HERE . NOW

OrissaPOST

More in store

Actor Shraddha Kapoor, who is basking in the success of blockbuster *Stree 2*, believes that her best is yet to come

LEISURE | P2

Cuba in dark

Cuba's electrical grid collapses again Saturday plunging the entire country into blackout for a second time just hours after services restored

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Critical minerals pact

India proposes critical minerals partnership agreement with US that will help domestic firms to get certain benefits in US market

BUSINESS | P11

Kiwis eye history

Sarfaraz Khan's and Rishabh Pant's heroics is unlikely to prevent New Zealand from earning their first-ever Test match victory on Indian soil in 36 years

SPORTS | P12

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MAGICAL ACT: Clowns perform during the International Clown Festival in Kolkata, Saturday PTI PHOTO

CM's ₹5L-cr dream

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday said his government is fully committed to ushering in a new era of industrial development and asked industrialists to invest in the state.

Odisha is poised to become a modern hub of industrial and economic activity, Majhi said while addressing industry leaders at a session of 'Investment Opportunity in Odisha' in Mumbai.

"I am proud to declare that Odisha, India's best-kept secret, is now ready to be explored," Majhi said, according to an official release issued by the Odisha CMO.

The state plans similar conferences and roadshows in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Europe and Singapore to attract ₹5 lakh crore investments for Odisha in the next five years.

He highlighted Odisha's high GDP growth and the advantages of its geographical location, natural resources, coastline, infrastructure and ports.

The state plans to hold 'Utkarsh Odisha – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025', scheduled for January 28-29, 2025, here.

Majhi said Odisha enjoys the active cooperation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

his 'Purvodaya Yojana' for the resurgence of eastern India.

"Odisha is right at the heart of this resurgence, playing a crucial role in powering India's growth engine," he said.

"Today, Odisha is poised to become a modern hub of industrial and economic activity. It is ready for business. And our government is fully committed to ushering in a new era of industrial development," Majhi said.

He said Odisha's transformation journey is not limited to resource-based industries anymore. "Our state is now transitioning swiftly to sectors that are skill-driven. We are witnessing rapid growth in industries like IT, electronics manufacturing, textiles, food processing, chemicals, petrochemicals and renewable energy, all contributing to a future where Odisha leads the nation," Majhi said.

As Odisha is fast becoming an industrial powerhouse, the state government is focused on building a robust industrial infrastructure. "We are ever sincere in creating a climate where innovation is encouraged, and business thrives," he told the gathering of industry leaders.

Noting that employment generation for Odia youth is a key agenda of the state government, Majhi appealed to industrialists to set up employment-intensive units in Odisha. "I assure you that you will get the best, most efficient manpower to work for you," he said.

"I personally promise you that my government will ensure a peaceful and safe environment for businesses to operate. Our state is prepared to offer a conducive and supportive environment for industries to invest and grow. I want you to be our partner in this journey of Viksit Odisha," the Chief Minister said.

He said that during the first 100 days of the BJP government in Odisha, the state has taken up initiatives like development of garment manufacturing clusters, food processing parks, and multimodal logistics hubs. These initiatives will surely strengthen Odisha's position in the global supply chain, added the CM.

WATERY GRAVE FOR 3 MINORS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Oct 19: Three minor boys were drowned in Subarnarekha canal while trying to retrieve a ball from the waterbody near the playground in Saraskana block of Mayurbhanj district, Saturday.

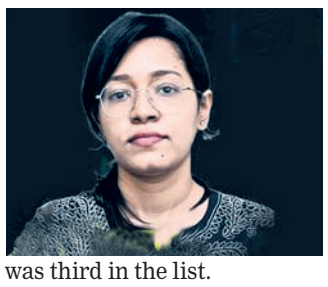
The deceased were identified as Sreyansh Sahu of Nuagaon village, Madan Mohan Sahu of Mundhakata village and Sai Shankar Sahu of Saraskana village. All of them, aged 14, were studying in Class-IX in the local school. Locals rescued them and rushed them to the Shirsha hospital where doctors pronounced them dead on arrival. Reports said the ball fell into the canal during play following which the three caught hold of each other's hand and tried to collect the ball but in vain.

Swetashree tops OCSE-2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Oct 19: Swetashree Mohapatra topped the Odisha Civil Services Examination (OCSE) 2022, the results of which were announced by the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) here, Saturday.

Of the top 10 candidates, five including Mohapatra were women. As per the selection list published by the commission Prinkil Parbin Parida secured Rank 2 while Dipti Ranjan Pati



was third in the list.

The topper, in her reaction, said, "I am very happy after knowing the result. It was my first attempt. I would like to give the credit of my success to my parents, siblings, friends and everyone around me."

A total of 683 candidates have cleared the examination of which 258 were women. The OCSE is conducted in three phases - preliminary examination, main examination and personality test.

A total of 92,914 candidates including 34,712 women aspirants had applied for OCSE-2022, out of which 40,586 candidates appeared at the preliminary examination held October 15, 2023.

GST Council to rejig tax rates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Term life insurance policies, and senior citizens' health insurance premium are likely to be exempted from GST as most members of a state ministerial panel favoured cutting taxes to benefit the common man, an official said Saturday.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) to decide on GST on health and life insurance premiums in its meeting Saturday decided to exempt GST on premiums paid by individuals, other than senior citizens, for health insurance with coverage of up to ₹5 lakh. However, 18 per cent GST will continue to be levied for health insurance cover of over ₹5 lakh.

Separately, the GoM on GST rate rationalisation, too, met Saturday and suggested that the GST Council rejig tax rates on a host of goods, including packaged drinking water, bicycles, exercise notebooks, luxury wrist watches, and shoes.

A final decision on GST on health and life insurance premiums, as well as rate rationalisation, is likely to the taken by the GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister and comprising state counterparts, in its meeting scheduled to take place next month.

"The rate rejig exercise will help the states and Centre to realise revenue gain of ₹22,000 crore, which will help cover the revenue loss from reduction in GST rates for insurance premiums," the official added.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

He wields the power of music like Tansen. Whenever he sings, it sparks riots

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.0°C	34.0°C
Min Temp	25.6°C	25.0°C
Humidity	74%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of development of thunder

Over 30 flights receive bomb threats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/ Mumbai, Oct 19: More than 30 flights of various Indian airlines, including Vistara, Air India and IndiGo, received bomb threats Saturday, according to sources. Flights of Air India, IndiGo, Akasa Air, Vistara, SpiceJet, Star Air and Alliance Air have received the threats, the sources said. So far this week, at least 70 flights of Indian carriers have received bomb threats and most of them turned out to be hoaxes.

The sources added that more than 30 flights, including domestic and international ones, operated by domestic airlines have received bomb threats through social media since morning. In at least one of the flights, a note was found in the lavatory saying there was a bomb in the flight.

Vistara said five of its flights on international routes Saturday received security threats through social media while IndiGo said at least four of its flights got security-related alerts.

"Following the protocol, all relevant authorities were promptly alerted and all security procedures are being adhered to, as per the guidance from the authorities and security agencies," an airline spokesperson said in a statement. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security held a meeting with CEOs and representatives of airlines here over the issue.

Drone targets Netanyahu's residence

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Oct 19: The Israeli government said a drone targeted the Prime Minister's house Saturday, though there were no casualties.

Sirens wailed in Israel warning of incoming fire from Lebanon. The military said dozens of projectiles were launched. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the drone targeted his house in the Mediterranean coastal town of Caesarea, though neither he nor his wife was at home.

The barrage comes as Israel considers its expected response to an Iranian at-

tack earlier this month and presses its offensives against Hamas militants in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In Gaza, Israeli forces fired at hospitals in the battered northern part of the Palestinian enclave, and strikes in the strip killed more than 50 people, including children, in less than 24 hours, according to hospital officials and an *Associated Press* reporter there.

In September, Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a ballistic missile toward Ben Gurion Airport when Netanyahu's plane was landing. The missile was intercepted.

In addition to the drone launched at Netanyahu's private residence, Israel's military said some 55 projectiles were fired in two separate barrages at northern Israel from Lebanon Saturday morning. A 50-year-old man was killed after being hit by shrapnel while sitting in his car in northern Israel, and four people were injured, Israel's medical services said.

On the other hand, Iran's supreme leader vowed Hamas would continue its fight following the killing of Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of last year's deadly October 7 attack.

leisure

RALPH MACCHIO RETURNS FOR FACE OFF WITH CHAN

Karate Kid: Legends, a new *Karate Kid* movie starring Jackie Chan, Ben Wang and Cobra Kai star Ralph Macchio is set to hit theatres May 30 next year. The movie aims to unite the various iterations of the *Karate Kid* saga.

LUCA TO HELM ADAPTATION OF *AMERICAN PSYCHO*

Filmmaker Luca Guadagnino is in discussion to direct a new take on the popular horror novel *American Psycho*. The novel, written by Bret Easton Ellis and published in 1991, was earlier adapted into a 2000 movie, featuring Christian Bale.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

TAURUS

You will wake up feeling determined and decisive today, says Ganesha. Be careful as your rigid views may make you seem stubborn. You may not be willing to come half way during a conflict and will make a habit of articulating your viewpoint. Tension at the workplace will eat through most of your time today, feels Ganesha.

GEMINI

You will feel blue and out of sorts today. You will feel that you are all alone in the world, emotionally. Your repressed desires and your philosophical streak will come to the fore today and will influence your dark mood, says Ganesha.

CANCER

With Ganesha's grace, whatever you think or peruse will be successful. Students will excel and finish pending work. You can display your imagination excellently. In short, a day of happiness and variety.

LEO

Most of your time will be spent at the work place. You will excel in all your tasks today. Professional relationships will be marked by co-operation. You will have cordial relations with your colleagues. It is an auspicious and progressive day for business, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Avoid all kinds of prejudice and do not allow intolerance to enter your mind today, advises Ganesha. In all likelihood, you will look around yourself in search of love and affection. You will do well to keep negativity at bay as otherwise it may cow you down.

LIBRA

Ganesha says those of you who are married or in love will experience a good time today. As you spend more time with your life partner by going out for a drive or for dinner, you will come closer to them. Today is a day full of joy, vigor and happiness for you.

SCORPIO

Being a workaholic may divert your attention from your family and you may have to bear the consequences. It's time to sort differences with your spouse. But, all this while, you need to be calm and patient. Watch your words in case of any arguments, warns Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

It's time for invitations and grooving all night long. And even eat like a glutton. But, for a change you are not on a mood to party, though it is unlike you. You reject the idea of socialising and hitting the dance floor. And your friends do not like your changed avatar, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Though less, you will get money from your investments and other resources. Don't ignore pending projects; complete them at the earliest so that you will have clear picture about your requirements and responsibilities, advises Ganesha. Once you are done with them, you will enjoy happy times with your friends and family in the evening.

AQUARIUS

Meeting people from the different walks of life, having a good conversation with them and widening the horizon of your knowledge – this will be the highlight of today for youl. At work, you will have a busy day with plenty of meetings, discussions, planning and execution, feels Ganesha.

PISCES

Today you will get attention from the opposite sex and this will play an important role in your success in the near future. Due to the favourable alignment of the planets you will recieve more than your expectations. Ganesha feels that even though you are a calculative and cautious person, you will tend to be aggressive, outgoing and willing to take risks today.

Uorfi joins *Playground S4*

Mumbai: After the reality show *Follow Kar Lo Yaar* Uorfi Javed will once again be seen on another reality show named *Playground S4* on Amazon MX player. She will be playing the role of an additional mentor in the show.

Known for her quirky fashion statements and bold social media persona, The arrival of Uorfi is set to elevate the competition, introducing innovative ideas and enthusiasm, alongside mentors like Munawar Faruqui, Elvish Yadav, Mythpat, and Mortal.

Playground is a gaming reality show. In the show, 16 contestants will be divided into four teams. *S4* has already captivated viewers with its high-octane challenges, and emotional drama created by the talented contestants. Uorfi's approach will surely bring an added intensity level to the competition. With her keen eye for detail and emphasis on authenticity, contestants will elevate their game to impress her, raising the stakes significantly. This change in dynamics is set to ignite new rivalries, drama, and entertainment ensuring viewers remain on the edge of their seats.

Presented by Hero MotoCorp and co-powered by Tecno, the gaming and entertainment franchise is streaming exclusively on Amazon MX Player. IANS

MANUSHI'S SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

Mumbai: Actress Manushi Chhillar often shares captivating photos and videos, giving her fans a peek into her daily life.

The former Miss World recently brightened her followers' feeds with a cheerful Instagram post where she revealed what keeps her happy at work. Taking to her Instagram handle, she posted a series of her photos and captioned, "Here's what keeps me happy at work What makes you happy? Doing my own make up Make some pet friends Food." In the images, the *Samrat Prithviraj* actress is seen enjoying her time on set. She mentioned three simple yet profound sources of happiness in her life, doing her own makeup, making pet friends and food. In one of the photos, she is seen applying lipstick, while in others, she shares images of food. The last photo shows Manushi enjoying her dinner after pack-up.

Manushi's rise to fame began with her victory at the prestigious Miss World pageant in 2017. The 27-year-old actress made her acting debut in the Akshay Kumar starrer historical drama *Samrat Prithviraj*, where she portrayed the courageous and resilient princess Sanyogita. Since then, Manushi has appeared in several films, including *Operation Valentine*, *The Great Indian Family*, and *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*. IANS

My best is yet to come: Shraddha

Mumbai: After acting in numerous blockbuster movies, Shraddha Kapoor revealed the kind of shift she desires in her filmography.

Speaking at the SCREEN launch event here, the *Aashiqui 2* actress said, "I believe that my best is yet to come, and I definitely want to feel, when I am going to be a part of a film, that it is going to be something exciting for me as an actor... to be a part of a particular story that is really riveting, that may have a message subliminally passed on to the audience. I am in that headspace right now."

The actor further said that her pace of work has changed.

"There was a time when I was doing a lot of films back to back, and now it's the opposite. It's like one film in three years... And it's fine. I found my comfort in that now because I feel like I want to be a part of films where I feel truly fulfilled and can push myself as an actor while doing something different from what I've done before," she added.

Kapoor also noted that it's not necessary to have a constant stream of film releases. PTI

Madhuri's special message for PeeCee

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra Jonas recently took to Instagram to express her heartfelt gratitude to Madhuri Dixit for her kind words of praise for her film *Paani*.

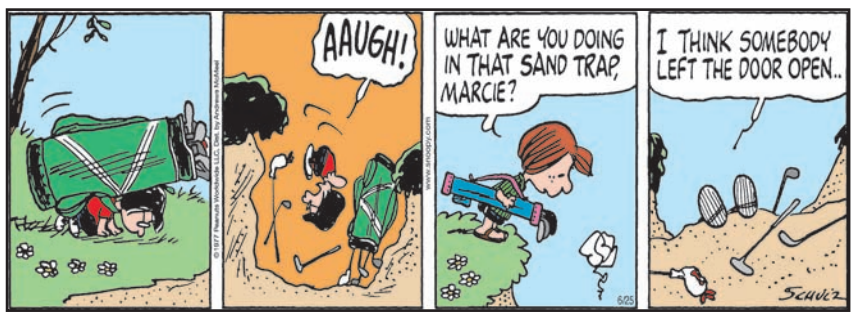
In an Instagram post, Madhuri appreciated the creativity and hard work of the whole team, urging fans to watch the film. The Marathi film, which addresses the critical global issue of water scarcity, is bankrolled by Priyanka's production house.

Taking to her Instagram story, the *Dostana* actress reposted Madhuri's post, writing, "Thank you @madhuridixitnene." Heaping praise on the film, the *Dil To Pagal Hai* actress shared the trailer of the film on her Instagram and wrote, "Bravo to the whole team for commendable creativity and hardwork! Please go and show them love and support. *Paani* is now out in theatres." She also tagged Priyanka and director Addinath M Kothare in her post.

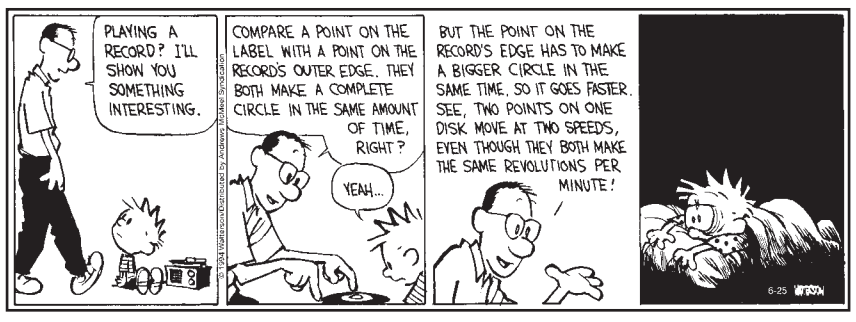
Backed by Priyanka Chopra and her mother, Madhu Chopra's production house, Purple Pebble Pictures, *Paani* stars Addinath, Rucha Vaidya, Subodh Bhave, Rajit Kapur, Kishor Kadam, Nitin Dixit and Sachin Goswami, among others. The film won the 66th National Film Awards in 2019 under the Best Film on Environment Conservation category. The film is scheduled to hit theatres October 19. IANS

FUN post

PEANUTS

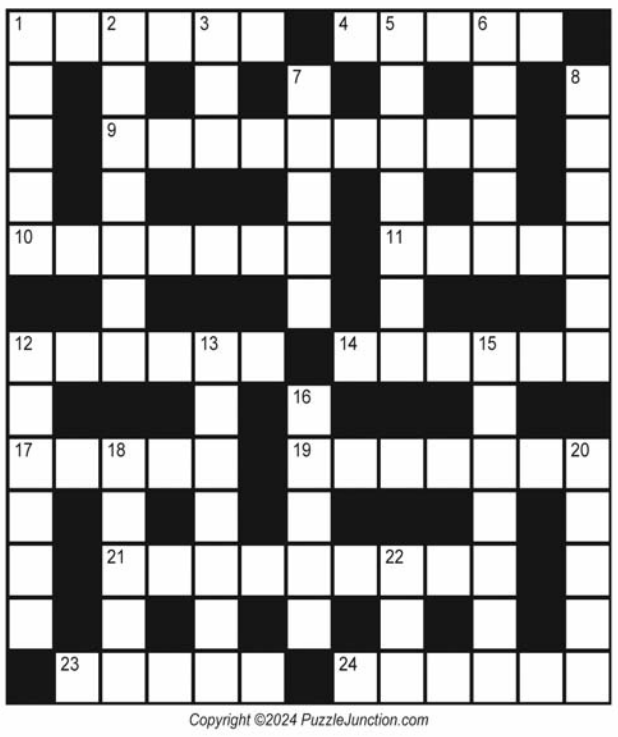


CALVIN AND HOBBES



BREVITY

CROSSWORD



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Across
1 Remain firm
4 About-face (1-4)
9 Beau
10 Type of bed
11 Pitch
12 Salad slice
14 Barked like a puppy
17 Miraculous food
19 Possibly
21 Unrehearsed
23 Aardwolf
24 Australian arboreal marsupial

Down
1 Perch
2 Restrained
3 Cunning
5 Railroad support
6 Equestrian
7 Fortified
8 Full of holes
12 Commotion
13 Bring into focus
15 Small change
16 Eating utensil
18 In need of a muffler
20 Emergency supply
22 Favoring

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.

