strong current of the river, the pillars of the bridges sank deeper and weakened, leading to cave-ins. The lack of maintenance has also been described as a causative factor, with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directing authorities to prepare a maintenance policy of bridges of the Rural Works department. P9

Advani admitted to Apollo Hospital

New Delhi: Veteran BJP leader and Bharat Ratna Lal Krishna Advani was admitted to Apollo Hospital here Wednesday night, sources said. This comes days after the 96-year-old former Deputy Prime Minister was discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) after a night-long stay there. "Advani is stable and under observation. He has been admitted under Dr Vinit Suri, senior consultant, Neurology," a hospital source said, adding that he was admitted around 9 pm.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why not let the Opposition leaders speak freely? Anyway, we can expunge anything they say

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	79986.80	▲ 545.35
NIFTY	24286.50	▲ 162.65
DOLLAR	83.58	▲ ₹0.03
EURO	89.95	▲ ₹0.30
GOLD	₹72,520	▲ ₹966
SILVER	₹90,259	▲ ₹2,377

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	30.4°C	28.8°C
Min Temp	26.4°C	25.0°C
Humidity	91%	90%
Rainfall	0.5mm	2mm

FORECAST
Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain



JUMBO LESSON: Mahouts look after elephants at Kumki Elephant Training Centre in Kumarkhunti, located under Chandaka wildlife division on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Don't make mockery of justice: SC to NIA

Taking serious note of National Investigation Agency (NIA) delaying the trial of a counterfeit currency accused, who has been in jail for four years, the Supreme Court, without mincing its words, reprimanded the Central agency by saying that every accused has a right to speedy trial however serious the crime is. Granting bail to Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh, the top court warned the NIA against 'making a mockery of justice'



The SC order came while hearing an appeal against a February 2024 Bombay High Court ruling that denied bail to Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 3: Holding that the right to a speedy trial cannot depend on the severity of the alleged crime, the Supreme Court Wednesday rebuked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for its delay in prosecuting a counterfeit currency case that resulted in the accused being lodged in jail for four years without trial. The SC move came while hearing an appeal against a February 2024 Bombay High Court order that denied bail to Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh. Mumbai police arrested Shaikh after recovering counterfeit currency notes allegedly

originating from Pakistan from his possession in February 2020. The NIA later took over the investigation and claimed that Shaikh had visited Dubai before his arrest and received the counterfeit currency there. Criticising the delay in the trial, the SC urged the NIA to uphold the right to a speedy trial, rather than 'make a mockery of justice' by seeking time after time to submit its counter affidavit in the matter.

"You are the NIA. Please do not make a mockery of justice. It is four years, and the trial has not commenced. This is not done. Whatever offence the accused has committed, he has the right to a speedy trial as enshrined under the Constitution of India," the bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan said. "We are convinced that the manner in which the court and the prosecuting agency have proceeded in this case, the right to speedy trial has been frustrated, thereby violating Article 21," the bench said.

The bench observed that two co-accused had already been granted bail and pointed out that Shaikh had been detained as an undertrial for four years. However, the trial court had not yet framed charges and the prosecution was expected to examine as many as 80 witnesses. Based on these considerations, the apex court set aside the Bombay High Court order and granted a conditional bail to Shaikh. Additionally, the SC also directed Shaikh not to leave Mumbai during the bail period and report to the NIA's Mumbai office every 15 days.

Law college prof kills dad in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Residents of Capital city Wednesday woke up to a spine-chilling murder when an assistant professor of a private law college here allegedly stabbed his father to death over some financial issues at an apartment in Rangamatia area under Mancheswar police limits. The accused was identified as Anirudha Choudhury, 38, and the victim Sunil Choudhury, 68, a former employee of Nalco, according to the police. Anirudha was under severe mental stress as he was unable to repay a loan of ₹25 lakh he had incurred recently. The accused had frequent quarrels with his father as the latter was not budging to the demand of the former.



Accused Anirudha Choudhury

Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said Mancheswar police learnt about the incident around 4:30 am and rushed to Flat No-108 of DHPL apartment, Rangamatia. The cops took a profusely bleeding Sunil to Capital Hospital, but the doctors there declared him 'brought dead'. The stabbing caused deep

wounds in Sunil's chest and stomach, Singh added. Sunil's housekeeper Alok said the deceased's wife called him around 3am saying her son has attacked her husband with a knife multiple times. "When I reached there, Sunil was lying in a pool of blood, with his son near him. Following this, I called everyone in the flat and apprised them of the situation." Police sources said there was a bitter quarrel between Anirudha and his wife last week when the latter was seeking some money from him and wanting to dispose of the current flat. Anirudha used to demand money from Sunil to repay loans. The police registered a case under Section 103 (murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Judicial probe into UP stampede

AGENCIES

Lucknow, July 3: Retired judge of Allahabad High Court Brijesh Kumar Srivastav will head the three-member judicial inquiry commission set up by the Uttar Pradesh government Wednesday to probe the Hathras stampede that claimed at least 121 lives, an official statement said. The commission, tasked to complete the investigation within two months, will look into various aspects of the case including "whether this incident is an

accident or a conspiracy" and the arrangements made by the district administration and police for crowd control. It will also recommend preventive steps. The panel, formed a day after the incident following the direction of Governor Anandiben Patel, will have retired IAS officer Hemant Rao and retired IPS officer Bhavesh Kumar as its members. It will probe the compliance of the permission granted by the district administration and the conditions mentioned therein by the organisers of the programme.

Champai goes; Hemant to be CM for 3rd time

AGENCIES

Ranchi, July 3: Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren Wednesday resigned from his post, following which JMM leader Hemant Soren called on Governor CP Radhakrishnan and staked claim to form the government. Hemant told the media all formalities to form the government are complete. "Everything will be disclosed soon," the JMM executive president said. P8

WORLD'S FIRST Japan issues banknotes with 3D hologram

REUTERS

Tokyo, July 3: Japan began circulating its first new banknotes in 20 years Wednesday, featuring three-dimensional portraits of the founders of financial and female education institutions, in an attempt to frustrate counterfeiters. The notes use printed patterns to generate holograms of the portraits facing different directions, depending on the angle of view, employing a technology that Japan's National Printing Bureau claims is the world's first for paper money. "Faces of those representing Japan's capitalism, women's empowerment and technology innovation are on the new bills," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said at a function. The step comes as the economy moves into a growth-driven phase for the first time in three decades, he added.

The new 10,000-yen (\$62) note depicts Eiichi Shibusawa (1840-1931), the founder of the first bank and stock exchange, who is often called "the father of Japanese capitalism". The new 5,000-yen bill portrays educator Umeko Tsuda (1864-1929), who founded one of the first women's universities in Japan, while the 1,000-yen bill features a pioneering medical scientist, Shibasaburo Kitasato (1853-1931). While Kishida talked up the latest technology to fight counterfeiting, it is not a major problem in Japan. The 681 fake banknotes police detected in 2023 represented a sharp drop from a record high of 204 in 2004. Authorities plan to print about 7.5 billion newly-designed bills by the end of the current fiscal year, swelling the 18.5 billion banknotes, worth 125 trillion yen, in circulation by December 2023.



"Cash is a secure means of payment that can be used by anyone, anywhere, and at any time, and it will continue to play a significant role" despite alternatives, said Central Bank Governor Kazuo Ueda. The Bank of Japan has experimented with digital currencies, but the government has made no decision whether to issue a digital yen. The first renewal of paper money since 2004 spurred businesses to upgrade payment ma-

chines for cash-loving customers. Cashless payments in Japan have almost tripled over the past decade to account for 39 per cent of consumer spending in 2023, but still lag global peers and should rise to 80 per cent to boost productivity, the government says. Nearly 90 per cent of bank ATMs, train ticket machines and retail cash registers are ready for the new bills, but only half of restaurant and parking ticket machines, the Japan Vending Machine Manufacturers

Association said. Almost 80 per cent of the nation's 2.2 million drink vending machines also need upgrades, it added. "It might take until year-end to respond to this," said Takemori Kawanami, an executive at ticket machine company Elcom. "That's too slow, but we are short of components," he added, as client orders for upgrades exceeded expectations. Many Japanese fast-food restaurants such as ramen shops and beef bowl stores use ticket machines to cut labour costs, but some small business owners battling inflation are unhappy at the extra investment needed. "The machine replacement has no sales impact, so it's only negative for us, on top of rising costs of labour and ingredients," said Shintaro Sekiguchi, who spent about 600,000 yen for ticket machines at three ramen shops he runs in Tokyo.

400 e-buses to be added under PM e-Bus Sewa

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 3: In a bid to give a fillip to the public transport system, the state government has decided to add 400 e-buses to the fleet of 'Mo Bus' under PM e-Bus Sewa, Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said here, Wednesday. Mahapatra travelled in a 'Mo Bus' from Master Canteen to Press Chhak here. During the journey, he interacted with the commuters and enquired about their travel experience in 'Mo Bus', the City bus service of the state government. Speaking to the media, Mahapatra said, "We have been doing well for the last six years. Out of the 400 buses that are running, 63 are e-buses. All of them will be e-buses in future. There are plans to run 100 buses



in Bhubaneswar, as many in Cuttack, 50 in Sambalpur and 100 in Rourkela." Mahapatra also said 'Mo Bus' service may be renamed as 'Ama Bus'. The 'Mo Bus' service is providing convenient, sustainable, safe commuting options to the citizens, said the minister, adding that there shall be detailed discussion with the regular passengers. "The number of buses will be increased based on the need of the citizens. We are checking the situation at various places. The bus service will be provided wherever necessary," Mahapatra asserted.

leisure



MEGAN STALLION BACKS BEYONCE FOR US PREZ

Rapper Megan Thee Stallion wants Beyoncé to be the US President saying the superstar would not even have to campaign. During an interview with Shannon Sharpe on *Club Shay Shay*, the 27-year-old said: "I love her. She is like THE woman. Beyoncé is THE person."

PERRIE EDWARDS HAS NO SENSE OF SMELL

Former *Little Mix* star Perrie Edwards has no sense of smell and never even knew about her condition until her kitchen went on fire and she couldn't smell the smoke. "They did so many tests on me growing up, but I didn't know I had no sense of smell," she said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Business affairs and love will flourish today. You can expect some monetary benefits and even some loans to be sanctioned. In love, you anticipate a romantic evening, where you will confide your deepest feelings to your beloved. Ganesh says you couldn't possibly ask for more.

TAURUS
Today, your passion for punctuality, for insistence on maintaining schedules is in for real appreciation. But, warns Ganesh, it could also create immediate and unexpected problems for some. You are like to become exceedingly impatient restless as the day progresses.

GEMINI
The first half of the day may see you in a foul mood, and the reason for it is likely to be some mental worry that has been bothering you for quite some time now. If things worsen, it is best to see a doctor. You will feel the urge to do something that really appeals to you, in the evening, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will take a bold stand to achieve full capacity and efficiency. You will come out with new ideas and strategy, which will prove to be useful and profitable. Avoid confrontation and keep your cool, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will face some problems today and will be tense on account of them. You may experience instability and conflict in your personal relationships. You should not spend time chasing useless schemes and concentrate on fruitful and progressive activities, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Your focus of attention will be your monetary matters today, and working towards building on your profits. Ganesh says it will be better if you make arrangements to set aside some money for the rainy day. You may seal some deals and agreements today that will prove to be very beneficial for your business in the future.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be busy in work related to your business field. People in the field of research will gain success today. In legal matters that are pending, the judgment will be in your favor today. Solutions regarding the success of your business will come out too.

SCORPIO
The company of like-minded people will keep you in cheery spirit throughout the day. The day promises to be lively and vibrant as you will engage in one activity after another. But Ganesh warns that being over enthusiastic may be detrimental to your health.

SAGITTARIUS
A typical trait, you are possessive about your belongings today, says Ganesh. You are easily able to meet your deadlines at work and submit the things on time. This will keep your energy levels intact. In a nutshell, a bright and beautiful day in store for you.

CAPRICORN
It's rare that while you're engaged in work, slogging to sort out things and prove yourself capable, you simultaneously manage time for the love of your life, and spare some more for recreational activities. Quite a bit of multitasking, but that's what Ganesh has in store for you today.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will revel in a lot of tender loving and care (TLC). You may also be able to solve certain baffling situations plaguing your peace of mind. Ganesh suggests that you meet people, as any associations you form today will prove beneficial in the long run.

PISCES
You will be in the mood to splurge today. You are likely to find yourself throwing a party or entertaining guests in the afternoon. You might just indulge in some uncalculated extravagance and give your spouse a pleasant, albeit expensive, surprise, says Ganesh.

Sara shares secrets of her wellness

Mumbai: Sara Ali Khan, who has confessed about undergoing an extensive physical transformation and a major journey battling PCOS and other health conditions, recently revealed her secrets behind maintaining her physical and mental health.

In a recent interview, the *Atrangi Re* revealed that she prefers to have a holistic approach towards it which includes practices that not only help to maintain the body but also the mind. Speaking about how they contribute to an individual's overall well-being, Sara added, "Wellness practices are essential for overall well-being. It's all about creating a balanced lifestyle that nurtures both body and mind. I set aside an hour each day for meditation or yoga, which helps me unwind and relax. I also dedicate time for exercise, whether it's Pilates or a quick workout session. Physical activity clears my mind and boosts my energy levels."

She also swore by a few other practices and shared about it saying, "Apart from staying active, I maintain a balanced diet and stay hydrated. I also prioritise a proper sleep schedule to ensure I'm well-rested. Reading is another wellness practice I love."

In the past, the *Simmba* actress has confessed that she has always had struggles with her weight mainly due to her PCOD diagnosis. However, it is also true that the actress' dedication towards her health has always helped her to get back in shape.

AGENCIES



Kareena's post on kids resonates with moms

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor Khan, a renowned actress, wife, and mother of two, recently took to social media to share a relatable post that resonated with many moms. Bebo, keeps her fans updated on both her personal and professional life through social media.

Currently enjoying a holiday in the UK, she recently shared a post reflecting on the common dilemma faced by mothers everywhere.

Tuesday, Kareena took to her Instagram stories to share a photo of herself en-

joying her kids' leftovers! The image showed a bowl of whipped ice-cream and another with chopped straw-

berries. Beside them was a plate with a half-eaten pancake, accompanied by a spoon and fork. The actress humorously captioned the post, "I am the mother who eats her kids' leftovers," followed by a speak-no-evil emoji, drawing attention and a red-heart emoji. Many netizens, especially mothers, expressed appreciation relating to this

moment. On the work front, Kareena is set to star in Hansal Mehta's long-awaited directorial, *The Buckingham Murders*, a murder mystery.

AGENCIES

joying her kids' leftovers! The image showed a bowl of whipped ice-cream and another with chopped straw-

Shivangi: Social media has been a blessing

Mumbai: Actress Shivangi Verma has shared how social media has played a significant role in her life and career, calling it a game-changer and blessing for artistes like her.

Known for her work in the show *Choti Sarrdaarni*, Shivangi said: "Social media plays a very important role in my life. It's a game-changer. If used right, it can take someone from zero to 100 in terms of fame and recognition. For artistes like me, who might not have received the respect they deserve solely based on their talent, social media has been a blessing."

"Initially, I was hesitant about it, but my mother encouraged me to showcase my work and personality online. As a result, things started working in my favour," she said.

The actress also said that she stays in touch with many influential casting directors and industry people through her social media platforms.

"However, I also understand the importance of setting boundaries. Too much of anything can be harmful. Social media can expose us to all kinds of people, both good and bad, and sometimes inappropriate content. But despite its downsides, I find social media to be the best thing," added the actress.

IANS

NATYA DHARA - DAY III



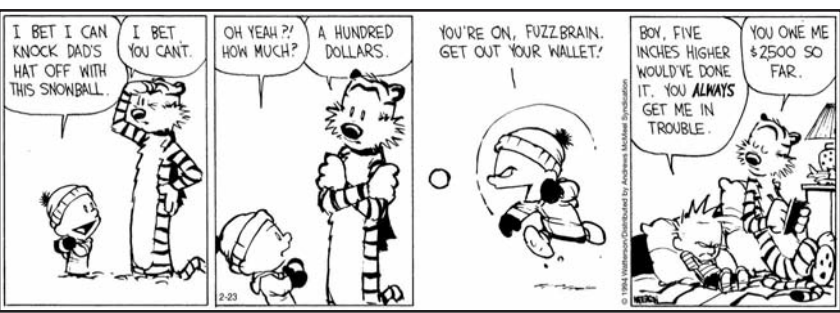
Artists of Bhubaneswar-based theatre troupe Shradha Saburi presented Odia play *Moha* at Bhanjakala Mandap, Wednesday, on the third and final evening of the event. Written by Shankar Tripathy, the drama was directed by Ullas Mohanty. Natya Dhara, a joint collaboration of Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Odisha Natya Sangh, is held for four days a month (three days at Bhanjakala Mandap and once at Rabindra Mandap) to promote theatre in Odisha.

