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SC takes cognisance of Kolkata rape horror

RAJESH KUMAR/SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has taken suo-motu cognisance of the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The case is set to be heard by a bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on Tuesday.

According to the cause list for August 20, uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench headed by CJI Chandrachud is scheduled to hear a matter titled 'In Re: Alleged rape and murder incident of a trainee doctor in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata, and related issues'. The Supreme Court's intervention comes in the wake of mounting public pressure and allegations of mishandling by State authorities. Earlier two lawyers practising in the Supreme Court —Ujjawal Gaur and Rohit Pandey, penned a letter to the CJI on Thursday, urging him to take immediate action in the case.

In their letter, the advocates emphasised the urgent need for the highest court in the country to step in, given the gravity and seriousness of the incident.

"The nation looks to the judiciary as the ultimate guardian of justice, the last



Members of various Resident Doctors' Associations protest during a candle march against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, at Connaught Place, in New Delhi, on Sunday ■ Ranjan Dimri

refuge for those whose cries have been silenced by brutality.

"The victim in this case, a young doctor whose life was dedicated to serving others, deserves nothing less than the full measure of justice that our legal system can provide. Her death must not be in vain, it must galvanise

us to act, to ensure that no other woman suffers such a fate," stated the letter.

"The time has come for the judiciary to send a clear and resounding message that such heinous crimes will not be tolerated, that the sanctity of life and the dignity of women must be fiercely protected by the full

might of the law," it said. The Calcutta High Court recently transferred the probe from the Kolkata Police to the CBI.

The case has raised serious concerns about the safety of medical professionals in India, particularly women, who are often left vulnerable in their workplaces.

CBI closes in on crucial evidence in murder case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The call detail records of Sandip Ghosh, the former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, along with the personal diary of the slain lady doctor, could hold crucial clues to unraveling the mystery behind her rape and murder, according to some Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials.

During his interrogation, Ghosh has not been forthcoming about his phone call activities before and after the murder, prompting the CBI to seek the details from service providers, sources said. Ghosh, who has already been grilled by the CBI for more than 28 hours over two consecutive days, also failed to provide explanations for the torn pages from the victim's diary, which were previously recovered by the police.

The victim's family members have expressed their suspicions about certain individuals, noting that she had mentioned her

reluctance to perform night shifts at the hospital.

"Clearly, she was under pressure for some reason or was privy to something she should not have known," one family member speculated, questioning why the victim would tear out 4-5 pages from her personal diary.

On Sunday, the CBI summoned several security staff members and a subaltern police officer for questioning. However, investigators have yet to determine why hospital authorities delayed informing the police by two hours after discovering the body or why students and staff were instructed not to go to the third floor, where the seminar room — and the victim's body — was found early on the morning of August 9.

The officials also have asked the former principal of the college as to why the common wall between the bathroom and the seminar hall was pulled down after the incident and why the washbasins and such other things were replaced in a hurry.



Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren speaks with the media upon his arrival at Delhi airport on Sunday ■ PTI

All does not seem well with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

All is not well within the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) as the state approaches its upcoming Assembly polls. Senior JMM leader and former Chief Minister Champai Soren, popularly known as the "Jharkhand Tiger," has sparked speculation about his possible defection to the BJP.

Adding fuel to the rumours, Soren recently removed JMM's name from his X (formerly Twitter) profile and said he is considering three options: retiring from politics, starting a new party, or joining another party. Notably, his X profile now only describes him as the former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, with no reference to the JMM. This development comes less than two months after Soren

handed over the reins of Jharkhand to his successor, Hemant Soren.

In a strong indication that he may quit the party, Champai penned an emotional letter on X detailing the "insults and contempt" he has had to bear recently at the hands of his own partymen that eventually forced him to look for an "alternative path". "After so much insult and contempt, I was forced to look for an alternative path," he said.

"With a heavy heart, I said in the same meeting of the legislative party that — "A new chapter of my life is going to start from today." I had three options: First, to retire from politics, second, to form my own separate organisation and third, if I find a companion on this path, then to travel further with him," Champai wrote on his social media post.

Bitter Football Foes of Bengal unite against rape horror

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after the Kolkata Police cancelled the highly anticipated Derby Match between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal FC — citing a shortage of manpower and concerns about potential disturbances due to ongoing protests over the doctor's rape and murder — more than 10,000 supporters from the three clubs took to the street of Kolkata to demand justice. This unity was unprecedented, as for years, the fans of Mohun Bagan Club, East Bengal Club, and Mohammedan Sporting Club have been fierce rivals in Kolkata's football scene.

These three century-old giants, whose supporters have a long history of street clashes



and even fatalities due to their intense rivalries, found common ground in their shared call for justice for the slain doctor.

The fans, defying prohibitory orders under Section 163 (formerly Section 144, CrPC) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, gathered at

the iconic Salt Lake Stadium to voice their outrage over the brutal crime.