			3		6	8		
6				1				
			8	4		5	3	
	5	9						7
			6					
4				3			8	
9			4	5		3		
		6			7	1		
							2	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

M	A	R	S		C	O	A	S	T	E	R	S
E		I		I		B		T		L		A
D	A	V	I	N	C	I		E	R	U	P	T
I		E		C				R		S		E
T	U	R	B	O	T		T	E	P	I	D	
A				M		A		O		V		D
T	A	T		P	L	U	M	P		E	L	I
E		E		A		K		H				R
	P	A	S	T	A		P	O	T	P	I	E
T		C		I				N		E		C
R	E	H	A	B		B	R	I	S	K	E	T
A		E		L		E		C		O		O
M	U	R	D	E	R	E	R		F	E	A	R

SUDOKU

2	7	6	8	3	9	1	4	5
9	4	3	7	5	1	2	8	6
5	8	1	4	6	2	7	9	3
6	5	9	2	8	7	3	1	4
1	2	4	3	9	5	8	6	7
8	3	7	1	4	6	5	2	9
4	1	8	9	7	3	6	5	2
3	9	5	6	2	8	4	7	1
7	6	2	5	1	4	9	3	8

DANCE FEST

Girls perform Odissi at Kala Vikas Kendra in Cuttack, Saturday

Low-pressure area likely over Bay Oct 21

WEATHERMAN SAYS

- The sea condition will remain rough along and off the coast from October 22 to 25
- Coastal Odisha is likely to receive heavy rainfall from October 23 to 25
- Fishermen should return to shore by October 21

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: A cyclonic circulation, which has formed over Andaman Sea, is likely to intensify into a low pressure by October 21 and further into a depression around October 23, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Saturday.

The low pressure may have an impact on coastal areas of north Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Bangladesh next week, it said.

"A cyclonic circulation is formed over central Andaman Sea. Under its influence, a low-pressure area is likely to form over Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea around October 21. Thereafter, it is likely to move northwestwards and intensify further into a depression around October 23," IMD, in its evening bulletin, said.

Amid speculation of formation of a cyclone in October this year as forecast by certain international models, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said a clearer picture will emerge only after formation of a low-pressure area around October 21.

"The IMD has made no prediction on whether the system will develop into a cyclonic storm. October is known as the month of cyclones and some weather models are indicating probability of cyclogenesis. We provide a forecast on the path and intensification of a system after assessing over 10 weather models. However, right now, there is no consensus among them as a low-pressure area is yet to be formed," Mohapatra said.

Though it is too early to make a cyclone prediction, Mohapatra said, "The system is likely to have an impact on coastal areas of north Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Bangladesh."

Mohapatra said that the sea condition will remain rough along and off the coast from October 22 to 25. The coastal region of Odisha is likely to receive heavy rainfall from October 23-25. He suggested the fishermen to return to shore by October 21.

He confirmed that the low-pressure area is likely to be formed over Bay of Bengal and adjoining north Andaman Sea October 21, it is likely to move northwestwards and intensify further into a depression around October 23.

Mohapatra, in a video message, said that the squally weather with wind speed 35 kmph to 45 kmph gusting to 55 kmph is likely to prevail over eastcentral and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal October 21 and 22.

The IMD said that light to moderate rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of south Odisha, north coastal Odisha and dry weather is very likely to prevail over the districts of north interior Odisha Sunday.

The IMD also forecast thunderstorm with lightning very likely to occur at isolated places in Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati districts Sunday.

BOOK LAUNCH: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, Padma Vibhushan Dr Karan Singh, author Pallavi Rebbapragada and senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai during the launch of 'Nandini Satpathy - The Iron Lady of Orissa', a book chronicling the life and works of the only woman chief minister of Odisha, at Constitution Club of India in New Delhi, Saturday OP PHOTO

Govt to change name of 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha'

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabinarayan Naik Saturday said that the state government has decided to change the name of 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' to 'Bikasit Gaan, Bikasit Odisha'.

The 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha', a flagship rural welfare scheme, was launched by the previous BJD government before the general elections.

A new guideline related to the scheme will be released by the government in two days, Naik said.

The minister said according to the revised guidelines, the opinion of the 'palli sabha' (community meeting) or 'gram sabha' will be given utmost importance, and the panchayat representatives will have the power to implement various projects under the scheme for the development of the villages. The villages will be developed as per proposals from the locals, the minister said. It aims to develop villages with various facilities such as internet, sports infrastructure, training hubs for self-help groups (SHGs), banking, and digital connectivity.

Accused 'helps' City cops in tricky Raj ops

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: After drawing a blank in a hot pursuit for a criminal in the dusty plains of Haryana last month, little did an investigation team from Odisha Police expect that an alleged partner in the crime would turn out to be a helping hand in apprehending two wanted cyber offenders in a desert town of Rajasthan in a protracted and tricky operation.

On September 23, a three-member team from the Cyber Crime and Economic Offences Police Station of the Commissionerate Police, led by Sub-Inspector Pratap Das who was assisted by constables- Subham Mohapatra and Rashmiranjan Jali, set out on a mission to Delhi to bring to book the main suspect in a ₹2 crore digital fraud registered a week back. The sleuths had already succeeded in nabbing one of the accused in the case and based on the information ferreted out from him, went after his associate who was holed up in the national capital.

Das said they took the arrested accused with them purposefully as the former would help identify the wanted accused.

Working on the information that the wanted accused lived in Chandni Chowk area of Delhi, the cops laid a trap in the vicinity. "As per our plans, his associate would call him for a rendezvous. And as soon as he was spotted at the place, we'd nab him," Das said, adding that the plan went haywire as the wanted accused has got a whiff of the police plans and fled to Narnaul in Haryana, at least 130-km from Gurgaon.

On receipt of the information, the police team left for Narnaul in the late hours of September 24 and sought cooperation of the local police (Sadar police station). Das said the Station House Officer (SHO) was uncooperative and refused any assistance during a raid at a suspected hideout of the wanted accused.

This made the task of the police team impossible in the unknown territory. "We finally gave up as long hours of journey had already taken a toll on us," Das said.

While the policemen were planning to return, they were

alerted by some senior officers back in Bhubaneswar, who were tracking the operation, about a couple of cyber criminals in another case whose mobile phone GPS location was traced to a place in Churu district of neighbouring Rajasthan. "Since Churu was only 145-kilometre from Narnaul, we decided to pursue the case," Das said.

Meanwhile, the arrested accused accompanying the police team all the while had struck a rapport of sorts with the members of the team. "We decided to take his help further in pursuing the fresh lead as he was more familiar with the north Indian terrains and language which we were lacking," Das added.

Moreover, the accused earlier worked in mills in Delhi and textile markets in various north-Indian cities which gave him familiarity of the topography and local mannerism. "We convinced him to travel with us till Churu district to help us in the detection of the case. He agreed," Das said.

Das' hunch proved correct. They were faced with hostility from Ratan Nagar police station as the SHO there belonged to the same community as the two wanted criminals. "Here the accompanying criminal played his trick. He coaxed the SHO to agree to our demands and soon, we were allotted the required number of police constables who helped us in nabbing the two accused," Das said while identifying them as Naveen Kumar Jangir, 22, and Mukesh Kumar Sheela, 26.

The City police team finally returned triumphant with the arrested accused. As a reward to the "helper's" unconditional support, the cyber police did not oppose his bail when he was produced in the court September 27.

"During the course of investigation, we found his involvement in the case was mostly peripheral, and also he was cooperative all through. That's why we decided not to press for his custody," Das chuckled.

Couple held for forcing minor into flesh trade at City spa

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: The twin city Commissionerate Police Saturday rescued a minor girl from 'Diamond Salon and Spa' in Rabi Talkies area where the owners, a couple, had forced her into flesh trade.

Inspector in-charge (IIC) of Badagada police station Trupti Ranjan Nayak said the couple – Raj Pattnaik, 21, and Prativarani Rout, 20 – has been taken into custody following their arrest under relevant provisions of the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA) and BNS.

The IIC said the accused couple had recently employed the minor as a receptionist at the spa at a monthly salary of Rs 10,000.

"The girl was desperately searching for a job when she came across the couple through a distant relative," Nayak said.

A few days into her joining, the couple allegedly forced her to solicit male customers. When the girl protested, the accused duo took away her mobile phone and locked her up in a room. Later,

they coerced her into accompanying them on a trip to Puri, Nayak said.

It was during the visit to Puri, the minor somehow managed to access a mobile phone and narrated her ordeal before her ailing brother seeking help.

Her brother in turn contacted a friend who reached the spa in Bhubaneswar to rescue the girl. However, the couple viciously attacked him, leaving him seriously injured.

On Saturday morning, he lodged a complaint at Badagada police station narrating how the girl has been kept hostage.

"Acting on the information, we raided the spa and rescued the minor girl in the afternoon," the IIC said.

The arrested couple was produced before a court for remand.

FOR A CAUSE: Members of 'Students Against Corruption' queue up at Arunodaya Market post office in Cuttack, Saturday, to send letters to the President of India seeking cancellation of exam for appointment of RI/AMIN OP PHOTO

Starch-digesting gene likely evolved before farming did

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Genes that help humans digest carbohydrates could have started evolving more than 800,000 years ago, long before the advent of farming, a new study has found.

Analysing the genomes of 68 ancient humans, including a 45,000-year-old sample from Siberia, researchers at the University at Buffalo, US, found that pre-agricultural hunter-gatherers already had about four to eight copies of the amylase, or 'AMY1', gene -- known to help break down starchy foods such as bread and pasta.

Gene duplication, whereby a gene copies itself and grows in number, is considered a major driver of evolution.

The results showed that the early duplication of the gene helped human adapt to starchy

foods and set the stage for the wide genetic variation that still exists today, influencing how humans digest starchy foods effectively, the team said.

"The idea is that the more amylase genes you have, the more amylase you can produce and the more starch you can digest effectively," Omer Gokcumen, a professor in the department of biological sciences, University of Buffalo, and corresponding author of the study published in the journal Science, said.

The initial copies of the amylase gene was like "the first ripple in a pond, creating a genetic opportunity that later shaped our species," the researchers explained.

As humans spread across different environments, the gene's copies provided an advantage for adapting to new diets, particularly those rich in starch, they said.

The team also found that the amylase gene duplications occurred in Neanderthals and Denisovans -- both close and extinct relatives of the modern humankind.

"This suggests that the (amylase) gene may have first duplicated more than 800,000 years ago, well before humans split from Neanderthals and much further back than previously thought," lead author Kwondo Kim, The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, US, said.

Ex-MLA Utkal Keshari Parida passes away

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Former MLA Utkal Keshari Parida died at a hospital in the City here Saturday following a brief illness, his family said.He was 65.

Parida was elected to the Assembly from the Kendrapada constituency as a candidate of the Odisha Gana Parishad (OGP) in 2004. He had defeated BJP's Bed Prakash Agarwal.

He joined politics during his college days. He was the president of Salipur College Students' Union in 1980-81.

He was elected the vice president of the Odisha Archery Association in 2021.

Condoling Parida's demise, the Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik said his work for the people will always be remembered.

Odisha on threshold of AI strategy devpt

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: In a significant step towards fostering an Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem in the state, a brainstorming workshop on 'Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Odisha' was held at the Convention Centre of Lok Seva Bhavan Saturday.

Organised by the Electronics and IT department, the workshop saw participation from senior officials, academia, industry leaders, and international organisations, all collaborating to shape Odisha's future AI strategy.

According to an official press release, the workshop is part of a broader set of initiatives by the state government aimed at catalysing the state's AI ecosystem. The insights and discussions from the event are expected to play a pivotal role in the development of Odisha's AI strategy, aligning it with India's national AI mission.

The event was attended by senior officials, including Development Commissioner-cum-ACS Anu Garg, Principal Secretary Electronics and IT Vishal Dev, and senior representatives from various government departments.

> The workshop aligns Odisha's efforts with the national IndiaAI Mission, which has earmarked over ₹10,000 crore for AI research and development

Speaking at the event, Anu Garg highlighted Odisha's rapid growth across sectors and emphasised the need for equitable AI adoption that benefits marginalised communities.

Dev announced that Odisha has already started the process of developing its AI strategy and policy. He outlined the state's ambition to contribute to India's AI mission, including the development of compute capacity, indigenous AI models, and fostering AI start-ups.

The workshop featured presentations by representatives from leading organisations, including the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, University of California-Berkeley, and the Wadhwani Foundation.

Topics covered in the workshop included AI use cases in healthcare, agriculture, education, disaster management, and the importance of building a local compute capacity.

A panel discussion followed, featuring senior academics from IIT Bhubaneswar, IIIT Bhubaneswar, and other prominent institutions, as well as industry leaders from Accenture, TCS, IBM, and NASSCOM. The discussions focused on AI research initiatives in Odisha, industry-academia collaboration, and the need for an actionable, inclusive AI strategy.

The workshop aligns Odisha's efforts with the national IndiaAI Mission, which has earmarked over ₹10,000 crore for AI research and development. With the successful completion of thes event, Odisha is on track to develop an AI strategy that drives economic growth and empowers its citizens.

The workshop marks an important milestone in Odisha's journey to becoming a leader in AI innovation and adoption.

FOLLOWING TRADITION: Habishyalis observe Rai Damodar Brata at Brundabati Niwas in Puri, Saturday

OP PHOTO

OSDMA holds programme on psychosocial care

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), in collaboration with National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), organised the first batch of Training of Trainers (ToT) programme here from October 17 to 19.

The three-day programme covered various aspects of disasters and its impact on mental health, psychological first-aid and psychosocial care techniques and self-care strategies.

Bangalore will implement the programme titled, 'Enhancing psychosocial care for communities in disaster- prone areas of Odisha'.

The main objective of the intervention is to build psychosocial care capacities at community levels, enhancing the knowledge and skills of community level workers (ASHA, AWW and Volunteers), to extend psychological first-aid and psychosocial care to the disaster-affected community, develop knowledge products through training manual and participant handbook, and to create a pool of trainers.

In the first phase, the initiative will be implemented in six coastal districts i.e. Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam.

OSDMA district project officers, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists from district mental health programmes, counsellors and District Child Protection Officers of the coastal districts and ODRAF- DMTC master trainers participated in the programme.

Professor and head of the department of Psychosocial Support in Disaster Management (DPSSDM) at NIMHANS Subhasis Bhadra, additional professor Jayakumar C, and Gobinda Majhi attended the programme.

SNIPPETS

Odisha couple electrocuted to death

Korba: A couple was electrocuted to death in their house in Chhattisgarh's Korba district Saturday, police said. Originally from Odisha, victims Duryodhan Mahanta and his wife Bharati lived in the Adarsh Nagar locality within the jurisdiction of Kusmunda police station, an official said. Bharati was hanging washed clothes on a metal wire when electricity passed through it. Duryodhan attempted to pull her when she shouted for help, but both got electrocuted, he said. The couple was rushed to a hospital where doctors declared them dead, the official said. The bodies were sent for post-mortem and the victims' families in Odisha were informed, he added.

'Nari Shakti inspiration towards Viksit Bharat'

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday that blessings from women inspire him to keep working to build a developed India, after a BJP leader shared a story of a tribal woman who insisted on giving ₹100 to convey her gratitude to Modi. Sharing pictures, BJP vice president Baijayant Jay Panda said on X that he met the tribal woman during the party's membership drive in Odisha's Sundargarh district. "This Adivasi lady insisted on giving me ₹100 to 'convey thanks' to PM Narendra Modi. She brushed aside my demurrals and explanations that it wasn't necessary, and simply would not take no for an answer until I finally relented. "This is a reflection of the transformation that Odisha and Bharat is experiencing," he said in his post.

MPs attend ECoR's divisional committee meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: The divisional committee meeting of Members of Parliament (MPs) representing Sambalpur railway division jurisdiction of East Coast Railway (ECoR) was held in Jharsuguda Saturday.

MPs from Chhattisgarh and Odisha, along with senior railway officials, including ECoR GM Parmeshwar Funkwal attended the meeting.

Bolangir MP Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo was elected as the chairman of the divisional committee. The meeting was attended by Bolangir MP Sangeeta kumari Singh Deo, Bargarh MP Pradeep Purohit, Kalahandi MP Malvika Devi, Mahasamund MP Roop Kumari Choudhry, Rajyasabha MP Niranjan Bishi and MLA Tankadhar Tripathy, who represented Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan were present on the occasion.

The MPs, engaged in constructive discussions, offered valuable insights for enhancing railway infrastructure and improving passenger amenities in the region. They appreciated the developmental initiatives undertaken by the Sambalpur railway division, highlighting the importance of ongoing projects.

Key issued discussed during the meeting included, increasing train frequency and extending services to remote locations, early construction of new railway lines, development of road under bridges (RUBs) and road over bridges (ROBs), improving passenger amenities at stations, cleanliness of trains, platforms and station areas, timely completion of ongoing projects and adding more stoppages of trains in the division.

They commended the commitment of ECoR towards addressing regional freight transportation needs and continuously striving for betterment of passenger train services.

Funkwal, in his address, welcomed the MPs and expressed his gratitude for their valuable inputs and insightful feedback. He updated the house on the performance of ECoR on status of ongoing infrastructure development projects.

The meeting was also attended by Sambalpur divisional railway manager Tushar Kant Pandey, ECoR principal heads of various departments, along with officers of Sambalpur division.

Deputy CM Deo stresses on rabi crop cultivation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 19: Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo participated in the National Conference on Agriculture - Rabi Crops Programme and discussed various issues and initiatives related to rabi crop agriculture in the state.

