



Storyteller Urvashi

Actor Urvashi Rautela narrates an interesting episode from Mahabharata during her ongoing spiritual journey to north India

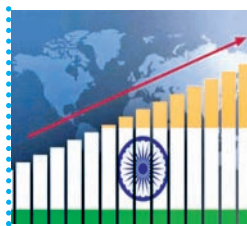
LEISURE | P2



Trudeau faces litmus test

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau faces motion of no confidence introduced by Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Growth forecast

Asian Development Bank retains India's growth forecast for the current financial year at 7 per cent

BUSINESS | P11



New approach

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi says his newfound approach has helped him in winning 9 of his 11 matches at the Chess Olympiad

SPORTS | P12



DAY TO INK FINGERS: Women voters queue up at a polling station to exercise their franchise during the second phase of Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections in Katra, Wednesday, that recorded over 56% turnout

STEEL CITY HORROR

Minor gangraped

It appears that there is no let-up in crimes against women in the Steel City, as a minor girl was allegedly gangraped at Raghunathpalli by five men recently – the second such incident in a week

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 25: At a time when the furore over the gangrape of two minor girls from Jharkhand in the Steel City here is yet to die down, a 17-year old girl was allegedly gangraped by five people, Sunday night.

Police registered a case and launched an investigation after the survivor's father lodged a complaint at Raghunathpalli police station here, Tuesday evening. A medical examination was conducted on the survivor while four police teams launched a manhunt to nab the culprits.

A police team, dog squad and scientific team also reached the spot and conducted a probe. Chatters were abuzz that police have detained some youths and their family members after a police complaint was lodged.

Police said that the survivor, a resident of an area under Plant Site police station, is also a student of a reputable college in

MAN MURDERED WHILE HAVING TEA

Rourkela: Three masked miscreants hacked a man to death and attacked his brother-in-law near Chhend petrol pump in Sector-7 area, Wednesday, when they were having tea. The deceased was identified as Mohd Shakir of Chakradharpur in neighbouring Jharkhand and the injured Mohd Amir. The incident took place when Shakir was having tea with Amir near Kalpataru Ashram beside the petrol pump and the miscreants on a bike attacked them with sharp weapons. Shakir died on the spot while Amir managed to escape. Cops began a probe.

the city. The incident occurred when she, along with two of her friends, had visited a hotel and bar under Civil Township.

It is alleged that the male acquaintances of her friends accompanying her to the hotel were also present there. Later, her friends left the place leaving the survivor alone in the hotel.

There three youths lured her to a park near Traffic Square and took turns on her. Her father grew apprehensive and searched for her after she failed to turn up at home by late at night. Later, he found her inside the hotel. The FIR mentions that more persons are involved in this crime.

Bangalore murder accused ends life

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Odisha police Wednesday found a man, the key suspect in the brutal killing of a woman in Bangalore, hanging from a tree in Bhadrak district, an officer said.

The police also recovered a diary, believed to be belonging to the deceased man Mukti Ranjan Ray, 30, in which he confessed to killing the woman whose dismembered body was found in the refrigerator of her house in the southern metropolis.

Bhadrak SP Varun Guntupalli said Ray, a resident of Bhuinpur under Dhusuri police station, was the prime suspect in the woman's murder. He was allegedly on the run following the discovery of the body parts of Mahalakshmi, a 29-year-old woman. Her body was found chopped into 59 pieces.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Very important file. Needs urgent decision. Place it in front of the empty chair and not the occupied one

Subhadra 1st instalment to all by March 8

BHUBANESWAR: All beneficiaries of Subhadra Yojana will get their first instalment of Rs 5,000 by March 8, 2025, Deputy CM Pravati Parida said, Wednesday. However, the second instalment will be credited to beneficiaries' accounts on International Women's Day (March 8), she said. Parida said one crore women will get the benefits of Subhadra Yojana in phases. "So far, 92 lakh have applied for the scheme. We hope the applicant number will cross one crore within next week," she said, adding that 25,11,000 women have so far received the first instalment.

Yagya at Bharatpur PS to wipe out evidence!



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Soon after assuming office as the inspector in-charge (IIC) of Bharatpur police station – which is presently in the eye of storm over the alleged custodial torture of a woman and her male friend from Indian Army – Monday, Deepak Kumar Khandayatray performed a 'special puja' and some other rituals at the police station, allegedly in contravention of Section 238 (causing disappearance of evidence) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

City-based advocate Sourachandra Mohapatra said before commencing the rituals it is likely that they would have cleaned the place, in a bid to eliminate evidence, which is essential for the investigation. This act is an outright contravention of Section 238 of BNS, erstwhile 201 in IPC. "The question is whether

they had taken the prior approval from the investigating officer (IO) for conduct of the yagya," Mohapatra added.

Khandayatray, however, said he thought about performing the rituals within a week of joining as "it was essential to instill a composed milieu before venturing out for any task". "The 'havan' (homa yagya) was performed only to ensure that peacefulness prevails inside the police station," he added.

Notably, Khandayatray rose to the ranks of inspector in 2021 and was posted at Nayagarh Sadar police station. Later, he was posted as IIC of Itamati and Pipili police stations. He was also serving at the DCP office here.

Khandayatray said the old Bharatpur police station was under CCTV surveillance. "CCTVs were removed after the inauguration of the new PS in March. Owing to technical glitches, the installation process was halted for some time," he said.

The priest who conducted the rituals said it was done to ward off the evil forces at the police station. He added the rituals continued for over two hours in the police station. Khandayatray replaced Dinakrushna Mishra who, along with four other cops, had been suspended on an order of the DGP over the issue.

POLYGRAPH TEST ON SUSPENDED IIC | P3

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	85169.87 ↑ 255.83
NIFTY	26004.15 ↑ 63.75
DOLLAR	83.56 ↓ ₹0.03
EURO	93.49 ↑ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹75,242 ↑ ₹239
SILVER	₹92,255 ↓ ₹138

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	30.5°C	31.2°C
Min Temp	25.9°C	25.0°C
Humidity	94%	95%
Rainfall	6mm	4mm

FORECAST
GENERALLY CLOUDY SKY

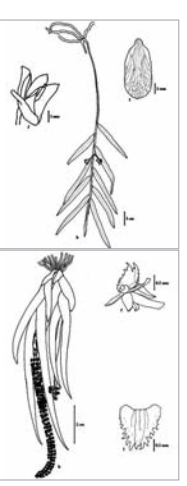
Orchid glory for Similipal

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The Similipal National Park is not only a treasure house of nature with scenic beauty and lush green valleys, but also a tiger and biosphere reserve replete with diverse flora and fauna. Adding more feathers to its cap, scientists have discovered two epiphytic orchids, the indicator species of a healthy forest.

According to a report, around 100 species in 41 genera of orchids are found in Similipal of Mayurbhanj district. This is against 144 species under 53 genera found in Odisha till date.

Two epiphytic orchids have been discovered in Similipal recently by renowned orchidologist Sarat Chandra Misra. While one is 'Dendrobium Prasannae S



Misra', the other one is 'Oberonia similipalensis S Misra'. Misra said orchid flower has unique floral plan. Out of the three petals, the rear one, known as the lip, is differently shaped and also

coloured from the rest of the membered. It contains nectar or food grains, real in deceit form. It is also twisted half a round two occupy the front position in the flower; he mentioned. In 'Dendrobium

Prasannae' the lip is broadly oblong with an abruptly ending short tip – the stems are drooping, long and slender. 'Oberonia similipalensis', on the other hand, is a much smaller curious-looking plant with knife-shaped slender leaves. Its lip is broadly ovate, undivided, with deeply cut edges.

The former species has been named after late Prasanna Kumar Dash, former minister and Speaker of the Odisha Assembly, an ardent environmentalist and watchdog of the Similipal forest.

When the Odisha Environmental Society (OES) mooted the proposal for declaring Similipal as a Biosphere Reserve, it was Dash who, as the president of OES, pursued the proposal both at the state and Central level.

HUM HAIN GENERATION LARGE.
HUMAARA HAR CELEBRATION
LARGE.

SEAGRAM'S
ROYAL STAG
PACKAGED DRINKING WATER

IT'S OUR LIFE.
WE LIVE IT LARGE.

SCAN TO MAKE YOUR CELEBRATIONS
LARGE WITH SURYA KUMAR YADAV.
ALSO, WIN EXCITING GOODIES.*

*T&Cs Apply. For T&Cs visit: www.royalstagfan.com



CATHERINE ZETA-JONES SHARES PICTURE IN HER 'BIRTHDAY SUIT'

Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones, is celebrating her 55th birthday which she shares with her filmmaker husband Michael Douglas. On Wednesday, the actress shared a nude monochromatic picture of herself. Since she shares her birthday with her hubby, she asked her followers for gifting ideas.

DE NIRO'S SCATHING ATTACK ON TRUMP

Veteran actor Robert De Niro has launched a scathing attack against the US Presidential runner Donald Trump. The Hollywood legend has accused him of wanting to 'destroy' America, and branded the scandal-hit Republican a 'clown' who will become a 'dictator for life' if re-elected.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
The stars today may play some tricks, which may land you in some sort of problem. But by mid-day, things will calm down and you will forget it. Ganesh says that in the evening, you will be calm and pensive which is an excellent thing.

TAURUS
Your thinking is likely to be very clear and purposeful, this day says Ganesh. You will be eager to do something new, meaningful and exciting today. And you will be smart enough to think things out carefully and make elaborate plans before you make a move. This day is expected to become less stressful, more relaxed and trouble free compared to your average days.

GEMINI
Today is an auspicious and fruitful day for you. You will become excited by every very small accomplishments. You will need to fulfill the demands made upon you by your family and friends. You will probably find yourself balancing the cheque book at home, or buying appliances for the house, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will savour a tasty meal. You will go out for dinner with your friends or family. It may so happen that you will take out time from your hectic schedule to prepare tasty food and invite friends and relatives. Your nature of helping others will make you popular and you will benefit from it, says Ganesh.

LEO
You will be in the mood to express your thoughts and opinions unabashedly today. You will try your utmost to make gains in your profession. You will be able to clear off your debts. You should make the most of this beneficial time to end your financial troubles, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Your creative talents will flourish today. Ganesh says you will be pleased with your possessions which you have carefully safeguarded for a long time. In the evening you may want to refurbish your house by making the necessary additions and subtractions.

LIBRA
An extended family is a boon, especially when it comes to charring out some success. Okay, maybe it's not Don Corleone calling the shots in your favour, but expect to get a favourable base from your relatives for the same. Bring your luck with you to work, and keep smiling.

SCORPIO
The Dons in the office may bypass your superiors and probably make you run around as an errand boy. You are likely to impress your superiors with your brilliance. Evening, though, will ring out the exhaustion of the morning. Ganesh advises you to delay bidding on sealed tenders for today.

SAGITTARIUS
All said and done, today Ganesh foresees you striking a fine balance between your profession and passion. Profession will win the hand during the course of the day. Your fitting in social circles is slated to take a back-seat as you tend to focus more on your work.

CAPRICORN
The usually high spirit that you display at work is likely to be dampened today by a trivial issue. So, try not to let too many thoughts trouble your mind today, advises Ganesh. Money matters may be pressing, forcing you to take risks. In the circumstances, keeping your cool will be the best thing to do, for a minor slip can cost you all that you may not be prepared to lose.

AQUARIUS
It's time for some family bonding! You realise that you've neglected your near and dear. Now, you need to do something substantial to win back your family's approval. However, your sincerity alone will melt their hearts.

PISCES
Friends are the subject of all your activities today. You will make new acquaintances that will prove to be helpful in times of need. A loved one will make you happy like you've never been before. A candlelight dinner with your sweetheart is probably in the offing, says Ganesh.



'IT'S GOOD TO NOT BE PUT IN A BOX'

Mumbai: Malavika Mohanan has indeed made a significant mark with her back-to-back releases, *Thangalaan* and *Yudhra*. The actress showcased her versatility by portraying two distinct characters in both films and has also been receiving a positive response from many.

While sharing about her experience of working on different characters in *Thangalaan* and *Yudhra*, Malavika said, "Both are from different worlds. As an actor, the prep you do is so different. For *Thangalaan*, there were a lot more action sequences, there was a lot of physical prep

and stunt training. For *Nikhat*, I had to learn the piano - it was more of a soft girl character, I mean she is tough when she has to be but it's a very different character. It is very versatile and as an actor, it is good to not be put in a box where you are playing the same kind of role."

Interestingly, in an earlier interaction, the actress also revealed that there are bits of similarities between the characters and that she resonates with both of them.

Mumbai:

Actress Urvashi Rautela shared photos of her favorite spot from her ongoing spiritual journey.

Taking to Instagram, Urvashi, who has 73 million followers, shared her pictures and narrated an interesting story from the mythological epic Mahabharata.

The *Skanda* actress wrote, "Back at my Fav place (with orange heart) Once in Mahabharata, Bhima was proud of his strength. At that time Hanumanji broke the ego of Bhima. The place where Bhima and Hanumanji met is still situated near Uttarakhand.

Apart from these ventures, Malavika Mohanan will be next seen in *The Raja Saab* alongside Prabhas.

AGENCIES

Urvashi's spiritual journey

This place is known as Hanuman Chatti."

In the pictures, Urvashi is seen seeking blessings from Lord Hanuman and reading about the shlokas from Mahabharata and their sacred meanings.

Earlier, Urvashi shared a clip from the Kedarnath Temple and offered a glimpse of her spiritual visit. In the clip, Urvashi is seen holding the damru in her hand as she seeks blessings from a naga-sadhu sitting behind her.

She made her film debut in 2013 with the action movie 'Singh Saab the Great', directed by Anil Sharma. The film starred Sunny Deol, Amrita Rao, and Prakash Raj in the lead roles.

The 30-year-old actress

has starred in films like *Sanam Re*, *Great Grand Masti*, *Hate Story 4*, *Pagalpanti* and *Jahangir National University*. Urvashi next has *NBK109*, *Welcome To The Jungle*, and *Kasoor 2* in the pipeline.

IAN S



Urmila files for divorce

Manoj calls himself a victim of stereotyping

Mumbai: Manoj Bajpayee has steadily established himself as one of the most respected actors of his generation. With the arrival of OTT and the success of *The Family Man*, he has become popular among the masses as well. While the critics and audiences rate him as one of the more versatile actors in the country, Manoj admits that he, too, is a victim of stereotyping.

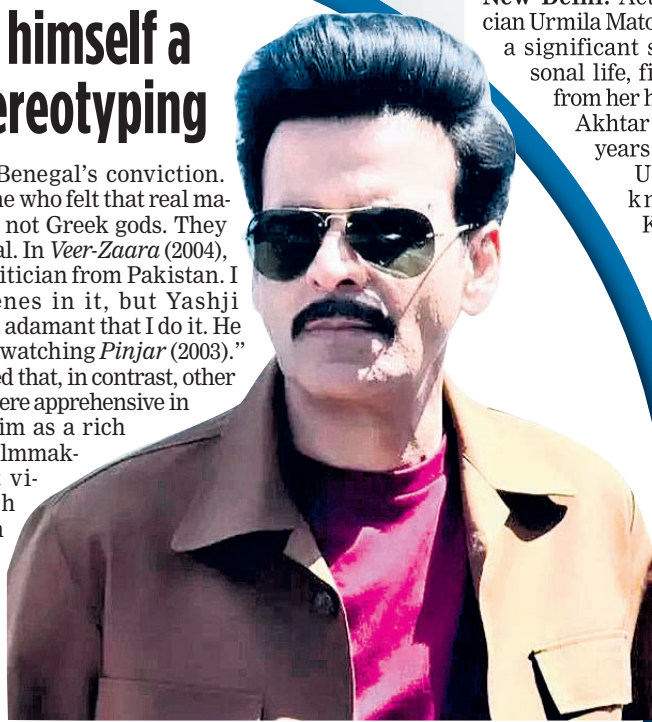
In a recent interaction with an entertainment portal, the National Award-winner lamented that he is largely cast as characters from 'set in middle-class and lower middle-class stories' and never as a rich person.

He said, "The only film before *Gulmohar* (2023) where I played a rich guy was *Zubeidaa* (2001). That

was Shyam Benegal's conviction. He was the one who felt that real maharajas were not Greek gods. They looked normal. In *Veer-Zaara* (2004), I played a politician from Pakistan. I had two scenes in it, but Yashji (Chopra) was adamant that I do it. He cast me after watching *Pinjar* (2003)."

Manoj added that, in contrast, other filmmakers were apprehensive in presenting him as a rich guy. "These filmmakers had that vision which stems from seeing life up close. The others have trouble depicting me as rich."

AGENCIES



New Delhi: Actress and politician Urmila Matondkar has taken a significant step in her personal life, filing for divorce from her husband, Mohsin Akhtar Mir, after eight years of marriage.

Urmila tied the knot with the Kashmir-based businessman and model March 3, 2016.

According to reports, a possible reason behind the rift could be the age gap between Urmila and Mohsin as the actress is 10 years elder to him, and

also married quite late in life, in her 40s.

Another reason being speculated is the tiff over fi-

nances that strained their relationship. A user on the content aggregation platform *Reddit* wrote that Mohsin, and her family were forcing the actress to sell off her property for their business till she had nothing.

As per the media reports, the divorce is not mutual with Urmila filing for the divorce four months ago.

Mohsin has worked in films such as *Luck By Chance*, *BA Pass* and *Mumbai Mast Kallander*. The two first crossed paths during the wedding of celebrated fashion designer Manish Malhotra's niece in 2014.

It was said to be love at first sight for Mohsin. Urmila and Mohsin had paid a visit to Amritsar's Golden Temple, followed by a Nikah.