The victim's semi-nude body had been found inside the hospital on the morning of August 9. Dramatic scenes unfolded in front of the stadium, where police struggled to disperse the

football fans, resorting to lathi charges as the supporters chanted, "Lobster and Hilsa unite at the death of our own sister."

The chant symbolised the unlikely unity between Mohun Bagan supporters (represented by Lobster, associated with western Bengal) and East Bengal supporters (represented by Hilsa, symbolising those who migrated from East Bengal), highlighting the cultural divide that the tragedy bridged.

Mohun Bagan, known as the National Club of India, was founded on August 15, 1889. Mohammedan Sporting Club followed in 1891, and East Bengal Club was established in 1920.

Continued on Page 2

Probe into Pandian's chopper rides underway

Stern action to be taken if norms violated: Min

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena on Sunday informed that a probe into the expenditures on VK Pandian's whirlwind tours across Odisha using helicopters is underway and it would be completed soon.

He further informed that the apprehension of the people of the State may come true.

According to Jena, as the



Mohan Majhi government has a zero-tolerance approach towards corruption, stern action would be taken if any violation of norms is found.

In response, the BJD said no corruption activities were carried out during its tenure of administration. "Let them do the investigation," said BJD leader Munna Khan

Notably, when the BJD was in power, BJD leader and former 5T Chairman VK Pandian toured around 27 districts in helicopters to hear grievances of people. Crores of rupees were spent from the State exchequer in this regard.

Several RTI activists have asked about information regarding the expenditures on Pandian's chopper tours but in vain so far. Even, a case has been recently registered against Pandian in the Capital police station in Bhubaneswar in this connection.

Sriram's IAS coaching centre penalised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed ₹3 lakh penalty on coaching institute Sriram's IAS for publishing misleading advertisements and violating consumer rights. The misleading advertisement was related to its claims regarding UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022. In a

statement, the CCPA said because of the violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the CCPA, headed by Chief Commissioner, Nidhi Khare, and Commissioner, Anupam Mishra, has issued an order against Sriram's IAS for misleading advertisement regarding UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022. Coaching institutes and online edtech platforms use

pictures and names of some successful candidates to influence prospective aspirants (consumers), without disclosing the courses opted by such candidates and length of the course so attended. According to an official statement, the CCPA has imposed a "penalty of ₹3 lakh for misleading advertisement on Sriram's IAS."

SIM box racket: Hawala link detected

Accused taken on remand

SAROJ MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

A Hawala link has been detected through which money was channelled to Bhubaneswar from Bangladesh to facilitate operations of the SIM box racket, which was busted in the capital city on Friday.

City DCP Prateek Singh said on Sunday that police would seek help from technical and scientific experts to dig deeper into the case in course of the investigation.

After Bhubaneswar, the Special Squad of police seized a SIM box in Rajendra Nagar under the Madhupatna police station in Cuttack, based on the inputs provided by accused Raju Mandal.

In another development, police have got a five-day remand of Raju though they had prayed the court for a 14-day remand. "We have been granted a five-day remand, during which we will try to know about other locations where Raju has planted SIM boxes secretly," said Singh.

According to the police, the SIM box racket was op-

erated from Bhubaneswar to reroute international calls to Pakistan, China and West Asia.

Raju, who hails from West Bengal, has been arrested and over 1,000 SIM cards mostly pre-activated in the neighbouring State, routers and other equipment have been seized from a house in the Laxmisagar area.

SIM boxes are used to hide original phone numbers and are often employed for cybercrimes, hate speeches, terrorist acts, extortion and other illegal activities, posing challenges for law enforcement agencies.

Dengue cases soar to 2,000 in State

Khordha tops chart with 500 cases

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The rising dengue cases across Odisha have become a matter of major concern for the State Government. The number of positive cases of the vector-borne disease has surged to around 2,000 in the State so far.

Khordha district alone has registered around 500 dengue cases and it is followed by Sundargarh, Balangir and Cuttack.



The State government has directed the district administrations to contain the spread of the disease.

Notably, Union Minister Jual Oram's wife Jhingia Oram succumbed to dengue on Saturday. The development has triggered concerns about the outbreak of dengue in several quarters.

"We are active at the places where dengue outbreak has

been witnessed. With the help of the municipal corporations, preventive measures are being taken at those places. Efforts have been made for proper diagnosis and treatment of the affected persons," said Public Health Director Dr Nilakantha Mishra.

"As many as 13 positive cases were detected out of 192 tested samples in Bhubaneswar on Friday. We have formed two special wards for the treatment of patients. While 14 patients are being treated in one ward, there are no patients in the other ward. The conditions of all the patients undergoing

treatment at the hospital are stable. We have also reserved 20 more beds for dengue patients," said Capital Hospital Deputy Superintendent Dr Dhananjay Das.

"Outbreak of dengue in Bhubaneswar is under control than last year. However, we have not taken it lightly. Mosquito oil is being spread at regular intervals. We are also cleaning stagnant water, continuing fogging and spreading awareness among the people. We request people to consult doctors immediately in case of fever," said Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das.



