

Raring to go
Actor Sharvari Wagh says she's like a ball of energy soaking everything and trying to learn and better herself

LEISURE | P2



Massive attack
Russia launches Monday over 200 missiles and drones at Ukraine, killing five people and striking energy facilities nationwide

INTERNATIONAL | P10



RBI to launch ULI
RBI will be launching Unified Lending Interface (ULI), a platform to ensure frictionless flow of credit, especially for smaller and rural borrowers

BUSINESS | P11



Memorable debut
Odisha FC win their maiden outing in the AFC Women's Champions League by beating Lion City Sailors in the first round match

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

'Reuters' team member dead in missile attack

Kyiv: A British safety adviser working with a team of journalists from Reuters was killed after a Russian missile struck a hotel in the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, the organisation confirmed Monday. Ryan Evans, 38, was staying at the Hotel Sapphire with colleagues in Donetsk region when it was hit by a Russian missile Saturday night. Two other members of the six-person Reuters crew were hospitalised with injuries. Local officials said the hotel was struck by an Iskander-M Russian ballistic missile, leaving the reporters with blast injuries, concussions and cuts on the body.

Gunmen kill 37 in Pak's Balochistan

Karachi: Heavily-armed gunmen killed at least 37 people in two separate attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan province Monday, as insurgent violence spiked in the restive region. In the first incident, 23 people from Punjab province were killed in a targeted attack in Musakhel district after gunmen offloaded them from buses and checked their identities. In another attack, gunmen killed at least 14 people, including six police officers, in Qalat district. P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



FLOUTING ALL SAFETY NORMS: A woman carries kids dressed in colourful attires on the occasion of Janmashtami, precariously on her two-wheeler and without helmets in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru, Monday

Laxmanananda murder report soon: Law Min

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Amid growing calls to release the judicial commission report on the killing of VHP leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said Monday that the state government will soon take a decision on the matter.

Harichandan made the observation while speaking to reporters on the 16th death anniversary of Saraswati. He informed that Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi is aware of the situation and has already discussed it.

The demand for the release of the report has been voiced by several organisations, including the Odisha unit of VHP, Bajrang Dal, and the Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati Smriti Committee, all supported by the RSS.

Saraswati and four of his associates were gunned down at Jalespeta Ashram in Kandhamal district August 23, 2008, during Janmashtami celebrations, leading to widespread violence that resulted in 43 deaths.

The Odisha government had set up a Commission of Inquiry, initially led by Justice Sarat Mohapatra and later by Justice AS Naidu, to investigate



Saraswati's death. Although the Commission submitted its report in 2015, the previous BJD government delayed its release, according to information provided by state VHP leader S Satpathy.

Kandhamal MP Sukanta Kumar Panigrahi demanded a CBI probe into the case August 23. He cited concerns that the masterminds behind the killings remain at large.

A petition was also filed in the Orissa High Court seeking a CBI probe into the gruesome murders. Hearing the plea filed by advocate Debasis Hota, the High Court had issued a notice to the Odisha government January 2 this year. However, opposing the CBI inquiry, the state government in March urged the Orissa High Court to dismiss the petition for a CBI investigation.

50kg gold, 2qtl silver seized near airport

Speculation is rife regarding the source of the two precious metals. However, officials have said that the owner has been identified and asked to produce documents including tax invoices of the materials seized

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 26: In a major haul, a Commercial Tax and Goods and Services Tax (CT & GST) enforcement squad seized gold and silver worth ₹30 crore near Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here, Monday, official sources said.

"Nearly 50kg of gold and two quintals of silver having a market value of ₹30 crore were seized from two vehicles near BPIA," officials said.

Sources claimed that the gold and silver landed at BPIA from Mumbai at noon. "BVC Logistics loaded the gold and silver in two of its vehicles," they added.



One of vehicles in which the gold and silver were being taken

CT and GST Additional Commissioner Manas Swain said acting on a tipoff, the officials intercepted the two vehicles and seized the gold and silver consignments. He said four persons belonging to 'BVC Logistics' have been detained in connection with the seizure.

"We are verifying the documents about the consignment and also examining whether the GST payment has been made on it," Swain said. Sources added that officials are questioning the owner of the precious metals and seeking documents.

"The gold and silver were being transported to at least 12 jewellery stores. However, the owner of the precious metals could not produce the required documents including tax invoices. So, our officials seized the gold and silver. The owner has been asked to depose before the authorities concerned and produce all the documents. The seized gold and silver will be deposited in the government treasury if the person concerned fails to produce all the documents within the stipulated time period," Swain added.

The consignments were brought to the Odisha capital in Indigo and Vistara flights. The precious metals were kept in cartons, said CT & GST Joint Commissioner Ajay Sethi. "We are also checking the flight documents of the precious metals," Sethi said.

Squads reassigned for pachyderm protection

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Under scrutiny for the death of over 40 elephants so far this fiscal, the Forest department has reassigned protection squads from various divisions to circle levels for more effective wildlife protection.

In a recent letter to all regional chief conservators of forests (RCCFs), the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Susanta Nanda has said that despite having 397 squads deployed in different ranges and divisions for protection and conservation of wildlife, more than 40 elephant deaths have been reported during the current financial year. The letter was issued last week, sources stated here Monday.

The letter stated that while the services of these squads are crucial, the leadership necessary for their effective utilisation and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for field operations — such as tracking elephants and undertaking protection activities — have been lacking.

The letter also pointed out that no action has been taken



in this regard, and the performance of the squads has not been reported to the wildlife headquarters.

The letter noted that 'signs of permanency have crept in', resulting in neither effective patrolling nor protection of wildlife and their habitats, with no action taken against underperforming squads.

To rectify the situation, the Forest department has decided to reallocate the squads from forest divisions to the RCCFs for better field deployment and patrolling.

The department advised the RCCFs to 'not disengage any performing squad members as long as they fulfil the requirements in the field'. RCCFs have also been instructed to mobilise squads from other divisions as needed to ensure effective wildlife protection and management. Special care has to be taken for protection of elephants, the letter said.

15-member panel to monitor Subhadra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The Odisha government will form a 15-member panel to monitor the 'Subhadra Yojana', a women's welfare scheme in the state, officials informed here Monday. As per the guidelines released by the state government for implementing the Subhadra scheme, a state-level sanctioning and monitoring committee (SLSLMC) headed by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja will be constituted for the programme.

The 15-member panel would review the policy from time to time, make recommendations to the government, strengthen coordination among departments involved in the scheme, outline the hindrances for implementation, and propose necessary revisions for its successful implementation.

Among others who will feature in the committee are development commissioner (vice-chairman), principal secretary/secretary, Finance department, principal secretary/secretary, Women & Child Development department and principal secretary/secretary, Panchayatiraj & Drinking Water department. Besides, if required, the committee can invite any person or organisation during meetings for necessary suggestions leading to the success of the scheme.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VAR.
SENSEX	81698.11	↑ 611.90
NIFTY	25010.60	↑ 187.45
DOLLAR	83.90	↓ ₹0.01
EURO	93.72	↑ ₹0.39
GOLD	₹72,021	↑ ₹244
SILVER	₹85,384	↑ ₹173

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	33.2°C	31.6°C
Min Temp	26.0°C	23.2°C
Humidity	92%	94%
Rainfall	Nil	33.4mm

FORECAST
Generally cloudy sky with heavy rain

NON-BAILABLE CHARGES SLAPPED ON GHOSH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 26: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has named Sandip Ghosh, former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in the FIR the agency has filed in connection with its probe into the alleged financial irregularities at the institution during his tenure. The agency has slapped Section 120B of IPC (criminal conspiracy) with Section 420 IPC (cheating and dishonesty) and Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018) which covers unlawful acceptance of gratification by a public servant. The cases read together ac-

count for cognisable offences and are non-bailable in nature, a senior Calcutta High Court lawyer stated here Monday.

The FIR was lodged on the basis of a written complaint lodged by Debal Kumar Ghosh, special secretary to the West Bengal Health department.

The FIR was lodged late Sunday after the CBI took over from a state-constituted special investigation team (SIT) following directions of the Calcutta High Court.

The order was issued on a petition by former deputy superintendent of RG Kar Hospital, Akhtar Ali, who requested a probe by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

UNESCO heritage site Sun Temple faces climate threat

RESEARCHERS HAVE STATED THAT 50 HERITAGE SITES ACROSS THE WORLD WILL CEASE TO EXIST IF GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS CONTINUE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: Researchers working with 'Climate X' have predicted that more than 50 UNESCO heritage sites in the world will cease to exist due to the effects of climate change by 2050. The report states that five of these sites are in India, including the Sun Temple at Konark.

The other Indian heritage sites that face extinction are Khangchendzonga National Park, Keoladeo National Park, the Sundarbans in West Bengal and a number of churches in Goa.

Currently, 1,223 sites have been included in UNESCO's World Heritage list. These are consid-

ered to be important and need to be protected, the report stated.

The findings were the result of assessing climate models by experts. They explained how the landmark sites will be impacted because of floods, coastal erosion, landslides, wind-based hazards, storms and cyclones.

"Our findings serve as a stark warning for governments, preservationists and the global community to prioritise the safeguarding of

our planet, to preserve our ancient monuments and our current assets and infrastructure and to protect life today and into the future," Lukky Ahmed, CEO and co-founder of 'Climate X' said.

Researchers from 'Climate X' carried out the new study to understand which among the heritage sites will perish because of climate change. Climate X's 'Spectra' platform was used by the team in which models projected how properties, assets and infrastructure will be affected by climate change under different scenarios. During the course of the research, 50 sites across the world were found to be at risk if global

greenhouse gas emissions continue increasing at the current rate. The platform's algorithm quantified the risk from extreme weather to 16 different climate hazards, which ranged from tropical cyclones, extreme heat and flooding, across eight different warming scenarios which may occur in the next 100 years.

The number one site on the risk list is Indonesia's Subak System which faces the risk of surface flooding, extreme heat days, and drought risk. The second is Australia's Kakadu National Park which faces the risk of surface flooding and wildfires and is followed by China's, Quanzhou Emporium of the World as it faces the risk of acute drought.



leisure



KYLIE TURNING INTO A 'HOMEBODY'

American socialite Kylie Jenner is reportedly turning into a 'homebody' and shunning the Hollywood circuit to focus on her budding romance with actor Timothée Chalamet and being at home with her two kids.

HALLE STILL 'CLOSE' WITH HER CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART

Hollywood star Halle Berry said that she has often thought about what might have happened if they had stayed together with her childhood sweetheart, whom she is still 'close friends' with. The 58-year-old actress has married thrice and has been in a relationship with Van Hunt for over four years.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you will crave total freedom in whatever you are doing, says Ganesh. And sheer entertainment is on the cards for teenyboppers, like mall-hopping or going for a film. The kids will demand a Jumbo Berry ice cone. All in all, it will be a family day for you.

TAURUS
Your unflinching punctuality, your insistence on following time schedules is due to be noticed and appreciated today. Your colleagues and superiors will be singing praises as soon as you arrive for work. If you are in an artistic or a creative profession, such as designing, journalism, multi media, you have a remarkably eventful and gratifying day ahead. Creative people and professionals having the same sun sign as yours are also in for a great day, assures Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will find yourself caught in two minds repeatedly, owing to your unpredictable mood swings. This will be the cause of a lot of mental stress. You can reduce your anxiety by talking out your issues with family members and experts. You need to take care of your health today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
A day to indulge in fantasy. Your ideas will be fantastic. Your status and prestige go up. People will praise your efforts. (Your efforts will be appreciated). A day of creativity and success, with Ganesh's blessings in tow.

LEO
You will relentlessly try to find means to progress at the workplace today. You will remain steadfast in your resolutions. You will not allow those working under you to slack. You will need to let go of your inhibitions and fears to be happy in life. You will receive the beneficence of highly placed superiors, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Confidently take on the challenges that in all likelihood will test your business abilities, especially the ones that are related to your investments and monetary matters. You will most probably come up with novel ideas to solve long-pending issues, and Ganesh says that this will be very effective.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you will be busy in your work field today and will be able to attain your goals in your work field today. Your level of enthusiasm will be at its peak. Today you may be able to meet with a person from the opposite sex who will be your future partner. Ganesh showers you with his blessings always.

SCORPIO
You are a visionary and today you work towards building a successful future. But, expecting an instant result would be unfair. You need to have patience to bring in those dynamic changes in your life. Wait and watch, the patience would reap sweet fruits!

SAGITTARIUS
The cloud of worries is likely to keep you gloomy today. Try to burst that cloud, and take a decision that would help you to solve your troubles. There may be some delay, if you want the situation to get back to normal. However, as Ganesh says, you would be the one who would benefit at the end of the day!

CAPRICORN
You want to enhance your knowledge by exploring foreign shores, but luck hasn't favoured you yet. Ganesh predicts today to be a favourable day for you to try again for higher studies. If associated with the Stock Market or speculation, you are likely to make profits. You will come across many opportunities, but you need to identify and explore them to the fullest.

AQUARIUS
Are you facing a roadblock in your path? Make a minor change in your route, you will find a smooth and clear road once again, advises Ganesh. The efforts you have made in the past will come to fruition, today. Don't get satisfied with your current achievements, you still have a long way to keep working hard.

PISCES
Do not commit yourself to any large investments today. It is best to avoid speculative activities. For those who have a job, the co-operation of your colleagues will help you progress, says Ganesh.

SHARVARI RARING TO GO

Mumbai: Ahead of her shoot in Kashmir, actress Sharvri is in an *Alpha* state of mind as she intensely preps for the schedule.

The *Bunty Aur Babli 2* actress took to Instagram Monday and shared a slew of pictures featuring her in "action mode", where she is seen working out. She captioned it: "Alpha state of mind #MondayMotivation"

Team *Alpha* is heading to Kashmir Monday to shoot for the second schedule of the entertainer. The actress had earlier shared her excitement to shoot in Kashmir, which is also called as Heaven on Earth.

Talking about her upcoming schedule, Sharvri had earlier said: "I can't wait to be on the sets of *Alpha* again and I can't wait to shoot in Kashmir! I'm thrilled that it's going to be a very exciting schedule. The *Alpha* team will be meeting after some time so we are all super ready to start the Kashmir sked!"

She went on to add, "And on the sets of *Alpha*, I'm like a ball of energy soaking everything and trying to learn and better myself. To get an opportunity like this so early in one's career is truly a blessing. I'm just humbled to be in such a franchise that has the megastars of our film industry in it!"

On the work front, Sharvri is currently basking on the twin success of *Munjya*, which raked in Rs. 100 crore and was also seen in *Maharaj* and *Vedaa*.



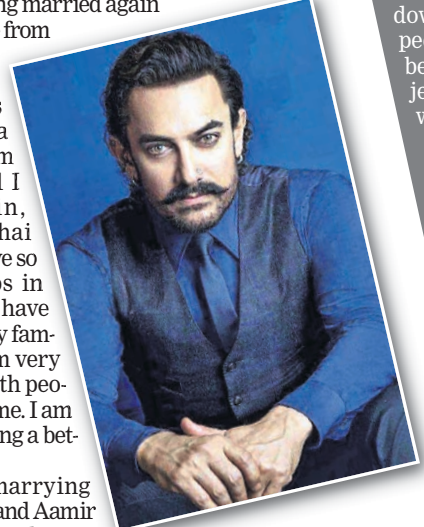
CHINTA O CHETANA'S 47TH BARSHA UTSAV - DAY II



Artists of Tridhara dance group of Bhubaneswar perform *Prahallada Nataka*, a traditional play native to Odisha which narrates the story of Lord Vishnu's man-lion avatar, Nrusingha or Narasimha, on the second day of the event at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar Monday. Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari was the chief guest on the occasion.

At 59, it looks difficult: Aamir on 3rd marriage

Mumbai: Aamir Khan recently shared his thoughts in a candid interview on Rhea Chakraborty's podcast. Aside from discussing his movies, the actor also opened up about his personal life. During the conversation, he discussed the possibility of getting married again following his divorce from Kiran Rao.



Aamir, when quizzed if he plans to get married for a third time, said, "I am 59 now, where will I get married again, mushkil lag raha hai (looks difficult). I have so many relationships in my life right now, I have reconnected with my family, my kids, etc. I am very happy just being with people who are close to me. I am working towards being a better person."

The topic of remarrying came up when Rhea and Aamir were discussing how the concept of marriage has evolved over time. When Rhea asked Aamir for advice on getting married, he jokingly mentioned that he wouldn't be the best person to ask since he has experienced two failed marriages.

However, he openly admitted that he doesn't enjoy living alone and desires a partner for companionship. Aamir also shared how he maintains a close relationship with his ex-wives, Kiran and Reena Dutta, and emphasised that the success of marriages varies from individual to individual.

'Showbiz is beautiful but a difficult industry'

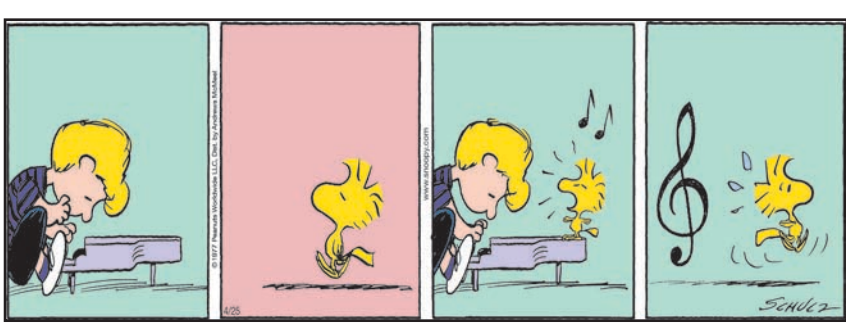
Mumbai: It's been 16 years since Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na released but Manjari Fadnis' role of Meghna in the film remains among her most-remembered ones. The actress feels show business is dreamy and beautiful but at the same time it's a difficult industry.