Urmila with hubby Mohsin in happier times

IAN S



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

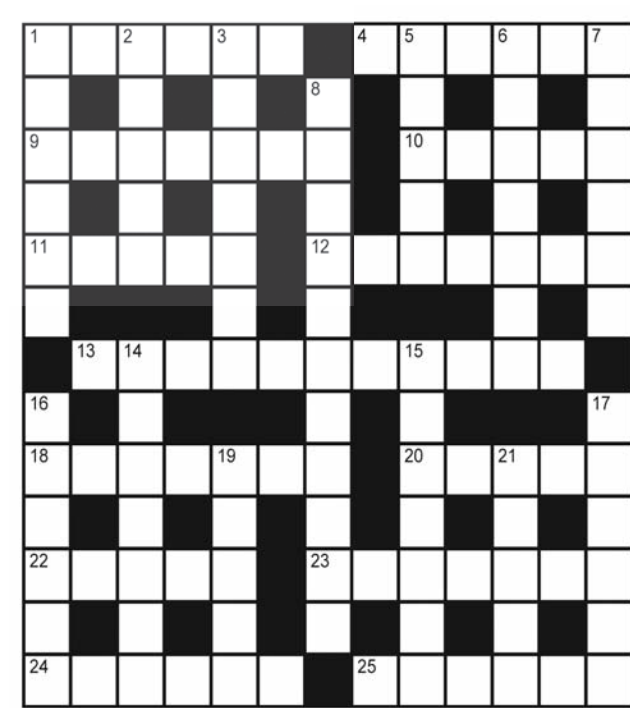


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Ring of colour
- 4 Forms
- 9 Superior
- 10 Coquette
- 11 Glasgow's river
- 12 Overshadow
- 13 Name calling (3-8)
- 18 Discomfort
- 20 Rope fiber

Down

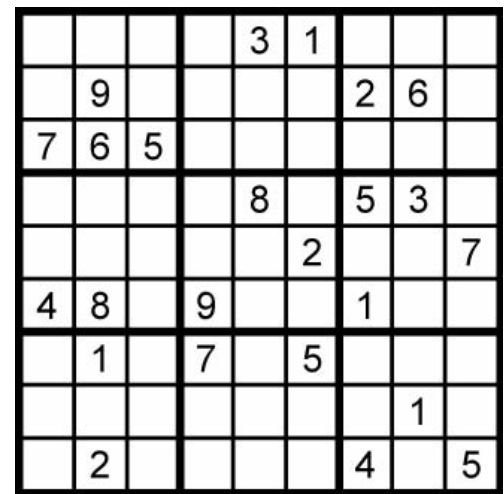
- 22 English race place
- 23 Vacation traveller
- 24 City managers
- 25 Wellness
- 1 Llama relative
- 2 Hostile force
- 3 Prowls about
- 5 Suite spot?

- 6 Toddler's place
- 7 100 agorot
- 8 Deterrents
- 14 Jinxed
- 15 Express through movement
- 16 Mummify
- 17 Hold tight
- 19 Lay to rest
- 21 Eddy

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

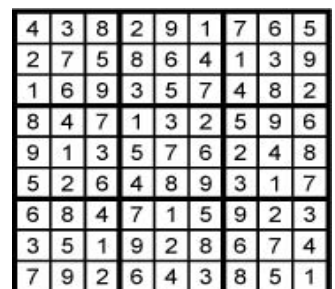


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



NEW DELHI: Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil will visit Odisha Thursday to participate in activities under the ongoing Swachhata Hi Seva campaign, aimed at promoting sanitation and cleanliness across rural India, officials said. The minister will be joined by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi as the duo will review the state's efforts in waste management, Open Defecation-Free (ODF) Plus status, and sanitation initiatives under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G), according to an official statement issued here Wednesday.

downtown

SHIPBUILDING, REPAIR FACILITY IN STATE SOON



AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Odisha is among the five states which will soon have shipbuilding and repair clusters, according to Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal.

"Recognising the strategic importance of shipbuilding and ship repair, the ministry is developing dedicated clusters in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Gujarat," Sonowal said Wednesday while highlighting the major accomplishments of his ministry in the first 100 days of the third term of the NDA government.

In the next five years, the ministry projects container handling to reach an impressive 40 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit), creating 2 million job opportunities across the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) alone will scale up its handling capacity from the current 6.6 million TEUs to 10 million, he added.

the largest all-weather deep-water ports with a capacity of 298 MMTPA.

According to him, this mega port is expected to create 1.2 million employment opportunities and place an Indian port among the top 10 container ports globally, significantly improving international shipping connectivity and reducing transit times and costs.

Ports, Shipping and Waterways Secretary TK Ramachandran said in the first 100 days, the ministry has taken bold steps to implement key reforms, such as the establishment of the Indian Maritime Centre and the Indian International Maritime Dispute Resolution Centre, both of which will bolster India's standing as a global leader in maritime infrastructure and logistics.

"We are on track to achieve the ambitious goals of the Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amritkaal Vision 2047, which focus on sustainable growth, enhanced connectivity, and improving the ease of doing business", Ramachandran said.

Responding to a question on Chababar Port, he said the government had signed a contract and now the contract has been operationalised and the port is doing very well.

"We are also now going global in Sri Lanka, in Myanmar, in Bangladesh, India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) is taking over operations of some of the terminals of few ports," Ramachandran said.

Ports, Shipping and Waterways additional secretary Rajesh Kumar Sinha said the ministry is working on a proposal to incentivise vessels who use green fuel.

The minister also said that 3,900 acre land has been allotted to Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) and V. O. Chidambaram Port Authority for setting up of hydrogen manufacturing hubs. This will attract more than Rs 5 lakh crore worth of investment in the coming years, he added.

He also said JNPA is going to become the first Indian Port to attain a Container Handling Capacity of 10 million TEUs in the coming months.

Sonowal said International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island, will serve as a major transshipment hub.

"After 25 years since the establishment of Kamarajar Port, the addition of Vaduvan Port marks a significant milestone in India's maritime journey, alongside the recent notification of Galathea Bay as a major port," he said.

He underscored the foundation of Vaduvan Port, India's first major port project of the 21st century, poised to become one of



BIRTH ANNIV: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, in presence of Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, lights the ceremonial lamp to mark the birth anniversary celebration of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Nurses launch statewide protest

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Nursing staff at state-run hospitals and healthcare centres launched a statewide agitation Wednesday over their 10-point charter of demands that include regularisation of contractual workers and scrapping of the outsourcing system.

Suchismita Dash, president of the Odisha Nursing Employees' Association (ONEA), said the group has repeatedly presented their demands to the state government but has received no response.

Stating that nurses have begun their protest without disrupting emergency medical services, Dash warned that they might



opt for 'cease work' from September 27 if their demands were not addressed.

In the meantime, Health Secretary Aswathy S held dis-

cussions with ONEA representatives to address various concerns affecting nursing officers.

Though the Health department assured that their issues

would be considered sympathetically at the appropriate time, Dash expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome of the meeting and said the association would proceed with their planned agitation.

Meanwhile, the government has urged nursing staff to refrain from further agitation, withdraw their strike, and return to work immediately.

Earlier, Director of Nursing Artabandhu Nayak had instructed the heads of all state-run healthcare facilities to take action against nursing staff participating in the 'cease work' protest, citing the Odisha Emergency Services (Maintenance) Act, 1988, which is currently in effect in the state.

BHARATPUR CASE

Court allows polygraph test on suspended IIC

Earlier in the day, the CID recreated the alleged crimes at Bharatpur police station and on Chandaka Road where the Army officer and his fiancée were allegedly harassed by a group of youths

Seven engineering students were also arrested on the basis of the road rage complaint and later released on bail

The Odisha Police had suspended five police personnel, including the IIC of Bharatpur police station, in connection with the September 15 incident



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate court here Wednesday allowed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to conduct polygraph test on Dinakrushna Mishra, the suspended inspector-in-charge (IIC) of Bharatpur police station, in connection with the alleged torture of an Army officer and sexual assault on his fiancée in custody.

The court also granted permission to CID to take Mishra to Gandhinagar in Gujarat for conducting the polygraph test.

Under polygraph test, also known as a lie detection test, a person's physiological responses to questions are analysed to determine whether the person is lying or telling the truth.

Before granting permission to the CID for the test, the court sought consent of the accused police officer who said that he had no objection to being subjected to the scientific investigation.

"I am innocent. I am not involved in the commission of the offences as alleged against me. I do not have any objection to undergo narco-analysis, polygraph or brain fingerprinting tests. I am giving my consent on my own accord and free will," the accused police officer told the court. The court accepted the CID's

proposal to conduct polygraph test on the accused police officer after realising that the sequence of the events in this case occurred within the four walls of the police station without any eyewitnesses and therefore scientific methodology may give a proper direction to the investigating agency to reach at the truth, the order said.

The CID also pleaded before the court that the investigating agency was finding it difficult to confirm the veracity of the allegations and also the counter allegations in the absence of CCTV cameras at the police station.

An Army officer was allegedly subjected to torture and his fiancée to sexual assault by policemen when they went to Bharatpur police station September 15 to lodge a complaint of road rage.

Earlier in the day, the CID recreated the alleged crimes at Bharatpur police station and on Chandaka Road where the Army officer and his fiancée were allegedly harassed by a group of youths.

The Odisha Police had earlier suspended five police personnel, including the IIC of Bharatpur police station, in connection with the incident. Seven engineering students were also arrested on the basis of the road rage complaint and later released on bail.

BJD slams govt for 'neglecting' tribals

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The Opposition BJD Wednesday accused the ruling BJP of being 'anti-tribal' and slammed the state government for allegedly neglecting the tribal community by discontinuing several schemes initiated by the previous Naveen Patnaik administration.

The party made the allegation during a press conference here addressed by BJD MPs - Niranjan Bisi and Sasmit Patra - and party's media coordinator Priyabrata Majhi.

In response, the ruling BJP dismissed the allegations, asserting that the previous BJD government had failed to address tribal issues, including the implementation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act over its 24 years in power.

"The BJP government scrapped the Special Development Council (SDC) created by the previous government. Under the SDC, the tribal people were benefited and development works were being carried during the BJD government. However, the Mohan Majhi government stopped it," BJD MP Bisi alleged.



The BJD leaders came down heavily on the BJP government for stopping the LABHA (Laghu Bana Jatya Drabya Kraya) Yojana, a fully state-funded initiative providing a minimum support price for minor forest produce, which was launched by the Patnaik government in January.

They claimed that tribal communities are experiencing uncertainty and fear, with development halted under the BJP administration.

Noting the ongoing protests for forest land rights across the state, Bisi said, "Tribal development has become a distant dream under the BJP government."

Additionally, the BJD representatives criticised the 18 per cent GST imposed on kendu leaves, which approximately 8 lakh tribals collect in western and central Odisha. They accused the BJP-led Central government of ignoring calls for GST exemption.

"Though we have been demanding exemption of GST on kendu leaves, the BJP government at the Centre ignored it," they said.

The BJD also claimed that several communities are still awaiting tribal status and also alleged neglect in the recruitment of junior teachers, with officials citing a lack of suitable candidates.

Bisi countered, "If the country can elect a tribal President and the state a tribal chief minister, it's inaccurate to claim there are no suitable candidates for teaching posts."

Rejecting BJD's allegations, BJP spokesperson Anil Biswal alleged that attempts were made in the past by the Patnaik government to seize tribal land through an ordinance, which was retracted following opposition from the saffron party.

"The then Patnaik government was forced to withdraw the ordinance in the face of stiff opposition by the BJP," Biswal said.

He referenced violent incidents involving tribal communities during land acquisition in Kalinganagar.

Biswal added that the BJD's defeat in the schedule areas during the 2024 elections indicates a rejection by tribal voters.

Govt betrayed beneficiaries of social security schemes: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The state Congress Wednesday criticised the BJP government in the state for allegedly betraying the beneficiaries of social security schemes by altering its pre-election promises of increasing pension.

Senior Congress leader Jayadev Jena said the BJP had vowed to raise the monthly social security pension to ₹3,500 in its manifesto but later modified this commitment, limiting the increase to those aged over 80 and persons with over 80 per cent disabilities.

Jena said very few people fit this narrow criteria, arguing that this decision effectively betrays other beneficiaries aged 60 to 79. "It seems the government does not want to enhance social security pensions for the people of Odisha," he said.

He also criticised the state government over a recent incident involving a 70-year-old woman who had to crawl nearly 2 km to her panchayat office to

collect her pension.

A video of Pathuri Dehury, from Raisunan gram panchayat in Keonjhar district, went viral, prompting Jena to express concern about the socio-economic conditions in the CM's home district.

Jena, who hails from Keonjhar, described the district as neglected across various sectors, including health and education, despite its significant mineral wealth contributing substantial revenue to the state.

He noted issues such as high school dropout rates, with over 80 per cent of residents living below the poverty line, and a lack of qualified doctors and teachers.

Current government data indicates that 36.75 lakh beneficiaries receive social security pensions under the Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY), while 20.33 lakh are covered under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).

The government plans to increase the pension amount for about 5.26 lakh beneficiaries who are either over 80 or have significant disabilities, it was learnt.

Improved support for women farmers need of hour: CIWA

Arun Kumar Panda, Head of Division of Gender, Family and Community Studies at CIWA, emphasises the stark disparities faced by women in agriculture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: In a push for gender equality in India's agriculture sector, a senior official from Odisha-based Central Institute for Women in Agriculture (CIWA) Wednesday stressed the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies and improved support for women farmers.

Speaking to PTI, Arun Kumar Panda, Head of Division of Gender, Family and Community Studies at CIWA, emphasised the stark disparities faced by women in agriculture.

"Compared to men, women are lagging in agriculture—a reality often referred to as a gender issue," Panda stated.

The official pointed out several key areas where women farmers face significant challenges.

In case of land rights, only 13.75 per cent of women have land registered in their names, a direct result of patriarchal family structures. This is impacting their ability to access loans and other resources.

They lack access to resources, the official said. He added extension services, crucial for agri-



cultural development, predominantly cater to men, with mere 18-20 per cent reaching women farmers.

As far as technology adoption is concerned, women farmers often lag in adopting new technologies due to lack of awareness and limited education, he added.

To address these issues, Panda called for a multi-pronged approach.

He said there is a need to prioritise collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data to inform policy decisions; enhance women's financial inclusion through improved access to finance, cooperatives, and microcredits; and establish robust monitoring mechanisms to evaluate gender policies effectively.

He also called for increase in number of women in extension services, promoting 'gender-sensitive extension services'.

CIWA, the only institute under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) dedicated to women farmers, is at the forefront of developing women-friendly agricultural innovations. The institute has created various tools to reduce drudgery, including a manual

hand ridger and a pedal-operated coconut dehusker.

Addressing the absence of women in high-level agricultural roles, Panda noted a shift in narrative from women's development to women-led development. "The time will come, and definitely this problem will also be addressed," he asserted.

The CIWA official stressed the importance of targeted policies to promote gender equality, calling for increased government investment in female-specific training and skill development programmes.

As India strives for agricultural progress, bridging the gender gap emerges as a critical step towards inclusive growth and empowerment of women farmers.

Nadda to visit Odisha today



Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: BJP president JP Nadda will be on a one-day visit to Odisha Thursday, a senior party leader said.

State BJP leader Jatin Mohanty said Nadda is scheduled to arrive in Bhubaneswar around 10.30 am.

He would hold discussions on the BJP's ongoing membership drive with party MPs, MLAs and workers from 11.30 am to 1 pm.

Following that, Nadda would visit Suando village in Puri district, the birthplace of Utkalmuni Pandit Gopabandhu Das in the afternoon before leaving for New Delhi, Mohanty said.



SHOWCASING TALENT: Artistes perform at state level science drama competition organised at Regional Science Centre in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Workshop to strengthen FPOs



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: A state-level consultation on strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) for sustainable growth and market integration was organised by Nirman at a City hotel here Wednesday.

The event brought together over 25 organisations, including Pradan, Harsha Trust, Tata Steel Foundation, and GIZ, to discuss the challenges and opportunities in promoting FPOs.

Nirman's executive director, Prasant Mohanty and state programme officer Arunima Swain, along with Ouat extension ed-

ucation dean PJ Mishra and joint director Sarbani Das were present at the inaugural event.

Mohanty, in his address, emphasised the challenges faced by the Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) in supporting FPOs. "This platform offers a great opportunity to learn from each other's experiences," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Swain highlighted the need for collaboration between the government, private sectors, and CSOs to make FPOs more sustainable. "Lack of financial resources and other constraints are hindering the effective functioning of many FPOs," she noted.

Heavy rain likely for next two days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The state is likely to experience heavy rainfall for two days under the influence of the low-pressure area over Westcentral and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal (BoB) off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday.

IMD has issued yellow warning of heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts with light to moderate rain or thundershower at many places across the state Thursday.

Light to moderate rain or thundershower may also occur at most places in North Odisha and at many places in South Odisha, the weather agency said.

STANFORD-ELSEVIER RANKING

IIT Bhub faculty among world's top 2% scientists

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: In a major achievement for the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar, six of its distinguished faculty members have been recognised amongst the top 2 per cent of scientists worldwide, according to the prestigious global ranking released by Stanford University in collaboration with Dutch academic publishing company, Elsevier.

The recognition places IIT Bhubaneswar's faculty amongst the most impactful researchers globally, solidifying the institution's reputation for excellence in research and innovation.

The recognised faculty members for the year 2024 are Subhransu Ranjan Samantaray, School of Electrical and Computer Sciences; Rajan Jha, School of Basic Sciences; P Dinakar, School of Infrastructure, Manas Mohan Mahapatra, School of Mechanical Sciences, Pattabhi Ramaiah Budarapu, School of Mechanical Sciences, and Barathram Ramkumar, School of Electrical and Computer Sciences.



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According to institute sources, the faculty members have been acknowledged for their groundbreaking research and high-impact publications, setting new benchmarks in their respective fields. Four of these faculty mem-

bers—Subhransu Ranjan Samantaray, Rajan Jha, P Dinakar, and VR Pediredi have also been recognised for their career-long contributions, adding further prestige to their recognition.

Institute director Shreepad Karmalkar expressed his pride and congratulated to the recognised faculty members saying, "This recognition is a testament to the high-calibre research being conducted at IIT Bhubaneswar. The faculty members continue to push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation, and their inclusion in this elite list reflects the institute's commitment to excellence in research and development."

Nadda unveils TCC at City AIIMS

THE EVENT MARKS A PIVOTAL STEP IN INDIA'S EFFORTS TOWARDS A TOBACCO-FREE SOCIETY, ALIGNED WITH THE LAUNCH OF TOBACCO FREE YOUTH CAMPAIGN 2.0

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda virtually inaugurated the Tobacco Cessation Centre (TCC) at AIIMS Bhubaneswar here Tuesday.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav was also virtually present in the event, which marks a pivotal step in India's efforts towards achieving a tobacco-free society, aligned with the launch of the Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 2.0.

