



## Raashii's perspective

Raashii Khanna says "just being good enough is not good enough anywhere" and that working hard is the key to success

LEISURE | P2



## Pak-IMF deal

Pakistan announces to abolish about 150,000 govt posts, close six ministries, and merge two others, as part of IMF deal

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Regulating FDI

The government is considering setting up a foreign investment regulatory mechanism for post-investment review and monitoring in the country

BUSINESS | P11



## Shah's successor

The members of 93rd BCCI Annual General Meeting urge incumbent secretary Jay Shah to speed up the process of finding his successor

SPORTS | P12

# Rain mayhem claims 170 lives in Nepal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, Sept 29:** The death toll from rain-triggered floods and landslides across Nepal climbed to 170, with 42 others missing Sunday, officials said.

Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday, with flash floods reported in parts of the country. According to the Home Ministry, as many as 111 people have sustained injuries in flood-related incidents.

Search and rescue operations are underway with the mobilisation of all the security agencies, it said, adding that the Nepal Army has airlifted 162 people from across the country.

As many as 4,000 people affected by flood and inundation have been rescued by the Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force personnel, it said. All necessary relief materials, including food grains, have been distributed to those rescued.

National highways have been blocked since Saturday, with hundreds of people stranded on various highways due to landslides. The flood damaged at least 322 houses and 16 bridges across Nepal.

Eyewitnesses said they have never seen such a devastating flood and inundation in the Kathmandu valley in 40-45 years.



**DEADLY DELUGE:** In this aerial image of the Kathmandu valley, Bagmati river is seen amid floods due to heavy rains in Kathmandu, Nepal

PTI PHOTO

## Ayushman Bharat States, UTs asked to enrol senior citizens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The Union Health Ministry has asked all states and Union Territories to facilitate the enrolment of all eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above to enable them to avail the benefits of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme.

In a letter sent to the states and UTs, Union Health Ministry Additional Secretary LS Changsan said that a separate module has been created in mobile phone application (Ayushman App) and in web portal (beneficiary.nha.gov.in) for enrolment of those senior citizens who would like to avail the benefits under the scheme.

Desirous senior citizens would have to apply on this portal or app. A distinct Ayushman card will be issued to all eligible senior citizens with the age 70 years and above for both existing and new families, she said in a recent letter.

The scheme is to be rolled out shortly, Changsan said. P9



## IPS reshuffle: Panda, Bothra transferred

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** In a major reshuffle in the police ranks, the state government Sunday transferred over 55 IPS officers, including SPs of 21 districts, and appointed Suresh Dev Datta Singh, a 1998-batch IPS officer, as the Commissioner of Police for the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Singh replaced 1994-batch IPS officer Sanjeeb Panda, who has been transferred and posted as ADG, Training, and Director, Biju Patnaik State Police Academy. According to the notification issued by the Home department, Vinayosh Mishra, a 1993-batch IPS officer, has been appointed as ADG, CID-Crime Branch. Mishra replaced 1996-batch IPS officer Arun Bothra, who has been transferred and posted as ADG, Railways and Coastal Security.

Pinak Mishra, a 2011-batch IPS officer, has been appointed as the DCP of Bhubaneswar. Mishra replaced Prateek Singh, who has been transferred and posted as (SP), Cuttack (Rural). P3

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



**I got demoted in the reshuffle. From being the CM's son to the Deputy CM**

WEATHER	
BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	29.8°C 34.5°C
Min Temp	25.4°C 24.5°C
Humidity	83% 83%
Rainfall	0.6mm 0.7mm
FORECAST	
FOG/MIST IN THE MORNING	

## ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

# Govt mulls three Bills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The Central government is likely to bring three Bills, including two to amend the Constitution, to put in place its plan to hold simultaneous elections.

One of the proposed Constitution amendment Bills, that deals with aligning the local bodies elections to that of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, will require an endorsement from at least 50 per cent of the states.

Moving ahead with its 'one nation, one election' plan, the government earlier this month accepted the recommendations of the high-level committee for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state Assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner after a countrywide consensus-building exercise.

The proposed first Constitutional amendment Bill would deal with making provisions for holding Lok Sabha and state legislative Assembly elections together.

Citing recommendations of the high-level committee, sources



The third Bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union Territories having legislative Assemblies -- Puducherry, Delhi and J&K

The proposed first Constitutional amendment Bill would deal with making provisions for holding Lok Sabha and state legislative Assembly elections together

The proposed second Constitutional amendment Bill will seek to amend constitutional provisions relating to the preparation of electoral rolls by the EC in consultation with SECs for elections to local bodies

said the proposed Bill would seek to amend Article 82A by adding sub-clause (1) relating to the 'appointed date'. It will also seek to insert sub-clause (2) to Article 82A relating to the end of terms of the Lok Sabha and state legislative Assemblies together.

It also proposes to amend Article 83(2) and insert new sub-clauses (3) and (4) relating to the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It also has provisions related to the dissolution of the legislative Assemblies and amending Article 327 to insert the term simultaneous elections.

This Bill will not require ratification by at least 50 per

cent of the states, the recommendation said.

The proposed second Constitutional amendment Bill will require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the state assemblies as it will deal with matters relating to state affairs.

It will seek to amend Constitutional provisions relating to the preparation of electoral rolls by the Election Commission (EC) in consultation with State Election Commissions (SECs) for elections to local bodies.

Constitutionally, the EC and SECs are separate bodies. The EC holds elections to the post of the President, the Vice President,

Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Assemblies and state legislative Councils while the SECs are mandated to conduct polls to local bodies such as municipalities and panchayats.

The proposed second Constitution amendment Bill will also create provisions to hold simultaneous elections to municipalities and panchayats, along with elections to Lok Sabha and state legislative Assemblies by inserting a new Article 324A.

The third bill will be an ordinary one to amend provisions in three laws dealing with Union territories having legislative Assemblies -- Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir -- to align the terms of these Houses with other legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha as proposed in the first Constitutional amendment Bill.

The statutes it proposes to amend are the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act-1991, the Government of Union Territories Act-1963 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019.

## Next Subhadra money disbursement Oct 9: Parida



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** The state government will release the first instalment (Rs 5,000) to more than 40 lakh beneficiaries under its flagship women-centric programme Subhadra Yojana October 9, Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida said here Sunday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the ambitious Subhadra scheme of the BJP government on his birthday, September 17 this year. On that day, the first instalment of ₹5,000 was sent directly to the bank accounts of about 25.11 lakh beneficiaries. Chief Minister Mohan Charan

Majhi, in the presence of several other dignitaries, would release the first instalment of money to over 40 lakh women October 9 at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district during the Durga Puja festival, she said.

Stating that about 96 lakh women have registered themselves under the scheme so far, she informed that all those who can apply on or before October 7 and become eligible, will get the money October 9.

"Mayurbhanj was selected for the second phase of release of the Subhadra money because the district has shown a path of women empowerment to the country," she said, adding, "Our President belongs to the district, and the chariot of Devi Subhadra is pulled by only women devotees at Baripada during Rath Yatra."

Subhadra Yojana, the finance assistance scheme, named after the sister of Lord Jagannath, was one of the major promises made by the BJP for women in its election manifesto in Odisha. The party came to power in June.

## SHORT TAKES

### Internet suspension extended in Bhadrak

**Bhadrak:** The state government Sunday extended the suspension of internet services in Bhadrak district for two more days to restore normalcy after violence erupted between two groups over an 'objectionable' social media post. Initially, internet services were suspended for 48 hours, till 2am September 30. However, this period has now been extended by another 48 hours to help manage the situation, Satyajit Naik, DIG of Odisha Police (eastern range), said. The local administration had imposed indefinite prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNSs, Friday in areas under Purunabazar police station to maintain order. As of now, police have arrested 15 people, including the main accused who posted the controversial content online.

### Another Hezbollah leader dead: Israel

**Jerusalem:** The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah. The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place. If confirmed, he would be the seventh senior Hezbollah leader slain in Israeli strikes in a little over a week, including founding members who had evaded death or detention for decades. P10

## Mission begins to bring back Sunita from ISS

BY THE TIME BARRY WILMORE AND SUNITA WILLIAMS RETURN IN FEBRUARY, THE PAIR WILL HAVE LOGGED MORE THAN EIGHT MONTHS IN SPACE

AGENCIES

**Washington, Sept 29:** The NASA-SpaceX spacecraft, carrying Crew-9 members NASA astronaut Nick Hague (commander) and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov (mission specialist), was on its way to the International Space Station (ISS) Sunday, in a mission that aims to bring stranded Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams back to Earth in February next year.

The NASA-SpaceX mission safely reached orbit after it was successfully launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. This mission is significant as it marks the first human spaceflight to launch from Space



Launch Complex-40.

"SpaceX Dragon spacecraft is on its way to the International Space Station (ISS). The new crew arrives at the orbiting lab Sunday, Sept. 29, for a five-month science mission," NASA posted on social media platform X. The targeted docking time is approximately 5:30pm Sunday

(3.30am Monday India time), according to NASA.

The Crew-9 members have two empty seats which NASA astronauts Barry Wilmore and Sunita Williams will fill when the spacecraft returns next year.

The Crew-9 was initially expected to launch Thursday but was postponed due to poor

weather conditions due to hurricane Helene, currently impacting the Gulf Coast of Florida. Williams and Wilmore travelled to the ISS on an eight-day sojourn on the faulty Boeing's Starliner. While the Starliner was declared unfit for human travel by NASA, and it returned safely to Earth, the astronaut duo is stuck in space.

For the first time since May 2020 test flight, SpaceX launched two astronauts to the ISS on a Dragon spacecraft.

In a bid to make room for Williams and Wilmore in the orbiting lab, NASA had pulled out two other Crew-9 members -- commander Zena Cardman and three-time shuttle flier Stephanie Wilson.

# leisure

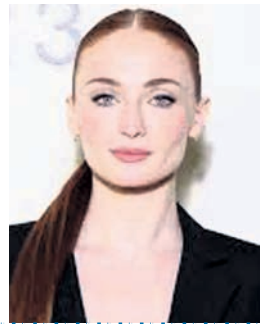


## 'INCEPTION' STAR JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT TO VISIT INDIA

The Primetime Emmy-winning actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who is known for *Inception*, *Knives Out*, *The Dark Knight Rises* and others, is set to visit India for the 14th season of the IFP, formerly India Film Project.

## SOPHIE TO MAKE A COMEBACK ON SMALL SCREEN WITH 'JOAN'

Actress Sophie Turner makes her return to the small screen with quite a meaty role in *Joan*. The British drama is about a jewellery thief, who was so prolific that she became known as "the Godmother" in Britain's criminal underworld.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Today, you will focus your lens on the one you've taken a fancy to! You are high on energy, but low on commitment to work. It won't be surprising if your bosses are miffed. But still, says Ganesh, it's a day of flowers and love notes.

**TAURUS**  
There ain't no mountain high enough and there ain't no valley deep! Today, you will find yourself on an invincible run. You might be your own worst enemy today, if you waste your effort and energy for unproductive purposes. Overall, it is smooth sailing today and Ganesh advises you to stay focussed.

**GEMINI**  
Today, your emotions will cloud your ability to reason. You may try to find a refuge in devotional and spiritual activities. A visit to a couple of religious places may help you restore your peace of mind. A laid-back mindset will work wonders for you today.

**CANCER**  
Today is a fabulous day for your love life. Your happiness may make a few people go green with envy, but they can do you or your relationship no harm, so ignore them. However, it may be important for you to make sure that you safeguard your reputation.

**LEO**  
Even an emperor, when struck with an ailment, is not a pretty sight. Bearing this in mind, today you shall make health your number one priority, says Ganesh. You will do wise to chart out some sort of a workout regime for yourself, and inculcate a sense of discipline in maintaining it, even if it is anything as simple as a thrice-a-week routine.

**VIRGO**  
The day will bring unexpected changes and pleasant surprises. You may hit the road with your loved ones, and the journey will not only be exciting but also calm your nerves. Overall, a bright, happy day to make most of, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
It's time to take what is already good, and turn it into something better. Take this day as a day to bring about improvements in your life and yourself. You may also consider taking up some extra courses in the evening. Maybe it's time for a salsa lesson, or learn how to toss a few Italian delicacies. Small crash courses go a long way in enhancing your efficiency, says Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
You might just blow your fuse today, warns Ganesh. Anger will melt all sense and sensibilities. But if logic does prevail eventually, things may just improve as the day passes. Ganesh says it is high time you awakened your softer side.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
A demanding day today, as you find yourself in charge of arranging and attending high-voltage meetings. Those dealing in stock and share will have profitable returns in the afternoon. But don't count your chickens before they hatch, says Ganesh. Wait till the evening to count those wads of notes.

**CAPRICORN**  
As the day begins, you may get a strong urge to leave everything and set off on a backpacking trip. So strong the wanderer in you may be now that it may even momentarily take over the famed Goat caution. Yet alas, this being only a fleeting moment, you may soon don your dapper avatar, and head to work. If nothing else, at least, loosen your tie at the end of the day and head to a dance floor. In short, live a little, winks Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
It's family time, and your near and dear will be mighty pleased. You will pamper and fuss over them, and will even pull funny faces to make them smile. Your love and affection will undoubtedly pay off, and come back to you in more ways than one. Ganesh says you deserve a pat on the back for being so devoted to family.

**PISCES**  
You have been neglecting your health of late, a fact which is hammered home by your ill-fitting trousers today! So, while you ignored the adage of prevention being better than cure, you could still make a stitch in time to save nine! Head for the gym, and watch those calories, says Ganesh.

## FSB'S 5TH IDFFB CONCLUDES

# Curtains down with Haobam's Nupishabi



Stanzin Dorjai in conversation with Subrat Beura

**Bhubaneswar:** The closing day of the fifth Indian Documentary Film Festival Bhubaneswar (IDFFB), organised by Film Society of Bhubaneswar (FSB) screened a wide array of works from Manipur, Gurgaon and Nagaland, even crossing the trans-boundaries with films shot at Gobi Desert in Mongolia.

The day started with screening of Meena Longjam's *Andro Dreams*, based on the life story of Laibi, an elderly woman who runs AMMA FC, an all-women football club in Andro village, near Imphal.

Next followed *Flickering Lights* by Anupama Srinivasan and Anirban Dutta in Tangkhul language screened earlier in Busan, Sydney Yamagata, IDFA and Amsterdam film festivals. Years in the making, the film documents preparations for the arrival of electricity in Tora, a village in Nagaland as part of a deal with the government.

Anupama Chandra and Uma Tanuku's *The Books We Made* and Rangan Chakravarty's *No City for Women* were the special focus on the closing day. Inspired by the works of Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon who co-founded the first feminist publishing house in India 'Kali for Women', *The Books We Made* talks about the

joy and pain of surviving in two non-lucrative professions: writing for small, discerning audiences and that of publishing.

Chakravarty's *No City for Women* explores the challenges of women navigating the Millennium City, Gurgaon through their personal narratives of violence on the basis of gender. He joined for a post screening conversation with the audience.

Stanzin Dorjai and Christiane Mordelet's *I'll Come Back Dancing in the Dunes* had the Indian premier at the festival, narrates the story of Otgo, an eleven-year old herder from the Gobi desert, who dreams of becoming a dancer in Ulan Bator's Opera. Stanzin is a documentary filmmaker from Ladakh.

As part of Haobam Paban Kumar's retrospective, *Nupishabi*, based on the Sumang Leela or Courtyard Play, one of the most popular art forms in Manipur was screened on the final day.

Addressing the audience at the closing ceremony, FSB's president Subrat Beura extended gratitude to the viewers, partners and institutions for being a part of the festival. Beura also announced the dates for the feature film festival during last week of January 2025.

# SRK's unexpected similarity with Dhoni

**Abu Dhabi:** The bromance between megastar Shah Rukh Khan and multi-hyphenate Karan Johar was on full display at the IIFA stage as the two hosted the event along with actor Vicky Kaushal.

During one of the sets, KJo and SRK, who are BFFs and frequent collaborators, engaged in a fun banter over the subject of retirement.

SRK, who was dressed in a black tuxedo paired with a white shirt, said, "Now, the biggest thing about legends is that they know when to stop, when to retire. Like the great Sachin Tendulkar, like Sunil Chhetri the footballer, like Roger Federer, the great tennis player. They all know when to retire and I think it's time you did too. So, please go back. Thank you very much".

Replying to this KJo said, "So, by that standard, why don't you retire? Hashtag just saying".

SRK, who is known for his wit, replied in a matter of seconds, "I and Dhoni belong to a different league of legends, we keep showing up in the IPL despite saying 'No' several times".

At this point, Vicky Kaushal, who was seated in the audience section atop a ladder, said, "Retirement is for legends. Kings are forever".

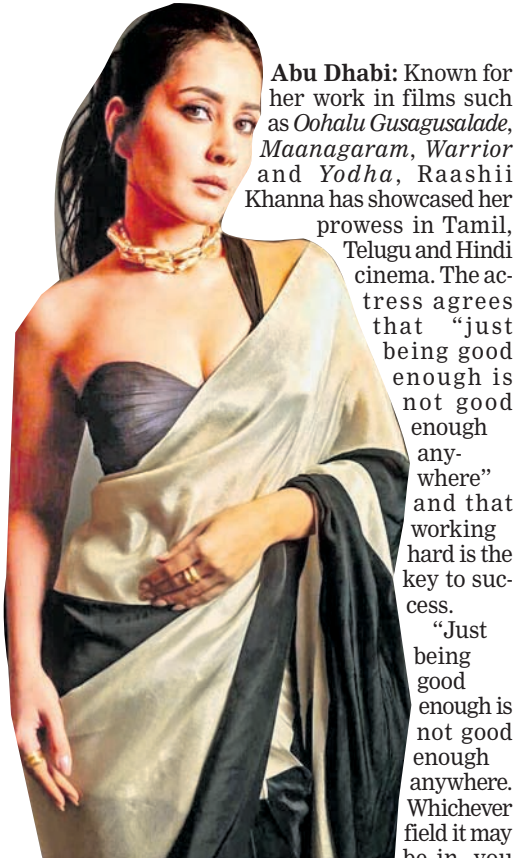


Khan, who made a terrific return at the movies last year with his blockbuster films *Pathaan* and *Jawan* took home the Best Actor trophy at the 24th edition of the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) in Abu Dhabi.