Narrating her journey, she says, "I have had my share of ups and downs, and emotional breakdowns. Along with its dreamy, beautiful aspects, showbiz is a very difficult industry to be in. No one deals with the number of rejections that people in our industry deal with on a daily basis."

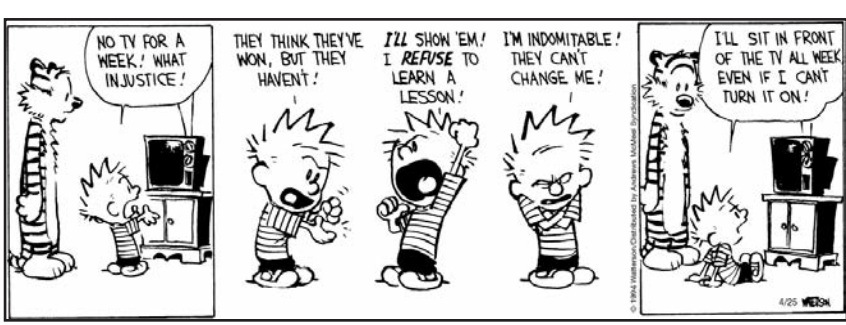
The Grand Masti actress adds that her spiritual approach helps her stay on track throughout her career: "I chose not to be a part of the rat race as I believe everyone has their own journey. Sometimes you will be ahead and sometimes others will be ahead of you. It's a long road and we have to move at our own pace to grow in life. On days that I am not working, I keep myself creatively occupied with singing, reading, painting or by meeting people that inspire me."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

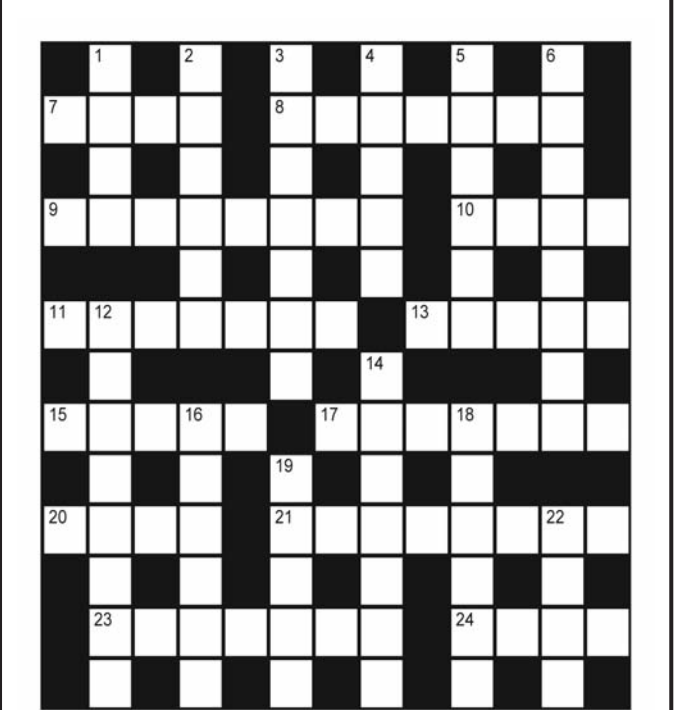


BREVITY



FUN post

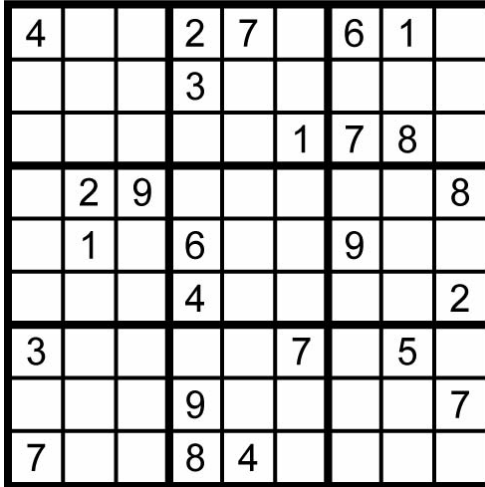
CROSSWORD



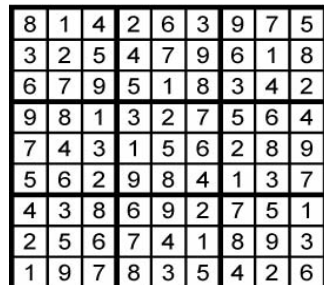
- Across**
- 7 Quick
 - 8 Very bad
 - 9 Blood feud
 - 10 Expression of pain
 - 11 Nominate
 - 13 Magical wish granter
 - 15 Lumberjack's leftover
 - 17 Water transport
 - 20 Beach item
 - 21 Circus performers
 - 23 Painkiller
 - 24 Italian automaker
 - 5 Levy
 - 6 Winter driving hazard (5,3)
 - 12 Small amount
 - 14 Airedale
 - 16 Illness
 - 18 Reject outright and bluntly
 - 19 Place to wash up
 - 22 Furniture wood
- Down**
- 1 Nephrite
 - 2 Artist's hangout
 - 3 Mexican saloon
 - 4 Talking bird

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

DEFT HANDS

Differently-abled artisans shape a clay idol of Lord Ganesh in Cuttack, Monday



1,274 held, over ₹20 crore worth illicit liquor seized



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: A staggering 1,274 persons have been arrested and a record 2,209 cases made out by the Excise department during the statewide crackdown against illicit country liquor and fermented brew manufacturers across the state in the last one week following the hooch tragedy at Chikiti in Ganjam district August 19.

A senior Excise official told Orissa POST Monday that a total of 1,15,822 litres of illicit country liquor and 1.02.237 kg fermented brew have been seized during the raids at manufacturing dens by various Excise units in the state. The retail price of the seized contraband has been estimated to be of over Rs 20 crore.

The officials also seized 132 vehicles used in the transportation of the illicit liquor consignments, leading to the arrest of 70 vehicle owners. "They are being questioned to ascertain if they, too, were part of the illicit liquor syndicates," the official said.

Only Monday, the department



arrested 125 persons from various parts of the state and registered 341 offences in connection with the recovery of 21,341 litres of illicit spirits and 2,28,762 kg of fermented brew. The raids, carried out on the instruction of Excise Commissioner Narsingha Bhol, also resulted in the seizure of 20 vehicles and arrest of 10 of their owners, the official said adding that all the accused have been forwarded to courts.

On Monday, Excise sleuths from Khurda division inter-

No let up for repeat offenders

In order to bolster cases against habitual offenders during the present crackdown, the Excise sleuths are digging out their past cases and clubbing those with the fresh case during their production in the case.

"We are making the entry of their past cases in our case diary, remand as well as the chargesheet (at a later stage) so as to convince the court/s not to take a lenient view of their notoriety," a senior Excise official said.

Simultaneously, the sleuths have also stepped up efforts to intensify crackdown on the smuggling syndicates that ensure a steady supply of illicit spirits and fermented brew to big cities like Cuttack and Bhubaneswar using various modes of transport, especially buses.

"We have identified those production and distribution points in Mayurbhanj, Athagarh, Khalikote and Dhenkanal," the official said adding that massive crackdowns are on the anvil.

cepted a van at Sansireipur area and recovered 1,500 litres of illicit country liquor. The accused in the case, Prakash Majhi was arrested and forwarded to court, the official said.

Similarly, 650 litres of illicit spirit was recovered from a car in Dhenkanal district.

Meanwhile, the official said that during the multiple raids carried out in and around Bhubaneswar, including Salia Sahi, 578 litres of illicit spirit and 5,829 kg of fermented brew had been recovered. Three persons were arrested in that connection.

"We are going to intensify the drive in the coming days," the official said.



FESTIVE MOOD: Girls pose for a selfie with the ISKCON temple in the backdrop as thousands thronged on Janmastami, in Bhubaneswar, Monday PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

All isn't well with adopted villages: NHRC seeks report

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought detailed responses from the Ministry of Rural Development's Secretary and state's Chief Secretary within eight weeks on the plight of the residents of villages 'adopted' by public sector banks (PSBs), MPs and MLAs.

The NHRC move came while hearing a plea filed by senior lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy. The petitioner drew the apex rights body's attention towards lack of basic amenities and bare necessities in the villages 'adopted' on record by various organs of democracy and institutions in the country.

In his plea, Tripathy alleged that residents, especially the poor belonging to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, in vil-

lages - like Jalanga in Bhadrak district - adopted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Samagra Gramin Vikas Yojana (SGVY) have been leading a miserable life.

"RBI governor D Subbarao had launched a financial outreach programme in Jalanga December 3, 2009. Later, UCO Bank adopted Jalanga to transfer it into a model village under the SGVY. During his visit to Jalanga in February 2013, Subbarao heard grievances against UCO Bank. But to no avail," said Tripathy.

He claimed that to date, the five villages - Jalanga, Chandipur, Pokatunga, Chhatabara and Bhedabahal of the state - which have been adopted by the RBI under SGVY did not reveal any improvement even after 14 years of their adoption.

The situation of villages



adopted by MPs, MLAs and corporate is no different, the petitioner said.

He said no comprehensive database regarding the adopted villages in India has been prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development. It is believed that more than 10,000 villages have been adopted by various institutions, MPs and MLAs in the country.

"Mere adoption on records,

spending money with the nexus of corrupt persons in the name of poverty and backwardness further worsens the condition of life of the adopted villagers and weakens their belief in the democratic setup," Tripathy said.

Periodic, systematic assessment and evaluation of the living conditions and quality of life with happiness index of the residents of adopted villages should be given utmost importance, Tripathy said.

The rights activist urged the NHRC to seek a comprehensive database on the adopted villages in states, including Odisha, and Union Territories and make a study on the development of the villagers so far as bare necessities of life and basic amenities and improvement of health, education, employment and other parameters of human life are concerned.

IMD: Heavy rains to lash state for 2 days

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, August 26: A depression over northwest Madhya Pradesh and adjoining east Rajasthan has intensified into a deep depression, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Monday and warned of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in parts of Konkan, Goa, Maharashtra and Odisha over the next two days.

At 11:30 pm August 25, the deep depression lay centred near 70 km south-southeast of Chittorgarh, Rajasthan. This system is expected to move west-southwest, affecting South Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and reaching Saurashtra, Kutch, and parts of Pakistan by August 29, the IMD said in an update issued at 2 am.

The weather department said another low-pressure area is located over Bangladesh and adjoining Gangetic West Bengal. It is likely to intensify further and move towards Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha, and Jharkhand over the next two days. Issuing a red alert, the IMD said heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is expected in West Madhya Pradesh August 26. Similar conditions are forecast for east and south Rajasthan, Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch from August 26 to 29.

Konkan, Goa, Madhya Maharashtra, Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, and Jharkhand are also expected to receive heavy to extremely heavy rainfall over the next two days, it said.

The IMD has warned of strong winds reaching up to 50 kmph in Madhya Pradesh August 26 and up to 60 kmph in south Rajasthan August 26-27. In Gujarat, nearby Pakistan, north Maharashtra, and the northeast Arabian Sea, strong winds gusting up to 55 kmph are expected on August 26, increasing to 60 kmph August 27 and 28.



ON GUARD: Security personnel conduct a flag march in Khurda, Monday, following tensions after the broad daylight murder of a man Sunday OP PHOTO

Over 11K chickens culled; Health dept issues alert

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The state government has culled over 11,700 chickens in Puri district's Pipli following the detection of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza, an official said Monday.

After mass deaths of chickens at a local poultry farm in Pipli, culling began Saturday and was completed Monday evening. Additional culling in homes and nearby villages will take place Tuesday, the official added.

The Health department has directed Satya Panigrahi of the state RRT and Sunita Jena, Epidemiologist, SSU to proceed to Puri to investigate and ensure the culling operation as per the guideline.

Director, Public Health Nilakantha Mishra has asked CDMO, Puri, to remain prepared for the protection of human

CDMO, Puri asked to remain prepared for the protection of human health due to the ongoing outbreak of bird flu

health due to the ongoing outbreak of bird flu in the district.

Jagannath Nanda, Additional Director of Disease Control, said 13 rapid response teams are handling the culling, with some poultry farm owners conducting culling independently. No other unusual chicken deaths have been reported elsewhere in the state, he added. In response to the outbreak, the state Health department has heightened surveillance and issued an alert.

Bijay Mohapatra, Director of Health Services, emphasised that while bird flu is not new to Odisha, the department is working with

stakeholders to manage the situation. He assured that sufficient medicines are available and urged poultry workers to maintain hygiene and wear masks.

Meanwhile, neighbouring West Bengal has reportedly expressed its unwillingness to procure poultry from Odisha following the discovery of avian influenza in chickens at a farm in Pipli area. The West Bengal Poultry Federation informed about this decision Monday.

The H5N1 strain is considered highly pathogenic and can also be transmitted to animals such as pigs, horses, large cats, dogs, and occasionally humans.

The spread of the virus is a concern for governments and the poultry industry due to the devastation it can cause to flocks, the possibility of trade restrictions and the risk of human transmission.

Light exercise improves blood flow to children's brain

Performing light-intensity exercises for a short duration was found to have improved the blood flow to children's cerebrum, known to help with cognition, according to a recent study.

The study by Japan's Waseda University enrolled 41 healthy children from fifth-grade elementary to third-year junior high school students to find out how short-term, light-intensity exercises affected the blood flow to prefrontal cortex, located in the cerebrum and known to handle cognitive functions.

Researchers focused on exercises that can easily be performed on the spot without special equipment, such as stretching. Most of the exercises were performed

while seated, with movements lasting 10 to 20 seconds.

The team used an imaging technique - functional near-infrared spectroscopy - to measure changes in blood flow to the brain by looking at concentrations of oxyhaemoglobin (that carries oxygen from the lungs to the tissues) while at rest and during the exercise.

According to the findings published in the Scientific Reports journal, the researchers found a significant increase in oxyhaemoglobin levels in multiple regions of the prefrontal cortex during all forms of exercise compared to the resting state.

"By combining the types of exercise that easily increase blood flow in the prefrontal cor-

Children around the world have been shown to engage in physical exercise, leading to high levels of sedentary behaviour



tex identified in this study, it is possible to develop an exercise

program that everyone can easily engage in to improve chil-

dren's executive functions. It may also be used in the future to prevent cognitive decline in adults and the elderly," said Takashi Naito, one of the authors and a doctoral student at Waseda University.

The authors further wrote that the study implies that short-duration, light-intensity exercises, provided that they entail a certain degree of cognitive and/or physical demands, can activate the prefrontal cortex and increase blood flow.

Previous studies have shown that physical exercise improves cognitive function in many ways such as by improving blood flow to the brain, by causing structural changes in the brain and by promoting the

forming of new brain cells, or neurons.

However, as children around the world have been shown to insufficiently engage in physical exercise, leading to high levels of sedentary behaviour, the authors said that the study's results offer potential solutions.

The study is a significant step forward in combating sedentary lifestyles and activating brain functions in children, thereby supporting their physical and mental growth, they said.

"Our goal is to develop a light-intensity exercise program that is accessible to everyone, aiming to enhance brain function and reduce children's sedentary behaviour," Naito said.

Deputy CM bats for setting up climate-friendly cold storage

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment KV Singh Deo emphasised on setting up of climate-friendly cold storage in the state in view of changing weather patterns and temperatures.

Deo discussed the matter while holding a meeting with representatives of various cold storage service providers here.

"In order to address climate change issues, the government



is of the view that cold storage facilities should be climate resilient," he said.

"The cold storage facility will be set up in all districts and subdivisions of the state for storage of fruits, vegetables, milk and related products," the minister said.

He said, "The cold storage will be solar-powered as Prime Minister Modi emphasised on the use of renewable energy and solar energy for sustainable development."

Deo discussed with experts and providers about the estimated cost for the installation of cold storage facilities in the state and informed them the government is providing 70 per cent subsidy for the same.

The Minister advised the officials of the Department of Cooperatives, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment and Department of Energy to visit the places where the facility is already functional.

Principal Secretary Arabinda Padhee said that cold storage facility will help in increasing farmers' income and control in price rise of commodities.

Notably, in July, Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, during a meeting with different farmers' organisations, had told about state government's plan to open one cold storage in each sub-division of the state as a first step.

Since the farmers' major problem was storing their perishable produce, this would be helpful for them, he said.

"The government is preparing a policy for prosperity of the farmers. The government's help from cultivation to marketing of the farm produce will be covered under it," the CM said.

"Besides, the deserving farmers, who have not been covered under PM Kisan Yojana, would be brought under the Central scheme, he said adding that the government is drawing up a policy in this regard, he added.