The 60-day campaign aims to raise awareness and drive meaningful changes toward tobacco cessation among the youth of the nation.

Minister Nadda said that the initiative underscores the Central government's commitment to public health under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Institute's executive director



POST NEWS NETWORK

Ashutosh Biswas lauded the department of Psychiatry for spearheading the important initiative. He emphasised the need for expanding such services in collaboration with other departments in the future to ensure holistic management of patients.

Biswas also called for patient awareness campaigns to strengthen the effectiveness of the TCC services.

Department of Psychiatry head Biswa Ranjan Mishra reiterated the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration for effective tobacco cessation. He stressed that the centre will provide a comprehensive approach, integrating pharmacological and psychosocial support to aid patients in overcoming tobacco dependence.

The fully functional TCC will

be managed by trained psychiatrists and offer specialised treatments for both smoked and chewable forms of tobacco through medications and counselling.

Given the widespread use of tobacco in India and its association with numerous medical conditions, the TCC is envisioned as a one-stop centre providing multidisciplinary care and support for individuals looking to quit tobacco, institute officials said.

Through a combination of medications, counselling, and psychosocial interventions, the TCC aims to support users in overcoming their addiction, thus paving the way for a healthier, tobacco-free future, they said.

Notably, tobacco use, both in smoked and chewable forms, continues to be a leading cause of preventable illness and death worldwide. The launch of the TCC provides individuals struggling with tobacco dependence access to expert care and guidance.

60th doctorate to Samanta

Bhubaneswar: Educationist, social activist and KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta was conferred with an honorary doctorate by Assam Down Town University in Guwahati Wednesday. This is the 60th honorary doctorate for Samanta. The honour was presented during the university's 11th convocation ceremony. The university said that Samanta has been given the honour for his remarkable contribution in the fields of education, health, tribal development, art, culture, literature and rural development. Due to personal commitments, Samanta was unable to attend the ceremony in person, but a representative accepted the award on his behalf.

2-day training for Jala Sathis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: A two-day skill up-gradation programme for the Jala Sathis was organised by the Odisha Urban Academy, with technical support from Urban Management Centre here, Wednesday.

The programme aims to empower Jala Sathis with advanced skills and knowledge to ensure efficient and sustainable management of water services across urban areas in the state.

Housing and Urban Development principal secretary Usha Padhee interacted

with the participants and highlighted the pivotal role played by them in community-based water management practices and applauded their dedication. Padhee emphasised the importance of continuous skill enhancement to meet the growing demands of urban water governance and deliver quality services to the public.

"Jala Sathis are the bridge between the administration and the community. By equipping them with the right skills, we ensure a robust water management system, that is both efficient and sustainable," said Padhee.

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar/ New Delhi, Sept 25: Odia social activist Trilochan Sahoo, who works for conservation of nature, has recently adopted an innovative approach to draw people's attention towards tree plantation in New Delhi.

Wearing a T-shirt with words 'I am the tree speaking' written on it, he stood by holding a plant in one hand and a placard on the other highlighting the importance of plantation.

Trilochan said that he will display his message at prominent places in the Capital including the Rashtrapati Bhavan, India Gate, Parliament House and IIT Delhi.



"I will be campaigning for five days at different places in Delhi to take forward the message of protecting wildlife along with planting trees," he said.

"I will request people to plant at least one sapling on their

birthday and nurture it," the social activist said.

Talking about his plans, Trilochan said that he will visit various districts of Odisha and other states of India to spread the message of nature conservation.

Trilochan is a native of Keonjhar district and, to his credit, planted thousands of trees and created a mini forest in his village Fakirpur.

He has also conducted various awareness activities for conservation of forests and wildlife.

Trilochan has completed his Master of Finance & Control (MFC) from Utkal University, Odisha and completed post graduation in Economics. He is now pursuing PhD in Economics.

World Bank to study state's infra strategy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: The World Bank, in collaboration with the Centre, has identified Odisha as one of the four states for study of infrastructure strategy in order to give recommendations on raising private investment for the same.



In this regard, a five-member team from the World Bank, comprising senior PPP (Public Private Partnership) specialists and advisors, participated in a meeting, under the chairpersonship of Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg, at the Lok Seva Bhawan here, Wednesday.

Secretaries of key infrastructure departments and officials from the directorate of PPP and Finance also attended the meeting and gave key suggestions on various areas where private participation is beneficial for the state.

Garg briefed the delegation about the revamped PPP policy, institutional framework for appraisal of PPP projects and recent initiatives undertaken by the department to enhance greater private sector participation. She stressed on the growing aspirations of the state and how 'Vision 2036' is crucial for the state's recognition at the national and global level.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

I, Prakash Chandra Sahoo, state that in my Aadhaar No. xxxx xxxx 7456 my name recorded as Prakash Chandra Sahoo but in my Board Certificate my name has been recorded as Prakash Chandra Sahoo. I declare by this affidavit No. 999 Dtd. on 13.09.24 that Prakash Chandra Sahoo and Prakash Chandra Sahoo both the names are same and one person for all purposes.

TPSODL empowers students with industry-relevant skills

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Sept 25: In a significant step towards empowering the youth with industry-relevant skills, Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) recently launched a series of technical training programmes at government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Berhampur and Hinjilicut.

The initiative is a part of an ongoing collaboration between TPSODL and ITIs across Southern Odisha, aimed at preparing students for future opportunities in the power sector.

The inaugural events, held at the respective campuses of the ITIs, were marked by the presence of TPSODL CEO Amit Kumar Garg, alongside senior officials from the organisation. Govt ITI Hinjilicut principal Muktirani Samanta and govt ITI Berhampur principal Ranjan Kumar Parida joined the event and expressed enthusiasm for the transformative potential of the programme.

As part of the state government's flagship initiative, 'Skilled in Odisha', the partnership aims to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical expertise. Students will be trained



using modules aligned with the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), ensuring that they receive standardised and top-quality instruction. The training curriculum has been designed to provide hands-on experience, combining theoretical insights with practical exposure at TPSODL's

cutting-edge facilities.

The students will have the opportunity to train at TPSODL's highly advanced infrastructure, including the HoTT Centre, Power System Control Centre, Smart Meter Lab, and 33/11 KV sub-stations. The practical exposure is designed to familiarise them with real-world operations,

safety protocols, and the latest technology, significantly boosting their employability.

In addition, graduates of the programme will have the opportunity to secure placements with TPSODL, offering a valuable pathway to employment. By building a skilled workforce, TPSODL is not only contributing to the development of Southern Odisha but also supporting the vision of a self-reliant India.

Currently, TPSODL has partnered with ITIs in Berhampur, Hinjilicut, Rayagada, Jeypore, and Boudh, with plans to expand further.

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Demanding ₹100cr, man keeps school under siege for 5 days

'THIS IS MY HOUSE'



Munda's demands include a residential building with a boundary wall and garden, besides property worth ₹100 crore in the village

The authorities needed 60 personnel of the police, fire brigade and district voluntary force, besides a drone camera and an iron mesh to capture him

house" several times. Munda had barged into the school Saturday after an altercation with the headmaster. Following the argument, he hit the headmaster with a stone using his slingshot, drove him out and locked the school building from inside, police said.

When a group of local youths tried to climb the roof, he threatened them.

After the police were informed, inspector in charge (IIC) of Mahulpada police station, Suresh Chandra Pradhan, reached the spot with his team.

Munda hit Pradhan on a palm with an arrow when he tried to climb the roof using a ladder. He needed hospitalisation. Another police officer was also injured by Munda.

Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Bonai, Swaraj Devta, then reached the spot along with fire brigade personnel. Rourkela SP Brijesh Ray said a drone camera was used to pinpoint his location on the roof.

Finally, a section of the policemen guarding the school building kept him occupied on one side of the roof, fire brigade and district voluntary force personnel reached there from another side.

They used an iron mesh which can stop arrows and stones to capture the man, police said.

For the past five days, Munda has been having the ration stored for the students.



STILL IN FASHION: Two persons selling daily use bamboo wares in front of Maneswar block office at Malatigunderpur in Sambalpur district, Wednesday

PNN & AGENCIES

Sundargarh, Sept 25: Demanding a house and other property for himself from the government, a man in Sundargarh district has kept a school under siege for five days and injured three people with arrows and stones for coming close to him, an officer said.

The authorities needed 60 personnel of the police, fire brigade and district voluntary force, besides a drone camera and an iron mesh to capture him Wednesday evening.

The tribal man, a resident of Phuljar village, was arrested and taken to the local police station.

He has used his bow and arrow and a slingshot to injure two policemen and the school headmaster, respectively, since Saturday afternoon when he vir-

tually took over the three-storied building.

The school was not functioning from Monday and students were attending classes in a nearby institute.

With a bow and arrows, a slingshot and stones, Dhani Munda has been staying on the terrace of the Badjal Government Primary School under the jurisdiction of Mahulpada police station.

He dropped a piece of paper writing his demands on it when the police through public address system asked him what he wanted to leave the school building.

Munda demanded a residential building with a boundary wall and garden for him, besides property worth ₹100 crore in the village, the officer said.

During his stay on the terrace, he shouted "This is my

Man awarded 3-yr RI for sexually abusing minor girl

Balasore: Special Judge, POC SO Ranjan Kumar Sutar Wednesday sentenced a man to undergo three years of Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) for molesting a minor girl. The convict identified as Ajay Nath had molested a minor girl of Khantapara area inside a shop. The parents of the minor girl lodged an FIR with local police June 28, 2023. The accused was arrested, and police submitted a chargesheet. The accused was tried under the provisions of POC SO and other sections of IPC. The court, after examining eight witnesses and 11 exhibits, pronounced the verdict, Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda said.

CM announces assistance for flood-hit people in Balasore

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has announced financial assistance for the people affected by recent floods in Balasore district, according to an official statement.

Majhi visited the flood-hit areas in Balasore September 18 and held a meeting with the district administration.

After returning from the areas, he directed officers concerned to provide relief to the affected people, the statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said late Tuesday.

According to the announcement, assistance of ₹1.20 lakh will be provided for each household whose residence was completely damaged in the flood, while ₹6,500 has been earmarked for each partially damaged 'pucca' house, ₹4,000 for partially damaged 'kucha' house, ₹8,000 for hut and ₹3,000 for damage of cowshed.

Small and marginal farmers, who have suffered crop loss of 33 per cent and above will get an input subsidy, an assistance to compensate for the investment made in agriculture, of ₹8,500 per hectare of land in non-irrigated areas.

Those having land in areas under assured irrigation facili-



ties will get assistance of ₹17,000 per hectare.

The aid for crop loss can be provided for a maximum of two hectares of land.

Financial assistance of ₹6,000 will be given to fishermen for the repair of partially-damaged boats and ₹3,000 for fishnets. They will also get ₹15,000 for the replacement of completely damaged boats and ₹4,000 for fishnets, the CMO said.

Those associated with fish farming will get assistance of ₹10,000 per hectare for de-silting and repair of damaged fish seed farms.

For loss of livestock, farmers will be provided ₹37,500 per milch cow or buffalo,

₹32,000 per draught animal, ₹20,000 per calf and ₹4,000 per goat.

Under the handicrafts/handloom sector, assistance of ₹5,000 per artisan for the replacement of tools/equipment and ₹5,000 for loss of raw material/goods will be provided.

After getting reports on damage to public properties like schools, hospitals, electricity lines, water supply connections and irrigation projects, the state government will provide financial assistance to the department concerned, the statement added.

IIC shunted out for molesting colleague

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 25: The inspector in-charge (IIC) of Bandhamunda police station under Rourkela police district was transferred Wednesday to the district police headquarters on charge of molesting a female colleague at the police station.

It is alleged that the accused, identified as Ashok Das, IIC of Bandhamunda police station, had been molesting the female colleague for the last few days. The matter came to the fore after the survivor filed a written complaint before the DIG, Brijesh



Rai, three-four days back.

Rai ordered for an investigation into the charges by forming a probe committee. Later, the

IIC was transferred to the district police headquarters, DSP Nirmla Mohapatra said.

When contacted, Das rejected

the charges. He said the concerned woman police official was asked to report for duty at another place, September 17. However, she allegedly neglected in attending her duty and was found sitting at the police station.

Moreover, she submitted a leave application for 10 days ahead of the Nuakhai festival but her leave application was turned down. As a result, she nursed a grudge and has made false allegations in his name, the IIC said. "I have every faith in the justice delivery system," he said demanding a fair probe into the charges.

Bidding process over for rly tracks in Sundargarh



Work on Talcher-Bimalagarh railway link to commence soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 25: It seems that the delay in Talcher-Bimalagarh railway link in Sundargarh district is finally over. Eight companies participated Monday in the bidding process for the laying the tracks between Bimalagarh and Mahudhia. People are hopeful that with the bidding over, any one of the eight will be allotted the project and work will begin on the 35-kilometre stretch between Bimalagarh and Mahudhia.

The bidding process was conducted at the East Coast Railway office in Bhubaneswar. Among those who participated in the bidding, only one company is from Jharsuguda.

The project had been lying in a limbo for quite some time now. However, with the BJP coming to power in Odisha, the project, which was launched in the early 1960s, got a new lease of life. Since the unveiling of the plan to build the new railway tracks, land acquisition has been a major issue for both ECoR and the state government.

Railway officials said that the tender for the work will be allotted next month. They added that the laying of 35-km track at a cost of ₹535 crore will be completed by October 2026. Sources in the district administration and ECoR informed that Sundargarh Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan has been entrusted with the responsibility of solving the contentious land issues. ECoR sources also informed that the Railway Ministry is keen to complete the work within the scheduled time frame.

Truck runs over woman, 6 goats

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Sept 25: A woman and her six goats were killed on the spot when a trailer-truck ran over them. The deceased has been identified as Gurubari Bag, 55. The mishap occurred Tuesday near Amalipalli bypass under Sundargarh police station limits. The driver of the truck fled the spot after the accident.

Enraged locals and family members of the deceased blocked the road where the accident had occurred demanding compensation and action against the errant driver. Traffic came to a standstill on the bypass for more than two hours. However, later on, they called off their demonstration when police officials assured them that their demands would be looked into.

A bystander informed that truck was travelling at more than the permissible speed limits and had jumped the divider before running over the woman and her goats. "I saw the truck-trailer coming at high speed from the opposite direction. Suddenly the driver lost control and jumped the divider before running over the victim," he said.

There can be no doubt that accidents are on the rise in this town and its outskirts. Eleven women suffered injuries Monday when the auto-rickshaw they were travelling in overturned near Biramitrapur.

All QC teams from RSP receive awards



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 25: All the 30 Quality Circle teams of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) were awarded under different categories in the Chapter Level Quality Circle Competition held under the Chapter Convention of Quality Concepts at Rourkela, September 22 and 23. In all 140 teams and 730 participants from different organisations of Jharkhand and Odisha were in the fray in this event.

Notably, RSP was awarded for highest participation in QC category. In all 30 teams from RSP including three teams from Odisha Group of Mines (OGOM) participated in this competition, out of which 27 teams secured Gold awards, while three bagged Silver awards. Team Ankur from Pipe Plants claimed the prestigious JK Das Rolling Trophy in the quality circle stream for scoring the highest marks, demonstrating all round excellence.

The second best award in the category was bagged by the

Shrusti Quality Circle team of Oxygen Plant of RSP. Besides this, eight teams of RSP were also awarded in the model competition held during the convention. RSP team members also excelled individually to bag numerous awards in various competitions like essay writing, slogan, poem writing and quiz. Chandan Samal, GM (RCL) coordinated the QC teams from RSP.

The teams that bagged Gold awards are 'Prayas', 'Shrushti' and 'Ignite' from Oxygen Plant, 'Tejas' from New Plate Mill, 'Samruddhi' and 'Dynamic' from Plate Mill, 'Samarpan' from Steel Melting Shop-I, 'Agranee', 'Sambhab' and 'Pinnacle' from Raw Material Handling Plant, 'Lakshyam' from RCL, 'Pragati' from Instrumentation, 'Ekam' from C&IT, 'Shakti' from Power Distribution, 'Creative' from SMS-II, 'Vijeta' from Sintering Plant -I, 'Srujan' from Sintering Plant -II, 'Megamind' from Roll Shop, 'Nishkarsh' from Air Conditioning, 'Ankur' and 'Avishkar' from Pipe Plant, 'Aarohan' from Hot Strip Mill-2, 'Pioneer' from E&A, 'Utkarsh' from Blast Furnace, 'Karmveer' from Coke Ovens and 'Tejas' and 'Prayas Kaizen' from BIM.

The silver awardees are 'Prahari' from the Communication Engineering Department, and AROHI, LQC from BIM.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. SNTPBBS-072024-RSSISURVEY

Name of Work: DESKTOP RADIO SIGNAL STRENGTH INDICATOR (RSSI) SURVEY AND PLANNING FOR PROVISION OF 4G LTE-R NETWORK IN LOW DENSITY RAILWAY NETWORK OF EAST COAST RAILWAY. (APPROX. 1611 KM)

Approximate Advertised Value: ₹ 16,14,222.00, EMD: ₹ 32,300.00, Period of Completion: 60 Days.

Date & time of tender closing: At 1030 hrs. on 18.10.2024.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note : The prospective bidders are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.

Assistant Signal & Telecom Engineer/ PR-71/CH/24-25 (P-J)/Bhubaneswar

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Phone: 0663-2540057, 9438493125, 943849126
E-Mail : sambalpur@ktbank.com
Website : www.karnatakabank.com
CIN : L85110KA1924PLC001128

NOTICE TO THE LOCKER HIRES/ ALL THE CUSTOMERS

We are pleased to inform that the Karnataka Bank Sambalpur Branch, Purohit Complex, Budharaja Area, Main Ainthapali Road -768004, State-Odisha, along with existing onsite ATM is proposed to be shifted to New Premises at Heritage Building Plot No-80, beside Shreeleathers Showroom, Ainthapali Chowk, Sambalpur - 768004 (Odisha) on 04.10.2024 for giving better service.