FUN post

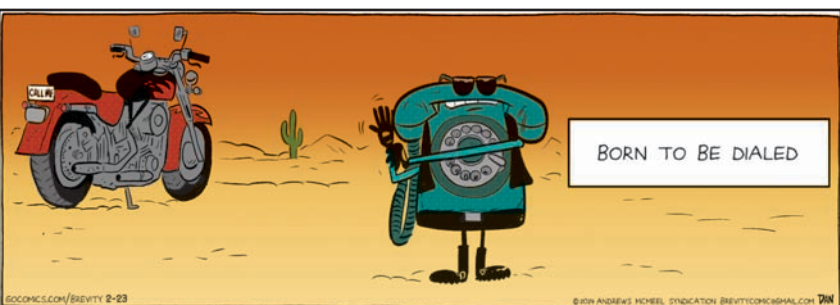
PEANUTS



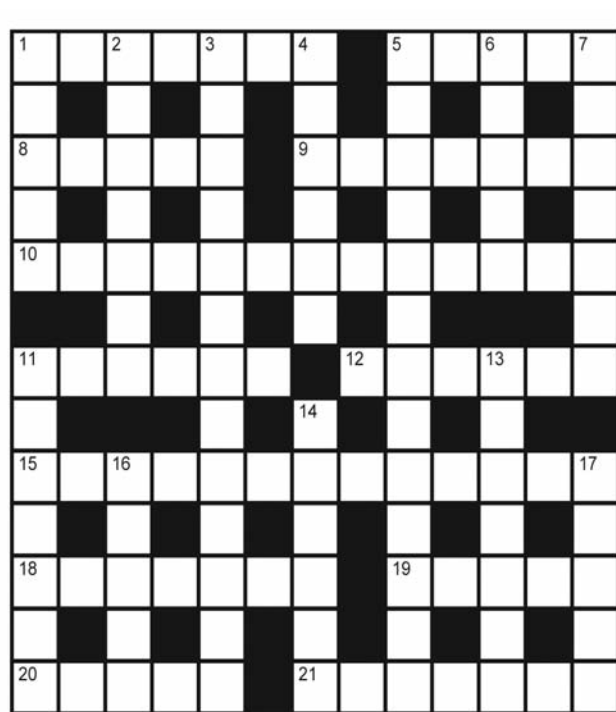
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



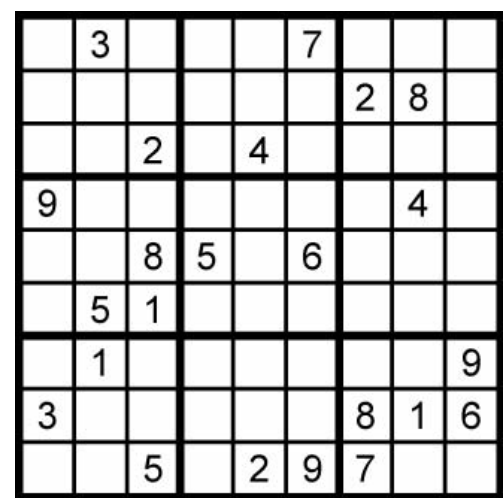
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Prepares a hot dessert
 - 5 Cringe
 - 8 Miscue
 - 9 Curl
 - 10 Golden ager (6,7)
 - 11 Conviction
 - 12 Warm welcomes
 - 15 Alliance
 - 18 Stronghold
 - 19 Kind of tube
 - 20 Old anesthetic
 - 21 Kitchen set
- Down**
- 1 Boxer's bane
 - 2 Ductless gland
 - 3 Scanner type (3,4,6)
 - 4 Severe
 - 5 Andromeda, e.g.
 - 6 Ballroom dance
 - 7 Light-sensitive membranes
 - 11 Road sport item
 - 13 Cook's wear
 - 14 Obscured
 - 16 Indentation
 - 17 Health care provider

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Justice BR Sarangi Jharkhand HC Chief Justice

NEW DELHI: Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi was Wednesday appointed as the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court, the Law ministry said. Justice Sarangi is at present a judge of the Orissa High Court. His name was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium in December last year. The Law ministry also announced the appointment of Justice Muhamed Mustaque Ayumantakath, a judge of the Kerala High Court, to be the acting chief Justice of that High Court with effect from July 5 as incumbent Chief Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai demits office Thursday on attaining the age of 62 years.



SC: Orissa High Court's 2-month bail incorrect

PETITIONER WOULD CONTINUE TO REMAIN ON BAIL TILL FURTHER ORDERS OF THE TOP COURT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 3: The Supreme Court has termed as 'incorrect' an order of the Orissa High Court which limited the period of bail granted to an accused in a case lodged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act to two months.

A vacation bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan, while referring to a verdict passed earlier by the top court, said it is now well settled that the right to speedy trial is recognised as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution and is closely tied to the right to life and personal liberty.

The bench noted that the petitioner had filed a bail application in the High Court which had taken notice of the fact that the petitioner was in custody since May 11, 2022 and only one witness was examined so far.

"In such circumstances, the High Court thought it fit to order release of the petitioner on bail

but only for a period of two months," it noted.

"In our opinion, it is an incorrect order. If the High Court was of the view that the right of the petitioner to have a speedy trial could be said to have been infringed, then the High Court should have ordered release of the petitioner on bail pending final disposal of the trial itself," the apex court said in its July 1 order. It said there was no good reason for the High Court to 'limit the period of bail'.

While issuing notice on the plea filed by the petitioner, the bench directed that he shall continue to remain on bail pending further orders by the apex court.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by the petitioner challenging the May 6 order of the High Court.

The High Court had disposed of his bail application after directing the trial court to release the petitioner on interim bail for a period of two months from the date of his actual release.

CONG'S THREE-DAY ULTIMATUM TO COPS

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 3: The Congress Wednesday gave a three-day ultimatum to Odisha Police to arrest the people involved in the alleged attack on its workers in front of the party's state headquarters here Tuesday evening.

Notably, the supporters of both the BJP and the Congress clashed here Tuesday evening during a protest over remarks made by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha.

Speaking to media here, senior Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati said police should arrest the persons involved in the attack on the Congress Bhawan within three days. Otherwise, 20,000 youths will forcibly enter the state BJP office here, he warned.

Under the instruction of the state BJP president and Chief Minister, their party youths hurled stones at Congress headquarters. Several Congress workers and mediapersons were injured during the attack, he alleged.

After coming to power, the BJP government is trying to murder democracy like the BJD, Bahinipati said. He also said that protests will be organised before SP offices across the state if the persons concerned are not arrested in 72 hours.

The incident happened outside Congress Bhawan, where the BJP was holding a demonstration over Rahul's remarks.

Besides stones, the supporters of both sides also hurled cow dung at each other.

Cow dung was thrown at a hoarding with Rahul Gandhi's picture. Later, it was washed with milk by the Congress workers.



SETTING STAGE: Chariot construction reaches last leg on Grand Road in Puri, Wednesday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Srimandir deities recover from fever

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, July 3: A delegation of Daitapati and Pati Mahapatra servitors Wednesday informed Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb about the recovery of Lord Jagannath and His siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, from fever in the Anasara Gruha (sick room) of Srimandir.

The servitors went to Sri Nahar (the royal palace) located alongside the Grand Road near the 12th century shrine in a ceremony called 'Rajprasad Bijje'.

They said that after the administration of Phuluri oil and

Dasmula Aushadhi, the deities are recovering. The sibling deities have changed their clothes from white to coloured ones and have been made to sit on platforms called 'Chaka Bijje'.

The deities would be ready to ride respective chariots to the Gundicha temple on a nine-day sojourn starting July 7, the delegation said. The deities had been in the sick room, supposedly suffering from fever after the grand bath on the Snana Purnima. They were put on a fruit diet while the temple Vaidya (physician) treated them with herbs and

oils. At the same time, Daita servitors carried out some secret rituals at the Anasara Ghuha.

Since July 7 will witness a rare scenario after five decades when the Netra Utsav, Nabajouban Darshan and Rath Yatra will be observed on a single day, the Gajapati advised the servitors to work dedicatedly to ensure that all the rituals are observed on time as per the prescribed schedule.

"We are glad that President Droupadi Murmu will witness the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings this year," he said.

This will be the first such occasion when the President will participate in the Rath Yatra, the Gajapati said.

Highlighting that Justice Arijit Pasayat Committee is expected to have its meeting July 5, he said the initiative to open the inner Ratna Bhandar (inner treasury compartment) of the temple may be taken.

After recovering from the sickness, the deities will be accorded Banaklaji Seva (facial makeup) to give them a rejuvenated and youthful look, temple sources said.

BJD joins Oppn against govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Two unaligned and key regional parties charted separate political paths in Parliament's first session in the Modi government's third term as the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) joined the Opposition in targeting the treasury benches, while the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) kept away from such protests and remained sympathetic to Centre.

Both the parties have suffered serious setbacks in the recent Lok Sabha polls and lost power in their respective states, where Assembly elections were held simultaneously. Both had supported the ruling BJP on key legislative matters in Parliament during its previous term at the Centre.

Both the parties, YSRCP and BJD, continue to have a sizeable presence in the Rajya Sabha, where the BJP-led NDA does not have a majority, and their stand on issues can tilt the bal-



It was just another, same routine reply from the Prime Minister, counting the same achievements of his government. It makes no sense to sit through another deliberation when the aspirations and demands of the people of Odisha find no presence," Patra told PTI after the walkout.

SASMIT PATRA | BJD RAJYA SABHA MP

ance of power.

BJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra led his party colleagues Wednesday in walking out of the Rajya Sabha, along with the Opposition parties, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reply to the 'Motion of Thanks' on the President's address to a joint sitting of Parliament.

Neither President Droupadi Murmu's address nor Modi's reply had any mention of BJD's longstanding demand for 'spe-

cial category status' for the state, Patra said.

He added that there was also no reflection of his party's demand for an increase in coal royalty, and highway, railway and telecom presence in the eastern state, where the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD was in power for 24 years, before losing it to the BJP.

"It was just another, same routine reply from the Prime Minister, counting the same achievements of his govern-

ment. It makes no sense to sit through another deliberation when the aspirations and demands of the people of Odisha find no presence," Patra told PTI after the walkout.

The BJD has nine members in the 245-member House, while the YSRCP has 11. The BJD has no MP in the Lok Sabha, while the YSRCP has four members in the Lower House. V Vijayasai Reddy, the YSRCP leader in the Rajya Sabha, condemned the Opposition parties' decision to stage protests in the Lok Sabha when Modi spoke there Tuesday.

"It has to be condemned," he said, adding that the prime minister's reply to the motion should have been heard patiently as he was only responding to questions raised by different MPs.

What the Opposition has done is not in accordance with sound democratic principles and precedents in Parliament, Reddy said.

Tehsildar, police SI land in Vig net RDA legal asst dismissed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: A tehsildar of Nayagarh district and a sub-inspector (SI) of police of Jajpur district were arrested by Vigilance sleuths over bribery, official sources said, Wednesday.

According to Vigilance sources, Dhobei Nayak, tehsildar of Khandapara in Nayagarh, had been demanding ₹20,000 from a man to release the latter's sand-laden truck seized by the administration.

"The truck owner approached the Vigilance following which a trap was laid and Prasanna Kumar Sahoo, a private person, was caught receiving ₹20,000 on behalf of the tehsildar late Tuesday night," they said, adding that both Sahoo and the tehsildar have been taken into custody.

Following the trap, simultaneous raids were carried out at locations related to the tehsildar, they added.

A case (11/24) under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been

registered against the duo by the Bhubaneswar Vigilance police station.

Meanwhile, Vigilance sleuths have nabbed Keshab Chandra Dash, SI at Binjharpur police station in Jajpur, while receiving ₹5,000 from a man to provide him the post-mortem report of his father who died in an accident May 20, 2024.

The court also slapped a penalty of ₹5,000 on Dash. Failure to pay the penalty amount would entail additional three-month RI under Section 13(2) r/w 13(1)(d) of the PC Act, 1988 and 109 of the IPC, the court had ruled.

"Following the conviction, the RDA legal assistant was dismissed from government service by the competent authority in accordance with the provision of OCS (CCA) Rules, 1962," a Vigilance statement read.

registered against the duo by the Bhubaneswar Vigilance police station.

Meanwhile, Vigilance sleuths have nabbed Keshab Chandra Dash, SI at Binjharpur police station in Jajpur, while receiving ₹5,000 from a man to provide him the post-mortem report of his father who died in an accident May 20, 2024.

"The entire bribe money has been recovered from the possession of the SI. Following the trap, simultaneous searches were carried out at three locations related to the SI," they said.

A case (16/24) has been registered against the SI under Section 7 of the PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 at Cuttack Vigilance police station.



FOR A GREENER TOMORROW: Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj launches a plantation drive at BJB (Autonomous) College in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. Among others, Bhubaneswar-Ekamra MLA Babu Singh is also seen

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Low rainfall, high CO2 may replace biodiversity hotspots

Even as greenhouse gasses are increasing unprecedentedly, it can decrease rainfall in the equatorial region as well as affect India's biodiversity hotspots, according to a new study Wednesday.

The study showed that it will potentially replace India's biodiversity hotspots consisting of evergreen forests in the Western Ghats, northeast India, and the Andamans with deciduous forests.

For the study researchers from Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, used fossil pollen and carbon isotope data from the Eocene Thermal Maximum 2 (ETM-2), also known as H-1 or Elmo.

It is a period of global warming that occurred around 54 million years ago.

In addition to global warming, during this period the Indian plate also lingered near the equator during its journey from the southern to northern hemisphere.



"This makes the Indian plate a perfect natural laboratory that offers a peculiar opportunity to understand the vegetation-climate relationship near the equator during the ETM-2," the researchers said.

Based on the availability of fossils from ETM2, the team selected the Panandhro Lignite Mine of Kutch in Gujarat and collected fossil pollen from there.

Their findings, published in the journal Geoscience Frontiers, found that when atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) concen-

tration was more than 1000 parts per million by volume (ppmv) near the palaeo-equator, the rainfall decreased significantly. It led to the expansion of deciduous forests.

The study also raises important questions about the survival of equatorial/ tropical rainforests and biodiversity hotspots under increased carbon emissions.

It can also help understand the relationship between CO2 and hydrological cycle and aid in the future conservation of biodiversity hotspots.

State Social Welfare Board will be revamped soon: Min



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 3: State Social Welfare Board (SSWB) will be revamped soon, Deputy Chief Minister and Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Pravatī Parida said during a meeting at State Institute of Women and Children (SIWC) here Wednesday.

Chairing a NGO consultative meeting, the minister said the board is crucial for development of the state and it can be effectively managed through partnership between the government and voluntary organisations.

She also sought suggestions from the stakeholders in this regard.

WCD department Shubha Sarma Principal Secretary informed that a committee will be formed to discuss proposals and suggestions received from dif-



ferent organisations in revamping the board.

Social Welfare Board Director and ICDS Monisha Bannerjee, senior officials of the department and representatives of voluntary organisations were pres-

On this occasion, Minister Parida inaugurated the yoga-cum-wellness centre, along with badminton and volleyball courts at State Institute of Women and Children (SIWC) campus in Laxmisagar

ent in the meeting. On this occasion, the minister inaugurated the yoga-cum-wellness centre, along with badminton and volleyball courts at State Institute of Women and Children (SIWC) campus in Laxmisagar here Wednesday.

Parida also planted saplings of Jamun and Indian Gooseberry (Amla) as part of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign.

Addressing the gathering, the minister said that the tree-planting campaign has become very popular throughout the country and urged the people to plant trees in the name of their mothers to give a better future to next generation.

Parida also advised voluntary organisations to plant banyan trees as they are very useful for the environment.



VENTING IRE: Members of various trade unions stage a demonstration in front of EPFO office in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, seeking fulfillment of their demands

Rly board to zones: Restore defunct Wi-Fi facilities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Taking strong note of non-functional Wi-Fi facilities at several stations, the Railway Board has written to the general managers (signal and telecommunication) of all its 17 zones, asking them to take immediate measures to restore the services.

According to the board, of the more than 7,000 railway stations in the country, 6,108 have been equipped with Wi-Fi facilities that passengers can access for free.



However, the board has pointed out to the railway zones that this facility is non-functional at many stations for various reasons.

OUT OF MORE THAN 7K RAILWAY STATIONS IN THE COUNTRY, 6,108 HAVE BEEN EQUIPPED WITH WI-FI FACILITIES THAT PASSENGERS CAN ACCESS FOR FREE

"Wi-Fi facility has been provided at 6,108 stations of Indian Railway. However, it has been observed that Wi-Fi at many stations

is not working due to various reasons, which include faulty equipment and construction work. This causes inconvenience to the passengers," the Railway Board said in the letter addressed to the GMs of all zones.

"In view of the above, it is advised to take immediate necessary measures for the restoration of Wi-Fi facilities at railway stations," it added.

The board has also asked the zones to provide a compliance report of its instructions every week.

Roundtable on health at ILS

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 3: Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), Bhubaneswar and Technology Information, Forecasting & Assessment Council (TIFAC), New Delhi organised a roundtable on health at ILS Wednesday.

About 50 doctors, scientists and healthcare experts from all over India discussed the status of healthcare system in India and the way forward to make healthcare system more efficient.



ILS director Debasis Dash said the main focus was making point of care (POC) diagnosis and point of care (POC) doctor more efficient so that even the remotest parts of India could access advanced diagnostics and have access to doctors from specialised fields.

They also discussed emerging fields of personalised and precision medicine, use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare. The impact of climate change on health was also discussed. Pradeep Srivastava, executive director, TIFAC emphasised on creating a healthcare system that is equitable, preventive, resilient to climate change and innovative by 2047.

'Cancer care infra needs decentralisation'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 3: With the objective of discussing the issue of rising cancer cases in the state, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD) recently organised a programme with medical experts from City-based hospitals.

Participants in the programme included directors of Radiation Oncology Utkal Hospital Sanjib Kumar Mishra and Sanjay Kumar Mishra and senior consultant and head of Radiation Oncology in SUM Ultimate Medicare Chira Ranjan Khadanga.

Highlighting state government's initiative toward cancer care, the experts said that recent data by the Health and Family Welfare department

reveals a 22.5 per cent increase in cancer incidence and a 22.6 per cent rise in mortality over the past decade.

Sanjib Kumar Mishra said, "Odisha faces a significant challenge in cancer care. While national data shows a worrying rise, Odisha experiences a higher burden, particularly with breast and cervical cancers."

Early detection and access to advanced therapies are crucial for improving patient outcomes. However, bridging the gap between available resources and patient needs remains a hurdle, he said.

"Mobilisation of available resources can be made more efficient by decentralising the cancer care infrastructure. This can be achieved by es-

tablishing well-equipped diagnostic centres and treatment facilities in district hospitals and peripheral areas," Mishra added.

Khadanga emphasised the importance of technological advancements and building a robust infrastructure to bring down cancer care incidences.

Khadanga highlighted the technological advancements in treatment, particularly proton therapy which holds immense promise.

"These innovations allow for the highly targeted eradication of tumours with minimal impact on surrounding healthy tissues. However, we need a robust healthcare infrastructure to turn the tide against cancer," he said.

Sanjay Kumar Mishra said, "The government's focus on improving cancer care infrastructure and high-quality healthcare is commendable. With the right investments and collaborative efforts, Odisha will soon become a hub for cancer care not just in India, but across the globe."

Ants perform life-saving amputations on injured mates

RESEARCH ON CARPENTER ANTS PROVIDES FIRST EXAMPLE OF A NON-HUMAN ANIMAL SEVERING LIMBS OF INJURED COMRADES TO CURB INFECTIONS

New research shows that some ants perform limb amputations on injured comrades to improve their survival chances. The behaviour was documented in Florida carpenter ants - scientific name *Camponotus floridanus* - a reddish-brown species more than half an inch (1.5 cm) long inhabiting parts of the south-eastern United States.

