



Mystery man
Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is busy promoting her upcoming film *Citadel*, has been spotted with a mystery man after her divorce

LEISURE | P2



Israel hits back
Israel retaliates heavily in southern Beirut after a drone was launched at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's holiday home

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Auto exports rise
Automobile exports from India in the first six months of the current fiscal year rise 14 per cent year-on-year

BUSINESS | P11



36-yr win run ends
New Zealand beat India by 8 wickets in Bangalore to win their first Test in the country after 36 years

SPORTS | P12

Severe cyclonic storm 'Dana' brews in Bay

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: A cyclonic circulation over the North Andaman Sea is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm and reach the Odisha-West Bengal coasts by October 24, bringing heavy rainfall and gusty winds in both the states, the Met office said Sunday. The cyclone has been named 'Dana', proposed by Qatar.

According to weather officials, wind speeds along and off the Odisha-West Bengal coasts are anticipated to reach 60 km/h from October 23, increasing to 120 km/h from October 24 night to October 25 morning.

Fishermen of both the states have been advised against venturing into the sea from October 23 to 26 as the condition is likely to remain rough.

The weather system is likely to develop into a low-pressure area by Monday afternoon, intensifying into a depression over east-central Bay of Bengal by October 22 and subsequently evolving into a cyclonic storm by October 24, the Met office said, adding that it is likely to bring light to moderate rainfall across many areas, with isolated heavy to very heavy downpours in the coastal areas of Bengal and



Odisha from October 23 to 25.

IMD Director-General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the system is likely to take the shape of a severe cyclonic storm. He said parts of Odisha are likely to experience heavy to very heavy rainfall from October 23 onwards.

"Some places in the coastal region may experience 20cm rainfall October 24-25. The intensity of the spell may also increase to 20 to 30 cm, and above 30 at some places," he told a local TV channel in Bhubaneswar.

However, Mohapatra said that the IMD has not made any forecast on landfall location and intensity so far.

The IMD has issued a red warning for isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm), with the possibility of extremely heavy rainfall (over 20 cm) and thunderstorms with lightning, for Puri, Khurda, Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur districts October 24. **MORE P3**

'Intense' school blast rocks Delhi

Bomb! A simple mention of the word and your reflex causes you to flinch, leaving your eyes wide open. Safety is something taken lightly until it's missing. Once aware of the lurking danger, the vulnerability causes panic to soar, and so do the chances of everything going awry thereafter. A blast on a CRPF School campus, termed "intense" by locals, rocked the national capital Sunday morning sending personnel of Delhi Police and elite security agencies such as NSG, NIA and CRPF into a tizzy, as they collected samples and scoured the whole area using sniffer dogs and robots. Locals said car windows and glass panes of several nearby shops got shattered. It was still unclear what caused the blast and who's behind it. The AAP said the blast has exposed the "crumbling" law and order in the city and shows that the BJP-led Central government is unable to fulfil its responsibility of keeping the Delhiites safe. On the other hand, flyers have been having a harrowing time onboard scores of planes in the last few days as bomb scares continue unabated. Over the last week, around 100 flights have received bomb threats, which later turned out to be hoaxes. Not that they are unheard of before, but bomb scares have become so frequent that one thinks before taking or booking a flight. And it's not only a safety concern but also causes airlines financial turbulence with crores of rupees going waste in maintaining protocols, re-routing or cancelling planes. With the aviation regulator and the Centre racing to contain the menace, only time will tell how effective they are. And they need to do it soon, because who knows if the next bomb threat would be a hoax. One can only hope these incidents are not a precursor to something diabolical.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: A strong blast ripped through a wall of the CRPF School in Rohini's Prashant Vihar area Sunday morning sending shockwaves across the national capital and the country's top investigation agencies to the spot to find clues into the explosion. A high alert was sounded in the city by police in the wake of the blast. Initial investigation suggests

the blast could have been caused by a crude bomb, police said. No one was hurt in the incident.

Sources in Delhi Police said it was a low-intensity IED controlled with a timer or remote without shrapnel or ball bearings. It is suspected that perpetrators wanted to send a message to the authorities, though no one has taken responsibility for the blast as yet, a senior police officer told PTI. According to police and wit-



National Security Guard (NSG) personnel during an inspection near CRPF School where a loud blast took place at Rohini area, in New Delhi, Sunday

nesses, the blast, captured in a CCTV camera, destroyed a portion of the school wall, windowpanes of nearby shops, and damaged a few cars parked nearby. The sound of the blast was heard several hundred metres away.

The incident comes against the backdrop of a series of bomb threats sent to several airlines in the last few days. After the explosion, teams from the National Investigation Agency (NIA), National Security Guard (NSG),

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Delhi Police cordoned off the area and forensic experts collected samples from the site.

Videos from the spot showed thick plumes rising from the blast site. Residents termed the explosion "intense" and reported a foul smell in the area after it.

"Since today was Sunday, nobody got hurt. I shudder to think about how big a disaster it could have been had it happened during the weekdays," a local said.

25 more flights get bomb threats

Mumbai/New Delhi: As many as 25 flights of Indian airlines received bomb threats Sunday, causing hardships to hundreds of passengers and forcing authorities to move scores of planes to isolation bays at airports concerned for detailed checks.

The developments came a day after more than 30 flights of various Indian carriers received bomb threats. This week, nearly 100 flights received threats sending security agencies into a tizzy. The threats later turned out to be hoaxes.

IndiGo, Vistara, Akasa Air and Air India and Akasa Air are among the airlines that received bomb threats, including international flights, they added. At least six flights each of IndiGo, Vistara and Air India received the threats.

Against the backdrop of bomb threats to airlines, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) held a meeting with representatives of airlines Saturday. The civil aviation ministry plans to put in place strict norms to prevent incidents of hoax bomb threats to airlines.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

POLL ALLIANCE



We think alike. Our partymen think alike. Even my brother and his son-in-law are charged with similar kind of scams.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.0°C	32.0°C
Min Temp	25.6°C	22.2°C
Humidity	87%	87%
Rainfall	26.2mm	15.4mm

FORECAST
HEAVY RAINFALL VERY LIKELY

\$1mn each day till polls, trumpets Musk



The money is the latest example of Musk using his extraordinary wealth to influence the tightly-contested presidential race between Trump and his Democratic rival Kamala Harris

REUTERS

Harrisburg (Pennsylvania), Oct 20: Billionaire Elon Musk announced Saturday to give away \$1 million each day until November's election to someone who signs his online petition supporting the US Constitution.

And he wasted no time, awarding a \$1 million check to an attendee of his event in Pennsylvania aimed at rallying supporters behind Republican Donald Trump. The winner was a man named John Dreher, according to event staff.

"By the way, John had no idea. So anyway, you're welcome," the Tesla founder said as he handed Dreher the check. The money is the latest example of Musk using his extraordinary wealth to influence the tightly-contested presidential race between Trump and his Democratic rival Kamala Harris.

Musk started America PAC, a political action organization he founded

6 civilians, doc killed in J&K terrorist attack

Srinagar: Seven civilians including six non-locals and a local doctor were killed Sunday and five others were injured in a terrorist attack in J&K's Ganderbal district. Official sources said that terrorists attacked a private company's labourer camp in the Gagangier area of Ganderbal district. Earlier, three non-locals had been killed, but reports now confirm that six non-locals including two officials of the private company and four labourers, and a local doctor were killed in this terrorist attack that took place around 8.15pm. Gagangier is around 74 kms from Srinagar city. The private company is engaged in building a tunnel from the Gagangier area to the Sonamarg tourist resort to make the Srinagar-Sonamarg an all-weather road. Two days back terrorists killed a non-local Bihar resident, Ashok Chouhan in the Zainpora area of the Shopian district. **P9**



CAPTURE ODISHA'S Cultural Heritage THROUGH YOUR LENS

SHOOT, SHARE & WIN!

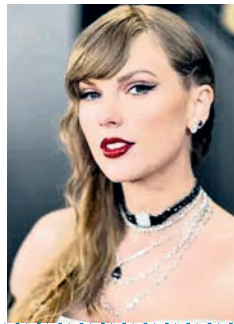
ATTRACTIVE CASH PRIZES | GET FEATURED IN 2025 CALENDAR ALONG WITH YOUR NAME | LAST DATE TO SUBMIT 5th NOV, 2024 | SCAN TO PARTICIPATE



TPC^{ODL} | TPN^{ODL} | TPS^{ODL} | TPW^{ODL}
(Joint Venture of Tata Power and Government of Odisha)

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leisure



TAYLOR SWIFT SUFFERS WARDROBE MALFUNCTION

Pop icon Taylor Swift recently experienced a wardrobe malfunction as she was performing her track "But Daddy I Love Him", with her white gown suddenly popping open in the back. However, her dancers acted quickly, and came to her rescue.

JLO'S REVENGE PLAN FOR AFFLECK AMID DIVORCE

A source close to Jennifer Lopez revealed that the singer is busy planning a revenge plan for Ben Affleck after he broke her heart. JLo is determined to focus on herself and make a striking remark with her comeback despite being devastated.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
Ganesh predicts that today you will look up to your family for happiness. Towards the later part of the day, however, there are possibilities of a platonic affair blossoming. Those who are already caught up in a romantic affair, says Ganesh, will experience some thrilling times.

TAURUS
Never dig a well when your house is on fire, says Ganesh. You will realise the importance of saving money for future needs today. You will feel uneasy in your routine and may feel the urge to get away from the chaos of things. Evening might see you spend a small fortune on loved ones and leisure, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI
A busy day for you, predicts Ganesh, but it has little to do with work. Today, your mind is in a spiritual mode. You may want to make a few changes to the interiors of your house, mostly to get them in sync with the state of your mind. A romantic evening with your sweetheart in a sumptuous surrounding is likely, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Though the day will spring a lot of challenges, you will be up to it every single time. Your mind will be sharp, and will run like an athlete taking part in a marathon. All you need is a little self-belief. And there will be no stopping you once you set your mind free.

LEO
Your interactions with those around you will be tinged with understanding and empathy, as you will make an effort to solve their problems. Your relations with people will become stronger as a result. You need to stop worrying about others and pay more attention to your family, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
In all likelihood, you will want to go into seclusion today, both mentally and physically. You have a knack to work yourself up to face challenges and gather your resources to come up trumps in unpleasant situations. However, you will not be able to go beyond your limitations.

LIBRA
Remember the joint account you were going to open one of these days? Well, today is the day best suited for such decisions. Make the most of this propitious day and make well-informed plans concerning your future career growth. Ganesh gives his nod.

SCORPIO
In all probability, backlog is the last word you may like to hear. Professionally, you will remain workaholic for most part of the day. You shall polish off all those files in your 'In' tray. The romantic bee will buzz around in the evening and gladden your heart, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Find yourself taking up the Thinker's ponderous posture. Post noon, you may find yourself making plans to rearrange the interior of your home. In the office, your superiors will know your worth and heap appreciation on you, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
A memorable time with like-minded people is on the cards today, says Ganesh. At work, you may try everything in your capacity to attain perfection, but perfection will remain restricted to your thinking. None of the innovative ideas striking your mind will actually come into force. But this will not deter you in any way, and you will continue to remain optimistic and move ahead with equal enthusiasm.