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and agriculture ministers of other states also attended the conference. In the National Food Security plan, Deo proposed to provide financial support for the cultivation of pulses and oilseed crops on 2.5 lakh hectares of paddy land.

In addition, he has also submitted a demand to increase the field performance expenditure per hectare for sunflower, groundnuts and beekeeping.

Deo proposed to approve the annual programme plan of 8.34 crore rupees, provided by the state in the agro forestry programme under the National Development Plan.

Keeping in view the state's vulnerability to natural disasters, Deo proposed to set up a research centre for deep land agriculture in coastal regions of the state and an agricultural machinery development, training and testing centre to bring innovation in agricultural mechanisation in western Odisha.

MoPSW hosts Second National Lighthouse Festival in Puri

Puri, Oct 19: Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal Saturday said lighthouse tourism has been providing employment to many people.

Sonowal was speaking at the second National Lighthouse Festival which began here with over 100 participants, including government officials, tourism experts, and conservationists, in attendance.

The festival organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW), aimed to explore the vast potential of lighthouse tourism and strategies for preserving these maritime structures, blending tourism development with heritage conservation.

"Lighthouse tourism has been providing employment to many people and at the same time informing our next generations about the country's maritime history. In coming days, these lighthouse tourism will grow," Sonowal said.

Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Shantanu Thakur stressed on the importance of developing lighthouse tourism as a means to boost local economies and preserve India's rich maritime heritage.

"The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has embarked on a transformative journey to revitalise our historic lighthouses. These majestic structures, which have long guided mariners, are now evolving into centres of tourism, culture, and learning," Thakur said.

"With the development of 75 iconic lighthouses across the nation, we are not only preserving history but also creating vibrant spaces for recreation and community engagement," he added.

A detailed presentation by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGL) showcased the current status and future prospects of lighthouse tourism in India, highlighting various initiatives underway.

LIGHTHOUSE TOURISM CONCLAVE 2024

With an investment of ₹60 crore, 75 iconic lighthouses across nine coastal states and one union territory have been developed. Each lighthouse has become a beacon of both heritage and recreation, with modern amenities such as museums, amphitheaters, children's parks, and more, an official said.

In Odisha, five lighthouses—Gopalpur, Puri, Chandrabhaga, Paradip, and False Point—have been developed as part of this initiative to promote lighthouse tourism.

The conclave was graced by dignitaries, including Puri MP Sambit Patra, Minister of State for Petroleum, Natural Gas & Tourism Suresh Gopi and Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida.

According to officials, in the fiscal year 2023-24 alone, the 75 dedicated lighthouses attracted an impressive 16 lakh visitors.

> As many as 75 iconic lighthouses developed across nine coastal states and one Union Territory with an investment of ₹60 crore

> In Odisha, five lighthouses—Gopalpur, Puri, Chandrabhaga, Paradip, and False Point— have drawn more than 10 lakh visitors as of September in the current fiscal year 2024-25

As of September 2024, the current fiscal year 2024-25 has already welcomed more than 10 lakh visitors.

These developments have also resulted in job creation, with 150 direct and 500 indirect employment opportunities emerging in nearby hotels, restaurants, tour operators, transportation services, and local shops and artisans, the officials said.

The presentation was followed by two engaging panel sessions, moderated by Gaurav Nagar. The first session focused on "Lighthouse Tourism and Heritage." Speakers, including Kapil Mohan, Debasis Mishra, and renowned photographer Dinesh Khanna discussed the cultural and economic significance of lighthouses and the untapped potential in leveraging them as tourist destinations.

The second session concentrated on "Preservation and Conservation of Lighthouses." Experts such as Raja Parija, Capt Devabrat Mishra, and Sangeeta Thakur deliberated on sustainable preservation techniques, balancing heritage conservation with the growing demand for tourism.

Later in the evening, the Lighthouse Tourism Festival was held at Talabania Ground in Puri, witnessing a grand cultural celebration.

The festivities began with the invocation dance, Ganesh Vandana, followed by a captivating medley of traditional Assamese performances, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Assam.

PNN/AGENCIES

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TENSE MOMENT: A player heads a ball while trying to score a goal during a football match at All India Inter NIT Sports Meet held at Dillip Tirkey Stadium in Rourkela, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Unsafe ghat roads endanger lives of local tribals, tourists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Oct 19: Travelling in the forested hilly areas of Keonjhar district has become a risky proposition due to lack of proper maintenance of the ghat roads. Hazards such as frequent landslides continue to endanger the life of the commuters on the routes in the absence of repair and upkeep.

Moreover, mindless felling of trees for road construction and the landslides also lead to widespread deforestation in the district.

Hills are being cut into size and roads are being built to facilitate communication and smooth transportation of cargo. However, after the construction gets over, the roads in the forested areas are not properly managed causing mud and stones to come crumbling down the hills.

Landslides damage the roads and result in traffic snarls apart from endangering the lives of the commuters if they happen to pass by the route during the period.

Similarly, remnants of the felled roadside trees get uprooted and fall on the roads due to lack of proper barricading of the hill sides. As people continue to travel perilously on the ghat roads, they often meet with accidents resulting in loss of lives and properties.

Meanwhile, forest dwellers are demanding that such risky stretches of the ghat roads be identified and properly managed. They claimed that the administration has no fund constraints for the purpose due to the presence of District Mineral Foundation and mining houses.

Locals said that these problems can be addressed by marking and barricading such sensitive stretches and packing the roadsides properly with wire mesh.

The Bayapandadhar-Gonasika road under Bansapal block in this district connecting Gonasika tourist site, the origin of the Baitarani river, is a case in this point. This road was built long ago by cutting the hills. Local forest dwellers and tourists travel on this road in large numbers.

However, in some places, the hills have been cut and the roadsides are in an unsafe condition. They alleged that huge boulders and soil chunks fall on the road when it rains continuously. Similarly, due to rampant soil erosion, big trees along the road are in unsafe condition and could get uprooted at any moment.

In case of excess rain, there is every possibility of the trees collapsing on the road increasing the possibility of severe accidents and road blockades. There have been many such incidents in the past, but the administration is yet to address the issue, they lamented.

Banspal Block Development Officer (BDO) Bikrani Kispat said that the road is a major link of communication as it is used by a lot of people and tourists. However, since this road belongs to the Rural Development department, the authorities will be informed to take steps to address the problems.

Environmentalists alleged that due to departmental apathy, landslides occur on many roads in the hilly areas such as Judia Ghat and Kanjipani Ghat in regular intervals.

It is also alleged that forests and local environment get destroyed due to lack of coordination between the road construction agencies and the Forest department.

Armed robbery at Bondamunda; gold worth ₹20L looted

Rourkela: Armed robbers looted the house of a railway employee Friday night in Bondamunda area and decamped with gold ornaments and cash worth about ₹20 lakh. A group of robbers entered the house of Dilip Panda, a junior engineer in Indian Railways around 2am. They entered the house by cutting the iron grill when the family was sleeping in the bedroom. They were carrying different sharp-edged weapons. As soon as the family woke up, they gagged them and asked for the key to the almirah. Meanwhile, one of them found the key in the drawer of a table and opened the steel almirah. They first took away the 38 grams gold kept in the almirah and then asked for money. Panda had ₹10,000 hard cash, which they took and fled the scene. He raised an alarm and neighbours gathered after a while. Informed, police arrived with dog squad and the scientific team for the investigation Saturday morning. SDPO, Zone 1 Nirmal Mohapatra said, "So far, no arrest has been made. But we are hopeful that we will make a breakthrough soon."

ASHA misappropriates women's money, absconds with daughter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Purushottampur, Oct 19: In a shocking incident, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and her daughter at Rishipur village under this police limits in Ganjam district, under the pretense of providing healthcare services to women, obtained their signatures and availed loans worth lakhs of rupees in their names from various finance companies before fleeing.

The matter came to light after the women staged a protest in front of Purushottampur police station Saturday demanding immediate arrest of the culprit. Notably, the affected women had filed a complaint in this regard five days back. Following the complaint, police had registered a case (667/24) against the ASHA and her daughter. However, they have not taken significant action prompting the women to stage a protest.

> Women who have been duped by the duo Saturday staged a protest in front of Purushottampur police station demanding immediate arrest of the culprits

On the other hand, due to the absence of the ASHA in the village, newborns, mothers and pregnant women have been deprived of vaccinations and other services for the past two months.

Subhasini Pattnaik of Rishipur village lodged the complaint stating that 60 women in the village had formed a self-help group, with the ASHA identified as Kuni Pattnaik serving as the group leader. They had been facilitating loans from various finance companies.

However, in recent months Pinki withdrew money from the women's accounts without their knowledge and transferred funds, after which they absconded. The women became aware of the fraud when finance company employees started visiting their homes to collect the monthly installments, which had not been repaid.

The protesting women alleged that since Kuni was an ASHA in the village, she used to ask for signatures under the pretext of healthcare services and collected bank passbooks, telling women that they would receive financial aid through government schemes. The women have accused her of misappropriating money this way. An investigation is ongoing and action will be taken, said the investigating officer Kshetramohan Sahu.

Blast in fire cracker making unit; four minors critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote, Oct 19: Four minor boys were critically injured in an explosion at an illegal fire cracker manufacturing unit at Satabandha Sahi of Manikpur village under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam district Saturday.

The injured minors were identified as Prasad Gouda, Badal Gouda, Babula Gouda and Samir Duhudi, who are residents of Manikpur village.

According to sources, the blast occurred when the four boys were preparing fire crackers in a house at Satabandha Sahi in the village ahead of Diwali festival for sale.

The blast was so severe that the tin roof of the house was blown up. One of the boys, Badal Gouda, was severely injured as one each of his legs and hands were also blown up in the explosion.

All the injured were immediately rushed to Khallikote hospital in a critical condition.

As their conditions deteriorated, all were forwarded to MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur for better treatment.

On being informed, Khallikote police along with a forensic team, bomb squad and fire brigade team rushed to the spot. An investigation into the incident is ongoing, said the police.

Man set ablaze after kangaroo court over black magic suspicion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nuapada, Oct 19: A 50-year-old man was fighting for his life at a hospital in Nuapada district after he was allegedly set on fire by villagers accusing him of practising black magic, police said Saturday.

The residents of Portipada village had convened a meeting Friday evening, and the victim, Kham Singh Majhi, was asked to be present there.

The kangaroo court charged him with practising black magic, and as a punishment, tied him with ropes made of straw and set him on fire, police said.

As the blaze engulfed him, Majhi ran from one house to the other, screaming and shouting in pain. As no one came forward to help him, he finally jumped into a pond.

He was rescued from the pond by his family who admitted him to the Sinapali government hospital. As his condition was critical, he was transferred to the district headquarters hospital, police said.

"The villagers had called a meeting and threatened my father with dire consequences for performing black magic.

As he denied the charges, they first beat him up and then set him on fire," alleged Majhi's son Hemlal.

SDPO of Khariar Arup Behera said a case was registered at the Sinapali police station, a search was underway for the accused persons.

Most of the people have fled their houses when police reached the village, he said.

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4	Class of Contractor	:	"D" & "C" Class
5	Period of Completion	:	6 calendar months
6	Availability of Tender online for bidding	:	22.10.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to 02.11.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
7	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	:	01.11.2024 upto 4.00 P.M.
8	Date & Time of opening of Bid	:	04.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

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Chhendipada

SNAKEBITE KILLS MAN, DAUGHTER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Harabhanga, Oct 19: In a tragic incident, a man and his minor daughter died after being bitten by a poisonous snake at Thidikajora village near Charichhak Bazaar under Harabhanga block in Boudh district late Friday night.

The deceased were identified as Sushanta Kanhara, 46, and his daughter Subhasmita Kanhara, 16, natives of Gumagada village in Kandhamal district. Sushanta had been serving as a teacher for over 20 years in Harabhanga block of Boudh district and was living with his family in a rented house in Thidikajora village near Charichhak Bazaar.

Sushanta along with his daughter and wife went to sleep after finishing dinner Friday night. Around 11pm, a venomous snake crawled onto the cot where Sushanta was sleeping and bit him on the left foot. At the same time, his daughter Subhasmita, who was sleeping nearby, was also bitten on her left foot by the snake. However, his wife was unharmed.

After the snakebite, both Sushanta and his daughter did not realise they had been bitten. An hour later, Subhasmita woke up complaining of chest pain, and Sushanta too started feeling dizzy.

They were immediately rushed to the Phulbani district headquarters hospital by the neighbours. However, upon arrival at the hospital, Subhasmita was declared brought dead by the doctors. Shortly, Sushanta too succumbed to the snakebite while undergoing treatment.

Subhasmita was a Plus II second-year student at a private college and had come home for the Dussehra holidays.

After post-mortem, the bodies were handed over to the family, and their last rites were performed in their native village at Gumagada.

The death of the teacher and his daughter has cast a shadow of grief on the teaching community and students in Harabhanga block.

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Bid Identification No: BGR R&B/13/2024-25
No. 4070 Dtd.09.10.24
1. The **Superintending Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Division, Bolangir** on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE for construction of building work detailed in the table below from eligible contractors.
2. Nature of work : Building Work
3. No. of tender : 23 Nos. Building Work
4. Tender Cost : Rs.6,000/- (Tender paper cost)
5. Class of Contractor : "B" Class, "C" Class (Registered with CDMS)
6. Date & time of sale & receipt of Bids : From Dt.23.10.24, 11.00 A.M. to Dt.01.11.24 upto 05.00 P.M.
7. Date of Opening Bid : Dt.02.11.24 at 11.30 A.M.
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **http://tendersodisha.gov.in**.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Bolangir (R&B) Division
OIPR-34028/11/0013/2425

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. ELS-ANGL-OT-24-25-10
NAME OF WORK : IMPLEMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS) I.E. ISO 9001:2015, QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS), ISO:14001-2015 ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEM (EMS), AND OHSAS 45001:2018 AT ELECTRIC LOCO SHED, ANGUL.
Advertised Value : ₹ 1,12,362/-, **EMD :** ₹ 2,300/-, **Tender Document Cost :** ₹ 1,180/-, **Period of Completion :** 36 Months.
Bidding Start Date : 25.10.2024
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 08.11.2024.
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website **www.ireps.gov.in**
Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer (TRS)/ Angul
PR-642/P/24-25

'e' PROCUREMENT
NOTICE NO.05/2024-25
No.O-393
1. Name of work : Building Works
2. Total No. of Work : 6 (Six) works
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.32.60 to Rs.42.10 lakhs
4. Period of Completion : 06 (Six) & 09 (Nine) Calendar Months
5. Class of contractors : 'C' & 'B' Class only
Other details as follows :
a) Procurement officer : Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Cuttack.
b) Availability of tender online for bidding : From dt. 21.10.2024 at 11.00 A.M. to dt. 30.10.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
c) Last date & time of seeking of tender clarification : Dt. 29.10.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.
d) Date & Time of Opening Technical Bid : Dt. 01.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd./- Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division
Cuttack
OIPR-25053/11/0008/2425

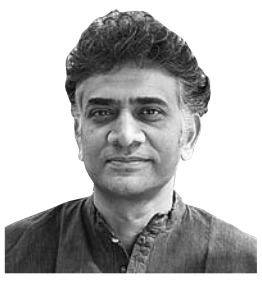
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-390
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR
Ph. No. - 0674-2301787, Fax No. - 0674-2300965, E.Mail I.D. - eerw_bbsr@yahoo.co.in
No. : Tender - Online - BBSR Divn. - 07 Date : 08.10.2024
e-Procurement NOTICE
1. Name of the work : Repair / Maintenance of road work 2. Total No. of Road : 60 Nos. of Roads
3. Class of contractor
a) Above Rs. 20 lakh and upto 3 crore : 'B' Class (of Odisha PWD) or equivalent class of other licensing authorities. b) Upto Rs. 40.00 lakh : 'C' Class (of Odisha PWD) or equivalent class of other licensing authorities. C) Upto Rs. 20.00 lakh : 'D' Class (of Odisha PWD) or equivalent class of other licensing authorities.
4. Estimate cost of Individual project : Rs. 5.00 lakh to Rs. 38.00 lakh 5. Time for completion : 2 (Two) calendar months 6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Date & Time of opening of tender
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Bhubaneswar	Tender Online - BBSR Divn. - 07	24.10.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	04.11.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.	05.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**
Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
Rural Works Divn. BBSR
OIPR-25189/11/0012/2425

> To stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it if necessary in the teeth of the worst opposition and to be ready to all you can for its sake, is the definition of heroism. THE MOTHER

Unwritten Strategy



Aakar Patel

Our contrasting responses to the United States and to Canada on the same issue have been highlighted. However, that is the nature of the international order and the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must

The international rules-based order is a euphemism for the jungle rule that defines global power politics. "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must" is a line from a famous history text written some 2400 years ago that is the foundation of international relations theory. This is true even today despite our myriad institutions including the United Nations and its security council. For instance try telling Palestinians or Lebanese that there is an international order, while their children are being murdered in one-sided war. Or for that matter, Ukrainians, Iranians, Cubans, Vietnamese and Afghans. Given this reality, it is natural that states will operate only or mostly in self-interest when it comes to international affairs. This is how it is and that is understandable.

India is accused of violating the order by ordering attacks on individuals in foreign nations that it is supposedly friendly with. The reality is that if India feels a threat emanating from across its borders, and it senses it is strong enough to get away with an action, it will act. This is also understandable.

Several questions arise but let us examine one in particular. What is the nature of the threat that we are alleged to have acted against and how grave a threat is it?

The data on fatalities will tell us something meaningful. The South Asia Terrorism Portal says that violence in Punjab seriously began in 1984 when 456 people were killed. This was of course the year of Operation Blue Star and the assassination of a prime minister. Fatalities peaked three decades ago, in 1991. In that year over 5000 people were killed. The next year it dropped but was still almost 4000. After that it collapsed. From 1998 to 2014, the number of annual fatalities has most often been zero (in 12 years). In the past six years it has not gone above single digits and no security official has been killed.

If the government and the security establishment think it is still a serious enough threat to national security to merit the sort of actions that it has been accused of taking, this thinking must surely be reflected somewhere. Disliking what someone says is not the same thing as feeling a national security threat from them. So where can we find what our government says regarding threats to our national security? The answer appears to be: Nowhere.

In January 2021, a think-tank put out a paper by a retired general. He wrote that the changes introduced in the military gave an opportunity for the pioneering incumbent (it was then Gen Bipin Rawat) to display his strategic and military acumen. Unfortunately, the report concluded that the Chief of Defence Staff was "yet to articulate a defence strategy."