The actor clinched the trophy for his work in *Jawan* in which he played dual roles of a father and a son. Actress Rani Mukerji was feted with the Best Actress award for her work in *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*.

The third of the top 4 honours, Best Picture went to the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer *Animal*, and Best Director being won by Vidhu Vinod Chopra for his surprise hit *12th Fail*.

Director being won by Vidhu Vinod Chopra for his surprise hit *12th Fail*. IANS



**Abu Dhabi:** Known for her work in films such as *Oohalu Gusugusalade*, *Maanagaram*, *Warrior* and *Yodha*, Raashii Khanna has showcased her prowess in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi cinema. The actress agrees that "just being good enough is not good enough anywhere" and that working hard is the key to success.

"Just being good enough is not good enough anywhere. Whichever field it may be in, you have to give your best to keep climbing the ladder. The idea is to not take that pressure of which step you are on and how many steps you have to climb, just work hard and be disciplined. That's all," Raashii told IANS in Abu Dhabi.

Raashii made her acting debut in acting with *Madras Cafe* in 2013. After which, she worked with some of the finest names down south such as Vijay Deverakonda, Prithviraj, Mohanlal, Ravi Teja and Jr NTR. One of the most popular names down south, Raashi never feared getting overshadowed.

"Art is not a competition, it's a collaboration. I am always focused on doing the best that I can do and so are they. And when you are so focused on doing your best, you always shine together," she concluded. IANS

## RAASHII STRESSES ON HARD WORK

# Of adulterated love, ladoos and logistics

DR. RACHNA RATH

The implicit meaning of adulteration is to worsen or corrupt the quality of any item xyz by the addition of an inferior or foreign substance to it. In the modern world, this man-made manifestation seems to be omnipresent in its various forms akin to a deity. Regrettably, it seems to have been assimilated in the deity's daily diet of ghee-soaked (Gee! shocked) ladoos.

Adulteration with the likes of lard (pig fat) and too much 'laad' (pampering and indulgences) have been explicitly found to shatter FAITH and create FITH (flipped/\*\*\*\*ed in the head) scenarios respectively. Substituting quality-time, at the drop of a dime, with smart-phones is the unsmart SOP opted by

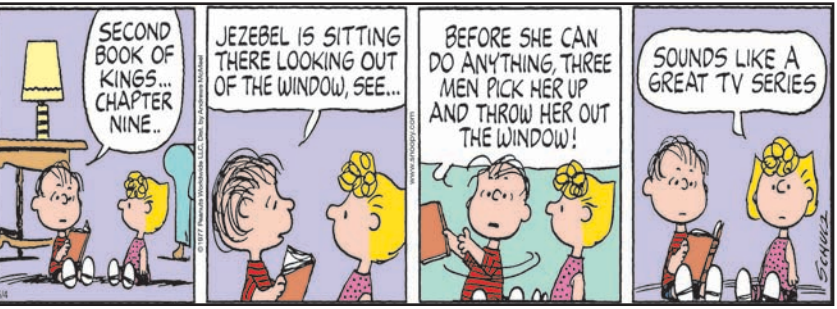


over-worked and/or over-indulgent parents that tends to adulterate love with material laad. No wonder that about 9.5 per cent children in the age group of 3 to 17 year have been diagnosed with anxiety, depression or other behavioural problems and this gloomy statistic seems to be escalating.

Amid escalating tension in West Asia, the covert intelligence behind the planning and smooth execution of a cutting-edge, supply-chain adulteration project has blown the minds of the whole world after blowing up over thousands of pager sand walkie-talkies simultaneously. In comparison, rated on a crime scale, adulteration of milk with starch, masalas with brick powder, pointed gourds with malachite green make for petty pick-pockets that would generate no explosive news either.

An unadulterated prayer meanwhile! May the shadow of the red dot/triangle hovering over the Supreme Almighty's carte du jour soon pass and may the mother earth not keep getting stained a crimson-red anymore. Amen!

## PEANUTS



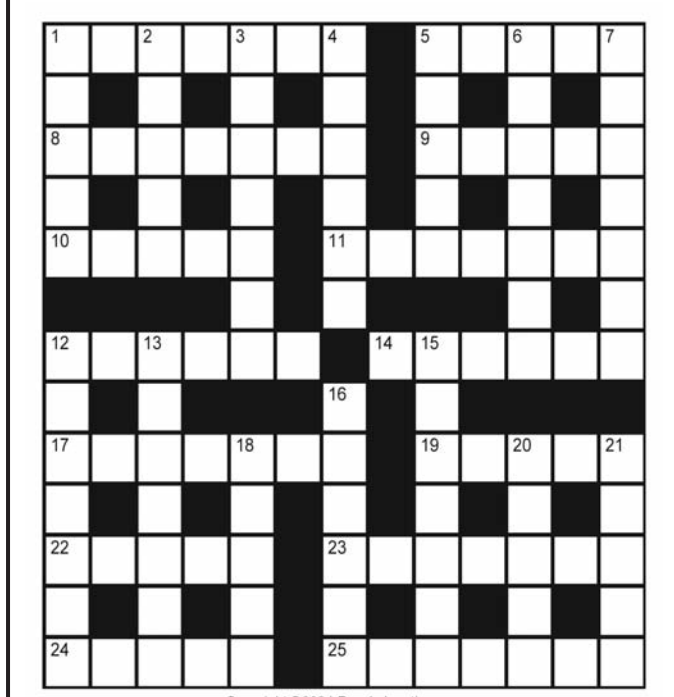
## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY



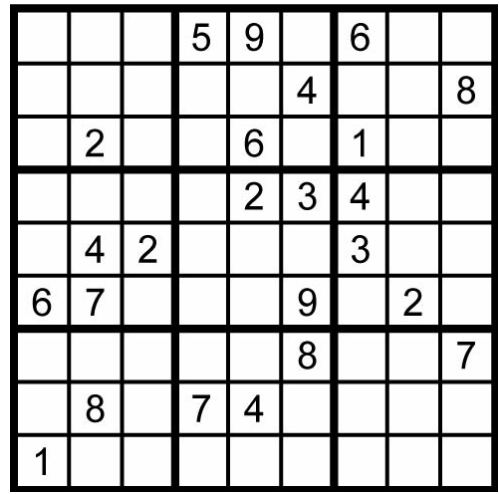
## FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Taxi, for one
  - 5 Jellied garnish
  - 8 Type of arrest
  - 9 Complain
  - 10 Island west of Maui
  - 11 Tinned treat
  - 12 Mendicant
  - 14 Lurch out of control
  - 17 Hot spots
  - 19 Origins
  - 22 Novelist Jong
  - 23 Eternal
  - 24 High-strung
  - 25 Triumph
  - 6 Photographer's request to a model
  - 7 Flask
  - 12 Forbearing
  - 13 Perfect in every way
  - 15 Shorten, as a story
  - 16 Hibernating
  - 18 Nonsensical
  - 20 Bizet work
  - 21 Rope fiber
- Down**
- 1 Outspoken
  - 2 Grey or white wading bird
  - 3 Restaurant offering
  - 4 Forgive
  - 5 A deadly sin

## SUDOKU

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

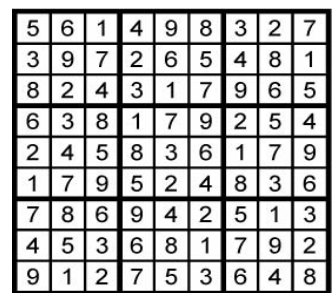


## SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## PUJA PREP

Members of Jharpada Durga Puja Samiti in Bhubaneswar unveil the tableau plan ahead of the 10-day festivities, Sunday



# e-KYC updation of 2cr PDS beneficiaries completed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** The e-KYC updation of over two crore beneficiaries of the public distribution system (PDS) has been completed in the state and that of the remaining 1.5 crore will be done in the next 45 days, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said Sunday.

The ongoing exercise is aimed at ensuring that genuine beneficiaries covered under the food security schemes of the Centre and the state governments get the benefits, the minister said.

"The e-KYC of over 2 crore beneficiaries have been completed while it will take another one and half months for verification of the remaining 1.50 crore," he said.



**2.88 crore people of 80.13 lakh families have been included under the National Food Security Act (NFSA)**

Speaking to media persons, the minister said the government is carrying out the process for updation of e-KYC (know

your customer) to detect ineligible beneficiaries.

"After completion of the verification process, the ineligible beneficiaries will be discarded and new eligible ones will be included under the public distribution system," he said.

According to official data, altogether 2.88 crore people of 80.13 lakh families have been included under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Similarly, 37.41 lakh people of 12.52 lakh families have been availing of benefits under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).

In addition, 10.02 lakh people of 3.15 lakh families are benefiting from the state food security scheme.

In total, about 80 per cent of the state's population has been covered under food security schemes.



**SONG OF JOY:** A singer performs at Nuakhai Bhetghat celebrations organised by Western Odisha Yuva Manch, at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## ₹4.77 lakh cash seized from car; driver quizzed



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** The Commissionerate police Saturday night seized ₹4.77 lakh cash, stashed in the boot of a car, near Omfed square during a checking and blocking drive.

Twin city police commissioner Sanjeeb Panda identified the driver of the vehicle as Dibyajyoti Nayak. He has been detained by the Chandrasekharpur police for driving under the influence of alcohol following his interception.

Speaking to media Sunday, Panda said, "The car was being driven rashly when the cops signaled the driver to slow down during checking. As he did not relent, we put up barricades in front of his vehicle. The driver then drove the vehicle backwards." He said two cops received minor scratches while trying to stop the vehicle and catch hold of the driver.

After the vehicle was brought to a halt, the cops searched it thoroughly and found the cash stuffed in a cavity in the boot, Panda added.

Meanwhile, the Chandrasekharpur police is questioning Dibyajyoti to ascertain the source of the seized cash. "He will be given a maximum of two days time to come out with reliable evidence pertaining to the source of the cash. Failing which, necessary actions will be initiated against him," said IIC Chandrasekharpur police, Prakash Chandra Majhi.

## V Mishra new CID-CB chief

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** Director of State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) Vinaytosh Mishra has been appointed as ADGP, CID-CB as the state government effected major shuffling in the senior and mid-level IPS officers Sunday.

According to the order, issued by Home Department, SM Narvane has been made Director Printing, Stationary and Publications, while Additional DG, Special Armed Police (SAP), RP Koche has been made the Director, Intelligence. Similarly, Saumendra Priyadarshi, who barely served eight months in the former's post has been made the ADGP, Modernization.

The Special Secretary to Home Department, ADGP Santosh Bala, who also held additional charge of CMD, OPHWC, has been appointed as Director, SCRB and State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL).

The other prominent transfers include, Jagamohan Meena



as the DCP, Cuttack and Sagarika Nath as SP Khurdha. SP Dhenkanal, Madkar Sandeep Sampat has been posted as SP, Bhadrak, while SP Deogarh, Anupama James has been made SP, Vigilance. The post of SP Vigilance will also be shared with Rahul PR, who was currently posted as SP, Jagatsinghpur.

On the other hand, ADGP Modernization, Dayal Singh Gangwar has been posted as ADGP, Headquarters, while ADGP Railways and Coastal Security and Director SFSL, Rajesh Kumar has been posted as ADGP, SAP.

## POCSO court frees man held for rape 8 yrs ago

COURT SAID PROSECUTION FAILED TO PROVE AGGRAVATED PENETRATIVE SEXUAL ASSAULT CHARGES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** A special POCSO court in Puri recently acquitted a man accused of raping a minor girl on the pretext of marriage after the prosecution failed to prove 'aggravated penetrative sexual assault' charges against him.

While setting free the accused, 28, who is currently undergoing teacher's training, Additional Sessions Judge Ramanath Panda observed that the sole evidence of the victim without corroboration is held to be unreliable due to want of corroboration.

"I am of the considered opinion that the evidence adduced by the prosecution is not sufficient to bring the accused within the fold of the charges leveled against him under IPC Sections 341, 354, 323, 376(2)(n) and 560, as well as Section 6 of POCSO Act, 2012,"



the judge said in his order adding, "Accordingly I hold that the prosecution has failed to establish the charges leveled against the accused beyond all reasonable doubt."

Defence counsel Debadutta Kanungo said that the Astaranga police had arrested the accused October 6, 2016 on an FIR lodged by the victim, then 16, stating that

the former intercepted her on a motorcycle when she was on her way to college in the morning hours. He then forced her to ride pillion on the motorcycle, and took her to a secluded place, and took some photographs with her on a cell phone, the victim said in the FIR.

"She also alleged the accused manhandled her and told her that he would not keep any fur-

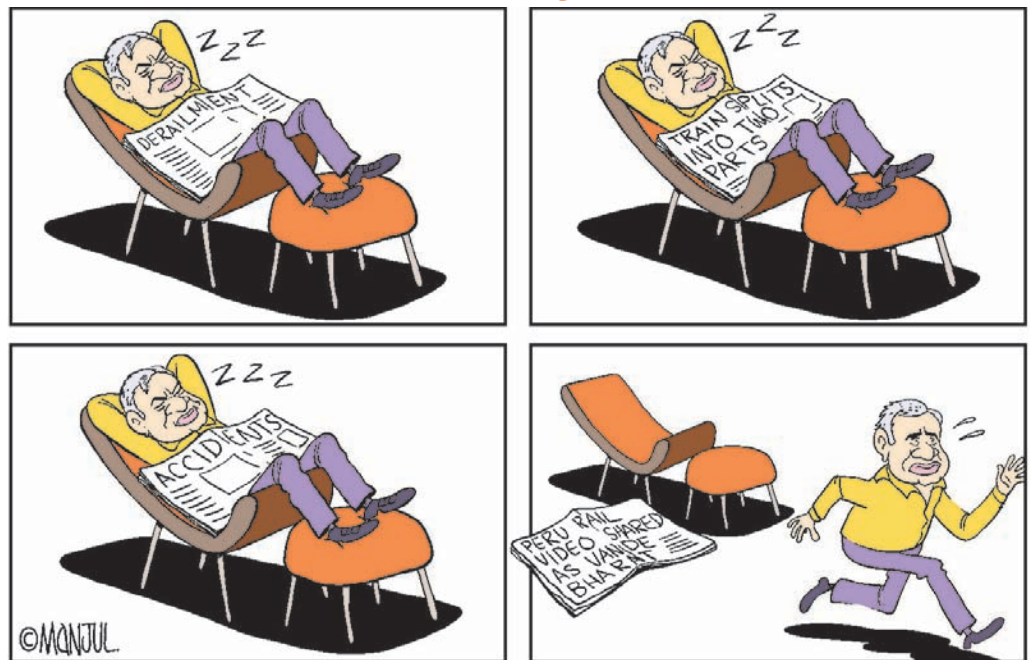
ther relationship with her though he had been maintaining forcible sexual relation with her for the past one year," Kanungo said as quoting the FIR.

The police filed the chargesheet in the case November 22, 2016 and the trial commenced in February 2018. In the meantime, the court granted bail to the accused a year after his arrest.

"The trial went on for around 8 years. The judgment was pronounced September 12 this year" Kanungo said, adding, "a conviction cannot be held upon a disputed and unreliable foundational fact alleged by a POCSO case victim. This has been held by many high courts and the supreme court as well."

Meanwhile, while closing the case, the court allowed the complainant to appeal against the order within the stipulated 90 days, Kanungo added.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## PM praises Odia youth's efforts in preserving Santhali language

Ramjeet Tudu from Mayurbhanj has launched a campaign to give a new identity to Santhali with the help of digital innovation

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday heaped praises on Ramjeet Tudu, a youth from Mayurbhanj district, for his unique campaign to preserve the Santhali language and 'Ol Chiki lipi'.

Tudu is currently working as an Assistant Revenue Inspector in Keonjhar district.

During the 114th episode of his weekly Man ki Baat address, PM Modi said that a child learns his mother tongue easily and quickly, adding that India has almost 20,000 languages and dialects and each one of them is surely the mother tongue of someone or the other.

"There are some languages which are used by very few people, but you will be happy to know that unique efforts are being made now to preserve those languages. One such language is our 'Santhali' language. A campaign has been started to give a new identity to Santhali with the help of digital innovation. 'Santhali' is spoken by the people of the Santhal tribal community residing in many states of our country," stated Modi.

The Prime Minister further noted that many tribal communities - apart from India - in neighbouring Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan also speak in Santhali.

"Shriman Ramjeet Tudu, a resident of Mayurbhanj, Odisha is running a campaign to create an online identity of the



Santhali language. Ramjeetji has prepared a digital platform where literature related to the Santhali language can be read and written in the Santhali language. Actually, a few years ago when Ramjitji started using the mobile phone, he was saddened by the fact that he could not send messages in his mother tongue," added Modi.

"After that, he started exploring the possibilities of typing 'Ol Chiki', a script of the Santhali language. With the help of some of his friends, he developed the technique of typing in 'Ol Chiki'. Today, due to his efforts, arti-

cles written in the Santhali language are reaching millions of people," said the PM.

Speaking to media persons, an elated Tudu said that he is happy and feels proud that the Prime Minister of India has praised his small effort on his programme.

"I started work on the digital platform for the Santhali language in 2015 and the digitisation work is continuing till date. Initially, no tools were supporting the 'Ol Chiki' dialect but now they are available on the internet. However, there is a lack of enough content in Santhali language, and to address that problem, we have been writing on Wikimedia's project Wikipedia. This apart, we have launched a website 'Birmali' which is the first Santhali eMagazine where we publish the works of various writers. We are providing the Santhali language and literature to the people accessing the internet," said Tudu.

He urged the youths that many languages in the world have completely become extinct. "If we continue our efforts, then a language and its heritage can be preserved," he exhorted them.

## Sorrows of Luna, Karandia river islanders persist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Sept 29:** The destruction caused by flood waters across 13 villages located in the island region of Luna and Karandia rivers in Kendrapara district has become visible after the water level receded recently.

Many crops along the riverbanks have been destroyed, while parts of agricultural land have now been submerged in the rivers.

The flooding was caused after the rivers swelled following the release of water in Mahanadi in August this year. The two rivers are part of the Mahanadi water system.

In the last 10 years, more than 60 houses in the region have been swallowed by the rivers, and the phenomenon continues. Every year, houses and farmlands in the island region are destroyed due to floods, prompting locals to demand the construction of stone-packing em-



bankments along the rivers. However, nothing has happened to address the perennial problem so far: Pinaki Samantaray from Aitipur village said that even after 77 years of Independence, these 13 villages remain neglected by successive governments. "Despite our repeated pleas to politicians and officials, the residents of the island area have not yet seen any fruitful results," he said.