AQUARIUS
Metaphysics and philosophy have aroused your interest. Instead of spending a huge amount on books on these subjects, Ganesh suggests that you keep a balanced approach and practice spiritual discipline. It's also high time you changed your dietary habits.

PISCES
You are likely to be filled with overwhelming ambition today. You will be driven and prepare meticulously to tackle your projects. Evening should see you in the company of like-minded individuals, busy with intellectual activities, says Ganesh.

Samantha spotted with mystery man

Mumbai: Samantha Ruth Prabhu has always grabbed eyeballs either for her impeccable fashion sense or for her personal life. The *Oo Antava* girl, who is busy these days promoting her upcoming film *Citadel* has again made headlines.

Recently, a video featuring Samantha with a mystery man went viral. The clip shows Samantha leaving a venue with the man by her side. At one point, she appears to try and hold his hand but quickly refrains from doing so.

Netizens are speculating that the actress may have started dating, following her ex-husband Naga Chaitanya's engagement to Sobhita Dhulipala.

Talking about her personal life, Samantha and Naga Chaitanya announced their separation on social media in a joint statement in October 2021.

The news sent shockwave to the whole world as they were considered one of the most loved couples in Tollywood.

The reason between Samantha and Naga Chaitanya's divorce has never been clear. The two parted ways after being happily married for four years.

AGENCIES



KANGANA'S DEFINITION OF WITCHES

Mumbai: Actress and MP Kangana Ranaut has always been vocal about her thoughts and has fearlessly expresses her views on social media. This time, the actress penned a long note on witches, calling them "women who are connected to their higher self".

Replying to a viral X post that said, "Don't be afraid of witches, be afraid of the ones who burned them.", Kangana wrote, "Witches are those women who have high self-worth, who have sharp intuition, who are free spirits, who have indomitable willpower and who have a stubbornness to cross every kind of wall.

This quality makes them mysterious, frightening and threatening for those who

are caged and cursed."

The *Queen* actress further wrote, "People caged think that gifted people have some evil power and they should be burned, there is stinginess in so many things and the feeling of jealousy is the highest. You can either have a feeling of jealousy from someone or get influenced, make smart choices, those who choose to be inspired are the chosen ones."

Samantha Ruth Prabhu shared a screenshot of Kangana's tweet on her Instagram Stories and praised the actress for her choice of words.

AGENCIES



Nia takes a break

Mumbai: Television actress Nia Sharma took to her Instagram and shared some stories and videos in which she is seen enjoying her vacation in Phuket, Thailand.

She posted a video that shows her exploring Maya Bay and captioned the video that read, "Exactly where I planned to be... Maya Bay... (No Bae) #phippiisland #mayabay #lagoon."

In the video shared by Nia, she can be seen dressed in a black swimsuit and taking a dip in the ocean water. She is also seen having fun on the boat and enjoying the thrill of the waves.

On the work front, Nia Sharma started her career in 2010 with a television show on Star Plus *Kaali-Ek Agnipariksha*

as Anu. She made her recognition with the parallel main lead role of Manvi Chaudhary alongside Krystle D'Souza, Karan Tacker, and Kushal Tandon in the show titled *Ek Hazaaron Mein Meri Behna Hai* and *Jamai Raja* as Roshni Patel. *Jamai Raja* also came up with a sequel. Most recently she was seen playing a 'Chudail' in the show *Suhaagan Chudail* which was aired on Colors.

Also, she participated in some reality shows such as *Khatron Ke Khiladi-Made in India*, *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 10*, and *Laughter Chefs-Unlimited Entertainment*.

Mumbai: Hrithik Roshan, the son of actor-turned-film-maker Rakesh

Hrithik India's richest star kid

Roshan, is currently the wealthiest of all 'star kids' in India. As per reports, the 50-year-old actor has a net worth of Rs 3100 crore (over \$370 million), which surpasses even some of the top stars like Saif Ali Khan (Rs 1200 crore), Abhishek Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor (Rs 400 crore), Alia Bhatt (Rs 550 crore).

Hrithik made his debut with the movie *Kaho Na... Pyaar Hai* and since then he has delivered several blockbusters such as *Dhoom 2*, *Agneepath*, *Jodhaa Akbar*, *Krrish*, *Kaabil*, *War* and many more.

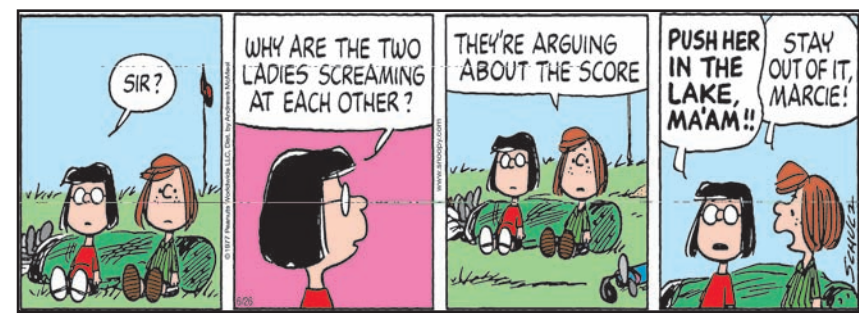
The *Fighter* actor is one of the highest paid artist in India and has won several awards. Apart from movies, Hrithik earns a substantial amount of money from other sources such as brand en-

dorsements, production house (FilmKraft Productions Pvt Ltd), investments in start-ups, and his own lifestyle and sports-wear brand called HRX. According to a report the company is worth Rs 1000 crore and is one of the most successful businesses owned by an Indian actor.

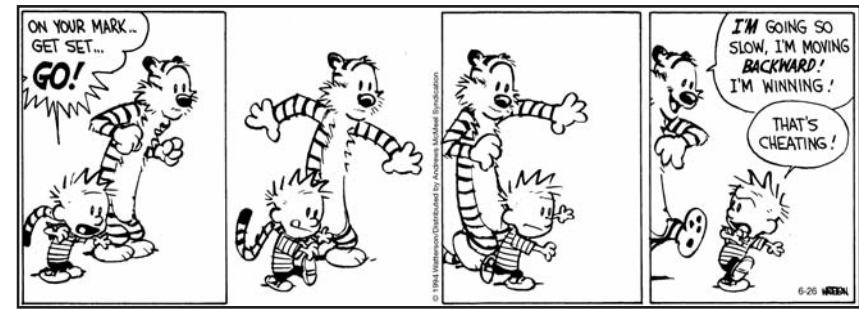
AGENCIES



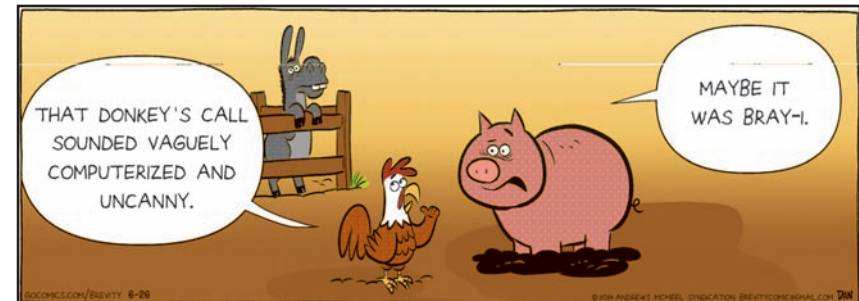
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

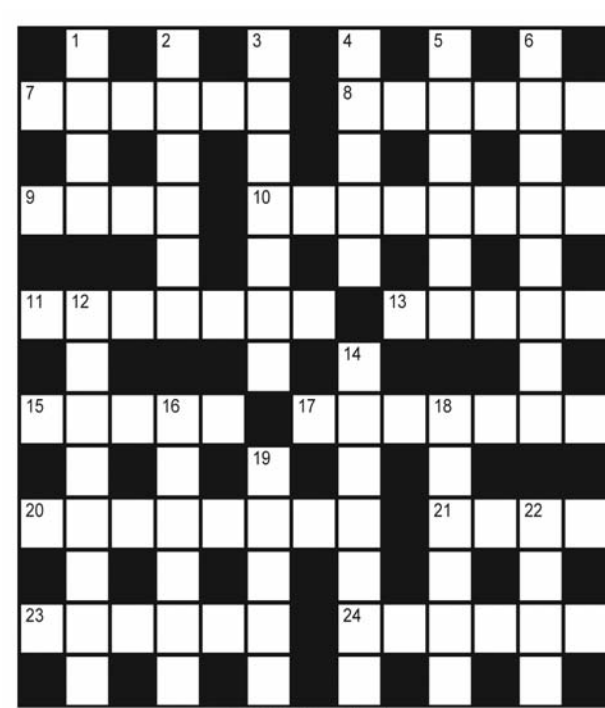


BREVITY



FUN post

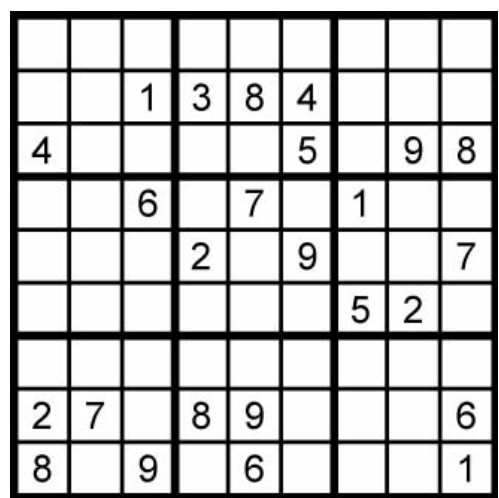
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Coercion
 - 8 Cattle enclosure
 - 9 Vegetate
 - 10 Fraud
 - 11 Hanging Gardens site
 - 13 Head coverings
 - 15 Express
 - 17 Former French cavalryman
 - 20 Map line
 - 21 Curve
 - 23 Rip off
 - 24 Banner
 - 5 Giant pigfish
 - 6 Battle on 18 June 1815
 - 12 Really
 - 14 Food storage unit
 - 16 Three-legged metal stand
 - 18 Polish city
 - 19 Plumber's snake
 - 22 Zoo feature
- Down**
- 1 Martial art
 - 2 Bell tower part
 - 3 *Topkapi* actor Peter
 - 4 Rifle attachment

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

FITNESS FIRST

Students perform yoga during State Himalaya Yoga Olympiad organised by AIIPH University in Bhubaneswar Sunday



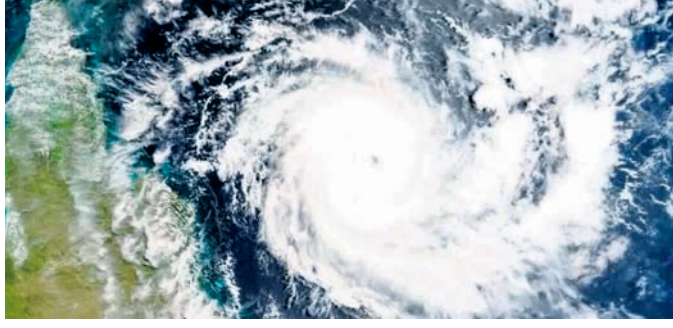
Cyclone fears: Coastal dists put on high alert

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The state government Sunday asked all District Collectors to remain on alert, with coastal district administrations on high alert, due to forecasts of heavy rainfall and gusty winds potentially exceeding 100 kmph October 24.