10 killed, 27 hurt in UP road tragedy

PNS ■ BULANDSHAHR (UP)

Ten people were killed and 27 injured when a pickup van collided head-on with a private bus in the Salempur area here on Sunday, officials said. The accident occurred on the Budaun-Meerut State highway, around 14 kilometres from the district headquarters. The traffic on the road was briefly affected due to the incident.

According to locals, the pickup van was coming from Ghaziabad when it collided with the bus. "Ten people were killed and 27 were injured in the accident. The injured have been sent to different hospitals," District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh told reporters.

The deceased were identified as Mukut Singh (45), Deen Nath (45), Brijesh (18), Babu Singh (19), Shishupal (27), Girraj Singh (26), Sugarpal (35) and Omkar (30). Two of the deceased are yet to be identified, he said. Nine of the injured are undergoing treatment at a private hospital. The condition of four of the injured was serious and they were referred to the Meerut Medical College. The remaining injured people have been admitted to the district hospital, Singh said. The DM said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognisance of the incident and directed him and other officials to ensure that the injured get the best medical treatment. He said fitness documents of both vehicles were updated.

Cong to stage protest before ED office on Aug 22 Paribesh Cong silver jubilee fest to be held at IMMT

LALIT MOHAN MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Congress is to protest in front of the Bhubaneswar ED office on August 22 against the "arbitrary" functioning of the ED. This was informed by Mohammad Moqim at a press conference here on Sunday.

The AICC has recently appointed a 14-member committee to look after the affairs of the Odisha Congress unit headed by State AICC-in-charge, Dr Ajay Kumar. This is an all-India programme of the party. Mohammad Moqim, who is a member of the com-



mittee, is the coordinator of the programme for Odisha. He convened meetings of all district units, former frontal organisation leaders, the newly-appointed Student Congress head, block Con-

gress chiefs and MLAs for last three days.

This is the first protest programme of the State Congress after the poor performance of the party in the last elections.

Moqim said the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre is regularly harassing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders by misusing ED and CBI as the Congress is raising public issues. The Recent Hindenburg report has opened up a Pandora's Box of the NDA government. Therefore, there is a fear of ED action against the opposition leaders, par-

ticularly Rahul Gandhi. But Rahul Gandhi and the Congress are determined to raise public issues in Parliament and streets without any fear.

Moqim said the BJP government is Odisha has not yet started working in a full-fledged manner and the BJD has not yet played its role as main opposition. In this situation, the Congress shall play the role of main opposition and expose the misrule of the NDA government at the Centre.

He said the protest shall witness thousands of Congress cadres converging in Bhubaneswar on August 22.

On Nov 29, 30

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 25th or silver jubilee session of the Odisha Bigyan 'O' Paribesh Congress will be held at CSIR-IMMT (Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology), Bhubaneswar this year.

The two-day conference to be organized under the joint auspices of the Orissa Environmental Society(OES) and the IMMT, will be held on November 29-30 on the focal theme, 'Science fostering holistic development of the nation'.

In this context, the first pre-



paratory meeting of the Organizing Committee was held at IMMT under the chairmanship of OES president Dr Sundara Narayana Patro. On behalf of the IMMT, the head of the Department of Environment and Sustainability and in-house convener Dr Naveen Kumar Dhal delivered the welcome speech. Convener of the Congress and secretary of OES Dr

Jayakrushna Panigrahi made a detailed presentation on the schedule for the two-day programme.

Among others, scientists of the IMMT Dr MG Sujana, Dr Trupti Das, Dr Soni Pandey, Dr Pravat Manjari Mishra, Dr Asheesh Kumar Yadav, Dr Arakshita Majhi, Dr Manish Kumar, Dr Umakanta Subudhi, Dr R Boopathy, Er Satish, Dr Y Choudhury, Dr

SM Mustakim, Dr DR Satpathy and Biswaranjan Das were present.

Similarly, joint secretary Er Manoranjan Mishra, co-convenor Prof Sandeep Kumar Kundu, member Dr Surabhi Jain of OES also participated in the discussion. Like every year, over five hundred delegates are expected to join the Congress this year, informed the convener Dr Panigrahi.

Elephant calf run over by train

Another jumbo electrocuted

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Two elephants, including a calf, were killed in two separate mishaps in Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts on Sunday.

The elephant calf died after being hit by a train while crossing the railway tracks at Koida under the Barsuan Range in Sundargarh. A herd comprising six elephants and the calf was crossing the railway track when the mishap took place. After the mishap, the elephant herd was seen at the accident site guarding the body of the calf, locals said.

As the jumbos remained

near the carcass, train movement was affected on the route for some time. Forest and Railways officials visited the spot.

In another incident in Sambalpur district, a female elephant died after coming in contact with a high-tension wire at Charadapasi village under the Nakatideula Range of Rairakhol Division. The elephant was aged about 10 years.