FOR GREENER FUTURE: Biju Yuva Janata Dal members plant a sapling during an event in Cuttack, Monday

OP PHOTO

CLASSIFIED

LOST

I, Sri Susant Kumar Mishra, S/o Khirod Kumar Mishra. I lost our house sale deed named Susant Kumar Mishra and my mother Smt. Sarajya Mishra vide Document No.-11581001579. If any person find it, please contact below address or nearest Police Station. Susant Kumar Mishra Hatipathar Road, 3rd Line, Ranigada Farm, Rayagada-I Mob No.- 9437474770

AFFIDAVIT

I, Basant Kumar Rout, aged about 52 years, S/o-Late Puna Rout, permanent resident of Village/Post - Gandarpur, Via - KIIT, PS - Nandanakan, Dist. - Khurda, Odisha - 751024, India, do hereby declare that my real name is Basant Kumar Rout, which is also mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 420731665289. That in the School Certificate of my daughter Aisha Rout my name has been mentioned as Basanta Kumar Rout. That both the names belong to one and the same person i.e. me.

BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC, MALKANGIRI I, Biswajit Panda, S/o Bijay Kumar Panda residing at Hi-tech Colony, Malkangiri, P.O./P.S./Dist. Malkangiri do hereby solemnly affirm on oath as follows. That I am the holder of the Matriculation Certificate issued by the Indian School Certificate Examination (ISCE) under Roll No. 1234044/018 unique ID 7783343 for the academic year 2023 and the passed out student of Deepti Convent School, Malkangiri. That, I have lost my original matriculation certificate during the shifting to my new residence. I submit that the matriculation certificate mentioned is lost by me is a very essential document for my career. Hence I request the authorities of the (ISCE) Board to issue me a duplicate matriculation certificate lost by me. I undertake to hand over the original certificate in the event of their retrieval at a later date.

Deponent

First episode of Puri Heritage Walks launched

MAIDEN VENTURE TO CONTINUE EVERY MONTH ON THE SECOND SUNDAY



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Puri, August 26: Heritage enthusiasts from across the state took part in the first episode of Puri Heritage Walks in the pilgrim town on the eve of Janmastami.

The initiative is aimed at familiarising heritage lovers with the essence of Jagannath cult and the rich traditions of the deities and shrines around the world-famous temple, which epitomises Odia cultural traditions and ethos.

Led by young heritage activists of Puri, more than 50 walkers from Konark, Gop, Puri,

Bhubaneswar, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Cuttack participated in the maiden walk.

After initiating the event from near the Mahaveer Temple adjacent to the Southern Gate (Aswa Dwara), they visited Sriramdas Math or Dakshina Parswa Math and Kapal Mochana Mahadev Temple and entered the temple premises to see Adi Nrusingha, Maa Bimala and Nirmalya Khala shrines.

The heritage walkers then went to Ananda Bazaar and before having the Mahaprasad had an in-depth discussion on the unique aspects of the Srimandir and the cult and how the various



other traditions like Shaivism, Shakti worshiping and Tantricism created a wonderful collage over the religious fabrics of its day-to-day traditions.

Sarat Mohanty, a servitor-cum researcher in the Jagannath culture and tradition, shared his experiences over the tying of the flags over the Neela Chakra and how he experiences a bird's eye view of the entire eastern coast from the Chilika lake to Dhauli, Nayagarh to the endless Kalinga Sagar (Bay of Bengal) and how the heavy structure atop the temple is decorated with intricate designs and carvings.

Traditional priest of Maa

Bimala's shrine, Siddharth Acharya spoke on the association of Tantricism over the Jagannath Culture and how the traditions at the Srimandir represents a unique blending of the major religious traditions under Shiva, Devi (Shakti) and Tantric traditions.

Jagannath culture researcher Dayanidhi Tripathy and Debiprasanna Nanda also spoke on some of the unknown aspects of the temple traditions.

Puri Heritage Walks conveners Sanjay Baral, Aurojyoti and Biswaranjan Dehury coordinated the event despite a Sunday and presence of thousands of devotees inside the Srimandir premises.

The conveners and the participating heritage enthusiasts decided to continue the heritage walk every month on the second Sunday.

The subsequent Puri Heritage Walks will be held at specific shrines or group of temples, religious structures inside the holy city and would also explore the delicacies of Puri as traditionally the historic city has got a plethora of unique dishes which are known as the traditionally authentic Odia cuisines.

'Take security measures for Subhadra Yojana implementation'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Planning and Convergence department Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg Monday asked Director General of Police (DGP) to take necessary precautionary measures to avoid any untoward incidents during distribution and collection of forms for implementation of Subhadra Yojana in the state.

In a letter, Garg mentioned that camps for distribution and collection of forms may be organised at suitable locations as per the decision of district Collectors/municipal commissioners.

"As the number of beneficiaries for Subhadra is more than one crore, hence it is apprehended that beneficiaries would assemble for collection and submission of forms at above-mentioned locations," Garg said in

the letter. Moreover, unscrupulous elements may try to exploit people and engage in nefarious activities, the letter added.

"It is therefore requested to issue instructions to all concerned to take necessary precautionary measures to avoid any untoward incidents during such activities for smooth implementation of the programme," the letter said.

"Adequate personnel may be

deployed at appropriate locations in consultation with the district Collectors/ municipal commissioners. You are also requested to alert your team to remain vigilant and act on any tips/ information received and take strict legal action against any middleman or unscrupulous elements detected during the process. These instructions may be communicated to all officers in the field," the letter read.

RCB Meadows organises art competition 'Rangatuli-2024'



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar (RCB) Meadows organised the inter-school art competition 'Rangatuli-2024' at State Museum here Monday.

The third edition of event brought together over 550 young artists from 105 schools across the City, competing in two categories with the theme of Krishna's Magical Childhood for students of Class IV to Class VII and the Heritage of Odisha for Class VIII to Class X students. The event was inaugurated by noted Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer Dash Benhur, Superintendent of the Odisha State Museum Bhagyalipi Malla, and PDG Aswini Kar.

The young participants demonstrated remarkable creativity and skill, creating artworks that reflected both their imagination

and artistic talent.

The events culminated in a grand award ceremony at the Bhanja Kala Mandap. From Group A, Anweta Sahu Vikash, First Steps School, Kritika Routray, Mother's Public, Pahala, and Mandira Jena, Bhubaneswar Model Public School Takshila secured first, second and third prizes, respectively.

From Group B, Sai Shree Singh, Loyola School, Hitansi Behera ODM Public School, and Puravi Baral, SBG Vidaya Mandir were awarded the first, second, and third prizes, respectively. Additionally, five students from each group received consolation prizes.

The ceremony was graced by dignitaries, including Member of Parliament Sambit Patra, Ekamra Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh, Pipili MLA Ashrit Pattanayak, and Rotary DG (2024-25) Yagyansis Mohapatra.

People with aneurysm at high mental health condition risk

People who know they suffer from aneurysms (weakened areas in brain blood vessels) are at a great anxiety risk, along with developing certain other mental health conditions, scientists reported Monday.

The highest risk was seen in patients younger than age 40, according to research published in Stroke, the peer-reviewed scientific journal of the American Stroke Association, adding that even if the risk is small, the potential of a debilitating brain vessel rupture may be a psychological burden.

An unruptured intracranial aneurysm occurs when the wall of a blood vessel in the brain becomes weak and bulges out, posing a potential risk of future rupture and life-threatening bleeding in the brain.

"I often see people who do not

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An unruptured intracranial aneurysm occurs when the wall of a blood vessel in the brain becomes weak and bulges out, posing a potential risk of future rupture and life-threatening bleeding in the brain

undergo surgery yet feel fear and/or anxiety about their condition before each imaging or screening test to monitor their condition," said study co-author Na-Rae Yang, an assistant professor of neurosurgery at Ewha Womans University Mokdong Hospital in Seoul, South Korea. Even when it is medically



judged and explained that follow-up observation is the best course for their aneurysm rather than surgery, "they still worry about the very slim chance of developing a fatal brain bleed," Yang added.

During the study, researchers examined data from the National Health Information Database in South Korea, which includes over 20 years (2004 to 2024) of health data for more than 85,000 people who received care from

"I often see people who do not undergo surgery yet feel fear and/or anxiety about their condition before each imaging or screening test to monitor their condition

NA-RAE YANG | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF NEUROSURGERY AT EWHA WOMANS UNIVERSITY MOKDONG HOSPITAL, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

hospitals, clinics and pharmacies throughout the country.

More than six months after diagnosis with an aneurysm, researchers compared how many people developed a mental health condition, such as anxiety, stress, depression, bipolar and eating disorders, insomnia and alcohol or drug misuse.

The analysis took place over a 10-year period. It found that, when compared to people with-

out an aneurysm, people with an aneurysm were 10 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition.

In cases where a mental health condition was diagnosed by a psychiatrist, the difference was even greater, showing a three-fold increased risk.

"Our finding of a higher rate of a severe mental health condition in younger adults with aneurysm underscores the significant psychological burden for this group of patients who may already be dealing with other life stressors, such as building their career and/or raising a family," Yang noted.

The researchers suggest providing support to help patients cope with the stress of the diagnosis may be an important part of comprehensive care.

IANS

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DMF funds going to waste in Keonjhar



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

MINERAL RICH BLOCKS SUCH AS JODA, BANSPAL, HATADIHI, AND HARICHANDANPUR STILL LACK THE BASIC MINIMUM AMENITIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, August 26: This district is known for its huge quantities of iron ore. In fact it is said that Keonjhar is the highest iron ore producing district in India. However, despite bringing huge amounts of revenue to the exchequer both at the state and central levels, the district continues to remain under-developed. The people here belong mostly to tribal communities and live in poverty. The mineral rich blocks of Joda, Banspal, Hatadihi, Harichandanpur still lack the basic minimum amenities. Unemployment is also high in this district. The District Mineral Foundation (DMF) fund was expected to play a key role for the overall development. However, the funds are mostly used for

physical infrastructure. Development of basic facilities and amenities has taken a back seat and as a result, suffering of the people grows. Sources alleged that there is a glaring lack of attention towards improving the well-being of mining-affected communities through better investments in healthcare, nutrition, availability of clean water and creating income security. However, there are some good examples as well that show how the funds can be used constructively. For instance, this district has used DMF funds for local livelihoods through millets, scholarships to talented but poor and backward students, and improving health facilities. DMF is committed to the interest and benefit of mining-affected areas. People were happy with the thought that in addition to the budgetary resources of the state government, funds will also be available from DMF, stated a source. But later on DMF funds became the major budgetary resource for which this district lost contribution from the state, he added. "Due to lack of proper management, huge funds are spent on different projects without

calling any tenders. Many projects are lying incomplete for years together. The funds have been spent for projects which could have been developed with money provided by the Odisha government," said Subhakanta Nayak, an RTI activist. "The trustee board of the DMF is not meeting regularly. On many occasions proposals are passed without the necessary approval of the board. Huge amounts have been spent for the appointment of staff in the DMF and most of them are incompetent," Nayak added. Nayak's opinion was supported by social activist Mukhtar Ahmed. "As DMF fund is Keonjhar's own, hence local needs and employment should be given priority. Funds have been spent on many unnecessary projects and due to lack of proper supervision huge amounts of money has gone to waste due to poor quality work," Ahmed pointed out. According to the DMF website, total funds collected so far are ₹11,541.12 crore (it includes ₹1,731 crore in FY 2023-24 and ₹438 crore in the on-going FY 2024-25). So far 3,271 projects have been undertaken and ₹5,308.09 crore has been spent on those. Out of this ₹3,628.25 crore has been spent on 2,592 projects in high priority areas and ₹1,679.85 crore on 679 projects in other. District Collector and chairman of the DMF trustee board Bishal Singh said, "The data available on the website is wrong. We have spent more money than the figure being shown on the website. We will soon review the projects to find out how many of them are incomplete. Work on various projects is regularly monitored by our technical team."



FIRE SAFETY: Fire personnel perform a mock drill on fire safety during an awareness programme held at Sanskar International School in Bargarh, Monday OP PHOTO

Pradhan lays foundation stone of projects worth ₹95cr in Athmallik

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Angul, August 26: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday laid the foundation stone of projects worth ₹94.83 crore in education, health, and road sectors which will benefit the students and the public in Athmallik subdivision under Angul district. Inaugurating the new building and dormitory of Odisha Model School in Banamalipur block under Angul district on the auspicious occasion of Janmashtami, Pradhan said two schools in each block and urban area will develop into PM Shri Schools. The National Education Policy (NEP) under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has prioritised our education to meet the needs of the world and prepare the new generation for the future, Pradhan said. He said about 800 schools in the



state are planned to be developed into PM Shri Schools. This school will play a major role in carrying forward the basic tradition in the Athmallik subdivision, he added. The Union Minister advised the District Collector to bring together all the departments of the district and plan to increase the irrigation and farming activities in all the villages of Athmallik. "We will have to take collective

responsibility to make the Athmallik subdivision an ideal subdivision. Women's empowerment and employment should be our priority along with education, health, transit, transportation systems," he said. Pradhan said a welfare government has been formed in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a popular government under the leadership of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in Odisha. The Union Minister said women beneficiaries will be given ₹10,000 annually and a total of ₹50,000 will be credited directly to their bank accounts in five years under the 'Subhadra Yojana' launched by the BJP government in the state. More than 1 crore mothers will be benefited from this scheme, which he said will be the biggest scheme in Odisha to empower the mothers.

Firefighter hurls hot water at colleague; suspended

Baripada: In a bizarre incident, a firefighter has been suspended after he hurled hot water at a coworker leaving him with severe burn injuries at the Bangiriposi Fire Station office compound in Mayurbhanj district Monday. The suspended firefighter has been identified as havildar Nutan Malik and his critically injured colleague as Dushmant Kumar Dehury, a constable. According to sources, Dushmant returned late to the station, Sunday night. Havildar Nutan Malik, who was on duty, reprimanded him for his tardiness. This led to a heated argument between them, after which Nutan, in a fit of anger, brought boiling water and hurled it at Dushmant. Dushmant sustained severe burns on his leg and thigh. He was initially rushed to a nearby clinic, and transferred Monday morning to the PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada, where he is undergoing treatment. Following the incident, the Central Range Officer suspended Malik from duty, as confirmed by Additional Fire Officer Bishwanath Munda.



FESTIVE FERVOUR: Students participate in 'Dahi Handi' competition held at Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district on the occasion of Janmashtami, Monday OP PHOTO

Slain VHP leader's death anniversary passes off peacefully in Kandhamal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Phulbani/Bhubaneswar, August 26: Amid unprecedented security, 'Janmashtami' and the death anniversary of slain Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati were observed peacefully across the communally sensitive Kandhamal district and other parts of state Monday. With armed personnel stationed at vulnerable locations in Kandhamal, the celebrations for 'Janmashtami' and Saraswati's 'sacrifice day' passed off peacefully. Baliguda Sub-Collector Reena Pradhan said, "The death anniversary of the VHP leader was observed peacefully at the ashrams founded by him in Chakapada and Jalespata. There were no reports of any untoward incidents." Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan paid their respects to Saraswati, who, along with four associates, was murdered on Janmashtami, August 23, 2008. The violence that followed resulted in 43 deaths in Kandhamal. Taking to X, the Chief Minister described Saraswati as a great social reformer who worked for the wellbeing of the downtrodden and also upheld the local culture. His (Saraswati) dedicated life will all along inspire society, Majhi said.



Pradhan, who garlanded Saraswati's statue in Angul district, wrote on X, "On the occasion of the death anniversary of Vedant Keshari Brahmali Puja Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati Ji Maharaj, I paid homage at his birthplace in Talcher block, Gurgang. Swamiji worked to instill devotion among the masses and created an example of social harmony in the state. May his sacrifice and ideals continue to bless our nation and society." To commemorate Saraswati's death anniversary, the RSS organised a marathon in Bhubaneswar, drawing participation from hundreds, including students. State's Ministers Rabi Narayan Naik and Suryabanshi Suraj attended a function at Saraswati's Jalespata Ashram and paid their

tributes. Naik praised the slain leader as a great reformer who significantly contributed to the backward region of Kandhamal and the tribal community. Suraj highlighted Saraswati's role in promoting culture, education, and agriculture. Kandhamal MP Sukant Panigrahi criticised the previous BJD government for not taking proper action against the conspirators behind Saraswati's murder. Swami Muktananda Ji, in charge of the Jalespata Ashram, expressed hope that the current government will unveil the truth and bring the assailants to justice. The 2008 murder of Saraswati and his associates by unidentified gunmen during Janmashtami led to widespread riots, with about 43 deaths and thousands displaced. The district administration imposed a 40-day curfew to restore order. The Naveen Patnaik government initiated a Crime Branch inquiry, which implicated several Maoists. In October 2013, eight convicts, including Maoist leader Udaya, were sentenced to life imprisonment. Despite significant public interest, the findings of the judicial inquiry, conducted by Justice Sarat Chandra Mohapatra and later Justice AS Naidu, have not yet been made public, even 16 years after the murder.

Woman dies after delivery; medical negligence alleged

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, August 26: Tension ran high at Nayagarh District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) following the death of a woman post-delivery as her family members alleged medical negligence, Monday morning. The deceased woman was identified as Sabitri Sethi, 30, a resident of Tentulia village under Jagannath Prasad block of Ganjam district. Following the death of the woman, police reached and began an investigation. An administrative inquiry by the Health department has also commenced in this regard. Though the mother and newborn son were healthy after delivery, the woman lost her life after receiving a blood transfusion. However, the infant was in good health, it was learnt. It has also been alleged that ₹5,000 was paid to the doctor and additional money was given to the nurse for the operation. According to the deceased's sister-in-law, Sabitri was admitted to a local health centre

after experiencing labour pain. As her condition did not improve, the doctor referred her to the Nayagarh District Headquarters Hospital, where she was admitted Saturday. The doctors suggested surgery as a normal delivery was not possible. After the operation, Sabitri gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Both the mother and the child were stable when they were moved to the ward. However, after the doctor advised a blood transfusion, Sabitri's condition worsened and she eventually lost her life. Superintendent of Nayagarh DHH, Ajay Kumar Bahinipati, acknowledged the allegation of medical negligence leading to Sabitri's death but stated that no formal complaint has been received. An administrative investigation has started, and the police are conducting their own inquiry, he said. The family initially resisted a post-mortem examination but agreed after persuasion. They are now awaiting the post-mortem report for further clarity.