In this connection you are requested to empty your locker, two days prior to the date of shifting, so that during shifting of the locker cabinet, the items/articles kept inside your locker unit do not get damaged. You can make use of the same locker unit in the new premises from the date of shifting of the branch. Hence all the Customers of our Bank are requested to vacate the items/articles kept in locker in order to avoid damage to the same. We regret for the inconvenience caused to you in this regard and request you to bear with us. Please note that we will not be responsible for the possible loss/damage to the articles/items kept inside the lockers, during transportation.

Date: 26.09.2024
Place: Sambalpur
By Order
Branch Manager

FOCUS WORKPLACE STRESS

BREAKING THE SILENCE



Renowned MNCs despite offering attractive remuneration package and alluring incentives, place immense pressure on white-collar professionals in India, pushing many to the brink

As the nation continues to discuss the toxic work culture in the corporate sector, following the recent outcry over the death of EY executive Anna Sebastian Perayil due to excessive workload, another tragic incident has emerged in Chennai. A techie named Karthikeyan, who had been working at a Pallavaram-based firm for the past 15 years, was found electrocuted, entangled in live wires. His family revealed that he had been battling depression due to work pressure and was on medication. We are often overwhelmed by a barrage of questions that disturb our minds, yet we find no answers because we prioritise competition over positive co-habitation. These recent incidents are not new to us; we have long ignored the sensitivity of the issue, waiting for more such tragedies to occur.



Bijayani Mishra

WITH LATEST DATA SHOWING A SHARP RISE IN SUICIDES, EMPLOYERS ARE URGED TO REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS AND TRAIN MANAGERS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES' MENTAL WELLBEING

The issue of suicides among MNC professionals in India is indeed alarming. A report of Business Insider (2022) reveals that, India's major cities, that attract many people seeking better job opportunities and livelihoods, have unfortunately become hotspots for suicides. The four major cities - Delhi (2,760), Chennai (2,689), Bangalore (2,292), and Mumbai (1,436) together account for nearly 35.5% of all suicides reported from 53 cities. With the latest data showing a sharp rise in suicides in India, employers are being urged to reduce workplace stress and train managers to support employees' mental wellbeing.

Factors such as long hours, tight deadlines, heavy workload, job insecurity, and conflicts with colleagues or bosses contribute significantly to this issue. Notably, renowned MNCs despite offering attractive remuneration package and alluring incentives, place immense pressure on white-collar professionals in India, pushing many to the brink. A typical busy office often reveals signs of high work-related stress, including long hours, job strain, and poor future prospects. These factors are vividly illustrated in the letter by Anita Augustine,

the mother of the late Anna Sebastian, which details the toxic work environment and prevalent work pressure at the Pune EY office.

After this incident, I spoke with some of my friends working in MNCs and learned some daunting facts about their work culture. They highlighted how companies glorify long working hours and normalise working on weekends. They also mentioned that employees are expected to be ready with their systems even on off days to provide data and figures whenever required. From these observations, it is clear that these companies operate like total institutions, leaving little room for employees to breathe. In some cases, they are strictly allowed to carry their laptops even on their planned vacations and leaves.

In his 1897 book, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, Durkheim describes suicide as a 'social fact' and highlights how high levels of regulation and integration can drive individuals to take their own lives. This classic work remains relevant today, as we observe employees in MNCs being treated like robots, compelled to work in highly regulated environments, and forced to conform to corporate culture.

Sometime ago, Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy had suggested that Indians work a minimum of 70 hours a week for

two to three years to offset the economic slowdown caused by the COVID lockdown. This proposal faced widespread criticism, with opponents citing studies that show regularly working long hours can lead to severe physical and mental stress, and is a significant risk factor for increasing suicidal thoughts and intentions. Recent statistics highlight a dramatic rise in suicides among professionals. According to alarming data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2021, approximately 50 people in India are believed to commit suicide every week due to career or workplace problems. The NCRB report also revealed that a total of 164,033 people died by suicide in India in 2021, marking a 7.2% increase compared to 2020. However, many experts believe that the available statistics on suicides in India are underestimated and unreliable. Numerous suicides are not included in official statistics for various reasons. Additionally, if a suicide occurs outside of work hours or away from the workplace, it may not be classified as work-related, even if the victim's family and police suspect that job-related stress or other factors contributed to the death.

While many Indian companies are still not fully aware of the risks associated with anxiety and depression among em-

ployees, and how to prevent, reduce, and manage these issues, some handful of employers recognise the importance and benefits of fostering a mentally healthy workplace culture. The term "handful" reflects how we often overlook mental health issues, not viewing them as legitimate concerns. We openly discuss physical health problems, but mental health remains stigmatised and less accepted in society. Many of us worry about being judged by colleagues or having our struggles labeled as 'mental' and shared with others. This fear leads to reluctance to speak openly about our feelings. It's crucial to recognise that our brains are constantly active, and just like our bodies, they can experience challenges. We need to foster an environment where mental health is acknowledged and discussed without stigma.

Both large and small firms should initiate safety and well-being programmes, emphasising their commitment to addressing suicide directly with employees. A dedicated day should be planned to enhance the mental and emotional well-being of associates. Additionally, multi-nationals should promote a 24/7 helpline, peer-based counseling, professional counseling, staff support, and guidance on managing mental and physical health. Each location should have a specific local advice line for professional counseling. To combat work-related stress and employee isolation, companies should implement team-building and enjoyable activities in the workplace. Leadership should emphasise humility and thoughtfulness, considering the impact of their actions on local communities, the planet, and future generations.

The key lessons from the recent incidents should be to create a conducive environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns and feedback without being judged or bullied.

The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Maitreyi College, University of Delhi

Economics & Empathy

The outcome of November's US presidential election will have profound consequences for democracies worldwide and for geopolitical flashpoints like Ukraine, the Middle East, and Taiwan. But the potential economic fallout could be equally far-reaching. In today's interconnected global economy, with supply chains stretching across continents, policy missteps in the United States could reverberate around the world, fueling trade wars, inflation, and unemployment.

Election campaigns are rarely conducive to sound policymaking, as candidates often make ambitious promises without considering their feasibility. This is especially true of the 2024 election, with studies suggesting that both Democratic and Republican policies are likely to increase the deficit over the next decade.

The focus on short-term fixes and immediate relief could have a significant impact on America's long-term fiscal health. According to the Penn Wharton Budget Model, Vice President Kamala Harris' economic policies could raise the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion by 2034. While alarming, this figure pales in comparison to the potential impact of former President Donald Trump's proposed policies, which are expected to increase the deficit by \$5.8 trillion over the same period.

Harris and President Joe Biden have been heavily criticised for presiding over the highest inflation in 40 years. But inflation has fallen dramatically since peaking in June 2022, prompting the Federal Reserve to cut its policy interest rate by 50 basis points last week. Despite this, Trump continues to attack the Biden administration over price increases, promising to tame inflation by, for example, expanding domestic oil drilling.

While macroeconomic experts are not always right when it comes to potential policy outcomes, there are times when their concerns are well-founded. Trump's economic proposals are a case in point.

Consider Trump's proposed tariffs. If elected, he plans to impose a 10 per cent tariff on all imports to the US and a 60 per cent tariff on Chinese goods. He also aims to curb outsourcing to foreign producers, promising to "build American, buy American, and hire American" and threatening to "punish those who ship jobs and factories overseas or to places like Mexico."

Although targeted tariffs can sometimes make economic sense, applying them across the board would inevitably drive up costs and create inefficiencies. Discouraging outsourcing may appear beneficial, but blocking US companies from accessing cheap labour abroad would make American products less competitive globally, harming the economy and reducing demand for labour in the long run.

The current debate about outsourcing is often framed as a battle between workers in wealthy countries and those in developing economies. But this overlooks the fact that outsourcing is fundamentally a labour-versus-capital issue. Every time a job is moved overseas, profits increase, benefiting owners while workers bear the costs. The solution is to tax capital and redirect some of the revenue to workers without sacrificing competitiveness. Yet Trump, who has pledged to cut corporate taxes, has embraced the opposite approach.

Argentina's experience should serve as a cautionary tale about the threat that Trump's policies pose to America's economic prospects. In the early twentieth century, Argentina experienced remarkable growth, with some even predicting that it would eventually surpass the US economically. But in 1930, José Félix Uriburu launched a military coup and declared himself president. Backed by the far-right Nationalists, he restricted immigration and nearly doubled tariffs by 1933. Consequently, Argentina's economy stagnated, and its hopes of rivaling the US were dashed.

To be sure, macroeconomic policymaking is inherently fraught with error and uncertainty. This is why simple correlations, such as pointing out that economic indicator Y worsened under President X, are misleading and largely irrelevant. Political leaders are not expected to know everything; they are expected to have empathy for ordinary people and base their decisions on sound reasoning and the best available scientific knowledge.

Trump falls far short of this ideal. His lack of empathy is evident in his dehumanising rhetoric, especially his claims that migrants are "poisoning the blood" of the country. Throughout his career, he has consistently shown disdain toward the disadvantaged.

At a time of rising geopolitical tensions and economic turmoil, the US needs a president who may not have all the answers to the world's problems but genuinely cares about ordinary people and approaches policy challenges with empathy, integrity, and humility. Only one candidate fits the bill.

The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University and a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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WISDOM CORNER

“Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while... you don't do things right once in a while... you do them right all the time. Winning is habit.”
VINCE LOMBARDI

“Nature is ever at work building and pulling down, creating and destroying, keeping everything whirling and flowing, allowing no rest but in rhythmical motion, chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another.”
JOHN MUIR

“A man who as a physical being is always turned toward the outside, thinking that his happiness lies outside him, finally turns inward and discovers that the source is within him.”
SOREN KIERKEGAARD

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1580:** After nearly three years at sea, English Admiral Francis Drake arrived in Plymouth Harbour, England, completing his circumnavigation of the world.

■ **1687:** During the bombardment of the Acropolis by Venetian forces, part of the Parthenon was destroyed in a powder explosion. 1810 Swedish Act of Succession is passed. The Swedish Act of Succession, also known as the 1810 Act of Succession was adopted by the Riksdag of the Estates. This act is part of the Swedish Constitution and regulates the succession of the Swedish Royal family.

■ **1815:** The Holy Alliance of Russia, Austria, and Prussia was formed, after the final defeat of Napoleon.

SPECTRUM POLITICS

To resign or not to resign

During the course of a hearing not long ago, a Supreme Court Bench had raised a query whether the incarcerated Chief Minister of National Capital Territory (NCT) could or could not sign on official files while sitting inside the prison he was lodged in. The hearing pertained to a petition, filed by eligible convicts, against undue delay in disposal of their application for remission of jail term. The remission file had been gathering dust for want of signature of the imprisoned CM. The question should have ideally been broader - whether an imprisoned person can continue to hold the chair of CM.

The imprisoned CM has since secured bail from the SC and thereafter resigned from the post. The resignation appears to have been prompted by the bail conditions and political strategy. However, the larger question about continuity in office of an imprisoned CM needs to be addressed, should a similar scenario arise in future.

I have retired from a public sector bank where the service

rule stated that an employee behind bars for more than 24 hours was liable to be suspended from service without an ado. Moreover, a parallel departmental enquiry would have also ensued presuming the employee would have committed some act of omission or commission necessitating arrest by law-enforcement agencies. Here it had been many months but the imprisoned CM stayed ennobled, figuratively speaking, in the chair unscathed. The question that the SC Bench should have asked and answered was whether an imprisoned person could continue in the CM chair. If CM was wrongly arrested, he should have been let free by the courts immediately. Otherwise, the continuance of the imprisoned CM in chair was not tenable. If an arrested government employee is liable to be suspended from service at once without granting even a reasonable time to the accused to obtain bail, why the same rule should not apply to the head of government of NCT.

In another instance during the same period, a CM of a state, anticipating his arrest, resigned

from the post in the nick of time. By anointing his colleague as stop-gap CM, the tribal leader made sure that there would not be any governance deficit besides projecting optics of political morality. He resumed the mantle of CM only after getting bail from the High Court which had later been endorsed by the SC.

The Chief Minister of NCT, before himself being arrested, did not bat an eyelid to sack his cabinet colleagues when they were arrested. The same yardstick should have been applied to self also. How was the government of NCT running as the imprisoned CM had not been holding any cabinet meetings, nor been signing any official files?

A government employee is suspended immediately from service if arrested whether for misusing the office one is holding or for some purported crime in personal capacity. Here the arrest had been made for alleged corruption in official role. Therefore, the continuance in office was not tenable. In corruption cases the accused should ideally return to office only after

being exonerated from all charges. But because the trial process is unduly long, and there being suspicion of arrest arising out of political vendetta, one should at least wait for bail before returning to office. Can a government employee, howsoever higher in hierarchy, continue to hold the office he is accused of misusing for corrupt practices? The answer is big 'NO'.

The legal eagles can also ask many ancillary questions. Whether the CM will be treated on leave for the period he stayed in jail? Was the imprisoned CM getting all the pay and perks without discharging any of the duties? Was there an arrangement of officiating CM? If an officer of Chief Secretary level is arrested by agencies for purported corruption, will the officer continue to still be Chief Secretary while being in jail for months together? Ironically, the imprisoned CM himself was once a bureaucrat and is likely to be well-versed with the service rules.

The writer can be reached at X @CHANDER GUPTA



Chander Gupta

IN CORRUPTION CASES THE ACCUSED SHOULD IDEALLY RETURN TO OFFICE ONLY AFTER BEING EXONERATED FROM ALL CHARGES

Netanyahu problem

Sir, This refers to "Lebanon death toll reaches 550," OrissaPOST, Sept 25. Monday's deadly airstrikes by Israel in southern Lebanon mark a huge escalation in the 11-month-old conflict. But blame also lies with Hezbollah, which has been baiting Israel for months with Beirut doing little to rein in the militant group. The militant group's calculation was that it could continue low-level strikes against Israel in solidarity with Hamas in Gaza. This would stretch Tel Aviv's military resources and impact its economy, but its calculation went wrong. Hezbollah thought it could absorb whatever Israel threw at it. But the pager and walkie-talkie bombings last week hit the group hard. True, Mossad's modus operandi has raised worldwide concerns about weaponising everyday electronic devices. And Israel is earning itself international opprobrium by escalating another conflict on the Lebanese front. But at this point, Netanyahu just doesn't care. And US in election mode is unable to rein him in. Also, he made a clever calculation with Hezbollah. Arab nations - who were troubled by Israel's Gaza operation - will not mind the offensive against the Shia militant group. Plus, if Iran steps in at some point, it's a jackpot for Netanyahu as even a future US administration will be forced to stand with him. In all this, the world, not just West Asia, has a Netanyahu problem.

Whither justice

Sir, A film titled Sector 36, loosely based on the 2006 Nithari serial murders is now the talk of the town. This film is a poignant reminder that no animal is more dangerous than humans. The film is also a slap on the country's police which failed to provide ample evidence for almost two decades which led to the acquittal of the accused duo of Subhash Koli and Moninder Singh Pandher in 2023. After reading more about the case it came to light that Pandher who let insanity happen on his premises has friends in high places. If people can get away after committing such an inhuman crime then humanity and justice are just old-world concepts and we are being ruled by Satan.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

First-timers vote for better edu, jobs

THE ISSUES OF RESTORATION OF STATEHOOD, ARTICLE 370, REGIONAL DISCRIMINATION AND SECTARIAN POLITICS FAILED TO CATCH UP WITH THE YOUNG VOTERS IN J&K, AS THEY WANT JOBS, DEVELOPMENT, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND PEACE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Reasi (J&K), Sept 25: Jammu and Kashmir's Pir Panjal region witnessed an overwhelming response from first-time voters who enthusiastically participated in the second phase of Assembly elections Wednesday, aspiring for better job opportunities, skill education, development and good governance in the Union territory.

For them, it was not just a responsibility to exercise their right to vote but also a matter of great pride. A large number of such voters turned up at the booths, not only in urban but also in rural areas of Rajouri, Poonch, and Reasi districts.

The issues of restoration of statehood, Article 370, regional discrimination and sectarian politics failed to catch up with the young voters in J&K, as they want jobs, development, good governance, and peace.

Some returned to their native places from colleges and workplaces with a commitment to vote in their birthplaces across Rajouri, Poonch, and Reasi districts.

"I am very happy to vote for the first time in my life. It is my right and duty too. It makes me proud of my country that has given us the right to choose our representatives. I urge all youngsters to come out and vote to choose your government," said 21-year-old Ananya, an engineering student, who came from Jammu to Rajouri for voting.

Ananya, who cast her vote at Chatyar model polling station,

J&K ASSEMBLY POLLS



Key leaders whose fate will be determined in the second phase include former chief minister Omar Abdullah, JKPC president Tariq Hamid Karra, and J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina

emphasised the need for a government that would ensure not only peace and normalcy but also jobs for the youth, skill education, and development.

At a booth in Muradpur mountainous area of Rajouri district, many voters captured the memory of getting their index fingers inked for the first time at selfie points set up at the booth. Beyond participating in democracy's biggest celebration, these

new voters unanimously demanded better education and governance.

"Getting your finger inked is a deeply satisfying experience. I cherish it. It also comes with a sense of responsibility. Voting is our right to choose our representatives and the government that will shape our future. We must perform this constitutional duty," said Sarwar, another student.

"The youth are not concerned about politics. Our focus is on electing a government that prioritises better education, healthcare, and job opportunities," he added.

Divya Sharma, another first-timer at a model booth in Poonch, advocated for improvement in education, particularly in professional fields, and the establishment of a government medical college to produce doctors in Poonch.

Similarly, Tikshan Bali said she voted for development and good governance of Poonch. "I want the elected representatives to ensure better education, healthcare, communication infrastructure, tourism, and above all, job opportunities for youth."

Anwar Hussain, an undergraduate student from Mahore in Reasi district, also voting for the first time, emphasised the need for improved education, healthcare, and road infrastructure in their region. "We need jobs and skill education," he said.

In the second phase of elections in J&K, there are over 40,000 voters in the age group

of 18 to 19.

Voting began at 7 am across the 26 Assembly constituencies under tight security.

The second phase covers six districts — three in the Valley and three in the Jammu division.

In this phase, 93 candidates are contesting in Srinagar district, followed by 46 in Budgam district, 34 in Rajouri district, 25 in Poonch district, 21 in Ganderbal district, and 20 in Reasi district.