Forest Department officials visited the spot and launched an investigation into the matter. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Arabinda Mohanty said the jumbo was suspected to have died after its trunk came in contact with the high-tension wire. A probe was underway to ascertain the circumstances in which it died.

CT&GST Asst Commissioner arrested for graft

PNS ■ CUTTACK

A day after simultaneous searches at five locations, the Vigilance police on Sunday arrested Assistant Commissioner of CT and GST, Enforcement unit at Jajpur Road, Binay Bhusan Tripathy and his two associates on the charges of bribery, evasion of taxes and causing loss to the tune of over Rs 5.85 lakh to the State exchequer.

On May 7, Tripathy had intercepted a goods vehicle carrying MS scrap weighing about 22,240 kg worth Rs 8.90 lakh at Revena in Jajpur and demanded Rs 2.5 lakh as bribe from the owner to release it.



When the bribe demand was not met, he sold the entire scrap to another dealer in violation of GST laws. He then collected the tax but misappropriated the balance amount of Rs 5,85,356, a Vigilance release said.

He is also accused of collecting bribes from various transporters and suppliers.

The investigation revealed that he had been depositing the bribes collected in various

bank accounts of his family members and later converting them into fixed deposits.

"While one such account was opened in the name of his father Madhab Tripathy, the latter denied any knowledge of it and regular cash deposits being made in the same. The account passbooks have been seized from the possession of the Assistant Commissioner," the Vigilance said.

The other arrested are Jyoti Pattnaik, who falsely claimed ownership of the goods, and Md Golam Sad, a scrap dealer, who received the goods. Further investigation was ongoing.

City IIT celebrates Independence Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar celebrated the 78th Independence Day with the theme of this year 'Viksit Bharat @2047'.

While Odisha is all set for a socioeconomic revamp and India is marching ahead with its plan towards making India a developed country, the IIT Bhubaneswar has reiterated its commitment to contribute towards a new Odisha and a Viksit Bharat.

Institute Director Prof Shreepad Karmalkar hoisted the National Flag on the occasion. He emphasised on the activities being taken up by the institute towards the development of entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem across Odisha.

Among others, Prof Rajesh



Roshan Dash, Dean (Student Affairs); Bamadev Acharya, Registrar Srinivasa Ramanujam Kannan, Professor-in-Charge, Extra-Academic Activities, were present.

As part of the celebrations, Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB) and Student Gymkhana organised vibrant cultural programmes. Members of the institute also took part in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign to showcase their patriotism and respect for the Tricolour.

Besides, the institute also observed the Partition Horrors Remembrance Day on the occasion.

Tara turns emotional over Cong mess

Says 'I feel like crying'

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

Senior Congress leader and Jeypore MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati on Sunday turned emotional as he described the state of affairs in his party's Odisha unit.

He lamented that all the top leaders of the State are busy in "leg-pulling" instead of building the party as a fighting force. This accounted for the party's poor performances in elections.

"There was strong discontentment against the BJD government headed by Naveen Patnaik before the

2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. People were looking for an alternative. Since the Congress was in disarray, they chose the BJP, which still now has no organisational base at the grassroots," said Bahinipati.

Five-time MLA Bahinipati has not been chosen as the Leader of Congress Legislature Party (CLP). Nor did he find a place in the 14-member Congress Steering Committee now formed under the leadership of party's Odisha in-charge Dr Ajay Kumar to look after the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee affairs.

"The Congress leaders seem to be engaged in leg-pulling. It hurts me and I feel like crying," said Bahinipati.

'Environ protection a collective responsibility'

Says CM as OES team meets him

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Office-bearers of the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) on Sunday met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and discussed various significant issues concerning the protection of environment in the State.

The team requested the CM for initiating steps to declare the Mahendragiri Forest Ecosystem as the second biosphere reserve of Odisha, to enact and implement the Chilika Act, to accelerate the eco-restoration works in the State in view of the declaration of 2021-2030



as the Ecosystem Restoration Decade by the United Nations, to take up extensive afforestation and plantation and to focus on improving the overall environmental quality of the State.

In his response, the CM emphasised on maintaining the quality of the State's environment and suggested that

people of all sectors, from the administration to various institutions and the general public, to collectively play their parts in protection of the environment.

As a life member of the OES, Chief Minister Majhi wished the organisation all success in its future endeavours.

A set of books published by the OES was presented to the CM. OES president Dr Sundara Narayana Patro, vice-president Dr Bijay Ketan Pattnaik, secretary Dr Jayakrushna Panigrahi, joint secretary Er Manoranjan Mishra and member Dr Sarat Chandra Mishra were included in the group.

CONTEMPORARIES Escalating violence against women in India

A call for urgent and comprehensive reforms

The recent, unspeakably brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor at RG Kar Medical College Hospital in Kolkata has once again thrust the issue of women's safety into the national spotlight. This atrocity, committed within the supposedly secure precincts of a hospital, is not merely a grievous crime; it is a stark indictment of a society that persistently fails to protect its women. The time for perfunctory responses has long passed; we must now confront the deep-seated malaise afflicting our social and legal structures with resolve.