As per the predictions made by the IMD Sunday, the cyclonic circulation over the north Andaman Sea is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm and reach the Odisha-West Bengal coasts by October 24, bringing heavy rainfall and gusty winds in both the states.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja held a review meeting with senior officials, including Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) DK Singh to take stock of the preparedness measures.



District Collectors have been tasked with preparing cyclone shelters to accommodate residents if evacuations become necessary.

The SRC outlined the state's goal of achieving 'zero casualty' to ensure no loss of life or livestock during the calamity. Pregnant women in likely affected areas will be moved to nearby hospitals, and the public

has been advised to stay alert but not panic, he said.

The Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and Fire Services personnel are on standby, and will be deployed once the IMD determines the cyclone's landfall location and wind intensity, he added.

Meanwhile, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister

IMD has issued red warning for isolated heavy to very heavy rain (7 to 20 cm), with the possibility of extremely heavy rainfall (over 20 cm) and thunderstorms with lightning, for Puri, Khurda, Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur dists October 24

Suresh Pujari said the state is fully prepared to address the situation, emphasising proactive measures to mitigate the impact of the expected cyclone. He noted that discussions with relevant officials have been held, and district administrations have been

instructed to remain vigilant.

The weather bureau has issued a red warning for isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm), with the possibility of extremely heavy rainfall (over 20 cm) and thunderstorms with lightning, for Puri, Khurda, Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur districts October 24.

An orange warning is in place for Kendrapara, Cuttack, Nayagarh, Kandhamal and Gajapati, indicating heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) along with thunderstorms, for the day.

Additionally, a yellow warning has been issued for Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, and Keonjhar districts, predicting heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorms.

State to host 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held at Janata Maidan here from January 8 to 10 next year following approval from Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, officials said Sunday.

The event will be jointly organised by the state government and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), a press statement said.

A five-member MEA delegation has already visited the venue to coordinate with state officials while various committees have been formed for smooth execution of the event, it said.

Notable attendees include President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, several Union ministers, and Majhi. The PM is expected to participate in the main event on the second day and launch the Pravasi Bharatiya Teerth Express, the statement added.

More than 5,000 diaspora members from various countries are likely to join the three-day convention. The overseas Indians, NRIs and other dignitaries will be taken on a tour to various places in Odisha, showcasing the state's cultural heritage, historical significance and industrial potential, the government said.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated January 9 to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in Mumbai from South Africa in 1915.

ECoR's waste-to-craft drive for clean premises

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) is proud to announce a remarkable initiative aimed at transforming waste materials and scrap into stunning works of craft as part of its ongoing commitment to cleanliness and sustainability. This creative endeavour, driven by the employees of the Diesel and Electric Loco Shed, Traction Sub-Station, and Traction Distribution Sections, not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of railway premises but also promotes environmental awareness.

As part of the Swachhata Hi Seva and Swachhata Pakhwada campaigns, employees have utilised an array of discarded materials—including bull gears, traction bars, pneumatic pipes, compressor valves, and more—to create eye-catching art pieces. These innovative artworks include representations of India's map in tricolor, models of famous landmarks such as the Qutub Minar and bridges, as well as whimsical sculptures of dinosaurs, musical instruments, and other creative forms.

The initiative has garnered attention from passersby and local communities, showcasing the potential of waste materials to convey meaningful messages about sustainability

and environmental stewardship. Previous installations displayed at ECoR Headquarters and Rail Sadan in Bhubaneswar have set a precedent, inspiring further creativity across various railway establishments.

Among the standout creations are human figures captured in dance poses, crafted from scrap metals and welded into intricate designs. These installations, made from components like cam gears and piston carriers, exemplify how discarded materials can be transformed into beautiful expressions of art.

Additionally, this initiative serves as a platform for skill development among railway employees. During their leisure time, staffers from locations including Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, and Araku have actively engaged in beautifying their surroundings through art. Some of their work can already be seen at Visakhapatnam station, the railway stadium, and the Diesel Loco Shed, with plans for further installations across more railway stations in the near future.

By embracing creativity and sustainability, the ECoR is setting a powerful example of how waste can be repurposed into art, fostering a culture of cleanliness and environmental consciousness.

City cops get 3-day custody of 'call centre' gang members

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: A Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate's court Sunday granted the Commissionerate Police three-day custody of six persons, who were arrested

team from Cyber police station left for Kolkata Saturday to check their criminal antecedents, if any, with the help of the local police. "Another team at the Cyber police station is scrutinising their bank transactions, with help from technical experts, to find out their possible money laundering activities, and terror links," Mishra added.

On Thursday Mishra had claimed that the gang of six generated an average monthly income of ₹1 lakh

from their con operation. He said the revelation came during the interrogation of the mastermind, Haider Ali, who said the money was raised by sending fraudulent emails to clients, impersonating as customer care agents and providing fake numbers to induce them into making fraudulent transactions. Mishra said the operational area of the scammers extended to far off territories like the UK and US, apart from several states in the country.



October 16 for running a fake call centre out of a rented flat in Sundarpada area, to facilitate further investigation into the case.

DCP Pinak Mishra said the Commissionerate Police will obtain the custody of the six accused, all from Kolkata, from the Jharpada special prisons where they are currently lodged, Monday. "We will have them in our custody till Wednesday," Mishra said.

Shedding light on the progress of the probe, the DCP said a three-member

UDAN

Now even small cities have got new and big air routes for education, business, tourism, treatment...

Unmatched 8 years of UDAN scheme

Year	Airports	Air Passengers
2014	74	17 Crore
2024	157	38 Crore

Today all the states and union territories of the country have **airport**

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“ In just one decade, India has shown a huge change. Traveling by plane has become possible even for those who wear slippers, this is the success of UDAN. ”

- Narendra Modi

2ND INDIAN LIGHTHOUSE FESTIVAL

Two new lighthouses on Odisha coast: Union min

CHIEF MINISTER MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI JOINS UNION MINISTER SONOWAL AS THE SECOND EDITION OF THE FESTIVAL CONCLUDES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, Oct 20: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Sunday announced that two new lighthouses will be set up on the Odisha coast to boost tourism in the state.

The new monuments will be set up at Chaumukha in Balasore district and Dhamra in Bhadrak, he said while addressing the 2nd Indian Lighthouse Festival here.

At present, Odisha has five lighthouses—Gopalpur, Puri, Chandrabhaga, Paradip, and False Point.

Sonowal, the minister of ports, shipping and waterways, said the coastal communities of the country would be developed as societies in order to enable and empower them within the vicinity of lighthouses.

A central association of all these societies would be created to give a national momentum to celebrate the lighthouses as national icons and the cultural heritage and legacy of India's rich maritime sector, he said.

The Union minister also inaugurated Kalwan reef lighthouse at Jamnagar in Gujarat as well as stacker-cum-reclaimant and a flyover at Padadip Port in Odisha.

"The Indian Lighthouse



Festival or 'Bharatiya Prakash Sthamb Utsav' has been receiving laurels from all quarters of the country as we continue our efforts to further bolster facilities for the tourists - both domestic and foreign - for a memorable experience at these wonderful monuments," he said.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is taking all steps to realise the full potential of India's rich cultural heritage as well as its historical legacy in propelling the economic growth of the country, he said. Sonowal said his ministry is committed to ushering in a new chapter of growth in the country's blue economy.

He said that the tourists' footfall in the lighthouses witnessed a rise of more than 400 per cent since 2014.

"From 4 lakh tourists in 2014, it reached 16 lakh in the last fiscal," the minister said.

"We have already crossed 9 lakh in the first half of the current fiscal, and it is evident that the growing trend of lighthouses as tourists' hotspots will continue," he said.

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, amphitheatres, children's parks, and more, an official said.

Among others, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union ministers Shantanu Thakur and Suresh Gopi, and Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida attended the meeting.

Santali language makes it to Google Translate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: In a major breakthrough, Google added Ol Chiki script, the official writing system for the Santali language, to Google Translate, marking a significant milestone for the Santal-speaking community.

The inclusion of Santali comes after sustained efforts since 2019 by a group of dedicated digital activists, including R Ashwani Banjan Murmu, Ramjit Tudu, Prasant Hembram, Fagu Baskey, Samu Tudu, Bijendra Hansda, Premchand Murmu, Bodi Baski, Aryan Murmu, Maino Tudu, Durga Soren, and many other independent volunteers.

The addition of Santali lan-

guage to Google Translate is seen as a crucial step towards expanding digital content for the marginalised language, which is spoken by millions but often under-represented on digital platforms.

With its inclusion, Santali speakers will now have a valuable tool to access and share information in their native language, contributing to the preservation and growth of their cultural heritage.

"In June, Santali language was added with Latin script by Google. Now, it is added with Ol Chiki Script after we raised the issue," said Ashwani Murmu, an activist.

Members of the Santali community have expressed their joy and pride in this achievement, as it paves the way for



lation service. This move further solidifies Google's commitment to promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity across its platforms.

Santali is written using several scripts including Bengali, Devanagari, Odia, Latin, and Ol Chiki. The newest of these scripts, Ol Chiki was developed between 1920-1940 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu to create a writing system that met all the orthographical needs of the Santali language and could unify its literature under one script. The Ol Chiki script has 30 letters, out of which six are vowels and the remaining 24 are consonants, along with six diacritics.

There are about 894,764 Santali speakers in the state, and they are mainly concentrated in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, and Sundargarh districts.

EMPOWERING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

increased visibility and digital representation. Many hope this will lead to further inclusion of indigenous languages on global platforms.

Alongside Santali, Google's latest update also includes several other languages such as Inuktitut (Latin and Syllabic), Crimean Tatars (Latin script), Tshiluba, and French (Canada), expanding the diversity of languages available at the trans-

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AFFIDAVIT

I, Sri Akhil Kumar Pradhan, S/o Gadadhar Pradhan, Village-Ataranga, Post- Sidhanai, P.S.- Aska, Dist.- Ganjam, Odisha declared by this Affidavit No. 1577 dtd.30.09.2024 that now onwards my father will be known as Gadadhar Pradhan instead of Gadadhara Pradhan for all my future purpose.

I, Bijay Kumar Patra, S/o-Late Shyam Babu Patra, resident of C-146, Koel Nagar, Rourkela, Dist.-Sundargarh, Odisha, Pin-769014 declared by this affidavit No.- A/10 dtd-18.10.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BIJAY KUMAR PATRA for all future purposes.

By an affidavit (No.-12AA 805976, dtd. October 08,2024) before Shri Jagyuneswar Acharya, Notary, Bhubaneswar (Regd. No.-7791/2009) I, Smt. Sabitri Mohapatra, W/o- Shri Pradeep Kumar Panda, Plot No.- 929/2914, Anant Nagar, Kapil Prasad, Old Town, P.S.-Shree Lingaraj, Bhubaneswar- 751002, District.- Khordha Odisha do hereby declare that, my name has been changed from Sabitri Panda (Reflected in old Aadhaar and PAN) has been changed to my maiden name Sabitri Mohapatra. I do hereby declare that, "Sabitri Mohapatra" and "Sabitri Panda" is one and same person and has same identity. Henceforth, the name Sabitri Mohapatra will be used for all purposes including all bank account details, Aadhaar, PAN, Pension records and other future purposes and transactions.