One reason for this likely was that the government is yet to determine what the nature of the problem is. Six years ago had come the creation in 2018 of the Defence Planning Committee. This was to be chaired by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and include the foreign secretary, defence secretary, chief of defence staff, three service chiefs and secretaries of the Ministry of Finance. It had the enormous tasks, according to a piece in the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, of looking after "national defence and security priorities, foreign policy imperatives, operational directives and associated requirements, relevant strategic and security-related doctrines, defence acquisition and infrastructure development plans, national security strategy, strategic defence review and doctrines, international defence engagement strategy," and so on. It met once, on 3 May 2018, and does not appear to have met after that. This is surprising for a government and a party that puts, or at least says it puts, a great deal of priority on national security.

In May this year, a newspaper published a report on this aspect under the headline: "Absence of written National Security Strategy doesn't mean India doesn't have one: CDS."

Former general Prakash Menon has noted that, for several decades, India's political guidance to the military had been oriented towards Pakistan as the immediate threat. But now that the Chinese threat was at the doorstep, this would have to change. The political objectives expected to be achieved by the military resided in a document called the "Raksha Mantri's Operational Directive," which was written by the then defence minister AK Antony in 2009. All it says is that the armed forces "should be prepared to fight on both fronts simultaneously a war at 30 days (intense) and 60 days (normal) rates." This is a reference to ammunition and spares and not really a doctrine.

Even this directive, Gen Menon said, "continues to lack parentage for the lack of a coherent National Security Strategy. The Defence Planning Committee, headed by the NSA, was assigned this task two years ago. Nothing has emerged so far." This is what happens to complex enterprises that are run from the top but with no interest in detail. The national security strategy of an aspiring great power is unwritten because there is no ownership of the intellectual aspects of the work, little application, little enthusiasm for the hard but boring tasks and too much focus and emphasis on meaningless and marginal spectacle.

Our contrasting responses to the United States and to Canada on the same issue have been highlighted. However, that is the nature of the international order and the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.

What must also be highlighted is the issue of rationale. Have we thought through the nature of our national security problems before we begin working on solutions? The answer to that is no.

WISDOM CORNER

> If you are vigilant and make a stern effort to reject every thought when it rises, you will soon find that you are going deeper and deeper into your own inner self, where there is no need for your effort to reject the thoughts. RAMANA MAHARSHI

> The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind. KAHLIL GIBRAN

> There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self. ALDOUS HUXLEY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1822:** The Congress of Verona, the last of the meetings held by the European powers in accordance with the terms of the Quadruple Alliance, opened in Verona, Italy.
- **1973:** Australia's Sydney Opera House—designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, whose dynamic, imaginative, but problematic plan won an international competition in 1957—was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on this day in 1973.

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

THE BRICS EFFECT

Brahma Chellaney

WHEN IT COMES TO FOSTERING MUTUAL TRUST WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, THE WEST HAS NOT BEEN DOING ITSELF ANY FAVOURS LATELY

The expanded BRICS+ boasts formidable global clout. The grouping dwarfs the G7, both demographically (with nearly 46% of the world's population, compared to the G7's 8.8%) and economically (accounting for 35% of global GDP, compared to the G7's 30%)

A new age of international relations is dawning. With the West accounting for a declining share of global GDP, and the world becoming increasingly multipolar, countries are jostling to establish their positions in the emerging order. This includes both the emerging economies – represented by the recently expanded BRICS grouping – that seek a leading role in writing the rules of the new order, and the smaller countries attempting to cultivate relationships that can safeguard their interests.

With the BRICS, what began as an asset class has become a symbol of the yearning for a more broadly representative global order, a hedge against Western-led institutions, and a means of navigating growing geopolitical uncertainty. All this has proved highly attractive. Earlier this year, the BRICS expanded from five countries (Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa) to nine (adding Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates). And almost three dozen more countries – including NATO member Turkey, close US partners Thailand and Mexico, and Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country – have applied to join.

While the diversity of the grouping's members (and applicants) highlights the broad appeal of the BRICS+, it also creates challenges. These are countries with very different political systems, economies, and national goals. Some are even at odds with each other: China and India have been locked in a military standoff in the Himalayas for over four years, following China's stealth encroachments on Indian territory.

Translating shared interests into a common plan of action, and becoming a unified force on the global stage, was difficult even when the BRICS had just five members. With nine – and possibly more – member countries, establishing a common identity and agenda will require sustained effort. But other multilateral groupings that are not formal, charter-based institutions with permanent secretariats – such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the G20, and even the G7 – also struggle with internal divisions.

Moreover, the BRICS has demonstrated considerable resilience. Western analysts have been predicting from the start that the grouping would unravel or drift into irrelevance. Yet this month's BRICS+ summit in Kazan, Russia – the first since the expansion – may well bring movement toward further enlargement, as it underscores the West's failure to isolate Russia following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

This is not to underestimate the challenge of cohesion. The grouping's founding members do not even agree about its fundamental objectives: whereas China and Russia want to spearhead a direct challenge to the United States-led world order, Brazil and India seek reforms of existing international institutions and appear uneasy about any anti-Western orientation.

In this disagreement, however, the enlargement might tip the scales. Six of the group's nine members, including all four of the new additions, are formally part of the nonaligned movement, and two (Brazil and China) are observers. This suggests that there will be considerable internal pressure for the BRICS+ to chart a middle ground, focusing on democratising the global order, rather than challenging the West.

That said, when it comes to fostering mutual trust with developing countries, the West has not been doing itself any favours lately. On the contrary, its weaponisation of finance and seizure of the interest earned on frozen Russian central-bank assets have caused deepening disquiet in the non-Western world. As a result, a growing number of countries seem interested in exploring alternative arrangements, including new cross-border payment mechanisms, with some also reassessing their reliance on the US dollar in international transactions and reserve holdings.

All of this could aid the larger designs of Russia and China, two natural competitors that have become close strategic partners partly in response to US policy. China, in particular, stands to gain, such as from increased international use of the renminbi. Russia now generates much of its international export earnings in renminbi and stores them mostly in Chinese banks, thereby effectively giving China a share of the returns. China's ultimate goal – which Western financial warfare is inadvertently aiding – is to establish an alternative renminbi-based financial system.

The BRICS is already engaged in institution-building, having established the New Development Bank – conceived by India and headquartered in Shanghai – in 2015. The NDB is not only the world's first multilateral development bank created and led by emerging economies; it is also the only one whose founding members remain equal shareholders with equal voice, even as more countries join. By contrast, the US is the dominant shareholder and holds veto power in the World Bank.

The expanded BRICS+ boast formidable global clout. The grouping dwarfs the G7, both demographically (with nearly 46% of the world's population, compared to the G7's 8.8%) and economically (accounting for 35% of global GDP, compared to the G7's 30%). Its economies are also likely to be the most important source of future global growth. Furthermore, with Iran and the UAE having joined their oil-producing counterparts Brazil and Russia as members, the BRICS+ now accounts for about 40% of crude-oil production and exports.

Yes, the group faces significant challenges, not least uniting to become a meaningful global force with defined (and realistic) political and economic objectives. But it also has the potential to serve as a catalyst for a long-overdue revamping of global governance so that it better reflects twenty-first-century realities.

The writer is Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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SPECTRUM INDO-PAK TIES

New beginning or status quo

DK Giri

A NORMALISATION OF INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES AS WELL AS THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION

EAM S. Jaishankar was in Pakistan early this week. Observers both in India and abroad are interpreting this visit as the beginning of a thaw between India and Pakistan. The deliberations and informal interactions of Jaishankar with Pakistani leadership including his counterpart may indicate to such a possibility. At the same time, it may be noted that the EAM was attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. There was no bilateral component in his visit. However, it is worth our while to examine both these interpretations.

The SCO is important for India as New Delhi would not like to isolate from friendly-countries like Russia, Central Asian States and Iran. The deliberations in SCO were guarded perhaps in view of the sensitivity between India and Pakistan. Any controversy involving both countries was avoided. Pakistani PM Shahbaz Sharif significantly made no reference to the Kashmir dispute in his speech, a departure from their tradition.

New Delhi had stayed away from multilateral meetings held or scheduled to be held in Islamabad. That includes the SAARC Summit. Second, PM Narendra Modi, abstaining from attending the meeting suggests that New Delhi has diluted its participation. SCO summit calls upon Heads of government to attend.

Third, Jaishankar was quite sharp in his articulation on India's position and perspectives. He urged the members to have an "honest conversation." He added, "If trust is lacking, if friendship has fallen short and good neighbourliness is missing somewhere, there are surely reasons to introspect and causes to address." He alluded to China's BRI and said that cooperation on trade, investment, connectivity, and energy flows must respect territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries. He picked three evils of SCO Charter which are: terrorism, separatism, extremism. He underlined that if activities across borders are reflecting these three evils, they are hardly likely to enhance bilateral relations.

Pakistan's Information Minister Ataullah Tarar said to one of the leading Indian newspapers, "there has been a lot in the past between India and Pakistan. Any new initiative in future would be dictated purely by the principle of reciprocity." From such statements, it appears that Jaishankar's presence in Pakistan may not lead towards reconciliation. Jaishankar himself had stated in Delhi before his departure that, "I am going to Pakistan to be a good member of SCO." So, we are back to square one. Remember that India suspended any dialogue with Pakistan citing a principle that "talks and terror cannot go hand in hand." This happened after the Pulwama attack in 2019 which claimed the lives of 40 Indian soldiers.

Let us accept the obvious premise that India-Pakistan relations will not improve unless Pakistan becomes a genuine democracy by freeing itself of the stranglehold of its army. The Pakistani army is corrupt, selfish and self-serving unlike Indian Army which is known for its valour, apolitical approach and sacrifice. Pakistani population is well-disposed to India. In my visits to Pakistan, I have always felt at home. Many Indian visitors have similar experience. Pakistanis look up to India for sustaining democracy, diversity, the spirit of accommodation and tolerance. They have hardly anything in common with Chinese.

Given a free choice, Pakistani people and their leadership will veer towards India for the said and other reasons. Likewise, the leadership in New Delhi should stop using Pakistan as an election plank to consolidate the Hindu electorate. That is not in the long-term interest of India. One can win elections but lose friends in neighbourhood and endanger its own security. Former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee used to say, "You can change your friends, but not your neighbours."

Therefore, it is in India's national interest to use this opportunity and rebuild bridges with Pakistan. India's main adversary is China. Weaning away Pakistan from China would be a strategic move. Russia may give a hand to India to normalise relations with Pakistan. A normalisation of India-Pakistan relations is in the interest of both countries as well as the South Asian region.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

The Priyanka card

Sir, Priyanka Gandhi has always desired to strengthen the party at the grassroots level without basking in the limelight. That she chose to stay away from contesting elections says a lot about her personality as much as it says about the shrewdness of her mother Sonia Gandhi who is adept at playing the waiting game. It would have been baptism by fire for Priyanka when the popularity of Narendra Modi was at its peak. But now, after the general election results Congress is in a position where it can play the 'Priyanka card' to its advantage. Priyanka, with a striking resemblance to her grandmother Indira Gandhi, is more natural and spontaneous than Rahul Gandhi, qualities that can hold her in good stead as a leader. Therefore, despite its denial, the Congress is gradually building the momentum in favour of Priyanka Gandhi with 2029 in mind. Having played a major role in re-building the party in different states, she may be the "go to" person for the Congress sooner than later.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Contrasting story

Sir, The contrast between India's growth story and its rising inequality appears to be playing out year after year, as the country ranks 105 out of a total of 127 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2024. It is all the more disturbing that India's GHI score of 27.3 this year puts it in the "serious" category. While the ruling BJP at the Centre always calls the ranking's methodology as "shocking" and "unscientific," the painful truth is that hunger and malnourishment track with growing inequality in India, which is something inexplicable and shows the extent of disparity in incomes and callousness towards the poor. The seriousness of the problem of hunger and malnourishment should be highlighted and tackled at the national level, since states alone cannot handle a problem of such enormity. Food security is not just about feeding the population, it's about long-term health, growth and well-being for all, especially the most vulnerable sections of society.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Drug menace rose across NE after Myanmar coup, Manipur unrest

Mizoram, southern Assam and Tripura have become corridors of drug smuggling as the three northeastern states share borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shillong/Aizawl, Oct 19: After the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021 and the ethnic turmoil in Manipur since May 2023, illegal drug-related activities and smuggling into the country's northeastern region increased, officials said, stressing the need to step up vigilance and action to curb the drug menace.

Meghalaya Social Welfare Minister, Paul Lyngdoh, said that the ethnic unrest in neighbouring Manipur caused the growing drug trafficking in the mountainous state.

"This is an unfortunate part, because of our region's strategic location and very proximity to the 'Golden Triangle', drug menaces are active in the region," he told the media.

The Minister, who also holds the Arts, Culture and Tourism Departments, said that due to the unrest in Manipur, illicit drugs trade has shifted from that particular area to Meghalaya, and it has become a major challenge for the government.

Saying that the state's police and law-enforcing agencies have been kept on alert, he announced that the Anti Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) would be further strengthened and the ANTF would be headed by a senior retired IPS officer.

The Minister said that he would soon visit Delhi to apprise the concerned Central ministry about the seriousness and growing drug threat in Meghalaya.

Lyngdoh said that earlier only the police department was dealing with drug-related activities and now various departments and wings are very proactive to curb the drug-related challenges.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma personally looked after the matter and it shows the level of seriousness of the government, he said.

"We are in the process of constituting the Village Defence Party (VDP). The DREAM (Drug Reduction, Elimination & Action Mission) would be further strengthened," the Social Welfare Minister said.

Meanwhile, in Aizawl, senior police officers and other security officials submitted that smuggling of drugs, mostly heroin and methamphetamine tablets, also known as party tablets or Yaba, into India from Myanmar, has risen to a great extent after the military coup in the neighbouring country in February 2021.

The Assam Rifles, which has been guarding the unfenced 510km of border with Myanmar, have seized different types of drugs valued at around Rs 67 crore and arrested eight drug peddlers, including three Myanmarese during the last one week.

Officials said that during the six separate operations during the past one week, the paramilitary troopers seized 350 grams of heroin, 22.309 kg of methamphetamine tablets, 7.6 kg of ganja (Marijuana) and 90 lakh worth of illegal Indian currencies.

Mizoram Police and Customs officials also often accompanied the Assam Rifles personnel in the operations against the illegal drugs peddling.

Mizoram, southern Assam and Tripura have become corridors of drug smuggling as the three northeastern states share borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Officials said that all the drugs smuggled from Myanmar and through Mizoram are ferried to southern Assam and Tripura to further smuggle these to Bangladesh or other parts of India.

LG clears resolution to restore J&K statehood

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 19: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has cleared a resolution passed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led Cabinet urging the Centre to restore the statehood to the Union Territory, officials said Saturday.

The Cabinet which met under the chairmanship of Omar Abdullah Thursday passed a unanimous resolution for restoration of statehood in its original form, an official spokesperson said.

Without giving any further details, the officials asserted that the LG has cleared the resolution passed by the Cabinet.

The spokesperson said the restoration of statehood will be a beginning of a healing process, reclaiming the constitutional rights and protecting the identity of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Political parties have described the resolution only on statehood and not on Article 370 as an utter surrender and a departure from the stand of the ruling National Conference

The Cabinet has authorised the chief minister to take up the matter with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Government of India for restoration of statehood, he said.

Protection of Jammu and Kashmir's unique identity and constitutional rights of people remains the cornerstone of the newly-elected government's policy, the spokesperson said.

He said the chief minister would be proceeding to New Delhi in the coming days to meet the Prime Minister and Union ministers in this regard.

The Cabinet has also decided to summon the Legislative Assembly at Srinagar November 4 and advised the LG to summon and address the Assembly, the spokesperson added.

The draft address of the LG to the Legislative Assembly at the commencement of the first session was also placed before the Council of Ministers which the Council decided shall be further considered and discussed, he said.

Political parties Friday described the resolution only on statehood and not on Article 370 as an utter surrender and a departure from the stand of the ruling National Conference.

Various political parties, including the People's Democratic Party (PDP), People's Conference (PC) and Awami Ittehad Party (AIP), denounced the move, reminding the NC of its poll promise to strive to restore (Articles) 370-35A and statehood as prior to August 5, 2019, and saying it was a departure from the pre-election stand.

Tourists visit the higher reaches of Sikkim after the first snowfall of the season, Saturday PTI PHOTO

Aizawl soon to be on India's railway map

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 19: The 51.38-km Bhairabi-Sairang new railway line project connecting Aizawl in Mizoram with the rest of the country is at an advanced completion stage, an official statement said Saturday.

Around 17.38 km of the new line was completed and commissioned in July this year with train services operational from August, according to the statement issued by Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) Saturday.

Mizoram's Bhairabi-Sairang railway project nearing completion

The 51.38 km new railway line between Bhairabi and Sairang is divided into four sections -- Bhairabi–Hortoki, Hortoki–Kawnpui, Kawnpui–Mualkhang and Mualkhang–Sairang, it said.

The whole project once completed will be a game-changer in terms of communication and commerce for the people of Mizoram.

The construction work of the Bhairabi–Sairang railway project involves 48 tunnels in tough terrains. The total length of tunnels in this project is 12,853 metres out of which 12,807 metres of tunneling work has already been completed, the statement said. The project will have a total of 55 major bridges and 87 minor bridges.

Construction work on the project's tallest pier, 104 metres, at the approach of Sairang station has also been completed.

The project also includes five road overbridges and six road underbridges, and there will be four stations - Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang, and Sairang.

There are many challenges in executing the project, such as less working time due to very heavy and prolonged monsoon, very tough and hilly terrain through deep forests, poor accessibility, non-availability of construction materials and skilled labour in Mizoram, it said, adding that NF Railway is, however, making all efforts to fulfil its commitment towards early completion of the project.

This will provide enhanced connectivity to the people of Mizoram, help grow small-scale industries in the area and boost tourism in the state, the statement said.

It will also ensure substantial cost reduction on transportation of passengers and various materials and commodities to this hilly state to cater to the needs of the local population, the statement added.

Fresh militant attack in Manipur; no casualties

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, Oct 19: In a fresh attack, suspected Kuki militants made a gun and bomb attack near a village police station in Manipur's Jiribam district Saturday, police said.

A senior police official in Imphal said that there were no casualties in the Kuki militants' attack in the vicinity of the Borobekra police station.