The body of the doctor was found in a seminar hall at RG Kar Medical College, violated and left for dead. The accused, a civic volunteer associated with the Kolkata Police, allegedly exploited his position of trust to commit this heinous act. A national outcry that followed, including a widespread strike led by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), reflects the



S JYOTIRANJANA

growing disillusionment with the empty promises of safety and justice.

India has, over the past decade, witnessed significant legal reforms aimed at addressing sexual violence, most notably the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which was enacted in the wake of the Nirbhaya case. This legislation, which introduced the death penalty for the most egregious instances of rape, was intended to serve as a deterrent. Yet, the dismally low conviction rates, hovering at a mere 27.8%, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), suggest that the gap between legislative intent and judicial reality remains vast.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Act, 2023, which has superseded the Indian Penal Code, represents a concerted effort to address these shortcomings. By expanding the definition of rape and introducing more severe penalties, the BNS Act seeks to create a legal framework that is both comprehensive and responsive to the evolving nature of crimes against women. However, even the most meticulously crafted laws are rendered impotent without stringent enforcement. Therefore, it is imperative to bridge the chasm between legislative ambition and judicial efficacy.

The BharatiyaNagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) Act, 2023 has replaced the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and introduced several critical reforms to enhance the responsiveness of both law enforcement and the judiciary to crimes against women. These reforms include the establishment of specialised units within police stations, staffed by officers trained in gender-sensitive practices. Additionally, the Act mandates in-camera trials and stringent confidentiality

protocols to protect the dignity of survivors.

However, the effectiveness of these measures will ultimately depend on their rigorous implementation. The Fast-Track courts, established to expedite justice in cases of sexual violence, have often fallen short due to systemic inefficiencies, including a lack of resources and personnel.

The role of police in preventing crimes against women is undeniably crucial. Yet, the Kolkata incident has laid bare the glaring deficiencies within this institution. Despite the presence of security infrastructure such as CCTV cameras, the accused, a civic volunteer entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the public, committed this horrific crime.

Comprehensive police reform is not just desirable; it is an absolute necessity. This includes not only gender sensitivity training for all officers but also establishment of structural safeguards to ensure that women feel safe and supported when they seek police assistance. The presence of women officers in every police station, the creation of women-only police stations and

the deployment of technology to monitor and prevent crimes are critical steps in this direction.

The impunity with which crimes like the one in Kolkata are committed often stems from a lack of fear of consequences. This must change. A police force that is held accountable is one that will be more vigilant, more proactive and more committed to protecting the vulnerable.

The workplace, another crucial arena, continues to be fraught with risks for women. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, was intended to provide a robust framework for the protection of women at work. However, as the Kolkata case illustrates, the implementation of this Act remains uneven and, in many cases, woefully inadequate.

To transform workplaces into genuine sanctuaries for women, organisations must adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment. This requires not only the stringent enforcement of existing laws but also a cultural shift within workplaces, one that fosters respect, equality and safety. The govern-

ment must enforce compliance with these regulations more strictly, ensuring that every workplace adheres to the law.

Legal and institutional reforms, while necessary, are insufficient in isolation. They must be accompanied by a broader cultural transformation, a shift in societal attitudes towards gender equality. This transformation must begin at the grassroots level with education that challenges entrenched patriarchal norms and promotes a culture of respect and dignity for women. The "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" initiative has made some inroads in this regard, but much more needs to be done.

India must also look beyond its borders for solutions. Countries like Sweden and New Zealand offer instructive models of how comprehensive gender equality policies and victim-centred legal frameworks can effectively reduce violence against women. South Africa's National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, which integrates special courts and community-based prevention strategies, is another example that India could adapt to its unique con-

text.

The rape and murder of the young doctor in Kolkata is not merely a tragic incident, it is a damning reflection of the broader failures of our society. It is a wake-up call that demands immediate and decisive action as we can no longer afford the luxury of complacency or rely on half-measures. The safety and dignity of women must be non-negotiable priorities.

And India stands at a critical juncture. By learning from the past, adapting global best practices and committing to genuine reform, we can create a society where women are not merely safe but are also respected, valued and free to live their lives without fear. The time for action is now, before another life is tragically cut short.

(The writer is an advocate, Orissa High Court, Addl. Central Government Standing Counsel, CAT, Cuttack Bench, Consulting Editor-Legal Affairs and Public Policy, The Pioneer and a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Media Studies, School of Mass Communication, KIIT University. Views are personal)

Workshop 'Mun bi Baignyanika Hebi' at IOP

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Association of Nuclear Chemists and Allied Scientists - Eastern Regional Chapter (IANCAS-ERC), in collaboration with the Institute of Physics (IOP), Bhubaneswar, organised a one-day IOP-IANCAS Golden Jubilee Workshop titled "I will also be a Scientist" on August 17 here.

The event aimed to inspire science graduates by highlighting the importance of Material Sciences, Nuclear Sciences, Advanced Physics, and their societal applications. Approximately 200 students from classes IX and X, representing around 25 Odia medium high schools across Odisha, attended the day-long programme.