Located about 10 kilometers away from Kendrapara city, this island region suffers from lack of basic facilities such as education, healthcare, transportation, and drinking water.

The 13 villages are spread across five panchayats under three blocks. The villages include Aitipur, Balarampur, and Balisingh in Marshaghai block under Aitipur Panchayat; and Dihjalpoka, Pakshata, and Kanibanka under Jalapoka Panchayat.

In Derabis block, Dihbasapur and Indalo panchayats are part of the affected region. Additionally, Sansasala, Sishua, and Sathilo villages in Garadapur block's Bangalapur panchayat are also affected by the nature's fury.

The 13 revenue villages are bordered by the Karandia river on one side, and the Luna River on the other. The island area

starts near Sathilo, and ends at Dihbalrampur.

Rekha Sethy, a local resident, expressed her distress, saying that the Karandia river has made their lives unbearable. "In the past two years alone, the river has swallowed four houses, and now only one house remains," she said.

She mentioned that several years ago, the river was about 300 meters away, but due to the changing course of the rivers, the banks are eroding rapidly.

Sarpanch Bidyulata Sahu stated that out of around 200 houses, 60 have been lost to the river over the past one decade. "Not only homes, but much of the farmland near the river has turned into the riverbed, resulting in a loss of agricultural land," he said.

Meanwhile, Irrigation department's Executive Engineer, Umesh Chandra Sethy, said that plans are underway for stone-packing of the embankment. "The work is expected to start very soon," he said.

# Odisha tops Urban Governance Index



The ranking highlights state government's commitment to urban reforms and its success in empowering local governance structures, effective decentralisation and fostering citizen involvement

Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra. He said that Housing and Urban Development principal secretary Usha Padhee has been rigorously monitoring the UGI, for which the state is scripting success.

Odisha's holistic approach to governance reform, combining accountability and inclusivity, makes it a model state for urban governance in India, Mahapatra said.

Notably, the key reforms include enhanced administrative and financial powers for ULBs, facilitating better decision-making at the grassroots level, significant improvements in ULB budgets and resource allocation, Introduction of citizen engagement platforms and targeted initiatives to improve the capacity of municipal staff and infrastructure.

(ULBs) and elected representatives, the study said.

The state has demonstrated strong governance through comprehensive fiscal decentralisation, robust citizen participation frameworks, and transparent administrative processes.

The UGI evaluates states based on four core pillars: empowerment of elected representatives, city administration, fiscal autonomy, and citizen involvement, covering 42 detailed indicators.

"The recognition reflects our long-standing efforts to decentralise power and ensure that our cities and urban local bodies have the resources and autonomy needed to deliver on their mandates. Odisha will continue to prioritise transparent, accountable, and citizen-driven governance," said Housing and

Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra. He said that Housing and Urban Development principal secretary Usha Padhee has been rigorously monitoring the UGI, for which the state is scripting success.



**BUDDING TALENT:** Young participants display their artwork during a drawing competition organised by Sisu Samachar in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## Nat'l review meet on cooperative sectors today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** A two-day national review meeting with representatives from states and Union Territories (UTs) on the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Cooperation for strengthening of cooperative sectors will be held here September 30.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja will inaugurate the meeting and

Ministry of Cooperation secretary Ashish Bhutani will be present as the guest of honour. Officials from 28 states and four Union Territories (UTs) will participate in the event.

On the first day, a workshop will be organised to implement various initiatives at the grassroots level. Around two lakh new Multipurpose Primary Agriculture Credit Societies

(MPACS), primary dairy and fisheries cooperative societies will be formed, covering all the panchayats in the country.

The second session of the review meeting will focus on the empowerment of Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) so that rural people can benefit from it.

Since the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation, under

the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, numerous significant steps have been taken towards empowerment of cooperative societies.

The ministry has been consistently working to bring the initiatives to the grassroots level and ensure that their benefits reach people from all walks of life.

## SAMANTA GETS AHPI ACCOLADE

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** KIIT, KISS and KIMS founder Achyuta Samanta was awarded the 'Iconic Healthcare Leader' honour by the Association of Healthcare Providers, India (AHPI) during the second AHPI leadership convention held in Chennai Sunday. Samanta got the accolade for his significant contributions to the healthcare sector in the country. The AHPI recognises individuals in India who have made exemplary contributions to healthcare each year. This year, two recipients were honoured: Samanta and Prathap Reddy, Chairman of the Apollo Group, who also received the Iconic



Leader award.

Upon receiving the honour, Samanta expressed his gratitude to AHPI and emphasised that the recognition would inspire him to contribute even more to the healthcare field. He also thanked the selection committee, led by Vijay Agrawal, and AHPI Director General Girdhar J Gyani, for choosing him for the prestigious award.

## IIT Bhub conducts cleaning campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar participated in the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign and conducted a series of initiatives in line with the theme of the year 'Swabhav Swachhata-Sanskaar Swachhata' recently.

As part of the Swachh Bharat Mission, the campaign started from September 17 and will continue up to October 1.

With an objective to protect and preserve the environment for the future, IIT Bhubaneswar initiated a campaign to stop using single-use plastic, including single-use plastic bottles in its campus. The institute also formed a solid waste management committee to oversee



the waste management efforts and will soon propose sustainable treatment options and segregation of waste.

Besides, the institute also organised different programmes to ensure cleanliness of the campus and to spread awareness. The housekeeping staff con-

ducted a mass cleanliness drive on its premises. They also cleaned the pond in Kaysapada, an adopted village of the Institute. The horticulture team cleaned the park of Podapada Primary School, situated in another adopted village by the institute as part of the campaign.

## TPCODL wins SKOCH awards

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and state government, conferred with the prestigious SKOCH Awards 2024 at the 99th SKOCH Summit, held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

Recognised for its cutting-edge initiatives, TPCODL received the gold award for 'Digitally Karan - Online Payment' and the silver award for 'Digitalisation of the Procurement Process'. The innovations have driven a five-fold increase in digital electricity payments, significantly enhancing customer service convenience. The digitalisation of procurement has streamlined operations, reducing cycle times while contributing to sustainability by sav-

ing over one ton of carbon emissions annually. Reflecting on the recognition, TPCODL CEO Arvind Singh remarked, "This esteemed recognition underscores our relentless commitment to driving innovation, enhancing customer service and elevating operational efficiency. It is a tribute to the dedication and hard work of our teams. As we continue our journey of digital transformation, we remain steadfast in our mission to create value for our customers and foster environmental sustainability."

TPCODL's noteworthy achievements in enhancing customer service and modernising procurement underscore its focus on transforming utility operations, championing digital adoption and advancing sustainability efforts across the region.

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary, Tangi, Dist. - Khordha, vide No.2910 / dt. 24.09.24. I, Ramesh Chandra Behera, S/o Kartik Behera, resident of Village - Tangi, PO/PS - Tangi, Dist. - Khordha state : That, my father Kartik Behera, S/o Udayanath Behera had purchased an area of Ac.0.100 decimals of Gharabari Land in Mauza - Tangi, Khata No. - 368/17, Plot No. - 142/1205 from Smt. Juti Manjari Behera, W/o. Kartik Behera vide Regd. Sale Deed No. 1093 dt.28.04.1980 and we are in possession since purchase. That, such original Regd. Sale Deed has been lost & beyond recovery. This affidavit has been published to avail housing loan from State Bank of India, Kamaguru branch and to create mortgage against said property. In this connection an FIR S.D / G.D No. 009 has been lodged by me on 24.09.2024 at Tangi Police Station, Dist. - Khordha. Ramesh Chandra Behera

## WALKATHON BY BHUB MANIPAL HOSPITALS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar hosted a walkathon Sunday to commemorate World Heart Day with over 500 participants joining the event.

The event kicked off from Kalinga Stadium and followed a route to Pal Heights square before concluding at the same place. The occasion was aimed at



raising awareness about the rising prevalence of cardiac-related issues, especially among younger individuals. The theme

of the walkathon was 'Conquer Heart Health'.

Institute director Saktimaya Mohapatra flagged off the event in presence of senior cardiologists including Lingraj Nath, Jajati Keshari Padhi, Mahesh Agarwal, Dibyanjan Behera, Pradeep Kumar Dash, Jitendra Nath Patnaik, and Biswajeet Mohapatra (Cardiothoracic Surgeons) and Vivek Choudhry (Cardiac Anesthesia).

Speaking on the occasion, Mohapatra said, "The event shows that our community is willing to take proactive steps toward better heart health, and we will continue to support such initiatives moving forward."

The participants were reminded of key heart health tips including regular health check-ups, consistent exercise, healthy eating habits and practice stress-relieving techniques such as yoga among others.

Complimentary T-shirts and refreshments were distributed to the participants as part of the walkathon initiative.

It was also an occasion for the institute to highlight the rise in sudden deaths since 2012—mainly due to heart attacks—that led to a 75 per cent increase in casualties, with many of the cases affecting individuals between the ages of 30 and 50.

## Sunshine Hospital holds event in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** City's leading healthcare provider Sunshine Hospital organised a Walkathon from Laxmisagar to hospital premises on the occasion of World Heart Day (WHD) Sunday.

The event was organised to create awareness about cardiovascular health and promote heart-healthy lifestyles. WHD, observed every year September 29, is dedicated to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases and the importance of heart health.

State Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan joined the event as chief guest, including consultant Cardiologist Ritesh Acharya, consultant in Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery Swetanka Das, Sunshine Hospital CEO Alok Lodh, and director Ayashkant Mohanty. Chief consultant in brain and spine surgery at the hospital, Brigadier (Prof) PK Sahoo highlighted the significance of the event and said, "The Walkathon is a crucial reminder for everyone to focus on heart health. Simple lifestyle changes can dramatically reduce the risk of heart disease, and at Sunshine Hospital, we remain dedicated to providing the best care while raising awareness about these life-saving habits."

## Bhub CARE Hospitals organises event on cardiovascular health



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 29:** CARE Hospitals, Bhubaneswar held a special event here focusing on cardiovascular health awareness and prevention on World Heart Day, Sunday.

The chief guest, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Minister Gokulananda Mallick, in his address, underlined the significance of maintaining heart health while following preventive measures.

He also highlighted the state government's initiatives in promoting cardiovascular wellness.

Olympian, World Gold Medalist and National Champion Dutee Chand, who was the special guest, emphasised the importance of a healthy

lifestyle, including exercise and nutrition, in preventing heart disease.

Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Saroj Kumar Mahapatra was the guest of honour.

Clinical director and department head of Cardiology Mahendra Prasad Tripathy said, "World Heart Day is an important occasion to remind ourselves of the vital role our hearts play in our overall health. We are committed to empowering our community with knowledge and resources to lead healthier lives."

Clinical director and head of Cardiac Surgery Bipin Bihari Mohanty, COO Kislay Anand and AVP-BD Lokanath Dash were present on the occasion.

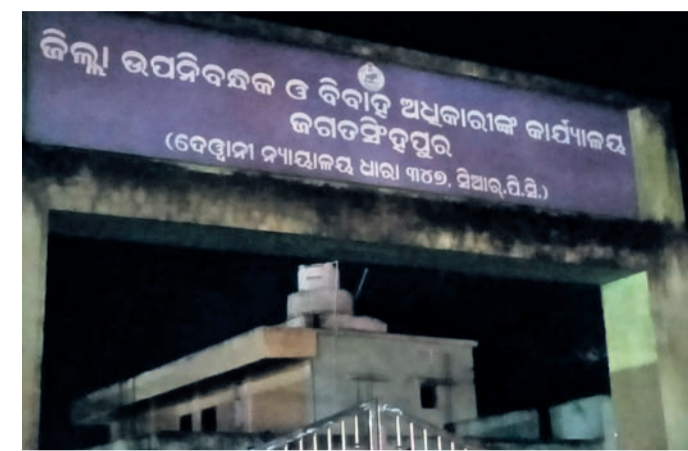
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JAGATSingHPUR SUB-REGISTRAR OFFICE

# Middlemen mint money in online slot allotment

People are forced to pay anything between ₹400 and ₹500 per slot as they fail to book the same online due to the pre-booking by middlemen and agents



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Sept 29:** Middlemen are making easy bucks by booking slots meant for land registration at the sub-registrar office here and selling them to people in need later, thereby defeating the very purpose of introduction of online booking system by the Inspector General of Registration (IGR) under Board of Revenue, Odisha, according to a report.

The IGR provides the slots in its portal available for a particular day to improve service delivery system and apparently to prevent rush at the sub-registrar office. Those who book the slots in advance will get the chance to sell/purchase land on a particular day. The slots are provided free of cost to people interested for land registration/sale. However, people are forced to pay anything between ₹400 and ₹500 to buy the slots as they fail to book the slots online due to the pre-booking of slots

by middlemen and agents the previous night.

Sources said in the past those who could bribe the middlemen in the sub-registrar office were allowed to complete their land registration in advance while the rest pushed to the bottom of the list of applicants. Later, the state government made an attempt to do away with the irregularities and bring transparency in land dealings when it introduced online slot booking at the sub-registrar office in the district headquarters here as well as all the sub-registrar offices in the district.

As per the scheme, the IGR displays the slots available for a particular day. Accordingly, a maximum of 15 to 20 transactions are allowed on a particular day at Jagatsinghpur sub-registrar office. Although slot booking is available free of cost, people are forced to grease the palms of middlemen to buy the slots due to their non-availability.

## Youth killed; jumbo calf found dead

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda/Hatadihi, Sept 29:** A youth was trampled to death by a tusker near Khajuridihi village under Bamebari forest section and Champua forest range while forest officials recovered the carcass of a female elephant calf near Chakratirtha of Hadgarh elephant sanctuary under Hatadihi block of Keonjhar district, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Gour Charan Nayak, 45. The tusker has been on a rampage in the area and has killed two persons during last three months. The incident occurred when Goura Charan had gone to a nearby jungle to attend nature's call near the village in the early hours of Sunday. He came face-to-face with the animal near gate no-5 of an industrial plant and became a victim of the animal.



Forest officials rushed to the spot but caught off guard when villagers gheraoed them demanding an end to elephant menace and compensation to the bereaved family. They rented after police officials placated them and brought the situation under control.

In the second incident, the age of the dead animal was around five years but the reason behind its death is yet unclear. It is suspected that the calf might have died during a fight between the elderly elephants or due to some disease. Locals said the carcass has been lying there for two days. The forest officials conducted a probe Saturday night and seized the carcass Sunday.

Anandapur DFO Abhaya Dalei said he can only comment on the issue after the autopsy report comes.



**SOCCER TOURNEY:** Players of Mayurbhanj and Boudh during the Sahani Cup football tournament held at Baripada Stadium, Sunday

OP PHOTO

## 5 more Khelo India Centres soon

AGENCIES

**Berhampur, Sept 29:** In a major boost to sports infrastructure, at least five new Khelo India Centres (KICs) under a Central scheme will be opened in five districts – Ganjam, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Nayagarh and Deogarh – in three disciplines, officials said Sunday.

While Khelo India Basketball centre will be opened at Government Queen of the Mission High School in Ganjam district, Khelo India Kho-Kho centres will be opened at Government SVT High School and RK Government School in Gajapati and Jharsuguda districts, respectively.

The centre for football will be opened at Tileibani PS High School and Narayana Government High School in Deogarh and Nayagarh districts, respectively.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has recently informed the state government about the opening of the KICs after the



**Coach or mentors for the proposed five centres in each discipline will be engaged in the next two months**

project was approved by the competent authority Thursday.

The SAI will be given funds to run the centres. The coach or mentors for the proposed five centres in each discipline will be engaged in the next two months, the officials said.

Former champion athletes should be engaged as the coach in each discipline.

The talent pool identification would be done by the respective past champion athletes or organisations adhering to

the guidelines of the scheme. Each centre must have strived to have an equal ratio of male to female trainees, the officials said.

Berhampur MP Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy expressed his happiness as the government approved two centres of the Khelo India scheme in his parliamentary constituency.

"These will help the talented players to hone their talent and compete at the national and international level. They will get an opportunity to make their mark nationwide," he said.

K Ravi Kumar, a Commonwealth Games gold medalist in weightlifting, said the centres would be helped to build up the athletes from the rural areas in the state by giving proper coaching and good infrastructure facilities.

According to the official website of Khelo India, 26 KICs in nine disciplines have been approved for 25 of 30 districts of Odisha, of which six have now started operations.

## Body of missing fisherman recovered

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Astaranga, Sept 29:** The body of a 50-year-old fisherman, who fell off a fishing boat and drowned in the sea Friday night, was found from Baliara on Devi riverbank in Puri district in the wee hours of Sunday. The deceased identified as Gandu Charan Behera was a resident of Kaliakana under Nagar panchayat of this block.

According to reports, Behera, along with his associates, ventured into the sea on a fishing boat around 3am September 27. However, due to a storm, the boat lost its balance in the middle of the sea, and Behera fell off the boat.

On being informed, the relatives of the deceased arrived at the spot and recovered the body. Behera's son Prakash has filed a written complaint at the nearby Nuagarh Marine police station following which a case (2/24) of unnatural death was registered an investigation began.



**WORK OF ART:** A 50-feet high puja pandal designed on the lines of Sai temple at Namchi in Sikkim put up by organisers at Block Square in Sonepur ahead of Durga Puja in this western Odisha town has been a centre of attraction

OP PHOTO

## MLA thrust on devt of Chandipur beach

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Sept 29:** Local MLA Manas Kumar Dutta Sunday held discussions with the officials of Tourism department regarding the development of tourism infrastructure and beautification of Chandipur beach in this district.

It has come to the fore that despite its global popularity, Chandipur beach has not been developed according to the needs of the tourists. As a result, it has been observed that visitors are gradually losing interest in the beach.

The MLA emphasised the completion of the ongoing Marine Drive project, which had begun as part of the beach protection initiative. He instructed the officials to expand the length of the embankment and create multiple entry points to the beach.

He mentioned that beautification and development work for Chandipur beach would begin soon through a well-planned approach so that the beach would become a major tourist destination in near future.

## Smitarani death case to be reopened: CM

AGENCIES

**Jajpur, Sept 29:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday assured the public that his government would reopen the mysterious death case of Smitarani Biswal, a panchayat executive officer from Dharmasala block of this district. He said this while addressing a meeting at Barchana in this district, Sunday.