These ants were observed treating injured limbs of nest mates

either by cleaning the wound using their mouthparts or by amputation through biting off the damaged limb. The choice of care depended on the injury's location. When it was further up the leg, they always amputated. When it was further down, they never amputated.

"In this study, we describe for the first time how a non-human animal uses amputations on another individual to save their life," said entomologist Erik Frank of the University of Wurzburg in Germany, lead author of the research published on Tuesday in the journal *Current Biology*.

"I am convinced that we can safely say that the ants' 'medical system' to care for the injured is the most sophisticated in the animal kingdom, rivaled only by our own," Frank added.

This species nests in rotting wood and defends their home

vigorously against rival ant colonies.

"If fights break out, there is a risk of injury," Frank said.

The researchers studied injuries to the upper part of the leg, the femur, and the lower part, the tibia. Such injuries are commonly found in wild ants of various species, sustained in fights,

while hunting or through predation by other animals.

The ants were observed in laboratory conditions.

"They decide between amputating the leg and spending more time caring for the wound. How they decide this, we do not know. But we do know why the treatment differs," Frank said.

It has to do with the flow of hemolymph, the bluish-greenish fluid equivalent to blood in most invertebrates.

"Injuries further down the leg have an increased hemolymph flow, meaning that pathogens already enter the body after only five minutes, rendering amputations useless by the time they could be performed. Injuries further up the leg have a much slower hemolymph flow, giving enough time for timely and effective amputations," Frank said.

In either case, the ants first cleaned the wound, likely applying secretions from glands in the mouth while also probably sucking out infected and dirty hemolymph. The amputation process itself takes at least 40 minutes and sometimes more than three hours, with constant biting at the shoulder.

With amputations after an upper leg injury, the survival rate documented was around 90-95 per cent, compared to about 40 per cent for unattended injuries. For lower leg injuries, in which just cleaning was performed, the survival rate was about 75 per cent, compared to around 15 per cent for unattended injuries.

Wound care has been documented in other ant species that apply an antibiologically effective glandular secretion to injured nest mates. This species lacks that gland.

Ants, which have six legs, are fully functional after losing one. It was female ants observed doing this behaviour.

"All worker ants are female. Males play only a minor role in ant colonies - mate once with the queen and then die," Frank said.

REUTERS

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Former MLA Aditya Madhi passes away

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 3: Former MLA of Malkangiri Assembly segment Aditya Madhi died Wednesday.

He was 49 at the time of his death. Madhi was suffering from kidney related ailments and died while undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Bhubaneswar, Wednesday evening.

He had undergone kidney transplantation two years back. A pall of gloom descended in Malkangiri district after report of his death spread. He represented Malkangiri segment in the state Assembly as a BJP MLA from 2019 to 2024. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family on Madhi's death and prayed for peace of the soul.

Three cops suspended for dereliction of duty

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, July 3: Three officials of Sadar Police Station in this district were suspended Wednesday for dereliction of duty.

Nayagarh Superintendent of Police (SP) Rahul Jain suspended the trio including sub-inspector Hasina Pradhan, assistant sub-inspector Rajeswari Nayak and constable Purnachandra Mohapatra of Nayagarh Sadar PS on charges of dereliction of duty following allegations that the officers instructed complainants to return home instead of filing their complaints, thereby neglecting their duties.

According to sources, a series of thefts occurred in Golagola village under the jurisdiction of Sadar police station, Monday night. Misceants allegedly decamped with ornaments more than ₹22 lakh along with cash from the houses of four villagers.

The victims rushed to the Sadar police station to file their complaints. However, instead of registering their complaints and taking prompt action, the on-duty police personnel allegedly told them to return and visit the next morning to file FIRs, delaying the investigation and action on the loot cases.

Body of missing fisherman found in Kolab reservoir

KORAPUT: The body of a fisherman who was missing since Monday has been recovered by the ODRAF team of OSAP 3rd Battalion from Mahadeiput ghat of Kolab reservoir in this district, Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Dhanurjaya Sisa, 18, a resident of Chandalmunda village under Lamtaput block. According to information, Dhanurjaya had ventured into Kolab reservoir to catch fish Monday evening. However, he fell into deep water while fishing in the reservoir and went missing. Family members of Dhanurjaya then informed Lamtaput police about the incident. Local police then sought help from the ODRAF team in Koraput to rescue the missing fisherman. A team led by ODRAF havildar Sunil Ekka launched a search operation near Mahadeiput Ghat of the Kolab reservoir. After a long rescue operation in the reservoir the ODRAF team finally managed to fish out the body of Dhanurjaya. The body has been handed over to the family members of the deceased after post-mortem.

Telugu chair, translator centre in Berhampur varsity hang fire

Former CMs of both Andhra and Odisha had agreed for setting up of a Telugu chair in Berhampur University in keeping with the establishment of an Odia chair at Ambedkar University in Srikakulam of Andhra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 3: Establishment of a Telugu chair at Berhampur University here on the lines of establishment of an Odia chair at Ambedkar University in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh is yet to become a reality despite passage of three and half years.

The decision was taken after former Andhra chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy held talks with then Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on the issue during a visit to Bhubaneswar. The two CMs had then agreed for setting up of a Telugu chair in Berhampur University in accordance with establishment of an Odia chair at Ambedkar University at Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh.

Over three and half years have passed since the agreement but the establishment of the chairs in both the universities is yet to become a reality. On the other hand, the establishment of the proposed Odia-Telugu translator centre in Berhampur has also been pushed to cold storage while a BEd course in Telugu language is yet to be introduced at Berhampur University.

Sources said as much as half of the total population in Berhampur is from the Telugu community while the other half belongs to Odia community. Members of both the communities share a cordial relationship and live in a bond of brotherhood and amity.

The tradition and culture of South India is also witnessed in Berhampur where both the communities do not mind taking part in each other's festivals and



functions.

Berhampur Assembly segment under Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency has witnessed 16 Assembly elections from 1951-52 to 2019 but the mainstream parties in the state have never fielded a candidate from the Telugu community.

However, the ruling BJP fielded a candidate from Telugu community for the first time in the 2024 elections and created history. BJP candidate K Anil Kumar defeated his nearest BJD rival by over 18,000 votes and was elected to the state Assembly.

This has spread cheers among the members of Telugu community as they hoped that Kumar will try to fulfil their demands after his election to the state Assembly.

Sources said that a team from Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council visited Berhampur, January 23, 2021. The team led by the then chairman of the Legislative Council Mohammed Ahmed Sarif also comprised members of Telugu Language and Culture Committee in Andhra Pradesh.

The team members interacted with the people from Telugu community and tried to ascertain their problems related to Telugu language and culture in the city. They also held discussions with

the members of Andhra Bhasha Bibardhan Samajam and tried to ascertain problems that they might be facing in the city.

They also tried to know the state government's attitude towards the members of Telugu community and visited Telugu schools in the city in the presence of state government officials. The members of the Bibardhini Samajam then submitted a 10-point charter of demands to the members of the Andhra's Legislative Council team.

Their demands include opening of an Odia-Telugu translator centre in Berhampur and establishment of a Telugu chair in Berhampur University. They also urged the committee members to place their demands before the state government.

Later, the team members visited Bhubaneswar and held talks with the state government. They returned to Andhra Pradesh and urged their own government to press for fulfilment of the demands with the Odisha government.

Ten months later, the then Andhra CM visited Bhubaneswar and held discussions with the then Odisha CM in this regard, November 2021. The two Chief Ministers agreed and decided for establishment of a Telugu chair in Berhampur University in keeping with an Odia chair at Ambedkar University in Srikakulam of Andhra Pradesh.

Since then, three and half years have passed but the chairs are yet to be established in both the universities. The establishment of an Odia-Telugu translator centre and introduction of BEd course in Telugu language are yet to materialise.



PLANTING HOPES: Women transplanting paddy saplings on a farmland at Sadar village under Chatiguda panchayat of Jhariaon block in Nabarangpur district following three days of incessant rainfall, Wednesday

Jumbo calf rescued from canal after 3-hr operation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada, July 3: After a three-hour long operation, Forest department personnel here rescued an elephant calf from a sub-canal of Subarnarekha river near Asanabani village in Durgapur panchayat under Betanati range in Mayurbhanj district, Wednesday.

According to sources, the elephant calf had fallen into the canal and could not climb out of it. Hearing the jumbo calf's trumpets, villagers along with the

Gajasathi team and Forest officials swung into action to rescue the animal.

However, the rescue operation took more than three hours as two tuskers guarding the calf at the spot became violent after seeing an earthmover machine which the Forest personnel were using in the rescue operation. During the rescue work the tuskers were seen violently attacking the excavator. However, despite the obstacles, the rescue team persevered and finally managed to rescue the elephant calf.

State to plant mangroves in coastal village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, July 3: Forest department will plant mangroves in a coastal village of Ganjam district to mitigate cyclone impacts and curb soil erosion, officials said Wednesday.

The plantation drive will be taken up at Purunabandh, a village located near the mouth of river Rushikulya under Khallikote range of Berhampur forest division.

Approximately 15,000 mangrove saplings will be planted across a six-hectare area near the village under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project, Sunny Khokkar, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Berhampur and the project's nodal officer, said.

The project, costing an estimated ₹33 crore, aims to enhance climate resilience across 33 panchayats in four coastal blocks - Chikiti, Rangelunda, Khallikote, and Ganjam, primarily benefiting the fishing community. Collaboration among various de-

partments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Animal Resources Development, and Watershed Management is pivotal for its implementation, Khokkar emphasised.

Experts have advocated for mangrove plantation in coastal Ganjam, identified as vulnerable to floods and cyclones.

Mangrove forests serve as natural barriers during cyclonic events, they noted. Ganjam district faced severe impacts from cyclones Phailin in 2013 and Titli in 2018.

The DFO outlined plans to conduct mangrove plantation on a trial basis in saline zones along the riverside near Purunabandh, ensuring it does not disrupt the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles. These endangered turtles annually flock in large numbers near the village for mass nesting, although they did not arrive this year.

A mangrove nursery has been set up near Purunabandh to facilitate the plantation. According to the Forest Survey of India-2021, Odisha's mangrove cover spans approximately 259 square kilometres, spanning across five coastal districts- Kendrapara, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, and Puri.



Steel City girl placed in IBR for painting sibling deities on seeds

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, July 3: Lord Jagannath's blessing and an indomitable passion to do something different with 21 types of seeds have catapulted a Steel City girl into the India Book of Records (IBR).

The inspiring feat of 15-year-old Smrutirekha Nayak, a Class X student of Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Rourkela, is really commendable and her achievement is a testament to the fact that a human being's creativity can create wonders on anything, even something as mundane and small as seeds. However, Smrutirekha thoughtfully attaches a great philosophy with her idea as she chose 21 different varieties of seeds to paint them with devotion and transformed those from mundane to divine with her art.

"I chose seeds because a seed is the basis of life, something which carries life in it. And Lord Jagannath is the seed of our life. So, I thought



what could be better than this," she explained the philosophy behind her creation.

Poised with this philosophy, Smrutirekha got down to the daunting task of creating the pictures of the sibling deities - Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra, on 21 types of seeds. "For 16 hours I worked relentlessly without any break to create these 21

images of different sizes, starting from 0.3 cm to 0.8 cm length," she said over phone from her residence at Chhend. "I used seeds of black gram, lemon, pumpkin, coriander and others," she added.

She went to Puri and as per her own admission, she perhaps got a divine calling and suddenly thought about approaching the IBR. "It was a sort of pilgrimage. I watched the trinity inside the temple and I found myself completely lost. After that I met the priests and showed them my artworks and they were also astonished."

"I waited for some time after sending the video of my creation to IBR as there was no reply. I got a reply from them June 27 confirming my selection and soon I got the certificate and other gifts from IBR."

She gave credits to her parents, to those who encouraged her and also the Lord himself. "It was the blessings of the Lord that I have got the award," she said.

TENDER NOTICE

Maa Markama +3 College, Bissamcuttack invites sealed Tenders for following items from the reputed agencies. The Tender document may be downloaded from our website- <https://mmplus3college.in/>

Sl. No.	Name of the items	Last date & time of submission of Tender form	Date & Time of opening technical bids	Date & Time of opening financial bids
1	CBCS & Other books	28.07.2024 4.00 P.M.	03.08.2024 10.30 A.M.	03.08.2024 11.30 A.M.

Interested agencies may submit their sealed tenders in two bid system i.e. Technical bid & Financial Bid as per terms & conditions of the tender documents. The filled in tender form of each item with tender fees and earnest money by Demand Draft in favour of Principal-cum-Secretary, Maa Markama +3 College, Bissamcuttack. The document should reach to the college office clearly superscribed "Tender for....."

Sd./- Principal-cum-Secretary
Maa Markama +3 College, Bissamcuttack
mmdegrecollege@gmail.com, www.mmplus3college.in
Contact No: 9337150340 / 8249390192

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No.L-06:The Executive Engineer (Agril.), Dhenkanal Division, Dhenkanal who has been authorized as the procuring officer for the projects of Dhenkanal Division, Dhenkanal is directed to invite percentage rate bid on behalf of the Governor of Odisha for the Civil construction works under Dhenkanal Division. The costs of the project approximately from 10.00 lakhs to 45.00 lakh. Bid document consisting of detailed tender call notice, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of the contract and other necessary documents can be downloaded from www.tendersorissa.gov.in from 09.07.2024 at 10.00 hours to 16.07.2024 at 16.00 hours. The bid will be opened on 18.07.2024 at 03.30 PM in the O/o Executive Engineer (Agril.), Dhenkanal Division, Dhenkanal. All other details regarding term and conditions, corrigendum from time to time if any, DTCN etc. can be seen and downloaded from www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
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TENDER CALL NOTICE
No.1766/DDMCH, Keonjhar Dated-03.07.2024
No.E-84: Sealed Tenders are hereby invited by the undersigned from the Firms/ Agencies/ Companies/ NGOs for supply of signage articles to DDMCH, Keonjhar. The tenders should reach the office of the Superintendent, DDMCH, Keonjhar on or before 01/08/2024 by 5 PM through Regd. Post/ Speed Post only which will be opened on 02/08/2024 at 11 AM in the office chamber of the undersigned at DDMCH, Kabitara campus, Keonjhar.
The details terms and conditions can be downloaded from the College or District web site kendu.jhar.odisha.gov.in/gmchkeonjhar.odisha.gov.in.
OIPR-10205/11/0003/2425

Sd./- Superintendent
DDMCH, Keonjhar

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF
POLICE, ODISHA, CUTTACK
DETAILS OF THE TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT, REMUNERATION, PLACE OF POSTING, APPLICATION FORM, ETC FOR ENGAGEMENT OF LEGAL ADVISORS ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS

No.D-82: Applications are invited from the Retired Districts Judges / Addl. Districts Judges / Public Prosecutors / Addl. Public prosecutors for engagement on a reemployment basis as Legal advisors, in the Office of the Director General of Police, Odisha, Cuttack on a contractual basis to render legal advice / opinion in various Court cases, service matters and other issues / matters etc. with the following stipulations with reference to Home Department letter No. 11284/D&A dt. 30.03.2024.

- The age of the candidate should be below 65 years as on 01.08.2024.
- Should be able to read, write, and speak in Odia language.
- The engagements shall be made in a transparent manner for one year initially.
- The performance of the Legal Advisor is to be reviewed periodically and documented, at least once in a quarter.
- Continuance of the system of legal Advisors after the 1st year would be considered after assessment of the impact of the new system in improving the quality of investigation.
- After an initial engagement of one year, the same should be renewed based on satisfactory performance.
- Their monthly remuneration is to be fixed on a case-to-case basis as per Finance Department Office Memorandum No. 7022/F dt. 17.03.2018 and Office Memorandum No. 24533/F dt. 29.09.2022.

Candidates interested to serve at Cuttack only shall apply to the Director General of Police, Odisha, Cuttack in the given form by e-mail or registered post, which should reach the office on or before 10.08.2024 positively. The selection will be governed by the procedure and rules laid down vide Govt. of Odisha, G.A Department Resolution No. 23750/Gen. dt. 27.08.2014 and Home Department Letter No. 22228/D&A dt. 25.06.2016.

Details of the postal address of the Office of Director General of Police, email, Application Form and relevant Govt. orders cited above are available on the Odisha Police website : www.odishapolice.gov.in.

Sd./- Addl. D.G. of Police (Hdqs.)
Odisha, Cuttack
OIPR-12029/11/0011/2425



Always do what you know to be the best even if it is the most difficult thing to do.

THE MOTHER



New Battlefield

NATO's July summit in Washington marks the 75th anniversary of the alliance's establishment, and it comes at a critical juncture. As threats to global stability evolve beyond conventional military domains, NATO must confront the barrage of disinformation undermining its unity and values. Specifically, member countries must prevent hostile authoritarian regimes from manipulating public opinion by leveraging technology to wage "cognitive warfare."

Fittingly, the upcoming summit is expected to focus on the war in Ukraine and the need for NATO's collective-defense framework to adapt to the realities of today's information ecosystem. Russia's brutal war of aggression has revealed the scale of the threat posed by cognitive warfare, with the Kremlin orchestrating a massive social-media campaign aimed at spreading false narratives, fueling anti-Western and anti-democratic sentiment, and undermining NATO's greatest strength: its unity.

To be sure, information warfare is not new. During the Cold War, NATO recognised and countered the Soviet Union's efforts to use propaganda and disinformation to weaken Western democracies. Since then, however, the digital revolution and subsequent rise of artificial intelligence have compounded the problem, enabling bad actors to produce and disseminate deepfakes and other forms of AI-augmented content at unprecedented speed and scale.

While these powerful new tools can yield significant economic benefits, they can also be dangerous weapons. Hostile powers like Russia are already using disinformation against democracies to influence domestic public debate, drive polarisation, erode trust in institutions, and weaken their ability to address shared challenges. This super election year, with half of the world's population casting ballots, creates a unique opportunity for NATO's adversaries to undermine democratic processes and fuel political instability.

NATO countries must confront the threat of AI-augmented disinformation head-on. This requires moving beyond the current reactive approach, which focuses on debunking falsehoods. The alliance must develop a comprehensive collective-defense doctrine that treats the information ecosystem as a key front in the battle to protect democratic societies.