The seminar was inaugurated by Director of IOP and president of IANCAS-ERC Prof Karuna Kar Nanda. Dr R Acharya from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, served as the guest of honour. Esteemed speakers, including

Prof PK Sahu, Dr SN Sarangi and Dr B Mallick, (secretary of IANCAS-ERC) delivered the talks. The workshop featured five scientific motivational talks, hands-on demonstration experiments on Gamma-ray measurement and Beta particle counting, engaging science experiments using liquid nitrogen, and a Science Quiz by Dr KC Patra to encourage students towards a career in science. To mark this Golden Jubilee occasion, the Director of IOP donated a scientific instrument kit to each participating school.

B'pur Press Club elections held

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The election of office-bearers of the Berhampur Press Club was held for the first time in its history here on Saturday for 2024. The whole process was video-graphed to maintain transparency.

Brahmapur Tehsildar Khirod Bihari Nag was present in the polling booth as observer and election officer.

The working journalists who contested in the election and were declared elected included Ashoak Kumar Brahma as president, Abhaya Padhi as vice-president, Prahallad Sahu as secretary, D Gopal Reddy as joint secretary and



Sibanarayan Panda as treasurer.

The election witnessed a great deal of enthusiasm as 148 out of 152 members of the electoral roll exercised their franchise setting a new record.

Among others, DV Rajendra Raju, Mihir Tripathy, Aruna Kumar Mishra, Achyutananda Padhi and Udayanath Hota assisted in the smooth conduct of the polling.

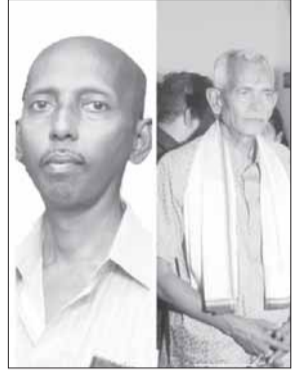
2 eye donation progs held by B'pur club

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

In a remarkable coincidence with World Organ Donation Day, the Friends Helping Club here facilitated two eye donation programmes.

The family of Epari Shanmukha Rao (61) who passed away on Tuesday due to ill health at his residence at Patra Street of Bada Bazar area in Brahmapur, agreed to donate his eyes. Rao is survived by his mother Vijayalakshmi, brother E Suryanarayana and three sisters Konchada Geeta Rani, Eppili Sobha Rani and Radha Subudhi.

Club members, Epari Raghunadham and K P K Subudhi played a crucial role in motivating the family and coordinating with the Eye Bank. Dr Bibekananda Sahu and Dr Smita Rani Mohanta from the Eye Department of MKCG Medical College Hospital, Brahmapur collected the



corneas at the residence of Rao.

In another similar programme at Gandhi Nagar, the club members facilitated eye donation of one Korpana Bhagban Patro (76) from Tikabali, who passed away due to old age ailments. Club member K Sai Kumar motivated the family to donate his eyes, which were collected by Dr Smruti Ranjan Dhar.

Patro is survived by his son Manoj Patro and two daughters S Indira Rani and Radha Rani Chowdhury.

IFFCO MD meets CM, discusses key projects

PNS ■ PARADIP

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) Managing Director US Awasthi recently visited the IFFCO Paradeep Unit and held key meetings with State officials to discuss ongoing and future projects aimed at bolstering the agricultural sector and infrastructure in the region.

During his visit, Awasthi also met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi along with Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and Minister of State for Industries, Skill Development, and Technical Education



Sampad Chandra Swain. He was accompanied by IFFCO Paradeep Unit head KJ Patel.

In his discussion with the Chief Minister, Awasthi emphasised the significant contributions of the IFFCO to Odisha's agricultural sector, particularly highlighting the production of patented IFFCO Nano fertilisers, DAP and Urea fertilisers. He also underlined

the crucial role played by the Paradip unit in ensuring India's food security.

The meeting with the Chief Secretary focused on IFFCO's new investments and projects in Odisha, including construction of a sulfuric acid plant, a Nano fertiliser plant and a river jetty at Paradip.

Awasthi also proposed development of a new Metro

Rail to improve commuting facilities between Cuttack and Paradip. Additionally, the discussions included establishment of a super speciality hospital in Paradip funded and operated by local industries to enhance healthcare services for the community.

In his meeting with Minister Swain, Awasthi discussed various development initiatives for Paradip. These included ongoing projects at the IFFCO Paradeep Unit and the proposed community-supporting establishments like the industry-funded super speciality hospital and the new Metro Rail.

JSW Steel mines dvn celebrates I-Day

At various operating sites, offices

PNS ■ BARBIL

JSW Steel's Odisha Mines Division celebrated the 78th Independence Day with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm on Thursday at its various operating sites and office locations in the State.