"The armed militants fired from their sophisticated weapons targeting the Borobekra police station and the adjoining village. The guerillas also hurled bombs," he said.

The official said that the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Manipur Police personnel immediately retaliated, leading to a heavy exchange of fire between the two sides.

Amidst the gun battle between the security forces and the militants, additional security forces have rushed to the spot.

Soon after the exchange of fire broke out, villagers, including elderly persons, women and children, were moved to safer places under security.

Surrounded by deep forests, the mountainous Borobekra village is located around 30 km from Jiribam district town. The mixed populated Jiribam district, adjoining southern Assam, has witnessed several incidents of violence this year though the district was apparently peaceful even after the ethnic violence broke out in many districts of the northeastern state since May last year.

Saturday's militant attack occurred five days after the crucial meeting between MLAs of the warring Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities in New Delhi October 15. Naga legislators also attended the vital meeting. Seventeen months after the ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, the Ministry of Home Affairs held the first meeting with all three major communities -- Meitei, Kuki, and Naga -- in a bid to find a way to a peaceful solution to the protracted unrest. Sources said that around seven Ministers and 13 legislators from Meitei, Kuki and Naga communities took part in the meeting called by the Intelligence Bureau under the MHA.

'Normalcy can return only if weaponisation of society is reduced'

Asserting that the Manipur Police was working round the clock to recover the arms that were looted from the security forces, DGP Rajiv Singh Saturday said normalcy would only return if weaponisation of society could be reduced. Speaking to reporters on the sideline of the 133rd Manipur Police Raising Day, Singh claimed the situation in the state has improved. "Weapons which are there in the society should come back to where they belong -- to the security forces, from where those were taken. Normalcy can only come if the weaponisation of society is reduced to a large extent. The Manipur Police is working round the clock," he added.

Arunachal gears up for Tawang Int'l Marathon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, Oct 19: Preparations for the second edition of the Tawang International Marathon are in full swing, a defence official said.

The high-altitude marathon, dubbed the 'Queen of High-Altitude Runs', is being jointly organised by the Indian Army and the Arunachal Pradesh government October 24, defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said.

He said it is a key event in promoting the civil-military bonhomie in the scenic border town of Tawang.

Building on the success of its inaugural edition last year, Chief Minister Pema Khandu declared the marathon an annual international event during the launch of its website, www.tawangmarathon, in July.

The state government has extended a grant of Rs 2 crore to support the event, which expects to see over 5,000 participants in the full and half marathon of 10 km and 5 km runs, respectively. The total prize pool for the event is Rs 60 lakh. Lt Col Rawat said over 4,500 participants have so far registered for the marathon.

The event has also given a significant boost to mountain sports, adventure activities, and tourism in the region, officials said.

Khandu will flag off the marathon from Tawang Stadium in the presence of Gajraj Corps GOC Lt Gen Gambhir Singh and Ball of Fire Division GOC Maj Gen KS Grewal, among others, they said.

Additionally, a display of Army equipment and cultural shows will be held.

2K athletes in Kashmir's first int'l marathon

THE EVENT WILL BE FLAGGED OFF AT 6.15AM SUNDAY BY J&K CM OMAR ABDULLAH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 19: Over 2,000 athletes, including international elite runners, will participate in the first-ever Kashmir International Marathon October 20, said Raja Yaqoob Farooq, Kashmir Director of Tourism.

The event aims to show the world that law and order and the situation have improved in the Valley, he said. "We have got the best athletes from across the world. We have top Indian runners, elite runners, Asian gold medallists and some of the best runners from Europe and Africa," Farooq said while addressing a press conference here.

The Department of Tourism has received 2,030 registrations from athletes from across the world, he said.

The marathon will see participation of 59 athletes from 13 countries and elite athletes from 29 across states and UTs, he said, adding that there will be two categories of races -- a 42-km full marathon and a half-marathon of 21 km.

"Kashmir is open to all. We welcome the tourists from different parts of the world. If someone is running 42 km, it itself makes a statement that Kashmir is now peaceful," he said.

"We also want to showcase our heritage, niche products, handicrafts, cuisine, to the world. These runners have millions of followers on their social media, so, they will be our brand ambassadors," he said.

Farooq said the marathon will have a good representation from Kashmir also.

The event will be flagged off at 6.15am Sunday by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

This will inspire the youth and in the next 5-10 years, there will be full marathon runners from here, he added.

national

Earlier, fish was brought to Bihar from other states, now the state is supplying fish to other states

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

BARBARIC ACT

In a shocking incident, a girl was set on fire by her former boyfriend in Andhra Pradesh's Kadapa district on Saturday after a suspected spat, police said. The victim, a Class 11 student, was battling for life while the police launched a hunt for the accused

Quote of the day

In a democracy, everybody has the right to contest elections. And everyone exercises that right as per his strength

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHA CM

Neither is adequate procurement taking place nor are farmers getting fair prices, nor is there any legal guarantee of MSP (minimum support price)

JAIRAM RAMESH | AICC GENERAL SECY

To be executed in collaboration with Asian Development Bank, it will revive 4000 hectares of beels to give fillip to indigenous fish production and water management

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

SHORT TAKES

Lankesh murder: Accused joins Sena

Jalna: Shrikant Pangarkar, an accused in the 2017 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh, which outraged the nation, joined Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena in Jalna ahead of Assembly polls. Lankesh was shot dead outside her home in Karnataka capital Bangalore September 5, 2017.

Scissor removed from abdomen

Gangtok: Doctors at STNM Hospital here removed a surgical scissor which was in the abdomen of a woman for 12 years, official said Saturday. The scissor was left in the abdomen of the woman when she underwent an appendix operation at STNM Hospital 12 years ago, the official said.

Minor raped at bus stand

Shivpuri (MP): A nine-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a man at a bus stand in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri, police said Saturday. The police have arrested the 33-year-old accused, a garbage collector, in connection with the assault that occurred Friday night.

Joshi's brother held

Bangalore: The police Saturday arrested Union Minister Pralhad Joshi's brother based on a cheating complaint lodged by a former JD(S) MLA's wife. Gopal Joshi and a woman named Vijayalakshmi Joshi were booked by Basaveshwaranagar police Thursday night. Gopal's son Ajay Joshi has also been named in the FIR.

Cops book BJP MLA

Gandhinagar: An FIR on charges of rape and criminal intimidation was registered Saturday against a BJP MLA from Gujarat following directions of the High Court. The accused, Gajendrasinh Parmar, a former minister of state, was also booked under the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act as the victim is a Dalit, the FIR stated.

200 kg ganja seized

Chennai: The Central Intelligence Unit, Chennai Range of Enforcement Bureau CID Tamil Nadu, apprehended four people allegedly involved in interstate ganja smuggling and seized 200 kg ganja worth about ₹20 lakh from them. A mini load carrier and a car bearing Andhra Pradesh registration numbers were confiscated reportedly for transporting ganja from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and selling it in Tamil Nadu.

Derogatory language has no place in courtrooms: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, Oct 19: Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud Saturday said all forms of derogatory language, particularly against women, have no place in courts, noting that insensitive words can perpetuate stereotypes and may disproportionately affect women and marginalised communities.

The CJI referred to complaints from women judicial officers about the use of derogatory language by some members of the administrative establishment towards women.

Addressing a gathering at the inauguration of the North Goa District Courts Complex near Panaji, the CJI said, "We must actively work to dismantle all barriers to have truly democratic access to justice".

Representational image

"As we strive for inclusivity within our courtrooms, the language which we use must reflect our ethos. We must be vigilant in our choice of words ensuring that our language is not only precise but also respectful and inclusive," the CJI said.

The CJI said the language used in courtrooms should reflect inclusivity, respect, and empowerment

He said the insensitive or dismissive language can perpetuate stereotypes and may disproportionately affect women and marginalised communities.

"Very often, I hear the complaint from women judicial officers that some members of the administrative establishment use derogatory language towards women," the CJI said, adding that all forms of derogatory language, particularly towards women, must have no place in our courts at all.

"This involves re-examining our legal lexicon and ensuring that it does not reinforce stereotypes based on gender, caste or social economic status," the CJI said. CJI Chandrachud said the Supreme Court has prepared a handbook on gender to make people aware of gender stereotypes used in discourse in our courts.

The CJI observed that the idea of a "conscientious court" lies at the heart of the judicial system which is acutely aware of societal realities and multi-faceted difficulties encountered by those seeking justice, reflecting the idea of a conscious court. Mentioning the redesigning of the statue of the Lady of Justice, the CJI stressed the law is not blind and that it views everyone equally.

Vijaya Kishore appointed new NCW chairperson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar has been appointed the ninth chair person of the National Commission for Women (NCW) succeeding Rekha Sharma, according to an official order.

The appointment made under Section 3 of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, will be for a period of three years or until she reaches the age of 65, whichever comes first, a government notification issued Saturday said.

Rahatkar's tenure will begin with immediate effect. The announcement will also be published in the Gazette of India. In addition to the appointment of Rahatkar, Archana Majumdar has been officially named a member of the NCW for a tenure of three years, as per a notification issued by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The NCW, a statutory body, is empowered to work towards the advancement of women's rights. Its mandate includes reviewing the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women.

According to a statement issued by the Women and Child Development Ministry, Rahatkar has demonstrated leadership skills across various political and social responsibilities.

During her tenure as the chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (2016-2021), she spearheaded initiatives like "Sakshama" (support for acid attack survivors), "Prajwala" (linking self-help groups to Central government schemes), and "Suhita" (a 24x7 helpline service for women).

Cong-JMM announce seat sharing deal; RJD 'disappointed'

AGENCIES

Ranchi, Oct 19: Fissures surfaced among INDIA bloc partners ahead of the Jharkhand Assembly elections as the RJD Saturday expressed disappointment over the announcement of JMM and Congress contesting 70 of 81 seats in the state.

The RJD said the decision on seat sharing by the two INDIA bloc constituents was "unilateral". It also made it clear that "all options were open" to the party. The Assembly polls will be held in two phases November 13 and 20 and counting will take place November 23.

"We express our disappointment over the offer of seats to us. The decision is unilateral," Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) spokesperson Manoj Kumar Jha said.

Earlier in the day, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren announced that the JMM and the Congress would contest 70 seats in the upcoming Assembly elections. Jha claimed, "We were not consulted. All options are open to us."

He said that the RJD has dentified "at least 15 to 18 seats" in Jharkhand where it has the potential to defeat the BJP on its own. Last time the party had contested seven seats and ended as runner-up in five of them.

Jha said several senior RJD leaders, including Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav, were in Ranchi and held a meeting this morning.

"A proper consultation process should have been done before declaring the seats...No political party can reject the sentiments of its voters and supporters...we have enough strength," he said.

In the 2019 Assembly elections, the RJD won one seat. Its MLA Satyanand Bhokta is a minister in the Hemant Soren cabinet.

The JMM-led alliance had, in 2019, won 47 seats in the Jharkhand Assembly, including 30 seats of JMM and 16 of the Congress. The BJP had secured 25 seats, JVM-P3, AJSU Party 2, CPI-ML 1, NCP- 1 and two independents emerged victorious.Currently, the Jharkhand Assembly has 74 members, with the JMM-led ruling alliance having 44 MLAs.

Babulal Marandi, Champai in BJP's list

The BJP Saturday released its first list of 66 candidates for the Jharkhand Assembly elections, fielding party president Babulal Marandi from Dhanwar and former chief minister Champai Soren from Saraikela. The party named Sita Soren, the sister-in-law of JMM leader and Chief Minister Hemant Soren, as its nominee from Jamtara. The list also has the names of Geeta Kora and former Union minister Sudarshan Bhagat.

PANNUN PLOT

Ex-spy wanted by US was held last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Vikas Yadav, a former Indian government official charged by the US authorities for his alleged role in a foiled plot to assassinate Sikh separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on American soil, was arrested by Delhi Police in December last year in an unrelated extortion and kidnapping case, police sources said.

According to the sources, the Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested Yadav (39) December 18, 2023, for allegedly kidnapping a businessman living in Rohini and demanding money in the name of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi.

He was granted bail in April this year, the sources said. According to the FIR filed by the Special Cell, Yadav told the businessman to meet him near the office of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in south Delhi December 11, 2023, claiming he might face a "serious threat".

Accordingly, the victim along with his friend met Yadav who was accompanied by a person

named Abdullah. Yadav and Abdullah allegedly pushed the victim into a car and demanded money in the name of Lawrence Bishnoi, the FIR said.

The accused duo also forced him to sign a blank cheque before dropping him near his car after threatening him with dire consequences if he told anyone about his ordeal, it added.

After returning home, the victim came to know that Yadav and his associate also took ₹50,000 kept in his cafe and deleted all the CCTV recordings, the FIR said.

The police booked Yadav and Abdullah under sections 364A (kidnapping for ransom), 307 (attempt to murder), 328 (causing harm to another person using poison), 506 (criminal intimidation), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrong restraint), 392 (robbery), 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The police filed a charge sheet naming Yadav March 13 this year before he was granted interim bail for six days March 22 on grounds of "illness" of his one-year-old daughter. The court April 22 granted regular bail to Yadav.

Notably, the interim bail order referred to Yadav as "an ex-government employee having clean antecedents".

The federal prosecutors Thursday claimed in an indictment filed in a US court that Yadav was employed by the Cabinet Secretariat, which houses the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's foreign intelligence service.

Yadav, who is at large, faces murder-for-hire and money laundering charges in connection with his alleged role in the foiled plot to kill Pannun, the US Department of Justice said.

A woman poses for photos after getting her hands decorated with mehendi at Hanuman Temple on the eve of 'Karva Chauth' in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

PROBE AGAINST ISHA FOUNDATION

'Unnecessary': SC on Madras HC order

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Supreme Court has termed "unnecessary" the Madras High Court's order to police in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore to probe the Isha Foundation by expanding the ambit of the habeas corpus petition of a father who had alleged that his two daughters were kept under captivity in ashram.

After interaction with the two individuals in respect of whom the petition was filed, a bench headed by CJI DY Chandrachud said that both the sisters had attained the age of majority and were majors even when they joined the Ashram.

"They have expressed their clear inclination to continue at Isha Foundation at Coimbatore. In this view, the purpose of the Habeas Corpus petition is duly fulfilled," the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said.

Disposing of the matter, the apex court said that it would be unnecessary to expand the ambit of proceedings which arose from the habeas corpus petition filed before the Madras High Court.

Further, it said that the jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution, while dealing with a habeas corpus petition, is well-defined and no further directions were necessary by the Madras High Court after it interacted with both the daughters of the petitioner. "The closure of these proceedings, it is clarified, will not affect any other regulatory compliances which are required to be achieved by Isha Foundation," the SC said, recording the statement of senior advocate Mukul Rohtagi, who appeared on behalf of Isha Foundation, that any such requirements would be duly complied with in accordance with the law.

Froth covers Yamuna ahead of festive season

VIDEOS CIRCULATING ON SOCIAL MEDIA SHOW VAST SECTIONS OF THE RIVER FROTHING, RESEMBLING CLOUDS OVER THE WATER, WHICH GRADUALLY DISSIPATED LATER IN THE DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Yamuna in Delhi was seen covered with a thick layer of white froth, with experts saying this poses health hazards for people, especially as the festive season approaches. Videos circulating on social media show vast sections of the river frothing, resembling clouds over the water, which gradually dissipated later in the day.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the city government is closely monitoring the situation.

Officials have already begun sprinkling defoamers to tackle the issue and the government is actively taking steps to manage and resolve the situation, the party said in a statement.

Bhim Singh Rawat, associate coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), told PTI that normally, the upper segment of the Yamuna experiences significant flood spells, but this year, there was no such spell during the just-concluded southwest monsoon.

This is unusual as the river generally witnesses at least a couple of low or medium flood spells in this segment every year, Rawat said.

He highlighted that the pollution in the river is a serious concern affecting human health and wildlife.

While the river has some natural cleansing ability, the pollution levels are alarming, Rawat said, adding that the white froth that was seen during monsoon this year becomes more noticeable during festival times.

The AAP said government engineers have been assigned to oversee the operations at the Okhla and Agra Canal barrages. Monitoring the timings of the barrage gates' opening and providing regular updates to higher authorities, it said.

The engineers have been tasked with uploading photos of the Yamuna downstream at Kalindi Kunj every two hours to ensure continuous observation, it added.

Experts have urged the government to address the pollution levels in the river, especially as major festivals like Chhath Puja are approaching.

The pungent foam contains high levels of ammonia and phosphates, posing serious health risks, including respiratory and skin problems, according to environmental experts.

This kind of foam formation is common when fats from decaying plants and pollutants mix with the water, but its presence during monsoon is surprising, said another expert, attributing the frothing to the absence of flood spells that typically wash away pollutants.

A man bathes an infant on the banks of the Yamuna river partially covered in the toxic foam, at Kalindi Kunj

PTI PHOTO

Rai: Changing weather conditions responsible

New Delhi: Delhi's air quality has deteriorated to the 'poor' category due to changing weather conditions and the pollution level is expected to worsen after Diwali, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said Saturday. Rai told PTI Videos that the Delhi government is doing everything it can to control dust pollution and needs the cooperation of residents.

national

Very sorry to hear about the death of Ashok Chouhan at the hands of militants in South Kashmir. These attacks are abhorrent & must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. I send my condolences to the family & loved ones of the deceased

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

HOOCH TRAGEDY TOLL RISES TO 37

Two more persons died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor, raising the toll in the hooch tragedy in the dry Bihar to 37, an official said Saturday. The latest deaths were reported from Baikunthpur in the Gopalganj district which shares border with Siwan and Saran districts, he said

Quote of the day

You say you can sing Tamil Thai Valthu with complete devotion, but why did you not immediately condemn when the singers missed a line pertaining to Dravida?

R N RAVI | TN GOVERNOR

In the coming time, Indian road infrastructure will be even better than that of America. We will do it

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Maharashtra polls is the election that will change the politics of the country. This is a historic election

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

X POST OF THE DAY

It makes my blood boil to see this disrespect of the Tiranga. GoI should identify these people, and if any of them hold Indian citizenship, they should never be allowed to return... These clowns are worse than Jihadis..

@MrSinha_

Constitution under attack: Rahul

In a no-holds-barred attack, he accused the BJP of "controlling the Election Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), Income Tax department, bureaucracy and judiciary"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Oct 19: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday claimed that the Constitution is "under attack" by the BJP as he accused the saffron party of controlling institutions such as the Election Commission, bureaucracy and central agencies.