The CM announced plans for a thorough investigation into the mysterious death of Smitarani Biswal, a panchayat executive officer from Dharmasala block. He expressed concerns that she was allegedly "used and murdered" by low-profile BJD leaders and questioned whether this was the kind of respect BJD was paying to women.

Majhi assured the public that his government would thoroughly investigate the case at the request of Smitarani's husband, emphasising a zero-tolerance policy for crimes against women.

"The investigation will be conducted with utmost transparency, and no stone will be left unturned," he promised, also pledging to ensure the safety and security of women across the state.

Majhi, who took part in a BJP membership drive in this district, alleged that the previous BJD government was involved in large-scale irregularities disguised as development efforts. "Instead of developing the state, the BJD

government has been building its vote bank for their own interests," he said.

Targeting the leader of the Opposition, Majhi alleged that Naveen Patnaik did not visit the CM's grievance cell in the last 16 years. "People who came to the grievance cell were disappointed not to meet the CM even once," Majhi remarked.

Claiming to have met over 1 lakh people within five days of taking office June 12, Majhi criticised Patnaik for avoiding direct interaction with the public.

He recounted an encounter with an elderly woman at the grievance cell who expressed her gratitude for being able to meet him, saying it had been a dream for common people to have such access during the BJD's tenure.

Majhi emphasised that he leads a "people's government," prioritising direct communication with citizens, which he argued was not possible under the previous administration. "My ministers and I sometimes skip lunch to meet those who come to the grievance cell from every corner of the state," he said.

Without naming them, Majhi criticised three BJD leaders, claiming that they had exploited the area in the name of development and failed to deliver justice to the local populace. He pointed out that despite Jajpur's wealth in mines and minerals, people had not seen any real development.

## Siddhartha wins Biju Patnaik Wildlife Conservation Award

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Sept 29:** Proud moment for this northeastern district, as scientist Siddhartha Pati of Balasure has been chosen for the prestigious Biju Patnaik Wildlife Conservation Award 2024 by the state Forest, Environment and Climate Change department for his significant contribution to conservation of horseshoe crabs.

Pati and Shailendra Narayan Satpathy of Bolangir will jointly receive the award at a grand event to be held by the state government marking the Wildlife Week in Bhubaneswar in the first week of October, according to sources.

Pati has led several internationally funded horseshoe crab conservation projects as principal investigator, receiving support from Rufford Foundation UK, Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund UAE, Conservation Leadership Programme UK, WWF India and Idea Wild USA. He has produced the world's first silent clay art film, "A Day for Living Fossil", to raise awareness about the biomedical and ecological importance of horseshoe crabs.

He was a desktop reviewer for International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



World Heritage Nominations in 2020. As the founder of the Association for Biodiversity Conservation and Research (ABC), he actively works for the conservation of horseshoe crabs and other marine species.

He is leading efforts to raise awareness on biomedical and ecological importance of the living fossil since 2012. Pati and his team at the ABC in Balasure have explored various horseshoe crab conservation strategies, such as assisting IUCN with updating the species' status and promoting awareness among local communities. Pati is

also a specialist in IUCN Species Survival Commission.

He has completed his M Sc in Biotechnology from Fakir Mohan University and earned his PhD (Doctorate in Science) from the same university in 2019 with a fellowship from the Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS), Department of Atomic Energy.

He pursued his postdoctoral research at University of Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia. Pati has worked with national and international institutes like FM University, Khallikote University, AMIT Bhubaneswar, University

Malaysia Terengganu and Udayana University, Indonesia. His research integrates his passion for science and hiking with applied research and innovation in bioprospecting.

He has been invited as a visiting researcher to Chinese University of Hong Kong and National University Singapore.

Several national and international journals have published more than 70 of his papers. He has also contributed popular articles to various magazines and edited three books on applied science, widely read by life science schol-

ars and professionals. He has filed a patent for his innovation too.

Pati has presented scientific papers at international conferences in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, China and Singapore, and serves as an editor and reviewer for several academic journals. He is also an advisory member for institutions like KKS College, Balasure, and the University of Engineering & Management, Kolkata.

He has received several awards including Future Conservationist Award (2018) from the Conservation Leadership Programme, Cambridge, UK. In 2023, Pati was honoured with the prestigious UNISERF Award by Udayana University, Indonesia.

Currently, he is working as a scientist-cum-director at NatNov Bioscience, where he applies his research to develop agricultural biostimulants from crustacean shells using biotechnological methods with a zero-waste mindset, reducing carbon footprint and providing employment to over 30 people in the startup unit.

After the announcement of his award, wildlife scientists, researchers, conservationists and various institutions from all over India and across the world congratulated him.

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For registration, please contact: Sandiptak Kar, Mobile: 91784 66814.  
Registration is compulsory.  
The registration time will be from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.  
No walk-ins will be allowed.

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FOCUS CONFLICTS

# PERPETUAL WAR



Behind the façade of 'primitive' ethnic passions exploding yet again in the African 'heart of darkness,' one can discern the unmistakable contours of global capitalism

is not the "savage" customs of the local population; it is the foreign companies and the wealthy consumers who buy their products. Remove them from the equation and the entire edifice of ethnic warfare crumbles.

The DRC is no exception, as demonstrated by the de facto dismemberment – or, rather, "Congo-ization" – of Libya following NATO's intervention and the fall of Muammar al-Gaddafi in 2011. Since then, much of Libya's territory has been ruled by local armed gangs who sell oil directly to foreign customers, reminding us of capitalism's tenacity in securing a steady supply of cheap raw materials. This is why so many states damned with the resource curse remain condemned to their plight.

The tragic upshot is that no party in ongoing conflicts is innocent or righteous. In Sudan, the problem is not just the RSF; both sides are playing the same brutal game. The situation cannot be reduced to a "backward" people who are not ready for democracy, because it is really about the continuing economic colonization of Africa – not just by the West but also by China, Russia, and rich Arab countries. We should not be surprised that Central Africa is increasingly dominated by Russian mercenaries and Muslim fundamentalists.

Yanis Varoufakis has written eloquently about the passage of capitalism to "technofeudalism," as evidenced by the Big Tech companies' de facto monopolies over their respective markets. In countries like Sudan and the DRC, however, we have something closer to the feudalism of medieval times. In fact, both descriptions are true: we are increasingly living under a combination of high-tech and analog feudalism. This is why Hemedti – even more than Elon Musk – is the true avatar of our era.

The writer is Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School.

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When one looks for a figure who best represents the worst tendencies of our brutal age, the first names that come to mind include Yahya Sinwar ( Hamas leader in Gaza), Binyamin Netanyahu, Kim Jong-un, or Vladimir Putin. But that is primarily because we are bombarded with news about these leaders. If we widen the lens to account for horrors that Western mainstream media largely ignore, those waging Sudan's civil war stand out even more. The country's new warlords are displaying shocking cruelty and indifference toward their own people, including by systematically hampering the flow of humanitarian aid and taking an exorbitant amount of it for themselves.

The situation in Sudan exposes a global economic logic that has remained obfuscated in other cases. Back in 2019, widespread demonstrations toppled the country's longtime dictator, Omar al-Bashir, whose reign at least had maintained a semblance of peace and stability following the secession of South Sudan (a predominantly Christian country that is now mired in its own civil war). Then, following a brief moment of transitional government and renewed hopes for democratisation, a brutal war erupted between two Muslim warlords: General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) who is still nominally head of state, and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (or Hemedti), the commander of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and one of the country's wealthiest men.

The RSF is behind some of the worst atrocities of the current conflict, including the Khartoum massacre on 3 June, 2019, when more than 120 protesters were killed, hundreds more wounded, thousands of women raped, and many homes pillaged. More recently, Dagalo's forces triggered a new cycle of violence on April 15, 2023, when they launched a broad assault on SAF bases across the coun-

try, including in the capital, Khartoum.

Although both sides express a vague commitment to democracy, no one takes such claims seriously. What they really mean is, "First we have to win the war; then we'll see." This is an understandable position to take. To all those involved, a mostly benevolent dictatorship like Paul Kagame's regime in Rwanda may be the best that one can realistically hope for.

Further complicating matters is the role of external forces. For example, Russia's Wagner Group, the Libyan National Army (under the command of Khalifa Haftar), and the United Arab Emirates have reportedly furnished the RSF with military supplies, helicopters, and weapons on a scale that has left it better armed than the SAF. Meanwhile, the SAF has been looking for its own backers, not least China.

But the RSF has another major advantage: Dagalo controls a region with abundant gold reserves that allow him to purchase all the weapons he needs. We are thus reminded of a sad truth facing many developing countries: natural resources are as likely to be a source of violence and poverty as they are to underpin peace

and prosperity.

The quintessential example is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has long been cursed by its reserves of critical minerals, diamonds, and gold. If it had no such resources, it would still be poor, but it might be a happier, more peaceful place to live. The DRC is also an exemplary case of how the developed West contributes to the circumstances for mass migration. Behind the façade of "primitive" ethnic passions exploding yet again in the African "heart of darkness," one can discern the unmistakable contours of global capitalism.

After the fall of Mobutu Sese Soko in 1997, the DRC ceased to exist as a functioning state. Its eastern region now comprises a multiplicity of territories ruled by local warlords whose armies press-gang and drug children and maintain business ties with the foreign corporations that are exploiting the region's mineral reserves. This arrangement serves both partners: the corporations get mining rights without having to pay state taxes, and the warlords get money with which to buy arms. Many of these minerals then end up in our laptops, mobile phones, and other high-tech products. The problem



Slavoj Žižek

THE TRAGIC UPSHOT IS THAT NO PARTY IN ONGOING CONFLICTS IS INNOCENT OR RIGHTEOUS

## Deepening Crisis

The principle of Yoga is the turning of one or of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching divine Being.

SRI AUROBINDO



The chance of peace, even if temporary, returning to the Middle East has suffered a deadly blow after Israel killed Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a powerful airstrike in Beirut 27 September. The Israeli military said it had targeted the group's central command headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs to eliminate Nasrallah. Hezbollah confirmed he had been killed, without saying how. It is to be noted that while opting for micro targeting, Israel is per force having to massively bomb civilian targets as the terror outfit had built bunkers and tunnels under homes of innocent city dwellers.

Israel has for long been trying to destroy the terror network of Hezbollah and cripple Iran which has been allegedly arming the group. It had a deadly encounter nearly 18 years back in Lebanon and had to retreat in the face of Hezbollah's offensive under the leadership of Nasrallah. Iran is known to support such Shi'ite network of allied groups in the Arab world.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gloated over the killing of Nasrallah terming it as a necessary step toward "changing the balance of power in the region for years to come." Whatever his bravado, there is no denying the fact that he has made his point loud and clear that the world outside which supports Hamas and Hezbollah is, in reality, supporting terrorist outfits which are openly preaching violence as the only method of a settlement in the Mid East. This present situation could escalate to push the Middle East to the brink of war with the possibility of a direct war with Iran and outfits groomed by the latter in several Arab countries.

Sensing that such a danger is looming large, US President Joe Biden said, "it is time for a ceasefire," though he described Nasrallah's death as a "measure of justice" for what he called his many victims, including thousands of Americans, Israelis and Lebanese. It is only natural that he would back Israel by fully supporting its "right to self-defence." At the same time, Biden is aware of the damage that escalation of the conflict in the Middle East may cause to the prospect of his party in the US presidential election in November.

Undoubtedly, the killing of Nasrallah and several other key commanders of Hezbollah in Israel's super precise air strike is a major blow to the outfit's capacity for inflicting damage on Israel which in effect poses a big challenge to Iran's position in the Arab world. That is why Iran has called for a United Nations Security Council meeting on Israel's actions in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region. Iran warning against any attacks on its diplomatic facilities and representatives shows it is scared. This utter fright was further strengthened with last week's news that the Iranian Supreme Leader went into hiding immediately after Nasrallah was killed in an air strike.

The words of Iran's UN ambassador, Amir Saeid Iravani, written to the 15-member Council are ominous, indeed, as he stated Iran will not hesitate to exercise its inherent rights under international law to take every measure "in defence of its vital national and security interests." This is the language of imminent war.

The situation seems to be spinning out of control with reports of Israeli strikes, a day after Nasrallah's killing, causing death to 33 people and injuries to 195 in Lebanon, according to the Lebanese health ministry. The strikes continued on Beirut's southern suburbs. More than 1,000 people have been killed and over 6,000 wounded as a result of Israeli attacks in the past two weeks, while about one million Lebanese have reportedly been displaced.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it would continue its battle against Israel "in support of Gaza and Palestine, and in defence of Lebanon and its steadfast and honourable people." Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said Nasrallah's death would be avenged and his path in fighting Israel would be pursued by other militants which is a clear indication of support to a terrorist group.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed grave concern over the dramatic escalation of events. His spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, in a statement said the cycle of violence must stop now and all sides must step back from the brink.

But, sadly enough, the UN has been turned into a helpless spectator in the Israel-Hezbollah-Hamas conflict. Its efforts for a ceasefire have hit the wall. Its credibility as a world organization for peace has come under question when it comes to handling big powers or their allies. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the inability of the UN to take concrete steps was a clear indication of the emasculation of that body of nations.

### WISDOM CORNER

Learning is the beginning of wealth. Learning is the beginning of health. Learning is the beginning of spirituality. Searching and learning is where the miracle process all begins. **JIM ROHN**

If you love your work, you'll be out there every day trying to do it the best you possibly can, and pretty soon everybody around will catch the passion from you - like a fever. **SAM WALTON**

I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature. **JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1895:** French troops occupied Antananarivo, Madagascar, after the refusal of Rainilaiarivony, the prime minister, to submit to French suzerainty.

■ **1938:** Munich Agreement signed. The notorious Munich Agreement, in which Britain's Neville Chamberlain encouraged Britain and France to appease Adolf Hitler's demands in the hope of preventing World War II, was reached on this day in 1938.

■ **1949:** The Berlin airlift officially ended after the Western Allied powers delivered 2,323,738 tons of food, fuel, machinery, and other supplies to West Berlin, which had been cut off from the West during the Soviet blockade of Berlin.

■ **1954:** The USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear-powered vessel, was commissioned by the U.S. Navy.

■ **1965:** In Indonesia a group of army conspirators known as the September 30th Movement began an abortive coup, and by the following morning they had kidnapped and murdered six army generals; the movement claimed that it had seized power to forestall a coup against President Sukarno by a council of generals.

### LOL

#### Far from home

A police car pulls up in front of grandma Bessie's house, and grandpa Morris gets out. The polite policeman explained that this elderly gentleman said that he was lost in the park...and couldn't find his way home. "Oy Morris", said

grandma, "You've been going to that park for over 30 years! So how could you get lost?" Leaning close to grandma, so that the policeman couldn't hear. Morris whispered, "I wasn't lost...I was just too tired to walk home."



### SPECTRUM MONETARY POLICY

## Cautious RBI may not trail US Fed



Shivaji Sarkar

RBI'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE SHOULD NOT BE THE CORPORATES, BUT THE DEPOSITORS WHO ARE FAILING TO REPLENISH DWINDLING BANK COFFERS

The US Federal Reserve cutting key interest rate after four years may not be beneficial to India, which is assessing concomitant risks, with possible loss in dollar value, of unfathomed trends in the global market. With apprehensions of spike in India's domestic inflation rate to at least around 5% by October, the US Fed's 50 bps (0.5%) cut may not force Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to follow suit, a demand that the industry has been sounding for some time.

The RBI remains cautious and is likely to watch global volatility. The booming stocks would not impact the RBI decision making process. A rate cut from RBI is unlikely this year, with a potential announcement expected only in February 2025, according to an SBI Research report. The industry and business pressure forced the Fed to settle for low rates. This signifies a reality that governments across the world are not acting independently. The multi-national businesses have become powerful. It is an indicator that India,

whether the situation deserves or not, may not be able to resist for long. Most observers feel before the presentation of the Union Budget, a rate cut is possible.

An immediate advantage is noticed in the stock market. India and elsewhere rate cut is taken as "positive" and share prices have risen. Bloomberg and other financial institutions have taken it as "good" move though they are unable to explain the rate cut and share price linkage. The stock market acts on emotions and speculation. Despite Indian markets being tizzy, Sensex and Nifty are jumping ahead. The crux is that both indices have a select few scrips. If only a few of the shares do well, the indices shoot up.

India's retail inflation rate easing to 3.65% year-on-year in August 2024, supposedly being a near five-year low, is not that low either. The RBI dilemma is over likely spike in prices to 5% or more by October end. Vegetables, fruits, pulses, edible oil, foodgrain and textile prices are a concern. Of late, cement and steel prices also

have appreciated jacking up real estate costs. In such a situation of uncertainties, it is not easy for the RBI to take a call.

Lower interest rates are not a panacea. It supposedly lowers the borrowing cost but only from a prospective date. If the RBI cuts rates, it makes credit less expensive for consumers and corporations alike. The cheaper debt means companies can spend more to expand, just as consumers might be able to afford bigger homes with lower mortgage rates.

It has its complications. The interplay between interest rates and the business world is unpredictable. Lower rates necessarily do not bolster the economy, and for companies and their investors, lower rates do not always carry unalloyed positive effects. The banking sector takes the worst cuts. Lowering interest rates beyond a point have been found to be counter-productive. The lower rates do not bring down bank transaction or operational costs. The worst was observed during the 2007-08 financial meltdown.

The New York Times observes

that the Fed began lowering rates in September 2007, in the early stages of the financial crisis. Over the next 12 months, the S&P 500 fell more than 20%. But rate cuts in 1995 and 1998 came alongside a strong rally for stocks.

So, either for the US or India, rate cut is a critical decision. India observed that "incentivising" corporate in 2008-09 led to a severe public sector banking crisis. The NPA rose to over ₹50 lakh crore and public banks had to be reorganised through mergers and severe haircut. Since then, the Indian banking system has gone through many crises.