Key leaders whose fate will be determined in this phase include former chief minister Omar Abdullah, JKPC president Tariq Hamid Karra, and J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina.

Women voters concerned about rising electricity bills

The election campaign of all the major political parties in Jammu and Kashmir revolved around the revocation and restoration of the erstwhile state's special status but women voters are more worried about the rising electricity bill amounts. An elderly woman, waiting for her turn to vote at a polling station in the heart of Srinagar city Wednesday told a visiting foreign diplomat that she is concerned about the erratic electricity supply and the rising bill amounts. "The electricity supply has been destroyed and tariff meters have been installed. Now they say water consumption will also be metered," the woman in her late 60s told the US Deputy Chief of Mission in Delhi, Jorgan K Andrews. While the woman refused to identify herself, she said she spoke her heart out hoping that the diplomat's intervention will bring some relief to poor people from the rising electricity bill amounts. Unaware that foreign diplomats were invited here only to witness the Assembly poll process, the woman said she is hopeful that the "Angeez" will take up the matter with the Central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The second phase of polling for the three-phased Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election is being conducted Wednesday. A significant number of women voters queued up before the polling stations here. They were more concerned about basic amenities like electricity, water and foodgrains through the public distribution system. "The monthly electricity bill has risen from ₹1,400 last year to ₹2,750 this year. We want to vote for a government that will roll it back," Hasena Bano, a resident of the uptown Bazullah area, said. While the electricity tariffs have remained unchanged for several years in Jammu and Kashmir, the Power Development Corporation has revised the load agreements and that has nearly doubled the monthly bills of the consumers who are paying at a flat rate.

Hoarding biz thrives in J&K



Traders say it shows wider participation in polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 25: There has been a "remarkable boom" in the hoarding and printing business in Kashmir during these Assembly elections, local traders have said, underlining that the trend shows wider participation in the democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir where polls are often marred by boycott calls.

Local entrepreneurs say the demand for election banners, posters, pamphlets, and flags has surged to the levels never seen before in the Valley's electoral history.

Jammu and Kashmir is voting in three phases to elect an Assembly. The first phase was conducted September 18. The second and the third phases are scheduled Tuesday (September 25) and October 1, respectively.

Waseem Raja Khan, who has three-decade experience in the field and owns a printing press in Srinagar's Batamalo, says they are printing more than a

thousand posters and hoardings every day.

The scale and the visibility of campaign in these elections stand in stark contrast to previous ones when such promotional material were often used discreetly, he said.

"We offer a wide array of services including banners, hoardings, pamphlets, flags, and manifesto printing. This election cycle has seen a remarkable increase in the use of these material," Khan said.

He said nearly every political party has approached him for his services.

Another printer, who did not wish to be identified, said, "While there have been many elections in Kashmir, this one has significantly boosted our business. In the past, there was minimal printing for electoral campaigns."

The surge in the demand has translated into substantial financial growth for Khan's business, with an increase of over 40 percent in orders.

"We are working around the clock to meet the deadlines, often pulling night shifts to ensure timely delivery. Each day, we print over a thousand posters and hoardings," Khan said.

Delhi launches Winter Action Plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai Wednesday unveiled the city's Winter Action Plan, featuring a range of measures including drone monitoring, an intensified anti-dust campaign, formation of task forces, road-sweeping machines and deployment of 200 mobile anti-smog guns to combat air pollution under the theme "Mil Kar Chale, Pradushan Se Lade".

In a bid to combat Delhi's notorious winter pollution, the minister emphasised the collaborative effort between the government and people to tackle the problem, especially during winter when pollution levels typically spike.

Launching the Winter Action Plan, which is based on 21 key focus areas, Rai said, "This year, our theme is 'Mil Kar Chale, Pradushan Se Lade' (let's fight against pollution together)," and added that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the na-

COMBATING AIR POLLUTION



tional capital will start working on it from Wednesday itself.

Speaking on the plan, Rai highlighted that pollution sources from the neighbouring NCR areas also have a significant impact on Delhi's air quality. He, however, noted that pollution levels within the capital have improved over the years.

"In 2016, Delhi experienced 243 polluted days but last year, this number reduced to 159, marking a 34.6 per cent reduction in pollution," he said, citing of-

Special initiatives will include the 'Harit Padyatra', where participants will walk with plants on their heads to raise awareness about greenery

Additionally, an electric-vehicle parade and an anti-pollution march will be organised, along with the 'Red Light On, Gadi Off' campaign, to curb vehicular emissions

ficial reports.

The key points of the action plan include drone monitoring for pollution hotspots, a special task force, an anti-dust campaign, road sweeping and water sprinkling, awards for excellence, awareness campaigns, stubble-burning mitigation, a green war room and more, the minister said.

Highlighting these points, Rai said the pollution hotspots will be monitored with the help of drones. "For the first time, drones

will be used to monitor pollution hotspots in real time. Previously identified sources will now be tackled with greater precision," he said.

He added that a special six-member task force has been formed to oversee pollution levels and ensure immediate action at critical points across the city. The members of the task force include representatives from the Transport department, Environment department, Revenue department, Public Works department (PWD), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the traffic police, Rai informed.

The government will launch an anti-dust campaign from October 7, during which strict penalties will be imposed on violators. All construction sites larger than 500 square metres must be registered on a designated website before this date, he said.

The minister also mentioned that different activities will be organised as part of the awareness campaign.



Supporters during AAP leader Manish Sisodia's 'padyatra', in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Street artist Kureshi remembered for making art democratic

HANIF KURESHI, THE CREATIVE LEAD BEHIND INDIA'S FIRST PUBLIC ART DISTRICT AND THE VISIONARY ARTIST AND DESIGNER REMEMBERED FOR 'MAKING ART DEMOCRATIC', DIED FROM CANCER IN GOA SUNDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Cars slow down, feet falter and eyes swivel to the many murals on the walls of schools, hospitals and homes in Delhi's Lodhi Colony, the quiet neighbourhood that has come to be known as Lodhi Art District over the last 10 years.

Hanif Kureshi, the creative lead behind India's first public art district and the visionary artist and designer remembered for "making art democratic", died from cancer in Goa Sunday. He was 41.

The gigantic murals, some freshly painted and others at different stages of their fully-lived vibrant lives, stand as quiet witnesses to the passing of the man who started the street art movement across the country, beginning with the government staff residential colony in 2015.

Kureshi co-founded the St+art Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, with four others - Arjun Bahl, Akshat Nauriyal, Giulia Ambrogi and Thanish Thomas - in 2013. The aim was to paint the streets of India.

Talking about Kureshi's inspiration behind St+art Foundation and Lodhi Art District, Bahl said he always wanted to "make art truly democratic for all". "That was one of the reasons he started the project across the country. He was very passionate about Indian streets, he found them very colourful," Bahl told PTI.

He remembered Kureshi as a "very generous" person always ready to teach others about his art and technique.

The group started seven art



PAINTING ON THE WALL

districts across the country in the last 10 years, four of which are active - Lodhi art district, Ukkadam art district in Coimbatore, Mahim art district in Mumbai and Nochi art district in Chennai.

The pilot project in Delhi that started with two murals today has over 60 by national and international artists.

Kureshi, who was known for his style of creating a curious mix of typography and street culture in his art, had written in one of his Instagram posts that he wanted to take "art out of conventional galleries and museums and make it accessible for the public".

Despite being diagnosed with cancer about 15 months ago,

■ Kureshi co-founded the St+art Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, with four others - Arjun Bahl, Akshat Nauriyal, Giulia Ambrogi and Thanish Thomas -- in 2013

■ The aim was to paint the streets of India

■ Be it the tall Mahatma Gandhi portrait on the side of Delhi Police Headquarters at ITO, or the colourful caricatures of people on the walls of different metro stations in Bengaluru, or the black-and-white portraits of Nochikuppam residents in Chennai, the art inspired by Kureshi's movement belongs to one and all

Kureshi remained "upbeat and positive", Bahl said.

Condolence messages poured in as art lovers and artists remembered the "pioneer of graffiti" in India who left a legacy that will "continue to inspire generations".

St+art Foundation took to Instagram to share the news of Kureshi's demise. The post remembered Kureshi as "a gifted mentor, collaborator, friend, father and husband". "His vision and charisma helped shape the landscape of public art in India with the countless projects he has contributed to. He was dedicated to nurturing a community of artists, designers and creatives who trusted him with loyal guidance. He was a pioneering figure for graffiti and street art with his tags spread across cities he travelled to," the organisation said.

Be it the tall Mahatma Gandhi portrait on the side of Delhi Police Headquarters at ITO, or the colourful caricatures of people on the walls of different metro stations in Bengaluru, or the black-and-white portraits of Nochikuppam residents in Chennai, the art inspired by Kureshi's movement belongs to one and all.

One-year service bond for medics: Delhi gov't

New Delhi: Delhi government has introduced a one-year mandatory service bond for medical students passing out from All India Quota and State Quota in both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) programs from medical institutions in Delhi. Under this new regulation, students graduating from undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including super-specialty programs, will be required to serve for one year in medical institutions under the Government of the National Capital Territory (GNCT) of Delhi, according to the order issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department of the Delhi Government (GNCTD). At the time of admission, UG students will have to furnish a bond of 15 lakh, while PG and super-specialty students will submit a bond of 20 lakh.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.A-
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Superintending Engineer
U.K. Head Works Division, Kolabnagar (K), PIN - 764011
e-Procurement notice - SE-UKHWD-03/2024-25
Dated. 24.09.2024 (ONLINE)

1 Nature of Work	Procurement & installation of MLA 100 HP Pump for settling tank at Kolabnagar
2 No. of Work	01 (One) No.
3 Approximate Value of Works	11.65 Lakhs
4 Class of Contractor	Reputed Manufactures/Authorised firms by manufacturer/Authorised dealers by manufacturer
5 Period of completion	03 (Three) Calendar Months
6 Date & time of availability of bid documents on line	25.09.24 at 11.00 Hours to 04.10.24 upto 17.30 Hours
7 Date & Place of opening of Bid on line	05.10.24 (10.30 Hours) at office of the Superintending Engineer, UKHWD, Kolab Nagar
8 Name of the officer inviting Bids	Superintending Engineer, UKHWD, Kolab Nagar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation, if any, required will be published in Govt. website only.

Sd./Superintending Engineer
Upper Kolab Head Works Division,
Kolabnagar

OIPR-32015/11/0007/2425

national

of the day quote

Fire engines were used to clean over 75,000 houses, 330 km-long roads and also flush out sludge from the streets. This experience will be of immense utility to handle any future disasters of this kind

N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | CM, ANDHRA PRADESH

We have decided to make it mandatory for the street vendors to display their ID cards given by the street vendor's committee

VIKRAMADITYA SINGH | PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER

It was made clear that the recommendations cannot be implemented in the three districts of the Barak Valley and the autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule areas without the explicit consent of the people in those regions

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CM, ASSAM

SHORT TAKES

BJP leader among 3 held for ₹8cr scam

Guwahati: Assam BJP's SC Morcha secretary Ashim Kumar Das and two others have been arrested for allegedly duping several companies of nearly ₹8 crore by issuing fake government work orders, police said Wednesday. Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Barah said there is every likelihood that these fraudsters have cheated many businessmen by using the same modus operandi, the details of which will be revealed during further investigation.

23 structures razed in Bahaich

Bahaich (UP): The district administration here Wednesday bulldozed 23 illegal structures in a village in Kaiserganj even as residents mounted a protest against the demolition ordered by the high court. Villagers claimed that most of the affected houses belonged to members of the minority community who had lived there for generations. Several of the demolished structures were built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and some had shops in the front, locals claimed.

Two students electrocuted

Dhar (MP): Two teenage tribal students died after getting electrocuted at a government-run hostel in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, an official said Wednesday. The state government Wednesday suspended the superintendent of the hostel and an assistant commissioner of the Tribal Welfare Department besides ordering probe. The incident took place Tuesday night at the Senior Students Hostel run by the state Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department at Ringnod, some 50 km from the district headquarters, said the official.

Actor Sidhique moves top court

New Delhi: Malayalam film actor Sidhique Wednesday moved the Supreme Court challenging the Kerala High Court order denying him anticipatory bail in a rape case. The high court Tuesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of Sidhique in a rape case against him, saying that in view of the seriousness of the accusations he was facing, his custodial interrogation was inevitable for proper investigation of the crime.



For Musi (redevelopment) project, first they say ₹1.50 lakh crore would be spent, then they ₹50,000 crore, ₹ 70,000 crore. After listening to what they say, we are getting doubt...people are also getting doubts whether the real motive is Musi beautification or something else

KT RAMA RAO | BRS PRESIDENT

SPACE RACE

India and the UK Wednesday launched a Women in Space Leadership Programme (WiSLP) with an aim to create a gender-inclusive environment in the field of space sciences



Fresh trouble for Siddaramaiah

The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife B M Parvathi by MUDA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Sept 25: A Special Court here Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case, setting the stage for filing of an FIR against him.

The Special Court exclusively to deal with criminal cases related to former and elected MPs/MLAs issued the order directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna. The Court issued directions to take up the probe under section 156 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (that gives a magistrate the power to order an investigation into a cognisable offense.) and file the investigation report by December 24.

The HC had also vacated its August 19 interim order directing the Special Court to defer the decision on complaints against the Chief Minister, giving the green signal for ordering a probe.

It had dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of the Governor's August 16 order granting approval for investigation under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988.

Reacting to the Special Court order, Siddaramaiah reiterated that he was ready to face an investigation.

"Already I have said that I am



The BJP once again demanded Siddaramaiah's resignation and asked him to cooperate with the probe

ready to face an investigation. I am not afraid of a probe," Siddaramaiah told reporters here. "I am ready for a legal fight. I had said this yesterday and I am reiterating it today as well." Home Minister G Parameshwara said Lokayukta police is an independent body. "It is not under anyone's mercy, they will investigate independently."

Parameshwara chose not to directly respond to a question regarding a statement made by Siddaramaiah seeking BJP leader and former CM B S Yediyurappa's resignation during a "similar situation" in the past, and said "let's see what in the order copy."

State BJP President B Y Vijayendra said: "the CM has

said that he is ready for any probe, but has questioned why he should resign. Siddaramaiah seems to have forgotten what he preached as Leader of Opposition to the then Chief Minister Yediyurappa. He had asked Yediyurappa to resign for fair and impartial probe when the accused person is at the helm of affairs."

The Opposition BJP and JD(S) in Karnataka Wednesday also sought to step up its demand for Chief Minister's resignation as they tried to lay siege to his residence.

Holding posters, placards and raising slogans, members of BJP Yuva Morcha marched towards "Cauvery" but the police thwarted their attempt, took them into preventive custody and whisked them away in a bus. Leaders and workers of the JD(S), an NDA partner, headed by former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, staged a demonstration at the Freedom Park here before proceeding to "Cauvery" but were stopped by police.

Complainant Snehamayi Krishna hailed the Special Court's order and said, after filing of the FIR, he would appeal to the High Court to hand over the case to CBI.

In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

J&K ASSEMBLY POLL

Over 56 pc voter turnout in phase 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 25: The second phase of polling in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections saw a voter turnout of over 56 per cent Wednesday, with the democratic exercise passing off peacefully amid tight security.

While there was significant participation in key constituencies in 26 seats spread over six districts with long queues of voters at polling stations since early morning, 20 of these segments recorded a marginally lower turnout than in the 2014 Assembly elections, when the overall voting was 60 per cent.

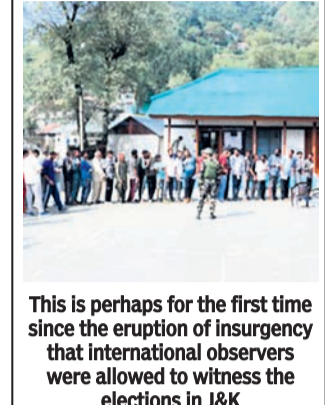
The first phase of polling, held September 18, saw an estimated 61.38 per cent voter turnout, while the final phase is set to take place October 1 in the crucial elections being held after 10 years.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer P.K. Pole announced a preliminary turnout figure of 56.05 per cent, stating that it might change as polling continued in some areas, including Hazratbal and Reasi.

He emphasised that the election proceeded smoothly, with only minor incidents reported.

"There were some stray incidents, but there is no need for re-polling anywhere," Pole stated during a press conference after polls closed at 6 PM.

The highest turnout was recorded in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi constituency, with 79.95 per cent of registered voters exercising their franchise. Other notable turnout figures



This is perhaps for the first time since the eruption of insurgency that international observers were allowed to witness the elections in J&K

However, the move drew criticism from former chief minister Omar Abdullah who said the polls in J&K were an internal matter of the country

included Kangan (71.89 per cent), Gulabgarh (73.49 per cent), and Surankote (75.11 per cent).

Over 15,000 personnel, including local police and central paramilitary forces, were deployed to maintain order at the polling sites. This phase saw a delegation of 16 foreign diplomats, including representatives from the US, Norway, and Singapore, visiting the valley to observe the electoral process.

This marked the first instance of international observers being allowed to witness elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the onset of militancy in the region.

The elections in Jammu and Kashmir continue to attract attention both domestically and internationally, as the region navigates its complex political landscape.

RG KAR RAPE-MURDER CASE

Records altered/falsely created in Tala PS: CBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Some records pertaining to the rape and murder case of a post-graduate trainee doctor at RG Kar medical college and hospital were "falsely created" and "altered" at the Tala police station in Kolkata, the CBI has alleged.

The central probe agency has told a special court in Kolkata that it has seized CCTV footage of the police station which has been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Kolkata, for examination, they said. The CBI which interrogated Tala Police Station officer in charge Abhijit Mondal and medical college's former principal Sandip Ghosh in its custody informed the court that "new/additional" facts emerged in its probe showing that "some false records pertaining to the instant case were created/altered in PS Tala".

The agency produced Mondal and Ghosh after the completion of their remand Wednesday.

The special court sent them to judicial custody till September 30, they said.

The central probe agency had arrested Mondal September 14 while Ghosh, who was already in judicial custody in corruption, was taken into custody in the rape and murder case September 15 after the orders of the court, they said.