He also said no force can stop the caste census and removal of the 50 per cent cap on the reservation.

"The Constitution is under constant attack from all sides, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, and it needs to be protected," Rahul alleged while addressing 'Samvidhan Samman Sammelan' in Ranchi ahead of the Jharkhand Assembly polls. In a no-holds-barred attack, he accused the BJP of "controlling the Election Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), Income Tax department, bureaucracy and judiciary".

"The BJP also controls funds and institutions but we possess honesty. The Congress fought the Lok Sabha elections without money," he claimed.

Rahul said the caste census is a "medium for getting social X-ray but PM Modi is opposed to this".

"However, no force can stop caste census, institutional survey and removal of 50 per cent cap on reservation despite no media or judiciary support," he said.

Attacking Modi, he said that the Prime Minister often repeats that he respects the Constitution but in fact "he is making it hollow".

Gandhi alleged that BJP is trying to destroy tribals' rich cultural heritage, history, ancient tradition and thousands of years old medical practices.

He said that thousands of years of thought, including those of Mahavir, Buddha, Birsa and Ambedkar, have been put behind Constitution.

OBCs are marginalised as only three OBCs officers were there among top 90 IAS officers in bureaucracy, while no Dalits or tribals were in key positions including in the Finance Ministry, Gandhi alleged.

"No Dalit, tribal or OBC is in the top management of 250 corporate firms or in key places in Bollywood," he claimed.

He alleged while the industrialists like Adanis and Ambanis were invited to Ayodhya Ram temple consecration, President Droupadi Murmu was not allowed as she is a tribal.

The BJP also controls funds and institutions but we possess honesty. The Congress fought the Lok Sabha elections without money

RAHUL GANDHI | LOP

He also accused the saffron party of not allowing the President during the new Parliament inauguration because she is a tribal.

Rahul claimed that 60 per cent of the GST is being paid by 50 per cent of the poor in the country while one per cent capitalists amassed 40 per cent of India's capital.

This was Gandhi's first visit to Jharkhand after the Assembly poll schedule was announced. The Assembly polls in Jharkhand will be held in two phases November 13 and 20 and counting will take place November 23.

Earlier in the day, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said that the INDIA bloc will contest the upcoming Assembly polls together and the Congress and the JMM will field candidates in 70 of 81 seats.

Seat-sharing talks are on with alliance partners -- the RJD and the Left parties -- for the remaining 11 seats, he added.

Ch'garh: 2 jawans killed in IED blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Narayanpur, Oct 19: Two personnel of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) were killed and two policemen injured Saturday when Naxalites carried out an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district, police said.

The incident occurred around 12 noon in Kodliyar forest in the Abujhmaad area when joint teams of security personnel were out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj said.

Personnel from the ITBP, Border Security Force (BSF), and the state police's District Reserve Guard, Bastar Fighters and District Force were involved in the operation launched from Orchha, Irakbhatti and Mohandi areas, he said.

The blast took place when patrolling teams were returning after the operation.

Four security personnel suffered injuries in the attack, the official said.

Those killed were identified as Amar Pawar (36) of Satara in Maharashtra and K Rajesh (36) of Kadappa in Andhra Pardesh, he said, adding that the duo belonged to ITBP's 53rd battalion.

After post-mortem and wreath laying, their mortal remains will be sent to their native places, IG Sundarraj said.

The injured personnel were airlifted and admitted to a private hospital in Raipur.

The hospital's operational head said the two injured jawans, Arvind from Bastar fighters and Anil of the District Force, have injuries all over their bodies.

Mamata urges junior doctors to end strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 19: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Saturday urged the junior doctors protesting the rape and murder of their colleague at RG Kar Hospital to end their fast-unto-death stir, stating that most of their demands have been addressed while rejecting their insistence on removing the state health secretary.

Taking forward the proposal for talks, Chief Secretary Manoj Pant later in the evening invited the medics for talks with Banerjee for "45 minutes" Monday at the state secretariat, conditional upon the "withdrawal" of the hunger strike.

However, the protesting doctors refused to end their hunger strike until all their demands were met but agreed to join the talks Monday.

Speaking to the doctors over the phone during a visit by Pant and Home Secretary Nandini Chakraborty to the protest site in Esplanade this afternoon, Banerjee said, "Everybody has the right to protest, but it shouldn't affect healthcare services. I would request you all to withdraw your fast."

Banerjee rejected the junior doctors' demand for the removal of state Health Secretary Narayan Swaroop Nigam, explaining that "it is not possible to remove everyone in a department at once; we have already removed the DHS and DME, so please rise above politics and rejoin work."

The junior doctors have been demanding the removal of the state Health Secretary Narayan Swaroop Nigam, besides addressing other issues

The junior doctors have been on fast-unto-death for the last 15 days, demanding justice for their deceased colleague and calling for systemic changes in the state's healthcare infrastructure. So far, six doctors on hunger strike have been hospitalised due to deteriorating health, while eight others remain on an indefinite fast, demanding that the state government take constructive action by October 21 to resolve the deadlock.

The CM stressed that the doctors should withdraw their strike and meet her at state secretariat Nabanna Monday to further discuss their demands. "I have removed the Commissioner of Police (CP), the Director of Medical Education (DME), and the Director of Health Services (DHS), but I cannot remove everyone in the department," Banerjee explained.

SHORT TAKES

Bus falls into gorge, 4 hurt

Chandigarh: A bus carrying 45 students of a Punjab school fell into a 40-feet deep gorge near Tikkar Tal in Haryana's Panchkula district injuring two students and the driver, among four Saturday, police said. The bus fell into the gorge near Tikkar Tal in the Morni Hills area after the driver lost control of the vehicle. The accident took place when the students of Nankana Sahib Public Senior Secondary School, Malerkotla in Punjab were going to Tikkar Tal--a tourist spot. The bus driver, two students and a tourist guide got injured while the condition of the rest of the students was alright, they said.

Homeless man beaten to death

New Delhi: A 30-year-old homeless was beaten to death allegedly by a group of residents in Rohini's Aman Vihar area, police said Saturday. The incident took place in the outer Delhi's Karan Vihar locality at 4 am, they said. The victim, Sandeep alias Bhura, hailed from Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur.

17 bullet rounds fired in Delhi

New Delhi: Around 17 rounds of bullets were fired between two groups over a monetary dispute in northeast Delhi's Welcome area Saturday evening, police said. A 22-year-old woman, Ifra, was injured in the firing incident, they said. According to police, a fight broke out around 4.30 pm between two groups involved in the jeans manufacturing business over a monetary dispute. Around 17 rounds of bullets were fired from both sides. Police said that Ifra was standing near the spot when she got shot in the chest. She was immediately rushed to GTB Hospital and is undergoing treatment.

SNIPPETS

AP CM restarts Amaravati capital works

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Saturday restarted the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) project works here. The works at Rayapudi village in the capital region were restarted after a hiatus of five years, following the erstwhile YSRCP government abandoning Naidu's 'dream project'. Later, addressing a press conference at the CRDA office at Rayapudi village, the chief minister said that the cost of Amaravati capital city project rose by ₹7,000 crore in the past five years to reach ₹52,000 crore now.

Suburban train derails at Kalyan station

Mumbai: A suburban train derailed Friday at Kalyan station in Thane district, some 60 kilometres from here, while entering a platform, though there was no report of anyone getting injured, an official said. The Titwala-CSMT train derailed on platform number 2 at around 9:00pm, leading to disruptions on the mainline, he said. "There is no report of injury to anyone. The rear coach derailed when the train was at slow speed since it was about to halt at platform number 2," Central Railway chief public relations officer Swapnil Nila said.

Andhra: ED raids ex-YSRCP MP

Hyderabad: The Enforcement Directorate Saturday raided the premises of former YSRCP MP and Telugu film producer M V V Satyanarayana and some others in Andhra Pradesh as part of a money laundering probe linked to a land grab case, official sources said. At least five locations in Visakhapatnam, including that of the former MP and an auditor, were being raided by the officials of the federal agency, they said. The agency officials collected some documents during the raids, according to the sources.

Artistes take part in a cultural parade during the last day of the week-long International Kullu Dussehra festival, in Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

RSS LEADER MURDER CASE

NIA moves SC challenging 17 PFI members' bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Kerala High Court order which granted bail to 17 Popular Front of India (PFI) members in the 2022 murder case of RSS leader Srinivasan.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih was told by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhatti, appearing for the NIA, that the agency has filed 17 separate appeals in the matter. She informed the bench that the Kerala High Court, in its impugned order dated June 25, granted bail to the 17 accused and rejected the bail pleas of nine accused.

"We have filed 17 separate Special Leave Petitions. This court may take up all the SLPs together," she urged the bench Friday. The bench, which was hearing a plea of one of the accused, Saddam Hussain MK, whose bail plea was rejected by the high court, directed the registry to seek permission from Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud to list all matters together.

All the accused, who were granted bail are also facing trial for allegedly instigating communal violence in Kerala as well as various other parts of the country. The high court had passed the judgement on the pleas filed by the 26 accused against a special court's orders denying them bail.

While granting bail to 17 of the 26 accused, the high court had imposed stringent conditions on them. They were asked to share their mobile numbers and real-time GPS locations with the investigating officer. Besides, the court asked the accused not to leave Kerala, surrender their passports and keep their mobile phones charged and active round the clock.

Breast cancer rising among young women: Experts

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer affecting women worldwide, as well as in India. The recent data from the Indian Council of Medical Research showed that breast cancer accounted for 28.2 per cent of cancers in women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Breast cancer, a disease long associated with older age groups, has surged enormously in women aged below 50 in the last three decades, according to experts.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer affecting women worldwide, as well as in India. The recent data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) showed that breast cancer accounted for 28.2 per cent of cancers in women.

Celebrities like Sonali Bendre, Tahira Kashyap, and Mahima Chaudhry who battled breast cancer under 50 and overcame the deadly disease with treatments.

Dr Ashish Gupta, Chief of Medical Oncology at Unique Hospital Cancer Centre, who is spearheading the Cancer Mukt Bharat Campaign in India, said "Cancer is no longer the disease of older adults. It is increasingly seen among women in the younger age group, majorly under 50."

The early onset of breast cancer is majorly due to genes, lifestyle factors such as poor nutrition, consumption of highly ultra-processed foods and a completely sedentary lifestyle coupled with environment pollutants, he said.

According to a recent study by Cancer Mukt Bharat Foundation, cancer is affecting about 20 per cent of young people below the age of 40 in India and breast cancer cases account for 15 per cent of younger adults.

Celebrities like Sonali Bendre, Tahira Kashyap, and Mahima Chaudhry who battled breast cancer under 50 and overcame the deadly disease with treatments

The risk factors for early onset include genetic predisposition to BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, obesity, excess sugar and processed food consumption, consistently high blood glucose and becoming insulin resistant, Dr Gupta said.

The early detection and timely treatment of breast cancer significantly impact the lifespan of affected individuals. Making screening procedures better and more accessible is crucial, he said.

Gupta, an American board-certified Medical Oncologist said, "Early detection programmes, including breast cancer awareness and cost-effective screening, is a must to fight the rising cases of breast cancer in India".

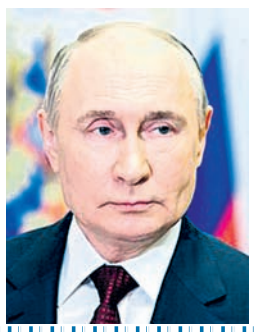
He also assured that people should not panic once diagnosed with the disease as there are many advanced treatments available currently that improve survival rates.

Dr Vineet Nakra, Senior Radiation Oncologist at Max Hospital-New Delhi and Director of Lenus Oncology Institute, said, "Breast cancer is on the rise in younger women due to a gradual change in lifestyle choices including late childbearing, reduced breastfeeding and poor diet choices among urban population."

"With an increased focus on breast preservation and its importance cosmetically in the younger population, radiation therapy plays an essential role after a cancer diagnosis," he said.

"Treatment for breast cancer includes surgery, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, targeted drug therapy, and immunotherapy. The treatment may vary depending on the stage and type of breast cancer," Dr Nakra stated.

international



The Indian prime minister put it aptly. Of late, he has said that BRICS is not an anti-Western one but a non-Western one

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

PAK'S POLIO PROBLEM

Pakistan reported another four cases of poliovirus taking the national tally to 37 this year, a media report said Saturday. The country remains one of the few countries in the world where polio remains endemic, and Balochistan in particular has been a hotbed of cases

Quote of the day

India is certainly bound to return Hasina (to Bangladesh) if India honestly interprets this

ASIF NAZRUL | LAW ADVISER, BANGLADESH

The banning of Al Jazeera, the tightening of censorship within Israel and in the occupied territories, seem to indicate a strategy of the Israeli authorities to silence critical journalism and obstruct the documentation of possible international crimes

IRENE KHAN | UN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR ON THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION

As business secretary, even as I was trying to do things to limit immigration, we had an India FTA where they kept trying to bring in migration and I said no. It's one of the reasons why we didn't sign it

KEMI BADENOCH | FORMER BUSINESS AND TRADE SECRETARY, BRITAIN

SHORT TAKES

UN expands arms embargo on Haiti

United Nations: The UN Security Council voted unanimously Friday to expand the arms embargo in Haiti to all types of weapons and ammunition, expressing grave concern at the extremely high levels of gang violence and criminal activities in the impoverished Caribbean nation. The resolution authorizes the 193 UN member nations to take "appropriate steps to prevent the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related materiel in Haiti." UN experts have said increasingly sophisticated weapons that end up in the hands of gang members and criminals are being trafficked from the US, especially from Florida. The resolution also extends a travel ban and asset freeze on individuals on the UN sanctions blacklist for a year. In late September, the council committee monitoring sanctions on Haiti added two people to the list, which included five gang leaders.

17 Indian fishermen repatriated from SL

Colombo: Seventeen Indian fishermen arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters have been repatriated, according to the Indian mission here. Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters. "Homecoming! 17 Indian fishermen have been successfully repatriated and are on their way to Tamil Nadu, India," the High Commission of India here said in a post on X Friday. The fishermen issue is a contentious topic in the bilateral ties, with Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats in several alleged incidents of illegally entering Sri Lankan territorial waters. Sri Lanka claims a similar attitude by Indian authorities.

Biggest drugs bust: Mexico arrests 23

Mexico City: Mexico's navy said Friday it had arrested 23 people in its largest-ever drugs bust, seizing some 8.4 thousand kilograms of illicit cargo in an operation off the country's southwestern Pacific coast. "This represents the largest quantity of drugs seized in a maritime operation, without precedent in the history of the institution," the navy said in a statement. The navy also seized 8.7 thousand liters of fuel and six boats of the coast near Lazaro Cardenas, in Michoacan state, and further south off the coast of Guerrero state.

Indian diplomats 'clearly on notice': Canada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, Oct 19: Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly Friday said the remaining Indian diplomats in the country are "clearly on notice" after Canada named the Indian High Commissioner in Ottawa as a person of interest in the assassination of a Sikh separatist leader.

Joly said the government would not tolerate any diplomats who contravene the Vienna Convention or put the lives of Canadians at risk.

India expelled six Canadian diplomats Monday and announced that it was withdrawing its High Commissioner in Canada after dismissing Ottawa's allegations linking the envoy to the probe into the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Canada, however, said it had expelled six Indian diplomats.

Joly, comparing India to Russia, said Canada's national police force has linked Indian diplomats to homicides, death threats and intimidation in Canada.

> We've never seen that in our history. That level of transnational repression cannot happen on Canadian soil. We've seen it elsewhere in Europe. Russia has done that in Germany and the UK and we needed to stand firm on this issue
>
> MÉLANIE JOLY | MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CANADA

Asked if other Indian diplomats will be expelled, Joly said: "They are clearly on notice. Six of them have been expelled including the high commissioner in Ottawa. Others were mainly from Toronto and Vancouver and clearly, we won't tolerate any diplomats that are in contravention of the Vienna convention."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police went public this week with allegations that Indian diplomats were targeting Sikh separatists in Canada by sharing information about them with their government back home.

The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down in Surrey, British Columbia.

India has rejected the Canadian accusations as absurd and politically motivated.

India has repeatedly criticised Trudeau's government for being soft on supporters of the Khalistan movement who live in Canada.

This image made from a video footage shows a derailed fuel transporting train in Minneriya, Sri Lanka, Saturday after it collided with a heard of elephants Friday

PTI PHOTO

Israel drops leaflets over Gaza

THE LEAFLETS SHOW SINWAR'S BODY AND A WARNING MESSAGE TO HAMAS

REUTERS

Cairo, Oct 19: Israeli planes dropped leaflets over southern Gaza Saturday showing a picture of the dead Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar with the message that "Hamas will no longer rule Gaza", echoing language used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The move came as Israeli military strikes killed at least 32 people across the Gaza Strip and tightened a siege around hospitals in Jabalia in the north of the enclave, Palestinian health officials said.

"Whoever drops the weapon and hands over the hostages will be allowed to leave and live in peace," the leaflet, written in Arabic, read, according to residents of the southern city of Khan Younis and images circulating online.

The leaflet's wording was from a statement by Netanyahu Thursday after Sinwar was killed by Israeli soldiers operating in Rafah, in the south near the Egyptian border, Wednesday.

The October 7 attack Sinwar planned on Israeli communities a year ago killed around 1,200 people, with another 253 dragged back to Gaza as hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

In the central Gaza Strip camp of Al-Maghzai, an Israeli strike on a house killed 11 people, while another strike at the nearby camp of Nuseirat killed four others.

Five other people were killed in two separate strikes in the south Gaza cities of Khan Younis and Rafah, medics said, while seven Palestinians were killed in the Shati camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

Late Friday, medics said 33 people, mostly women and children, were killed and 85 others were wounded in Israeli strikes that destroyed at least three houses in Jabalia.

The Israeli military said it was unaware of that incident.

It said forces were continuing operations against Hamas across the enclave, killing several gunmen in Rafah and Jabalia and dismantling military infrastructure. Palestinian medics said five people were killed in Jabalia Saturday.

- Israeli strikes kill 32 people across Gaza
- Tightens siege around hospitals in north
- 'Forces focusing on Hamas terrorist infra'

Israel's subsequent war has devastated Gaza, killing more than 42,500 Palestinians, with another 10,000 uncounted dead thought to lie under the rubble

EVACUATION ORDERS

Residents and medics said Israeli forces had tightened their siege on Jabalia, the largest of the enclave's eight historic camps, which it encircled by also sending tanks to nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya and issuing evacuation orders to residents.