It is prudent for the RBI to go slow. Its primary objective should not be the corporates but the depositors, who are failing to replenish dwindling bank coffers. As of now inflation is the key issue. Raising rates would be more desirable and beneficial for the economy as also the depositors than lowering it in the next six months. The country expects RBI to be on the right track and not be swayed by vested interests. **INFA**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Unruly police

Sir, This refers to "Mend your ways, CM warns police" (Orissa POST, September 29). This sort of warning to the police is absolutely imperative for most of the lower echelons of the police forces are not behaving properly with women. The latter get scared to visit police stations for lodging complaints particularly relating to sexual harassment. This should be done away with immediately. One hopes that the state which attracts hordes of tourists throughout the year does not get disturbed due to a section of erring police personnel. I am confident, when the Chief Minister has himself addressed the problem, the situation is likely to undergo a sea change.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

### Wealth of health

Sir, Numerous studies indicate that a vegetarian diet offers a wealth of health benefits, significantly reducing the risk of heart disease and various cancers. Plant-based foods provide essential nutrients that our bodies require for optimal health. In addition to their health advantages, vegetarian diets are considered more sustainable, as they cause less environmental harm compared to meat-based diets, according to nutritionists. World Vegetarian Day will be celebrated on 1 October, marking the beginning of a month dedicated to raising awareness about vegetarianism. This initiative aims to educate the public about the health benefits of plant-based diets and their positive impacts on animals and the environment. The day serves as an annual celebration to highlight the ethical, environmental, and health benefits of a plant-based lifestyle. As the number of individuals embracing vegetarianism increases worldwide, the significance of this day continues to grow. One of the key purposes of this celebration is to inform people about the positive outcomes of reducing meat consumption. Even if you are not a vegetarian, this day presents a great opportunity to learn about the advantages of a healthier lifestyle. This year's theme for World Vegetarian Day is "Mix It Up!" This theme encourages everyone to incorporate more plant-based dishes into their daily meals. Simple changes, such as substituting tofu for meat, trying a new veggie burger, or adding greens to your meals, can inspire creativity in cooking.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

# Railways gears up for Kumbh Mela

**Ministry plans to run 992 special trains, earmarks ₹933 crore for infrastructure**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 29: The Railway Ministry has been working on making elaborate arrangements for the Kumbh Mela and has plans to run 992 special trains for the mega religious congregation to be held in Prayagraj in January a senior railway official said.

According to officials, besides running special trains, the ministry has earmarked ₹933 crore to create and upgrade various infrastructure and amenities for passengers.

Also doubling of railway tracks at a cost of ₹3,700 crore in the Prayagraj Division and adjoining areas is being done at a fast pace for smooth movement of trains.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and his two deputies



Ravneet Singh Bittu and V Somanna held meetings Saturday to review the arrangements for handling the huge rush of devotees during the event set to begin January 12.

"They also hold regular video conferences with senior railway officials, including general managers, of the zones concerned such as the Northern Railway, North Central Railway and North Eastern Railway to take stock of the preparatory activities," the officer said.

## 7K fishermen insured without certificates, UP min orders probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, Sept 29: Uttar Pradesh Fisheries Minister Sanjay Nishad Sunday said that an officer in Prayagraj insured 7,000 fishermen but failed to provide them the insurance certificate.

An inquiry has been ordered into the matter, he told reporters at a press conference at the Circuit House here.

Insurance applications were received from 7,000 fishermen in this district and they were also insured, he said.

However, the fishermen did not receive their insurance certificates, leaving them unaware of their coverage, Nishad said.

The minister said that an inquiry has been ordered against the officer responsible for this.

The officer in question has been removed from the post and the department will now organise camps and distribute certificates to the insured fishermen, Nishad added.

He did not disclose the name of the officer.

Regarding the irregularities in the lease of ponds for fish farming in Prayagraj, he said that some officials allotted leases (for fishing) and Mukhyamantri Sampada Yojana funds to ineligible individuals.

Investigations have been ordered against these officials as well, he added.

During a department review meeting, Nishad highlighted that people involved in supporting activities of fish farming can benefit from the Kisan Credit Card.

According to the RBI guidelines, the department will verify the applications of people associated with fish farming following which they will get a Kisan Credit Card, he said.

Nishad also said that of the 2,300 applications for the Kisan Credit Card in Prayagraj, only 168 have been issued.

These Jal Sahelis, who have become a remarkable symbol of women's empowerment by constructing hundreds of water bodies, have set an exemplary standard for water conservation despite facing many obstacles. Heartfelt congratulations to these women who have become an inspiration for water conservation, and sincere thanks to the Prime Minister for his acknowledgment!

YOGI ADITYANATH | CM, UP

forts in water conservation across Bundelkhand and play a vital role in raising awareness about the importance of preserving water resources.

CM Yogi expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and congratulated the women who have become a source of inspiration for water conservation.



Students participate in a rally organised by Cardiological Society of India (CSI), Assam, on World Heart Day in Guwahati, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

# Blow to 'Gau Dhvaj Yatra' in NE

After Nagaland & Arunachal, 'Gau Dhvaj Yatra' organiser's flight denied landing in Meghalaya

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shillong, Sept 29: After Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati landed at the Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport in Agartala on Saturday morning and after few hours, it went to Guwahati airport," the official told IANS.

Now, his chartered flight is stationed at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati.

The 'Gau Dhvaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra' is facing stiff opposition from different organisations in several states of the

**Nagaland and Meghalaya are Christian-majority states, and beef is one of the most common and popular meats consumed by people in several northeastern states**

allow his chartered flight to land in Shillong airport at Umroi.

"The chartered flight of Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati landed at the Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport in Agartala on Saturday morning and after few hours, it went to Guwahati airport," the official told IANS.

Now, his chartered flight is stationed at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati.

The 'Gau Dhvaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra' is facing stiff opposition from different organisations in several states of the



northeastern region.

The District Magistrate of the East Khasi Hills district, in which Meghalaya's capital Shillong falls, promulgated prohibitory orders under Section 163 BNSS banning the assembly of five or more people in the district.

The District Magistrate RM Kurhah, in her order Friday, said that it has come to the notice of the administration that some organisations are planning to organise a 'Gau Dhvaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra' in

Shillong, though the organisers did not seek permission for carrying out of the Yatra.

Jagadguru Shankaracharya accompanied by his entourage was supposed to arrive at Shillong airport Friday, but he rescheduled his Shillong tour Saturday.

On Friday, hundreds of protestors from various organisations including the Khasi Students' Union (KSU), gathered outside the Shillong airport to prevent the seer and his entourage from moving out of the airport.

# Shutdown in Manipur districts continue

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, Sept 29: The shutdown that began in Manipur's hill districts including Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts Friday over fears of attacks on Kuki-Zo tribals, will continue Sunday.

On September 25, predicting attacks on Kuki-Zo tribals in Manipur, various tribal organisations, including Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF), asked people not to travel outside Kuki-Zo dominated areas between September 26 and 29.

After an emergency meeting, the ITLF had announced the closure of borders (between the Kuki-Zo community and

## TRIBALS IN FEAR



Meitei inhabited areas) from September 26 to 29, closure of schools, institutions and offices from September 27 to 29 in the areas inhabited by tribals belonging to Kuki-Zo community.

The tribal organisations had

also directed all village volunteers and citizens to be on high alert during these days.

An official said that shops, markets and various commercial establishments remained shut Saturday while vehicles excluding those of security forces

and emergency services remained off the roads.

Though the administration and security forces were alert, no untoward incident was reported on Saturday.

The bandh was called earlier this week by various organisations of Kuki-Zo communities, including the ITLF, Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills and Kuki Students Organisation (KSO), in protest against the Manipur government's Security Advisor Kuldip Singh's claim on September 20 that 900 Kuki militants after being infiltrated from Myanmar might carry out violence in peripheral villages of valley districts.

## CONSERVATION AMID CRISIS

AGENCIES

Jhansi, Sept 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his monthly radio address, 'Mann Ki Baat' Sunday once again highlighted Uttar Pradesh, specifically mentioning the remarkable water conservation efforts in Jhansi district.

The PM praised the women of Jhansi for breathing new life into the Ghurari River and preventing water wastage, showcasing their commitment to addressing the country's water crisis.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath thanked PM Modi for recognising the efforts of the women from Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Jhansi, particularly in the water-scarce Bundelkhand region.

The PM acknowledged the extraordinary work of these SHG women, who as 'Jal Sahelis', led a campaign to revive the dying Ghurari river: He praised their initiative to construct a check dam using sand-filled sacks in order

# PM lauds 'Jal Sahelis' for reviving Ghurari river



to stop rainwater from going to waste and replenish the river.

The initiative successfully alleviated the region's water scarcity problem, bringing joy to the community.

It may be noted that efforts of these Jal Sahelis took place in Simrawari village, Babina development block, Jhansi. Over six days of voluntary labour, they worked tirelessly to construct a dam that revived the Ghurari

River. Their initiative not only revived the river but also sent a powerful message to society.

The water retained in the river now provides essential resources for local people, serving their bathing needs and providing drinking water for animals. The Yogi government has undertaken water conservation efforts across Bundelkhand with unprecedented determination, overcoming numerous challenges.

As a result, most households in Vindhya and Bundelkhand have now received water connections. Under the Har Ghar Nal Se Jal Yojana, the government ensures that tap water is supplied to 95 percent of households.

In recognition of their contributions to water conservation, the 'Jal Sahelis' has been honoured by the state and central governments. These women continue to support government ef-

# national

## of the day quote

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mention of the efforts made by the self-help group women of Jhansi, who became 'Jai Sahelis' to revive the dying Ghurari River, in his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme is a moment of pride for all of Uttar Pradesh**

**YOGI ADITYANATH** | CM, UTTAR PRADESH

**If you have morality, then drive out former BJP Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and his son B Y Vijayendra who is the BJP state president. Expel Nirmala Sitharaman, (leader of opposition in the Karnataka assembly) R Ashoka and BJP MLA Munirathna**

**PRIVANK KHARGE** | KARNATAKA MINISTER

**Dalits should vote unanimously for the BSP, because this is the party which is constantly struggling to make them the ruling class by protecting their interests and welfare and giving them constitutional rights**

**MAYAWATI** | BSP CHIEF



**Now I am compiling the reports of killings and rapes during the regime of the Left Front. Our workers will visit each family affected by political violence and collect information so that we can deliver justice to them. There will be no leniency to the crime and justice must be delivered**

**MANIK SAHA** | CM, TRIPURA

## JAMAICAN PM TO PAY 4-DAY VISIT TO INDIA

Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness will pay a four-day visit to India beginning Monday to solidify bilateral ties in a range of key areas including trade and investment. It will be the first ever bilateral visit of a prime minister of Jamaica to India



# 'Bigger bailout for Pak possible with better ties'

Defence Minister Singh's remarks come at a time when Pakistan is grappling with a severe economic crisis, prompting the government in Islamabad to seek assistance from the IMF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Sept 29:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday said India would have given a larger bailout package to Pakistan than sought by Islamabad from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the neighbouring nation maintained friendly relations with New Delhi.

Addressing an election rally in Gurez Assembly segment of Bandipora district, Singh referred to the prime minister's development package for Jammu and Kashmir announced in 2014-15 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Modi ji in 2014-15 announced a special package for development of Jammu and Kashmir which has now reached ₹90,000 crore. The amount is much bigger than what Pakistan was seeking from the IMF (as bailout package)," the senior BJP leader said.

Singh referred to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's famous statement that "we can change friends but we cannot change the neighbours".



**Kashmir will again become a paradise on earth when Vajpayee's dream of restoring 'Insiyyat, Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat' in the valley is achieved**

**RAJNATH SINGH** | DEFENCE MINISTER

"I said, my Pakistani friends, why have strained relations, we are neighbours. If we had good relations, we would have given more money than the IMF," he added.

Singh said the Centre gives money to Jammu and Kashmir for development while Pakistan has been misusing financial aid for a long time.

"It seeks money from other countries to run a terrorism factory on its soil," he added.

The defence minister said Kashmir will again become a paradise on earth when Vajpayee's dream of restoring "Insiyyat, Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat" in the valley is achieved.

Singh said Pakistan, which has used terrorism as a tool against India, has been isolated at the international forums with some of its trusted allies also stepping back.

"Whenever we have investigated terrorism, we have found Pakistani involvement. Our successive governments have tried to make Pakistan understand that they should stop terror camps but to no avail. Pakistan is frustrated after revocation of Article 370 and is making attempts to revive terror. They do not want democracy to take roots here. (But) India is strong enough that it can take on Pakistan on its soil. If anyone in Pakistan carries out an attack on India, we can crossover and respond," he added.

Singh said Pakistan has been isolated now.

"Even Turkey, which used to support Pakistan, has not made mention of Kashmir at the UNGA," he added.

The BJP leader said since his party's government came to power at the Centre, peace has returned to Jammu and Kashmir.

# Cong demands FM's resignation over FIR

OPPOSITION SLAMS BJP FOR 'UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY' VIA ELECTORAL BONDS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The Congress hit out at the BJP Sunday after a case was lodged in Karnataka against Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others on a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme, demanding her resignation and seeking an objective probe under the supervision of courts.

Addressing a press conference here along with Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh, AICC spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said his party hopes that through the judicial process, those involved in this "corruption" will be summoned, their statements recorded and on that basis, they will be arrested.

"All the agencies, all the official organs know very well how to proceed because they have been proceeding against a large number of political opponents (of the BJP) in the last 11 years. They do not have to be told how to proceed.... We would certainly demand an objective probe under the courts' control but more importantly, ultimately supervised either by the Supreme Court or an SIT of the Supreme Court," Singhvi said.

"The first need of the hour is for the legal process started by this court order to take its course

and to be supervised by courts -- both the high court and ultimately, the Supreme Court -- to prevent any interference or distortion or subordination," he said.

**Four ways were used to extort money through the conspiracy of electoral bonds -- prepaid bribery, post-raid bribery and through shell companies**

**JAIRAM RAMESH** | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

The Opposition party reiterated its demand for a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry through a special investigation team (SIT) into the electoral bonds scheme. Ramesh alleged that four ways were used to extort money through the "conspiracy of electoral bonds -- prepaid bribery, postpaid bribery, post-raid bribery and through shell companies".

He said the finance minister should immediately resign on political, legal and moral grounds as she is "guilty".

Ramesh said the FIR was lodged following court orders and the Congress has nothing to do with it.

He said his party has been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry through an SIT into the electoral bonds scheme and it reiterates that demand.

Singhvi also accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre of "undermining democracy".

"The finance minister cannot do this on her own. We know who is number one and number two (in the government) and this was done on whose directions," he said.

## Prakash Karat to be coordinator of CPI(M)'s Politburo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** Senior CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the party's Politburo and Central Committee as an interim arrangement until the 24th party Congress to be held in April next year, the Left party said Sunday.

The decision comes in the wake of CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's death September 12 at the age of 72.

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), now in session in New Delhi, has decided that Comrade Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee, as an interim arrangement until the 24th party Congress to be held in April 2025 at Madurai," the CPI(M) said in a statement.

"This decision was taken due to the sad and sudden demise of the sitting general secretary of the CPI(M), Comrade Sitaram Yechury," it added.

Karat (76), one of the senior-most leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), was its general secretary from 2005 to 2015. Karat was born February 7, 1948 in Letpadan in present-day Myanmar, where his father, C P Nair, was employed with the Burma Railways and later, at the Burma Oil Pipeline Project.



An artist gives finishing touches to an idol of Goddess Durga ahead of the Navratri festival, at Mayur Vihar in New Delhi, Sunday

## SHORT TAKES

### Flood situation alarming in Bengal

**Kolkata:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday described the flood situation in the northern districts as "alarming" and claimed that the state is deprived of central assistance to deal with the natural calamity. Banerjee, who was on her way to north Bengal to inspect the flood situation there, told reporters that her government is dealing with the deluge on a war footing. "North Bengal is reeling under flood. Districts like Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar have been affected.

### Three killed as bus collides with truck

**Kaimur:** At least three people were killed and four others injured when the bus in which they were travelling hit a truck at Mohania in Bihar's Kaimur district Sunday, police said. The incident took place at around 5 am, they said. Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Mohania, Pradeep Kumar told PTI, "An information was received that a bus has collided with a truck near Barhauni Seva Niketan on the Mohania road. A police team immediately reached the spot. The bus was going from Gaya to Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh".

### Man killed as welding machine explodes

**New Delhi:** A 36-year-old man died and three others sustained severe burn injuries after a welding machine exploded in Bharthal village of Delhi's Dwarka Sunday morning, officials said. The deceased has been identified as Maya Ram, a resident of Bijwasan area. The injured have been identified as Rakesh (32), Faiyaz (22), Sameer (23), they said, adding the injured are under treatment at the Safdarjung Hospital.

### 3 girls drown in Jharkhand river

**Ramgarh (Jharkhand):** Three girls, aged between 8 and 15, drowned in a river Sunday while taking bath in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district, police said. The incident occurred in the Damodar river in the Ramgarh town police station area. All three girls, who belonged to Kahubera village, went to bathe in the river. "One of them went deep into the river and drowned. Two others attempted to rescue her and subsequently, they also drowned," Sub-Divisional Police Officer Parmeshwar Prasad said.

## VASANT KUNJ DEATHS DELHI POLICE TO STUDY BURARI SUICIDE CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The Delhi Police will study the 2018 Burari suicide case to see if there was any "occult practice" angle in the deaths of a man and his four daughters at a village in south-west Delhi's Vasant Kunj area, officials said Sunday.

They said that the case had raised concerns as the team found a red thread tied on the waist, hand and neck of the four girls. A box of sweets was also recovered from the spot.

According to the police, Heera Lal Sharma, who worked as a carpenter at the Indian Spinal Injury Centre in Vasant Kunj for the last 28 years, and his four daughters -- Neetu (26), Nikki (24), Neeru (23) and Nidhi (20) -- took their lives under a suicide pact.

Police said that Sharma was struggling with emotional and financial stress after his wife died last year due to cancer.

Police said that they would study the 2018 Burari suicide case. "In 2018, 11 family members, blindfolded and mouth-



taped were found dead at their residence in Burari area of north Delhi. In this recent case, we found five dead bodies -- a man and his four daughters, two of them differently-abled -- in their rented accommodation. Forensic teams during the initial check found a red thread (kalawa/mauli) tied on

the waist, hand and neck. Our teams will check the records of the Burari case to connect the dots of this suicide.

"So far we got to know that Sharma had not spoken to anyone in the last nine months. He and his daughters were rarely seen outside. After his wife's death, the family had disconnected from everyone," a senior police officer said.

"The team recovered a box of sweets from the house and will also reach the sweets shop to check CCTV footage to know

about his route, from where he purchased the celphos (poison) and why he took this extreme step," the officer said.

Sharma lived at a residential complex on the third floor of a four-storey building in Rangpuri village. Each floor houses eight flats and a majority of them were on rent, officer said.