It has alleged that an "unnecessary delay of two days" was caused in the seizure of his clothes and belongings that could have resulted in strong evidence against him, they said. The CBI is now probing criminal conspiracy, if any, between Roy, Ghosh and Mondal.

Kharge mocks at PM Modi's Make in India, calls it 'stunt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Wednesday alleged that 10 years of the Narendra Modi government's Make in India "stunt" has put a break on India's manufacturing and said that glitzy ads cannot sugarcoat its "colossal failures."



Kharge said that contrary to the BJP's high decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has become de-industrialised. "10 years of Modi Govt's Make in India Stunt has put Break in India's Manufacturing! 10 years ago, PM Narendra Modi crafted the slogan of 'Make in India' and claimed to build Aatmnirbhar Bharat. Contrary to BJP's high

decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has got de-industrialised due to Modi government's FLOP policy initiatives," he said in a post on X.

Kharge listed five "stark facts" which he claimed made India miss the bus on manufacturing. "The average growth rate of the manufacturing sector between 2014-15 and 2023-24 is just 3.1% (BJP-NDA) whereas between 2004-05 and 2013-14, the average growth rate was 7.85% (Congress-UPA). The number of employees in factories grew at 6.2% annually during the Congress-UPA regime. This growth fell spectacularly to just 2.8% under the Modi government," the Congress chief said.

Between 2011-12 and 2022, India's manufacturing sector saw minimal growth in employment, increasing from 6 crore to merely 6.3 crore workers, he said. "This modest addition of 3 lakh jobs annually is insufficient, considering 1.5 crore youth enter the workforce every year," he said.



Primary teachers take part in a protest march demanding restoration of the old pension scheme in Nagpur, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

No part of India can be called Pak: Top court

STATING THAT THE SOCIAL MEDIA CANNOT BE CONTROLLED, THE TOP COURT SAID THAT IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, ANY OBSERVATIONS BY JUDGES CAN HAVE A WIDE IMPACT, AND THUS, JUDGES SHOULD BE AWARE OF THEIR PREDISPOSITIONS SO THAT THEY CAN DELIVER JUSTICE IMPARTIALLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Supreme Court Wednesday cautioned courts against making comments that may be construed as "misogynistic" or directed towards a particular "gender or community" and said no part of Indian territory can be called Pakistan.

The apex court's strong observations came as it closed the suo motu proceedings over Karnataka High Court judge Justice V Srishananda's alleged objectionable comments during court proceedings. The Supreme Court also noted that he had apologised for his observations during open court proceedings September 21. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud observed that since Justice Srishananda was not a party to proceedings before it, "we

desist from making any further observations save and except to express our serious concern about both the reference to gender and to a segment of the community".

The top court September 20 took suo motu cognisance of the judge's comments against a woman lawyer during court proceedings in a case and his reference to a Muslim-majority area in Bengaluru as "Pakistan" in another. "Casual observations may well reflect a certain degree of individual bias particularly when they are likely to be perceived as being directed to a particular gender or community," the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy, said Wednesday.

"Courts, therefore, have to be careful not to make comments in the course of judicial proceedings which may be con-



strued as being misogynistic or for that matter prejudicial to any segment of our society," it said.

Referring to the text of a report submitted before it by the

proceedings and should have best been eschewed.

"The perception of justice to every segment of society is as important as the rendition of justice as an objective fact," it said.

"Such observations are liable to be construed in a negative light, thereby impacting not only the court of the judge who express them but the wider judicial system," it said.

After the bench dictated the order in the court room, Attorney General R Venkataramani referred to some messages on X about the observations and termed them "absolutely vitriolic". "Now you have seen the nature of the observations. We can't call any part of the territory of India as Pakistan. Because that fundamentally is contrary to the territorial integrity of the nation," the CJI observed.

Sabotage suspected as train hits rail piece

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Botad, Sept 25: A passenger train was halted after it hit an old iron piece of rail placed vertically in the middle of a track by someone in a suspected sabotage attempt in Gujarat's Botad early Wednesday, police said.

Nobody was injured in the incident, they said.

"The Okha-Bhavnagar passenger train (19210) passing through Ranpur police station limits in Botad district hit a four feet-long piece of old rail placed on the track next to cement sleepers around 3 am," Superintendent of Police, Botad, Kishor Baloliya, said.

"The train hit the piece of iron rail placed in a standing position in the middle of the track, following which it was halted there for several hours. The local police personnel were informed around 7.30 am, which reached the spot and launched an investigation," he said.

The incident occurred around two km from Kundli railway station, he said.

national

of the day quote

In the country's interest, I demand the Centre conduct a caste census, which was kept on hold by the Congress government earlier and now by the present BJP-led Centre

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

Significant opportunities are being created for the Maratha community in police recruitment. Sarthi initiative has produced 12 IAS, 18 IPS, and 480 MPSC officers from the Maratha community. It is necessary to ensure that any reservation granted (by a government) is upheld in court

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHA DEPUTY CM

MP CP Joshi's letter to the Lok Sabha Speaker about Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is not only ridiculous but also mischievous. What Rahul Gandhi said about the Sikh community and the Dalit class in America has been presented in a distorted manner

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

X POST OF THE DAY

Breaking! > The lab report which is going viral is report of rejected Ghee > No adulterated Ghee is used in Tirupati Laddu > Chandrababu Naidu & Pawan Kalyan claims are misleading > Naidu & Pawan Kalyan using religion to do politics Note : She is Palki Sharma, Pro BJP Journalist. But now for them also it's becoming difficult to hide facts Shame on Pawan Kalyan & Naidu. They should openly apologize for this

@DrJain21

SHORT TAKES

Seven killed as car collides with truck

Sabarkantha (Gujarat): Seven men were killed and one was grievously injured when a speeding car rammed into a trailer truck on a highway near Himatnagar in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district early Wednesday morning, police said. Due to the impact of the crash, the car was badly mangled and the bodies were retrieved after hectic efforts, they said. Rescue teams had to use a gas-cutter to remove the car scrap to pull out the bodies, an official said.

Mumbai University holds senate polls

Mumbai: The University of Mumbai has conducted the much-delayed senate elections for 10 seats, in a contest where the Shiv Sena (UBT) is seeking to strengthen its hold and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) challenging the status quo. Nearly 55 per cent voting took place at 38 polling centres and 64 booths in the elections, which were pending for two years, held Tuesday, an official said.

Jarange ends fast

Jalna: Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Wednesday called off his indefinite fast, nine days after its launch for the OBC quota demand, citing pleas from members of the Maratha community to withdraw his hunger strike. Speaking to his supporters in Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, Jarange said he had decided to call off the fast keeping in mind the sentiments of the Maratha community.



Jammu and Kashmir will never have a BJP government. There will be a secular government in J&K. Whatever government is formed in Jammu and Kashmir, PDP will be an important factor

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

JUSTICE SHAKDHER SWORN IN AS CJ OF HIMACHAL HC

Justice Rajiv Shakdher was sworn in as the chief justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court Wednesday. He was administered the oath of office by Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla. The notification for his appointment was issued September 21



Kangana does U-turn on comments on farm laws

The actor-politician's remarks put the BJP in a tight spot once again, more so as it is in the middle of an intense campaign to retain power in Haryana, which had witnessed protests against the three laws that were later withdrawn by the Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: BJP MP Kangana Ranaut Wednesday backtracked from her comments asking for the three farm laws repealed in 2021 to be brought back, once again finding herself in the middle of a political row, with the saffron party distancing itself from her remarks and the Congress seeking action against her.

Ranaut said her "personal" views do not represent the BJP's stance in the matter even as the Congress demanded her expulsion from the saffron party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's explanation over the issue.

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia distanced the party from Ranaut's comments, while rejecting her support for the laws.

Bhatia said the BJP has not authorised Ranaut for making any such statement and nor does her stand reflect the party's views. The Himachal Pradesh BJP has also distanced itself from Ranaut's statement.

Addressing an event in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh Tuesday, Ranaut said the three contentious farm laws faced protests only in some states. "Farmers are a pillar of strength in India's progress. Only in some states, they had objected to the farm laws. I appeal with folded hands that the farm laws should be brought back in the interest of farmers," she had said. Ranaut represents Mandi in the Lok Sabha.

The actor-politician said in a post X Wednesday: "My views on Farmers Laws are personal and they don't represent the party's stand on those Bills." Ranaut got into trouble for her comments on the year-long anti-farm laws protests earlier as well



The actor-politician Wednesday said in a post X: "My views on Farmers Laws are personal and they don't represent the party's stand on those Bills"

Ranaut got into trouble for her comments on the year-long anti-farm laws protests earlier as well

In June, barely weeks after she was elected to Parliament, Ranaut was slapped at the Chandigarh airport by a female CISF constable, who had said she was irked by the BJP leader's statements on the farmer protests

farm laws protests earlier as well. In June, barely weeks after she was elected to Parliament, Ranaut was slapped at the Chandigarh airport by a female Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable, who had said she was irked by the BJP leader's statements on the farmer protests.

The Congress lost no time to hit out the BJP over the issue, with Leader of Opposition in

the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying Modi must clarify whether he is opposed to Ranaut's comments or "up to some mischief". The Opposition party said the BJP must expel Ranaut if it does not agree with her statements.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the poll-bound states, including Haryana, would give a fitting reply to the saffron party. In a video statement, Rahul Gandhi said, "Those associated with the BJP keep testing ideas. They ask someone to voice an idea among people and then they see the reaction. This is what has happened. One of their MPs has talked about reviving the three black farm laws. Modiji, you must clarify whether you are against this or you are again up to some mischief."

In a post on X, Kharge said: "Even after the martyrdom of 750 farmers, the anti-farmer BJP and Modi government did not realise their grave crime! There is talk of re-implementation of the three black anti-farmer laws. The Congress Party strongly opposes this."

Jagan calls for pooja to clear Naidu's 'sin'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Sept 25: YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Wednesday called on people to take part in temple rituals (pooja) across Andhra Pradesh September 28 to atone for the sin allegedly committed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu through his allegations on Tirupati laddus.

Reddy's appeal comes days after Naidu alleged during a NDA legislative party meeting that the previous YSRCP government did not even spare Sri Venkateswara temple and used substandard ingredients and animal fat for making laddus.

The allegations sparked a massive controversy across the country. "YSRCP is calling for statewide rituals in temples to sanitise (undo) this sin committed by Chandrababu Saturday, September 28," said the former CM in a post on X.

According to the opposition leader, Naidu alleged that animal fat was mixed with ghee used to make laddu prasadam in Tiupati temple with a 'political motive'.

"Though animal fat adulteration did not occur, he intentionally lied that it happened and falsely propagated that devotees ate them," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has embarked on an 11-day penance to propitiate the deity over the alleged sacrilege.

Amid the row a complaint was filed before a court in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district Wednesday against the temple trust members for "hurting religious sentiments of Hindus".

Muzaffarpur-based lawyer Sudhir Kumar Ojha filed the complaint against members of the temple trust before the CJM court here and demanded the registration of an FIR against them for allegedly hurting the religious sentiments of the Hindu community.

BADLAPUR 'ENCOUNTER' CASE

Bombay HC calls for fair, impartial probe



THE COURT SCHEDULED THE NEXT HEARING FOR OCTOBER 3, BY WHICH DATE THE POLICE ARE EXPECTED TO DECIDE ON A COMPLAINT FILED BY THE FATHER OF THE DECEASED, REQUESTING A FIRST INFORMATION REPORT (FIR) AGAINST THE INVOLVED POLICE OFFICERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: The Bombay High Court expressed concerns Wednesday regarding the police shooting of Akshay Shinde, the accused in the Badlapur school sexual assault case, stating that the incident could have been avoided and emphasised the necessity for a fair and impartial probe.

A division bench comprising Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan also raised pertinent questions over the manner in which the shoot out was executed. The bench said while it was not impugning the police's integrity, it insisted on the importance of clarity in the investigation.

It also stressed the necessity for a fair and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting. During the proceedings, the court underscored its expectation that the police would address all aspects of the case transparently. "If we find that the investigation is not conducted properly, we will be constrained to issue appropriate orders," the bench warned.

The court scheduled the next hearing for October 3, by which date the police are expected to decide on a complaint filed by the father of the deceased, requesting a First Information Report (FIR) against the involved po-

lice officers. "We are not suspecting the police on their activities but come clean on all aspects," the bench said.

It also directed the immediate transfer of all case files to the Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department (CID) for further inquiry.

"Why have the files not been handed over to the CID yet? The preservation of evidence is crucial. Any delay raises doubts and speculation," it stated.

The judges raised pointed questions about the circumstances of the shooting, suggesting that it may have been preventable if police had attempted to subdue Shinde before the incident escalated.

The bench said while it was not raising any suspicion at this stage, it was very hard to believe that Shinde managed to seize a pistol from a police officer and opened fire.

The bench also noted that the officer who shot at Shinde was a police inspector who has experience on how to react in such a situation.

The court said it is not very easy to unlock and open fire from a pistol.

They questioned the rationale behind shooting him in the head rather than aiming for a less lethal area, such as the legs or arms. Justice Chavan said he has used a pistol several times and it is very hard to use.

Ashwini Vaishnav attends Swachhata Hi Seva campaign



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnav took part in a series of events as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva, 2024 campaign at Sochna Bhawan hosted by Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), emphasising the importance of cleanliness and environmental stewardship. The minister administered

oath to officers and staff of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at Sochna Bhawan where participants committed to promoting cleanliness and sustainable practices within their spheres of influence.

In continuation of the 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a sapling plantation drive was also initiated by Ashwini Vaishnav highlighting the dual objective of cleanliness and environmental conservation. He also distributed saplings to the employees and underlined individual responsibility towards the environment.

The Minister was accompanied by L Murugan, Minister of State for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Chairperson, Press Council of India, officers from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Media heads from other wings of M/o I&B and officers/officials in large number were also present during the events.



An activist holds a poster during BJP's protest against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata

Over 25% micro, small units struggling to survive in NE: Study

THE REGION HOSTS AROUND 74,000 MSMEs, BUT MANY FACE CRISIS DUE TO CHALLENGES SUCH AS A LACK OF AFFORDABLE FINANCE, RAPIDLY CHANGING TECHNOLOGY AND INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Sept 25: A study by the MSME Export Promotion Council (EPC) stated that over 25 per cent of micro and small enterprises in Northeastern states are struggling to survive and suggested a five-point strategy to revive these units and support new startups.

The region hosts around 74,000 MSMEs, but many face crises due to challenges such as a lack of affordable finance, rapidly changing technology and inad-

equated infrastructure, it said. MSME EPC chairman Dr D S Rawat, while releasing the study report in New Delhi Wednesday, said many startups have come up and helped the region in providing jobs, but some of them are in deep crisis in the absence of hand-holding either by large units or institutions.

To address these issues, the EPC has recommended that state governments establish high-powered committees to prioritise the challenges faced by MSMEs. They suggested developing a



roadmap to create a conducive environment for tapping into the region's potential, focusing

with research and development centres and global marketing agencies.

The study emphasised the need for a new financing model that involves the DoNER ministry, multilateral institutions, and private players to enhance industry attractiveness and foster entrepreneurship. The proposed 'Single Window' system aims to simplify processes for MSMEs and attract private investments, it added.

Major challenges include geographical barriers, underde-

veloped transport systems, low participation from the private sector, and insufficient financial and infrastructure facilities, the report said. The report advocated for collaboration with innovative companies and institutions and encouraged private sector funding through debt instruments with tax incentives. Additionally, it suggested building networks of development service providers to offer customised solutions to MSMEs in technology, product development, and marketing.

international

of the day quote

I look forward to deepening the mutually beneficial relationship between the IMF and Sri Lanka and wish you every success in your endeavours

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | IMF MANAGING DIRECTOR

I think the India-China relationship is key to the future of Asia. In a way, you can say that if the world is to be multi-polar. And therefore this relationship will influence not just the future of Asia, but in that way, perhaps the future of the world as well

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER, INDIA

We've elevated our strategic partnership to the highest level. We are pursuing a defence relationship on various systems that will make not just the Indian people safer, but people safer throughout the Indo-Pacific

JOHN KIRBY | WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR, US

SHORT TAKES

Wildfire rages in Ecuador's capital

Quito: A raging wildfire filled Ecuador's capital of Quito with smoke and threatened homes Tuesday as authorities rushed to control the blaze at a time when a historic drought has stretched resources and patience. President Daniel Noboa said the armed forces had been deployed to fight the fire, which started around midday in the bohemian Guapulo neighborhood and gradually spread to nearby residences and forested areas. Some fearful residents worked desperately to put out flames, according to a Reuters witness. No deaths or serious injuries have been reported. Ecuador's worst drought in over 60 years has plunged the hydropower-dependent country into an energy crisis as diminished reservoirs leave hydroelectric dams offline.

4 PIOs charged for S'pore cop abuse

Singapore: Four men of Indian origin were Wednesday charged with causing public nuisance and using abusive language against a police officer in Singapore's Little Precinct. A nearly two-minute video of the four abusing the police officer at a crime scene cordoned off to investigate an alleged murder Sunday morning in Little India, was uploaded on the Facebook page ROADS.sg, Channel News Asia reported. The post featuring Md Dino Marciano Abdul Wahab, 44, Alex Kumar Gansekaran, 37, Mohamed Eusof Mohamed Yahya, 32, and Mohanan V Balakrishnan, 32, shouting at police officers garnered more than 423,000 views in three days.

ADB cuts B'desh's growth forecast

Dhaka: The ADB has lowered its forecast for Bangladesh's economic growth to 5.1 per cent primarily due to supply disruptions caused by political unrest in July and August, a media report said Wednesday. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) had earlier projected that the overall production of goods and services in the South Asian country would grow by 6.6 per cent for the fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, The Daily Star newspaper reported. The ADB said the fiscal and monetary policies are expected to remain tight, further dampening consumption and investment demand. The ADB observed that demand remained suppressed by elevated inflation, tight global monetary conditions, and other macroeconomic challenges. The organisation further predicted that inflation could rise to double digits.

Russia's secret war drones project

IEMZ KUPOL, MANUFACTURER FOR THE RUSSIA DEFENSE COMPLEX, HAS DEVELOPED AND FLIGHT-TESTED A NEW DRONE MODEL CALLED GARPIYA-3 IN CHINA

REUTERS
Saint Petersburg, Sept 25: Russia has established a weapons programme in China to develop and produce long-range attack drones for use in the war against Ukraine, according to two sources from a European intelligence agency and documents reviewed by Reuters.