Several key changes are needed. First, NATO must develop the capability to monitor and analyse disinformation in real time. Investing in open-source intelligence (OSINT) tools and collaborating with tech companies is crucial to developing the necessary technical expertise to identify and counter malign influence campaigns. Specifically, NATO must invest in content authenticity and transparency tools – such as large language models (LLMs), AI classifiers, and natural language processing for sentiment analysis – that can identify AI-generated or altered content.

Second, countering disinformation effectively requires fast, agile, and far-reaching strategic communications. To this end, NATO must proactively promote its interests and mission, highlight the failures of authoritarian regimes, and offer its own positive narrative.

But to do this effectively, NATO must also take the battle to its adversaries' information ecosystems. By actively highlighting the malign activities of authoritarian regimes on their own digital platforms, NATO could undermine autocrats' narratives and expose their tactics. At the same time, amplifying independent voices in these domains could create a powerful multiplier effect, fostering greater resilience against propaganda and disinformation.

Third, because disinformation campaigns transcend national borders, countering them will require NATO to establish collaborative relationships with governments, private companies, and civil-society organisations. These partnerships should focus on developing shared standards, early-warning systems, coordinated responses to massive disinformation campaigns, and mechanisms to trace and mitigate malign activities across multiple sovereign information environments. As the concerted effort to combat Russian disinformation about Ukraine demonstrates, continuous collaboration is vital.

Lastly, the best defense against disinformation consists in fostering informed, critical-thinking populations. By supporting programmes that promote media and digital literacy, like those already in place in Finland, NATO could help build societal resilience against propaganda and voter manipulation.

To implement this strategy, NATO will also require new organisational structures. For starters, the alliance should establish a disinformation unit responsible for coordinating intelligence, spearheading counter-messaging efforts, and building strategic partnerships. Such a unit could leverage the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), as well as the work of Europol – the European Union's law-enforcement agency – to bolster and expand information-sharing networks.

Given the threat posed by the emerging "axis of disruptors" – comprising China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea – NATO must combine its military prowess with equally sophisticated mechanisms to protect its members' information systems against cognitive warfare. Member countries should use the upcoming Washington summit to make this approach a top priority. Confronting disinformation is not just about protecting the integrity of public debate; it is also about defending the very foundations of freedom and security. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss, because what is at stake is a battle we cannot afford to lose.

Ylli Bajraktari is a former chief of staff to the US National Security Adviser and a former executive director of the US National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence.

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Ylli Bajraktari

Confronting disinformation is not just about protecting the integrity of public debate; it is also about defending the very foundations of freedom and security



DK Giri

DUE TO THEIR LARGE SIZE OF POPULATION, THE HINDUS IN BRITAIN HAVE BEGUN TO WIELD CONSIDERABLE ELECTORAL INFLUENCE IN BRITISH POLITICS

The 4 July UK Parliament election is significant from several dimensions which may have strong impact on India and UK relations. The British Labour Party is expected to seize power from the Conservatives after suffering four consecutive defeats. But even in the United Kingdom, poll predictions have gone dramatically wrong. From the Indian point of view, the diaspora has become for the first time hyperactive with Hindus of Indian origin having their own manifesto. Also, the incumbent government is led by Rishi Sunak, a first non-white Prime Minister of UK. Incidentally, he also openly proclaims his Hindu identity.

Another important development for India is that India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is part of election manifestos. London has also been trying to revive the Commonwealth which consists of the former colonies of the UK. Amongst them, India is the biggest and the largest economy. Recall that British colonialism used to treat India as its 'jewel in the crown'. So, the FTA is expected to be taken forward by any party coming to power from the 5th of July.

Unarguably, the issues mainly related to India merit some analysis. The Indian Diaspora is about 1.8 million, out of which 1.06 million are Hindus as per 2021 Census. Hinduism is now the third largest religion in England. Due to their large size of population, the Hindus in Britain have begun to wield considerable electoral influence in British politics. Their manifesto, "Hindu Manifesto UK 2024" has been jointly prepared by a coalition of 29 Hindu groups like BAPS Swaminarayan

FOCUS UK POLLS

THE DIASPORA CLOUT



The British Indians are not a politically coherent community and not without any controversies including moral turpitude. But as a diaspora, they are perceived as a significant political community

Sansha UK, Chinmaya Mission, and ISKCON UK. It has also received the support from several parliamentary candidates.

What does the Hindu manifesto consist of? It has seven key demands. These are: protection of Hindu places of worship, access to fair education, equal representation, streamlined immigration, health and social care, protection of dharmic values and recognition of anti-Hindu hate as a religious hate crime. Basically, the manifesto aims to unify the UK Hindu community's voice urging all parliamentary candidates to support the community.

Fast forward, in 2017 general elections, eight Hindu MPs were elected to the British Parliament which was an all-time high reflecting the community's increasing political clout. The highest point so far was the election of Rishi Sunak as the Prime Minister in 2022. Although, the Hindu leaders in the UK will be driven by the national interest of the country,

they could, to a great extent, contribute to the cultural diplomacy between the two countries which in turn enhances bilateralism. Reassertion of Indian traditions and culture, largely through reiteration of Hindu identity at the behest of the ruling BJP may have spurred the activism of Hindu leaders in the UK. At any rate, Diaspora of any ethnicity in any country feels somewhat nostalgic about the country of their origin.

As said, FTA with India is on the manifesto of both Tory and the Labour. Both sides would like to conclude it in mutual interests of both countries. Due to India's prolonged election process covering one-and-half month and seven phases, and campaigning in Britain the 14th round of negotiations have been stalled. The negotiations had begun in January 2022 under the premiership of Boris Johnson. Since then, the Tories have been bedevilled by the leadership crisis.

Now the Conservative manifesto reads, "We will finalise a

Free Trade Agreement with India, alongside a deeper strategic partnership on technology and defence."

The Labour Party has gone a few steps further on FTA. Their manifesto states, "We will seek a new strategic partnership with India, including a Free Trade Agreement, as well as deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology and climate change."

The British Indians are not a politically coherent community and not without any controversies including moral turpitude. But as a Diaspora, they are perceived as a significant political community. How to use this connection in India's foreign policy is a question to be addressed by diplomats in South Block.

Remember, India could have a formal relation with the European Union only after Britain joined it in 1973, although, New Delhi had made political contact with the Union since 1962. Once, when I was trying to be nominated to an international body, the Swedish friends suggested that I should have the backing of the Brits. New Delhi may be making new contacts with other European countries like France but a continued close relation with Britain is important for India. For many Indian students seeking higher studies, Britain is still a preferred destination. Many Indians would like to go to Britain and work. This helps relocating the huge Indian population. So, whatever happens in the election on 4 July, New Delhi ought to keep in mind the issues debated in the campaign.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism. @INFRA

SPECTRUM CULTURE

The forbidden food

In recent memory, the cow has been held up as a symbol of Hindu identity. It is often the case that one hears of the non-consumption of beef as intrinsic to "Bharatiya" or Indian culture. It should not be surprising for readers to know that there are families in our country who will readily disown their children should they consume beef even abroad. One reads of individuals who are lynched on the suspicion of consuming this forbidden meat frequently in our polarised environment. Considering such sentiments, the burden of tracing the trajectory of this practice and its sanctity falls upon dispassionate historians and writers.

Archaeologist BB Lal, in his book "The Rigvedic People," reports on the archaeological evidence of meat consumption in the Indus Valley sites. That Bos indicus, or the Indian humped cattle, was consumed is proved by fragments of charred bones and evidence of cuts by sharp instruments. Lal also finds evidence of consumption of cattle at the Hastinapur sites, where the legendary Mahabharata is set. Lal was not ideologically motivated. In fact, Lal was accused of being sympathetic to the Hindutva cause for his excavation at the Babri mosque site. Later in his life, the Vajpayee government awarded him with Padma Bhushan while the Modi government honoured him with

Padma Vibhushan.

The "Hinduness" of the inhabitants of Indus Valley civilization can still be debated. The archaeological evidence, nevertheless, are corroborated by scriptural evidence. The Rig Veda frequently refers to animal sacrifice, particularly oxen for Indra. The Taittiriya Brahmana considers the immolation of "heifers" to be an important feature of rituals associated on the new moon days. The text further elaborates on the method of cutting up the animal and distribution of its meat, thus making it implicit that the animal is for consumption.

In Rig Veda, Agni is referred to as one whose food is the ox and "the barren cow." The Shatapatha Brahmana (III. 1.2.21) refers to sage Yajnavalkya willing to consume the meat of Ox and cows provided it was tender. This text also declares meat to be the best kind of food. As the Sanskrit scholar and devout Hindu Bharat Ratna Pandurang Vaman Kane has noted, the offering of cows as sacrifice existed alongside its sacredness. VD Savarkar, the Hindutva ideologue and social reformer, castigated the orthodoxy heavily for worshipping an "animal that lies in its own filth." In his usual sardonic tone, Savarkar attacks cow worshippers who "filled their cupped palms with cow urine and sprinkled it all over a temple but if a pure and wise man like Dr. Ambedkar

were to give them Ganga water, let alone drinking it, if it were even sprinkled on them, they believe they have been polluted." Swami Vivekananda too considered the taboo against beef to be a mere cultural custom. He treated his disciple Sister Nivedita's brother to a beef-steak dinner in London. Vivekananda mentions that Brahmins consumed beef in ancient India. In his words: "There was a time in this very India when, without eating beef, no Brahmin could remain a Brahmin; you read in the Vedas how, when a Sannyasin, a king, or a great man came into a house, the best bullock was killed." Furthermore, Vivekananda says that according to ancient rituals, "a man cannot be a good Hindu who does not eat beef." In the same passage, decrying the injunctions against beef as optional and temporary, Vivekananda hints at the flexibility of caste by arguing that caste in contemporary age ought to be "dispensed with." Decades after, Ambedkar would scholarly probe the connections between beef eating and caste.

Ambedkar starts his critique by referring to the Census of 1910, which found that the untouchables consumed the dead cow as one of their chief sources of food. Surveying the scriptural texts of Hinduism and Buddhism, Ambedkar proves indisputably that touchable Hindus, including Brahmins ate beef in the past.

The non-Brahmin could have given up the consumption of beef to imitate the hierarchically superior Brahmins. What led to the Brahmin giving up beef? The Aitareya Brahmana not only describes ritual sacrifice but also prescribes methods of butchering by Brahmin. Ambedkar postulates that it was the conflict between Brahminism and Buddhism, which compelled Brahmins to give up ritual sacrifice of the agriculturally useful cow in the face of Buddhist condemnation. This is one of the many plausible hypotheses that attempts to resolve this age-old question.

All these facts together merely elucidate the nuances of the debate concerning the historicity and the ritual sanctity of the cow. Should one condemn great individuals like Vivekananda, Savarkar and Ambedkar as anti-Hindu or averse to Indian culture merely because they did not see value in an artificial ritual? Is Indian culture or "Bharatiyata" so narrow that it cannot accommodate an individual with different dietary habits? Is our path to progress being impeded by our tendency to legislate personal religious beliefs? These are questions I leave the reader to ponder over.

The writer is a columnist and a student at Jindal School of International Affairs. Views are personal.



Anwesh Satpathy

IS INDIAN CULTURE OR "BHARATIYATA" SO NARROW THAT IT CANNOT ACCOMMODATE AN INDIVIDUAL WITH DIFFERENT DIETARY HABITS?

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1776: United States Declaration of Independence is adopted in Philadelphia. The statement declared the independence of the 13 British colonies from the British crown. It also announced the creation of a new country called the United States of America. Then handwritten declaration was approved by the Second Continental Congress and was signed by 56 delegates on August 2, 1776.
- 1826: Two major figures of the American Revolution who became U.S. presidents, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, died—50 years to the day after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.
- 1845: Essayist and philosopher Henry David Thoreau moved to his retreat at Walden Pond, where he eventually wrote a series of reflective essays titled Walden; or, Life in the Woods.
- 1855: American author Walt Whitman first published Leaves of Grass, a landmark in the history of American literature; undergoing numerous revisions, the poetry collection became known for its unconventional language and its celebration of the human body and sexual passion.
- 1865: Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was published, though the first print run was soon recalled because of quality issues; a new first edition was released in November.

Hathras horror

Sir, The stampede that took place at a religious event in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, killing more than 120 people and injuring many is heartbreaking and extremely saddening. Deadly crowd surges have become a common sight in India, especially during religious events which are often held in cramped areas with shoddy infrastructure and few safety measures. There have been a number of stampedes in India over the last some decades, as many religious events are organised without adequate preparations, and proper safety measures in place. The role of authorities and their utter failure and negligence to manage huge crowds primarily cause such stampedes. While the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had released guidelines in 2014 for crowd management, these directions are flouted with impunity. By ensuring separate entry and exit points at a location, deploying adequate police and security personnel and using a public address system to dispel rumours and any other communication, stampedes can be prevented, saving precious human lives.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

High expectations

Sir, A parliamentarian becomes a good Speaker when he is able to take all parties together. Every political party expects a Speaker of either House in the Parliament to be impartial and sober. Speaker Om Birla, has the onerous distinction of being elected as the Lok Sabha as a Speaker for a second consecutive term. Birla has promised an "impartial" conduct towards all members. So far so good but he has to take sufficient care not to hurt any past leader of the country even inadvertently. No parliamentary proceeding should be undertaken behind a veil of secrecy. By all accounts, the 18th Lok Sabha is destined to be acrimonious due to the enhanced Opposition strength. Speaker Om Birla needs to keep a cool demeanor and ensure that the House doesn't consistently run into rough weather. Additionally, he has to reciprocate to the just demands of the Opposition parties because reciprocity is always good for a robust democracy. And key Bills need to be passed keeping the spirit of democracy in view.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

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

Orissa POST
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Deluge drowns North East

DMK ups demand for NEET abolition

- Assam flood situation remains critical, over 16.25 lakh people affected
- Assam death toll in this year's floods, landslides, storms has risen to 56
- Five killed, widespread damage in Nagaland due to rain-related incidents
- 11 wild animals drown in Kaziranga National Park
- Flood situation remains grim in Arunachal Pradesh, over 60K affected
- Manipur floods kill 2, over 2K evacuated; schools to remain closed till Thursday



rivers continued to surge above the danger mark, officials said. Four districts - Namsai, Lohit, Changlang, and East Siang - bore the brunt of severe flooding, while other districts witnessed landslides following incessant rains over the past few days, they added.

In Papum Pare district, a cloudburst triggered the release of a significant volume of water from the Pare Hydropower Project (PHEP). A high flood alert has been issued for Namsai district and Wakro circle in Lohit district, where water levels have exceeded danger levels, officials said.

Sources from the state water resources department reported that 34 villages in Namsai and Wakro have been affected by floods so far.

According to official reports, five villages in Lohit district, 11 in the state capital, 16 in Changlang district, and four in West Kameng district have also been hit.

The ongoing rains and resultant floods and landslides have affected a total of 61,948 people across the state. Approximately 300 people have been evacuated to relief camps in the state capital, Changlang, and Namsai districts, officials said.

The calamity has also impacted 143.58 hectares of agriculture and horticulture land in the state.

MANIPUR FLOODED

Incessant rainfall has caused flooding at several places in Manipur's Imphal West and Imphal East districts after two major rivers breached embankments, prompting the evacuation of over 2,000 people, officials said Wednesday.

The state government has declared a holiday for all government offices Wednesday, while schools will remain closed till Thursday in view of the flood situation, they said.

The Imphal river breached its embankment at Singjamei Oinam Thingel in Imphal West, and the Kongba river at Kongba Irong and parts of Keirao in Imphal East, a senior official said. The Iril river also overflowed at Sawombung and parts of Ksheteigao in Imphal East.

NAGALAND SWAMPED

Rain-related incidents have claimed at least five lives and caused widespread damage in Nagaland in the last few days, an official release said Wednesday.

Damages to houses, roads, bridges and paddy fields have been reported, the release issued by Johnny Ruangmei, Joint Chief Executive Officer of the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) said.

With water levels in many rivers in the state rising after continuous rainfall over the past days, the NSDMA requested people to refrain from fishing or picnicking during the monsoon season.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, July 3: Assam continues to grapple with a severe flood crisis, affecting 16.25 lakh people across 23 districts, as the water level of major rivers, including the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, flowing above the danger mark, an official report said.

On Tuesday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited Golaghat district following breach of embankments, inspected flood-hit areas, interacted with the suffering population and held meetings with officials to provide relief and rehabilitation to people reeling under the deluge.

The Chief Minister reviewed the situation in Garal Bhattapara Gaonburah ghat and also inspected the Dharapur Jangrabari Sluice Gate over River Khana.

He reassured residents of repair work on damaged embankments and roads, alongside provisions of food and medical aid in relief camps.

The current second wave of floods have affected Barpeta, Biswanath, Cachar, Charaideo, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karbi Anglong, Karimganj, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Tinsukia and Udalguri districts.

Dhubri is the worst hit with over 2.23 lakh people suffering, followed by Darrang with nearly 1.84 lakh people and Lakhimpur with more than 1.66 lakh people reeling under flood waters, it added.

Nearly 8,400 people have been rescued by civil administra-

CONGRESS SLAMS MODI FOR NOT VISITING ASSAM

Appealing to all party workers to help people suffering due to the devastating flood in Assam, the opposition Congress Wednesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not paying any visit to the state during the ongoing crisis. The All India Congress Committee general secretary Jitendra Singh also criticised the BJP-led government in the state for "failing" to fulfill its promises regarding controlling the perennial flood. "During the Congress government, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came and visited the flood-affected areas and extended all possible help from the Central government. But unfortunately, no central leader of the NDA government has come to visit Assam as yet. It is extremely condemnable that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who can travel multiple times to Assam for election campaigns but cannot take time out to visit during this time of devastating floods in Assam," said Singh, who is also the in-charge of

Assam Congress. In a letter addressed to all Congress workers and leaders of Assam, he stressed that the state is reeling under unprecedented floods, affecting almost all districts causing immense distress to the people and damage to property. "We have observed that the Government of Assam has not been able to rise to the occasion as expected. Promises made by the government to the people of Assam for flood control have all failed," Singh said. During this hour of need, the Congress party must stand by the people of the state and extend all possible help and support in the affected areas, he added. "I urge upon our Pradesh Congress Committee president, Congress Legislature Party leader, MPs, MLAs, and senior leaders to visit and extend financial or material support in their respective flood-affected areas. The All India Congress Committee stands with the people of Assam at this hour of need. Please let us know how AICC can help in providing relief," Singh said.

tion, SDRF, NDRF and Emergency Services personnel from various parts of the state, ASDMA said.