Dy CM Parida, Works min review heritage projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Oct 20: Deputy Chief Minister Pravatī Parida, and Law, Works & Excise Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan recently took stock of the progress of several heritage projects being undertaken in this district and the Pilgrim City. A review meeting, jointly presided over by the Deputy CM and Works minister, was held here in this regard Saturday.

Discussions were held on the current status of the ongoing heritage projects, remaining work and preparation of new DPRs meant for renewal of the projects. The meeting shed light on the progress of critical infrastructure like housing projects for Srimandir servitors, construction of Srimandir Adarsha Gurukulam, new building of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), construction of Raghunandan Library, development of Srimandir kitchen and its surroundings, Pramod Udyan, Konark Heritage Area Development project, restoration of Musa River, and conservation and beautification of Puri lake.

The developmental initiatives which were also tabled for discussion include multilevel car parking at Digabareni Square, development of the stretch from Acharya Harihar Square to National Highway-316, vehicle parking lot at Sipasarubali, bio-toilet near the beach and sec-

ond phase development of Odia University.

These apart, identification of land for an appliqué hub at Pipli, repair and renovation of mutts and temples located within 75-metre radius of the 12th century shrine, Atharana heritage project, integrated development of Alarnath shrine at Brahmagiri, peripheral development of Maa Mangala temple at Kakatpur and beautification of Bakulabana also figured in the discussions.

Harichandan directed the departmental secretaries concerned, Puri district administration and senior officials to carry out the projects on a war footing. The Works minister also stressed on the developmental initiatives at Jagannath Ballav parking lot, Uttara Parswa mutt and Pramod Udyan after visiting the sites.

The meeting was attended by Puri MLA Sunil Kumar Mohanty, Pipli legislator Ashrit Pattanayak, SJTA chief Arabinda Padhee, Works department principal secretary VV Yadav, Law department principal secretary Manas Ranjan Barik, Endowment Commissioner Lalatendu Jena, Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain, Superintendent of Police Vinit Agrawal, Engineer in-chief (Civil) Purnachandra Mohapatra, Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation (OBCC) managing director Sameer Hota and other departmental officials.



EXTENDING SUPPORT: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi gives away Kartik Brata kit to an elderly Habisyali in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Inscription reveals details about Chitreswari temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Epigraphists from 'Kalinga Epigraphical Research Society' (KERS) have recently deciphered a stone inscription in Kakatpur block of Puri district which reveals the historical details behind the construction of goddess Chitreswari temple.

The inscription is found engraved over the padapadma pitha of stone sculptor of goddess. Members of KERS Satyajit Swain, Bikram Kumar Nayak, Mihir Bahinipati, Bishnu Mohan Adhikari and Deepak Kumar Nayak carried out the exploration jointly.

Sharing more details, Bishnu Mohan Adhikari said, "We noticed three lines of writings in Odia and Sanskrit language, inscribed over the lotus pedestal of goddess Chitreswari's stone image. Considering the script used, the inscription can be assigned to the beginning part of 19th Century CE."

Talcher-Paradip-Dhamra NW-5 to be developed soon: Padhee

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: Talcher to Paradip and Dhamra stretch of the National Waterway-5 (NW-5) is set to move forward and it will soon see the light of the day, said Commerce and Transport principal secretary Usha Padhee while addressing a conference recently organised here by Utikal Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ltd (UCCL) and Forum for River and Ocean Scientists and Technologists (FROST).

Speaking at the two-day international conference on coastal and inland water transportation with a special focus on the greening of the water transport sector, Padhee said, "The Union Ministry of Shipping, Port, and Waterways, and Inland Waterways Authority of India have finalised the study and preparation of the DPR along with detailed design and engineering of the cross structures



on the waterways along with the cost estimates through IIT Chennai for the development of NW-5."

The execution of the project shall be undertaken under the special purpose vehicle (SPV) composed of the state government, Ministry of Shipping and IWA, Coal India Ltd, and Paradeep Port Trust, she added.

In the seminar, along with the development of NW-5, the early development of the East Coast Canal (ECC) system and its connectivity to National Waterways 1, was emphasised to reap the

benefits of inland navigation for a green transportation mode and economy in the state.

The former head of the department of Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineer, IIT Kharagpur RP Gokarn and Indian Maritime University director Kesavadev presented their perspectives on the theme of the conference.

UCCIL President Prabodh Kumar Mohanty, in his welcome address, explained the importance of the seminar for development of industry and the state.

FROST president Suresh Mishra enlightened the delegates on requirement of green technology in the marine transportation in the state.

Speakers deliberated on the sustainability of water transportation in the restricted waters of rivers and coasts, particularly related to small vessels, with particular emphasis on greening the sector.

2-day seminar ODICHEM-2024 held in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 20: The Bhubaneswar Regional Centre of Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers (IICHE-BRC) and CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT), Bhubaneswar, organised a two-day seminar ODICHEM-2024 on the theme 'Technological Challenges in the Mineral Sector' here recently.

The event was inaugurated by the director of Materials Group, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre Raghvendra Tewari who was the chief guest of the occasion. In his address, Tewari



spoke on the energy scenario in the country and the changing role of critical minerals in India.

Deputy DG of the Geological Survey of India Pankaj Kumar, the guest of honour, presented a clear geological picture of Odisha, highlighting the possibility of industrial development, especially

related to the critical minerals.

The chairman of the organising committee DP Misra, a veteran chemical engineer welcomed the guests. He invited the investors to explore Odisha as their next investment destination.

CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar director Ramanuj Narayan nar-

rated the industry-oriented research activities taken up by the CSIR and CSIR-IMMT for the mineral sector.

The steering committee chairman Omkar Nath Mohanty explained the purpose of the seminar while IICHE-BRC chairman Chaturmukha Patnaik presented the activities of the Regional Centre and its thrust on organising various seminars.

Organising secretary of ODICHEM Deepak Nayak gave a brief outline of the event. Around 200 delegates from industries, academia, and R&D organisations attended the seminar.

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ECI nod to new polling booth at Tadibalsa



POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi, Oct 20: In a move that would discourage Andhra Pradesh to influence and manipulate voters of bordering Kotia gram panchayat (GP) under this block in Koraput district to participate in the polls in the neighbouring state, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has given its approval for establishment of a new polling station at Tadibalsa village under the GP. With this, Kotia panchayat will now have 10 booths, instead of nine earlier. Tadibalsa booth has 403 voters hailing from Neredibalsa, Tadibalsa,



Arjubalsa and Dhulipadar villages under the GP. The distance of this new booth will be only 10 km for the voters of these fringe villages. The voters of these fringe villages were earlier travelling for 34 km to vote at Ranasingh booth. They will now have to travel for only 10 km to vote at Tadibalsa polling station. The decision comes close on

the heels of the neighbouring state trying to wean away the voters of fringe villages in Koraput district from the Odisha government and manipulate them to vote in the panchayat and Assembly elections of Andhra Pradesh.

The desperate act of Andhra Pradesh had become a cause of concern for the district administration of Koraput district. Odisha election officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal had visited Koraput district before the last Assembly elections. District Collector V Keerthi Vasan and Pottangi BDO Sukant Kumar Pattanaik apprised him about the issue during the visit.

Dhal listened to their complaint and recommended the ECI for establishment of a new polling booth at Tadibalsa. The state election officer issued a notification for establishment of a new polling booth at Tadibalsa village Thursday after the ECI gave its approval to the proposal.



MATTER OF FAITH: A devotee walks on embers at the Jhamu Yatra held at Indira Colony in Munder village under Jujumura block of Sambalpur district, Sunday

Man attempts to kill son by tying him to tracks, held



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Oct 20: A man identified as Sachin Das who tied his 9-year-old son to railway tracks here Saturday night following a fight with his wife, necessitating the halting of a superfast express train to rescue the child, has been arrested by the Town police, Sunday.

The incident occurred near Sudapada railway gate in the district.

According to reports, the couple, who live in Kansariapada area of Bolangir, fought over some domestic issues Saturday night, following which the man took his minor son with him and left home. After some time he sent photographs of his son tied to the railway tracks to his wife on the latter's mobile phone.

On seeing the photographs, the woman immediately informed the police over the helpline. "On being informed, a team from Town police station tried to halt the train scheduled to run on the tracks, and launched a search to locate the minor boy. They found the boy being tied to the railway tracks near Sudapada railway gate," an officer, privy to the investigation, said.

The police team then alerted the concerned authorities who managed to stop the Dhanbad Superfast Express and rescued the boy.

Following rescue, the minor boy was handed over to his mother while the father has been arrested for attempting to kill his son, the officer added.

BIRSA MUNDA MEMORIAL Sundargarh Collector asked to identify land

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, October 20: The department of ST & SC Development, Minorities, and Backward Classes Welfare (STSCD-BLD) has asked the Sundargarh district administration to find a suitable place for the construction of a grand memorial in honour of Bhagwan Birsa Munda in the district to commemorate the birth anniversary of the legendary freedom fighter. The foundation stone for the memorial is scheduled to be laid in Rourkela November 15 this year.

In a letter to District Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan October 9, Principal Secretary, STSCD-BLD Bishnupad Sethi, said that the memorial shall include a 150 ft high statue of Bhagawan Birsa Munda, an interpretation centre, a convention centre, souvenir shop, cafeteria and green lawns.

"The foundation stone for the above shall be laid at a state level function on 15th of November, 2024 at Rourkela. Therefore, you are required to identify a suitable land for all the above preferably in a scenic backdrop to make it a state of the art monument," Sethi's letter, addressed to the Collector, read.

Former Engineer-In-Chief (EIC) of Works department, Jagannath Patel, who has been appointed as the technical consultant for the project, would soon visit the district for discussions with the district administration and prepare a preliminary report.

Meanwhile, reliable sources in the district BJP said that the district administration officials recently visited a couple of spots for the mega project before zeroing in on patch of land belonging to the government-owned Kuanmunda Dairy Farm. The Farm stands on more than 200



acres of land parcel. A water treatment plant of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation department has come up on about 20 acres. Besides, another 20-25 acres of land had been allotted to a private sponge iron unit by the previous government. Recently more than 60 acres were surrendered to the government.

Following the allotment of

Sources said the district administration has zeroed on the Kuanmunda Govt Dairy Farm land parcel for the construction of the mega project

land to the private company by the previous government, Sanjib Pratap Singhdeo, heir of the erstwhile Kuanmunda Zamindar family, and Manoj Satapathy, a social activist, had moved court challenging the government decision. They also wrote to the President of India in this regard.

Speaking to OrissaPOST, Singhdeo said, "A letter has been dispatched from the President's office to the Chief Secretary directing an inquiry. We are hopeful that soon some decisions will be taken in this regard,"

Skill training for prison inmates

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, Oct 20: To promote self-reliance among inmates, the Berhampur Circle Jail here has launched a skill upgradation training programme. Officials said Sunday that this will help the inmates lead a productive life after their release.