IEMZ Kupol, a subsidiary of Russian state-owned weapons company Almaz-Antey, has developed and flight-tested a new drone model called Garpiya-3 (G3) in China with the help of local specialists, according to one of the documents, a report that Kupol sent to the Russian defence ministry earlier this year outlining its work.

Kupol told the defence ministry in a subsequent update that it was able to produce drones including the G3 at scale at a factory in China so the weapons can be deployed in the "special military operation" in Ukraine, the term Moscow uses for the war.

Kupol, Almaz-Antey and the Russian defence ministry didn't respond to requests for comment for this article. China's foreign ministry told Reuters it was not aware of such a project, adding that the country had strict control measures on the export of drones, or unmanned



aerial vehicles (UAVs). Fabian Hinz, a research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London-based defence think-tank, said the delivery of UAVs from China to Russia, if confirmed, would be a significant development.

"If you look at what China is known to have delivered so far, it was mostly dual-use goods, it was components, sub-components, that could be used in weapon systems," he told Reuters. "This is what has been reported so far. But what we haven't really seen, at least in the open source, are documented transfers of whole weapon systems."

Still, Samuel Bendett, an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), a Washington-based

RUSSIA ESTABLISHES DRONE FACTORY IN CHINA
RUSSIAN ARMS FIRM DEVELOPS UAVS FOR USE IN UKRAINE
CHINA-MADE DRONES HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO RUSSIA
CHINESE GOVERNMENT SAYS IT IS NOT AWARE OF SUCH A PROJECT

military drones. The G3 can travel about 2,000 km with a payload of 50 kg, according to the Kupol reports to the ministry. Samples of the G3 and some other drone models made in China have been delivered to Kupol in Russia for further testing, again with the involvement of Chinese experts, they said.

Zelensky takes aim at China, Brazil

United Nations: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Wednesday dismissed efforts by China and Brazil to end Russia's war in Ukraine, questioning why the pair were proposing an alternative to his own peace formula and warning: "You will not boost your power at Ukraine's expense." "The peace formula has already existed for two years, and maybe somebody wants a Nobel Prize for their political biography, for (a) frozen truce, instead of real peace, but the only prizes Putin will give you in return are more suffering and disasters," Zelenskyy told the United Nations General Assembly. China has been trying to enlist developing nations to join the six-point peace plan it issued with Brazil in May. Their proposal calls for an international peace conference "held at a proper time that is recognized by both Russia and Ukraine, with equal participation of all parties as well as fair discussion of all peace plans."



Israel sends scores of bodies to Gaza

PALESTINIANS DEMAND DETAILS BEFORE BURYING THE BODIES

REUTERS
Cairo, Sept 25: Israel returned the bodies Wednesday of 88 Palestinians killed in its military offensive in the Gaza Strip, which the territory's health ministry refused to bury before Israel discloses details about who they are and where it killed them.

The bodies were brought into Gaza in a container loaded on a truck through an Israeli-controlled crossing, but, according to Palestinian officials, there was no information provided about the names or ages of the victims or locations where they died.

Health officials at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis refused to receive them and bury them, urging the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to seek details from Israel.

"The health ministry halted the procedures to receive the container (carrying the bodies) until the completion of the full data and information about those bodies so their relatives can identify them," the ministry said in a statement.

The head of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office said health ministry officials



told the driver of the truck to bring the bodies of dead Palestinians back to the Israeli crossing from which he had arrived. The truck then left the hospital. "They must act according to the international humanitarian law and in a way that preserves the dignity of the martyrs and their families," Ismail Al-Thawabta told Reuters.

The Red Cross said it wasn't involved in the transfer process. "We reiterate that all families have the right to receive news about their loved ones and bury them respectfully and in line with their traditions," said a statement issued by the ICRC.

Under International Humanitarian Law, those who have died during an armed conflict must be handled with dignity and be properly managed. The law requires that they be searched for, collected and evacuated, which helps ensure that people do not go missing, the ICRC statement added.

The Civil Emergency Service tasked with finding people missing under rubble, on roads and in ruined buildings in Gaza says it has been notified of around 10,000 people missing during the near year-long Israeli assault on Gaza.

Gaza health authorities list more than 41,000 Palestinians confirmed killed in the assault, which Israel launched after Hamas fighters attacked Israeli towns October 7 last year, killing 1,200 people and capturing around 250 hostages.

No trust motion against Trudeau



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ottawa, Sept 25: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's main rival in Canada's Parliament Tuesday introduced a motion of no confidence in the ruling Liberals, in the first major test of his unpopular minority government.

Following a debate in the House of Commons, a vote on the long-shot Conservative motion is scheduled Wednesday.

Far ahead in public opinion polls, Tory leader Pierre Poilievre has been itching for a snap election since the leftist New Democratic Party (NDP) earlier this month tore up a coalition agreement with the Liberals, leaving the Trudeau administration vulnerable to being toppled.

Kicking off the debate, a combative Poilievre railed against Trudeau for what he said was a failure to address soaring costs of living, a housing crisis and crime, while doubling the national debt.

He said the promise of Canada, "after nine years of Liberal government, is broken."

If elected Prime Minister, he said he would legislate "a common sense plan to axe the tax (on carbon emissions), build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime."

During an appearance in New York on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert Monday evening, Justin Trudeau acknowledged that Canadians are facing "a really tough time."

"People are hurting. People are having trouble paying for groceries, paying for rent, filling up the tank," and "are looking at change," he said.

But he vowed to "keep fighting." At a news conference at the United Nations Tuesday, Trudeau criticized Poilievre

for suggesting "the best way to get through these difficult times is to cut services and programs that Canadians rely on."

"I'm thinking about how we can best help Canadians," he said.

LIBERALS HOLDING ON
The no-confidence motion is not expected to succeed after two smaller political factions have signaled they will side with the government and vote against it.

But Poilievre has vowed to keep trying, with another opportunity to bring down the government to be presented in early October.

Trudeau swept to power in 2015, and has managed to hold on by defeating two of Poilievre's predecessors in 2019 and 2021 ballots.

The deal with the New Democratic Party to prop up the Liberals would have kept his government in office until late 2025.

But the NDP, seeing its alignment with the Liberals hurting its own popularity, exited the deal early.

According to a recent Angus Reid poll, the Conservatives are well ahead of the Liberals, with 43 percent of voting intention against 21 percent for the ruling party. The NDP is at 19 percent.

In Canada's Westminster parliamentary system, a ruling party must hold the confidence of the House of Commons, which means maintaining support from a majority of members.

The Liberals currently have 153 seats, versus 119 for the Conservatives, 33 for the Bloc Quebecois, and the NDP 25.

Political analysts who spoke to AFP suggest an election likely won't happen until at least spring 2025.

'FISHING NET' Police quotas, surveillance trap North Koreans in China

Chinese police have begun to closely monitor the social media accounts of North Koreans in China, and collect their fingerprints, voice and facial data, making it harder for North Korean defectors to evade capture

REUTERS

Seoul, Sept 25: Border police in China's northeast have been given quotas to identify and expel undocumented migrants, one key aspect of broader surveillance that is making it harder for North Korean defectors to evade capture, according to previously undisclosed official documents and a dozen people familiar with the matter.

China has implemented new deportation centres, hundreds of smart facial-recognition cameras and extra boat patrols along its 1,400-kilometre frontier with North Korea, according to a Reuters review of more than

100 publicly available government documents that outline spending on border surveillance and infrastructure.

In addition, Chinese police have begun to closely monitor the social media accounts of North Koreans in China, and collect their fingerprints, voice and facial data, four defectors and two missionaries told Reuters. Stephen Kim, a missionary who helps North Koreans defect, told Reuters that based on his contacts with some 2,000 defectors, more than 90% of those currently in China had registered personal and biometric data with the police.

The measures took effect since the Covid-19 pandemic and have ramped up from 2023.

Cracking down on unauthorised migration helps Beijing manage a thorny issue in ties with Pyongyang while ensuring stability on China's periphery, according to eight people, including security scholars, rights activists and a former North Korean official. It also gives China potential leverage over its neighbour because Beijing can control the fate of these un-



China has feared that if too many North Koreans find refuge in China, more and more North Koreans would follow suit, and in time the outflow would destabilize North Korea and lead to reunification under South Korea and to the expansion of US political and military influence on the peninsula

ROBERTA COHEN | FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, US

documented North Koreans, several of them said. "But primarily, China has feared that if too many North Koreans find refuge in China, more and more North Koreans would follow suit, and in time the outflow would destabilize North Korea and lead to reunification under South Korea and to the ex-

pansion of US political and military influence on the peninsula," said Roberta Cohen, a human rights specialist and a former US deputy assistant secretary of state.

China's National Immigration Administration, which is responsible for border police, and the Ministry of Public Security,

which oversees the immigration agency, did not respond to queries about efforts to identify and deport North Koreans.

Beijing's Foreign Ministry said China protected "the rights and interests of foreigners in China, while lawfully maintaining the order of border entries and exits". It said the "relevant report is completely not factual", in an apparent reference to Reuters reporting. The ministry didn't respond to additional questions about Reuters findings and which elements it considered incorrect.

North Korea's embassy in Beijing and its UN missions in Geneva and New York didn't respond to questions about China's handling of defectors.

While the documents don't explicitly identify North Koreans as targets of the surveillance and deportations, the measures are focused on areas adjoining North Korea.

Among the documents examined by Reuters was the 2024 budget for China's border police in Jilin province, which adjoins North Korea.

Of 163 million yuan in spending, almost 30 million yuan went to border security upgrades. That included 22.3 million yuan for an unspecified number of new patrol boats, and funding for "deportation and repatriation" of foreigners that illegally enter, live and work in Jilin.

The budget set goals for 18 border police stations and teams; investigate and "deal with" at least 10 undocumented foreigners; spend no more than 30 days to process each deportation; and remind residents of the "harm and price paid" for aiding undocumented migrants. It lists performance metrics, including 10 points for achieving a repatriation rate of 95%. There were no such quotas in the 2023 and 2022 budgets.



“We had discussed this issue even three years ago and on earlier occasions also and the dairy is such a sensitive sector that in any of our FTAs across the world, we have not been able to open up the sector with duty concessions”
PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

ZEPTO TOPS STARTUPS LIST AGAIN

Quick commerce platform Zepto, for the second consecutive year, has been ranked first in LinkedIn Top Startups India List 2024 -- an annual ranking of emerging companies where professionals want to work. The list draws insights from data based on actions of more than 1 billion LinkedIn members globally



of the day quote

“We have potential. Definitely, we would like to be the first company in India to reach that milestone”



CS SETTY | CHAIRMAN, SBI

“We see growing business opportunities, including through our world-class partnership with Reliance, producing the country's gas and growing our joint retail presence”



MURRAY AUCHINCLOSS | CEO, BP

“We are targeting much higher investment flows. We have about \$70 billion to \$80 billion which is coming in every year. But we are expecting this to increase to at least \$100 billion a year in the years to come”



AMARDEEP SINGH BHATIA | SECRETARY, DPIIT

India pips Japan, ranks third on Asia Power Index

THE INDEX HAS CITED ECONOMIC GROWTH, FUTURE POTENTIAL AND DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE AS KEY FACTORS FOR INDIA'S RISE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: India ranks third in the annual Asia Power Index, released by an Australian think-tank, surpassing Japan on the back of strong post-Covid 19 economic growth, while China's power appeared to plateau just below the United States.

The Sydney-based Lowy Institute has put the US at the top

of its Asia Power Index with a score of 81.7, followed by China with a score of 72.7, India (39.1), Japan (38.9), Australia (31.9) and Russia (31.1).

The Index ranks 27 countries and territories in terms of their capacity to shape their external environment -- its scope reaching as far west as Pakistan, as far north as Russia and as far into the Pacific as Australia, New Zealand and the US.



The index has cited economic growth, future potential and diplomatic influence as key factors for India's rise. However, it has pointed out that New Delhi's clout remains below the poten-

tial promised by its resources.

“India has shown remarkable post-pandemic economic recovery, contributing to a 4.2-point rise in its economic capability. India's massive population and strong GDP growth reinforce its standing as the world's third-largest economy in PPP terms,” the think tank has said.

It has noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has garnered greater in-

ternational recognition.

The think tank has said India's non-aligned strategic posture has allowed it to navigate complex international waters effectively.

It has said India's participation in dialogues as well as its leadership in the Quad has allowed New Delhi to play a significant role in regional security dynamics, albeit outside of formal military alliances.

Gold hits all-time high of ₹77,850; silver soars ₹3K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Gold prices surged ₹900 to hit a fresh record high of ₹77,850 per 10 grams in the national capital Wednesday amid a rally in precious metal rates in the global markets, according to All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹76,950 per 10 grams Tuesday. Silver soared ₹3,000 to ₹93,000 per kg on fresh off take by industrial units and coin makers. It had ended at ₹90,000 per kg in the previous close.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed ₹900 to hit all-time high level of ₹77,500 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at ₹76,600 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Gold prices in the international markets is likely to surpass USD 3,200 per ounce in the near future, Surendra Mehta, National Secretary at India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), said.

“Gold's bull run continues as prices hit yet another all-time high at ₹76,000 per 10 gm on futures. Prices remain supported by a weaker dollar, expectation of more rate cuts from global central banks, safe haven demand, and inflow of ETF funds,” Pranav Mer, VP-Research (Commodity & Currency) at BlinkX and JM Financial, said.

According to traders, persistent buying by jewellers and a strong trend in the international markets were among the factors that aided the rally in gold prices.

On the other hand, in the futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for October delivery hit a fresh record high of ₹997, or 1.33 per cent, to ₹76,000 per 10 gram on the exchange.

ROBUST OUTLOOK

ADB keeps India growth forecast

GOVT SPENDING, AGRICULTURE TO BOOST ECONOMY, SAYS THE BANK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Wednesday retained India's growth forecast for the current fiscal at 7 per cent saying better farm output and higher government spending will boost economic activity.

In its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) update of September, the ADB said exports in the current fiscal will be higher than earlier projected, led by larger services exports. However, merchandise export growth will be relatively muted through the next fiscal.

“India's economy has shown remarkable resilience in the face of global geopolitical challenges and is poised for steady growth”

MIO OKA | COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR INDIA, ADB

“GDP growth is expected at 7 per cent in fiscal year 2024 (FY2024, ending 31 March 2025) and 7.2 per cent in FY2025, both as forecast in ADO April 2024,” the ADB said, adding that India's growth prospects remain robust.

It said while GDP growth slowed to 6.7 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of FY2024, it is expected to accelerate in the coming quarters with the improvement in agriculture and a largely robust outlook for industry and services.

The report highlights that an above-average monsoon in most parts of the country will lead to strong agricultural growth, enhancing the rural economy in FY2024.

Private consumption is expected to improve, driven by rural consumption fuelled by stronger agriculture and by already robust urban consumption.

The outlook for private investment is upbeat, but growth in public capital expenditure, heretofore high, will moderate in FY2025.

Efforts toward fiscal consolidation are expected to drive down the fiscal deficit to a level last seen before Covid-19, reflecting robust revenue collection and re-



strained current expenditure, the ADB said.

With the government's fiscal consolidation efforts, central government debt is projected to decrease from 58.2 per cent of GDP in 2023-24 to 56.8 per cent in 2024-25.

The general government deficit, which includes state governments, is expected to fall below 8 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal.

A recent policy announcement offering workers and firms employment-linked incentives could boost labour demand and bolster job creation starting in FY2025, it added.

The Budget 2024-25 has announced three employment-linked incentive schemes and said the government would allocate ₹2 lakh crore to implement them.

“Growth slowed year-on-year (yoy) in the first quarter (Q1) of FY2024 but is expected to rise in the coming months on improved agricultural performance and higher government spending. Industry and services are expected to continue performing robustly,” the ADB said.

ADB said growth in developing Asia remained strong during the first half of 2024, supported by domestic demand and continued recovery in exports. The growth outlook for developing Asia has been revised slightly upward to 5 per cent for 2024 from 4.9 per cent in April.

However, downside risks persist from rising protectionism, depending on the outcome of the presidential election in the United States, which could lead to negative real and financial spillovers in developing Asia.

FAG-END BUYING

SENSEX ENDS ABOVE RECORD 85,000 LEVEL, NIFTY SCALES 26K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 25: Benchmark Sensex closed above the 85,000 level for the first time while Nifty scaled the 26,000 peak at close Wednesday as fag-end buying in banking and power shares helped stock markets recoup early losses.

After a see-saw trade during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 255.83 points or 0.30 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 85,169.87. During the day, it surged 333.38 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 85,247.42. As many as 20 Sensex shares closed in green while 10 in red.

The broader Nifty climbed 63.75 points or 0.25 per cent to close above the 26,000 level for the first time. The 50-issue index closed at a record high of 26,004.15 after scaling a new intra-day peak of 26,032.80.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Power Grid, Axis Bank, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers.

BSE SENSEX

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024



TOP GAINERS	
POWER GRID	+3.91%
AXIS BANK	+2.98%
NTPC	+1.94%
BAJAJ FINSERV	+1.50%
BAJAJ FINANCE	+0.91%

TOP LOSERS	
TECH MAHINDRA	-2.21%
TATA MOTORS	-1.39%
TITAN	-0.93%
KOTAK BANK	-0.92%
SBI	-0.68%

Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India and JSW Steel were the biggest laggards.

“After a range-bound trade, the benchmark indices inched higher towards close, led by power and banking stocks, while mid- and small-cap indices experienced corrections driven by valuation concerns,” Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

The domestic market may face short-term challenges owing to a decline in FII inflow and shift of funds to other emerging markets due to their cheap valuation, he added.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.53 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.35 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities jumped 0.99 per cent, power (0.87 per cent), realty (0.71 per cent), metal (0.40 per cent), telecommunication (0.24 per cent) and commodities (0.23 per cent).

Consumer durables, IT, services, teck, auto and industrials were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹2,784.14 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.35 per cent to \$74.91 a barrel.