5 wild boar piglets rescued from well

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khariar, August 26: Forest personnel rescued five wild boar piglets from an abandoned well at Gadramunda village under this block in Nuapada district, Monday. Sources said the villagers spotted the five wild boar piglets that had fallen inside the well near the corn field of one Bhubaneswar

Banchhor of the village and informed the Forest department. Informed, a team of forest officials reached the spot and rescued the five piglets from the well. Forester Kandarpa Sunani said that the rescued piglets are being provided with medical treatment at the Khariar Veterinary Hospital and arrangements are underway to release them into the forest soon.

Steel City readies for Durga Puja with formation of committees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 26: Rourkela is gearing up for the upcoming Durga Puja festivities in the month of October. Formation of the Durga Puja committees marks the formal beginning of preparation. If one takes into account all the big, medium and small pandals, then there are over 100 committees in the Steel City. "This year we may see a few more getting added," said a member of the Central Puja Committee (CPC), an umbrella body of all the pandals. An

elected member heads the CPC but ADM, Rourkela is the president of the body. "Our committee has been formed well in advance. We don't delay on that matter," said Satyananda Mohanty, who is one of the advisors of the Daily Market Puja Committee, one of the oldest organisers in the city. Some committees are formed in just one formal meeting and some take a couple. Shankar Jena, a member of Sector-2 puja committee, said, "First round of the meeting was held a day back and soon we will complete the for-



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

malities and choose our officials." Don Pradhan, a member of the Sector-16 committee said, "We formalise everything in

three meetings and already one is over. Our budget is big. So one evening is kept aside to present the expenditure of last year and also scrutinise it." Similar news is coming from Sector 4, 20, 18, Telephone Bhawan, Civil Township, Kalinga Vihar, Chhend, Basanti Colony and other areas. The festivities, especially the major pandals, are incomplete without the roaming exhibitors, swings, well of death and other such teams. Most of the pandals have fixed groups. Soon the contracts for decoration, priest, sculptors etc will be given.



Impossibility is only a sum of greater unrealised possibles. It veils an advanced stage and a yet unaccomplished journey

SRI AUROBINDO



Tiny Crack

In the second sign of disunity between the BJP-led NDA government and one of its key allies, a senior Janata Dal (United) functionary on 25 August joined leaders of Opposition parties – the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP), and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) – to prevail upon the Centre to stop the supply of arms and ammunition to Israel that invaded Gaza following the deadly attacks by Palestinian militant outfit Hamas last October. A statement was issued in Delhi which cannot easily be pushed under the carpet as a tiny crack. However, the importance of this statement, on a day the Middle East witnessed a fresh wave of attacks and retaliatory strikes between Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, increases because of the timing. This Israeli attack on Hezbollah was its biggest since the full-scale war between the two in 2006.

With the unfolding events, the joint statement issued by the Opposition and JD(U) leaders assumes significance in Indian politics. The first sign of disenchantment demonstrated by the JD(U) was when its President and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar did not show up at a Niti Aayog meeting of Chief Ministers held at New Delhi on 27 July with PM Modi being present. There was no prior information about Nitish's absence.

The NDA government in its previous term, when the BJP was calling the shots having more than the requisite number to survive on its own, had great bonhomie with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government as the common thread running between the two was their antipathy towards Moslems. It may be noted that the JD(U) is a much needed partner in the NDA coalition government and it enjoys the support of a large section of Moslems in its home turf of Bihar.

The Opposition and JD(U) leaders, some parliamentarians among them, condemned the "ongoing Zionist aggression and the heinous genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel." In a strong message to the Modi government, they said India "cannot be complicit" in this.

The statement came after a meeting in New Delhi between the League of Parliamentarians and Al Quds' secretary general Mohammed Makram Balawi. That meeting where Balawi spoke in detail about Israel's alleged violation of international law was jointly organised by JD(U) general secretary KC Tyagi and SP's Rajya Sabha MP Javed Ali Khan. Apart from Tyagi and Khan, SP Lok Sabha MP Mohibullah Nadvi, former MP and Rashtrawadi Samaj Party's ex-president Mohammed Adeb, AAP MP Sanjay Singh, AAP MLA Pankaj Pushkar, Congress spokesperson Meem Afzal and former Lok Sabha Congress MP Kunwar Danish Ali signed the statement.

In the statement they said they unequivocally condemned the Israeli aggression and the assault, they insisted, was an affront to humanity and a gross violation of international law and the principles of justice and peace.

While urging the Centre to stop the supply of arms and ammunition to Israel, the parties said as a nation that has always championed the cause of justice and human rights, India cannot be complicit in this genocide.

These are strong words and coming from a key ally of the NDA government, they can be interpreted as a sign that the BJP will find it difficult to continue with the government's rather ambivalent stand on the raging conflict between Israel and Palestinians. The NDA government has so far not been vocal against Israel's hostilities against Palestinians that have been condemned by different world bodies.

The government's friendly ties with Israel came under scrutiny and attack during its previous term when it was found that it had bought the Pegasus spyware from Israel for domestic spying. It was allegedly used to stifle the voice of protest against the government's policies and its acts of omission and commission. The espionage software is still being used to keep tabs on journalists, writers, officials, social activists and others.

The noise being made by the JD(U) suggests the NDA government's troubles of depending on two of its crucial allies have started surfacing over a least expected issue. KC Tyagi is known in Delhi circles as the main trouble shooter for Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.



Jagdish Rattanani

POLICIES OF THE LAST DECADE HAVE FAILED, AND POLICY REVERSALS IN BITS AND PIECES WON'T FIX THE MESS

The reversal in the last fortnight by the minority BJP government of two of its long-held and fiercely-defended policy proposals -- lateral hiring and pensions -- has quickly been traced to either the renewed opposition in the new Parliamentary arithmetic or is pictured as a strategic withdrawal in the face of electoral compulsions, given the polls in Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir; to be followed by Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

In the short-term analysis, this reading is indeed true. But beyond the immediate, what it shows is the bind of the BJP which, after all, had not pushed these policies unthinkingly or half-heartedly. These are precisely the policies that fit into the BJP idea of continued and even accelerated reforms, endorsed by its narrow group of industrialist friends and supported by the wider business community. Without doubt, the BJP and its leadership continue to believe in the policies that have come under attack.

This was equally so with the abrupt withdrawal of the infamous farm laws in Nov. 2021. Then, like now, the government and Modi himself were seen as desperate to push the new arrangements, but the political capital spent on what was being called monumental reform came then with a monumental lack of transparency and questions on intentions. It was the BJP stalwart and former J&K Governor Satyapal Malik who alleged that favoured industrialists had already picked up tracts of land in advance of the law to make a killing as prices soared later.

The current policies have come under fire on issues of undermining social justice, a charge that is already believed to have cost the BJP heavily in the last Lok Sabha polls, by hiring senior government execu-

FOCUS NATION

POLICY REVERSALS



The government employees don't trust the market, just as the farmers did not want an open market system and instead sought MSP guarantees from the government

tives without reservations in the case of lateral hires. In the case of the New Pension Scheme, now discarded, the charge is leaving people to the vagaries of the market. The government employees don't trust the market, just as the farmers did not want an open market system and instead sought MSP guarantees from the government.

This highlights once again the issue of lack of trust of the ordinary citizen in the fairness of the markets and broadly the private sector, and transitively the lack of trust in the BJP-led government which is seen as speaking for the private sector and pushing for its bigger role in the economy. There are two parts to this lack of trust: one is the inherent anti-market tendency of the nation, the other is the added anti-market bias caused by undue closeness between power and private capital.

So after more than two terms with a full-blooded majority and a single leader in command, virtually no opposition on the outside and complete silence on the inside of the party, the BJP has not been able to change the national mindset at least in

terms of economic affairs. Here lies the big collapse for the BJP and the Modi brand of politics, even if the BJP for now continues to hold power at the Centre and in several states. As it pushes to exert its influence and expand its remit, the party will play for a more right-wing agenda, and even test the boundaries, and in the process stir the pot on many other fronts to divert attention, its communal politics included.

In part, this is because the BJP is today a machinery of self-proclaimed strategists and narrative shapers who tend to believe that governance is about telling stories, along the way making them up and then putting in all resources to sell these stories. The BJP is not really taking on the immense political challenge of explaining and then persuading the people to go with the right-wing turns it seeks; it is sneaking it in, and in that it is being met with defeat after defeat. The nation is saying it cannot be fooled. The fact is that India remains unconvinced on more reforms of the kind on offer. Take the example from some

seven years ago, when the Economic Survey of India officially noted that: "All states, all societies, have some ambivalence toward the private sector ... But the ambivalence in India seems greater than elsewhere ... It appears that that India has distinctly anti-market beliefs relative to others, even compared to peers with similarly low initial GDP per capita levels."

In this, the government quoted data from the World Values Survey. Revisiting the latest data points in the same survey tells us that the baseline has not moved in India. Last year, for example, the same survey asked reactions to the statement: "Government ownership of business should be increased." In India, 23.3% of respondents completely agreed with this statement, higher than the number reported for China or even Bangladesh. India sat in the band where Pakistan sits, where a higher 28.7% agreed fully with that statement. In India, a total of over 60% tended to go with that statement than the other end of the scale which said private ownership of business should be increased -- just 11.1% endorsed that fully.

We may not need that survey to know that India's economy isn't doing well. Rising inequality, higher than that found during the British Raj according to the World Inequality Lab, coupled with the complete failure on providing decent jobs, the corruption that has seeped in at the top, right into regulatory systems as seen in the case embroiling the head of SEBI, tells us of all that is going wrong. Policies of the last decade have failed, and policy reversals in bits and pieces won't fix the mess.

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

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SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting workers from extreme heat

Today's escalating climate crisis disproportionately affects the world's two billion informal workers. As heat waves become increasingly frequent and intense, the absence of global occupational safety and health (OSH) protections against climate-related risks leaves these workers dangerously exposed. Forced to labor in record-breaking temperatures, their health and even lives are in jeopardy.

In 2022, the International Labor Organization (ILO) declared a "safe and healthy working environment" a fundamental right. But although many countries have recognised extreme heat as an occupational hazard and implemented workplace-safety protections, these measures rarely extend to the world's most vulnerable workers: those working informally in fields, landfills, street markets, and homes.

More than 2.4 billion workers worldwide are exposed to extreme heat annually. With heat stress projected to increase rapidly over the next few decades, the international community must urgently reform labour-protection frameworks to ensure workers' health, safety, and livelihoods. Without decisive action, millions will continue to suffer needlessly, trapped in a cycle of rising temperatures and hazardous working conditions.

This danger is particularly acute

in low- and middle-income countries, where informal jobs account for roughly 90% of total employment. While data on these workers' health and safety are limited, a growing body of research suggests that extreme heat has a profoundly negative impact on their well-being and livelihoods.

For example, research by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and the University of Sheffield found that 85% of waste pickers in Brazil experienced heat stress in 2022 and 2023, resulting in serious health risks and reduced productivity. In Delhi, where temperatures breached 50° Celsius in May, the death of a 53-year-old laborer prompted the lieutenant governor to issue new guidelines adjusting laborers' working hours and expanding access to drinkable water. As a recent World Health Organization editorial notes, the severe effects of extreme heat on informal workers include an increased risk of skin cancer.

Despite recent advances on establishing global OSH standards, policymakers face significant challenges in addressing the issue. Notably, 64% of informal workers are self-employed. Without employers to finance essential safety measures, economically vulnerable workers must use their limited resources to protect themselves.

This weakness reflects a dis-

connect between local and national policymakers. In urban areas, informal workplaces are typically regulated by municipal authorities that rarely coordinate with national labor agencies responsible for workplace safety. Moreover, informal workers are often stigmatized and seen as an undesirable source of crime and urban blight.

Even when national and local authorities manage to coordinate their efforts, significant gaps remain. India's heat action plans, for example, aim to tackle climate-related risks across multiple levels of government. But these plans overlook the realities of informal work and the need for targeted interventions at the municipal level, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

While establishing global norms and standards is necessary, they must be translated into concrete measures that protect informal workers in the regions most affected by rising temperatures. In particular, local and municipal authorities must adopt inclusive labor regulations and invest heavily in appropriate infrastructure, including expanded access to potable water, shade, indoor ventilation, and high-quality occupational health services. To prevent the rise in morbidity and mortality rates associated with heat stress, these services must be affordable, adequately funded,

and accompanied by structural shifts at the national level to provide vital income support to workers grappling with climate-related displacement.

Informal worker organizations are already leading the way. In Zimbabwe, informal traders have convinced Masvingo's city council to approve public investment in critical urban infrastructure. In India, the Self-Employed Women's Association, one of the world's largest worker organisations for women in informal employment, recently launched its own insurance program that enables beneficiaries to avoid working during dangerous heat waves.

In addition to such worker-driven solutions, OSH protections must be integrated into climate policies. As heat-related hazards continue to evolve and intensify, a staggering number of workers -- including those in informal employment -- face the risk of chronic illness, death, and disability. Without coordinated action, the future of work will be increasingly dangerous and uncertain, leaving millions of workers to face the brunt of the climate crisis.

Laura Alfors is Director of the Social Protection Programme and Christy Braham is Workers' Health Coordinator at Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.

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WISDOM CORNER

To meditate means to go home to yourself. Then you know how to take care of the things that are happening inside you, and you know how to take care of the things that happen around you

THICH NHAT HANH

Joy can only be real if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness

LEO TOLSTOY

It isn't until you come to a spiritual understanding of who you are - not necessarily a religious feeling, but deep down, the spirit within - that you can begin to take control

OPRAH WINFREY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1776: During the American Revolution, British forces under General William Howe defeated George Washington and the American Continental Army in the Battle of Long Island.
- 1859: Edwin Laurentine Drake struck oil while drilling in Titusville, Pennsylvania, becoming the first driller of a productive oil well in the United States.
- 1962: NASA Launches Mariner 2. Part of NASA's Mariner program, the unmanned space probe was the first man-made object to flyby another planet -- it encountered Venus on December 14, 1962. The space probe made its last contact with scientists on Earth on January 3, 1963.
- 1964: The musical film Mary Poppins, an adaptation of P.L. Travers's book, had its world premiere in Los Angeles, and it became a Disney classic, especially noted for the performance of Julie Andrews, who was making her screen debut.
- 1979: Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, was assassinated by members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, who placed on a bomb on his boat, which was in Donegal Bay, Ireland.
- 1985: Military coup in Nigeria. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida took over the government after overthrowing Muhammadu Buhari in a bloodless coup.
- 1991: Moldova gains its independence. The Eastern European country was part of the Soviet Union since August 2, 1940, from parts of Romania and parts of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1991, after the dissolution of the USSR, the country gained its independence.

LOL

Rookie on the job



A few glances, but no one moved, so he barked again, "Let's get off that corner... NOW!" Intimidated, the group of people began to leave, casting puzzled stares in his direction. Proud of his first official act, the young policeman turned to his partner and asked, "Well, how did I do?" "Pretty good," chuckled the vet, "especially since this is a bus stop."



Laura Alfors & Christy Braham

MORE THAN 2.4 BILLION WORKERS WORLDWIDE ARE EXPOSED TO EXTREME HEAT ANNUALLY

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Safety first

Sir, Following the horrendous sexual assault on two kindergarten girls in Maharashtra's Badlapur, the state government appears to have woken up from a deep slumber. Now, the state has directed the management of all schools, including the private ones, to install CCTV cameras in strategic locations within one month, and report compliance. Failure to follow the order may result in withholding financial grants as well as revocation of permission to run the schools. This is welcome because at a time when sexual predators are on the prowl big time, the security measures put in place by the school authorities cannot be found wanting. Headmasters are duty bound to examine the CCTV footage thrice a week and immediately report any disturbing incident. It is crucial for all schools to maintain the utility and functionality of the video cameras. The vitality of securing the CCTV cameras from perverts within the schools cannot be overstated.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Pension provision

Sir, This refers to "Assured pension for central govt workers," Orissa Post, Aug 25. It's heartening to learn that the Union cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) that will benefit 23 lakh central government employees. The UPS aims to give assured pension, family pension and assured minimum pension to the beneficiaries. At the same time, the central government has yet to act affirmatively in regard to the pension on higher wages in EPS-95 pension scheme. The Supreme Court ruling on 'Pension on Higher Wages' is yet to fructify after being rolled out in November 2022. In January 2024, after previously extending the deadline for employers to upload wage details and other information for Pension on Higher Wages, the EPFO extended the deadline for employers from December 31, 2023, to May 31, 2024. Since then, there has been no information on any extension of the deadline, nor on the status of pensioners' and members' contributions from the EPFO. The labour minister's reply in Parliament during last session that there is an actuarial deficit in the EPS-95 scheme is discouraging amid the reports that the EPFO is promoting a new rule to calculate the higher pension.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

HEMA COMMITTEE REPORT

'Heal in Rajasthan' policy to boost medical tourism

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 26: Aiming to boost medical tourism in Rajasthan, the state government will launch a 'Heal in Rajasthan' policy soon, officials confirmed Sunday.