Experts from the Textile department will provide six months of training to the inmates, divided into three batches. Each batch will consist of 20 male prisoners participating in a two-month course, said DN Barik, senior superintendent of Berhampur Circle Jail. Upon completion of the course, inmates will sit for an examination to earn a trained weaver's certificate, he added.

Barik said several inmates who have weaving skills are currently producing items such as bedsheets and towels in the prison workshop. After completing the course on weaving with a dobbie loom, they will be able to create garments featuring the latest de-



OP PHOTO

signs, which are in high demand among customers, he informed. The primary goal of the skill development training is to help inmates become self-reliant and lead productive lives after their release. Additionally, trained inmates will have the opportunity to secure loans to start their own weaving units, with the government offering substantial subsidies, Barik explained.

During their time in jail, inmates will not only produce clothing designs but also earn from sales. "We will deposit the proceeds from their products into their bank accounts," Barik informed.

The jail superintendent highlighted that the products made by inmates are highly sought after. On average, inmates earn approximately ₹3 lakh annually from selling cotton-made clothes.

Woman sets herself on fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, Oct 20: A woman suffered serious injuries after setting herself on fire over a family feud here Sunday morning. In an effort to save the woman, her husband was also injured while trying to douse the flames. The incident took place at Adia village under Jadida panchayat and Soro police limits in Balasure district. The injured woman was identified as Bhanumati Maharana while her husband is Sashikanta Maharana.

According to information available, the couple had been quarrelling over some family matters and the argument turned bitter Sunday. In a fit of anger, Bhanumati poured kerosene on herself and set herself ablaze.

Hearing the screams of the woman and her husband, neigh-



bours rushed to their house and doused the flames. The two were first rushed to the Soro community health centre (CHC) from where they were later shifted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Doctors said later in the day that the conditions of both are 'critical'.

On being informed, personnel from the Soro police station rushed to the spot and launched an investigation.

Man trampled to death by elephant in Sundargarh

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, Oct 20: A man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in Sundargarh district, police said Sunday. The incident happened at Kuanmunda village under Nuagaon block Saturday night when the victim along with his friend was returning home after watching a cultural programme organised on the occasion of Laxmi Puja, they said.

The two were walking back to their home when they came face to face suddenly with the elephant. The pachyderm chased both and as the victim fell, the animal trampled him to death. The elephant also attacked the other person and injured him critically, police said. He survived as by that time a crowd had gathered at the spot and managed to drive



the animal away.

The injured person is undergoing treatment at the Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH), said Forest Ranger Duryodhan Jerai.

On getting information about the incident, Forest department personnel went to the spot and managed to drive away the elephant, he said. However, locals

informed that the elephant was still in the area.

In the last couple of weeks human and elephant conflict has increased. Only a couple of days back one elephant calf died and two pachyderms were injured after they were hit by a train while crossing the tracks. One of the injured elephants has been sent to the Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) for treatment.

It should be also stated here that a couple of weeks back, Forest department officials had put radio collars on two marauding tuskers who were killing people and causing massive damages to property. It was done to keep a track on their movements. However, the exercise turned futile as one of the pachyderms attacked and killed a person within a couple of days after the collar had been put on it.

NOTICE FOR LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

Notice is hereby given from Dipti Sankar Das that, he has applied for loan to LIC HFL. But at present, he has lost the Original Link Documents i.e. Sale Deed No. 3655 dtd. 21.08.1995 and Sale Deed No. 5213 dtd. 12.11.1996, which were kept with him and in spite of his best efforts, failed to trace the same. Therefore, notice is hereby given to general public that if anybody has got any right, title interest over the property on the missing documents, he/she has to claim before the LIC HFL AT-Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar within 15 days from the date of publication. And after that the documents will lose its legal force and LIC HFL, Bhubaneswar will not be responsible for any claim. Whatsoever on the property after 15 days.

Address for Communication
LIC HFL, Chandrasekharpur,
Bhubaneswar,
B. K. Pattanaik, Advocate,
Mob. No. 9337395558

VSS Town Hall to turn museum soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Oct 20: The 120-year-old Veer Surendra Sai Town Hall (VSS) which is more than a century old will soon be developed into a museum and opened for visitors, officials said here Sunday. The Town Hall is closely linked to the history and culture of this district. It was earlier known as Victoria Town Hall and the foundation stone for it was laid during the British Raj in 1902.

Engineer JB Leven Thorpey of Central Province designed the Town Hall building. It was inaugurated by JP Hewety, Chief Commissioner of Central Province in 1904. Former royals, zamindars and affluent traders of Sambalpur region contributed handsomely for the construction of the building. The zilla school, women's college, Trust Fund College and the district library were all functioning once from this building.

Officials informed that the plan



to develop the building into a museum has been on the cards for some time now. The renovation of the building was completed in 2022 and now steps have been initiated to turn it into a museum.

The Indian National Trust For Art

and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has been given the charge to develop the Town Hall into a museum, historian Deepak Panda, senior member of the association's Sambalpur Chapter informed. He added that plans are underway to handover the museum

to the state government by December.

The museum will house designs of ancient Sambalpur, traditional Bandha art, Manga, a traditional weaving equipment used to make clothes, traditional jewellery of this region, musical instruments and other attractions of western Odisha. The museum will also display traditional sports goods which are on the verge of extinction, ancient idols and historical articles.

Ancient artefacts recovered from various places in this district as well as Dokra art of Munder area in Padiabahal, bow and arrows of Jujumura, clay works of Barpali area will also be displayed in the museum.

When contacted, Vedbhushan, Commissioner of Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) said that the visitors to the museum will come to know about the life, tradition and culture of Sambalpur region. This place will certainly attract a large number of visitors, he added.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-423
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, SUNDARGARH
E.Mail - rw_rourkela@yahoo.co.in
TENDER CALL NOTICE
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-SERKL-12 of 2024-25
1. Name of the work : Road Works & Bridge Works. 2. Total No. of works : 09 (Nine) Nos.
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 5.59 Lakhs to 39.74 Lakhs 4. Class of contractor : "D" & "C" & "B" Class
5. Period of completion : 01 (One) Calendar month 6. Type of Tender : Single Cover 7. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding
1	2	3
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Sundargarh	Online-SERKL-12 of 2024-25	23.10.2024 from 10.00 A.M. to 05.11.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Sd./- Additional Chief Engineer
RW Division-II, Sundargarh
OIPR-25193/11/0016/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.O-413
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, NABARANGPUR
E.mail - gerwngp@rediffmail.com
Letter No. : 3800 **g-Procurement Notice** **Date : 15.10.2024**

Name of the work : Road Works Total No. of works : 27 (Twenty Seven) No's
Approx. Estimated Cost : Rs. 5.08 lakhs to Rs. 39.27 lakhs Class of Contractor : "B", "C" & "D" Class Contractor
Period of completion : 01 (One), 1 & 1/2 (One and half) and 2 (Two) Calendar Months

Procurement officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of works	Availability of tender online for bidding	Date & Time of Opening of Tender
1	2	3	4	5
Rural Works Division-I, Nabarangpur	EERWNGP - Online 02/2024-25	27 (Twenty Seven) No's	24.10.2024 at 10.00 A.M. to 04.11.2024 upto 03.00 P.M.	05.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.

For details can be seen from the Government website www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Rural Works Division-I, Nabarangpur
OIPR-25092/11/0002/2425

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

INVESTMENTS IN NATURE



Not only do we currently invest far too much in activities that harm nature and make our problems worse; we invest only one-third of what is needed to meet the 2030 targets for climate, biodiversity, and land degradation

all our activities. Moreover, because one of the biggest challenges in scaling up nature-positive investments lies in structuring projects, we are providing advisory services to help nature-restoration and biodiversity initiatives get off the ground. In Morocco, the European Investment Bank advised and lent €100 million (\$109 million) to preserve and restore more than 600,000 hectares of forest. In Ivory Coast, we are gearing up to support sustainable cocoa farming in which forests are preserved, rather than cut down. And to support marine conservation, we are working with partner institutions on the very successful Clean Oceans Initiative, which is ahead of schedule in providing €4 billion for projects to limit plastic waste.

Innovative financial instruments that transfer risk can help mobilise more public and private finance for such investments. The European Investment Bank-financed Land Degradation Neutrality Fund, for example, provides finance and technical assistance for sustainable agriculture and forestry around the world, and the EcoEnterprises Fund supports pro-biodiversity businesses in Latin America. The European Investment Bank is also exploring a new investment in a fund that supports afforestation, forest management, and conservation projects in the region. At COP16, we hope to build on such initiatives to scale up financing for nature.

We urgently need to reduce the flow of finance to activities that harm nature. Doing so is central to overcoming the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

The writer is Vice President of the European Investment Bank.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

It is easy to think of humans as existing separately from nature. But the greatest threats to humanity come from crises affecting nature, not least climate change, biodiversity loss, and rampant pollution. We cannot address any of these until we stop taking nature for granted and start investing more in it.

"Nature-positive" investments in marine conservation, sustainable land management, water security, and afforestation could deliver around 30 per cent of the emissions abatement needed to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius – the target enshrined in the Paris climate agreement. Moreover, such investments not only improve our resilience to climate change; they also would help to prevent future pandemics.

Ahead of the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia, this month, we must remember that the crises affecting nature also pose structural risks to the global economy, our collective well-being and prosperity, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Fully 55 per cent of global GDP is highly or moderately dependent on nature.

In Cali, delegates from nearly 200 countries will discuss how to accelerate action to protect 30 per cent of the planet's land and maritime areas, reduce pollution, and restore degraded ecosystems by 2030. One of the key obstacles to meeting these ambitious targets is financing. Not only do we currently invest far too much in activities that harm nature and make our problems worse; we invest only one-third of what is needed to meet the 2030 targets for climate, biodiversity, and land degradation.

To scale up nature-positive investment, we need to do four things. First, we must build

more effective public-private partnerships between countries and public development banks, as well as with nature organisations, companies, and private-sector financial institutions. This would help de-risk investments, prepare projects, and deliver impact at scale for climate, nature, and inclusive economic development. Second, we need to revive and mainstream regenerative practices and stewardship of biodiversity, particularly in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors.

Third, we need common principles, standards, and disclosure mechanisms to track nature-positive finance and its impact, and to disclose more information on the nature-related footprints, dependencies, and risk exposure of companies and financial institutions. Finally, to take nature into consideration in all policies and investment decisions, we must decrease the flow of financing to activities that are harmful to nature.

Multilateral development banks will play a key role in scaling up green investments. Institutions like the European Investment Bank are already stepping up support for the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of nature with the launch of common principles for tracking nature-positive finance. Such information is essential for measuring and incorporating nature into multilateral lenders' operations, as well as informing other investors about what constitutes a nature-positive investment. Partnerships and joint efforts to put these principles into practice are ongoing.