The administration has been operating 515 relief camps and relief distribution centres in 24 districts, where 3,86,950 people have taken shelter at present.

On account of widespread flooding, over 11,20,100 domestic

animals and poultry are affected across the state.

The flood scenario in Kaziranga National Park is also critical with vast tracts of forests inundated and a baby rhino drowning in floodwaters.

ARUNACHAL UNDER WATER

The flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh remained unchanged Wednesday, as major

Plea in HC against titles to new criminal laws in Hindi, Sanskrit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 3: The Madras High Court Wednesday directed the Union government to file its response to a petition, which sought to declare as ultra vires to the provisions of the Constitution, the Centre giving nomenclature in Hindi and Sanskrit languages for the three new criminal Acts that have come into effect from July 1.

The three acts are- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha.

A division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice R Mahadevan and Justice Mohamed Shafiq posted to July 23, further hearing of the Public Interest Litigation filed by advocate B Ramkumar Adityan, which also sought a direction to the Union government to take appropriate steps to provide nomenclature in English for the new three criminal laws.

In his PIL, Adityan submitted that the Union government has given titles in Hindi and Sanskrit languages to the three legislations.

There were 28 states and 8

Union Territories in the country. Only 9 states and 2 Union Territories' official language was Hindi, he added.

He said Hindi was the mother tongue for about 43.63 percent of the total population of India, whereas it was not the case with the remaining.

However, the Union government has given names in Hindi and Sanskrit languages to these important legislations. According to data from the 2011 census, only 3.93 lakh people speak Hindi in Tamil Nadu, he added.

He said the PIL was filed in the interest of public particularly advocates, law officers and Judicial Officers, who were not familiar with the Hindi and Sanskrit languages.

The nomenclature in Hindi and Sanskrit languages for these legislations would create confusion, ambiguity and difficulty for the non-Hindi and non-Sanskrit speakers. Moreover, the names provided for these Acts were hard to pronounce for the non-Hindi and non-Sanskrit speakers. Therefore, the titles in Hindi and Sanskrit violate the fundamental right, he contended.



India-Mongolia joint military drill 'Nomadic Elephant' commences

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, July 3: A 14-day joint military exercise between the armies of India and Mongolia began at the Foreign Training Node in Meghalaya's Umroi Wednesday, a defence release said.

The 16th edition of 'Nomadic Elephant' will be participated by Indian Army personnel from the Sikkim Scouts and other arms and services, while the Mongolian contingent will be represented by its army's 150th Quick Reaction Force Battalion, it said.

The annual training exercise, aimed at boosting joint military capabilities of both the armed forces to conduct counter-insurgency operations, is conducted alternately between the two countries, with the previous edition held in Mongolia in July 2023.

The opening ceremony of the exercise was attended by Mongolia's ambassador to India, Dambajavyn Ganbold, and Major General Prasanna Joshi, General Officer Commanding 51 Sub Area of the Indian Army.

The exercise will focus on operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain.

Tactical drills during the exercise include response to a terrorist action, establishment of a joint command post, establishment of an intelligence and surveillance centre, securing of a helipad or landing site, small team insertion and extraction, special heliborne operations, cordon-search operations besides employment of drones and counter-drone systems, among others.

Meitei, Naga bodies in Manipur urge Gov to implement NRC to curb illegal influx

MANIPUR CM CLAIMS THAT THE INFLUX OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS FROM MYANMAR LED TO THE EMERGENCE OF 996 NEW VILLAGES IN THE STATE IN THE LAST 18 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, July 3: Leading Meitei and Naga community organisations Tuesday jointly urged Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uike to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state to curb infiltration from across the border and protect the indigenous people.

Raj Bhavan officials said that leaders of the Coordinating Committee for Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) and the United Naga Council (UNC) jointly urged the Governor to implement the NRC with a base year of 1951.

COCOMI Coordinator Thokchom Somorendro and UNC President NG Lorho led the joint delegation, which also submitted a memorandum to the Governor.

COCOMI is the apex body of the Meitei community in Manipur while the UNC is the leading organisation of Nagas in the state.

Somorendro and Lorho informed the Governor that NRC implementation in Manipur is extremely vital to curb the influx of illegal immigrants, which they claimed, "shattered the demographic imbalance" of the northeastern state.

"Illegal migrants have already caused serious uncertainties and political insecurities to the native population of the state," the memorandum said.

The COCOMI and UNC leaders have urged the Governor



that NRC should be implemented at the earliest so that scientific method of identification may be applied to detect illegal immigrants and ensure that no further infiltration occurs in the state henceforth.

"Random village recognition without verification must be stopped. They further mentioned that the abnormal increase of villages in specific districts should be examined and corrective measures must be taken up," they said.

Raj Bhavan officials said that the Governor assured the leaders of the two prominent organisations that necessary steps

would be taken to ensure the NRC was implemented in the state and it is just a matter of time.

"The Governor said the matter has been discussed with the President, Union Finance Minister, and Union Home Minister during her recent visit to Delhi. The Central government is aware of the situation in the state. She also assured the delegation that all necessary action would be taken up in the best interest of the people of Manipur," a Raj Bhavan official said.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh often said that due

to illegal migrants from Myanmar, a demographic imbalance is taking place in the state, adding it is a threat to the security of the nation as well as the indigenous people in the state.

He claimed that the influx of illegal migrants from Myanmar led to the emergence of 996 new villages in the state in the last 18 years, and since 2006, massive deforestation occurred to establish settlements and carry out poppy plantations while these illegal immigrants started encroaching on the resources, job opportunities, land, and rights of the indigenous people.



Annammalai slams 'drama'; actor Vijay backs Assembly resolution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, July 3: The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu Wednesday said the opposition to NEET is an "all-India issue" now and sounded confident of seeing a "good result," vis-a-vis its possible abolition, on a day when top Tamil actor Vijay backed an Assembly resolution against the central qualifying test piloted by the government recently.

The DMK's students' wing held a protest demanding the abolition of NEET, even as Opposition AIADMK and BJP hit out at the ruling party for "misleading people" and enacting a "drama" over the issue.

NEET has been a sensitive issue in Tamil Nadu as scores of medical aspirants have died allegedly by suicide over the past few years, either over failing the exam or fears of unable to crack it. All major political parties, including the DMK and the AIADMK have been opposed to NEET.

DMK has been opposing NEET for long, claiming it was against social justice and state's rights. It wants marks secured in the class 12 exams to be the criteria for medical admissions.

The DMK protest, titled "No More NEET" was led by the party's Students Wing Secretary and Kancheepuram MLA, CVMP Ezhilarasam.

DMK Organisation Secretary R S Bharathi addressed the pro-

testers. The agitation comes days after the Tamil Nadu Assembly passed yet another resolution, seeking NEET exemption to the state.

In his address at the protest venue, Bharathi said the DMK has been opposing NEET ever since it was introduced and that it could not "enter into Tamil Nadu" during the days of late party president and former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi. So was the case when late AIADMK supremo J Jayalalitha ruled the state.

Actor Vijay, who heads the political party Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) that would contest the 2026 Assembly polls in the state, also opposed NEET and wanted Education to be brought to the States' List as a permanent solution to such issues.

Addressing students at an event organised by him to honour rank holders of classes 10 and 12 exams, the actor-politician

claimed students in Tamil Nadu, especially the poor, those from backward and very backward classes in the rural areas have been "badly affected," following the introduction of the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test.

Meanwhile, BJP state president K Annammalai slammed the DMK for enacting a 'drama' using NEET. He said the BJP has pointed out many "short-comings" in the report of Justice AK Rajan Committee, appointed by the DMK government on the NEET issue.

He alleged that the committee set up by the DMK government was "not providing details on (enrollment of) government school students in government medical colleges," pre-NEET, despite seeking it repeatedly.

“This is an all-India issue. There will be a good result. Last time it was different, this time the Parliament is different, there will be changes”

RS BHARATHI | ORGANISATION SECRETARY, DMK

national

of the day quote

The five-judge bench held that the imposition of President's Rule was a misuse of article 356 and was clearly politically motivated based on the report of Governor Buta Singh

SANJAY KUMAR JHA | JD (U) RAJYA SABHA MP

Congress to ensure representation to all social components in upcoming assembly polls

RAMESH CHENITHALA | AICC IN-CHARGE OF MAHARASHTRA

Who is Mr Swaraj? He may be anybody, but I do not respond to people like that. Irresponsible people. I do not respond to (them)

ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN | KERALA GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Rain brings respite from sultry weather

New Delhi: Afternoon rain in Delhi Wednesday brought respite from the intense humidity that had gripped the city over the past few days even as some areas saw waterlogging and traffic snarl. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), "intense rainfall" was reported in south Delhi's Aya Nagar observatory that recorded 39.8 mm of rain during three hours. Karkardooma, India Gate, Laxmi Nagar, Parliament Street, Mehrauli, Lodhi Road, Palam and other areas received "light to "moderate" rain in the afternoon.

Army chief reviews security situation

Poonch/Jammu: Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday and exhorted the troops to remain steadfast to meet all security challenges, officials said. This was his first visit to the Jammu region after taking charge as the 30th chief of the Indian Army June 30 and it assumes significance in view of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra and massive anti-terror operations underway, especially in the hilly districts.

Suraj Revanna remanded to JC

Bangalore: The 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) court Wednesday remanded former Prime Minister, HD Deve Gowda's grandson and JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna to judicial custody till July 18. Suraj Revanna is facing charges of indulging in forceful unnatural sex with JD(S) workers. Suraj was investigated by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) after the victims registered cases against him in Holenarasipura Rural police station.

Amritpal to take oath as MP July 5

Chandigarh: Pro-Khalistani separatist and MP-elect Amritpal Singh, who is detained under the National Security Act (NSA) in Assam's Dibrugarh jail, has been granted parole and will take oath as a member of Parliament July 5, the day another jailed MP-elect, Engineer Rashid, will also be sworn in. Faridkot MP Sarabjit Singh Khalsa told the media Wednesday that he met Speaker Om Birla at his residence in Delhi Wednesday morning and he agreed to administer the oath to Amritpal Singh at his chamber in the Parliament.



When the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha kept on lying on many things, including facts and figures, a notice was put to the Speaker and we have requested the Speaker to take appropriate action. We are waiting for the action

KIREN RIJU | PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER

Controversial preacher Bhole Baba equated himself to God

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kasganj (UP), July 3: Tens of thousands of his dedicated followers would attend his 'satsang' in Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring states, but Wednesday controversial preacher Bhole Baba equated himself to God in his sermons chose not to make a public appearance as families of over 100 people who died in the stampede at his congregation in Hathras mourned their loss.

The self-styled godman, who is called Baba Narayan Hari and Saakar Vishwa Hari Bhole Baba, is not named in the list of the accused in the FIR filed in the in-

cident though his name is in the complaint. Over two decades after he quit the police department and became a religious preacher, Bhole Baba is presiding over several ashrams, the biggest of them in Mainpuri which was surrounded by police Wednesday though it was not clear whether he was inside. In another clip claimed to be of his cavalcade, a large posse of men attired in black and claimed to be his security escort are seen running with his vehicle as he leaves a sermon site.

In a brief statement Wednesday in which he condoled the loss of lives, the godman claimed that "anti-social



elements" were behind the stampede which occurred after he left the satsang and named a Supreme Court lawyer for "further legal action" in the matter. His two upcoming congrega-

ANDHRA TO ADOPT FREE SAND POLICY

Andhra Pradesh Mines, Geology and Excise Minister K Ravindra Wednesday said the government will supply sand free to everybody in the state by adopting a free sand policy in three months' time to prop up construction works. Ravindra said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is determined to adopt a free sand policy to reinvigorate the construction industry, bolstering livelihood prospects for lakhs of construction workers



NEET-UG LEAK CASE

CBI arrests co-conspirator from Dhanbad



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The CBI arrested an alleged co-conspirator in the NEET-UG paper leak case, Aman Singh, from Dhanbad in Jharkhand, officials said Wednesday.

The CBI has developed intelligence about Jharkhand-based module allegedly involved in the paper leak that resulted in the arrest of Singh, they said. The agency had earlier arrested principal and vice principal of Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in the case and two persons who allegedly provided safe premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by Bihar Police, the officials said.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the case. The FIR from Bihar pertains to leakage of paper while remaining from Gujarat and Rajasthan pertains to impersonation of candidates and cheating. The agency's own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry pertains to a "comprehensive investigation" into alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination.

NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. More than 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the test.

Champai resigns; Hemant stakes claim to form govt

Champai Soren has resigned as the Jharkhand chief minister to make way for Hemant Soren who was elected legislative party leader in a meeting today

AGENCIES



ED to move SC against J'hkhand HC's bail to Hemant

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is expected to approach the Supreme Court soon with a special leave petition (SLP) against a recent Jharkhand High Court order that granted bail to former Chief Minister and JMM leader Hemant Soren in a money-laundering case, official sources said Wednesday. The ED is likely to challenge the June 28 order passed by a bench of Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay, stating that the court's belief that Soren is "not guilty" is erroneous and the accused does not satisfy the twin conditions stipulated by section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The high court had said there was "reason to believe" that Soren was not guilty of the offence as alleged by the ED and there was no likelihood of the petitioner committing a similar offence.

legislature party leader, party sources said. "A decision was taken in the meeting to make Hemant Soren as the Chief Minister of the state again," a party source told PTI.

Congress's Jharkhand in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir and its state president Rajesh Thakur also attended the meeting, besides Hemant Soren's brother Basant and wife Kalpana. Hemant Soren, son of JMM supremo Shibu Soren was released from jail June 28 after nearly five months, after the high court granted him bail in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

He had resigned as the CM shortly before his arrest January 31 by the ED. Meanwhile, official sources in New Delhi said the Enforcement Directorate is soon expected to approach the Supreme Court with an SLP against the Jharkhand High Court order that granted bail to Hemant Soren in a money laundering case.

The ED is likely to challenge the June 28 order passed by the single bench of Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay stating that the court's belief that the petitioner

(Soren) is "not guilty" was erroneous and the accused does not satisfy the twin conditions as required under section 45 of the PMLA, sources said.

Meanwhile, in a post on X, BJP MP Nishkant Dubey said, "The Champai Soren era is over in Jharkhand. In the family-oriented party, people outside the family have no political future. I wish the chief minister drew inspiration from Bhagwan Birsa Munda and stood up against the corrupt Hemant Soren ji."

Jharkhand BJP president Babulal Marandi asserted that the tribals outside Shibu Soren's family are only temporary faces in JMM. He also alleged that the family believes in using people as per their needs and requirements. Marandi alleged that the real face of JMM, which had talked about rising above nepotism and electing a new Chief Minister five months ago, has once again been exposed.

He claimed that the "tiger of Kolhan", as Champai Soren is known in political circles, has been turned into a mouse today. While Jharkhand can have 12 ministers, the state Cabinet at present has a strength of 10.

SC blasts Manipur govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: "We do not trust the state", an angry Supreme Court said Wednesday as it fulminated against the Manipur government over an undertrial prisoner belonging to the minority Kuki community not being taken to hospital for treatment over safety concerns.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made some strong observations against the state while hearing a plea filed by Lunkhongam Haokip that he was suffering from piles and tuberculosis and was not taken to hospital by jail officials despite having severe backache. "We do not trust the state...The accused was not taken to hospital because he is from the Kuki community. So sad! We direct him to be examined now. If the medical report reveals something serious, we will take you to task," the bench said. The counsel for Haokip claimed the jail officials did not pay heed to persistent requests for medical help.

The bench perused an order of the Manipur High Court and found that the undertrial prisoner was not taken to hospital since he was from the Kuki community and "shifting him to a

hospital will be hazardous taking into account the law and order situation".

Manipur has been in the grip of an ethnic conflict between the minority Kuki and majority Meitei communities.

The bench directed the jail superintendent and the state authorities "to make necessary arrangements for his transportation to the Gauhati Medical College and get him examined therein. The medical exam shall be as regards piles, TB, tonsillitis, abdominal pain as well as problems in lower lumbar spine".

It sought a detailed medical report on or before July 15 and asked the state to bear all the expenses including the treatment cost.

Manipur descended into chaos and violence in May last year over a high court order directing the state government to consider including the non-tribal Meitei community in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

More than 170 people have been killed and several hundred others injured since ethnic violence first broke out in the state May 3 last year when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for ST status.



Boys play football in a waterlogged field during rains in Nadia, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

Our orders not just for fun: Apex court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The Supreme Court Wednesday pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government for non-compliance with its order on examination of a minor victim of sexual assault, asserting it does not pass an order "just for fun".

A vacation bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Ahsanuddin Amanullah, which granted the prosecution one week to examine the victim in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case, warned it would summon the state's home secretary if it was not done within the stipulated time.

"Our order was a mandatory order, it was to be followed in letter and spirit. We are not passing orders just for fun," Justice Amanullah told senior advocate Garima Prasad, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government. The top court was hearing the



bail application of the man accused of raping the girl.

"We are seeing it happening day in and day out...every state counsel is taking our orders casually. If it is not done within one week, we will call your home secretary here. We are at fault for letting these things happen...the fault is on our part. The mes-

sage has to go (out)," an annoyed apex court bench said.

Prasad, at the outset, sought adjournment saying the victim's evidence could not be recorded as there was a condolence meet at the trial court. The bench said the state's counsel was very casual in approach. Since it was a "mandatory order", the

prosecution should have filed a petition for extension of time.

"Be very careful in court. Now we are going to take serious note of this. It was your duty to file a proper application for extension of time," it told Prasad and granted a week's time for examining the victim. The accused, who has been booked for alleged rape and criminal intimidation of a 16-year-old girl, has challenged the Allahabad High Court order rejecting his bail plea November 30 last year.

According to the prosecution, an FIR dated September 19, 2023 was lodged against the accused for sexually assaulting the minor repeatedly for over six months.

Earlier, while taking note of the fact that many witnesses in the case had not been examined, the top court had directed that the victim be examined by June 30. The accused had claimed none of the material witnesses had been examined in the case and sought bail.

Court extends Kejriwal's custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: A court here Wednesday extended till July 12 the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Kejriwal, who is in jail till July 12 in the CBI case related to the excise policy, appeared before the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conference. The court, meanwhile, reserved for June 6 its order on Kejriwal's application to allow his wife Sunita Kejriwal to be present as an attendant during his medical checkup.