Detailed discussions were held with all stakeholders Saturday on the draft of the policy prepared by the Medical and Health Department. The policy will be finalised soon based on the suggestions received.

In a meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary of the Health Department Shubhra Singh, various aspects were discussed in detail to increase medical tourism in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that the state government is ushering in a new era in medicine in Rajasthan. With this thinking, giving top priority to the health sector in this year's budget, 8.26 percent of the total budget has been provided for health. This is the highest budget provision so far.

She said that the infrastructure in the medical field is being developed rapidly in the state. World class institutions are being built here. Allopathy and AYUSH medicine and wellness activities are being encouraged with a holistic approach.

Construction of Ayushman Tower in Sawai Mansingh Hospital, establishment of two Medicity and Marwar Medical University, medical college and nursing college in every district, promotion of telemedicine, many high class medical institutions



in the private sector coming to the state are steps which will boost medical tourism in Rajasthan.

Also, with the provision of portability in the Chief Minister Ayushman Arogya Yojana soon, patients from other states will be able to come here for treatment.

Singh said that due to continuous improvement in health services and availability of treatment at reasonable rates, the possibilities of medical tourism in the state have developed rapidly. Through policy decisions, the state government wants to expand these possibilities further. Other enterprises including pharma and the hotel business will also get a boost from this.

In the meeting, experts from the medical field gave many important suggestions to increase medical tourism in the state, including developing high-level health facilities in the capital as well as other districts, improving road and air connectivity, increasing opportunities in medical education, providing adequate housing facilities for patients and their families, making the rules more easy and investment friendly to encourage private sector medical institutions.

Black clouds hover over Kerala CM

VIJAYAN GOVT LEFT REELING AS ACTOR-TURNED-CPI-M MLA FACES ALLEGATIONS; OPPOSITION STEPS UP ATTACK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, August 26: Amid the storm caused by the Justice Hema Committee report's sordid revelations of mistreatment and sexual exploitation of women in the Malayalam film industry and its handling of the issue, the Pinarayi Vijayan government Monday came under further pressure as actor-turned-CPI-M legislator Mukesh was accused of misbehaviour by a former woman actor, and opposition parties demanded his resignation.

The Vijayan government has been facing flak since the long-delayed report came out and the situation was exacerbated when two leading film personalities had to step down from their posts when two different women actors came forward to accuse them of sexual harassment.

Both AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes) General Secretary Siddique and Kerala State Chalachitra Academy Chairman and film icon Ranjith quit their posts Sunday in the wake of the allegations.

Even as these developments were being taken up by the media and the opposition parties, more allegations followed, including against Mukesh.

Actress Minu Muneer Monday said she faced bad experiences with Mukesh, popular actors



Malayalam film industry in turmoil: Both AMMA General Secretary Siddique and Kerala State Chalachitra Academy Chairman and film icon Ranjith quit their posts Sunday in the wake of the allegations

The team, which was to have its first meeting Tuesday to decide its way forward, held an online meeting Monday itself following more complaints surfacing. It has been decided that it will only be the woman officials who will be meeting and taking statements from the women complainants.

However, Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan expressed his doubts about the team.

"We have serious doubts about the Vijayan government and their sincerity in going forward with the probe. What was the need to ask a male police official to lead the team? When the team was constituted, there was not a word mentioned about the Hema Committee, hence we have our own doubts," the Congress leader said.

Meanwhile, there are claims that the Vijayan government tried its best to protect Ranjith because of his alleged closeness to the son of CPI-M state Secretary MV Govindan, who is also a budding film personality.

A section of the CPI-M is also upset with Mukesh and it surfaced when the Minister of State for Higher Education R Bindhu said that a probe is necessary into the allegations.

"Let it take place as no innocent person should be taken to task, while the wrongdoer should be dealt with," she said.

Those associated with the government are saying that if the victims stand firm in their statements, we can investigate. In which sexual harassment case have the victims been asked to stand firm in their statements? The government's effort is to protect the perpetrators

VD SATHEESAN | LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Manian Pillai Raju, Jayasurya and AMMA's former General Secretary Edavela Babu from 2008 to 2013, following which she left the film industry.

Both the BJP and the Congress held protests against Mukesh and their activists marched towards his office and residence at Kollam, demanding his resignation as a legislator.

Meanwhile, Raju said that he was convalescing after surgery and was not able to react earlier.

"It's natural that more and more allegations will now sur-

face from those who were not successful in the industry. My take is to let there be a probe," he said, citing the case of former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, who also faced widespread allegations.

On Monday only, popular actress Gita Vijayan said she faced a bad experience at the hands of director Tulasidas in the early 1990s, but he quickly denied any bad behaviour on his part.

"Perhaps I might have got angry with her when she acted and that's quite natural. We all remember it was on an extremely

high note that we wound up the shooting of the film that she acted," said Tulasidas.

Meanwhile, AMMA Joint Secretary and popular actor Baburaj, who was, in all likelihood, set to take over as Secretary got a rude jolt when a former junior artist said that she was called to his house in 2019 to discuss a film project and a sexual advance was made on her.

"I brought the complaint to the notice of the police then itself. Now even though our family is based outside Kerala, I will pursue this complaint. I got a call from a woman police official and I have told her (about it)," said the former junior artist.

Incidentally soon after the resignations of Siddique and Ranjith, the Vijayan government decided to form a high-level police team, comprising four women IPS officers to be led by a male officer.

RELIEF, REHABILITATION

UP gives ₹10cr for Wayanad landslide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, August 26: The Uttar Pradesh government has sanctioned an amount of Rs 10 crore to the Kerala government for relief and rehabilitation efforts in the landslide-hit Wayanad district.

This was informed by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan through an official letter Monday.

In his letter, the UP Chief Minister said that, during this difficult situation, his government and the people of the northern Indian state stand in solidarity with the people of Kerala.

A Raj Bhavan source said that Governor Khan, hailing from Uttar Pradesh, had requested aid from Chief Minister Adityanath for the rehabilitation work in Wayanad, where devastating landslides July 30 claimed several lives and displaced many more.

All-party meeting soon

The Kerala government will convene an all-party meeting August 29 to discuss the reha-



bilitation of landslide survivors in Wayanad. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has called for the meeting which would be held via online, a CMO statement said Sunday.

Various ministers, including revenue and housing, forest and wildlife, electricity, transportation, finance, public works would attend the meeting along with the chief secretary and the respective additional chief secretaries.

The Kerala government Saturday said the temporary rehabilitation process of the victims of landslides in Wayanad has been completed and all the

surviving families have been shifted to rented accommodations. All the 728 surviving families from the relief camps were shifted to rented accommodations, they said.

A total of 2,569 people have been shifted to various government quarters and other rented accommodations, authorities added.

The devastating landslides that had hit the hilly Wayanad district July 30 claimed over 200 lives. The landslides had completely wiped out three villages in Wayanad with 119 people still unaccounted for.

Why did Al-Qaeda choose jungles of Bhiwadi?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 26: In a major crackdown on terror, an Al-Qaeda-inspired module was busted in a joint operation carried out Thursday by the Delhi Police Special Cell and state police forces in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand, leading to the arrest of 11 persons while six others were detained.

Of those held, six were arrested from the jungles near Bhiwadi in Rajasthan's Khairthal-Tijara district adjacent to Alwar. They were reportedly undergoing weapons training there.

The accused have been identified as Hasan Ansari, Enamul Ansari, Altaf Ansari, Arshad Khan, Umar Farooq, and Shahbaz Ansari, all residents of Jharkhand who were staying in Rajasthan for the past few days, police sources said.

"The module, as per the current state of operations, was being led by Ishtiyaq from Ranchi. It was aspiring to declare 'khilafat' and execute serious terrorist activities within the country," a Delhi Police statement said.

"Rajasthan ATS team is in-



WEAPONS TRAINING

vestigating the matter further to find out the plans of the module, if they had more associates in Rajasthan, who provided them help, for how many days this was going on, etc," said Rajasthan DGP Utkal Ranjan Sahu.

Now the question that is doing the rounds in the Desert State is why did they choose the jungles of Bhiwadi?

The six suspected terrorists were arrested from the jungles

near the Sare Kalan village under the Chopanki police station area. The police said Sare Kalan happens to be the last village on the Rajasthan-Haryana border.

The terror module might have selected this area for weapons training as it is surrounded by dense forests and hilly areas, which makes it difficult to locate intruders, officials said.

While the neighbouring Alwar district is infamous for cyber

fraud, as well cases of cow slaughter, criminals in this area can escape taking advantage of the Rajasthan-Haryana border.

However, this time, after getting information about the terror module in Bhiwadi, a joint team of Delhi Police and Rajasthan Police carried out a secret operation and nabbed the six accused along with a cache of arms and ammunition.

According to sources, a training centre of the Al-Qaeda module was running in the Sare Kalan village for some time now where suspected terrorists were reportedly brought from other states for weapons training.

Surprisingly, the Bhiwadi Police were clueless about this nexus.

In July 2021, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) had busted a sleeper cell in the same region with the arrest of a person named Asruddin, who was linked to an Al-Qaeda module and was involved in anti-national activities. Eight SIM cards were recovered from the possession of Asruddin who also reportedly had links with handlers in Pakistan and ran social media accounts using different names.

Biz honchos team up to revive cultural centre

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, August 26: Three of Kerala's business honchos have decided to join hands to revive the Trivandrum Centre for Performing Arts (TCPA), a pioneering cultural institution which was lying low for a while.

C Balagopal, VK Mathews and Thomas John Muthoot have decided to join hands to help TCPA regain its lost glory by showcasing the rich range of the state's performing arts and the trio has termed it their 'Corporate Cultural Responsibility'.

The revamped TCPA will reach out to dance, theatre and visual arts of high heritage value, while also encouraging the seniors to engage with contemporary forms.

While Balagopal is a former IAS officer and the founder Chairman of Federal Bank, Mathews is the Executive Chairman of IBS Software and Muthoot is Chairman & MD of Muthoot Fincorp.

"TCPA will, from now on, func-



tion as an international platform hosting high institutions as well as performers across continents and participating in international festivals and cultural exchanges. Popular actress Cuckoo Parameswaran will take over as the artistic director. The idea is to nurture artistic talents, enlighten audiences and elevate the city's cultural profile on the global stage," said Mathews.

"To begin with, TCPA will conduct two or three series of designed and curated events throughout the year. Besides supporting budding artistes, a database of artists across genres to support emerging talents and enrich the cultural landscape. Financial sustainability will be generated through ticket sales, membership fees, sponsorships and grants," said Balagopal.

Crystal-clear water now flows over a two-kilometre stretch, with the hope that the Aeru' will once again enrich the riverbanks as it had previously done

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota, August 26: Environmentalist Bitthal Sanadhya was roaming near the Labhakho and Peepalda areas of the Dabi forest range in Rajasthan's Bundi district when he was told by a forest ranger that the place was a river buried by debris from illegal mining sites. Stunned by the revelation, Bundi Jal Biradari president Sanadhya -- who draws inspiration from Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh -- was driven to revive the river, a tributary of the Chambal known locally as the Aeru.

Armed with GPS images of the illegal mining sites and the buried river, he approached



Rajasthan High Court in 2018 and filed a PIL to revive the Aeru in the region.

An eight-kilometre stretch of the Aeru, which covers 40 kilometres through the Bhilwara and Bundi districts before merging into the Chambal, had been buried under debris from illegal mines.

The Aeru originates from Tilaswa Mahadev in Bhilwara and passes through six villages

before entering Bundi at Lamakhoh.

For years, suspected mining mafia illegally mined stones and slabs in the Aeru, turning the river into a dump yard.

"The ranger's response when he said it was part of the Aeru river buried under mining dump stunned me," Sanadhya said.

"Since then, I devoted myself to bringing the river back to life," he added.

RAJASTHAN RESTORATION

Buried by mining waste, river returns from brink

this year. Work on the river revival project, beginning with the removal of the mining debris, started in June and it has already begun to pay dividends.

Crystal-clear water now flows over a more than two-kilometre stretch, with the hope that the Aeru will once again enrich the riverbanks as it had previously done.

At least 15 earthmovers and 25 dumpers have been deployed to remove the mining waste and 40 per cent of the work has already been completed, said Ajay Singh Gurjar -- a junior engineer of the water resources department, which is executing the cleanup drive.

The work is now stopped for the monsoon but it will be completed by November, he added.

Research scholar Suman Sharma, who is pursuing a PhD on the water crisis in the Kota-Bundi region, said it was a rare example of a "buried river" being revived by an environmentalist's passion.

Rivers are living entities and this fact is being affirmed by the courts, Sharma added.

national

of the day quote

My only observation is that a deadline of six months should be fixed for all processes such as inquiry, charge-sheet, trial, and conviction in crime cases against women. Then only will we be able to reduce such crimes

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CM, ASSAM

I have repeatedly said that those who quit the AAP will be politically ruined. This is the blessing of the Almighty that those who leave the party never become MP, MLA or councillor

SANJAY SINGH | SENIOR AAP LEADER

70 cases related to the alleged Mahadev app scam were lodged at different police stations in Chhattisgarh and one case is with the Economic Offences Wing (EOW)

VIJAY SHARMA | DEPUTY CM, CHHATTISGARH

SHORT TAKES

CRPF trooper kills self with AK-47 rifle

Dantewada: A Central Reserve Police Force head constable allegedly committed suicide Monday in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, an official said. At around 10:30am, head constable Vipin Chandra of the CRPF's 195th battalion shot himself in the barracks with his AK-47 rifle, the official said.

Two dead as wall collapses

Mumbai: Two persons died and a youngster was injured when a compound wall collapsed at Kalbadevi in south Mumbai Monday evening, civic officials said. The 30 feet long compound wall having 5 to 7 feet height collapsed in the passage between two structures at Gandhi building at around 5.20 pm, they said. Three persons were injured in the incident and rushed to nearby GT Hospital, where doctors declared two of them, both aged 30, as "brought dead", said the officials.

3 of family missing after cloudburst

Ramban/Jammu: A woman and her two children were reported missing following a cloudburst in a remote area in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district Monday, officials said. Deputy Commissioner, Ramban Baseer-ul-Haq Chaudhary said the cloudburst occurred in Panchayats Kumate, Dhraman and Halla and rescue teams are on the spot as district administration is mobilizing all available resources to assist the affected people.



The BJP, which is anti-Dalit and anti-reservation, should stop dreaming of blocking this (caste-based census)

KUMARI SELJA | CONGRESS LEADER

HIMACHAL ASSEMBLY: TWO-WEEK MONSOON SESSION TO BEGIN TODAY

The two week long monsoon session of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly beginning Tuesday is likely to be stormy as both the ruling Congress and opposition BJP are gearing up to take on each other



Cong slams BJP over Kangana's remarks

RANAUT STOKED A CONTROVERSY BY SUGGESTING THAT THE FARMERS' PROTESTS COULD HAVE LED TO A BANGLADESH-LIKE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY IF THE TOP LEADERSHIP WAS NOT STRONG ENOUGH



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: The Congress on slammed the BJP over Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut's remarks on the farmers agitation, with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying the "shameful anti-farmer" comments are a "grave insult" to the farmers of western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab as well as the entire country.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also lashed out at the BJP over the actor-politician's remarks and said this "shameful and highly reprehensible anti-farmer ideology is the DNA of the Modi government".

The Congress said if the ruling party disagrees with Ranaut's comments then it should expel her from the party.

The Opposition party's reaction came after the Mandi MP had posted a clip of her interview with Hindi daily Dainik Bhaskar in which she suggested that a

The BJP Monday expressed disagreement with Lok Sabha MP Ranaut's controversial remarks on the farmers' protest and said she has been directed to not make such remarks in future

"Bangladesh-like situation" could have erupted in India but for the country's strong leadership. She then alleged that bodies were hanging and rapes were taking place during the farmers' protest against the now-repealed three farm laws.

She alleged the involvement of China and the US in the "conspiracy".

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "The propaganda machinery of the Modi government, which has failed to fulfill the promises made to the farm-



The propaganda machinery of the Modi government, which has failed to fulfill the promises made to the farmers, is constantly engaged in insulting the farmers

RAHUL GANDHI | LEADER OF OPPOSITION

ers, is constantly engaged in insulting the farmers." The BJP MP calling the farmers, who sacrificed 700 of their own people during the 378-day marathon struggle, rapists and representatives of foreign forces is another proof of the party's anti-farmer policy and intentions, the former Congress chief said.

Congress president Kharge also hit out at the BJP over the issue.

"Prime Minister Modi himself had insulted the farmers by calling them 'andolanjeevi' and 'parjeevi' (parasites) in Parliament, he even refused to

observe two minutes of silence for the martyred farmers in Parliament," he alleged.

"This shameful and highly reprehensible anti-farmer ideology is the DNA of the Modi government," he said.

Congress' social media head and spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the government should also clarify on the actor-politician's claim that the US and China were conspiring to create instability within the country. Shrinete said at a press conference here, "No leader till date has used the words Kangana Ranaut has used against the farmers. When Kangana's statements created outrage, the BJP was asked about its official stand."

The Congress spokesperson said if this is not the BJP's opinion then Kangana should be expelled from the party.

"The one who has said this about the farmers does not have the right to sit in Parliament. Tell Kangana to apologise to the farmers or the BJP should apologise," Shrinete said.