At the European level, the European Investment Bank is working closely with the European Commission to support the implementation of the European Union's 2030 Biodiversity Strategy worldwide. We strive to ensure that all the projects we finance cause "no loss" of biodiversity, and we are factoring biodiversity and ecosystem considerations into



Ambroise Fayolle

MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SCALING UP GREEN INVESTMENTS

Hasina Conundrum

A Bangladeshi court ordering an arrest warrant against Sheikh Hasina on 17 October has only aggravated New Delhi's predicament vis-à-vis the former Bangladeshi Prime Minister's stay in India. For Hasina, it is ironic that now she will be tried in the same International Criminal Tribunal (ICT), which she had established in 2010 to probe the atrocities committed during the war for its independence in 1971. However, the United Nations and various rights organisations have condemned the ICT's procedural flaws, leading to a widespread perception that it served as a tool for Hasina to target political adversaries. The court is currently investigating several cases that allege that Hasina orchestrated the "mass murder" of protesters. Hasina is wanted by the ICT for her alleged involvement in the violence in the country in the summer of 2024 when more than 1,000 people were killed after student-led protests against government job quotas turned into a mass unrest, marking the bloodiest period in the country's history. The ICT's chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam on 17 October said: "The court has... ordered the arrest of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and to produce her in court on November 18... Sheikh Hasina was at the helm of those who committed massacres, killings and crimes against humanity in July to August." Arrest warrants have been also issued for an additional 45 persons, including some former ministers who have fled the country.

The former PM has not made a public appearance since her escape from Bangladesh and her last known location was at the Hindon airbase close to New Delhi on 5 August. Initially, she was expected to remain in India for a brief period, but reports indicate that her efforts to seek asylum elsewhere have not been successful thus far. Her continued presence in India poses a challenge for New Delhi as it navigates relations with the new interim government in Dhaka led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. Many in Bangladesh are frustrated by India's decision to provide her refuge.

The two nations have a bilateral extradition treaty that would allow for Hasina's return to Bangladesh to face criminal charges. However, the treaty includes a clause that states that extradition may be denied if the offense is deemed to be of a "political character."

Hours after the ICT order, the Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that Hasina is still in India, though it made no reference to the arrest warrant. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "On the stay of the former prime minister, I had earlier mentioned that she had come here at short notice for safety reasons and she continues to be [here]."

Meanwhile, a top law adviser in Bangladesh's interim government, Asif Nazrul, 19 October stated that the country would firmly object if India attempted to deny the extradition of Hasina by referencing any clause in the treaty.

New Delhi, which has been losing one neighbour after another to China, has its task cut out to ensure smooth ties with its closest eastern neighbour. The clear lack of foresight on the part of India's foreign policy strategists is responsible for the impasse with Bangladesh. Having ruled Bangladesh for more than two decades, Hasina was gradually losing her popularity due to her autocratic tendencies and New Delhi's constant cozying up to her led to strong anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh. Earlier, it was only the people, now even the government in Bangladesh appears to be hostile towards India. New Delhi can ill afford to lose more neighbours.

WISDOM CORNER

"We're all going to die, all of us; what a circus! That alone should make us love each other, but it doesn't. We are terrorized and flattened by trivialities. We are eaten up by nothing." CHARLES BUKOWSKI

"It's very important that we re-learn the art of resting and relaxing. Not only does it help prevent the onset of many illnesses that develop through chronic tension and worrying; it allows us to clear our minds, focus, and find creative solutions to problems." THICH NHAT HANH

"Energy can't be created or destroyed, and energy flows. It must be in a direction, with some kind of internal, emotive, spiritual direction. It must have some effect somewhere." KEANU REEVES

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1520:** Magellan's discovery of gateway to circumnavigating the globe. On this day in 1520, explorer Ferdinand Magellan and three Spanish ships entered the strait later named for him, sailing between the mainland tip of South America and the island of Tierra del Fuego toward the Pacific Ocean.

■ **1833:** Swedish chemist, engineer, and industrialist Alfred Nobel, who invented dynamite and other more powerful explosives and who also founded the Nobel Prizes, was born in Stockholm.

■ **1940:** American novelist Ernest Hemingway published his classic novel For Whom the Bell Tolls; it was later adapted into an acclaimed film.

■ **1943:** Provisional government of Free India declared by Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose, an exiled Indian nationalist and a key figure in the Indian Independence Movement declared the creation of Azad Hind or Free India during a mass rally in Singapore. Netaji (leader), as he was fondly called by his followers, was unanimously declared as the Head of State, Prime Minister, and Minister for War of the new government. The government-in-exile did not have any territory to govern until Japan gave them the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, occupied by the Japanese in 1942, to run. A few days later after declaring the existence of Azad Hind, the provisional government joined the Second World War by declaring war on the Allies.

■ **1959:** The Guggenheim opens its doors. The Guggenheim Museum displays works from some of the world's most celebrated and sought-after contemporary artists. Situated in the Manhattan area of New York, the museum was first opened in 1939 as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. It was then named the Guggenheim Museum in 1952, after the death of the founder of the foundation that runs it, Solomon R. Guggenheim. The current museum building was designed by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and was opened to public on this day.

■ **1964:** The American musical film My Fair Lady, starring Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn, had its world premiere, and it later won eight Academy Awards, including that for best picture.

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Higher growth no panacea for poverty

India has 129 million citizens living in extreme poverty in 2024, says the World Bank. These people live on less than Rs 180 a day (\$2.5) or Rs 5400 a month. The estimates are based on Indian official statistics. At today's feeble pace, it could take more than a century to eliminate poverty as it is defined for nearly half the world for lower middle-class people who live on less than \$6.85 per day, according to the Bank's new Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report. A global policy change is hinted at.

On 17 July, 2023, Niti Aayog reported a significant reduction in the proportion of poor people in the country, declining from 24.8 per cent to 14.9 per cent during 2015-16 to 2019-21. But the COVID period saw difficulties rising and many more slipping below. Even post-COVID the lower-middle class in India faces a number of challenges, including, rising living costs, job instability, income inequality and high multiple taxations.

This has made it difficult for lower-middle class and poorer families living on \$ 6.85 to make ends meet. The costs of essential food products have soared by 50 per cent between 2015 and 2022. This staggering inflation has an especially significant impact on India's lower-middle class and lower class, especially in rural areas. While the prices of many common items have nearly doubled, the "real wage rate" has increased by just 22 per cent since 2015.

The 2023 Global Hunger Index gives India a rank of 111 out of 125 countries. This indicates a hunger severity level of 'serious' for the country. This also marks a fall from the previous year's rank of 107 (2022). In April 2022, the World Bank highlighted that "for each one percentage point increase in food prices, 10 million people are thrown into extreme poverty. If food prices stay this high for a year, global poverty could go up by more than 100 million." Average decadal inflation in India is at 55 per cent.

Former Reserve Bank Governor, Duvvuri Subbarao, has said that India may still be considered a poor country even after becoming the world's third largest economy. He says in comparison to other countries, India is the poorest among BRICS and G20 nations. India's per capita income is \$2,600, which ranks it 139th in the world. Subbarao says that becoming wealthy doesn't necessarily mean a country is de-

veloped. Even after becoming the third largest economy, the number of poor may remain high. The World Bank's India Development Update says that India's growth was boosted by public infrastructure investment and an increase in household investments in real estate. This does not alleviate poverty.

This apart, there are understandable concerns about the effects on India's poor of higher food prices stemming from recent or proposed policy reforms. Over 24 rounds of the National Sample Survey, spanning 1959-94, one finds a strong positive correlation between the relative price of food and India's poverty rate.

In 2021-22, 44 per cent of India's population lived below the lower middle-income poverty line. The Gini index of consumption-based inequality in India has remained high and steady. India's growth in 2023-24 was driven by strong construction, manufacturing, and services. The World Bank has concerns over the top one per cent of India, 92 lakh individuals, earning average Rs 53 lakh a year, with average wealth of Rs 5.4 crore. The high disparity indicates concentration of wealth.

Professor of Economics, Kalim Siddiqui, with University of Huddersfield, finds fault with

stress on growth rates that ignore the benefit to the poor. Despite high growth, India is home to the largest number of the world's poor. The neo-liberal free-market IMF policies saw surge of "growth" but not on ameliorating people's conditions.

Growth has led to a lopsided rise of the corporate and marginalisation of the working class. Siddique finds that despite the high GDP growth rates for the last two decades in India, overall employment has not been growing. The exponentially growing service sector has much smaller share in employment relative to their contribution to GDP. The study finds that neo-liberal pro-corporate policy has not removed poverty and inequality. "There is a lack of discussion about the presence of a large proportion of people living in sub-human conditions and lack of overall and holistic development of human being."

The World Bank now almost agrees that higher growth is no panacea for poverty. The world has to reverse the process from mere growth to improve the working conditions, check on prices and overall inclusive progress.

Professor of Economics, Kalim Siddiqui, with University of Huddersfield, finds fault with



Shivaji Sarkar

GROWTH HAS LED TO A LOPSIDED RISE OF THE CORPORATE AND MARGINALISATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

Critical achievement

Sir, The death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar marks a significant milestone in addressing his legacy of violence and terrorism. His death, alongside the ongoing military operations, may potentially lead to a ceasefire in Gaza and weaken Hamas' control over the territory. Sinwar, believed to be the mastermind behind the 7 October, 2023, attacks that resulted in the deaths of over 1,200 civilians and the capture of 250 hostages, was located and killed by Israeli forces after evading capture for over a year. His elimination represents a critical achievement for Israel in its broader campaign to dismantle Hamas' leadership. The targeted killing of key figures in Hamas, as well as Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah, underscores Israel's commitment to dismantling the leadership of terrorist organisations threatening its security. While President Joe Biden acknowledged Sinwar's death as a positive development, tensions remain over the US approach to the broader conflict, as Biden has urged caution in Israel's military operations. Nevertheless, Netanyahu's decision to press forward with military action, despite US concerns, has brought about this critical victory. Any potential ceasefire will need to account for Israel's security concerns, particularly regarding Hamas' ability to rebuild its military infrastructure.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Growing health concern

Sir, Osteoporosis, often referred to as the "bone-thinning disease," causes over one and a half million fractures in India each year. It weakens bones to the point where even a minor fall or bump can lead to a fracture. As a silent disease, osteoporosis often shows no symptoms until it reaches an advanced stage, making it difficult to detect early. This condition poses a significant health challenge, affecting millions of men and women across India. The prevalence of frequent fractures highlights its widespread impact, and addressing this issue is vital for public health. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), about 30% of postmenopausal women worldwide suffer from osteoporosis. In India, around 60 million people are affected, with women making up 80% of this population. With rising life expectancy and an aging demographic, osteoporosis has become a global epidemic, contributing to 8.9 million fractures annually—or one fracture every three seconds.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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BAHRAICH COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Demolition notices strike fear among shopkeepers

THE CRACKDOWN COMES DAYS AFTER A 22-YEAR-OLD HINDU MAN WAS SHOT DEAD IN THE MAHARAJGANJ AREA OF THE DISTRICT DURING A COMMUNAL FLARE-UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/Bahraich (UP), Oct 20: Shopkeepers in Bahraich scrambled to salvage their goods Saturday, apprehending a demolition drive by the authorities.

According to a local lawmaker, the Public Works Department has served demolition notices to 23 establishments – 20 of them belonging to Muslims.

The crackdown comes days after a 22-year-old Hindu man was shot dead in the Maharajganj area of the district during a communal flare-up.

BJP MLA from Mahsi, Sureshwar Singh, told PTI, "People are vacating their shops. Those who don't, will be dealt with by the administration." Of the shops served notices, "three belong to Hindus, while 20 belong to Muslims," he said. "In all, there are around 50 shops. Barring one or two, most of them on the Maharajganj bypass may face action," he said, adding, no one will be spared whatever maybe their religion.