Israeli officials said evacuation orders were aimed at separating Hamas fighters from civilians and denied that there was any systematic plan to clear civilians out of Jabalia or other northern areas.

Residents and medical officials said Israeli forces were bombing houses and besieging hospitals, preventing medical and food supplies from entering to force them to leave the camp.

Health officials said they refused orders by the Israeli army to evacuate the hospital or leave the patients, many in a critical condition, unattended.

"The Israeli occupation is intensifying its targeting of the health system in the northern Gaza Strip, by besieging and directly targeting the Indonesian Hospital, Kamal Adwan Hospital, and Al-Awda Hospital during the past hours and its insistence on putting them out of service," the Gaza health ministry said.

Barrages from Lebanon target northern Israel

Israel's war with Lebanon's Hezbollah — a Hamas ally backed by Iran — has intensified. Hezbollah said Friday it planned to launch a new phase of fighting by sending more guided missiles and exploding drones into Israel. The militant group's longtime leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September, and Israel sent ground troops into Lebanon early this month. Israel's military Saturday said some 180 projectiles were fired from Lebanon. A 50-year-old man was killed after being hit by shrapnel while sitting in his car in northern Israel, and four people were injured, Israel's medical services said. Israel has issued near-daily warnings for people to leave buildings and villages in parts of Lebanon. The fighting has displaced more than 1 million people, including some 400,000 children. Israel also said Saturday it killed Hezbollah's deputy commander in the southern town of Bint Jbeil. The army said Nasser Rashid supervised attacks against Israel.

POWER GRID COLLAPSE

Lights out in Cuba

CUBA'S ELECTRICAL GRID COLLAPSES, ENTIRE COUNTRY WITHOUT POWER

REUTERS

Havana, Oct 19: Cuba's electrical grid collapsed again early Saturday morning, state-run media reported, plunging the entire country into blackout for a second time just hours after authorities announced they had begun reestablishing service.

CubaDebate, one of the islands state-run media outlets, said Cuba's grid operator, UNE, had reported at 6:15AM the "total disconnection of the national electro-energetic system."

"The Electric Union is working on its reestablishment," the brief message said.

Cuba's electrical grid first collapsed around midday Friday after one of the island's largest power plants failed, suddenly leaving more than 10 million without power.

Even before the grid's collapse, an electricity shortfall Friday had forced Cuba's communist-run government to send non-essential state workers home and cancel school classes for children as it sought to conserve fuel for generation.

But lights began to flicker on in scattered pockets across the island early in the evening Friday, offering some hope that power would be restored.

The grid operator has not yet provided any details on what caused the grid to collapse again Saturday, or how long it will take to reestablish service.

The govt has announced emergency measures to slash electricity demand, including suspending classes, shutting down some state-owned work places and canceling nonessential services

Cuba's government has blamed weeks of worsening blackouts - often 10 to 20 hours a day across much of the island - on deteriorating infrastructure, fuel shortages and rising demand.

Strong winds that began with Hurricane Milton last week had also complicated the island's ability to deliver scarce fuel from boats offshore to feed its power plants, officials have said.

Fuel deliveries to the island have dropped off significantly this year, as Venezuela, Russia and Mexico, once key suppliers, have reduced their exports to Cuba.

Key ally Venezuela slashed by half its deliveries of subsidized fuel to Cuba this year, forcing the island to search elsewhere for far more pricey oil on the spot market.

Harris, Trump court early voters

REUTERS

Washington, Oct 19: Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump hit the campaign trail Saturday, pressing their case with voters from Georgia to Pennsylvania who are already starting to cast ballots in the US presidential election.

Harris and Trump are essentially tied in the most competitive states and many Americans are already voting early by mail or in person, with just 17 days until the election.

On Saturday, Harris will host a get-out-the-vote event in Detroit, Michigan, for the city's first day of early voting, alongside Michigan-born rapper Lizzo.

Then, she travels to Atlanta, Georgia, for a rally with pop singer Usher, who is currently headlining a sold-out, three-date concert tour in the southern city. Early voting started in Georgia this week.

Harris will need a strong result in the majority-nonwhite cities of Detroit and Atlanta and their surrounding suburbs to repeat US President Joe Biden's 2020 wins in those two states.

Trump planned to stage a rally Saturday in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, seeking to take advantage of what he felt was an improved position for him in opinion polls that show a deadlocked race. Some voters already have mail-in ballots in the state, which is the biggest prize on Election Day among battleground states and could tip the 2024 race.

Early voting also starts Saturday in Nevada, where former President Barack Obama was expected to campaign for Harris in Las Vegas.

BIRTH RATE PLUMMETS

China to understand 'fear of having kids'

BEIJING IS TRYING TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG COUPLES TO HAVE CHILDREN AFTER CHINA POSTED A SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF POPULATION DECLINE IN 2023

REUTERS

Hong Kong, Oct 19: China's National Health Commission (NHC) is surveying 30,000 people to understand factors influencing their attitudes towards childbearing and the "fear surrounding having children", as authorities struggle to boost a flagging birthrate.

The survey will include people from 150 counties in China and 1,500 different communities, the state-backed Global Times said late Friday, citing the China Population and Development Research Center, which falls under the NHC.

Beijing is trying to encourage young couples to have children after China posted a second consecutive year of population decline in 2023.

The survey aims to analyse "reluctance and fear surrounding having children" and ultimately provide fertility support and incentive measures, the newspaper said.

The last time a countrywide family and fertility survey was carried out was in 2021. It comes after China's National Bureau of Statistics said it will conduct a nationwide sample survey from October 10-November 30 to monitor population changes.

Population development has often been linked to a strong and rejuvenated China in state media.

Chinese health officials said in September they would focus more efforts on advocating marriage and childbirth at "appropriate ages" and called for shared parenting responsibilities to guide young people towards "positive perspectives on marriage, childbirth and family".

India doubles grant to support education in SL plantation community

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Oct 19: India has doubled its grant to ₹172.25 million to support education in Sri Lanka's plantation areas for the Indian-origin Tamil community.

Indian High Commission to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha and Secretary of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Education and Science and Technology JM Thilaka Jayasundara Friday signed and exchanged diplomatic letters to formalise the modalities.

"The project envisages the upgradation of infrastructure of 9 plantation schools identified by the Government of Sri Lanka. These include 6 schools in the plantation areas of Central Province and one school each in Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Southern Province," Jha said.

With the additional funds infused at the request of the Government of Sri Lanka, India's total commitment to the project now stands at 600 million Sri Lanka rupees (INR 172.25 million). The project would add to India's numerous past and ongoing development partnership initiatives in Sri Lanka in the important sector of education.

business

We are now the envy of the world and the entire world wants to do business with India

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

EL&N LONDON FORAYS INTO INDIA

EL&N London, a globally acclaimed lifestyle and café brand, has opened its first Indian outlet in Mumbai in partnership with Reliance Brands Ltd (RBL) at Jio World Plaza, Bandra-Kurla Complex, in Mumbai. Renowned for its picture-perfect settings, the launch marks EL&N London's first venture into the Indian market, a joint statement said.

Quote of the day

If we combine tourism with the wedding industry and leverage existing infrastructure, we can multiply this sector's growth manifold

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | TOURISM MINISTER

We expect that the sectoral challenges may persist for the next two quarters, and apropos to the same, we may dynamically recalibrate our business objectives in the coming quarters, prioritising positive credit outcome over assets under management growth

SUDIPTA ROY | L&T FINANCE CEO

We continue to invest in strengthening our fresher hiring program, building the right mindset and future skilling and associates, by building capabilities in AI-first and cloud-first skill sets

MOHIT JOSHI | TECH MAHINDRA CEO

SHORT TAKES

IOB launches Mahila Shaksham Scheme

Chennai: Public sector Indian Overseas Bank Saturday launched the 'Mahila Shaksham' scheme designed to finance individual Women Self-Help Group members under the Centre's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission initiative. Aimed at benefitting women entrepreneurs by ensuring financial self-reliance, the scheme is in line with the Ministry of Rural Development's 'Lakhpati Didi Yojana' scheme which is designed to improve the financial standing of women self-help group members. "The goal is to ensure that these women earn a sustainable annual income of at least Rs 1 lakh per household through financial assistance and entrepreneurial support," Indian Overseas Bank said in a statement.

Afcons Infra to float ₹5,430-cr IPO

New Delhi: Shapoorji Pallonji Group's infrastructure engineering and construction company Afcons Infrastructure Ltd (AIL) is gearing up to launch its Rs 5,430-crore initial public offering (IPO) October 25. The initial share sale will conclude October 29 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day October 24, according to the red herring prospectus (RHP). The company will announce the price band for the IPO next week. The infrastructure firm's Rs 5,430-crore IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 1,250 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to Rs 4,180 crore by promoter Goswami Infratech Private Limited. The offer size has been reduced following a pre-IPO fundraising.

PFC, BEML sign agreement

New Delhi: State-owned BEML and PFC have signed an agreement to finance and execute critical infrastructure projects, particularly in the areas of defence, rail transportation and infrastructure development. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between BEML CMD Shantanu Roy and Parminder Chopra, CMD of PFC in the national capital on Friday, BEML said in a statement. BEML and PFC entered into a strategic MoU which aims at intensifying cooperation in financing and executing critical infrastructure projects, particularly in the areas of defence, rail transportation and infrastructure development, it said.

India seeks critical minerals pact with US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Saturday said India has proposed a critical minerals partnership agreement (CMPA) with the US, that will help domestic firms in the sector such as electric vehicles to get certain benefits in the American market.

The issue was raised by India during a recent visit of the minister to the US earlier this month.

During the visit, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in critical mineral supply chain.

Critical minerals, such as cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earths, play a crucial role in the production of clean energy technologies, from wind turbines to electric cars. Such minerals are in demand for the production of batteries for electric cars.

"I have suggested that our critical minerals MoU should be converted to a critical minerals partnership agreement and become a beginning point to go towards a free trade agreement. But as we are all aware, the US Congress is not very enthusiastic about FTA with any country," Goyal told reporters here.

Last year, the US and Japan signed a critical minerals agreement. A critical minerals partnership agreement between India and the US will help Indian firms in the sector to enjoy duty concessions and other benefits to sell products from the sector in the American market.

These benefits are provided by the US under its Inflation Reduction Act, which is aimed at boosting manufacturing capabilities. The benefits are extended to American firms or a firm in the country having FTA with the US.

The CMPA is like an FTA in the critical minerals sector.

An official said the conversion of the MoU into a partnership agreement will give it the status of a trade deal, thereby enabling India to benefit from the electric vehicle tax credit that the US gives under its Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Goyal also said during his visit, the US industry showed keen interest to increase investments in India in different sectors.

Without disclosing name, he said a firm is looking at investments in the range of USD 10 billion in areas such as data centres and quantum computing for AI.

There were also discussions in the area of technology transfer.

"Also there is a great interest in co-development of new innovative ideas, R&D, and there was a talk of increasing collaboration to co-develop new technologies," he said, adding that the 2-3 sectors that came up for discussions included pharma, digital technology, and telecom where India is looking at 6G in a big way.

The US companies are also keen in segments such as biosimilars and bio-sciences.

During the visit, Goyal also co-chaired the US-India CEO Forum meeting with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo.

The other areas of deliberations in the forum meeting include ideas for further reduction in compliances, decriminalising business laws, "what we can do to facilitate easier flow of capitals, how to facilitate regulators to talk to each other more frequently and at some stage look at a mutual recognition agreement," he said.

He added that there were no talks on visa issues, or work permits.

Both sides are also looking to restructure the CEO forum to widen representation, bringing in an element of tourism, getting the right set of people in terms of companies, and age profile.

The tenure of many of the members of the forum will get over in December.

"H1B visas are history now. I have invited companies to set up GCC (Global Capability Centres) in India," he said.

Further, the minister said India is looking to open investment offices in New York and Silicon Valley that will have representatives from Invest India and National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC), and would aid investments into India.

On clean energy, the two sides discussed green hydrogen and green ammonia during his visit.

Rural demand drives smartphone mkt growth

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 19: Driven by rural demand ahead of the festive season, the Indian smartphone market grew 9 per cent in the July-September period, shipping 47.1 million units, according to a new report.

Vendors cleared inventory through early monsoon sales across online and offline channels to gear up for the festive season, according to market research firm Canalys.

According to senior analyst Sanyam Chaurasia, top brands in the market are expanding their portfolio in the mid-high range, in anticipation of clearing inventory during festive sales.

"Meanwhile, brands outside the top five experienced another strong quarter. Apple drove significant volumes with the iPhone 15, with stronger demand coming from smaller cities, ahead of its latest launch," he mentioned.

Other brands, such as Motorola, Google and Nothing, continue to drive volumes owing to strong pull factors from the unique design language, clean user interface and channel expansion strategies.

Vivo claimed the pole position for the first time amid an aggressive push across channels, capturing a 19 per cent market share and shipping 9.1 million units. Xiaomi came second, shipping 7.8 million units, driven by its budget 5G lineup, while Samsung came in third with 7.5 million units.

OPPO (excluding OnePlus) and realme completed the top five with 6.3 million and 5.3 million units shipped, respectively, according to the report.

According to the report, both replacement and upgrade buyers leaned toward higher-priced models due to expanded mid-to-high-end offerings, competitive trade-in deals, and accessible financing options.

"However, entry-level demand was weak as rising prices forced consumers to delay purchases until after Diwali. Brands are reliant on offline sales before the Diwali season and will remain cautious about year-end inventory levels," said Chaurasia.

The report further stated that heavy discounting and extended channel margins will be essential to manage stock effectively in H2 2024.

Q2 RESULTS CORNER

HDFC Bank net up 6%

Mumbai: HDFC Bank Saturday reported a 6 per cent increase in September quarter net profit to Rs 17,825.91 crore on a consolidated basis. On a standalone basis, the largest private sector lender's post-tax net grew to Rs 16,820.97 crore during the reporting period, as against Rs 15,976.11 crore in the year-ago period. Its core net interest income grew 10 per cent to Rs 30,010 crore on the back of a 7 per cent increase in gross advances and the margins being stable at 3.46 per cent. The bank, which had guided towards doubling in size in four years recently, is operating as per market dynamics right now, its Chief Financial Officer S Vaidyanathan told reporters here on a call. Pointing to the 15 per cent deposit growth, he said it is focusing on the liabilities and keeping the credit growth just at par or lower than the market, and will grow faster than the industry next year and get back to growing at the legacy growth rates the year after, he said.

UCO Bank posts 50% jump in net profit

New Delhi: State-owned UCO Bank Saturday posted a 50 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 603 crore in the September quarter, helped by improvement in interest income. The lender had recorded a net profit of Rs 402 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Total income increased to Rs 7,071 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 5,866 crore in the same period last year, UCO Bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank earned an interest income of Rs 6,078 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 5,219 crore in the same period a year ago. Net interest income improved to Rs 2,301 crore, from Rs 1,917 crore in the year-ago period, registering a 20 per cent growth. At the same time, Net interest margin rose to 3.10 per cent from 2.84 per cent at the end of the second quarter of the previous financial year. Commenting on quarterly numbers, UCO Bank Managing Director and CEO Ashwani Kumar said the bank expects to continue the momentum.

Kotak Mahindra Bank profit rises 5%

New Delhi: Kotak Mahindra Bank Saturday posted a marginal 5 per cent increase in its standalone profit to Rs 3,344 crore in the second quarter ended in September 2024. The private sector lender had recorded a net profit of Rs 3,191 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Total income increased to Rs 15,900 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 13,507 crore in the same period last year, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank earned interest income of Rs 13,216 crore during the quarter compared to Rs 11,193 crore in the same period a year ago. Net Interest Income (NII) improved to Rs 7,020 crore, from Rs 6,297 crore in the second quarter of the previous year, registering an 11 per cent growth. However, Net Interest Margin (NIM) moderated to 4.91 per cent from 5.22 per cent at the end of the second quarter of the last financial year. The bank was able to reduce gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) to 1.49 per cent of the gross loans by the end of September 2024 from 1.72 per cent a year ago.

FERTILISER SUPPLY ADEQUATE DESPITE RED SEA CRISIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: The Centre Saturday said it was confident of achieving record foodgrain production in the 2024-25 rabi season despite fertiliser shipment delays, citing favourable soil moisture conditions and adequate water levels in reservoirs.

Speaking at a national conference here, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said there was sufficient availability of key fertilisers such as urea and diammonium phosphate (DAP) despite delay in shipments due to geopolitical tensions.

"The shipments are delayed... However, there is no shortage of fertilisers. We have made arrangements and there is enough supply for the rabi season," Chouhan said.

The ministry has set a foodgrain production target of 164.55 lakh tonne for the 2024-25 rabi season, including 115 lakh tonne of wheat and 18.15 lakh tonne of pulses.

Sowing of rabi (winter) crops has started and will pick up pace post-Diwali.

Fertiliser Secretary Rajat Kumar Mishra said India is rerouting DAP shipments from Morocco via South Africa after Red Sea routes were disrupted, adding 21 days to delivery times to western ports.

BIZ BUZZ

Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles opens Odisha's largest dealership

Bhubaneswar: Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles has opened Odisha's largest dealership, Lakshita Automobiles, in Bhubaneswar's Khandagiri area, expanding its footprint in the region. The new dealership will showcase the entire range of Jawa, Yezdi, and BSA motorcycles, along with premium service and after-sales support. The inauguration was marked by the launch of two new models—the Jawa 42 FJ and the BSA Gold Star 650. The Jawa 42 FJ, priced from Rs 2.02 lakh (ex-showroom Odisha), features a muscular design, upswept exhaust, and powerful 350 Alpha2 engine, available in five colours. The BSA Gold Star 650, starting at Rs 2.99 lakh, brings classic British styling, a 652cc single-cylinder engine, and Brembo brakes for a top-tier riding experience. "We are excited to bring two iconic motorcycles to Bhubaneswar—the BSA Gold Star 650, representing British engineering excellence, and the striking Jawa 350 42 FJ," said Anupam Thareja, Co-Founder, Classic Legends Private Limited. "Our largest dealership in Odisha reflects our commitment to offering a premium customer experience through top-notch sales and service facilities." Jawa Yezdi aims to expand its dealership network in Odisha from 13 to 20 by year-end.