TEMPLE VANDALISM 12 houses set ablaze after idol defaced

Following apprehension of breach of peace, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS have been imposed in Jirania subdivision of West Tripura district from August 26 to 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, August 26: At least 12 houses and a few vehicles were set on fire by unidentified persons after an idol was found defaced at a temple in Ranirbazar area in West Tripura, police said Monday.

Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS were imposed in Jirania subdivision under which Ranirbazar falls. Heavy security deployment has also been made in the area to defuse tension.

"Around 12 dwelling houses were set on fire at Ranirbazar by miscreants late Sunday after an idol of Goddess Kali was found disfigured in Kaiturbari. A few motorcycles and pick-up vans were also gutted in the blaze," Assistant Inspector General (Law and Order) Ananta Das told PTI.

No human casualties were reported in the incident.

Eyewitnesses said that the residents fled their dwellings upon seeing the raging mob.

Das said heavy deployment of security forces have been made to defuse tension and Director General of Police, Intelligence, Anurag Dhankar and West Tripura Superintendent of Police Kiran Kumar have visited the area.

"Police will register a suo



moto case once the assessment of loss of properties is completed. The situation is under control," he said.

Following apprehension of breach of peace, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS have been imposed in Jirania subdivision of West Tripura district from August 26 to 28, District Magistrate Vishal Kumar said in an order.

Under the prohibitory orders, assembly of five or more people will be prohibited due to violent activities in the subdivision, it added.

Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma Monday expressed concern over the incident and appealed to everyone to maintain law and order.

"Last night incident in Ranirbazar Kaiturbari area is a worrying sign with reports of communal clashes. I appeal to those who are responsible for maintaining law and order to follow the rule of law," he wrote on Facebook.

"When our state is reeling under a natural disaster and so much of stress is there, some elements are only playing religious politics. Miscreants regardless of their faith must be dealt with firmly -- law has to be neutral to all. I ask for Tripura to unite in these tough times and not fight with each other, he added.

Shivaji statue unveiled last year by PM collapses

Opposition slams govt for poor quality of work

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 26: A statue of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, collapsed Monday, an official said.

Following the incident, the Opposition parties have slammed the state government, alleging it had paid little attention to the quality of work. A 35-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj collapsed around 1 pm at Rajkot Fort in Malvan, the official said.

Experts will ascertain the exact cause of the collapse, but the district has witnessed heavy rains and gusty winds in the last two to three days, he said.

Senior officials of the police and district administration reached the site to take stock of the situation, and the damage is being examined, he said. PM Modi un-

veiled the statue December 4 last year on the occasion of Navy Day. He also participated in the celebrations at the fort.

NCP (SP) state president and former minister Jayant Patil said, "The state government is responsible for the collapse, as it did not take proper care. The government paid little attention to the quality of work. It only focused on conducting an event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited to unveil the statue. This Maharashtra government only issues new tenders, accepts commissions and gives contracts accordingly."

Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Vaibhav Naik also criticised the state government for the alleged poor quality of the work.

"The state government may try to evade responsibility. People responsible for the construction and erection of the statue must be probed thoroughly," he said.



A statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, erected by the Navy and inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, collapses at Rajkot Fort, in Malvan, PTI PHOTO

CONGESTION IN JAILS

States, UTs directed to give complete info on open prisons

Semi-open or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the premises during the day to earn a livelihood and return in the evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: The Supreme Court has directed several states and Union Territories (UTs) to provide complete information with regard to the functioning of open prisons within four weeks.

Semi-open or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the premises during the day to earn a livelihood and return in the evening. The concept was in-

troduced to assimilate the convicts with society and reduce psychological pressure as they faced difficulties in leading normal lives outside.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan was informed by senior advocate K Parameshwar, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in a matter related to congestion in jails, that several states and UTs have not yet filed their responses.

The bench noted that states and UTs like Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab have not yet submitted the qualitative/quantitative charts despite circulation of a questionnaire seeking information in respect of the status and functioning of open correctional institutions and



whether such institutions exist within their jurisdiction.

"We, therefore, direct that all the States/Union Territories, which have not yet filed their response, to file complete response within a period of four weeks from today," the bench said in its order passed August 20.

It said the states and UTs,

which have not given complete information, shall also ensure compliance within four weeks.

"We further clarify that if any of the state governments or Union Territories do not respond in terms of the orders passed by this court, we will be compelled to direct the presence of the chief secretary of the

Semi-open or open prisons concept was introduced to assimilate the convicts with society and reduce psychological pressure as they faced difficulties in leading normal lives outside

states/Union Territories concerned before this court," the bench said and posted the matter for further consideration after four weeks.

The apex court noted that July 15, it had directed the chief secretaries of various states and UTs to submit their responses on the issue of open jails.

The amicus told the bench that states and UTs of Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Ladakh, have not filed their responses yet. While hearing the matter May 9, the apex court had observed that establishing open jails can be one of the solutions to overcrowding and also addressing the issue of rehabilitation of prisoners.

In its May 17 order, the bench had noted the submission of the amicus that a model draft manual has been prepared by the Union of India where the nomenclature 'open correctional institutions' is used for such facilities.

Coast Guard rescues 11 crew members

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: The Indian Coast Guard Monday said it rescued 11 crew members of a merchant vessel in a "challenging" operation after it reportedly sank around 90 nautical miles south of Sagar Island in the Bay of Bengal.

The Mumbai-registered cargo vessel was en route from Kolkata to Port Blair, the Coast Guard said.

"The Indian Coast Guard August 26 rescued 11 crew members from the distressed MV IIT Puma during a challenging night-time search and rescue operation," it said.

It said the vessel reportedly sank about 90 nautical miles south of Sagar Island.

"The Maritime Search & Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Chennai initially received a distress signal late in the evening August 25," the Coast Guard said.

national



The government will allocate ₹53.21 crore annually to the 'Mukhya Mantri Sukh Shiksha Yojana' aimed at providing financial assistance to widows, destitute women, divorced women and disabled parents to support the education and well-being of their children

SUKHINDER SINGH SUKHU | CM, HIMACHAL PRADESH

EXCISE POLICY CASE: SC TO HEAR KAVITHA'S BAIL PLEA TODAY

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Today the bail plea by BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. A bench of justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter



of the day quote

There can be nothing bigger than the nation, and when will a nation be strong, when we are united and good



YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

That is, there is no question of my retirement from active politics. Ever since the party has put forward Akash Anand as the successor of BSP in my absence or in dire ill health, the casteist media has been propagating such fake news that people should be cautious



The Congress is standing in support of oppressors and those who are corrupt. It is talking in favour of those involved in crimes against women as is being seen from West Bengal to Karnataka



X POST OF THE DAY

The ruling government, opposition, and regional parties seem determined to break all rules to marginalize General Category candidates, preventing them from securing jobs. Instead, they prioritize quota beneficiaries under the guise of social justice. If rules stand in their way, they will bypass them, ensuring that GCs are not allowed to thrive peacefully.

dates, preventing them from securing jobs. Instead, they prioritize quota beneficiaries under the guise of social justice. If rules stand in their way, they will bypass them, ensuring that GCs are not allowed to thrive peacefully.

SHORT TAKES

25 Naxalites surrender

Bijapur: Twenty-five Naxalites, five of them carrying a cumulative bounty of ₹28 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh Monday, a senior police official said. The 25 ultras, who were active in Ganguor and Bhairamgarh area committees of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), include two women, the official added. They surrendered citing disappointment with the hollow Maoist ideology and atrocities on tribal by leaders of the outlawed movement, he said, adding those who laid down arms were provided assistance of ₹25,000 each and will be further rehabilitated as per the government's policy.

Woman, 2 children electrocuted

Kota (Rajasthan): A 35-year-old woman and two children, including her eight-year-old son and 15-year-old nephew, were electrocuted to death in the Bundi district Monday, a police official said, adding that another man of the family sustained injuries in the incident. They had come in contact with a high-tension power line passing over the rooftop of their house in the Ramnagar village under the Bundi Sadar police station area in the Bundi district.

Road accident leaves 2 dead

Banda (UP): Two people lost their lives in a collision between a tempo and a motorcycle in Atarra area here, police said Monday. Police Circle Officer (CO) Gawendra Pal Gautam said the accident took place on the Atarra-Banda road near Khurhand village late Sunday evening. "The tempo travelling from Banda collided head-on with the motorcycle coming from Atarra. Four people were severely injured in the crash and taken to a hospital.

LADAKH GETS 5 NEW DISTRICTS

LOCALS WELCOME DECISION AS FULFILMENT OF LONG PENDING DEMAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh/New Delhi, August 26: Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced Monday the creation of five new districts in Ladakh, raising their number to seven in a decision welcomed by local people as fulfilment of their long-pending demand.

The new districts are: Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang.

However, the Leh Apex Body, which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) is fighting for their four major demands including granting of statehood and extension of sixth schedule of the Constitution, said they will continue their peaceful struggle.

In a post on X, Shah said the Union Home Ministry has decided to create the five new districts in pursuit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to build a developed and prosperous Ladakh.

"The new districts, namely Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorstep by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny," he said.

Leh and Kargil were the only



The new districts, namely Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorstep by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

two districts in Ladakh, the largest union territory in terms of area but the second least populous. It has an expanse of 86,904 square kilometers bordering China and Pakistan, with a population of 2.74 lakh according to the 2011 census.

The home minister said the Modi government is committed to creating abundant opportunities for the people of Ladakh. Ladakh was carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and declared a UT after the state was divided into two UTs August 5, 2019.

On that day five years ago, Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state, was also abrogated. Being a UT, Ladakh comes under the direct

administrative control of the union home ministry.

Prime Minister Modi hailed the creation of the new districts as a step towards better governance and prosperity.

Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang will now receive more focused attention, bringing services and opportunities even closer to people, he said, congratulating them.

He said on X, "Creation of five new districts in Ladakh is a step towards better governance and prosperity."

Former BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal termed the centre's announcement a 'Jannamshanti' gift for the people of Ladakh.

"In 2018, the BJP granted

J&K ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

BJP announces first list of candidates



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu/New Delhi, August 26: The BJP Monday issued a list of 16 candidates for the first phase of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, considerably pruning an initial list of 44 names following protests by some party cadre who alleged that "parachute candidates" were favoured over dedicated workers.

The original list, which included candidates for 36 segments in the Jammu region and eight in the Kashmir Valley, sparked significant dissatisfaction among party workers.

A group of disgruntled members protested at the BJP headquarters in Jammu.

While Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina attempted to downplay the discontent, the protests highlighted a growing rift within the party ranks.

Some angry BJP workers from different Assembly constituencies staged a protest at the party headquarters over the leadership "ignoring" hardworking workers and giving the mandate

to "parachute candidates".

Jagdish Bhagat, president of the BJP's Scheduled Caste Morcha, asserted that long-time members of the party felt overlooked.

"I have been associated with the party for the last 18 years and have worked day and night to strengthen it but the mandate was given to a person who joined the party only a few days back," Bhagat said.

Welcoming the withdrawal of the initial list, he said, "We hope that party leaders would be given the mandate instead of those who have done nothing for the party."

The revised list of candidates includes three former MLAs and Shagun Parihar, a woman candidate whose family has faced violence due to their political affiliations. Her father and uncle were killed by terrorists in Kishtwar district in November 2018.

Other notable candidates in the list are former ministers Sunil Sharma and Shakti Raj Parihar from the Jammu region and BJP vice president Sofi Yusuf from the Kashmir Valley.

Former deputy chief minister Nirmal Singh was among the prominent leaders dropped by the BJP.

On the internal rumblings within the Jammu and Kashmir BJP, party unit chief Raina said, "The BJP is fully prepared for the elections... our mission is ensuring the victory of our party."

He assured that the names of candidates for the second and third phases of the Jammu and Kashmir elections would be announced shortly.

BJP chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi echoed Raina's sentiments.

As of now, 14 candidates have filed their nomination papers for the first phase of elections. August 27 is the last date for filing nominations for the first phase.

The process of filing nominations for the second and third phases will begin August 29 and September 5, respectively.

The counting of votes for the elections will be taken up October 4.

In the last Assembly elections held in Jammu and Kashmir in 2014, when it was a full-fledged state, the BJP had won 25 seats.

Some angry BJP workers from different Assembly constituencies staged a protest at the party headquarters over the leadership 'ignoring' hardworking workers and giving the mandate to 'parachute candidates'



Nuns offer roses on Mother Teresa's tomb on her birth anniversary, at the Missionaries of Charity, in Kolkata, Monday

Namitha asked to prove Hindu identity at temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (Tamil Nadu), August 26: Actress Namitha Monday complained that she was asked to furnish proof of being a Hindu during her visit to the renowned Sri Meenakshi Sundareshwar temple here, and expressed disappointment over the alleged rude behaviour of temple officials.

The actress, who is a BJP state executive member, alleged that a temple official prevented her from having darshan and demanded proof of being a Hindu. "This being the case they spoke rudely and arrogantly and demanded a certificate to prove my caste and my faith," she said.

A senior official at the temple denied the allegations and said they stopped Namitha and her husband who were wearing masks to ensure if they were Hindus and explained the tradition at the temple.



fact that she was born a Hindu and that her marriage was solemnised in Tirupati and her son was named after Lord Krishna. "This being the case they spoke rudely and arrogantly and demanded a certificate to prove my caste and my faith," she said. A senior official at the temple denied the allegations and said they stopped Namitha and her husband who were wearing masks to ensure if they were Hindus and explained the tradition at the temple.

"After the clarification from them, she was anointed with kumkum on her forehead and taken inside the temple for a darshan of Goddess Meenakshi," he said.

When asked about this, the actress replied that she was allowed for darshan only after clarification of her faith and applying kumkum on her forehead.

She said her visit to Madurai was spiritual and she had come to celebrate Krishna Jannamshanti at ISKCON.

"There's a way of asking. I was made to wait for 20 minutes in a corner. We had informed the police about our visit Sunday," she said. The actress said she wore a mask as she did not want to disturb devotees who might recognise her.

Local emissions in NCAP cities to rise by at least 11% by 2030

THE STUDY, CONDUCTED BY THE THINK TANK CENTER FOR STUDY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND POLICY (CSTEP), EXAMINED 76 OUT OF THE TOTAL 131 NCAP CITIES OVER A PERIOD OF 2.5 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: Local emissions in most cities covered

under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) are projected to rise by at least 11 per cent by 2030 compared to 2019 levels, according to a new study.

The study, conducted by the think tank Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), examined 76 out of the total 131 NCAP cities over a period of 2.5 years.

The findings revealed that only 8 of the 76 cities are likely to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in four major pollutants -- PM10, PM2.5, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides -- by 2030, compared to 2019 levels.

"Our study shows that most cities covered under the NCAP will not be able to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in local emis-



The findings revealed that only 8 of the 76 cities are likely to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in four major pollutants -- PM10, PM2.5, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides -- by 2030, compared to 2019 levels

sions even by 2030," said Anirban Banerjee, project lead at CSTEP. Local emissions are expected to increase by 11 to 45 per cent in the studied cities by 2030, relative to 2019 levels, significantly worsening pollution, the study said.

The study estimated the share of the four major pollutants for the base year 2019 and projected their contributions from different sources until 2030. These outcomes were validated against transport and domestic fuel consumption surveys conducted in over 70 percent of the studied cities.

The findings suggest that without targeted interventions, local emissions will likely rise by 2030.

The study recommends prioritising targeted interventions

for major emission sources such as industries, transportation, construction, and open burning in these cities to meet NCAP targets and achieve cleaner air.

A portal visualising the study's findings will be launched Wednesday at the sixth edition of the India Clean Air Summit (ICAS), a premier conference on air pollution organised by CSTEP, taking place from August 26-30.

Launched in 2019, the NCAP is India's first national initiative to set clean air targets, aiming for a 20-30 per cent reduction in PM10 pollution by 2024, with 2017 as the base year. The revised target is a 40 per cent reduction by 2026, using 2019-20 as the base year.

international



“We must do everything to ensure that such things (German stabbing attack) never happen in our country, if possible. And this should and will happen very quickly”
OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

CANADA HITS CHINA EVS

Canada's government is imposing a 100 per cent tariff on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles that matches US tariffs and also 25 per cent tariff on steel and aluminum



of the day quote

The arrest of the Telegram President on French territory took place as part of an ongoing judicial investigation. This is in no way a political decision
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

We have to be ready to anticipate and to get used to these (aggressive, unprofessional and illegal) kinds of acts of China which are patently illegal as we have repeatedly said
GILBERTO TEODORO | DEFENCE MINISTER, THE PHILIPPINES

We believe that the United Nations Security Council should be focusing on more important matters than travelling around Europe (regarding Geneva conventions)
DMITRY POLYANSKY | AMBASSADOR, RUSSIA

SHORT TAKES

Indian, Chinese vessels dock in SL

Colombo: Indian Navy's frontline warship INS 'Mumbai' Monday docked at the port of Colombo, on a day when three Chinese Navy vessels berthed at the same harbour in Sri Lanka. Indian Naval Ship 'Mumbai' is on a three-day visit to the island nation, the Sri Lanka Navy said in a press release. Meanwhile, three Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy warships "HE FEI", "WUZHISHAN" and "QILIANSHAN" also arrived at the port of Colombo on a formal visit Monday morning, the Sri Lanka Navy said.

Malaysian naval attack ship sinks

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian authorities were working Monday to salvage a 45-year-old fast attack naval ship that sank after it struck an unknown underwater object. The navy said in a statement that a leak was first detected in the engine room of the KD Pendekar Sunday, which quickly flooded the vessel. The crew failed to fix the hole and the 260-ton ship sank underwater hours later off the coast of southern Johor state, it said. All 39 crew members were evacuated safely, with no injuries.