Sonu Maurya, who runs an eatery on rent, said he was asked by his landlord to vacate the shop and take out his merchan-



An official on the condition of anonymity said it was a routine exercise conducted annually to demolish houses built on the intersections, S curves or junction points of the road

dise before it gets demolished.

"I have a shop in Bhagwanpur, eight kilometres away from Maharajganj. The landlord told me that a notice of encroachment had been put on his construction and if a demolition took place, I would suffer losses," Maurya, who was on his way to Bhagwanpur, told PTI.

Samiullah, Sabina, and Rani Jaiswal, all locals, claimed they were being selectively targeted. The PWD Friday carried out inspections in the Maharajganj area and took measurements of 20-25 houses, including that of Abdul Hameed, one of the men accused of having a role in the killing of Ram Gopal Mishra Sunday.

An official on the condition of anonymity said it was a routine exercise conducted annually "to demolish houses built on the in-

tersections, S curves or junction points of the road."

The person said the illegal houses identified will be served notices under the Road Control Act 1964.

According to the notice put up at Abdul Hameed's house, the PWD said the construction was "illegal" since it was built within 60 feet of the central point of the road in rural areas, which is not allowed.

The notice asked Hameed to vacate the construction within three days or it would be demolished "and the expenses incurred for this action will be recovered from you through revenue means."

District Magistrate Monika Rani Friday told reporters that the "encroachments" were being removed to widen the roads in Maharajganj.

With Social Imp



Prime Minister Narendra Modi felicitates a child during the inauguration ceremony of the RJ Sankara Eye Hospital, in Varanasi, Sunday

Modi inaugurates multiple development projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), Oct 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party of practising nepotism to the extent that they overlooked Varanasi's development, and called on the youth from "non-political" background to join politics.

He said that the "dynasts" have harmed the country's youth the most.

The PM, who kickstarted developmental projects worth over ₹6,700 crore in his parliamentary constituency from Sports Complex, Sigra during his one-day visit, said that till 10 years ago scams worth billions used to be in the headlines, "but it is no longer the case."

"The country is facing a huge threat from pariwarwad. They never believe in giving opportunities to the youth. That is why I appealed from the Red Fort about bringing one lakh such youth of the country into politics whose family has nothing to do with politics. This is a campaign to change the politics of India. This is a campaign to eradicate corruption and ideology of pariwarwad," he said.

The PM urged the youths of Uttar Pradesh, especially Varanasi, to become part of the "new politics" with an open mind. "Kashi has once again become a witness to giving new momentum

to the nation," he said. Modi alleged that Varanasi was shortchanged for a long time by earlier governments which believed in furthering their interests.

"What was the mentality due to which Kashi was deprived of development? Remember the situation 10 years ago, Varanasi had to yearn for development," he said. "Today, in just 125 days, the start of work worth over ₹15 lakh crore is being discussed in every household," he added.

Modi said his government has two major goals – to in-

crease the convenience of the people and to give people jobs. Earlier, Modi inaugurated RJ Sankara eye hospital being run by the Kanchi Math.

The hospital will benefit people of 20 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as those living in the border areas of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, according to people associated with the Kanchi Math.

Among the projects, 16 development projects worth over ₹3,200 crore are in Varanasi. The PM also laid the foundation stone for the extension of the runway, construction of a new terminal building and allied work to be done at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi at a cost of approximately ₹2,870 crore.

Among the projects, 16 development projects worth over ₹3,200 crore are in Varanasi

3-day FolkTea Festival from November 29

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 20: The fourth edition of the 'FolkTea' festival, blending Assam's rich tea heritage with vibrant folk traditions, will begin November 29 at Pabhoi in Biswanath Chariali district, festival organisers said Sunday.

The three-day event will comprise a tea conclave, the state's traditional drama Bhaona performance by villagers, Jhumur dance by locals, a showcase of traditional folk performances and camping in the serene tea gardens, festival organiser Mrinal Talukdar told PTI.

"The FolkTea Festival is a platform for promoting Assam's tea industry, fostering collaboration, and embracing innovation by showcasing the deep-rooted connection between tea, culture, and nature, offering attendees an experience that blends tradition with adventure," he said.

The tea conclave serves as a B2B summit where Small Tea Growers (STGs), Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs), and other industry stakeholders engage in meaningful discussions with knowledge partners like Tea Board of India, TRA Tocklai, AAU Biswanath, among others, he said.

The conclave's four sessions will be conducted in the local language to foster accessible and impactful discussions, he said.

The sessions will deal with climate change and pest management, marketing and quality management, financial solutions for Small Tea Growers (STGs) and crop support and enhancer.

The second day of the festival will comprise a car rally to neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh, a tea ceremony, highlighting Assam's traditional tea-making rituals, enhanced with an oriental charm, 'Akash Banti', a mesmerizing sky lantern event that lights up the evening sky and an evening of musical performances by local artists and bands.

A heritage tea walk in the historical tea estate, a visit to a tea factory for a behind-the-scenes experience of tea production process, Eastern Himalaya cuisine, traditional cock fight and an evening of folk music and storytelling will bring an end to the festival December one.

Assam launches 3rd edition of land rights scheme

MISSION BASUNDHARA 3.0

THIS LATEST EDITION WILL INCLUDE DIGITISATION OF VARIOUS LAND-RELATED SERVICES, PUBLICATION OF MAPS AND OFFERING LAND RIGHTS TO THE PEOPLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Oct 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Sunday rolled out the third and last phase of Mission Basundhara scheme, a flagship programme to give land rights to indigenous people of the state.

At an official function here, Sarma said that through conferring land pattas to the indigenous communities, the BJP-led government is strengthening its resolve to protect 'Jati-Mati-Bheti' (community, land, homeland).

"Immediately after we assumed office, we set out on a mission to provide land rights to indigenous communities in Assam – an exercise undertaken after 75 years of Independence. Mission Basundhara was born with this vision October 2, 2021," he said.

Sarma said that when the government set out to implement the project, it was astounded by the unprecedented number of ap-



plications received, validating the effort as one of the biggest land-related initiatives in Assam.

"We disposed 8 lakh applications in 9 months under Mission Basundhara 1.0," he said, adding that the second edition of the flagship programme was launched in November 2022 and gave land rights to over 2 lakh indigenous people within a year.

"Taking forward the lessons learnt from the two editions of the scheme, today we officially launched Mission Basundhara 3.0. It will be another firm step taken by our government to safe-

guard the land and identity of the people of Assam," the CM said.

This latest edition will include digitisation of various land-related services, publication of maps and offering land rights to the people.

He said that realising its immense potential, especially in conferring land rights to the indigenous people of the state, the government has implemented several new rules this year to simplify the process.

"There will not be any Mission Basundhara 4.0. This will be the final Mission Basundhara. So, we should bring all applications from the people properly," Sarma told the officials related to the services under the scheme.

Talking about the third edition of the scheme, he said SC, ST, Adivasi, Tea Tribes and Gorkhas will not be required to prove three-generation ancestry to get land rights as they are the "sons of soil".

"Premium rate has been re-

duced to three per cent of zonal valuation for city dwellers. Also, authentic pre-1971 refugee certificate holders are eligible to apply in the scheme," Sarma said.

Through this comprehensive Mission, the government aims to give land ownership to priority groups at the earliest and bring transparency in various land-related services, he added.

The chief minister also said that the state government is dedicated to easing administrative processes for citizens.

"We have also introduced a new facility, called Digidoc. The Revenue Department's launch of Digidoc, a digital directory for non-registrable and optional registrable documents, will streamline services, reduce processing time and enhance public convenience," he added.

This initiative underscores the government's commitment to improving accessibility and efficiency, Sarma said.

Int'l Paratuberculosis Symposium to begin in Vrindavan Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), Oct 20: Experts from 18 countries will gather in Vrindavan Monday for a four-day symposium to discuss the identification and prevention of Johne's disease, which affects ruminants and could also pose a potential health risk to humans as believed by some experts.

The '16th International Paratuberculosis Symposium' (ICP-2024) is being organised by the Department of Biotechnology, GLA University, Mathura, in collaboration with the US-based Paratuberculosis Association.

At the symposium, being held for the first time in Asia, scientists from India and abroad will present updates on the latest research on zoonotic diseases (those transmitted from animals to humans), the organisers said.

Professor Shoorveer Singh, the symposium's organising chairman and head of GLA University's biotechnology department said that the depart-

ment of Biotechnology, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Government of India, in collaboration with a private sector animal health care product manufacturing company developed a vaccine for the prevention of Para TB in 2015.

Currently, research is ongoing to prevent transmission of this bacterium from animals to humans, he said. Various topics like biotechnology, microbiology, molecular biology, immunology, genomics, proteomics, public health, pathology, and disease control will be covered at the symposium, he added.

Rain damaged infra disappoints tourists at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

THE FOREST WAS REOPENED OCTOBER 14 AFTER THE MONSOON BREAK SINCE MAY, BUT TOURISTS HAD TO BE TURNED AWAY AS THE AUTHORITIES COULD START NEITHER JEEP NOR ELEPHANT SAFARIS DUE TO POOR ROAD CONDITION INSIDE THE SANCTUARY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Morigaon (Assam), Oct 20: Tourists visiting Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, the densest habitat of one-horned rhinos in the world, are facing hardship due to poor road conditions inside the forest on account of heavy rainfall a week ago.

The forest was reopened October 14 after the monsoon break since May, but tourists had to be turned away as the authorities could start neither jeep nor elephant safaris due to poor road condition inside the sanctuary, a senior official said Sunday.

During the last one week, already 1,585 tourists, including 21 foreign nationals from China and Thailand, visited Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and it is a healthy trend, the forest's Ranger Nayan J Das told PTI.

"However, many of them could not go inside because we could

not start the jeep or elephant safari. We had repaired the roads after the monsoon, but those got badly damaged in heavy rains that lashed the park at the time of reopening," he added.

Das said that the paths inside the sanctuary were waterlogged, and jeep and elephant safaris remained suspended for the first three days.

Usually, October is a non-rainy month in Assam but this year the state received heavy rainfall for several days till around Durga Puja earlier this month.

"When the rain stopped, we started repair work again. The damaged infrastructure was repaired and work on link roads inside the sanctuary is underway. We could finally start the jeep safari from October 17," Das said.

However, the elephant safari will take some more time to start and the forest authorities have set a target of November 7 for this, he added.



Apart from rhinos, other mammals found are leopard, leopard cat, fishing cat, jungle cat, feral buffalo, wild boar, Chinese pangolins, different types of deer, several hundred species of migratory and resident birds, amphibians and reptiles

Sudip Bose, a tourist from Kolkata, said he reached Pobitora October 16 but could not take the safari as it was closed then.

"I stayed one more night and took the jeep safari October 17. It was worth waiting for. However, the roads inside were very bad and the safari guide did not take us to a few areas as the link

paths were still in very bad shape," he said.

Another tourist, Lily Dubey from Delhi, said the authorities should have reopened the forest after preparing it fully for the tourists, otherwise it brings a bad reputation for the sanctuary when visitors coming from outside the state are turned away.