During the proceedings, Kejriwal requested the court's permission to speak but the court said he is already being represented through his counsels. Kejriwal said his wife was instrumental in managing his health over the years and as she had a detailed knowledge about his ailments and medical



history, granting her access to his medical records every week was justifiable and essential.

"Transparency in his medical care is not only a legal requirement but also a critical component of ethical medical practice. Therefore, the applicant (Arvind Kejriwal) and his wife must be duly informed of all aspects of the treatment being administered, ensuring their capability to make informed decisions about his health," the plea said.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has opposed the application.

national

of the day quote

Now, realising that power is slipping away from its hands, the BJP has realised that the system during the Congress' time was correct and the development of villages is safe in the hands of panches and sarpanches

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | CONGRESS LEADER

It's a well-known fact that more than 60 per cent of incidents of crime in the state occur mainly because of land-related disputes. Now with the appointment of 9,888 more officials, the department must complete the special survey and settlement of lands across the state by July 2025

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

Neither any minister was made from Hamirpur nor any development work was undertaken in the Hamirpur district in the last tenure of the Jai Ram government

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL CM

X POST OF THE DAY

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi was on fire all the time on Manipur issue. The way he directed other MPs to stand up against BJP speaks volume. This aggression is hurting BJP.

SHORT TAKES

TMC writes to Dhankhar

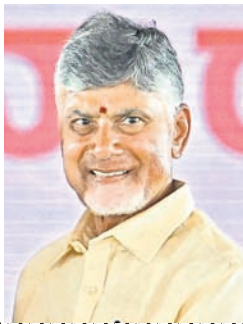
New Delhi: TMC's deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Sagarika Ghose Wednesday wrote to Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar urging him to expunge Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks made in the House on the Chopra and Sandeshkhali incidents of West Bengal. In a letter to Dhankhar, Ghose quoted excerpts from the Prime Minister's reply to the debate on Motion of Thanks on the President's address where he mentioned the incident of Chopra and also made a reference to Sandeshkhali.

Two DMK Mayors in TN resign

Coimbatore: Coimbatore Mayor A Kalpana Wednesday resigned from her post citing personal reasons, an official here said. DMK's Kalpana was the first woman Mayor of the city. Corporation Commissioner Sivaguru Prabakaran told reporters that Kalpana quit citing "personal reasons." Asked by reporters if she had cited any health issues for her decision, he said, "she has mentioned that it is due to health and family situation."

Woman, cousin face acid attack

Lucknow: A 21-year-old woman and her younger cousin brother sustained burns in an acid attack by an unidentified man in the Chowk area here Wednesday. Police reported that both victims are undergoing treatment at KGMU Trauma Centre. According to the police, the woman and her cousin were walking towards KGMU for a counselling session for him. "As they neared Chowk Stadium, an unidentified man confronted them, left, and then returned minutes later to throw acid on them before fleeing the scene," said a witness DCP, West Zone, Vishwajeet Srivastava.



Rebuilding Amaravati would have already started from yesterday and officials were given instructions. Crossing all the legal hurdles, we will go ahead

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM

NO NEW TAX IN MP BUDGET

Madhya Pradesh government Wednesday presented the state budget for 2024-25 with an outlay of ₹3.65 lakh crore, marking major allocations for the infrastructure development and welfare of women and tribals. No new taxes were announced in the budget, which state Finance Minister Jagdish Devda termed as "sarvparshi" (all-inclusive)



Govt forms Cabinet Committees

Except for Cabinet Committees on Security, Appointments and Accommodation, five Cabinet committees on economic affairs, parliamentary affairs, political affairs, investment and growth and skill, employment and livelihood have members from the allies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: The Modi government Wednesday constituted various Cabinet Committees, including the country's highest decision making bodies on security, economic and political affairs.

The members of the Cabinet committees included Union ministers from the BJP and its NDA partners like Janata Dal (U), Telugu Desam Party, Janata Dal (S), Shiv Sena and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas).

According to an official notification, the Cabinet Committee on Security comprises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Apart from PM Modi, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has Rajnath Singh, Shah, Sitharaman, Jaishankar, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Heavy Industries and Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy as its members.

Others in the committee are: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of Panchayati Raj and Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh.

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs comprises Modi, Rajnath Singh, Shah, Gadkari, Sitharaman, Goyal, Health Minister JP Nadda, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan



Naidu, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Jitan Ram Manjhi, Ports and Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, Women and Child Development Minister Annpurna Devi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy.

The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs comprises Rajnath Singh, Shah, Nadda, Sitharaman, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Naidu, Rijiju, Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar, Tribal Affairs Minister Jai Oram and Minister of Jal Shakti C R Patil.

The special invitees in the committee are Union Minister of State for Law (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal and Minister of State for Law L Murugan. Like previous years, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet comprises only two members - Modi and Shah.

Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth comprises PM Modi, Rajnath Singh, Shah, Gadkari, Sitharaman, Goyal, Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, Textiles

Minister Giriraj Singh, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, and Minister of Food Processing Industries Chirag Paswan.

Special invitees in the committee are Minister of State for Statistics Rao Inderjit Singh and Minister of Aayush Prataprao Jadhav. The Cabinet Committee on Accommodation has Shah, Gadkari, Sitharaman, Goyal and Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal as its members. Union Minister of State for Personnel and PMO Jitendra Singh is a special invitee in the committee.

The Cabinet Committee on Skill, Employment and Livelihood comprises the PM, Rajnath Singh, Shah, Gadkari, Sitharaman, Vaishnav, Pradhan, Yadav, Puri, Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. Union Minister of State for Skill Development Jayant Choudhary is the special invitee.

ZIKA CASES IN MAHA

Govt asks states to maintain vigil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: In view of some cases of Zika virus reported from parts of Maharashtra, the Union Health Ministry Wednesday issued an advisory to all states highlighting the need for maintaining a constant vigil over the situation in the country.

States have been urged to focus on screening pregnant women for Zika virus and monitor the growth of foetus of expecting mothers who tested positive for the infection. Besides the advisory by Director General of Health Services Dr Atul Goel, the ministry also asked health facilities to identify a nodal officer to monitor and act to keep the premises free of Aedes mosquito infestation.

Zika is an Aedes mosquito-borne viral disease like dengue and chikungunya.

Though non-fatal, Zika is associated with microcephaly (a condition where the head is much smaller than expected) in babies born to affected pregnant women which makes it a cause of major concern.

As Zika is associated with microcephaly and neurological consequences in the foetus of the affected pregnant women, states have been advised to alert the clinicians for close monitoring, the advisory stated.

States are urged to instruct the health facilities in the affected areas or those catering to cases from affected areas to screen pregnant women for Zika, monitor the growth of the fetus of expecting mothers who have tested positive for the infection and act as per Central government guidelines.

10 bridges collapse in 15 days in Bihar

CHIEF MINISTER NITISH KUMAR DIRECTED RWD AND RCD OFFICIALS TO IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT A SURVEY OF ALL OLD BRIDGES



UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Siwan (Bihar), July 3: With the collapse of three more bridges in Siwan and one in Saran district Wednesday, a total of 10 bridges have collapsed in the last 15 days in Bihar.

Officials said with the onset of the monsoon and the strong current of the river, the pillars of the bridges sank deeper and weakened, leading to cave-ins. The lack of maintenance has also been described as a causative factor, with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar directing authorities to prepare a maintenance policy of bridges of the Rural Works department.

The state government, taking serious note of such incidents, has also ordered a thorough probe to find out the exact reasons behind the series of bridge collapses. The government has warned that those found guilty would be given stringent punishment.

Three bridges collapsed in Siwan while one bridge gave way in Saran district Wednesday. In Siwan, one bridge each collapsed in Paterna, Tweta and Dhamai villages.

A portion of the bridge over the Gandaki river in Paterna village of Deoria block collapsed in Siwan district. It was constructed in 1982-83 and repair work was in progress, said Deputy Development Commissioner Mukesh Kumar.

It appeared that the rise in water level and strong current of Gandaki river could be the reason behind the bridge collapse but exact cause would be known only after an inquiry, he stated. As it is, a bridge had collapsed over Bund river in Khushi Dhangli village in Kishanganj district last Saturday while another bridge in the district broke down in Bansbari village June 26. In similar incident, a bridge collapsed in the Araria district June 18.

No casualties have been reported so far

SNIPPETS

Election Commission sends notice to Engineer Rashid

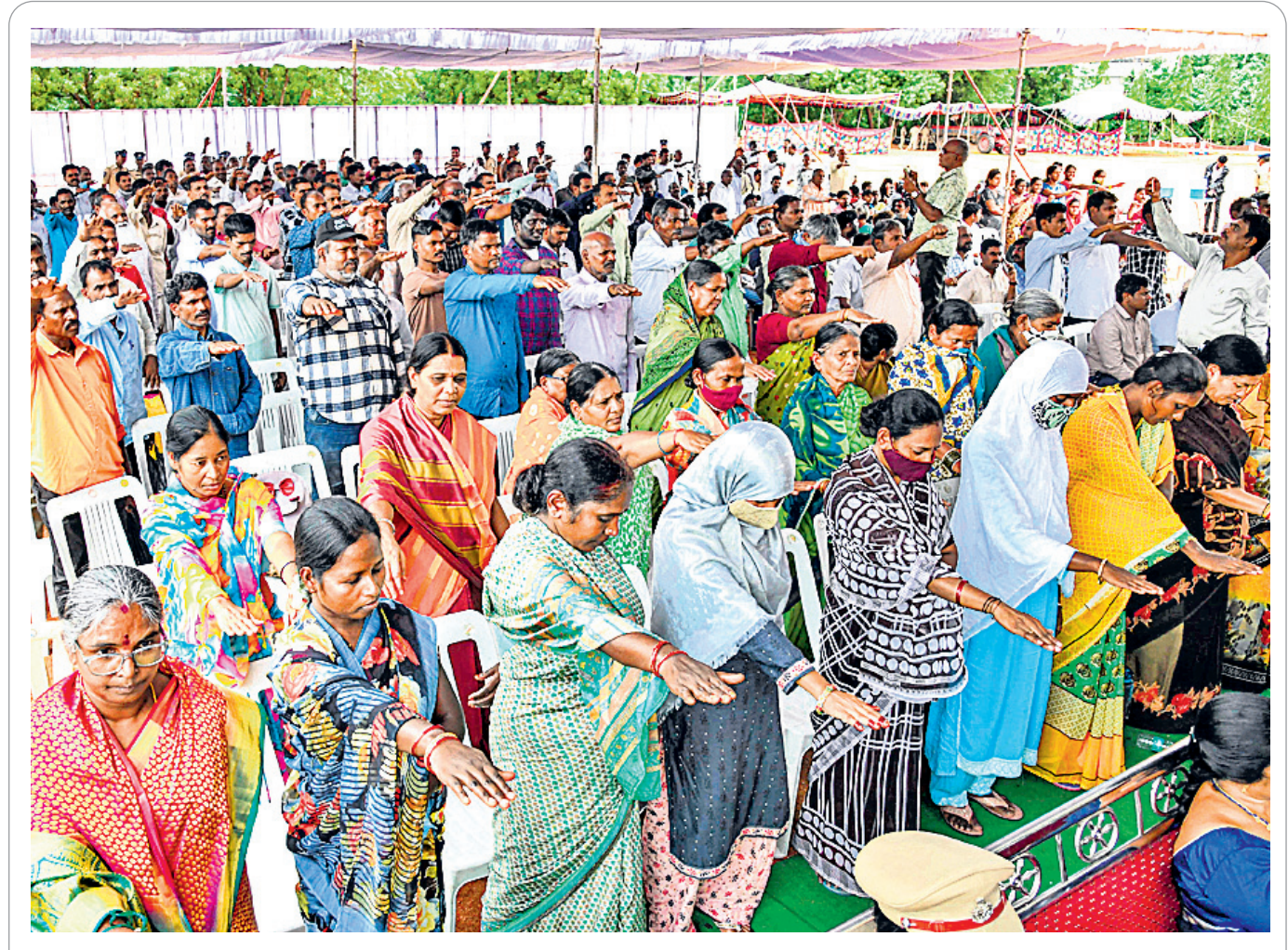
SRINAGAR: The Election Commission has sent a notice to newly elected MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid, also known as Engineer Rashid who is in jail in a terror funding case, over a significant disparity in his election expenditure report for the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency in Jammu and Kashmir. The election authority has asked for a response within two days. The notice was served by the deputy district election officer in Baramulla Tuesday, highlighting the expenditure register submitted by Rashid showed ₹2.10 lakh, while the actual amount recorded in the shadow register maintained by observers amounted to ₹13.78 lakh. Rashid, incarcerated in Delhi's Tihar Jail following his arrest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2019 on terror funding charges, has been granted a two-hour custody parole to take oath as a Lok Sabha member July 5.

Kangana slappate: CISF constable transferred

NEW DELHI: CISF constable Kulwinder Kaur, who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut at the Chandigarh airport last month, has been transferred to a unit in Bangalore pending a disciplinary inquiry, official sources said Wednesday. Kaur was suspended by the central armed police force June 6 soon after the alleged incident took place when the newly elected MP was travelling to Delhi. A police FIR was also lodged against the constable on a complaint by the Central Industrial Security Force. The sources said Kaur is under suspension and has been posted to the 10th reserve battalion based in the Karnataka capital pending a disciplinary inquiry. She was shifted to the unit soon after the incident in the fair interest of the investigation that is underway, they said.

NEET row: Youth Cong workers shave their heads

NEW DELHI: Raising slogans against the BJP-led Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA), the student outfits of some INDIA bloc parties staged a protest at the Jantar Mantar here Wednesday against alleged irregularities in several competitive exams. In a separate protest, the Congress' youth wing, Indian Youth Congress (IYC), staged a demonstration against the irregularities near the protest site. Several Youth Congress workers shaved their heads as a sign of protest while raising "anti-Modi" slogans. The members of the Left-backed All India Students Association (AISA), Student Federation of India (SFI), All India Students' Federation (AISF), along with the Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha and the Congress' students wing NSUI gathered at the Jantar Mantar to take out a march.



Prisoners take a pledge before their early release from the Cherlapally Central Jail in Hyderabad, Telangana

Poverty in India declines to 8.5% from 21.2%: Report

Earlier this year, NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam had said the latest consumer expenditure survey indicates that poverty has come down to 5 per cent in the country and people are becoming prosperous both in rural and urban areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Poverty in India is estimated to have declined to 8.5 per cent in 2022-24 from 21.2 per cent in 2011-12, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, according to a research paper by the economic think tank NCAER.

The paper titled 'Rethinking Social Safety Nets in a Changing Society', authored by Sonalde Desai of NCAER, used data from the newly completed Wave 3 of the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) as well as data from Waves 1 and 2 of the IHDS. "According to the IHDS findings...poverty declined significantly between 2004-2005 and 2011-12 (from a headcount ratio

of 38.6 to 21.2), and it continued to decline between 2011-12 and 2022-24 (from 21.2 to 8.5) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic," the paper said. The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes.

Traditional strategies designed to address chronic poverty in a large segment of society may be less effective as accidents of birth become less important than accidents of life, it added. The paper noted that ensuring social protection systems keep up with the pace of social transformation will be a key challenge for India as it strives towards equitable development. According to the paper, dur-



ing an era of economic growth, when opportunities increase, the long-term determinants of poverty may decline while accidents of life associated with

natural disasters, illness and death, and changes in occupation-specific opportunities may become more important. "Accidents of birth are more

likely to affect long-term chronic poverty, accidents of life may have a transitory effect on moving in and out of poverty," it said.

Earlier this year, NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam had said the latest consumer expenditure survey indicates that poverty has come down to 5 per cent in the country and people are becoming prosperous both in rural and urban areas.

"If we take the poverty line and inflate it with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to today's rate, we see that the average consumption of the lowest fractional, the 0-5 per cent, is about the same. This means poverty in the country is there in the 0-5 per cent group only," the NITI Aayog

CEO had said. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released data on household consumption expenditure for the year 2022-23 February 24 that showed per capita monthly household expenditure more than doubled in 2022-23 as compared to 2011-12.

The poverty line recommended by the Tendulkar Committee Report was set to ₹47 and ₹579 for rural and urban areas, respectively, but varied between states for 2004-2005. These poverty thresholds were subsequently adjusted by The Planning Commission to ₹860 and ₹1,000 for 2011-12.

international

of the day quote

I'm always worried when I hear narratives that denigrate the other, that dehumanize the other, that makes scapegoats of migrants, of refugees, of asylum seekers, of minority groups

VOLKER TURK | UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

I hope the (Macron-allied) Ensemble camp is a big as possible. After that we will seek to secure majorities on a project-by-project basis

GABRIEL ATTAL | PM, FRANCE

As tensions escalate in the West Philippine Sea, I saw a Chinese plan that they will use a hypersonic missile

IMEE MARCOS | SENATOR, THE PHILIPPINES

SHORT TAKES

Egypt swears in new Cab

Cairo: Egypt's new Cabinet was sworn in Wednesday as the country faces an ailing economy and raging conflicts in neighbouring nations. Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouly, who was first appointed in 2018, has been again tapped to form the new Cabinet which includes several technocrats. Some ministers, including those in charge of police and tourism, remain in place, but others, particularly defence, foreign affairs and economy-related portfolios, represent major challenges. The ministers have taken the oath before President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi in Cairo.

PM Shehbaz meets Putin

Astana: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday met with Russian President Vladimir Putin here wherein he emphasised the expansion of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia. The prime minister, in his televised opening remarks at the meeting, said the bilateral trade stood at around \$1 billion which could be expanded by overcoming the financial and banking matters. He expressed his readiness to work closely with the Russian president to further cement bilateral ties.

French citizen pleads guilty

Moscow: A French citizen arrested in Russia has pleaded guilty to criminal charges involving illegally collecting information on military issues in the country, state news agency Tass reported Wednesday. Laurent Vinatier was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine. Under Russian law, the criminal offense is punishable by up to five years in prison.

Toshakhana scam: Relief for Khan

Islamabad: A Pakistani court Wednesday acquitted former Prime Minister Imran Khan and several senior party colleagues in a case registered against them for protesting against the jailed Premier's disqualification by the election commission in the Toshakhana corruption case. Other leaders who have been exonerated in the case by the district and sessions court here are Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rasheed, Asad Qaiser, Shehryar Afridi, Faisal Javed, Raja Khurram Nawaz and Ali Nawaz Awan.