The bodies, found on Friday afternoon, did not have any injury marks. Police found three packets of Celphos poison, five glasses and a spoon containing a suspicious liquid from the house.

# Chandrayaan-3 landed on possibly oldest craters of Moon: Researchers

**THE CRATER WAS FORMED DURING THE NECTARIAN PERIOD, WHICH DATES BACK TO 3.85 BILLION YEARS AND IS ONE OF THE OLDEST TIME PERIODS IN THE MOON'S HISTORY**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** India's lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 possibly landed in one of the oldest craters of the Moon, according to scientists who analysed images from the mission and satellites.

The crater was formed during the Nectarian period, which dates back to 3.85 billion years and is one of the oldest time periods in the Moon's history, the team, including researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory and Indian Space Research

Organisation (ISRO), Ahmedabad, said.

S Vijayan, an associate professor in the Planetary Sciences Division, Physical Research Laboratory, told PTI, "Chandrayaan-3 landing site is a unique geological setting where no other missions have gone. The images from the mission's Pragyan rover are the first on-site ones of the Moon at this latitude. They reveal how the Moon evolved over time".

A crater is formed when an asteroid crashes into the surface of a larger body like a planet or a Moon, and the displaced material is called 'ejecta'.

Revealing how the Moon evolved over time, the images showed that one half of the crater was buried under material thrown out or 'ejecta' from the South Pole-Aitken basin, the



largest and most known impact basin on the Moon, the researchers said.

An impact basin is a large, complex crater with diameter over 300 km, while a crater measures under 300 km in diameter. Forming of ejecta is "similar to when you throw a ball on sand

**Chandrayaan-3 landing site is a unique geological setting where no other missions have gone. The images from the mission's Pragyan rover are the first on-site ones of the Moon at this latitude. They reveal how the Moon evolved over time**

**S VIJAYAN** | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE PLANETARY SCIENCES DIVISION

depths will be excavated," Vijayan said.

In this case, Chandrayaan-3 was found to have landed within a crater, about 160 km in diameter and detected in the images as a nearly semi-circular structure.

The researchers said this likely indicated one half of the crater; the other half of which was 'degraded' by getting buried under ejecta from the South Pole-Aitken basin.

"Further, near the landing site, ejecta or material 'thrown out' from another impact crater further away was observed, im-

ages captured by the Pragyan rover revealed that material of the same nature was present at the landing site," Vijayan said.

The Pragyan rover was deployed on the lunar surface by the Vikram lander, on-board the Chandrayaan-3.

"Together, the images from the mission and satellites showed that the Chandrayaan-3 landing site consists of material deposited from different regions of the Moon," he said.

The mission, launched by ISRO, Bengaluru, made a soft landing near the Moon's south pole August 23, 2023. The landing site was christened the Shiv Shakti Point August 26, 2023.

For validating their results, the researchers also observed other craters formed during the Nectarian period and found that most of them were severely degraded and modified, a finding that "substantiates our discovery of a buried crater".

The finding is also an indication of the weathering effects due to exposure to space, or 'space weathering,' they said.

**The mission, launched by ISRO, Bangalore, made a soft landing near the Moon's South Pole August 23, 2023**





A year ago, we launched the 'Indira Fellowship' with a mission to amplify women's voices in politics. Today, this initiative has grown into a powerful movement for women's leadership

RAHUL GANDHI | LEADER OF OPPOSITION

JUSTICE MANMOHAN TAKES OATH AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF DELHI HIGH COURT

Justice Manmohan Sunday took oath as the 32nd chief justice of the Delhi High Court. Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena administered the oath to the 61-year-old judge at a ceremony at the Raj Niwas, the LG's secretariat



of the day quote

Dealers, 'dalals' (middlemen) and 'damads' (son-in-law) used to rule during Hooda government's time and corruption was rampant, Shah alleged. "Several acres of land in Gurugram was destroyed to make 'Delhi's damad' wealthy

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Sonia Gandhi too shed tears for the terrorists killed in Batla House. All leaders of the INDIA alliance do this for votebank politics. For them, the country doesn't come first. She is doing this for votebank

RP SINGH | BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

In Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, we will have a resounding victory and the next two states that follow -- Maharashtra and Jharkhand -- the INDIA bloc is very strongly placed

SACHIN PILOT | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

XPOST OF THE DAY

Massive protests erupt in Jammu & Kashmir after (Hassan Nasrallah's assassination. Protestors have been heard raising anti-US and anti-Israel slogans amid the killing of Hezbollah's leader in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut. Senior politicians suspended their ongoing campaigns for the assembly elections. Local authorities beefed up securities across J&K to avoid any untoward incidents.

@SHUBHAMVIRAL

SHORT TAKES

17 fishermen held by Sri Lankan Navy

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Sunday apprised External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar that as many as 17 fishermen were arrested and their two boats were also seized by the Sri Lankan Navy and demanded swift measures to secure the release of fishers and their boats. The fishermen, who ventured for fishing from the Rameswaram fish landing centre September 28 were apprehended near Neduntheevu Sunday by Lankan authorities, Stalin said, writing to Jaishankar. The detention of fishermen and the confiscation of their boats cause serious distress and uncertainty among the coastal communities. Stalin requested the Central government to initiate strong and effective diplomatic measures to prevent the arrest of Indian fishermen and also to secure the immediate release of all the arrested fishermen and their fishing boats from Sri Lanka.

Balaji, 3 others take oath in TN

Chennai: High-profile DMK leader V Senthil Balaji, who was days ago granted bail by the Supreme Court in a money laundering case, was sworn in as minister by Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi here Sunday. Three other DMK legislators, R Rajendran (Salem-North), Govi Chezhiaan (Thiruvaidamarudur) and SM Nasar (Avadi) also took oath of office and secrecy administered by Governor Ravi in a simple ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan. They were sworn-in in the presence of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, his son Udhayanidhi, who had already been designated as Deputy Chief Minister.

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Govt sends names of 10 geological sites to ASI

There are about 100 geo-heritage sites, out of which 32 have been recognised as National Geological Monuments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 29: Names of 10 geological sites, sent to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for inclusion in the list of world heritage sites, are under scrutiny, the government has said.

There are about 100 geo-heritage sites, out of which 32 have been recognised as National Geological Monuments. Unlike archaeological sites, there is no legislation to protect geo-heritage sites. But the Geo Heritage Sites and Geo-relics Bill, 2022, which aims to protect India's geological heritage, is under process. Mines Secretary VL Kantha Rao said. Speaking at an event here, Rao

said that there are about 1,200 world heritage sites in the world, out of which 42 are in India and none of these are geological sites. "We need to work together," the secretary said and stressed on the recognition of at least two geoparks in coming years in India, Geological Survey of India (GSI) said in a statement.

India, Rao said, has excellent geo-heritage sites like Lunar crater in Maharashtra, Bhedaghat in Madhya Pradesh, Gandikota gorge in Andhra Pradesh. But these are known mostly as tourism sites and people are not aware of their geological importance. There is another global designation known as International Union of Geological Sciences

(IUGS) sites and some of the sites have been recognised in Sikkim, he said. All these recognitions should



India has excellent geo-heritage sites like Lunar crater in Maharashtra, Bhedaghat in Madhya Pradesh, Gandikota gorge in Andhra Pradesh

There is another global designation known as International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) sites and some of the sites have been recognised in Sikkim

lead to benefits for common people and he requested UNESCO to provide support in getting recognition to some of the Indian sites

as UNESCO Global Geopark. The UNESCO Global Geopark is the most recent UNESCO site designation that recognises sites that showcase not only the earth's geological past, but celebrate cultural connections to the land, becoming hubs of pride and economic growth for the people who call them home.

Adopted under the International Geopark Programme (IGGP) in 2015, UNESCO Global Geoparks recognise and preserve geological heritage of international significance, promoting sustainable development and enhancing local community engagement through geotourism and education. At present, there are 213 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 48 countries.

CM Mann chairs key meeting on paddy procurement after hospital release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Sept 29: Hours after he was discharged from the hospital, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Sunday reviewed the paddy procurement arrangement and said his government is fully ready for the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) beginning October 1.

Mann, who was diagnosed with bacterial infection leptospirosis, was discharged from Mohali's Fortis hospital earlier in the day, after the doctors attending to him said all his parameters and pathological tests were normal.

The 50-year-old AAP leader was admitted to the Fortis Hospital late Wednesday night for a routine check-up.

Chairing a meeting to review the paddy procurement arrangements, the chief minister said the state government is expected to procure 185 lakh metric tonne (LMT) of paddy from mandis by the farmers during the procurement season.

He said 32 lakh hectares of area was currently under paddy cultivation in the state, adding Punjab is targeting to procure 185 LMT of paddy.

Mann said the cash credit limit of ₹41,378 crore for the KMS 2024-25 has already been released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The minimum support price (MSP) for grade 'A' paddy is ₹2,320 per quintal.

The state procurement agencies - Pungrain, Markfed and Punsup - along with the Centre's Food Corporation of India will procure paddy at MSP.

Mann said that entire preparations have been made for smooth and hassle free procurement of paddy, adding the state government is committed to smooth and hassle free procurement and lifting of paddy.

The state government has already made elaborate arrangements for purchasing the harvest of the farmers as soon as it arrives in mandis, he said.

Kharge vows not to die till Modi 'removed'

KHARGE'S REMARKS CAME AMID CRITICISM OF THE BJP-LED GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE UNION TERRITORY, PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE DELAY OF ELECTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jasrota (Jammu), Sept 29: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge vowed to fight for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that he would remain active in politics until Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ousted from power.

Kharge's remarks came amid criticism of the BJP-led government at the Centre for its handling of the Union territory, particularly regarding the delay of elections. "We will fight to restore statehood. We are not going to leave it. I am 83 years old, I am not going to die so early. I will stay alive until PM Modi is removed from power. I will listen to you. I will fight for you," Kharge told a public rally here after he was

provided medical assistance at the rally venue.

The Congress chief earlier complained of dizziness while speaking and had to be provided medical help.

"He was addressing a public rally in Jasrota when he felt uneasy and dizzy. His colleagues helped him into a chair," Congress general secretary Gulam Ahmed Mir told PTI.

Kharge had flown to Jasrota to address a rally to garner support for his party candidates in the Assembly polls.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress vice president Ravindra Sharma said Kharge felt dizzy and was taken to a room, where doctors



were called for a check-up. They will advise whether he can attend the second rally at Udhampur or not, he said.

Later, Kharge's second rally at Udhampur was cancelled. He will return to Delhi.

At the Jasrota rally, Kharge continued, "I wanted to talk. But due to dizziness, I have sat down. Please pardon me. They (BJP) are trying to terrorise us."

"They talk about Pakistan. We do not fear. Who has freed Bangladesh...Indira Gandhi did it. Jai jawan Jai Kisan slogan was given by us. Pakistan was defeated by us. Lal Bahadur Shastri (govt) defeated it. This is

Terrorist killed in J&K's Kathua

A fresh encounter broke out in the Thanamandi area of Rajouri district Sunday evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Sept 29: A terrorist, suspected to be affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, was killed in a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said Sunday.

Also, a fresh encounter broke out in the Thanamandi area of Rajouri district Sunday evening when security forces launched a cordon and search operation after getting information about the presence of two terrorists, the officials said.

"Based on specific intelligence about the presence of terrorists, a joint search operation was launched by security forces at Manial Gali in Thanamandi.



Contact has been established and few rounds have been fired from both sides," a police official said.

Earlier in the day, a live hand grenade was found on the banks of a stream in the area and the device was later destroyed by experts in a controlled explosion.

In Kathua district, the body of an unidentified terrorist was

recovered this afternoon from the scene of the Saturday evening encounter at Kog-Mandli in Billawar tehsil, taking the death toll in the two-day operation to two, the officials said.

They said a grenade launcher, some grenades and other materials were recovered from the possession of the slain terrorist, while a massive search operation is underway to neutralise other foreign terrorists.

Head Constable Bashir Ahmad laid down his life and two officers - Deputy Superintendent of Police (Operations) and Sukhbir Singh and Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Niaz Ahmad - were injured when terrorists attacked a joint security search party Saturday evening.



People take part in a marathon, themed on 'Run For Zero Hunger', in Udaipur

PTI PHOTO

AYUSHMAN BHARAT HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME

States, UTs asked to facilitate enrolment of eligible senior citizens

The benefits of AB-PMJAY would now be available to all senior citizens of the age 70 years and above irrespective of their socio-economic status

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 29: The Union Health Ministry has asked all states and Union Territories to facilitate the enrolment of all eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above to enable them to avail the benefits of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme.

In a letter sent to the states and UTs, Union Health Ministry

Additional Secretary LS Changsan said that a separate module has been created in mobile phone application (Ayushman App) and in web portal (beneficiary.nha.gov.in) for enrolment of those senior citizens who would like to avail the benefits under the scheme.

"Desirous senior citizens would have to apply on this portal or app. A distinct Ayushman card will be issued to all eligible senior citizens with the age 70 years and above for both existing and new families," she said in a recent letter.

The registration for all eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above will be application-based only and that enrolment will be a continuous process, allowing registration throughout the year.

"The scheme is to be rolled out shortly," Changsan said.

The benefits of AB-PMJAY



A shared cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year will be available for senior citizens in families not currently covered under AB PM-JAY. This cover will be exclusive to senior citizens aged 70 years and above

would now be available to all senior citizens of the age 70 years and above irrespective of their socio-economic status, Changsan said.

These benefits will be available to the senior citizens of 70 years and above in families already

covered under AB PM-JAY as well as in families which are not covered under the scheme.

The only eligibility criteria for availing benefits under the scheme would be attainment of age of 70 years or above by the individual. This would be de-

termined on the basis of the age recorded in Aadhaar. As per prevailing practice, Aadhaar would be the only document required for enrolment. Aadhaar-based e-KYC will be mandatory for enrolment and issuance of Ayushman cards

Further if senior citizens (of the age 70 years and above) utilize full or part of the original family wallet of ₹5 lakh, other members of the family will be provided a top-up cover up to ₹5 lakh

for eligible senior citizens of both existing and new families, she stated.

The beneficiaries with other central and state government health insurance schemes will be given a one-time option to choose between their current scheme or the AB PMJAY scheme to avoid duplication.

Senior citizens of the age 70 years and above holding active private health insurance policies or senior citizens of the age 70 years and above who are beneficiaries of the Employees' State Insurance scheme would also be eligible to avail benefits under the extended scheme, the additional secretary informed.

The letter emphasized that the implementation of the scheme would require the states and Union Territories to facilitate the enrolment of all eligible senior citizens of the age 70 years and above.

# international

## of the day quote

When there is something disproportionate, there is a dominating tendency that goes beyond morality. A country that does these things, and I'm talking about any country, in a superlative way, these are immoral actions

POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Let me make India's position perfectly clear: Pakistan's cross-border terrorism policy will never succeed, and it can have no expectation of impunity. On the contrary, actions will certainly have consequences

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

Are the United States and the West really able to handle the consequences as they recklessly play with fire against Russia, which is a nuclear superpower

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

## SHORT TAKES

### US airstrikes kill 37 militants in Syria

**Beirut:** In Syria, 37 militants affiliated to the extremist Islamic State group and an al-Qaeda-linked group were killed in two strikes, the United States military said Sunday. Two of the dead were senior militants, it said. US Central Command said it struck northwestern Syria Tuesday, targeting a senior militant from the al-Qaeda-linked Hurras al-Deen group and eight others. They say he was responsible for overseeing military operations. They also announced a strike from earlier this month September 16, where they conducted a "large-scale airstrike" on an IS training camp in a remote undisclosed location in central Syria.

### Dozens missing after migrant boat sinks

**El Hierro:** Hopes of finding any of the 48 migrants missing since their boat sank near the Spanish island of El Hierro are diminishing, authorities said Sunday, in what threatens to be the deadliest such incident in 30 years of crossings from Africa to the Canary Islands. Nine people, one of them a child, had earlier been confirmed as dead after the boat sank in the early hours of Saturday morning, emergency and rescue services said. Rescuers were able to pick up 27 of 84 migrants who were trying to reach Spanish shores Saturday. Three patrol boats and three helicopters were taking part in a renewed search for the others Sunday, a Spanish coastguard spokesman said.

### Militants kill 7 in Balochistan

**Islamabad:** At least seven labourers from Punjab province were killed by separatist militants in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, police said Sunday. The labourers from Multan were shot dead late Saturday night when they were asleep in an under-construction house in the Khuda-e-Abadan area of Panjur town, Balochistan Inspector General of Police Moazzam Jah Ansari said. Ansari said the labourers were in deep sleep when the armed terrorists entered the under-construction house and opened indiscriminate fire with automatic weapons. The official said one of the labourers luckily escaped with an injury while another was not present at the time of the shooting.



Joe Biden became mentally impaired. Kamala was born that way. She was born that way. And if you think about it, only a mentally disabled person could have allowed this (invasion of violent criminals) to happen to our country  
DONALD TRUMP | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

**FIRST SETBACK FOR STARMER**  
British Prime Minister Keir Starmer suffers his first setback after one of his members of Parliament resigned from the Labour Party



# Fresh blow for Hezbollah

Israel says it has killed one more high-ranking Hezbollah official in airstrike

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Jerusalem, Sept 29:** The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place.

If confirmed, he would be the seventh senior Hezbollah leader slain in Israeli strikes in a little over a week, including founding members who had evaded death or detention for decades. The Israeli military said it carried out another targeted strike on Beirut later Sunday, with details to follow.

Hezbollah meanwhile confirmed that one of the seven, Ali Karaki, died in Friday's strike that killed Nasrallah. The Israeli military had earlier said that Karaki was killed in the airstrike, which targeted an underground compound in Beirut where Nasrallah and other senior Hezbollah figures were meeting.

Hezbollah has also been targeted by a sophisticated attack on its pagers and walkie-talkies that was widely blamed on Israel. A wave of Israeli airstrikes across large parts of



**Israel** keeps up strikes after killing Hezbollah's Nasrallah  
**Hezbollah** has announced it will keep firing  
**Families** camp out in Beirut streets after fleeing airstrikes

Lebanon has killed at least 1,030 people, including 156 women and 87 children, in less than two weeks, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes in Lebanon by the latest strikes. The government estimates that around 250,000 are in shelters, with three to four times as many staying with friends or relatives, or camping out on the streets, Environment Minister Nasser Yassin told The Associated Press.