On the special occasion, senior management of the company including COO of JSW



Steel mining division Sauvick Mazumdar, Odisha Business head Prasanna Kumar Panda, Operation Head Ram Shankar Sharma, Human Resources Head Chittaranjan Bahinipati, Logistic and Marketing head Subrat Sahoo and Project head BK Das among others were present.

Notably, COO Mazumdar

inaugurated the 31-meter national flag mast at Narayanposhi mines in Sundargarh district. Addressing the gathering, Mazumdar extended his warm Independence Day greetings to all the employees and said that JSW is playing a vital role in nation-building and contributing its part so that the nation would

not depend on other countries. Additionally, he placed a strong emphasis on safety, making sure that every employee reaches home safely each day.

A number of riveting patriotic performances by young artists were also featured during the celebration, enthralling the crowd and bringing a sense of patriotism to the occasion.

Moreover, there was a prize distribution event where the staff members received recognition for their devotion and hard work in carrying out their duties.

NDRF celebrates Independence Day

PNS ■ ATHAGARH

The 3rd Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at Mundali celebrated the Independence Day with great enthusiasm, patriotic fervour and a renewed commitment to serve the nation.

The day's celebrations commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by Second-in-Command Vardhman Mishra followed by the singing of the National Anthem.

In his address, Mishra highlighted the importance of Independence Day and reiterated



the battalion's unwavering commitment to protecting citizens during times of disaster and crisis.

He emphasised the role of the NDRF in ensuring the safety and security of the people of the country, particularly during natural and man-made disasters. "Our commit-

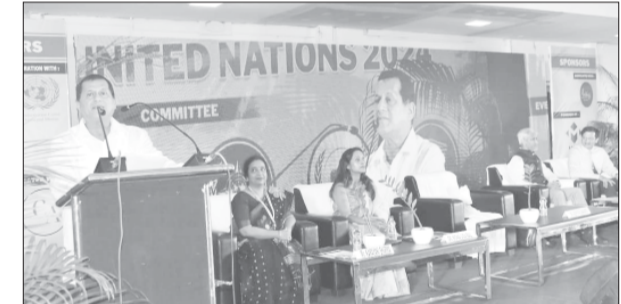
ment to serve the nation transcends all challenges. We stand ready to respond to any emergency, ensuring the safety and well-being of our fellow citizens" added Mishra.

The celebrations also included a march-past by the NDRF personnel, showcasing their discipline and readiness.

The battalion demonstrated K-9 capabilities during disaster response drills and rescue operations, underscoring their preparedness to handle any emergency situation. A special tribute was paid to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation, as well as to those who have served and continue to serve in disaster response efforts.

In line with the NDRF's motto, "Apada Seva Sadaiv Sarbatra," the battalion reaffirmed its pledge to serve the nation with courage, dedication, and compassion.

KiiT-IS Model United Nations inaugurated



Joined by 900 students from various schools

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 11th edition of the KiiT International School Model United Nations (MUN) programme was inaugurated on Saturday here, drawing participation from over 800-900 students from various schools. The event witnessed an inspiring address by the founder of KiiT and KISS, Dr Achyuta Samanta, who highlighted the significance of MUN as a platform for young minds to express their ideas, engage in constructive discussions, and integrate knowledge.

Dr Samanta emphasized the role of MUN in fostering critical thinking and communication skills among students. "This is the age of knowledge, not just certificates," he said, pointing out that having high academic scores alone is not sufficient without the ability to present ideas effectively. He stressed the importance of empowerment, engagement, enablement and enlightenment besides education as keys to success in life.

Group Captain R K Narang V M (Retd) also addressed the gathering, calling upon the students to take responsibility for finding solutions to global issues such as climate change.

To boost sugarcane farming in Ganjam

Stress laid on modern machinery use, irrigation

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAPUR

In an effort to address the challenges and encourage farmers to return to sugarcane cultivation, the district administration here has initiated several measures. A coordination meeting focused on irrigation was held on Tuesday at the Collectorate, Chhatrapur, chaired by Ganjam district Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida, to discuss strategies to revive sugarcane farming.

Farmers in Ganjam district are gradually moving away from sugarcane cultivation, citing a range of challenges that have made the once-thriving agricultural practice increasingly difficult. While sugarcane was once cultivated on over 3,000 hectares (ha) in the district, the area under cultivation has now drastically reduced to just 861.6 ha.

One of the primary chal-

lenges the farmers face is the lack of adequate irrigation facilities. Sugarcane is a water-intensive crop, and the district's reliance on inconsistent monsoon rains has made it difficult for farmers to sustain their crops. Many farmers do not have access to borewells or proper canal-based irrigation, leaving their fields parched during critical growing periods. This has led to lower yields and a lack of confidence in continuing sugarcane farming.

The cost of cultivating sugarcane has risen significantly over the years. Farmers have to invest in fertilisers, pesticides and labor, all of which have become more expensive. Additionally, the absence of modern farming equipment tailored for sugarcane cultivation has forced farmers to rely on outdated methods, further increasing labour costs and reducing efficiency. Without



the necessary machinery, such as planters and harvesters, the manual labour required is both time-consuming and costly.