I assured (Zelenskiy) that the Netherlands' support for his country is rock solid. We will continue to support Ukraine politically, militarily and financially against Russian aggression, whatever it takes and for as long as it takes

DICK SCHOOF | PM, THE NETHERLANDS

PREZ YOON'S IMPEACHMENT

The number of people demanding the impeachment of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol surpassed the 1 million mark Wednesday on the National Assembly's petition website



Harris top choice to replace Biden

US VP HAS THE HIGHEST NAME RECOGNITION AMONG ALL THE ALTERNATIVES AND THE HIGHEST POLLING AMONG DEMOCRATS WHO CAN SERIOUSLY BE CONSIDERED A CANDIDATE

REUTERS



Prez debate: Biden admits falling asleep on stage

US President Joe Biden has admitted that he "almost fell asleep on stage" and "was not very smart" enough to handle his schedule before the first presidential debate with Donald Trump, blaming his extensive foreign travels for his disastrous performance. During their roughly 90-minute debate deflected by personal attacks, Trump, the presumptive Republican Party candidate in the November 5 presidential election, clashed right from the start with Biden, arguing pointedly about the American economy, foreign relations and migration. "I wasn't very smart. I decided to travel around the world a couple of times shortly before the debate," Biden said while talking to donors at a fundraiser in a Virginia suburb of Washington DC Tuesday. "I didn't listen to my staff and then I almost fell asleep on stage," he said, amidst pressure on Biden to quit the race for the White House due to his advancing age. Biden admitted that he did not have a good debate, and apologised by saying that he was sorry for the performance. "It's not an excuse but an explanation," he said.



have floated alternatives to Biden besides Harris, including popular cabinet members and Democratic governors like Gavin Newsom from California, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Josh

Shapiro of Pennsylvania. But trying to sidestep Harris is wishful thinking and would be nearly impossible, these sources, who did not wish to be named, said. If named as the party nominee, Harris, 59, would take over money raised by the Biden campaign and inherit campaign infrastructure, the sources said. She also has the highest name recognition among all the alternatives, and the highest polling among Democrats who could seriously be considered a candidate, the sources said.

In addition, she has already been vetted for national office and has survived intense scrutiny from Republicans, they said. Also, US Representative Jim Clyburn, the man who was key to Biden's 2020 win, told MSNBC he would support Harris to be the Democratic nominee if Biden stepped aside.

Harris's aides dismissed any talk of a Democratic ticket that doesn't include both Biden and Harris. "Vice President Harris looks forward to serving a second term with President Joe Biden," a statement from her office said.

The United States has never elected a woman President, and Harris has spent much of her time as vice President struggling to distinguish herself in a role that is by definition a supporting one. As recently as last year, many inside the White House and the Biden campaign

privately worried she was a liability for the campaign.

Since then, Harris has managed to find her stride on the issue of abortion rights but her polling has not improved significantly. Harris's approval ratings hover under 40%, but according to recent polling highlighted by the Biden campaign, she and the President have similar odds of beating Trump.

The Vice President has also been consistently targeted by Republicans and conservative media in attacks many allies consider sexist and racist.

Three Democratic donors, who have recently been pushing for Biden to step aside, also said this week they think it will be "impossible" to sidestep Harris. The donors had been floating Whitmer and Newsom's names as possible alternatives until the past weekend.

"There is a real conversation in the Democratic party about leadership right now, but fair to say, and I'm not thrilled about this, it will be impossible to ignore Kamala," said one of the donors. Another donor said "she's nobody's choice, but yeah, nearly impossible."

Still, the President's reelection campaign is standing its ground, emboldened by a stronger performance by Biden during a scripted speech in North Carolina even as calls for him to step aside grow.

Employer held for Indian worker's death in Italy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rome, July 3: Italian police have arrested the owner of the agriculture company who dumped a 31-year-old Indian worker on the road without medical assistance after his arm was severed by heavy farm machinery, causing his death, a tragic incident that shocked the country and its leadership.

Satnam Singh was abandoned by his employer after a strawberry wrapping machine severed his arm in Lazio, near Rome, last month and died due to "copious bleeding", the ANSA news agency reported.

The Sikh casual farm labourer died in a hospital in Rome two days later after being airlifted there when he was eventually found.

Police Tuesday arrested the alleged gangmaster, Antonello Lovato, on suspicion of causing Singh's manslaughter death, the report said.

Prosecutors said in a statement that the Sikh farmer, who died of a massive haemorrhage in a Rome hospital, "would in all likelihood have been saved if he had been promptly assisted".

"We were waiting for this news, we were angry," the President of the Lazio Indian community, Gurmukh Singh, said.

"The worst thing (Lovato) did was to leave him outside his home instead of taking him to hospital," he was quoted as saying.

Nepali Congress urges PM Prachanda to quit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, July 3: The Nepali Congress Wednesday urged Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" to pave the way for the formation of a new government, a day after the Himalayan nation's largest political party struck a power-sharing deal with the CPN-UML to replace the incumbent government led by the former guerilla leader. The Nepali Congress Central Work Performance Committee (CWC) met at party President Sher Bahadur Deuba's residence at Budhanilkantha to discuss the current political situation and the party's future strategy. The meeting of the party's key committee came a day after the Nepali Congress President Deuba

and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman K P Sharma Oli finalised an agreement Monday to form a new government to replace the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Prachanda.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, party Spokesperson Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat said, "The Prime Minister should pave the way after the largest parties, Nepali Congress and UML, said they would form a new government together. This is also included in the decision. Other parties, too, are supporting the new Nepali Congress-UML alliance. So, the Nepali Congress CWC has requested the Prime Minister to pave the way," MyRepublica news portal quoted him as saying.

'Mumbai terror accused Rana extraditable'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, July 3: Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought in India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, is extraditable under the plain provisions of the US-India extradition treaty, a US attorney has told a federal court.

Assistant US Attorney Criminal Appeals Chief Bram Alden was making a closing argument before the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, where Rana has appealed against the order by a US District Court in California that denied the writ of habeas corpus.

In May, Rana, had filed a writ of habeas corpus challenging the court order, which acceded with the request of the US government that the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks accused be extradited to India.

Conservatives concede Britain election defeat

REUTERS

London, July 3: Britain's Conservative Party all-but conceded election defeat to Keir Starmer's Labour Wednesday, a day before polling stations even opened, and warned that the opposition party was on course for a record-breaking victory.

Opinion polls show the centre-left Labour Party is set for a big win in Thursday's vote that would end 14 years of Conservative government and hand Starmer the keys to the Prime Minister's Number 10 Downing Street office Friday morning.

Both Starmer and Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak kicked off the last day of campaigning before polls open warning voters of dire economic consequences if the other man wins.

But, facing predictions of the worst result in the party's history, the Conservatives turned their focus to damage limitation, saying they needed to hang on to enough seats to provide an effective opposition to a Labour government.

"I totally accept that where the polls are at the moment means that tomorrow is likely to see the largest Labour landslide majority, the largest majority that this country has ever seen," Conservative minister Mel Stride told the BBC.

"What therefore matter now is what kind of opposition do we have, what kind of ability to scrutinise government is there within Parliament."

Asked about Stride's comments, Sunak told ITV, "I'm fighting hard



UK election set to deliver more diverse Parl

The UK general election Thursday is expected to deliver the most diverse Parliament in the country's history, including in the number of parliamentarians of Indian heritage likely to be elected from across the nation. According to an analysis by the British Future think tank, the Labour Party is set to have by far the largest number of ethnic minority MPs if the party wins an overall majority and even more in a landslide scenario. With around 14 per cent of MPs coming from an ethnic minority background this time, the analysis finds that the new Parliament will be closer than ever to reflecting the diversity of the British electorate.

We need to stop the Labour supermajority that will put up your taxes. The only way to do that is to vote Conservative tomorrow

RISHI SUNAK | PM, UK

for every vote".

Polling analysis by Survation sees Labour winning 484 of the 650 seats in Parliament, far more than the 418 won by the party's former leader Tony Blair in his 1997 landslide victory, and the most in its history.

The Conservatives were predicted to win just 64 seats, which would be the fewest since the party was founded in 1834. Other analyses have shown smaller margins of victory for Labour; but none have shown a different over-

GET THE VOTE OUT

Labour's final campaign push focused on their fear that voters could see the result as a foregone conclusion and stay at home during polling Thursday, or register protest votes with smaller parties.

Starmer said Stride's comments were an attempt to lure wavering voters into not casting their ballots after polling opens at 0600 GMT. "I say: if you want change, you have to vote for it. I want people to be part of a change. I know there are very close constituencies across the country," he told the BBC.

"I don't take anything for granted, I respect the voters, and I know that we have to earn every vote until 10 o'clock tomorrow night and we will do that."



Vehicles set on fire by protesters in Mombasa, Kenya

Largest West Bank land seizure in 3 decades by Israel

The Palestinians view the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank as the main barrier to any lasting peace agreement

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, July 3: An anti-settlement watchdog says Israel has approved the largest seizure of land in the occupied West Bank in over three decades.

The Israeli group Peace Now said Wednesday that authorities recently approved the appropriation of 12.7 sq km of land in the Jordan Valley. The group's data indicate it was the largest single appropriation approved since the 1993 Oslo accords at

the start of the peace process.

The land appropriation was likely to worsen already soaring tensions linked to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Violence has surged in the West Bank since the start of the war, with Israel carrying out nearly-daily military raids that often spark deadly gunbattles with Palestinian militants.

The land seizure, which was approved late last month but only publicised Wednesday, comes after the seizure of 8 sq



km of land in the West Bank in March and 2.6 sq km in February

That makes 2024 by far the peak year for Israeli land seizure in the West Bank, Peace

Palestinian Authority is headquartered. By declaring them state lands, the Israeli government has opened them up to being leased to Israelis and prohibited private Palestinian ownership.

The Palestinians view the expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank as the main barrier to any lasting peace agreement and most of the international community considers them illegal or illegitimate.

Israel's current government considers the West Bank to be the historical and religious heartland of the Jewish people and is opposed to Palestinian statehood.

Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east

Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state.

Israel has built well over 100 settlements across the West Bank, some of which resemble fully developed suburbs or small towns. They are home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers who have Israeli citizenship. The 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule.

The Palestinian Authority administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank but is barred from operating in 60% of the territory, where the settlements are located.



For cases of dispute resolution and settlement which have arisen at the time of GST rollout during the challenges faced by small businesses, on those issues several decisions have been taken which may become part of the Finance Bill so that necessary changes can be brought in the GST law

SANJAY KUMAR AGARWAL | CHAIRMAN, CBC



NO TAKERS FOR J&K'S LITHIUM BLOCK

India's federally administered region of Jammu and Kashmir did not receive any bids in a second attempt to auction mining rights for lithium reserves found last year, according to a source with direct knowledge of the matter. The government in February 2023 found its first lithium deposits in Jammu and Kashmir with estimated reserves of 5.9 million metric tonne

Startups raised nearly \$7bn in H1



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 3: Indian startups have raised nearly \$7 billion in funding during the first half (H1) of 2024, more than the \$5.92 billion raised in H1 2023. However, the figures are still far less than \$20 billion in H1 2022, according to data compiled by TheKredible. The \$7 billion funding included 182 growth or late-stage deals worth \$5.4 billion and 404 early-stage deals worth \$1.54 billion. About 99 were undisclosed deals, reports Entracker.

The \$7 billion funding included 182 growth or late-stage deals worth \$5.4 billion and 404 early-stage deals worth \$1.54 billion

During H1, Indian startups produced a couple of unicorns – Perfios and Krutrim SI Designs. Last year, only two startups managed to cross the unicorn valuation while 2022 and 2021 witnessed the emergence of 26 and 44 unicorns, respectively. When it comes to month-on-month trends, June witnessed nearly \$2 billion in funding which is more than double the average of \$1 billion monthly funding until May this year, the report mentioned. Late-stage companies such as Zepto, Flipkart, PharmEasy and Lenskart topped with \$665 million, \$350 million, \$216 million, and \$200 million funding, respectively. Moreover, H1 2024 saw 55 mergers and acquisitions, which is lower when compared to 2023. The year 2021 witnessed over 250 mergers and acquisitions which dropped to 204 in 2022 and further reduced to 145 in 2023. Segment-wise, e-commerce topped the list with 124 startups raising more than \$1.87 billion. Fintech, healthtech, SaaS and EV startups were next on the list. Amount-wise, EV startups secured more funding than SaaS and healthtech. Agritech, foodtech, edtech and proptech saw a decline in funding during H1 2024.

of the day quote

India's high debt levels are sustainable for now because of higher real or nominal GDP and as most of the debt is held in rupee

POONAM GUPTA | DIRECTOR GENERAL, NCAER

Artificial Intelligence has added speed to the already dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem in India, and AI's concrete use cases are emerging in areas like agriculture, healthcare and education

SRINIVAS NARAYANAN | VP, OPENAI

There will be respectable equity returns over the next three years. It will not be as good as the last three years but it will be better than other asset classes

R JANAKIRAMAN | CEO, FRANKLIN TEMPLETON MF

Curtains down for India's X rival Koo

FOUNDERS SAY LITTLE YELLOW BIRD BIDS FINAL GOODBYE AS FUNDING WINTER BITES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: Social media platform Koo, which had pitched itself as a rival and viable alternative to Twitter (now X), is shutting down with co-founders Wednesday penning a heartfelt note about tough decisions and little yellow bird bidding "final goodbye".

In a post on LinkedIn, co-founders Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka announced that the platform will be discontinuing its services to the public, as talks for a partnership with multiple

larger internet companies, conglomerates and media houses did not yield the desired outcomes.

"We explored partnership with multiple larger internet companies, conglomerates and media houses but these talks didn't yield the outcome we wanted," the note said.

The duo said that although they would have liked to keep the app running, "the cost of technology services to keep social media app running is high and we've had to take this tough decision".

"We were just months away



from beating Twitter in India in 2022 and could have doubled down on that short term goal with capital behind us," they said. A funding winter, however hit the company at its peak, hurting

Koo at its peak grossed about 2.1mn daily active users, about 10mn monthly active users, and over 9,000 VIPs that included some of the most prominent personalities from various fields

note mentioned as the founders signed off saying, "the little yellow bird says its final goodbye" in a reference to Koo's yellow bird logo. It may be recalled that Koo's popularity in India peaked around 2021 amid the Indian government's spat with Twitter (now X) and growing calls for expanding the ecosystem of homegrown digital platforms. At its peak, Koo experienced heady growth in user metrics as union ministers and government departments at that time endorsed the homegrown microblogging platform.

Services growth bounces back

Robust increase in new business, exports in June, says PMI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: India's services sector growth quickened in June from May's five-month low, amid a stronger rise in new orders and an unprecedented expansion in international sales, a monthly survey said Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index rose from 60.2 in May to 60.5 in June, pointing to a sharp expansion in output.

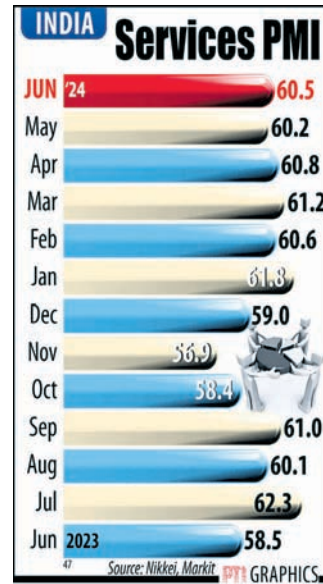
In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "Activity growth in India's services sector accelerated in June, with the index rising by 0.3 ppt (percentage point) to 60.5, led by an increase in both domestic and international new orders. This encouraged services firms to increase their staffing levels at the fastest pace since August 2022," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Demand strength and rising intakes of new business were cited as the key determinants of growth. New orders received by Indian service providers continued to increase in June, extending the current sequence of expansion to nearly three years.

There was also a record expansion in international orders. Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the US were all cited as sources of new work from abroad.

Positive client appetite encouraged service providers in India to recruit additional staff at the end of the first fiscal quarter. Staffing levels increased at the fastest pace since August 2022, as short-term and permanent staff were taken on to support pipelines of new work.

On the price front, service providers recorded a moderate increase in their average expenses due to higher food, fuel and labour costs. The pace of inflation was nevertheless the weakest in four months. Subsequently, selling prices also rose at the slowest pace since February. Going ahead, service providers remained confident of a rise in business activity over the course of the coming 12 months, with nearly 23 per cent of panellists expressing optimism.



SHORT TAKES

Sebi cuts face value of debt securities

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi Wednesday drastically cut the face value of debt securities to ₹10,000 from ₹1 lakh at present to boost participation of retail investors in the corporate bond market. Market participants are of the view that lower ticket size of debt securities may encourage more non-institutional investors to participate in the corporate bond market which in turn may also enhance liquidity. In a circular, Sebi said, "the issuer may issue debt security or non-convertible redeemable preference shares on private placement basis at a face value of ₹10,000". This, however, would be subject to certain conditions like the issuer should appoint at least one merchant banker, and non-convertible debentures and non-convertible redeemable preference shares are plain vanilla, interest or dividend-bearing instruments.

Govt bonds worth ₹28K-cr on sale

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Wednesday announced the sale of Government bonds worth ₹28,000 crore in three lots through auctions to be conducted by the Reserve Bank of India in Mumbai on Friday (July 5). The first lot comprises 7.02 per cent Government Security 2027 for a notified amount of ₹6,000 crore. The second set of 7.23 per cent Government Security 2039 is valued at ₹12,000 crore while the third lot of 7.30 per cent Government Security 2053 are for a notified amount of ₹10,000 crore. The three lots will be sold through a price-based auction using the multiple price method.

Wheat procurement crosses last yr's buy

New Delhi: The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has procured 26.6 million tonne of wheat during the current Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2024-25, surpassing last year's figure of 26.2 million tonne, the government said Wednesday. The procurement, which began earlier than usual this year, has benefited more than 2.2 million farmers who received about ₹61 lakh crore directly in their bank accounts as payment at the Minimum Support Price (MSP), it said in a statement. The government had set the MSP for wheat at ₹2,275 per quintal for the current season (April-March). States like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan showed significant improvements in their wheat procurement, the statement said.

India pitches for strengthening quality for spices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: India has supported strengthening quality standards for various spices, including small cardamom, vanilla and turmeric, at a global meet of the Codex Alimentarius Commission being held in Rome, the government said Wednesday.