Hezbollah has continued to fire rockets and missiles into northern Israel, but most have

been intercepted or fallen in open areas. No Israelis have been killed since the latest wave

## Israeli airstrikes kill 11 in Gaza

**Cairo:** Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip have killed at least 11 Palestinians, health officials in the enclave said Sunday, as Israeli planes bombed several northern, central and southern areas. A school sheltering displaced Palestinians in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip was among buildings hit, killing four people and wounding several others, Gaza medics said. The Israeli military said it struck Hamas militants operating from a command centre embedded in a compound that had previously served as Um Al-Fahm School. It accused Hamas of exploiting civilian facilities and its population for military purposes, which Hamas denies. In another strike, three people were killed in a house in Gaza City, medics said. Four others were killed in three separate airstrikes in Nuseirat and Khan Younis in central and southern parts of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said forces continue the fight in a "multi-front war" and are operating in Gaza to bring Israeli and foreign hostages home and to "dismantle" Hamas.

## Far right wins Austria election

Herbert Kickl, leader of Freedom Party of Austria, wins the general election for the first time

REUTERS

**Vienna, Sept 29:** Austrian voters handed a first ever general election victory to the far-right Freedom Party Sunday, vote projections showed, illustrating rising support for hard-right parties in Europe fueled by concern over immigration levels.

The Eurosceptic, Russia-friendly FPO held a slim lead in opinion polls for months over Chancellor Karl Nehammer's ruling conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in a campaign dominated by immigration and worries about the economy. Led by the 55-year-old Herbert Kickl, the FPO was projected to secure 29.1% of the vote, ahead of the ÖVP on 26.2%, and the centre-left Social Democrats on 20.4%, a projection by pollster Foresight for broadcaster ORF showed after polls closed.

A separate projection by pollster Arge Wahlen also had the FPO coming first, winning by a bigger margin than final polling had indicated, though it will need to cobble together a governing coalition if the country's President asks it to.



"What's at stake is whether the FPO will appoint the chancellor or not," Kathrin Stainer-Haemmerle, a political science professor at the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. "Should that happen, then I have to say the role of Austria in the European Union would be significantly different. Kickl has often said that (Hungarian PM) Viktor Orban is a role model for him and he will stand by him."

Kickl, who this year forged an alliance with Orban, opposes providing aid to Ukraine and wants sanctions against Russia withdrawn, arguing they are hurting Austria more than Moscow. FPO staff and activists at a party event in Vienna cheered in jubilation when the election projections were announced.

Kickl's victory may prove pyrrhic, as he is a polarising figure under whom other party leaders have refused to serve.

Stressing his party had won, Kickl said he was ready to talk with all parties over forming a coalition.

# RUSSIA DOWNS OVER 100 UKRAINE DRONES

Russia hits the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with multiple guided bombs Sunday, wounding at least 16 people

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Kyiv, Sept 29:** More than 100 Ukrainian drones were shot down over Russia Sunday, officials said, sparking a wildfire and setting an apartment block alight in one of the largest barrages seen over Russian skies since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia's Ministry of Defence reported that it had shot down 125 drones overnight across seven regions. The southwestern region of Volgograd came under particularly heavy fire, with 67 Ukrainian drones reportedly downed by Russian air defences.

Seventeen drones were also seen over Russia's Voronezh region, where falling debris damaged an apartment block and a private home, said Governor Aleksandr Gusev. Images on social media showed flames rising from the windows of the top floor of a high-rise building. No casualties were reported.



A further 18 drones were reported over Russia's Rostov region, where falling debris sparked a wildfire, said Governor Vasily Golubev. He said that the fire did not pose a threat to populated areas, but that emergency services were fighting to extinguish the blaze, which had engulfed 20 hectares of forest.

Russian ground assault warnings Elsewhere, 16 civilians were injured in an overnight barrage on the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia after Ukrainian military leaders warned that Moscow could be preparing for a new military offensive in the country's south.

The city was targeted by Russian guided bombs in 10 separate attacks that damaged a high-rise building and several res-

## IMF DEAL

# Pak cuts 150k jobs, dissolves 6 mins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, Sept 29:** In an effort to minimise administrative expenditures, cash-strapped Pakistan Sunday announced to abolish about 150,000 government posts, close six ministries, and merge two others, as part of reforms agreed upon with the IMF under \$7 billion loan deal.

The International Monetary Fund September 26 finally gave a nod to the assistance package and also released over \$1 billion as the first tranche after Pakistan committed to cut expenditures, increase tax-to-GDP ratio, tax non-traditional sectors like agriculture and real estate, limit subsidies and transfer some fiscal responsibilities to provinces.

Addressing the media on his return from the US, Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb said that a programme had been finalised with the IMF, which would be the last programme for Pakistan.

"We need to implement our policies to prove that it will be the last programme," he said, and emphasised that in order to join the G20, the economy must be formalised.

The minister said right-sizing within ministries was going on and the decision to close six ministries is set to be implemented, while two ministries will be merged. "Additionally, 150,000 posts across various ministries will be eliminated,"



Aurangzeb said. He dwelt at length on increasing tax revenues, noting that there were approximately 300,000 new taxpayers last year, and so far this year, 732,000 new taxpayers have registered, increasing the total number of taxpayers in the country from 1.6 million to 3.2 million.

Aurangzeb also said that the non-filers category will be abolished and those not paying taxes will no longer be able to purchase property or vehicles.

The minister claimed that the economy was moving in the right direction and the country's foreign exchange reserves had increased, reaching their highest level. He highlighted significant growth in both national exports and IT exports, and stated that investor confidence regarding the strength of the economy is a major success.

Aurangzeb stated that the policy rate has been reduced by 4.5 per cent by the government after coming to power, and expressed optimism that the exchange rate and policy rate will remain as expected.

## Indian-origin US health adviser faces criticism

AGENCIES

**Washington, Sept 29:** Indian-origin doctor and former Covid-19 czar of New York City, Jay Varma is facing severe criticism for lying under oath by testifying that vaccination is the sole means of stopping the spread of coronavirus.

This comes after hidden-camera footage surfaced, revealing Varma, the former Covid czar of New York City, boasting about attending drug-fuelled sex parties during the pandemic.

"It doesn't make any difference at all. Everybody's been exposed to the virus. Whether you're exposed to the virus because it's breathed on you or because you got injected into you. It's the same immune response," he said, as per the NY Post.

However, during multiple lawsuits against Covid mandates, Varma provided contradictory testimony, in which he said, "The Covid-19 vaccine has been shown to offer those persons with a prior Covid-19 infection greater protection against reinfection."

Critics have since accused him of providing false testimony, leading to a growing call for legal action.

# Spotlight on Indian visas in race to replace Sunak as Oppn leader

## FORMER IMMIGRATION MINISTER ROBERT JENRICK SINGLES OUT INDIA AS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES THAT SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO TOUGH VISA RESTRICTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Sept 29:** The two front-runners in the race to replace Rishi Sunak as Conservative Party leader and take his place in the House of Commons as Leader of the Opposition have thrown the spotlight on cutting immigration into the UK, with visas for Indians being singled out in heated debates.

Against the backdrop of the launch of the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham Sunday, former immigration minister Robert Jenrick singled out India as one of the countries that should be subjected to tough visa restrictions across all categories unless it takes back its nationals who enter

Britain illegally. His closest contender, shadow housing secretary Kemi Badenoch, has also zeroed in on the same issue and condemned new migrants bringing their disputes from India to cause unrest on the streets of the country.

"It is quite clear that there are many people who have recently come to this country who have brought views from their countries of origin that have no place here," Badenoch told the BBC.

"I saw as equalities minister people bringing cultural disputes from India to the streets of Leicester. We need to make sure that when people come to this country, they leave their



The election follows the resignation of Sunak as Tory leader in the wake of the party's bruising general election defeat in July under his leadership

previous differences behind. This is not a controversial thing to say," she said.

Nigerian-heritage Badenoch, considered among the favourites to win the ongoing Tory lead-

It is quite clear that there are many people who have recently come to this country who have brought views from their countries of origin that have no place here

KEMI BADENOCH | CANDIDATE FOR CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER

Meanwhile, her former ministerial colleague Robert Jenrick who has notched up an early lead in the contest told "The Daily Telegraph" earlier this week that while India benefited from 250,000 visas in the past year, there were as many as 100,000 Indian nationals estimated to be illegally residing in the UK.

He lamented that deportations or removals to India remain stuck in the hundreds despite an India-UK Migration and Mobility Partnership which is designed to cover such returns of illegal migrants.

"The government must stop other countries exploiting our generosity by imposing severe visa restrictions and restricting foreign aid to countries that do not take back their nationals here illegally," said Jenrick.

Over the four-day Tory conference starting Sunday, Jenrick and Badenoch will go head-to-head with two other party colleagues, former Cabinet ministers James Cleverly and Tom Tugendhat, as they make their leadership pitches before MPs vote in the next round. This time the field will be whittled down to the final two candidates who will then fight it out for the online ballot of the wider Conservative Party membership, many of whom will be making up their minds during the party conference. The new Conservative Party chief and Opposition Leader is then scheduled to be declared November 2 after the voting closes.



It is not going well at the lower level. I think the desperate need is for jobs. And you can see this, forget the official statistics. You can see it in the number of applications for government jobs, which are overwhelming

**RAGHURAM RAJAN** | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR

## COKING COAL IMPORTS

An Indian delegation, including senior government officials, will leave for Mongolia next month to discuss importing coking coal from the landlocked nation. The move aims at diversifying raw materials sources, and will not only increase the availability of the key steel making material but also help in cost optimisation of producing the commodity.



## of the day quote

Obviously, nobody wants to put everything in a risky asset or a speculative asset...banking products will always be part of the basket. So, we are trying to bring products which will appeal to them

**CS SETTY** | SBI CHAIRMAN

India is a market that is going to grow and that makes sense for us to continue sourcing more from India

**MAHENDRA NAIR** | GROUP VICE PRESIDENT, GE AEROSPACE

We are the fastest growing professional services firm of the country. We want Deloitte India revenues to be ₹20,000 crore by 2027 and USD 5 billion by 2030

**ROMAL SHETTY** | DELLOITTE SOUTH ASIA CEO

# Govt mulls regulatory mechanism for FDI

**INDIA IS A MAJOR DESTINATION FOR FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS GIVEN ITS 1.4 BILLION MARKET, STABLE POLICIES, DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND, GOOD INVESTMENT RETURNS AND SKILLED WORKFORCE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The government is considering setting up a foreign investment regulatory mechanism for post-investment review and monitoring in the country, according to sources.

At present, the consideration is at the discussion level only, they added.

"It has been observed that all countries do oversight on the FDI (foreign direct investment), which is coming into their country. People suggest that in India also, there should be an oversight mechanism. It's a kind of oversight on money, which is coming up in the country as FDI," one of the sources said.

It can help ascertain that the FDI coming into the country is beneficial to the economy and originates from legitimate sources.

India is a major destination for foreign direct investments given its 1.4 billion market, stable policies, demographic dividend, good investment returns and skilled workforce.

The government has taken a series of measures to attract overseas investments like promoting ease of doing business through simplifying procedures and significantly reducing compliance burden for the industry.



The government has also eased FDI norms in several sectors, such as space, e-commerce, pharma, civil aviation, contract manufacturing, digital media, coal mining, and defence, besides rolling out the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for 14 sectors like electronics and white goods.

The official added that the measures to improve ease of doing business, zero tolerance for corruption and the focused effort on emerging sectors like electronics have helped promote 'Make In India' and boost domestic and foreign investments in the country.

The 'Make in India' initiative was launched September 25,

2014, to facilitate investment, foster innovation, build world-class infrastructure, and make the country a hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation.

Over the last 10 financial years, FDI inflow has increased by 119 per cent, reaching USD 667 billion compared to USD 304 billion in the previous 10 years (2005-14), with over 90 per cent of total FDI received through the automatic route.

Foreign direct investment in India jumped 47.8 per cent to USD 16.17 billion in April-June this fiscal on healthy inflows in services, computer, telecom and pharma sectors, according to government data.

The government is also de-

veloping industrial townships to boost domestic manufacturing and attract foreign investors by providing world-class infrastructure.

India receives maximum investments from countries like Mauritius, Singapore, the US, the Netherlands, the UAE, the Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Japan, the UK, and Germany.

Sectors, which attract healthy overseas inflows, include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunication, pharma and chemicals.

On a question of whether India needs a dedicated law to deal with national security risks from FDI, Saurav Kumar, Partner, IndusLaw, said that a dedicated

law to deal with national security risks in foreign investment may strengthen India's position with respect to international law by providing a clearly defined legal basis for rejecting investments on national security grounds.

"This would not only reduce the risk of international challenges but also showcase that India's actions are transparent, predictable, and aligned with global best practices," Kumar said.

Rudra Kumar Pandey, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co said it is important that a specific domestic law is introduced which provides clear guidelines on parameters for processing the foreign investment application, aspects relating to a national security risk, the threshold for determining beneficial owner, the appointment of a nodal officer to interact with the applicant, providing of regular update, specific grounds of rejection and other relevant provisions to bring out the transparency in the approval procedure.

"The objective for having specific domestic law should be to bring certainty in the processing of the foreign investment application and give the investor confidence to come forward with their application," Pandey said.

## Mcap of most valued firms surges ₹1.21L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged ₹1,21,270.83 crore last week, with Reliance Industries becoming the biggest gainer, in line with an outstanding rally in benchmark equity indices.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,027.54 points or 1.21 per cent. The BSE Sensex hit its record high of 85,978.25 Friday.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped ₹53,652.92 crore to ₹20,65,197.60 crore.

State Bank of India added ₹18,518.57 crore taking its valuation to ₹7,16,333.98 crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation soared ₹13,094.52 crore to ₹9,87,904.63 crore and that of ITC grew by ₹9,927.3 crore to ₹6,53,834.72 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) surged ₹8,592.96 crore to ₹15,59,052 crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation climbed ₹8,581.64 crore to ₹13,37,186.93 crore and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) zoomed ₹8,443.87 crore to ₹6,47,616.51 crore.

The mcap of Infosys went up by ₹459.05 crore to ₹7,91,897.44 crore. However, the market valuation of ICICI Bank tumbled ₹23,706.16 crore to ₹9,20,520.72 crore.

The mcap of Hindustan Unilever declined by ₹3,195.44 crore to ₹6,96,888.77 crore.

## SHORT TAKES

### Reliance Infra wins arbitration case

**New Delhi:** The Calcutta High Court has upheld a ₹780 crore arbitration award in favour of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd in a dispute with West Bengal-based Damodar Valley Corporation, the Anil Ambani group firm said in a stock exchange filing. More than a decade back, Reliance Infrastructure had won a contract to set up a 1,200 MW thermal power plant in Purulia in West Bengal for ₹3,750 crore. The project was delayed due to disputes and other reasons, leading to DVC seeking damages from Reliance Infrastructure. Reliance Infrastructure, however, challenged this, and an arbitration tribunal in 2019 ruled in favour of the company and directed DVC to pay ₹896 crore to the company. DVC challenged the order of the arbitral tribunal in the Calcutta High Court, which was dismissed by the court.

### NLC India's critical mineral mining

**New Delhi:** State-owned NLC India has said it is in the process of participating in the upcoming auctions of critical mineral resources and aims to achieve the annual capacity of mining one million tonnes of such materials by 2029-30. NLC India's core business include mining of coal and lignite as well as power generation. Having critical mineral capacity assumes significance amid increasing demand of these resources for a wide range of activities from semiconductor manufacturing to renewable energy projects, including those related to production of solar panels, wind turbines and advanced batteries for storage and transportation.

### BP to boost India presence

**New Delhi:** Supermajor BP is looking to grow its business in India as it scouts for more opportunities in the world's fastest growing energy market, its top official said. BP board, after more than a decade, held its meetings in India during a five-day visit starting September 23 and went charmed. "They (BP board) know what we have done in India, the success we have had is what brings them here. Because they recognize the ability to create much more in India," said Sashi Mukundan, outgoing India head of BP group. "For me, it was very important that we needed to showcase India for them. And I can tell you all 12 of them have gone back saying, 'Oh, my God! What an experience.'" BP has a century-long presence in India, having invested more than USD 12 billion across the energy value chain including oil and gas exploration and production, downstream fuel retailing and mobility solutions and renewables.

## Investments in sectors under PLI schemes to hit ₹2 lakh-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The 14 sectors covered under the production linked incentive (PLI) schemes have witnessed investments of ₹1.46 lakh crore till August and the capital infusion is expected to reach ₹2 lakh crore in the coming years, the commerce and industry ministry said Sunday.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has held detailed discussions with companies that are getting fiscal benefits under the schemes to seek inputs and feedback. The minister engaged with

140 companies out of the 1,300 manufacturing units across 14 sectors, which have been the beneficiaries of the scheme.

"Overall achievement of PLI schemes was also discussed during the meeting. Actual investment of ₹1.46 lakh crore has been realised (till August 2024) and is likely to reach ₹2 lakh crore in the next year or so," the ministry said in a statement.

This has resulted in production/sales worth ₹12.50 lakh crore and employment generation of around 9.5 lakh (direct and indirect), which is expected to reach 12 lakh soon, it said.

## FPI inflow hits 9-month high of ₹ 57,359cr

*With this infusion, foreign portfolio investors' investment in equities has surpassed the ₹1 lakh crore mark in 2024, data with the depositories showed*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** Foreign investors have poured ₹57,359 crore into Indian equities in September, making it the highest inflow in nine months, mainly driven by a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

With this infusion, foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) investment in equities has surpassed the ₹1 lakh crore mark in 2024, data with the depositories showed.

Going ahead, FPI inflows are likely to remain robust, driven by global interest rate easing and India's strong fundamentals. However, the RBI's decisions, particularly regarding inflation management and liquidity, will be key in sustaining this momentum, Robin Arya, smallcase Manager and founder & CEO of research analyst firm GoalFi, said.

According to the data, FPIs made a net investment of ₹57,359 crore in equities until September 27, with one trading session still left this month.

This was the highest net inflow since December 2023, when FPIs had invested ₹66,135 crore

in equities.

Since June, FPIs have consistently bought equities after withdrawing ₹34,252 crore in April-May. Overall, FPIs have been net buyers in 2024, except for January, April, and May.