Even when farmers successfully grow sugarcane, they face challenges in selling their produce at profitable rates. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for sugarcane has not kept pace with rising input costs, leaving farmers with meager profits. Additionally, delays in payments from sugar mills add to their financial woes, making sugarcane cultivation a less attractive option compared to other crops.

Sugarcane crops in the region are increasingly vulnerable to pests and diseases, which further diminish yields. Farmers often struggle to afford the necessary pesticides or lack the knowledge to effectively manage these issues. The result is a weakened crop that is less likely to fetch a good price in the market.

Continuous sugarcane farming without proper crop rotation has led to soil degradation in many parts of the district. The soil has become less fertile, requiring more inputs to achieve the same yields

INBRIEF

Jual Oram's wife passes away

Bhubaneswar: Union Minister Jual Oram's wife Jhingia Oram (58) died of dengue during treatment at a private hospital here on Saturday night. Jual Oram himself is also down with dengue and undergoing treatment at the same hospital. Chief Minister Mohan and several other leaders expressed grief over the passing away of Jhingia Oram. Majhi visited the hospital late at night.



Odisha's first radio artiste Sanjukta Roy dies at 91

Bhubaneswar: Sanjukta Roy, the first radio artist of Odisha, passed away at her residence here on August 15 at the age of 91. She was suffering from age-related ailments. A disciple of classical instrumentalist late Ustad Haafiz Ali Khan Saheb of Gwalior, Sanjukta began her career as an artist with All India Radio (AIR), Cuttack, during its inauguration in 1948.



1 dead, 3 injured as van hits bike in Balangir

Balangir: A person died and three others were injured when a speeding pick-up van knocked down their bike near in Belpada in Balangir district on Sunday morning. The identities of the deceased and injured persons were yet to be established. The accident took place near the bus-stand of Kanut village in Patnagarh under the Belpada police limits. Police shifted the injured to the District Headquarters Hospital.

AIIMS BBS holds 78th I-Day with fervour



Staffs felicitated for hard work, dedication

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, marked the 78th Independence Day with immense enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. Executive Director, AIIMS Bhubaneswar Prof (Dr) Ashutosh Biswas hoisted the Tricolour as the chief guest of the event.

Prof Biswas commended the relentless efforts of AIIMS Bhubaneswar in advancing healthcare, medical education, and research. "The AIIMS Bhubaneswar has consistently been at the forefront of delivering high-quality healthcare to the people of Eastern India. Our achievements are a testa-

ment to the unwavering dedication and commitment of our staff, who have transformed the institution into a beacon of medical excellence," Dr Biswas remarked.

The event also served as a moment to recognize and honour the exceptional contributions of the institute's staffs. Dr Biswas felicitated several employees who have gone beyond their call of duty, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

"Your commitment is not just to this institution but to the nation itself, as you uphold the values of service, compassion, and excellence," Dr Biswas added.

The atmosphere was further enriched by the soulful rendition of patriotic songs that evoked a deep sense of unity, pride, and love for the country.

On World Organ Donation Day

PNS ■ JAGATSingHPUR

The World Organ Donation Day and Suraj Award distribution was held in the Collectorate here on August 13. Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling joined the event virtually and addressed the gathering.

Termining organ donation as a divine and godly act that has the power to save many lives, the Minister urged everyone to come forward to donate organs. The families of organ donors are brave hearts who make such decisions at a time that is so emotionally painful for them as well as their near

and dear ones, he said, giving his heartfelt salutations to organ donors from Khurda, Ganjam, Baleswar, Kendujhar, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur districts.

Jagatsinghpur Collector J Sonal suggested that individuals, families, and organisations need to be motivated to pledge to donate organs after death and spread awareness about the importance of organ donation. The Collector felicitated organ donor Birendra Swain's family and gave a cash award Rs 5 lakh to the deceased Swain's wife Anupama Swain. Late Swain's son Subhasis Swain spoke on the occasion.

Workshop on Green Hydrogen held



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Innodust, in collaboration with the Skill Council for Green Jobs, organised a workshop on "Training and Capacity Building Needs across the Green Hydrogen Value Chain" here on August 14.

The panel discussion was a highlight providing the diverse audience with deep insights into the future of the Green Hydrogen sector and various initiatives taken by the Odisha Skilling Department to equip the local workforce to excel in this field.

Eminent industry leaders

and government officials shared their invaluable insights. AVAADA president Prashant Choubey, OCIOR Energy CEO L Subramaniam, Tata Steel SEZ MD Manikanta Naik, Employment Director-cum-OSDA CEO Rashmita Panda, GRIDCO Limited Finance and Corporate Affairs Director Gagan Bihari Swain, GRIDCO Limited, Odisha Energy Department Engineer-in-Chief (Electricity) Pyari Mohan Mishra participated in the deliberations. Innodust CEO Sunil Kumar Sahoo and SCGJ technical officer Prem Bharti moderated the session.