SBI Bhubaneswar Circle opens 902nd branch

Bhubaneswar: A new branch of State Bank of India Bhubaneswar Circle was inaugurated at Chhenapadi in Keonjhar District. Chief General Manager SBI Bhubaneswar Circle Dinesh Pruthi inaugurated this 902nd branch in Odisha Saturday in the presence of DGM (B&O) Shailesh Sinha, Regional Manager Kamal Lochan Sarangi, Branch Manager Bhabesh Kumar Sethi and other staff members. Pruthi has assured availability of all financial products and high standards of service to the customers and public. Residents of Sasang, Bancho, Hatadihi, Mareigaon, Jambhira, Sulana, Panchugochia, Dhenka and nearby places will be benefited by the opening of this new branch.

Bhujia worth billions: The global race for a bite of Haldiram's

Haldiram is engaged in the manufacturing and distribution of 500 types of products such as snacks, namkeen, sweets, ready to eat and pre-mixed food, cookies, non-carbonated ready-to-drink beverages and pasta. It has operations in 100 counties, many through franchisees, including the UK, US and Japan

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Oct 19: There is a race among global investors to buy into Haldiram Snacks Food Pvt Ltd, the 87-year-old legacy brand which is India's largest snack and convenience foods company. Earlier, it was reported that Haldiram's promoters were planning to sell a controlling 51 per cent stake, but now a new report says they are looking to offload 10-15 per cent minority stake.

Many global investors have been vying to buy a stake in the cash-rich and profitable company which has a long legacy of manufacturing the iconic Indian savoury snack, Bikaneri bhujia. Early this month, reports based on information from sources said that Temasek Holdings Pte was in talks to buy a minority stake in Haldiram, a transaction that would have valued India's biggest snack maker at about $11 billion.

Few months ago, reports noted that Bain Capital had teamed up with Singapore's Temasek

to compete with Blackstone-led consortium for a controlling stake in Haldiram as large buyout funds vied for what could be the largest private equity acquisition in India so far. The Bain and Temasek combination submitted a non-binding offer in May, valuing India's largest snack and convenience foods company at $8-8.5 billion (Rs 66,400-70,500 crore), after initially engaging with the founding family of the 87-year-old brand separately, people aware of the matter said.

Earlier, Blackstone, the world's largest private equity fund, had teamed up with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC for a bid to acquire up to 76% of the company. "The biggest problem in this transaction is the size and the premium expectation by the Agarwal family," said a PE executive who had evaluated the deal but passed on it.

People familiar with Haldiram's operations said in May that the FY24 revenue of the combined snacks business was estimated to be Rs 14,500 crore with an EBIDTA of Rs 2,300-2,500 crore. The business has seen a compound annual growth rate of 18% in revenue over the past five years. The average EBIDTA margin is 14-15% though last year it improved to 17-18% on account of low commodity rates and price hikes in FY23.

While Haldiram dominates the snacks market, other players include PepsiCo's (Lays, Kurkure), Balaji Snacks, Prataap Snacks (Yellow Diamond), Bikanervala, Bikaji Foods, which recently got listed, and ITC Foods, which sells chips under the Bingo franchise. Indian savoury snacks market can be broadly segmented into western snacks and traditional snacks with the latter contributing around 48% to the total savoury snacks market -- namkeens, bhujia and ethnic snacks such as dry samosa, kachori, chakli, etc.

Despite 43.4% of the packaged savoury snacks market being unorganized, organized players such as Haldiram, Pepsico-Lays, Balaji, Bikaji have a strong foothold across the country and major market share in regional pockets.

The organized savoury snacks market is estimated at Rs 41,000 crore in 2021. Currently, the ethnic namkeen and snacks market is valued at Rs 10,800 crore. This segment has grown immensely since the last few years and majorly since pandemic.

SARFARAZ, PANT FIGHT BACK

NZ CLOSE IN ON TEST WIN ON INDIAN SOIL AFTER 36 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 19: Sarfaraz Khan's maiden century and Rishabh Pant's cavalier 99 is unlikely to prevent New Zealand from earning their first-ever Test match victory on Indian soil in 36 years with only 107 runs to get on the final day of an intriguing start-stop series opener.

Tom Latham (0) and Devon Conway (0) were at crease when bad light and later rain forced early stumps on fourth evening.

The last time New Zealand won a Test match in India was way back in 1989 when Sir Richard Hadlee was still an active Test cricketer and got 10 wickets at the Wankhede to ensure a huge 136-run win.

Tom Latham's team is on cusp of history despite a gallant fightback from India to score 462 in their second innings largely due to Sarfaraz continuing his happy knack of notching up 'Daddy Hundreds' from first-class to Test arena with a brilliant 150 off 195 balls and a stand of 177 with a half-fit Rishabh Pant, who missed his seventh Test hundred by a solitary run.

Once the second new ball was taken, India lost seven wickets for 54 runs with tall gast bowlers Matt Henry and William O'Rourke getting extra bounce and movement off the Chinnaswamy surface. After all, India were 52 runs ahead with seven wickets in hand. But Latham taking the new ball on the first available opportunity turned the tide in New Zealand's favour.

At that point, hopes were high of a miracle triumph similar to Kolkata 2001 with both Sarfaraz and Pant at the crease.

The first one to perish was Sarfaraz, who spooned Tim Southee to Ajaz Patel at covers and Pant followed soon, dragging William O'Rourke (3/92) on to his stumps.

It was his seventh dismissal in 90s in Test cricket, and he will certainly rue it after doing all the hard work till then.

Henry (3/102), who took five wickets in the first innings, looked pedestrian till then regained his mojo and movement with the new ball, mopped India's tail with the wickets of Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah.

But before the Blackcaps' bowlers found some wind in their sails, Sarfaraz and Pant dictated the course of the match like puppet masters.

The sight of Pant walking out to bat in the first session in itself was soothing as he had missed the whole of third day because of the blow he copped on the knee while keeping.

Pant understandably made a slightly gingerly start and was even involved in a mix-up with Sarfaraz, saved only by an erratic throw at stumps by wicketkeeper Tom Blundell.

Once swam past that period, Pant was unstoppable, clobbering left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel for a couple of six.

The left-hander soon brought up his fifty off just 55 balls with a thumping cover drive off Glenn Phillips before rain halted his march.

Despite the break, Pant started the middle session with confidence, biffing left-arm spinner Rachin Ravindra for a couple of sixes over the covers.

There were a couple of jittery moments for him but DRS saved him on both the occasions – once from an appeal for a bat-boot catch and once from a caught-behind appeal.

However, those blips did not affect his concentration and gradually began playing those shots exclusively crafted in the Pant manufacturing unit.

He sashayed and pirouetted around the crease to find all possible angles and the Kiwis bowlers were a clueless lot in finding an ideal line and length against him.

The prime example was an amazing slog swept six off Southee that sailed over the mid-wicket fence as the pacer tried to pitch it full, searching for swing.

Meanwhile, Sarfaraz, at the other end, chugged to a 150 after reaching his maiden Test hundred during the first session of the day, which he celebrated with unbridled joy.

His batting too was far from conventional, dishing out a melange of late cuts to accumulate his runs. In that sense, the Mumbai man's brusque batsmanship has a close resemblance to Pant's.

In fact, 40 out of his first 100 runs came in the arc between point and third man through late cuts of various nature – dabs, swish swat and an odd upper cut.

When the spinners were introduced, Sarfaraz used sweeps and nudges between square leg and fine leg to collect his runs. He made 39 runs in that region.

Latham struggled to keep a proper field for him. He even had to resort to the unusual placing of three players in the widish arc behind the square of the wicket. But still Sarfaraz found a way to score runs between them.

> I talk to my father quite often since he keeps me motivated all the time. I felt good since it was my maiden century playing for India. It has been a dream for me since childhood. Extremely happy
> SARFARAZ KHAN

> Sarfaraz's 150, Pant's 99 will remain just as a bright footnote unless Indian bowlers conjure some magic of their own on the fifth day

BRIEF SCORES

India 46 & 462 in 99.3 overs (Rohit Sharma 52, Virat Kohli 70, Sarfaraz Khan 150, Rishabh Pant 99; Ajaz Patel 2/100, William O'Rourke 3/92, Matt Henry 3/102) vs **New Zealand 402 & 0/0 in 0.4**

Women's T20 WC set for 1st-time champion

NEW ZEALAND-SOUTH AFRICA CLASH IN FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 19: New Zealand's golden generation, led by inspirational Sophie Devine, will have one last chance to lay hands on a global ICC trophy when it meets a gritty South Africa in the summit clash of the T20 World Cup which is set to throw a new champion, here Sunday.

New Zealand's women's team had won the ODI World Cup back in 2000 but none of the current squad members were part of that historic title triumph.

Before this event began, New Zealand were in the trenches having lost 10 matches on the trot in the format but under Devine this bunch, comprising of the venerable Suzie Bates and the assuring Amelia Kerr, has done wonders, bringing the side in contention for the ultimate prize.

It is most probably the last time the Black Shirts will have Devine, Bates and Lea Tahuhu playing of the national side in a global tournament.

Devine, 35, has more than 7000 runs under her belt in white-ball formats while the 37-year-old Bates has more than 10,000 runs to her name.

Pacer Tahuhu, 34, has 112 wickets in ODIs and 93 in T20Is.

They won't leave any stone unturned to ensure that they have a World Cup trophy in their cabinet.

South Africa on the other side will be equally determined to complete the unfinished business as they had lost the 2023 World Cup final to Australia at home. They have an opportunity to erase painful memories as they had lost by a mere 19 runs in the close contest.

New Zealand have one or other player to rise the occasion in the tournament and in the semi-final against the West Indies, if they failed to set a target big enough to daunt the free-flowing Caribbean batters, their bowlers responded with tidy spells throughout the game to eke out a memorable win.

Kerr's wicket tally has swelled to 12 in the tournament as she found apt support from the other end in the likes of Eden Carson (8), Rosemary Mair (7) and the experienced Lea Tahuhu.

New Zealand announced their intentions with a big win against India first up and followed that up with consistent performances across departments.

A 60-run loss to Australia, arguably the strongest team in the competition, notwithstanding, the Kiwis weren't unnerved as they went on to pip the West Indies in the final over of their low-scoring semifinal to make their third final.

When the tournament began towards the end of the first decade of this century, New Zealand appeared to be the team to beat as they made two consecutive finals but got pipped by England and Australia once each.

Bates and Devine, the survivors from those campaigns, will thus get a third crack in winning the first ICC trophy for New Zealand in white-ball cricket since 2000 when the men's team won the Champions Trophy in Kenya.

SHORT TAKES

India finishes 8th in Nomura Cup

Hai Phong: Kartik Singh rounded off the week with an even par 72 and finished tenth at the Asia-Pacific Amateur Team Championship. The teenager had an eventful round with five birdies and five bogeys and ten pars as he totalled 2-under for the week. It was another fine performance and he has been justifying the faith reposed in him by the Indian Golf Union. India finished eighth in the team competition as Rohit (77) and Anant Singh Ahlawat (76) were both tied 25th. Vietnam took the top honours in individual and team competition. Nguyen Anh Minh produced an inspired performance to lead Vietnam to an historic triumph in the 30th edition of the Asia-Pacific Amateur Team Championship.

Women's Handball Championship in India

New Delhi: India is set to host the 20th edition of the Asian Women's Handball Championship for the first time at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium from December 1 to 10. The tournament was originally slated to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan before unforeseen circumstances led to it being relocated. Apart from India, Iran, South Korea, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Hong Kong, and Singapore are the other heavyweights competing in the tournament. "We are delighted to host the 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship in India. This event reflects our strong belief in India's potential as a vibrant sporting nation and a key player in the handball revolution," said Assistant Director Technical of the AHF, Abdullah Al-Theyab in a release Saturday.

Junior men's hockey team defeats Japan

Johor: The Indian junior men's hockey team began its campaign in the Sultan of Johor Cup with a 4-2 win over Japan here Saturday. Amir Ali (12'), Gurjot Singh (36'), Anand Sourabh Kushwaha (44') and Ankit Pal (47') scored for India's while Tsubasa Tanaka (26') and Rakusei Yamanaka (57') found the net for Japan.

Poddar keeps Odisha hopes alive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 19: Odisha faced a familiar batting crisis in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A fixture against Jammu & Kashmir here at the Barabati Stadium before skipper Govinda Poddar came to the rescue.

The team lost half their side for 106 in response to J&K's 270 in the first innings. Captain Govinda Poddar's 87 not out resurrected their innings before rain stopped play with their score at 198-5 after 69.1 overs. He played some fine shots, hitting 8 fours and 2 sixes en route to an 87 off 148 balls.

Resuming on their overnight score of 15/1, Odisha started promisingly before Sandeep Pattnaik fell for 26. Skipper Poddar arrived at the crease and stitched a strong stand with opener Anurag Sarangi, who lost his wicket at 35. Then, Odisha lost two wickets in quick succession —Biplab Samantray (1) and Kartik Biswal (4).

The skipper found an able ally in young Aasirwad Swain, who realised the gravity of the situation and put his head down to defy the J&K bowlers. He ended the day on 25. The fact that he faced 93 balls and struck just 2 boundaries showed the teenager's maturity and resolve to support his captain.

The duo will look to bat long Sunday to help Odisha take the first-innings lead.

Mohun Bagan win Kolkata derby

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 19: Mohun Bagan asserted their dominance in the season's first derby, securing a comprehensive 2-0 victory over East Bengal, propelling them to second place in the Indian Super League standings Saturday.

In front of a packed 59,872 attendance at the Salt Lake Stadium, Jamie Maclaren broke the deadlock in the 41st minute, finishing calmly at the near post after exploiting a poor defensive positioning by Anwar Ali and a mistimed slide from Hector Yuste.

Substitute Dimitri Petratos sealed the win in the 89th minute, converting a powerful penalty after East Bengal goalkeeper Prabhsukhan Singh Gill brought down Greg Stewart inside the box.

With their third win in five matches, Mohun Bagan moved to second, just three points behind leaders Bengaluru FC.

In contrast, East Bengal, under the new guidance of Oscar Bruzon, were unable to spark a revival and extended their losing streak in ISL to four matches, leaving them rooted to the bottom of the table without a point.

East Bengal also extended their winless run to nine matches in ISL derbies, suffering eight defeats and one draw.

Subhasish Bose's follow-up effort was blocked by the MB defense, as East Bengal struggled to capitalise on their chances.

Just before half-time, Maclaren's clinical finish finally put MB ahead, capitalising on poor defending from East Bengal to give his team a deserved 1-0 lead heading into the break.

Maclaren's goal came as no surprise as he continued his fine form after scoring in the previous 3-0 win over Mohammedan Sporting.

Despite East Bengal's flashes of attacking play, Mohun Bagan remained dominant with 47 per cent first-half possession.

In the second-half, Mohun Bagan maintained control, adding a second goal late in the game. Though East Bengal pushed hard for an equaliser, MB's defence held firm.

Golden opportunity for Odisha's Kisku

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Three Indian footballers, along with two others, will undergo training at Old Trafford in Manchester after winning the fourth edition of United We Play, a grassroots football initiative.

The event saw the participation of over 15,000 budding Indian footballers across 18 cities, culminating in a grand finale in the presence of Manchester United legend and all-time great Gary Neville in Chandigarh.

In the finale, PC Lalchhuanawma (Mizoram), Shreejal Kisku (Bhubaneswar), and Mohd Ayan (Lucknow) were selected alongside Nepal's Bhakta Bahadur Pariyar and Chanason Chaiyatham from Bangkok.

These players will be given the opportunity to visit Old Trafford to participate in activities like a match-day experience, training session with Manchester United Soccer School coaches and legend interactions.

Delighted to see the dedication and passion for football among young children in India, Neville, whose illustrious career includes eight English Premier League titles and two UEFA Champions League titles for Manchester United, said in a release.

"Many congratulations to the young players whose hard work has paid off today. I am sure that the experience that they will have at the iconic Old Trafford, will be memories of a lifetime."

The launch of the fourth edition of United We Play took place at Kolkata in December last year, where former Manchester United and French footballer Louis Saha kicked-off the programme.

Dipa sees lack of passion in current generation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 19: Just-retired Indian gymnastics star Dipa Karmakar believes most of the current generation of gymnasts lack passion and urged them to embrace the sport with fervour to excel on the global stage.

Dipa, who blazed a trail by becoming the first Indian woman gymnast to compete at the Olympics and finish a historic fourth in 2016 Rio Games, retired earlier this month, ending a career in which she inspired awe for routinely performing the highly-difficult Produnova vault.

"There was junoon (passion) in Dipa, that is why. Same for Pranati," she said when asked why there is only one Dipa or Pranati Nayak among Indian women gymnasts winning medals on the international stage.

"I can't see this junoon (passion) much in the current generation (of gymnasts). I feel they look for short term, instant success," she said Friday night during a panel discussion at an event titled 'Beyond the Finish Line', organised by Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon.

The diminutive 31-year-old from Tripura grabbed headlines with her fourth-place finish in the vault final of the 2016 Rio Games, losing an Olympic medal by just 0.15 points.

Tokyo Olympian Pranati has won a vault bronze medal each in the 2019 and 2022 Asian Championships.

Hailing from Agartala, Dipa is one of only five women in gymnastics history to have successfully executed the Produnova, which involves two somersaults before landing and is called the 'vault of death' owing to the high risk of injury it poses. She felt that the problems plaguing the national federation for some time has also not helped the cause of Indian gymnastics.

While announcing her retirement, Dipa had said that she would give back to the sport by becoming a coach at some point in her life or she might simply remain a "supporter of the next generation of gymnasts following their dreams".

As recently as May, Dipa won vault gold medal at the Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Tashkent but decided to retire a few months later. Asked why she took the decision to retire, she said, "I had two ACL surgeries, shoulder and ankle injury. I was not being able to do my main event of vault the way I wanted. If the body is not allowing to push, there is no point of continuing."

When she started the sport in her home state, people would tell her why a woman should do gymnastics.

"People asked negative question like 'do women play gymnastics'? Another thing is many people did not know where Tripura is located. They would ask whether it is in Bangladesh or in northeast India. I want to put Tripura in Indian sporting map and also to show that women can excel in the sport of gymnastics."

> There was problem between the SAI and federation. For example, the selection criteria for the last Asian Games (2023) were known only after the actual trials. I want to bring changes in Indian gymnastics so that these kind of problems do not happen in future, but I can't do this alone
> DIPA KARMAKAR | RETIRED STAR GYMNAST

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