Several factors have contributed to the recent surge in FPI inflow into Indian equity markets, such as the start of the interest rate cut cycle initiated by the US Fed increased India weightage in global indices, better growth prospects, and a series of large IPOs, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director- Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

The 50 basis points rate cut by the US Fed on September 18 increased the liquidity in the Indian markets since the Indian rupee was aided by currency fluctuations. This interest rate differential is expected to attract more FPI inflows into India, Manoj Purohit, Partner and leader, FS Tax, Tax and Regulatory Services, BDO India, said.

"With quite a few mainboard IPOs with healthy valuations listing on the stock market, for-



eign money has been flowing in for the new opportunities," Bharat Gala, COO of Equity broking- Ventura Securities, said.

In terms of FPI inflows, the Hong Kong market was the top performer in September, with the Hang Seng index rising 14 per cent.

China's monetary and fiscal stimulus is expected to boost its economy, benefiting Chinese stocks listed in Hong Kong. If the Hang Seng continues to outperform, more funds may flow into the still undervalued market, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

In the debt markets, FPIs infused ₹8,543 crore through the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) and ₹22,023 crore via the Fully Accessible Route (FRR) in September.

With US bond yields on the decline, Indian government securities under the FRR have become particularly attractive to foreign investors, offering higher yields and liquidity, GoalFi's Arya said.

The RBI's supportive stance on debt markets, along with its focus on maintaining a stable yield environment, has encouraged sustained foreign participation through both VRR and FRR routes, he added.

## IPO rush: Hyundai, Swiggy among cos looking to raise ₹60K-cr

**COMPANIES ARE TAPPING THE PRIMARY MARKET TO RAISE FUNDS FOR EXPANSION PLANS, RETIRE DEBT, SUPPORT WORKING CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROVIDE EXIT ROUTES TO THE EXISTING SHAREHOLDERS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** The primary market will remain abuzz with more than half a dozen companies, including Hyundai Motor India, Swiggy, and NTPC Green Energy, lined up initial public offerings over the next two months to raise around ₹60,000 crore, merchant bankers said.

Insurance, One Mobikwik Systems, and Garuda Construction are among the companies planning to launch initial public offerings (IPOs) during October-November, they added.

Together, these firms are looking to raise ₹60,000 crore through their IPOs.

Munish Aggarwal, Managing Director and Head - Equity Capital Markets at Equirus, expects over 30 IPOs to be launched between September-end and December. This will be across sectors, deal sizes and a combination of fresh issues and offers for sale.

The strong momentum in IPO markets is driven by several key macroeconomic, sector-specific factors and the willingness of funds to look at new ideas, which is partially led by strong inflows into domestic mutual funds and the robust capital formation happening across corporate India, he added.

The companies are tapping the primary market to raise funds for expansion plans, retire debt, support working capital requirements and provide



exit routes to the existing shareholders.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian subsidiary of South Korea's Hyundai Motor Company, is expected to raise ₹25,000 crore, making it the largest-ever IPO in India.

This could surpass LIC's ₹21,000-crore initial share sale. The automaker's entire issue will be an offer-for-sale (OFS) of

14,21,94,700 shares by Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component, according to its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

Other major IPOs lined up include food and grocery delivery giant Swiggy, which according to sources, is targeting to raise ₹10,414 crore via fresh issue and OFS.

Swiggy's IPO consists of a

fresh issue of shares worth ₹3,750 crore and an OFS component of 18.52 crore worth ₹6,664 crore.

Further, NTPC Green Energy, the renewable energy arm of state-owned NTPC, is looking to launch its ₹10,000 crore IPO in the first week of November, sources told PTI earlier.

Shapoorji Pallonji Group's construction firm Afcons Infrastructure will also join the IPO rush with a ₹7,000 crore offer while Waaree Energies is expected to raise ₹3,000 crore through a fresh issue of shares, in addition to an OFS component.

Niva Bupa Health Insurance and One Mobikwik Systems are planning to raise ₹3,000 crore and ₹700 crore, respectively.

Moreover, 62 companies, including Bajaj Housing Finance, Ola Electric Mobility, and FirstCry's parent Brainbees Solutions have already mobilised around ₹64,000 crore collectively via mainboard, marking a 29 per cent increase from ₹49,436 crore collected by 57 firms through the route in 2023.

The primary market is expe-

riencing strong interest from issuers and investors across various sectors.

Going ahead, the outlook for the IPO market in 2025 remains broadly positive as Sebi approved 22 IPOs as of now with companies planning to raise around ₹25,000 crore, V Prashant Rao Director & Head - ECM, Investment Banking at Anand Rathi Advisors, said.

Additionally, over 50 firms have filed draft papers and are awaiting approval.

Cumulatively, these companies aim to raise more than 1 lakh crore, reflecting the significant momentum in the IPO market, he added.

The positive sentiment is supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, favourable market conditions, and sectoral growth.

Further, there are no signs of the IPO frenzy fizzling out and this behaviour might persist in the short term. However, risks like market corrections and regulatory interventions could moderate the enthusiasm. Vaibhav Porwal, Co-founder, Dezrev, said.

# BCCI secy succession plan gains pace



The current BCCI secretary, Jay Shah, is expected to step down from his post in the last week of November and take over as the chairman of ICC for a three-year period from December

retary was not on the AGM agenda, it has been learnt that the attendees discussed the succession plan among themselves to keep the procedure open. "It was a normal request to keep all due process in place at the earliest as there will be clarity for us. Also, we have some big events like the IPL auction coming up, so it should not be like we will be handling everything at one go," a state association representative who attended the AGM told PTI. As things stand now, Rohan Jaitley, president of Delhi and District Cricket Association, BCCI treasurer Ashish Shelar, joint secretary Devajit Saikia and Gujarat Cricket Association secretary Anil Patel are the candidates who are in the fray to succeed Shah, unless a dark horse emerges in the latter stages of the selection process. With no secretary election on agenda, the primary focal point of the AGM was the nomination of two representatives of India to the ICC meetings.

Currently, Shah is BCCI's representative on the ICC Board and IPL chairman Arun Dhumal is in the Chief Executives' Committee. The AGM entrusted the general body members to recommend two names soon for the posts - director and alternate director - as the ICC has also scheduled a conclave in Dubai right after the final of the upcoming women's T20 World Cup. As PTI reported Saturday, Arun Singh Dhumal and Avishek Dalmiya were elected to the IPL Governing Council as general body representatives with former all set to continue as the league's chairman at least till IPL 2025. Former Andhra cricketer, V Chamundeswaram was nominated by the Indian Cricketers Association (ICA) as a player representative and was inducted into the IPL GC. "The members of the general body also appreciated the efforts of the office bearers for the work

**Dhumal, Dalmiya retained in IPL GC**

## DULEEP TROPHY MAY RETURN TO ZONAL FORMAT

The Duleep Trophy is set to return to its traditional zonal from next year after the state units gave a thumbs down to the four-team concept introduced this season. The red-ball event featured four teams - India A, India B, India C, India D. India A beat India C to win the competition earlier this month. Usually, six teams from as many zones - central, east, west, north, south and north east - take part in the tournament, providing more opportunities to the players from their respective zones. "The state units felt the format used this season did not give a fair representation to the players from their respective zones. The traditional zonal format gives players more opportunities zone wise and that is what was conveyed in the AGM today," a state unit official told PTI after the BCCI AGM in Bengaluru.

undertaken with respect to the new National Cricket Academy campus, dubbed as the Centre of Excellence near the Bengaluru International Airport," said the BCCI in a release. In that context, the AGM also featured the screening of a 17-minute-long tribute video to Shah, highlighting the strong services he rendered to Indian cricket in his role as the board's secretary.

Other than that the AGM ratified the annual budget for the 2024-25 season and the members unanimously resolved to maintain BCCI's legal status as a society, an item which was originally not in the agenda of the meeting. "The members further resolved that the tournaments of the BCCI, including the IPL, shall not be converted into a company," the statement added.

## INDIA VS BANGLADESH TEST Wet outfield wipes out play for 2nd day on trot

Green Park Stadium's poor drainage system sparks outrage after no show on day three

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kanpur, Sept 29:** Despite a rain-free morning and bright sunshine later in the day, day three's play of the second Test between India and Bangladesh was called off without a ball being bowled at the Green Park Stadium.

The unexpected cause? A 'wet outfield'. Frustration grew as both teams remained at their hotel, while match officials inspected the field three times, all without covers. But there was no play, leading to two days now lost due to rain.

Shiv Kumar, the pitch curator of the Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association (UPCA) maintained that everything was under control in Kanpur. But he admitted to having confusion regarding the match officials' reservations.

"They gave us three different time for inspection but never told us what is the issue. Which area was wet or whatever is the problem. I told them that you can start the match but if you have any concern let me know," he told IANS.

With the morning and lunch sessions already lost, match referee Jeff Crowe conducted multiple inspections, but the soggy patches on the field, particularly in the deep mid-wicket area near Pavilion C, left him unsatisfied.

The damp 30-yard circle also continued to concern, leading to the push of the pitch inspection to 2pm. Crowe, alongside reserve umpire Virender Sharma and TV umpire Rod Tucker, insisted on further delays, hoping for sunlight to dry the affected areas before allowing play to resume.

Before the third inspection which was scheduled at 2pm, a senior ground official told IANS

that the match officials wanted ground to dry up with natural light but were never told about the exact area of wet patch.

"Match officials have asked us to wait for the natural light then only we can continue the play. The pitch and another part of the ground are perfectly good, there are certain areas of concern but we can start the play."

"If they want to wait for the sunlight, then they should have given the next inspection time at 1pm, because a little sunlight is always here which will dry the concerned area in an hour. We have already lost two sessions, next inspection at 2pm will lead us to call off the match," a ground official said.

Spectators travelling from different parts of the state showed their frustration with the ground facilities at Green Park, leaving them disheartened and wanting UPCA to take good care of one of the oldest stadiums in the country, which has been hosting Test cricket since 1952.

"I am deeply feeling bad, Green Park is one of the oldest stadiums and we got a Test match after three years. The game should have continued for all five days. It's the UPCA and the match organizers, who should be blamed. They are not taking proper care of it. We are coming from different parts of the state and investing money to watch the match but of what use," said a fan from Fatehpur.

The teams had played only 35 overs in the entire match so far, with Bangladesh standing at 107 for 3. The delay has sparked fresh criticism of the stadium's drainage system, with questions raised on its readiness to host international games.



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## SHORT TAKES Diksha set for China

**Deauville (France):** Diksha Dagar stayed as the top Indian golfer on the Ladies European Tour Order of Merit at 20th place with Pranavi Urs at 26th and Tvesa Malik in 50th position after the Lacoste Ladies Open de France here. This week in France, Dagar skipped the event, while Pranavi and Tvesa, both multiple winners on Hero WPG Tour at home, missed the cut. Diksha will feature in next week's Aramco Series in China. Meanwhile, a dramatic finale at the Lacoste Ladies Open de France ended with Chiara Tamburlini winning a playoff over Kirsten Rudgeley.

## Sharma lands 2 eagles, moves up

**Madrid:** India's Shubhankar Sharma compiled an interesting round of two-under 69 that included two eagles as he moved up from T-57 to T-44 with one more round to go in the acciona Open de España presented by Madrid. Sharma had two eagles, two birdies and four bogeys in the third round and this week he had landed three eagles - he had one in the first round - but has also dropped two doubles and two bogeys each on the first two days and four on the third. At even par for 54 holes, he is T-44. Angel Hidalgo will take a two-shot lead into the final round after producing a 68 on day three at Club de Campo Villa de Madrid.

## PCB warns central contract players

**Karachi:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has issued a stern warning to 6-7 centrally contracted players, urging them to improve their fitness or risk losing their contracts. The Pakistan team fitness trainer and physiotherapist will conduct another round of fitness tests Monday in Lahore after some players didn't meet the required benchmarks in the tests held earlier this month. "The players who have central and domestic contracts have been told in clear terms that there will be no compromise on fitness and they have to meet the benchmarks set by the team's fitness experts," a board official said. The official said that "the two foreign head coaches, Jason Gillespie and Gary Kirsten had told the PCB Chairman that no player should be given any benefit as far as fitness levels are concerned."

# Usha lashes out at IOA EC

Prez hits back, says EC members 'more focused on self-serving power play and monetary gain'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** Accused of running the Indian Olympic Association in an "autocratic" manner, its president PT Usha Sunday hit back at the revolting executive council members, saying they "seem more focused on self-serving power play and monetary gain" than working for the betterment of the country's sport.

In an official press release, Usha also alleged that "some of these EC members have very questionable track records, including allegations of gender bias and even cases of sexual harassment filed against them". "In my 45-year-long career as a sports person representing India... I have never encountered individuals so indifferent to the aspirations of our athletes and our nation's sporting future... these individuals seem



**It is essential to bring to light that some of these EC members have very questionable track records, including allegations of gender bias and even cases of sexual harassment filed against them**

PT USHA | PRESIDENT, IOA

more focused on self-serving power play and monetary gain through their prolonged presence and control in sports administration," Usha said.

On Saturday, 12 members of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Executive Council shot off a letter to senior International Olympic Committee (IOC) official Jerome Poivey, accusing Usha of running the organization in an "autocratic" manner and with a "my way or the high-

way" approach. They had sent the letter to Poivey, the head of Institutional Relations and Governance at the IOC, after Usha rejected their demand of removing Raghuram Iyer from the IOA CEO's post during a stormy executive council meeting.

The revolting EC members wrote to Poivey that Iyer's appointment is yet to be ratified and they will re-advertise for the position of the IOA CEO, "aiming to appoint a suitable candidate within the next two months".

Senior vice president Ajay H Patel, vice presidents Rajlaxmi Deo and Gagan Narang, Treasurer Sahdev Yadav, Joint Secretaries Alaknanda Ashok and Kalyan Chaubey, other Executive Council members Amitabh Sharma, Bhupender Singh Bajwa, Rohit Rajpal, Dola Banerjee, Harpal Singh and Yogeshwar Dutt had signed the letter. Termining the accusations made by the 12 EC members as "malicious and false", Usha said they "are only intended to malign my leadership and the efforts of those working diligently towards the betterment of Indian sports".

## India lose gold in Junior Shooting World C'ship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 29:** India lost a potential gold at the ISSF Junior Shooting World Championship in Lima, Peru after a pistol marksman was penalised two points for "reporting late" to the preparation arena ahead of the 10m finals.

The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Saturday penalised Umesh Choudhary, a 20-year-old marksman, for violation of Rule 6.17.1.3, which states that "a two (2) point/hit penalty will be deducted from the score of the first match shot/series if the athlete does not report on time", thus bringing into focus the role of coaches and support staff in the mammoth 60-member contingent.

Choudhary got 7.4 points on his first shot in the final after deduction of the two points.

National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) secretary, Rajiv Bhatia, said he had "no idea" about the incident and would "not like to comment" on the issue.

## HISTORIC SERIES WIN

# Lanka crush Kiwis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Galle (Sri Lanka), Sept 29:** Sri Lanka stormed to a series victory over New Zealand, securing the two-match test series with a resounding innings and 154-run triumph on the fourth day in Galle Sunday.

This victory, Sri Lanka's most dominant over the Kiwis, also marks their first win against New Zealand in 15 years. The hero of the games, left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya, was named Player of the Series after a masterful performance, claiming 18 wickets across the two matches.

Meanwhile, Kamindu Mendis took home Man of the Match honours for his unbeaten 182, anchoring Sri Lanka's colossal total of 602-5 declared. With this knock, Mendis etched



his name in history, joining the great Sir Don Bradman as the third joint-fastest player to reach 1,000 test runs.

Jayasuriya, who took nine wickets in the first test, was at his best again, snaring another nine wickets in the second test as New Zealand's batters struggled to cope with Sri Lanka's spin-heavy attack.

With this victory, Sri Lanka has now won three consecutive test matches and bolstered their hopes of qualifying for the ICC World Test Championship final at Lord's next June.

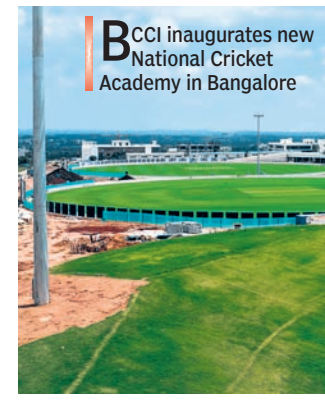
# NCA transforms into Centre of Excellence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 29:** It took 24 years for the National Cricket Academy (NCA) to find a dwelling that suits its stature and growth, but the wait was worth it as the facility finally took a new avatar as the BCCI Centre of Excellence, a hub of ultra-modern features including three different kind pitches.

The Centre of Excellence, now operating closer to the international airport here, was inaugurated by BCCI secretary Jay Shah Saturday, and the most striking features were three international-quality grounds and 86 decks - prepared specifically to make players feel at home in any conditions at home or abroad.

The Ground A, the main ground, boasts an 85-yard boundary with 13 meticulously maintained Mumbai red-soil pitches that will offer a good amount of bounce. It may be recalled that such a



BCCI inaugurates new National Cricket Academy in Bangalore

3 different natured pitches to help players prepare for challenges

pitch was used in the first Test against Bangladesh recently at Chennai, where India won by a massive 280 runs. It might come handy in the near future when India travel to Australia, a home of bouncy tracks, in November for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Another unique feature of this ground is the Herringbone drainage system that allows uber quick evaporation of

water in case of rain. "It's innovative subsurface drainage system ensures quick recovery after rainfall, minimizing disruptions and maintaining a consistent playing schedule," said the project manager.

The ground also is equipped with floodlighting and state-of-the-art broadcasting facilities, if ever the venue is required to host a much high-profile match.

The Ground B and C serve as dedicated practice grounds with 75-yard boundaries, featuring 11 Mandya soil pitches and nine Black Cotton soil pitches from Kalahandi, Odisha, respectively.

"It is just about getting exposure to different kind of conditions. So that when they graduate to the national team, they are ready. It is not a surprise to them. I think the pitches here will allow them to improve their adaptability. And the three beautiful grounds will allow them to face any situation with a lot of confidence," said VVS Laxman, the head of the Centre of Excellence, while addressing a select media gathering.

Apart from those three grounds, the Comprehensive Practice Resources in the centre, sprawling over 40 acres, offers an impressive 45 outdoor net pitches for practice divided into nine clusters, separated by safety nets sourced from England.