China violates Japan airspace

Tokyo: Japan scrambled fighter jets after a Chinese military aircraft "violated" Japanese airspace, the defence ministry said Monday. A Chinese aircraft was "confirmed to have violated the territorial airspace off the Danjo Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture," the ministry said in a statement, adding it had launched "fighter jets on an emergency basis". The "Y-9 intelligence-gathering" aircraft entered Japanese airspace at 11:29 am for around two minutes, the ministry added. Local media including public broadcaster NHK said the incident marked the first incursion by the Chinese military's aircraft into Japan's airspace.

Superyacht captain under investigation

Rome: Italian prosecutors have placed under investigation the captain of the superyacht that sank off Sicily last week in a storm, killing British tech magnate Mike Lynch and six other people, a judicial source said Monday. James Cutfield, a 51-year-old New Zealand national, is being investigated for manslaughter and shipwreck, the source said.

Balochistan on boil

More than 73 killed after militant attacks in Pakistan's province

REUTERS

Quetta, August 26: More than 73 people were killed in Pakistan's province of Balochistan when separatist militants attacked police stations, railway lines and highways and security forces launched retaliatory operations, officials said Monday.

The assaults were the most widespread in years by ethnic militants fighting a decades-long insurgency to win secession of the resource-rich southwestern province, home to major China-led projects such as a strategic port and gold and copper mine. "These attacks are a well thought out plan to create anarchy in Pakistan," Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement, adding that security forces had killed 12 militants in operations after the attacks Sunday and Monday.

Pakistan's military said 14 soldiers and police, and 21 militants, were killed in fighting after the largest of the attacks, which targeted buses and trucks on a major highway.

It was not immediately clear whether that figure included the



12 militants the interior ministry confirmed dead.

Local officials said at least 23 people were killed in the highway attacks, in which armed men checked passengers' IDs before shooting many of them and torching vehicles.

Rail traffic with Quetta was suspended following blasts on a rail bridge linking the provincial capital to the rest of Pakistan. Militants also struck a rail link to neighbouring Iran, railways official Muhammad Kashif said.

Police said they had found six as yet unidentified bodies near the site of the attack on the rail-

- ▶ Most widespread assault by ethnic insurgents in years
- ▶ Coordinated attacks target police outposts, transport links
- ▶ Security forces kill 12 militants in response
- ▶ Rail traffic with Quetta suspended following bridge blast

way bridge.

Officials said militants also targeted police and security stations in Balochistan, Pakistan's largest by area but least populated, killing at least 10 people in one attack.

Iran executes man in public for murder

AGENCIES

Tehran, August 26: Iran carried out Monday a rare public execution of a man over the murder of a lawyer two years ago, state media reported.

"The death sentence against the murderer of a lawyer was carried out this morning in public in Shahroud city" of the northern Semnan province, the judiciary's Mizan Online website said.

The official IRNA news agency said the man was a 20-year-old who confessed to having been hired by a gang to kill the lawyer, without providing further details.

Monday's execution was carried out in accordance with the Islamic Sharia law of "retribution". Public executions are relatively rare in Iran, where almost all capital punishments are carried out inside prisons, usually by hanging.



Iran executes more people per year than any other nation except China, according to rights groups including Amnesty International.

On Wednesday, authorities in central Iran executed a male fortune-teller for raping and sexually assaulting his clients.

NK leader unveils new suicide drones after performance test

Kim Jong Un called for the production of more suicide drones to be used in tactical infantry and special operation units, such as underwater suicide attack drones, as well as strategic reconnaissance and multi-purpose attack drones

REUTERS

Seoul, August 26: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watched as new "suicide drones" took off and destroyed test targets including a mock tank, and urged researchers to develop artificial intelligence for the unmanned vehicles, state media reported Monday.

Kim visited the Drone Institute of North Korea's Academy of Defence Sciences Saturday and viewed a successful test of drones correctly identifying and destroying designated targets after flying along different preset routes, state

news agency KCNA said.

Kim called for the production of more suicide drones to be used in tactical infantry and special operation units, such as underwater suicide attack drones, as well as strategic reconnaissance and multi-purpose attack drones, KCNA said.

Also known as loitering munitions, such weapons been widely used in the war in Ukraine as well as in the Middle East.

Loitering munitions can typically be aloft and ready to strike before a specific target is located, then attack by crashing into the target with a built-in warhead. Photos released by state media

UK Police bust Indian-origin drugs gang

The gang was using frozen chicken as smuggling cover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 26: A gang involving Indian-origin men that used frozen chicken consignments among their many covers to smuggle drugs has been busted by UK police and now its members face prison sentences ranging between 16 and two years each.

Maninder Dosanjh, 39, was



jailed for 16 years and eight months, and Amandeep Rishi, 42, faces imprisonment for 11 years and two months for their role in the conspiracy to supply class A banned drugs and money laundering at Birmingham Crown Court last week.

West Midlands Police told the court they seized 400kg of "high-purity" cocaine as well as GBP 1.6 million in illegal cash as investigators dismantled the wholesale supply chain, which saw the 10-strong gang transporting the drugs in pallets of raw chicken.



"This far-reaching investigation covered the importation, exportation and wholesale national supply of cocaine and money laundering," said Detective Chief Inspector Pete Cooke from the West Midlands Police's

Russian missile, drone barrage on Ukraine



REUTERS

Kyiv, August 26: Russia launched about 200 missiles and drones at Ukraine Monday, killing five people and striking energy facilities nationwide, Kyiv said, while neighbouring NATO member Poland reported a drone had probably entered its airspace.

Power cuts and water supply outages were reported in many areas, including parts of Kyiv, as officials said the attack, 2-1/2 years into Russia's full-scale invasion, targeted power or other critical infrastructure in at least 10 regions.

Russia dramatically stepped up its strikes on the Ukrainian power grid in March in what Kyiv has said looked like a concerted effort to degrade the system ahead of next winter when people need electricity and heating most.

Monday's missile and drone salvo was Russia's most intense in weeks, coming as Ukraine is claiming new ground in a major cross-border incursion into Russia's southern Kursk region while Russian forces steadily inch forward in Ukraine's east, closing in on the transport hub of Pokrovsk.

"It was one of the biggest combined strikes. More than a hundred missiles of various types and about a hundred Shahed drones. And like most previous Russian strikes, this one is just as sneaky, targeting critical civilian infrastructure," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

Poland said an "object" had entered its airspace, that it may have landed on Polish territory and that searches were underway. "Most likely it was a drone and we assume so, because the

POLAND SAYS AN 'OBJECT' HAS ENTERED ITS AIRSPACE, THAT IT MAY HAVE LANDED ON POLISH TERRITORY AND THAT SEARCHES ARE UNDERWAY

UKRAINIAN DRONE HAS STRUCK A RESIDENTIAL HIGH-RISE IN SARATOV, RUSSIA, DRAWING STARK COMPARISONS TO THE 9/11 ATTACKS

trajectory of the flight and the speed indicate that it was definitely not a missile," Jacek Goryszewski, spokesperson for the Polish army's operational command, told Reuters.

According to Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, 15 Ukrainian regions sustained damage from the missile and drone barrage. Zelenskyy said the energy sector had suffered "a lot of damage".

Top Kyiv officials urged its Western allies and arms suppliers to allow long-range strikes into Russia. Zelenskyy also redoubled his call on allies such as Poland to join Ukraine in shooting down missiles and drones over Ukrainian airspace.

Ukraine had no powerful long-range weapons at the start of the invasion, but has since developed many models of long-range attack drone and used them to hit targets deep inside Russia, ranging from oil refineries to military airfields.

Over the weekend, Zelenskyy said Ukraine had developed a new "drone missile" that had been used to attack Russia and was more powerful and faster than other hardware in Kyiv's arsenal.

UK RIOTS

Pak court acquits man charged with cybercrime

AGENCIES

Lahore, August 26: A Pakistani court Monday acquitted a local man of cybercrime offences involving the spread of fake online information which fuelled riots in Britain, his lawyer said.

The riots began after false information circulated online wrongly blaming an Islamist migrant for the killing of three young girls in a knife attack in the northern English town of Southport in late July.

Farhan Asif, who ran a web publication, was arrested in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore and charged last week by the country's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

"He has been absolved in the investigation," his lawyer Rana Rizwan Akhtar told Reuters TV, saying the investigation agency could not find any basis to prove that his client was involved in any illegal activity.

After a hearing Monday, the judge ordered the release of Asif, who walked free. He told the judge that he deleted his post on social media only six hours after realizing that it was not correct.

Asif had provided the agency with all of his social media accounts and access to all of his devices, he said.

The accused had posted an article on his X social media account which said that the attacker was a Muslim immigrant, and also shared pictures of the killings, according to the case registered against him.

business

of the **quote**

Nasscom has played a pivotal role in propelling India's emergence as a global innovation leader. With our nation's robust engineering R&D capabilities, innovative potential, and extensive digital talent pool, India is well-positioned to spearhead large-scale digital transformations that are sustainable and inclusive

SINDHU GANGADHARAN | NASSCOM CHAIRPERSON

Real estate sector has been experiencing a bull run in the past few quarters, substantiated by the volume of transactions across top 8 cities as well as the prevalent positive sentiments towards housing. There has been a direct impact on housing prices - signifying not just the underlying demand but the definitive shift towards real estate as a preferred asset class

BOMAN IRANI | CREDAI PRESIDENT

The launch of our injectable facility and the Jammu expansion are key steps in our strategy to enhance our production capabilities

SANDEEP JAIN | AKUMS DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS MD

SHORT TAKES

100-mn milestone for Amazon Pay's UPI

New Delhi: Amazon Pay Monday said its UPI offering is witnessing widespread adoption across the country with over 100 million customers using the service. Launched in 2019, Amazon Pay UPI has witnessed strong user preference from across big states of Maharashtra, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Karnataka, the company said in a statement. The 18-24-year age bracket led the adoption of Amazon Pay UPI, it added. "We are humbled and proud that 100M customers have chosen Amazon Pay UPI as their preferred choice of online payment experience. We are excited to continue to innovate and expand our offerings to simplify lives and fulfil aspirations for millions across India," Amazon Pay India CEO Vikas Bansal said.

Sebi show-cause notice to Paytm

New Delhi: Market regulator Sebi has issued notice to fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, in the March 2024 quarter on employee stock options given to its MD and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma, according to the company filing Monday. In response to a query from stock exchanges, Paytm said the notice is not a new development, and it is in regulatory contact with the market regulator to make required representations. According to Paytm's financial year 2024 annual result filing, it had issued 2.1 crore employee stock options (ESOP) to Sharma in the financial year 2022. Sebi had issued a show cause notice to Paytm on ESOP issued to Sharma.

PhonePe Group posts ₹197cr profit

New Delhi: Walmart-backed PhonePe Group Monday reported a consolidated net profit, excluding ESOP costs, of ₹197 crore for fiscal year 2023-24. It had incurred a loss of ₹738 crore in the previous fiscal, according to a company statement. Revenue in FY24 was ₹5,064 crore, 73.7 per cent higher than ₹2,914 crore in FY23. The group's payment business reported a standalone net profit (excluding ESOP costs) of ₹170 crore in FY24, against a loss of ₹194 crore in the preceding fiscal.



India is a huge opportunity... The growth that we are seeing for different types of work across Indian environment is massive, and we are very much part of making sure that we engage both with private sector companies and with government agencies where we can support, for example, the government's vision on digital India...

SALIL PAREKH | INFOSYS CEO

AVG HOUSING PRICES UP 12%

Average housing prices grew by 12 per cent annually during the April-June quarter across eight major cities with Delhi-NCR witnessing a maximum 30 per cent appreciation, according to a report by CREDAI, Colliers and Liasas Foras.



RBI to launch platform for rural, small biz lending

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 26: Buoyed by the success of digitalisation of financial services, the Reserve Bank will be launching Unified Lending Interface (ULI), a platform to ensure frictionless flow of credit, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.

Last year, the Reserve Bank had launched a pilot of a technology platform which enables frictionless credit in two states.

"From now on, we propose to call it (platform) the Unified Lending Interface (ULI). This platform facilitates seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including even land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders," said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das at the RBI@90 Global Conference on 'Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies' here.

He emphasised that the 'new trinity' of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure journey.

In the inaugural speech, Das said Unified Payments Interface or UPI, a real-time payment system launched in India in April 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has played a significant role in the growth of retail digital payments in India.

NPCI was promoted by banks under the guidance of the Reserve Bank.

While initial participants on the UPI platform were banks, non-bank third party app providers and use of QR codes have all combined in popularising UPI.

It has since emerged as a ro-



bust, cost-effective and portable retail payment system and is attracting active interest across the globe, Das said.

He said the ULI will cut the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers. The ULI architecture has common and standardised APIs, designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources.

This reduces the complexity of multiple technical integrations and enables borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, quicker turn-around time without requiring extensive documentation, he said.

Das said by digitising access to the customer's financial and non-financial data that other, well-resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet demand for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers.

"Based on our experience from the pilot project, a nationwide launch of the ULI will be done in due course. Just like UPI trans-

formed the payments ecosystem, we expect that ULI will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in India," Das said.

The Governor further said that ideally, while the legacy payment systems should be able to connect to each other and so should the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) systems, one country's legacy system should also be interoperable with another country's CBDC.

Actual implementation of interoperability would pose challenges and may involve certain trade-offs, he said.

Technical barriers may be surmounted by using common (international) technical standards. Further, the governance structure or management framework for long-term sustainability would also need to be finalised, Das said.

He said the UPI system has the potential to evolve into a cheaper and quicker alternative to the available channels of cross-border remittances.

A beginning can be made with small value personal remittances as it can be quickly implemented, the Governor added.

FSSAI withdraws advisory on removal of 'A1', 'A2' milk claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: Food safety regulator FSSAI Monday withdrew its recent advisory wherein food businesses were directed to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products from packaging.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said the advisory has been withdrawn to carry out further consultations with stakeholders. It would imply that food business operators (FBOs) can continue to sell and market their products with claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk.

A1 and A2 milk differ in their beta-casein protein composition, which varies based on cow breed.

In a fresh advisory issued Monday, the regulator said, "the advisory dated August 21, 2024...stands withdrawn for further consultation and engagement with the stakeholders".

The FSSAI, in its advisory dated August 21, had asked FBOs to remove claims of 'A1' and 'A2' from their products. E-commerce platforms were also told to remove these claims from products and websites immediately.

The regulator had said that the claims of 'A1' and 'A2' types of milk and milk products do not conform with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

After examination, the FSSAI had found that A1 and A2 differentiation is linked to the structure of beta-casein protein in milk. However, current FSSAI regulations do not recognise this differentiation.

In the August 21 advisory, FBOs were also asked to exhaust pre-printed labels within six months, with no further extensions to be granted.

Over 23L govt employees under NPS get option to choose OPS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: The just-announced Unified Pension Scheme for central government employees will be available only for those who are currently subscribers of the New Pension Scheme (NPS), including retirees.

The new scheme guarantees employees 50 per cent of their average basic pay over the last 12 months before retirement as a pension for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years against a market returns linked payout under the NPS.

According to the scheme approved by the Union Cabinet, the pension will be proportionate for a lesser service period of up to a minimum of 10 years. Also, assured pension of ₹10,000 per month on superannuation after a minimum of 10 years of service.

The scheme has been brought out to address the concerns of government employees over NPS, which came into effect from January 1, 2004.

Under the old pension scheme (OPS), effective before January 2004, employees got 50 per cent of their last drawn basic pay as pension.

Unlike the old pension scheme, OPS is contributory in nature, wherein employees will be required to contribute 10 per cent

of their basic salary and dearness allowance while the employer's contribution (the central government) will be 18.5 per cent.

Under the NPS, the employer contribution is 14 per cent, and the employee contribution is 10 per cent. However, the eventual payout depends on the market returns on that corpus, mostly invested in government debt.

Employees, under the OPS, were not required to make any contribution. They, however, contributed to the General Provident Fund (GPF). The accumulated amount, along with interest, was paid to the employee at the time of retirement.

As the NPS was less attractive than the OPS, several non-BJP-ruled states decided to go back to the old pension scheme, which offered a DA-linked benefit. This prompted the Centre to constitute a committee in April 2023, under former Finance Secretary and now Cabinet Secretary-designate TV Somanathan to suggest improvement in the NPS architecture.

Fulfilling the long pending demands of government employees ahead of assembly elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Cabinet on August 24 approved the OPS, which will provide assured pension to 23 lakh eligible central government employees.

Q1 GDP growth to decline to 7.1%: SBI economists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 26: Economists at the country's largest lender SBI Monday joined other watchers forecasting a slip in the economic growth and estimated India's real GDP growth to come at 7.1 per cent for the June quarter.

The economists said the growth in gross value added (GVA) will fall below 7 per cent to 6.7-6.8 per cent for the April-June period this fiscal when compared to the year-ago period. "As per our 'Nowcasting Model', the forecasted GDP growth for Q1 FY25 would be 7.0-7.1 per cent, and GVA is at 6.7-6.8 per cent with a downward bias," the economists said.

It can be noted that the real GDP growth had come at 7.8 per cent in the June quarter last year and the preceding March quarter. A slew of analysts have been pointing to a moderation in economic activity in the June quarter, mainly driven by softer manufacturing and lower government spending due to the general elections.

The report also said that given the uncertain global growth outlook and the softening inflation, there is a space for monetary policy easing.