Defence production hits record ₹1.27L-crore

INDIA EXPORTING MILITARY HARDWARE TO OVER 90 COUNTRIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: India's defence production has clocked an all-time high of ₹1.27 lakh crore in terms of value in 2023-24 and it is now exporting weapons and military hardware to more than 90 friendly countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Wednesday.

Indian armed forces are now using weapons and platforms manufactured on Indian soil and the country is rising on the global defence industrial landscape, the minister said in a post on 'X' on the 10th anniversary of the NDA government's 'Make in India' programme.

The government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "astute leadership" introduced the 'Make in India' programme with a vision to make the country self-reliant in every domain, Singh said.

“Ten years since then, many reforms have been made in every sector including the de-



■ Defence exports crossed ₹21K-cr mark for first time in 2023-24 ■ Ministry has set target of increasing it to ₹50K-cr in next five years

fence sector. India is rising on the defence industrial landscape of the world,” he said.

“Today, Indian Armed Forces are using weapons and platforms, which are manufactured on our own soil and we are also exporting defence items to more than 90 friendly foreign countries,” the minister added.

In the last few years, the government has taken a series of measures to promote the domestic defence industry.

The focus has been to boost domestic defence manufacturing and bolster military preparedness especially in areas along the border with China.

India's defence exports

crossed the ₹21,000 crore mark for the first time in 2023-24 and the defence ministry has set a target of increasing it to ₹50,000 crore in the next five years.

India is one of the largest importers of arms globally.

According to estimates, Indian armed forces are projected to spend around \$130 billion in capital procurement by 2029.

The government wants to reduce dependence on imported military platforms and has decided to support domestic defence manufacturing.

The defence ministry has set a goal of a turnover of \$25 billion (Rs 1.75 lakh crore) in defence manufacturing in the next five years.

In May 2020, the government announced increasing the FDI limit in the defence sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent under the automatic route. The government allows 100 per cent FDI for specific cases.

Valuation concern: Equity funds' cash holdings surge

REUTERS

Mumbai, Sept 25: Indian equity funds' allocation of cash relative to their asset size rose to a 5-year high at the end of August, as fund managers are worried about markets being too rich and other macroeconomic risks around US elections and Chinese growth.

According to Morningstar data, active equity funds in India with a fund value of at least \$1 billion held an average of 5.39% of their portfolios in cash as of end-August, their highest levels in five years.

Although the rise in cash levels is partly due to inflows and the launch of new funds, caution is also a factor.

“The elevated cash levels among fund managers may suggest an expectation of a potential stock market correction as

“While the market has been performing well, there are potential risks such as economic slowdown, interest rate regime change, geopolitical tensions and market overvaluation”

SONAM SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER AND FUND MANAGER, WRIGHT RESEARCH

they seek to mitigate losses,” said Mahesh Patil, chief investment officer at Aditya Birla Sun Life Asset Management Company.

“This could reflect caution around the rapid rise in markets, especially since there has been no major shift in fundamentals to justify the surge,” he said.

After lacklustre earnings growth in the first quarter of this fiscal year, which saw more than half of Indian companies miss consensus earnings ex-



pectations, fund managers are also worried about valuations.

“There are valuation concerns as pockets of markets are looking over-stretched,” said Abhishek Goenka, founder and chief executive of IFA Global.

The forward price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio for MSCI India's large-cap index is at 22.8 times, an 18.6% premium to the 10-year average, while the MSCI India mid-cap index is trading at a

67.7% premium and the small-cap index at about 40% premium to their respective 10-year averages.

“Currently, valuations for mid-caps look elevated, hence, there might be a possible correction in mid-caps,” said Anil Rego, founder and fund manager at Right Horizons.

Morningstar data showed the ICICI Prudential Value Discovery Fund, with a fund value of about \$5.9 billion, saw its cash alloca-

tion climb to 14.7% by the end of August from 7% at the beginning of the year.

Similarly, the SBI Long Term Equity Fund, which has a fund value of \$3.3 billion, increased its cash holdings to 9.8% in August from 4.46% at the start of the year. The Quant Small Cap Fund, valued at \$3 billion, also saw its cash allocations rise significantly to 15.7% in August from just 2.15% at the start of the year.

However, some analysts don't believe that these high cash levels portend a market crash.

“Usually, bouts of deep correction happen when the markets are fully invested. If the markets are circumspect and exercising caution, we may see 3%-5% corrections getting bought into. The cash will start getting deployed and that would support the markets,” Wright Research's Sonam Srivastava said.

IPO FRENZY

Hyundai gets IPO nod; to raise ₹25K-cr

New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, has received capital markets regulator Sebi's approval to float an initial public offering (IPO), people familiar with the development said Wednesday. Sources had previously stated that the South Korean automaker is looking to raise at least \$3 billion (about ₹25,000 crore) through an initial share sale. This development marks a significant milestone for the Indian industry, as it is the first automaker initial share-sale in over two decades, following Japanese automaker Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003. Hyundai Motor India's proposed IPO is entirely an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 142,194,700 equity shares by promoter Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed in June.

Swiggy gets Sebi nod to raise ₹10K-cr

New Delhi: Food and grocery delivery major Swiggy has received capital markets regulator Sebi's clearance to launch its much anticipated Initial Public Offering (IPO), sources said Wednesday. Swiggy filed its offer document April 30 through the confidential pre-filing route, keeping details undisclosed for the time being. Swiggy, founded in 2014, had a valuation of nearly \$13 billion in April. The company's annual revenue stood at USD 1.09 billion as on March 31, 2023 and has more than 4,700 employees, according to Tracxn, a global startup data platform. In April, sources had previously stated that Swiggy received shareholders' approval for an IPO to raise ₹10,414 crore fund through issue of fresh equity shares and an Offer-For-Sale (OFS).

Arjun's newfound route to success

CHESS PLAYER SAYS HE DOESN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT OUTCOME, BUT TO GIVE HIS BEST



"It's like giving my best in my efforts and accepting whatever comes out of it. And if you give your best, you most likely tend to get the best possible outcome. It wasn't easy obviously," Erigaisi informed.

A fan of team events, Erigaisi is excited about the upcoming Global Chess League, which he calls the 'IPL of chess'. "I like that it's a team event. I enjoy team events and also I like the rapid format. It is definitely the IPL of chess," Erigaisi signed off.

With Indian youngsters shining on global stage, the nation is celebrating them as the golden generation of chess players and Erigaisi believes that the camaraderie between him, D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa, fuels their collective success and elevates their game.

"We can certainly call this the golden generation of India. Like 2003 born to 2006, let's say. And I'm the oldest one in there. We all know each other for a pretty long time and have a healthy rivalry also. It helps. It's like when someone does well, the others also get motivated and want to do equally well," Erigaisi pointed out. "In the end our goal is to win," he added.

Vidit decides not to defend title

New Delhi: A member of the victorious Chess Olympiad team, Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi has decided against defending his crown at the 10th Vugar Gashimov Memorial Chess super tournament in Azerbaijan for an audience with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Gujrathi took to 'X', to inform that he reached Baku for the event but decided to return to India to meet Modi on learning about the felicitation function. "I reached Baku and I got to know our Hon'ble PM wants to felicitate the Indian team. I was overjoyed when I heard this and I wanted to be a part of it. It's amazing at how such short notice he is taking out time for us," Gujrathi wrote on 'X'.

TEAM FOR THREE T20 GAMES AGAINST BANGLADESH

Jitesh may pip Kishan as 2nd wicket-keeper



Jitesh Sharma (left) and Ishan Kishan will fight it out for the second wicket-keeper's slot

PHOTO X

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Jitesh Sharma could well pip Ishan Kishan for second wicket-keeper's slot in the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 team that will play three T20Is against the Bangladesh starting October 6 in Gwalior. The squad is expected to be announced this week. The second and third T20Is will be held in New Delhi and Hyderabad October 9 and 12 respectively.

The selectors are keen that Rishabh Pant focuses on the 10 Tests this season. Hence Sanju Samson will be India's No. 1 glovesman in the shortest format for now with Jitesh from Vidarbha believed to be ahead of Kishan in the race for second keeper's slot. Kishan's selection in Rest of India squad also means that his international comeback

- T20 series against Bangladesh starts Oct 6 at Gwalior
- 2 other matches Oct 9 and Oct 12 at New Delhi and Bangalore
- Top players like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah likely to be rested

it remains unclear who will partner him at the top of the order if both Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal are rested.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, captain of the Rest of India team, is also in a tight spot as he will be busy with the Irani Cup until October 5, leaving little time before the Bangladesh T20Is begin. There is speculation that Jaiswal might play the first match, while Gaikwad could join the squad for the last two games.

Hardik Pandya is set to return to the national side, along with Shivam Dube. The likes of Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Tushar Deshpande and Ravi Bishnoi, all of who were part of the Zimbabwe series, are expected to be part of the squad. Harshit Rana who was in Zimbabwe as back up pacer could also get a chance.

could be slightly delayed.

With the Test series against New Zealand starting October 16 in Bangalore, top players like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, and Jasprit Bumrah are likely to be rested as a part of workload management programme. A lot of players, who played in Zimbabwe in the five-match T20I series in July this year, will get a look-in.

Abhishek Sharma, the hard-hitting Punjab left-hander, is set to be back in the mix in absence of Shubman Gill. However,

DEADLY DUO: Arjun Erigaisi (left) says the performance of D Gukesh motivates him to do well

PHOTO X

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi revealed Wednesday that he once felt bogged down by the weight of his own expectations, a phase that led to several lows. However, by detaching himself from the outcome of his matches, he has finally discovered the path to success.

Erigaisi is enjoying a stellar year. Not only did he play a vital role in the Indian men's team's historic gold at the recently-concluded Chess Olympiad in Budapest, he also won nine of

his 11 games to secure an individual gold on the third board. His performance elevated him to a career-best World No. 3 in FIDE rankings.

However, things didn't seem so rosy a year ago, as Erigaisi found himself caught in a rut. "I would say back in 2021, I was clearly underrated (in ratings). I was about 2500 something (rating). But my strength was clearly about 2600. So, it was all smooth sailing until a point," he told this agency.

"And then in 2023, I was about 2700 in ratings. And that period was tough. I was having ups and

downs. And some of the downs were really harsh like missing out on the Candidates. So 2023 was really tough. It was then I made a conscious decision to detach myself from results. It is because I was ending up putting too much pressure on myself by desperately wanting to achieve something. It really helped," Erigaisi added.

Erigaisi said that by liberating himself from the suffocating pressure of achieving specific results, he discovered a new-found mental clarity and resilience. But how did he do it?

SHORT TAKES

AICF cash awards for chess teams

New Delhi: The All India Chess Federation (AICF) announced a whopping ₹3.2 crore in rewards for the historic 45th Olympiad-winning Indian teams during a felicitation ceremony here Wednesday. AICF president Nitin Narang made the announcement. Each player from the winning teams will receive ₹25 lakh, while the coaches of the men's and women's teams, Abhijeet Kunte and Srinath Narayanan, will be rewarded with ₹15 lakh each. Grandmaster Dibyendu Barua, head of the Indian delegation, will receive ₹10 lakh, and the assistant coaches will be rewarded ₹7.5 lakh each, Narang stated.

NADA notice for retired Vinesh

New Delhi: The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) served a notice Wednesday to wrestler-turned-politician Vinesh Phogat for whereabouts failure and sought an explanation within 14 days. Vinesh had announced her retirement from the sport immediately after her disqualification from the Paris Olympics in August. All athletes registered with NADA's Registered Testing Pool (RTP), of which Vinesh is a part, are required to provide details about their availability for dope tests. NADA has conveyed to the former wrestler that she had committed a whereabouts failure as she was not available for a dope test September 9. However, by that time she had retired.

3rd victory for PFC

New Delhi: Goals from Ezequiel Vidal and Filip Mrzljak helped Punjab FC defeat Hyderabad FC 2-0 and make it three wins in a row for the side in the ISL here Wednesday. Following their emphatic win, Punjab FC, who scored once in each half, now sit at the top of the table. After the initial 15 minutes, Punjab FC took control of the game and dominated proceedings for the rest of the match. Their efforts bore fruit when Vidal scored with a swerving free-kick in the 35th minute. Mrzljak then doubled the lead in the 71st minute.

STORMY IOA MEET EXPECTED TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: The Indian Olympic Association's (IOA) executive council meeting here Thursday is expected to be a stormy affair with its members adding contentious items on the agenda, including the alleged 'threatening letters' issued by president PT Usha to them. The meeting will take place in the backdrop of growing tensions between Usha and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav.

Yadav threatened Tuesday legal action against Usha for 'defaming' his image after she issued a show cause notice to him on the basis of a complaint challenging his eligibility to hold the post. The 14 agenda points added by the executive council cover a discussion on 'illegal and threatening letters issued by the president to the members of the executive committee from time to time'.

As per two more items concerning the president, the council will 'discuss and deliberate upon the scope of powers of the president under the IOA constitution and will decide on the need for reporting the conduct of the president to the IOA Ethics Commission'.

- Powers of the IOA president under the constitution to be discussed
- Members to discuss additional expenses incurred due to PT Usha's room upgrade at Paris

The official communication on the meeting was jointly issued by 12 council members, including senior vice-president Ajay Patel, vice-president Rajalaxmi Singh Deo, vice-president and former Olympic medalist Gagan Narang, member and former wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt among others.

The members who did not sign the document are boxer MC Mary Kom and table tennis player A Sharath Kamal, who are on the IOA Athletes Commission.

Issues related to the recent Paris Olympics will also be a substantial part of the meeting. They include the sponsorship details of the Olympics, 'additional expenditure' incurred in Paris covering the room upgrade expenses of president at alleged cost to the IOA and 'bring to knowledge the list of accreditation cards issued to various people at Paris Olympics including various Passes and Invites'.

Shakib fit for selection: Coach

AGENCIES

Kanpur, Sept 25: Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe said Wednesday that Shakib Al Hasan is available for the second Test against India, downplaying concerns around his fitness owing to an injury that he picked up in the opening game. Shakib suffered a finger injury during the game in Chennai while facing Jasprit Bumrah. The second game is scheduled to start here Friday.

"At the moment, I haven't heard from my physio or from anyone. He is still eligible for selection," Hathurusinghe said after the team's first training session here. The coach praised Shakib for putting up a great fight against the quality Indian bowling attack in both the innings of the first Test. However, in spite of that Shakib's form with the bat of late, has not been great. In Pakistan he could managed only 15, 2 and 21 not out during his three outings.

However, Hathurusinghe said he was not overly concerned about Shakib's performance with the bat. "I am not upset about his performance. Our overall performance, we could have done better. I am sure that he also thinks that he can perform better. We all know what he is capable of," Hathurusinghe said. "He (Shakib) batted really well



Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe is not worried about Shakib Al Hasan's form with the bat

I am not worried about Shakib's form with the bat... he is a class player and he will come good very soon

CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHE

(21 off 56 balls) in the second innings. He couldn't go on, not because of lack of pride. It's the sheer quality of the opposition," the coach added, backing the veteran player.

Hathurusinghe said his play-

ers did not do justice to their potential in the opening Test against India but promised a better approach in the must-win second game beginning here Friday.

"We are a bit concerned. We normally talk about if you get a start, make it big. That's the biggest concern because some of the guys faced 30 deliveries. And then in cricket, it's the hardest thing to get in. But India are posing different challenges, so we have to bat for longer periods," Hathurusinghe informed.

Good show by Indian shuttlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Macau, Sept 25: Shuttler Kidambi Srikanth, along with compatriots Ayush Shetty and Tasnim Mir, advanced to the second round of the men's singles at the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament here Wednesday.

In his first competition since recovering from an injury sustained in May, sixth seed Srikanth, a silver medallist at the 2021 World Championships, outclassed Israel's Daniil Dubovenko 21-14, 21-15, while Ayush, the 2023 World Junior Championships bronze medallist, also had a strong start, defeating fellow Indian Alap Mishra 21-13, 21-5. Former World junior No. 1 Tasnim Mir triumphed over Devika Sihag, winning 15-21, 21-18, 22-20 to also secure her spot in the next round of women's singles.

In mixed doubles, the pair of B Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy also progressed after a hard-fought victory against Malaysian qualifiers Loo Bing Kun and Ho Lo Ee, winning 24-22, 10-21, 21-13.

However, the tournament ended for other Indians with Tanya Hemanth, Anupama Upadhyaya, Isharani Baruah, Chirag Sen and Sameer Verma losing in the first round.

Rodri injury overshadows City win

AGENCIES

London, Sept 25: Manchester City began life Tuesday in the League Cup without key midfielder Rodri after he suffered knee ligament damage in a fiery 2-2 draw against Arsenal in the Premier League Sunday.

Little over 48 hours on from that top-of-the-table clash, Man City were in action again and Pep Guardiola made nine changes, including a debut for 16-year-old Kaden Braithwaite.

Jeremy Doku, one of the two to retain his place, fired in the opening goal from Jack Grealish's pass pass after five minutes. Rodri's absence could mean a more prominent role for Matheus



Matheus Nunes celebrates after his goal against Watford

Nunes and the Portugal international blasted in his first goal since joining City for 53 million pounds a year ago.

In another match Christopher

Nkunku scored a hat-trick as Chelsea thrashed fourth tier Barrow 5-0 to reach the last 16 of the tournament.

Guardiola meanwhile stated that Rodri will be missed. "We're waiting for the last phone calls from the doctors to know exactly what definitely he has and the type of surgery he has to get," Guardiola said. The Spain international is among the favorites to win this year's Ballon d'Or award for the best player in the world.

Rodri's absence is a major blow to City's ambitions of winning a record-extending fifth straight Premier League title. Guardiola said Rodri is the 'best midfielder in the world and irreplaceable'.

MBAPPÉ HURTS HIS HAMSTRING

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Sept 25: Kylian Mbappé will be sidelined for a substantial period with a hamstring injury, Real Madrid said Wednesday. "Following tests carried out today by Real Madrid's medical services on our player Kylian Mbappé, he has been diagnosed with an injury to the biceps femoris in his left leg," Madrid said on X. "His progress will be monitored."

The club did not give a time frame for Mbappé's recovery, but he is set to miss at least Sunday's derby at Atletico Madrid in La Liga. He could also miss France's Nations League matches against Israel in Budapest October 10 and away to Belgium four days later.

LEGENDS LEAGUE CRICKET
WATCH LIVE ACTION TODAY!
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