According to an official statement, India, as a member elected on a geographic basis (Asia), is participating in the 86th session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). G Kamala Vardhana Rao, CEO of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), represented India in the session being held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome from July 1-5.

The CAC, an international body established by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade. The executive committee plays a critical role in reviewing proposals for new work and monitoring the progress of standards development. India also backed the progression of standards for named vegetable oils, guidelines for the control of Shiga Toxin-Producing Escherichia coli, and the safe use and reuse of water in food production and processing.

Telcos' tariff hikes to push up core inflation by 0.2%

After a hiatus of over two and half years, the telcos announced a price hike of over 20%, starting with largest operator Reliance Jio making the first move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 3: The near-simultaneous tariff hikes of over 20 per cent by the country's top three telcos will push up core inflation by 0.20 per cent in FY25, a foreign brokerage said Wednesday.

Analysts at Deutsche Bank also upped their core inflation or

the price rise, excluding food and fuel, by 0.20 per cent to 3.8 per cent.

Apart from the tariff hikes, the below-trend monsoon rains will be another factor that will be of focus from an inflation trajectory perspective, they said.

The report said the impact of telecom tariff hikes will start getting reflected from July, and the hikes will alone push the month-on-month core inflation by over 0.85 per cent month on month.

"Overall, core inflation will likely rise by 0.20 per cent in FY25 due to the telecom tariff hikes. Consequently, we revise our FY25 core inflation forecast to 3.8 per cent, from 3.6 per cent average earlier," they added.

Vedanta wins multiple accolades



Bhubaneswar: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has won the prestigious Kalinga Energy Excellence Award and Kalinga Environment Excellence Award for its alumina refinery unit at Lanjigarh, Kalahandi district. These awards were presented by the Institute of Quality and Environment Management (IQEMS) in association with the Odisha State Pollution Control Board and the Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad. Vedanta's Lanjigarh unit, India's premier producer of smelter-grade alumina, has undertaken multiple initiatives as part of Vedanta Aluminium's sustainability goals such as net zero carbon by 2050, net water positivity by 2030, effective waste management, biodiversity restoration and adoption of energy-efficient technologies across operations. Commenting on the achievement, John Slaven, CEO, Vedanta Aluminium, said, "Our success in energy efficiency and environmental conservation, driven by our commitment to sustainable operations, is reflected in our numerous accolades. Balancing increased operational efficiency with a sustainable value chain is a top priority in our decision-making process. These achievements underscore our relentless pursuit of excellence through a sustainable business model, bolstering the transformational journey of Vedanta Aluminium."

SBI city branch Baripada unveiled

Baripada: State Bank of India city branch Baripada has been inaugurated at Ward No 15, Baghra Road. Dinesh Pruthi, Chief General Manager SBI Bhubaneswar Circle, inaugurated the branch premises in the presence of General Manager (Network-I) Ponnambalam M, Deputy General Manager Shalish Kumar Sinha, Regional Manager Jagannath Srichandan Nayak. This is SBI's 33rd branch in Mayurbhanj district and 5th branch in Baripada town. Prasanna Mishra, mountaineer (Everest) and retired SBI staff was felicitated in the event.



India's rating upgrade possible if fiscal deficit falls to 4%: S&P

Centre estimates to bring down fiscal deficit to 5.1% of the GDP in the current fiscal, from 5.63% YoY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 3: A sovereign rating upgrade for India in the next 24 months is possible if the central government is able to prudently manage its finances and bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of GDP, an S&P Global Ratings official said Wednesday. S&P Global Ratings Director, Sovereign Ratings, YeeFarn Phua, said the trigger for up-

grade would be general government (Centre + states) deficit falling below 7 per cent of the GDP, and a lot of this would have to be driven by the central government.

"If the central government is able to bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of the GDP, we will consider a rating up-



grade over the next 24 months," Phua said. As per the fiscal consolida-

tion roadmap, the deficit -- the difference between government expenditure and revenue

-- will be brought down to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. The US-based rating agency had in May upgraded outlook for India to positive, from stable, while retaining the rating at 'BBB-'. Phua further said the Indian economy has clocked an average of 8 per cent growth in the last three years, driven by domestic consumption and infrastructure investment that has made real difference on the ground. "We see the medium-term growth potential for India at 7 per cent," Phua said.

Satwik, Chirag optimistic

DOUBLES DUO CONFIDENT ABOUT DELIVERING THEIR BEST AT THE PARIS OLYMPICS



We understand Olympics is the greatest, biggest tournament there is. We don't want to think so much about the pressures, we're looking to go out there, enjoy the atmosphere and have a great time on court
—CHIRAG SHETTY

New Delhi, July 3: Star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has 'cracked' the service variation challenge and is focussing on 'comprehensive physical and mental conditioning' to ensure peak performance at the upcoming Paris Olympics. Satwik, 23, and Chirag, 26, have been troubled by the wide variations of tumble, spin and wide serves that their opponents, mainly the Koreans and Indonesians, have employed against them during the recent tournaments. Chirag said they have ad-

ressed the 'new challenge' and remains confident of negotiating it during the Paris Games. "Regarding serve variations, they are a new challenge, but placing complete importance on that wouldn't be right," Chirag told this agency in an email interview. "There was a time when we struggled with receiving such services, but we eventually cracked it. We know what to do, we've been practicing, and we're confident we'll come out strong at the Olympics to counter that," the shuttler added. The current World No.3 pair had narrowly missed out on a quarterfinal berth in the last Olympics when despite winning

two of their three group matches, the duo couldn't qualify for the knockout stage as it was settled on the basis of the number of games won and lost. "The experience of playing in the Tokyo Olympics has been invaluable in our preparation for the Paris Games. Competing at such a high level has taught us crucial lessons about handling pressure, staying focused, and adapting to different playing conditions," Satwik said. "The intensity and atmosphere of the Olympics are unparalleled, and having been through it once, we now have a better understanding of what to expect and the initial jitters

of being at the Olympics for the first time are also not going to be there. Additionally, winning the French Open has naturally given us a significant confidence boost," Chirag added. In the last couple of years, the duo worked its way to become the World No.1 after a series of sensational performances, including winning the Commonwealth Games gold medal, a bronze at the World Championships in 2022, and gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games. Satwik and Chirag have also won the French Open and Thailand Open this year after reaching the finals at the Malaysian Super 750 and India Super 750 tournaments.

"As the Olympics draw closer, our approach is becoming more focussed and strategic. We're fine-tuning every aspect of our game to ensure peak performances when we step onto the courts in Paris," Satwik said. "This includes developing specific game plans for our potential opponents by studying their strengths and weaknesses in detail, concentrating on targeted drills, and enhancing our on-court positions and shot selections. We're in a good rhythm and are eagerly looking forward to be back at the Olympics. Comprehensive physical and mental conditioning is at the heart of our preparation," Chirag added.

Cup, players arrive today

PM TO FELICITATE TEAM AT HIS RESIDENCE FOLLOWED BY ROADSHOW IN MUMBAI

Bridgetown (Barbados) July 3: The wait has finally ended for the T20 World Cup to come home. The World Cup-winning Indian cricket team finally departed from Delhi aboard a chartered flight from the Grantley Adams International airport Wednesday after being stranded here for three days due to the Category 4 Hurricane 'Beryl'. The Air India special charter flight AIC24WC - Air India Champions 24 World Cup - took off around 4.50am local time and will land in the Indian national capital Thursday at around 6:20 am (IST). "Coming home," posted India captain Rohit Sharma on 'Instagram', posing with the trophy in the aircraft before it took off. The Indian squad, their support staff, the players' families and some board officials are aboard the flight along with members of the travelling media contingent. The flight has been arranged by the BCCI. The players are set to be felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi within hours of returning to the country. Plans are also afoot to have a roadshow in Mumbai to honour the triumphant team, who ended a trophy drought of 11 years. "Air India managed to send a flight on a charter basis in close coordination with the BCCI officials to bring the players home. Fortunately, this aircraft could be made available after accommodating the passengers due to fly from Newark to Delhi in another Air India flight," a source close to the developments said. BCCI vice-president Rajiv Shukla gave the information about the programmes once the team land. "The flight will land at Delhi airport tomorrow (Thursday) at 6.00am. The team will meet PM Narendra Modi at 11.00am at his residence. After this, the team will fly to Mumbai, where a ceremony has been organised," Shukla said. "There will be a roadshow from Nariman Point in an open bus and later we will honour and felicitate the players with the prize money of Rs 125 crore as announced," he added. Rohit also took to social media to welcome the fans. "We want to enjoy this special moment with all of you. So let's celebrate this win with a victory parade at Marine Drive & Wankhede on July 4 from 5:00pm onwards. It's (Cup) coming home," Rohit posted on 'X'.



SHORT TAKES

Pandya on top of T20 all-rounders' list

Dubai: Hardik Pandya rose two places to become the first Indian to occupy the No.1 spot in the ICC's T20 all-rounders' rankings issued Wednesday, as the country's cricketers improved their standings following their title-winning performance in the just-concluded World Cup. The 30-year-old is level with Sri Lankan Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20 all-rounder. Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who won the 'Player of the Tournament' award at the T20 World Cup, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top 10. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020.

No Messi at Paris Olympics

Buenos Aires: Lionel Messi won't be in Argentina's squad at the Olympics starting later this month in Paris. Coach Javier Mascherano included four World Cup winners in the squad he announced Tuesday, including striker Julián Álvarez and defender Nicolás Otamendi. Messi won the gold medal at Beijing in 2008 in his only Olympic campaign.

Cancer returns to haunt Boycott

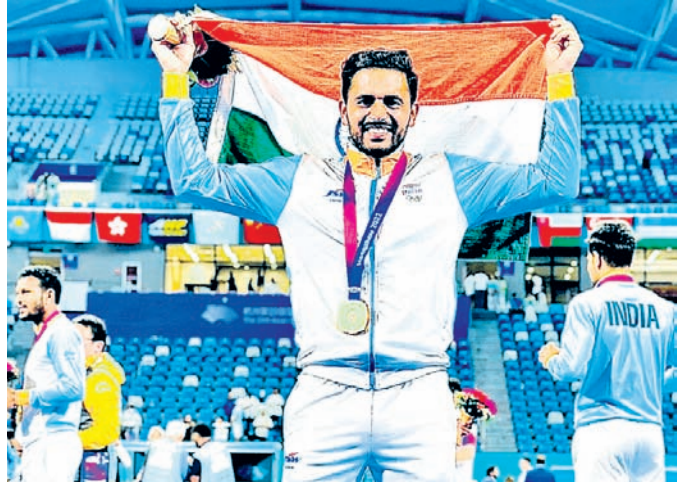
New Delhi: Legendary England batter Sir Geoffrey Boycott has revealed about his diagnosis with throat cancer for the second time and said he is set to undergo surgery in two weeks' time. Boycott, 83, was informed last week that the cancer, for which he was treated in 2002 through chemotherapy and radiotherapy, has returned. "In the last few weeks I have had an MRI scan, CT scan, a PET scan and two biopsies and it has now been confirmed I have throat cancer and will require an operation," Boycott stated in a statement to *The Daily Telegraph*.

Winning start

Riyadh: Ace Indian cueist Pankaj Advani started his campaign at the 2024 Asian Billiards Championship positively notching victories over Aung Phyo and Yuttapop Pakpoj here. The 38-year-old first beat Myanmar's Aung Phyo 4-2 and then emerged victorious in a thrilling clash over Thailand's Pakpoj 4-3.

Harmanpreet wants gold at Olympics for predecessors

New Delhi, July 3: Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh is desperate to reclaim the gold medal in the upcoming Paris Olympics in his bid to give a fitting tribute to the country and stalwarts of the game. India ended their 41-year-old hiatus of a medal at the Olympics by winning a bronze at Tokyo in 2021. Now Harmanpreet wants to elevate it to gold. "We are giving our all to elevate our history and legacy. Winning the gold will be a tribute to India and our seniors," the ace drag-flicker said in an exclusive feature on JioCinema's *The Dreamers*.



Harmanpreet's predecessor Manpreet Singh, under whose leadership India bagged the historic bronze in Tokyo, echoed similar sentiments. "Seeing our flag on the right, I felt we could strive harder to place it at the centre next time, with our anthem playing. This marks the beginning of our renewed journey," he said. Veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh highlighted the relentless drive and collective spirit of the team. "Someone somewhere is training to beat you. That thought pushes me out of my comfort zone. Every time I train, I am driven by the desire not to disappoint the 1.4 billion people of our country," Sreejesh said. "There was a time when Indian hockey relied on individual brilliance, but now we play as a cohesive unit," he added. Chief coach Craig Fulton explained the team's mentality, philosophy and strategy, that helps them go toe-to-toe with some of the best sides in the world. "There aren't a team that this Indian team haven't beaten. The question you could also be asking is - what do the other teams have to do to beat India?" Fulton said. "The whole philosophy in my mind is to defend, to counter, and to win - having a squad that can defend against the best teams in the world but then counter-attack from anywhere. And that's in the DNA of this Indian team," the South African said.

Chopra clarifies his pull out from Paris DL

Saarbrücken, (Germany), July 3: Olympic and World Champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra clarified Wednesday that Sunday's Paris Diamond League (DL) was never a part of his competition calendar this year. The statement came after a media report stated that Chopra pulled out of the event due to the adductor niggles that has been troubling him for the past couple of months. The 26-year-old Chopra took to 'X' to say that there was no question of a withdrawal when he had not even entered his name. "Hello, everyone. Just to clarify: the #ParisDL wasn't part of my competition calendar this season, so I haven't 'withdrawn' from it. I'm focusing on getting ready for the Olympic Games," Chopra stated. "Thanks for your understanding and support, and wishing all the athletes competing; all the best! #RoadToOlympics," Chopra posted. Chopra was exempted from last week's National Inter-State Championships, which was a mandatory event for all Indian athletes, by the Athletics Federation of India (AFT). The AFI said the relaxation was given to Chopra due to the short turnaround time between the domestic event and the Diamond League July 7. Chopra had also indicated last month that his schedule will be decided according to the state of his body. "Further competition schedule will be decided later according to situation and my body. Otherwise, I will go to Paris from there (after competing in Turkey, Finland)," Chopra had stated. Chopra, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a track and field medal (gold) at the Tokyo Olympics, had won the gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games last month. Meanwhile, Spencer Mackay, the head of strength and conditioning at 'Inspire Institute of Sports' (IIS) said Wednesday in Vijaynagar that Chopra is in best physical condition to claim a medal at the Paris Games. "He is in excellent physical condition and well-prepared," Mackay said. "His past injuries and recent niggles are now an afterthought. When the Olympic finals begin, Neeraj will be in a fantastic position to win another medal for the country," Mackay added.

New Delhi, July 3: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has slotted its team's marquee Champions Trophy (CT) match against arch foes India in Lahore March 1 next year, but the BCCI is yet to give its consent to the tentative schedule, a senior ICC Board member stated here Wednesday. The tournament is slated from February 19 to March 9 with March 10 as Reserve Day. The last tournament that Pakistan hosted was the Asia Cup in 2023. It was conducted in a 'Hybrid Model' with India playing their matches in Sri Lanka as the government refused to permit the players' travel across the border. It is understood PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who was invited to watch the T20 World Cup final in Barbados, submitted a 15-match schedule with all of India's games kept in Lahore for security and logistical reasons. "The PCB has submitted the draft of the 15-match ICC Champions Trophy Seven games in Lahore, three in Karachi and five in Rawalpindi, the ICC board member informed. India have been clubbed with Pakistan, Bangladesh and New Zealand in Group A. Group B comprises Australia, South Africa, England and Afghanistan.

Gauff, Alcaraz win

London, July 3: No. 2 seed in the women's segment Coco Gauff and top seed in the men's section Carlos Alcaraz advanced to the third round of the Wimbledon tennis tournament with easy wins Wednesday. Gauff beat qualifier Anca Todoni 6-2, 6-1 while Alcaraz defeated Alexander Vukic 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 6-2, setting up a third-round meeting with No. 29 Frances Tiafoe after the American eliminated Borna Coric 7-6 (5), 6-1, 6-3. Gauff appeared relaxed after her win on Court No. 1 which she said is 'special' to her. "This is the court where I first started at Wimbledon. Court 1 is always a special place for me to play on," the 20-year-old Gauff said.



Alcaraz also appeared relaxed after his victory. When told by the on-court interviewer that Tiafoe said he's 'coming after you', the 21-year-old Spaniard replied with a smile: "I'm going for him." In other results, No. 11 Danielle Collins completed her first-round match - a 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) win over Clara Tauson.

Demiral strikes sink Austria

Leipzig, July 3: Merih Demiral was Turkey's unlikely hero Tuesday with both goals in a 2-1 win over Austria that booked their place in the Euro 2024 quarterfinals. The Al-Ahli centre-back smashed home after just 58 seconds and produced a towering header on the hour mark to double Turkey's lead here. Michael Gregoritsch quickly pulled a goal back for Austria and only a stunning save from Mert Gunok denied Christoph Baumgartner a dramatic equaliser deep into stoppage-time. Turkey advance to face the Netherlands in the last eight in

Berlin, Saturday The Netherlands had thrashed Romania earlier in the day 3-0. Austria had emerged as dark horses to go far on the perceived weaker side of the draw after topping a group including France and the Netherlands. Turkey's Arda Guler was a constant threat to the Austrian defence and his teasing delivery from a corner caused chaos inside the first minute. Baumgartner's clearance off the line hit teammate Stefan Posch, goalkeeper Patrick Pentz clawing it out to Demiral, who lashed into the roof of the net for the second fastest goal ever at a European Championship. Coach Ralf Rangnick made

QUARTERFINALS		
Spain vs Germany	July 5	9.30pm
Portugal vs France	July 6	12.30am
England vs Switzerland	July 6	9.30pm
Netherlands vs Turkey	July 7	12.30am

(All timings IST)

two changes at half time for Austria. He got the reaction he desired as Austria began cutting through the Turkish defence. However, Turkey struck much against the run of play when another Guler inviting corner was powered home by Demiral. It was also a set-piece at the other end that got Austria back in the game seven minutes later. Posch flicked on Marcel Sabitzer's corner for Michael Gregoritsch to sweep high into the net. But despite their best efforts, Austria could not find the equaliser.



Merih Demiral celebrates after scoring the first of his two goals against Austria Tuesday