The SBI economists said its growth estimates are based on

41 lead indicators, and pointed to a moderation in sales growth and an inching up in staffing costs for manufacturing companies. "Against this backdrop, profit margins have declined, and this will pull down manufacturing growth," it added.

If one were to exclude the banking, finance and insurance companies, corporates reported only 5 per cent revenue growth and a degrowth of 1 per cent in operating profits in Q1 FY25, it said. SBI economists have, however, retained their 7.5 per cent growth estimate for the fiscal year 2024-25, which is higher than the 7.2 per cent made by the RBI.

The report said the global economic outlook remains uncertain, and the persistent geopolitical tensions, rekindled fears of a potential recession on signs of weaker than expected labour market outcomes in key economies and financial market volatility in response to monetary policy divergence cast a shadow on prospects.

On the positive side for India, the South West monsoon picked up from early July, closing the deficit, it said, noting that as of August 25, the cumulative rainfall was 5 per cent above the LPA (long period average) against 7 per cent below the LPA during the same period last year.

Sensex rallies 600 points on US Fed rate cut hopes

Rising for the fifth straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 611.90 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 81,698.11. During the day, it surged 738.06 points or 0.91 per cent to 81,824.27

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 26: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent Monday, propelled by intense buying in metal, IT and consumer durable stocks amid hopes that the US Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates soon.

Renewed Foreign fund inflows and buying in frontline stocks HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries further bolstered investor sentiment, traders said.

Rising for the fifth straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 611.90 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 81,698.11. During the day, it surged 738.06 points or 0.91 per cent to 81,824.27.

A total of 2,189 stocks advanced, while 1,860 declined and



148 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The NSE Nifty soared 187.45 points or 0.76 per cent to 25,010.60, registering gains for the eighth session in a row.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, Maruti and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the

BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.66 per cent and the smallcap index soared 0.20 per cent.

"US Fed has signalled a rate cut in September, reflecting the decline in US treasury yields and the dollar index, which has led to a rally in global markets despite there being no indication of the size of cuts. Indian markets hit a new high led by a change in FII stance to positive from negative, along with continued strong DII inflows. Although the overall trend was positive, large caps outperformed on account of healthy earnings and relatively fair valuation compared to broader markets. IT,

Realty, FMCG and Consumption gained on account of improved outlook," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among the indices, metal surged 2.03 per cent, realty (1.69 per cent), consumer durables (1.43 per cent), IT (1.37 per cent), teck (1.11 per cent) and commodities (0.91 per cent). Telecommunication and services were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower.

"Markets kicked off the week on a positive note, gaining over half a per cent, driven by a dovish stance from the US Fed," Ajit Mishra - SVP Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

"Optimism was the order of the day as dovish statements by the Fed Chair last week sparked positivity across the globe and also at Dalal Street. Markets shrugged off the recent sluggish trading sessions, as the US Fed chairperson, last week, pointing towards a likely rate cut fuelled a major rally that saw Nifty close above the crucial 25k mark. While simmering tension in West Asia may continue to keep investors on the edge, India, relatively better off compared to other major economies, could continue to attract investor flows in the medium term," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

Gold duty cut likely to spark buying spree during festivals

REUTERS

Bangalore, August 26: Gold demand in India during the upcoming festive season is likely to remain robust, as the substantial reduction in import duty has made prices appealing, providing comfort to retail consumers and encouraging purchases, industry officials said.

Higher demand in the world's second-largest gold consumer could support a rally in global prices, which hit a record high last week. But higher demand for

gold imports could increase India's trade deficit and weigh on the rupee.

"The primary beneficiaries of the reduced duty cut will be retail consumers," said Sachin Jain, CEO of the World Gold Council's Indian operations.

India slashed import duties on gold in July to 6% from 15%, a step aimed at tackling smuggling.

Demand during the upcoming festival season will be very strong, Jain told Reuters on the sidelines of the India Gold



Conference. Gold demand in India usually

strengthens towards the end of the year, which coincides with the

traditional wedding season and major festivals including Diwali and Dusherra, when bullion buying is considered auspicious.

Retail demand has improved since the duty cut brought down prices and this momentum seems likely to continue in the coming months, said Ajoy Chawla, CEO of Jewellery division at Titan.

Global prices hit a record high last week, but in India, domestic prices were around 71,800 rupees per 10 grams on Monday, below a record high of 74,731

rupees hit in July.

The duty cut changed sentiment among retail consumers, which were postponing purchases because of the price rise, Asher O, managing director of India Operations at Malabar Gold and Diamonds.

Gold prices could have hit a new record high above 80,000 rupees without the duty cut, but now they are trading below the peak, which is likely to increase demand from the next month's Onam festival, said Asher.

SHORT TAKES
MB to face BFC

Kolkata: Charismatic former India captain Sunil Chhetri will be pivotal to Bengaluru FC's chances of making it to the Durand Cup summit clash when they take on Mohan Bagan Super Giant in the last-four contest at the iconic Salt Lake Stadium, here Tuesday. As Asia's oldest football tournament enters the final stages of the competition, Bengaluru FC have their task cut out against the defending champions. Mohan Bagan have not only scored 10 goals but also stoutly defended their citadel, conceding just three goals. Bengaluru FC too have shown great promise in the tournament, scoring 11 goals and conceding only two in the four games they have played. The ticket holders turning up for the Durand Cup semifinal will not be allowed to enter the stadium with tifo, drums, smoke candles or other inflammable materials, the Kolkata Police said Monday.

Prannoy takes break

New Delhi: Seasoned Indian shuttler HS Prannoy Monday said he is taking a break from the sport to allow his body to fully recover from the effects of chikungunya, which had adversely impacted his performance at the Paris Olympics. The 32-year-old, a 2022 Thomas Cup title winner and a world and Asian Games bronze-medallist, had been laid low by a week-long bout of the mosquito-borne viral disease that causes severe pain in the joints just ahead of the Paris Olympics. "Unfortunately, the battle with chikungunya has taken a toll on my body, leaving me with persistent pains that make it impossible to compete at my best," Prannoy wrote on X.

WI clinch T20 series

Tarouba: West Indies smashed 13 sixes in its innings to beat South Africa by 30 runs and secure the Twenty20 international series with a game to spare. West Indies scored 179-6 after being asked to bat first in the second T20, accelerating from 111-4 after 14 overs. Shai Hope hit a 22-ball 41 with two fours and four sixes. Captain Rovman Powell contributed 35 runs, also in 22 balls, with three sixes. South Africa was all out for 149 with two balls remaining despite a strong start of 57-0 after just four overs. But the chase faltered and, at 138-6, South Africa needed 42 runs off the last four overs.

Notice to ban Shakib

Dhaka: Cricket fans around the world were left utterly shocked when former Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan was accused in a murder case. The case was reportedly filed by Rafiqul Islam whose son Rubel was killed on August 7 amid the ongoing protests in Bangladesh. The case, which was filed with the Adabor police station in Dhaka, named Shakib as the 28th accused while former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was also included in the list, which consisted of 154 names. Reportedly, a legal notice has been sent to the Bangladesh Cricket Board, where the lawyers have asked the board to ban Shakib from all forms of cricket. BCB president Faruque Ahmed stated that a decision regarding Shakib will be made after the end of the first Test.

Historic win for Odisha FC

Odisha FC secured their spot in the inaugural AFC Women's Champions League by winning their first league title in the 2023-24 edition of the Indian Women's League

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Odisha made a memorable start in the first-ever AFC Women Champions League as they outplayed Singapore's Lion City Sailors 4-1 in Jordan.

A brace from Lynda Kom and two own goals helped Odisha FC run out comfortable winners at Amman's Prince



Mohammed Stadium Sunday. In a tightly contested start to the game, Odisha FC took the lead in the 20th min at the Prince

Mohammad Stadium, Jordan with an own goal from Neha's well taken corner. While OFC should have scored

more with the number of chances they got, it was Lion City Sailors who equalised in the 40th min with well taken shot across the goal. The first half finished with a scoreline of 1-1.

OFC came out all guns blazing in the 2nd half and Lynda Kom scored 2 goals in quick succession (54, 57). With a comfortable 3-1 lead, coach Crispin took Pyari Xaxa off in the 63rd min as she was struggling with some pain in her ankle.

Lion City Sailors kept trying but OFC's newly recruited Ibrahim Maryam was solid at Centre Back. In the 88th min, Sailors let in another own goal and OFC won the game comfortably with a score of 4-1 in the end.

OFC will be playing the local Jordanian team, Etihad Club, in their next game in the preliminary stage August 31. The winner of the group will qualify to the Group stage of the first ever AFC Women Champions League.



SINQUEFIELD CUP

Praggnha holds Liren, Gukesh draws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

St Louis (USA), August 26: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa navigated his match against the reigning world champion Ding Liren with remarkable ease, holding him to a draw in the sixth round of the Sinquefield Cup, the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour.

World championship challenger D Gukesh also played out another enterprising draw with France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave while Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi suffered a shocking loss, going down to Fabiano Caruana of United States in just 25 moves.

The sixth round saw no other surprises as the games between Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Alireza Firouzja of France versus local star Welsey So ended draws.

With just three rounds remaining, Caruana seems determined to give Firouzja a run for



his money even though the former still leads the fray on 4 points.

Caruana and Wesley So are on 3.5 points each.

Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Vachier-Lagrave and Liren share the fourth spot on three points each with Nepomniachtchi and Abdusattorov following them a half point behind.

Anish Giri stands last on two points in the \$3,50,000 prize money tournament.

Gukesh has been trying hard in almost every game but so far

the lady luck has not smiled on him. Playing white against Vachier-Lagrave, he went for the King pawn opening and faced the tried and tested Najdorf Sicilian.

Gukesh came up with a double-edged idea in the middle game that fetched him a pawn in return for a king side attack for Vachier-Lagrave.

For some time it looked like the Frenchman had a powerful attack but Gukesh always found the best manoeuvres.

BCCI introduces prize money for players in junior, women events

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: In a significant development, the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) Monday introduced prize money for player-of-the-match and player-of-the-tournament award winners in all women's and junior cricket competitions at domestic level.

In a post on social media, BCCI secretary Jay Shah announced that in men's cricket, prize money will be awarded for player of the match in Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali tournaments.

"We are introducing prize money for the Player of the Match and Player of the Tournament in all Women's and Junior Cricket tournaments under our Domestic Cricket Programme," Shah tweeted.

Last year, the BCCI had increased the prize money for the domestic tournaments with the Ranji Trophy winners receiving a whopping cash reward of Rs 5 crore.

Let WFI work sans interference: Prez

WFI remains suspended by the Sports Ministry even as world governing body UWW had lifted its suspension in February following conduct of its election

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, August 26: WFI President Sanjay Singh Monday said India have the potential to win four to five medals in women's wrestling at the 2028 Olympic Games but for that to happen "a couple of institutions" will have to stop interfering in day-to-day functioning of the national federation.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) remains suspended by the Sports Ministry even as world governing body UWW had lifted its suspension in February following conduct of its election.

The ministry had suspended WFI December 24, three days after it held elections where Sanjay Singh was elected the new President.

Ministry's action came in the wake of WFI's announcement of hosting U-15 and U-20 Nationals, hours after the election.

Ministry said the announcement was against the rules since a 15-day notice was required so that players could prepare.

WFI had maintained that young wrestlers would have lost one year if it waited for 15 days since 2023 season would have finished by then.

IOA, on being asked by the ministry, had formed an ad-hoc panel to run the federation but dissolved the panel recently. However, the ministry is yet to lift its suspension

"If WFI is allowed to do its work independently and a couple of institutions stop interfering in our functioning, we can get the country four to five medals in women's wrestling in the next Olympics," Sanjay Singh told PTI.

Sanjay Singh also urged Vinesh Phogat to reconsider her retirement decision.

Vinesh announced her retirement from the sport after missing out on a medal at the Paris Olympics. She was disqualified after weighing 100 grams more before the women's 50kg final.

"If Vinesh Phogat has to play pure wrestling, she should re-

consider her decision of retirement as the new generation of women wrestlers will get inspiration from her and move forward. The way she is sharing a political platform nowadays, if she has to do politics (in future), then she should not do politics in wrestling," he said.

On speculation that Phogat might enter the political arena, Singh refused to comment saying it was a personal matter of the 30-year-old wrestler. He said he would extend full support to Phogat if she returns to competitive wrestling.

Singh also said that the movement of the country's wrestlers in 2023 has given the WFI a "very big lesson".

The agitation was launched against the then WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in an alleged sexual harassment case.

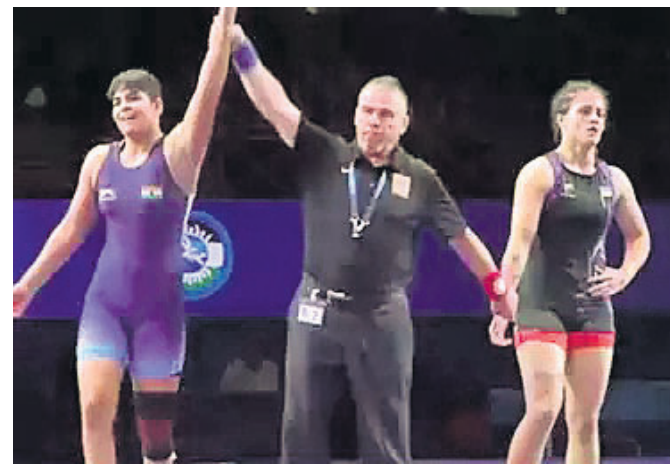
"We were expecting Indian wrestlers to win six medals in the Paris Olympics but wrestling activities were stopped for 18 months under the conspiracy of anti-national forces. Due to this movement, the country could get only one medal in the Olympics," he said.

The WFI president's comment has two days after India's U17 women team won the World title, riding on a phenomenal performance in Amman where five Indian wrestlers emerged world champions apart from winning a silver and two bronze

"I want to keep wrestling and politics separate. So I don't want to name anyone who started this movement, but it is because of politics entering wrestling that this fate has happened to wrestling at the Paris Olympics," he said.

He also informed that WFI is considering opening a wrestling academy in Ujjain, the religious city of Madhya Pradesh.

The state Chief Minister Mohan Yadav is the president of the state wrestling association. "Initial discussion with the chief minister regarding the plan to open a wrestling academy in Ujjain is already underway," he added.



India's latest sensation in motorsports

PRAGATHI GOWDA FINISHES THIRD AT RALLYE DES VALLEES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Remiremont, August 26: Pragathi Gowda made an unprecedented debut at the Rallye des Vallees 2024 by finishing third in the Rally - 5 car class with a timing of 23:51.8.

With this achievement, she became the first Indian rallyist to finish on the podium in her debut race. Her third-place feat was all the more significant, as she raced with male competitors, which also included France's National Champion Yoan Corberand, who finished first in her class.

After three months of rigorous training in Europe, the 26-year-old Pragathi, along with Brazilian co-driver Gabriel Morales, not only blazed to the podium in her category but also finished an impressive 37th overall.

"My first international rally in France was an incredible experience. We had a very productive test day and a perfect recce in the build-up to this beau-



tiful rally. It was a challenging rally for me but with each kilometre I drove I gained confidence in the car and with my co-driver. I was able to match the speed of other top drivers. I was doing about 165kmph in some places and averaged about 102 kmph speed through the race on these narrow roads," Pragathi said.

"Thanks to the support pro-

vided by everyone on my team, I improved my time stage-after-stage. Also being acknowledged by some of the top rallyists here has been overwhelming and I am encouraged to do better in the upcoming race this weekend," she added.

Driving a Renault Clio Rally 5 car fitted with Indian-made MRF tyres, Pragathi showed immense pace in the first special

I am really happy with my first rally experience in France and I will continue to work hard to improve my performance in the upcoming rallies

PRAGATHI GOWDA

stage to come 5th in her class and 80th overall. With a better grip on the track, she went on to improve her timing by a whopping 32 seconds across the second and third special stages to finish on the podium.

The Rallye des Vallees 2024 is a high-speed rally on narrow asphalt roads which begs impeccable precision and one misstep could mean the end of the rally. Pragathi braved this challenge, achieving a top speed of almost 165kmph in some areas of the circuit and clocked an average speed of 102.5 Kmph at the end of the rally, an impressive drive that was applauded by many of the local champions.

Parth invests in PadelPark to promote padel sport growth



POST NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai, August 26: PadelPark India, a comprehensive ecosystem and market leader dedicated to the sport of Padel in India, received a boost with a fresh round of funding, led by Parth Jindal, Founder of JSW Sports and Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS).

Padel is a racquet sport with its roots in Mexico. Over the past few years, the sport has gained significant interest in Europe, along with a remarkable surge in its popularity across the globe.

The sport's rapid growth can be determined with the number of courts worldwide increasing from around 10,000 in

2016 to more than 50,000 in 2024 and poised to grow to around 60,000 courts by 2026. Last year more than 2,500 Padel clubs open around the world.

Commenting on his investment in PadelPark India, Parth Jindal, Founder of JSW Sports & IIS said, "PadelPark is building an ecosystem for the sport of padel in the country, ranging from establishing the necessary infrastructure to creating a coach and student education program to establishing a robust tournament framework. The Founders' vision of expanding access through innovation and community building aligns perfectly with our own vision of transforming India into a sporting nation. Padel is a fast-growing global sport that I have no doubt will become an Olympic sport in the future and I am excited to work with the PadelPark team to increase the popularity of the sport in India."