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary harbours the world's highest density of one-horned rhinoceros

Located in Morigaon district, about 35 km from Guwahati, the habitat comprises Assam alluvial grassland with hilly forests for an area of 38.81 sq km

Pobitora supports two critically endangered, four endangered, eight vulnerable and three near-threatened bird species

"Tourists spend time and money on vacations. If it does not fructify due to lack of preparedness by the management, it is not good. Also, there is no system of getting proper information. There should be a website or social media account with regular updates," she added.

During the 2023-24 tourist season, a total of 51,293 tourists, including 2,029 foreigners, came to Pobitora and enjoyed jeep and elephant safaris.

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary harbours the world's highest density of one-horned rhinoceros. Located in Morigaon district, about 35 km from Guwahati, the habitat comprises Assam alluvial grassland with hilly forests for an area of 38.81 sq km.

Apart from rhinos, other mammals found are leopard, leopard cat, fishing cat, jungle cat, feral buffalo, wild boar, Chinese pangolins, different types of deer, several hundred species of migratory and resident birds, amphibians and reptiles.

Pobitora supports two critically endangered, four endangered, eight vulnerable and three near-threatened bird species.



Believe me, if you have faith, God will always find a way

'NO PARTY POST TO ACCUSED IN LANKESH MURDER CASE'

The Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has stayed the appointment of Shrikant Pangarkar, an accused in the 2017 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh, to any post in the party in Jalna district.



of the day quote

In four out of five constituencies, we had our MLAs and they became parliamentarians. They have taken responsibility for the victory of the candidates in the upcoming bypolls.

The Brahmin community has always moved forward taking along all sections of society. It has been working dedicatedly for the betterment of the nation.

The sacred land of Baba Vishwanath has witnessed the launch of numerous development and service projects, with health sector investments amounting to ₹2,500 crores

PANNUN MURDER PLOT

Yadav's family rejects charges

AGENCIES

Pranpura, Oct 20: An Indian ex-official charged by the US with directing a murder-for-hire plot has dismissed the allegations, his family said, expressing shock that Vikash Yadav was wanted by the FBI.

Yadav, 39, described the claims as false media reports when he spoke to his cousin, Avinash Yadav, the relative said Saturday in their ancestral village about 100 km (60 miles) from the capital New Delhi.

The US Department of Justice charged Yadav with leading an unsuccessful plot to murder Sikh separatist leader Gurbat Singh Pannun last year. Yadav was an official of India's Research and Analysis Wing spy service, according to the indictment unsealed Thursday.

India, which has said it was investigating the allegations, said Yadav was no longer a government employee, without saying whether he had been an intelligence officer. "The family has no information" about him working for the spy agency, Yadav's cousin said in the village of Pranpura in Haryana state.

"He never mentioned anything about it," despite the two speaking to each other regularly. "For us he is still working for the CRPF, the federal Central Reserve Police Force, which he joined in 2009, said Avinash Yadav, 28. "He told us he is deputy commandant" and was trained



Nijjar killing, attempt on Pannun's life part of 'single' plot: MacKay

New Delhi: The US indictment linking a former Indian agent to a foiled bid to assassinate Khalistani separatist Gurbat Singh Pannun paints a "compelling and detailed portrait" of "a single plot" emanating from Delhi to kill multiple targets across North America, especially in Canada and the US, Canada's most recent envoy to India Cameron MacKay has alleged.

as a paratrooper. The cousin said he did not know where Yadav was but that he lives with his wife and a daughter who was born last year.

Indian officials have not commented on Yadav's whereabouts. The Washington Post, citing American officials, reported

Thursday that Yadav was still in India and that the US was expected to seek his extradition. His mother, Sudesh Yadav, 65, said she was still in shock. "What can I say? I do not know whether the US government is telling the truth or not." "He has been working for the coun-

- Yadav's family says he was a paratrooper, a trained paratrooper
Family says it does not know if suspect was a spy, where he is
Relatives shocked that Yadav is wanted by the FBI

RG KAR HORROR

Junior doctors' hunger strike enters 16th day

The agitating doctors, joined by colleagues across the state, have threatened to escalate their protest by organising a strike of all medical professionals in West Bengal Tuesday if their demands were not met



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 20: Amid West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's request to agitating junior doctors to withdraw their indefinite hunger strike and come for talks, the 'fast-unto-death' of the medics demanding justice for the RG Kar Hospital rape-murder victim entered the 16th day Sunday.

Taking forward the proposal for talks, Chief Secretary Manoj Pant Saturday evening invited the medics for talks with Banerjee for "45 minutes" from 5 pm Monday at state secretariat Nabanna, 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.

The junior doctors have been on fast-unto-death for the last 16 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 Monday to resolve the deadlock. Speaking to the doctors over the phone, the chief minister 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

Mamata Banerjee Saturday urged the agitating doctors to end the hunger strike, stating that most of their demands have been addressed while rejecting their insistence on removing the state health secretary

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 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. She questioned, "Is it logical for you to decide which officer should be removed?" "Some of your demands need policy decisions. We will cooperate to the fullest extent possible, but it is not acceptable that you will dictate to the government what should be done," she asserted.

SHORT TAKES

Terrorist killed by security forces

Srinagar: One terrorist was killed Sunday in the joint operation launched by the security forces along the line of control (LoC) in J&K's Uri sector. Army's Srinagar-headquartered Chinara Corps said that the joint team neutralised one heavily armed militant and recovered 01 AK Rifle, 02 AK Magazines, 57 AK rounds, 02 Pistols, 03 Pistol Magazines and other war-like stores from the site.

1 killed, 2 hurt in cross-firing

New Delhi: A 35-year-old man was killed while two others sustained bullet injuries in an incident of cross-firing in northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri area, officials said Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Deepak alias Patrakar, they said. "Information was received from the BJRM Hospital regarding a man brought with multiple bullet injuries, who was declared dead," a senior police officer said.

Congress' CEC meeting today

New Delhi: The Congress' Central Election Committee will hold its meeting Monday to finalise candidates for the upcoming Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly polls. The CEC meeting for Maharashtra was to take place this evening but was postponed with party leaders citing various reasons from Karwa Chauth to holding of meetings for both states on the same day, as the reason for the deferment.

Dalit teen forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'

Kanpur (UP): A 16-year-old Dalit boy was allegedly assaulted by a group of students who forced him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' here, police said Sunday. A purported video of the incident surfaced online, prompting police to register an FIR under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ghatampur) Ranjeet Kumar said that a boy, belonging to a Dalit community was allegedly assaulted by a group of students after seeing his Instagram status that carried images of BR Ambedkar.

MAHA POLLS

BJP releases first list of candidates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 20: The BJP has retained 71 sitting MLAs in the first list of 99 candidates for the forthcoming Maharashtra assembly polls and also fielded kin of some regional satraps including Congress-turned-BJP politician Ashok Chavan's daughter.

Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, state BJP president Chandrashekar Bawankule, Assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar, ministers Girish Mahajan, Sudhir Mungantiwar, and Chandrakant Patil, are among the prominent faces feature in the first list released Sunday. The list includes 13 women candidates.

Fadnavis is renominated from home turf Nagpur South West, Narwekar from Colaba in south Mumbai, and ministers Sudhir Mungantiwar, Girish Mahajan, and Chandrakant Patil from Ballarpur, Jamner, and Kothrud constituencies, respectively.

Mungantiwar had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha election from Chnadrapur constituency which he lost to his nearest Congress rival.

Out of 16 MLAs of BJP in Mumbai, the party has renominated 14 in the first list.



Women click selfies on the occasion of 'Karwa Chauth' in Patna, Bihar

PTI PHOTO

Centre unable to maintain law and order in Delhi: AAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The AAP Sunday said the blast near a school in Delhi has exposed the "crumbling" law and order in the city and shows that the BJP-led central government is unable to fulfil its responsibility of keeping the Delhiites safe.

The BJP spends most of its time obstructing the work of the elected government in Delhi instead, Chief Minister Atishi said in a post on X in Hindi. There was

no immediate response from the BJP to the AAP's allegations.

The blast took place near a CRPF school in the Prashant Vihar area Sunday morning. Though no one was injured in the incident, a wall of the school, nearby shops and a car were damaged, according to police.

"The bomb blast outside a school in Rohini exposes the crumbling law and order situation in Delhi," Atishi said.

"The law and order of Delhi

SCHOOL BLAST



is the responsibility of the BJP-led central government. The BJP spends most of its time stalling the work of the elected government in Delhi instead. "Due to this, the situation in Delhi today

is like that of Mumbai during the underworld era of the 1990s. Shots are fired openly, gangsters are extorting money and criminals are emboldened," she charged.

The BJP lacks both the intention and capability to work, the Chief Minister said. If by mistake the people of Delhi bring the BJP to power in the capital, then schools, hospitals and water and electricity services will also suffer like the law and order situation, she added.

Police make 10th arrest in Siddique murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 20: Mumbai Police's crime branch investigating the Baba Siddique murder case Sunday arrested a scrap dealer from Navi Mumbai for allegedly providing a weapon to shooters, taking the number of persons in custody so far to 10, an official said.

The accused has been identified as Bhagwat Singh Om Singh (32), originally from Udaipur in Rajasthan who is currently staying in Navi Mumbai. Singh was produced before a court which remanded him to police custody till October 26, the official said.



Police have so far arrested 10 persons, including Bhagwat Singh, from various locations, including five from the Mumbai Metropolitan region for providing logistical support and firearms, in connection with Siddique's killing October 12.

The former Maharashtra minister was fatally shot, prima facie by three persons, near the office of his MLA son in Bandra. The suspected shooters in the custody of police are Gurmail Baljit Singh (23) and Dharmaraj Rajesh Kashyap (19).

The main shooter, Shivkumar Gautam, and two other persons involved in the murder conspiracy are on the run.

Pollution crisis: AAP, BJP spar as Yamuna froths

THE AIR QUALITY IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL HAS STARTED DETERIORATING WITH THE ONSET OF WINTER WHILE THICK LAYERS OF TOXIC CHEMICAL FROTH ARE COVERING THE YAMUNA RIVER SURFACE AT VARIOUS PLACES, ESPECIALLY KALINDIKUNJ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The "dirty politics" of the BJP is responsible for growing air and water pollution in Delhi, Chief Minister Atishi said Sunday blaming BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Haryana for the situation.

The BJP hit back, saying the "immaturity and incompetence" of the AAP government have caused "severe" air and water pollution in Delhi.

With the BJP trying to corner AAP on the failure to check pollution, Atishi gave a clean chit to AAP-ruled Punjab and blamed "parali" (paddy stubble) burning, diesel buses and brick kilns in BJP-ruled Haryana for the poor air quality in Delhi.

She also alleged that thousands of diesel buses from UP that reach the Kaushambi bus depot on the Delhi- Ghaziabad



border, brick kilns in NCR and thermal plants in the region also contributed to air pollution in Delhi. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdev alleged that the AAP leaders defending their government in Punjab on stub-

ble burning have turned into "enemies" of Delhi residents. Haryana releases 165 million gallons per day (MGD) of industrial untreated wastewater through Badshahpur, Mungeshpur and other drains

into Yamuna, while 65 MGD of such polluted water is discharged by UP through various drains into the river, she said.

In a press conference, Atishi claimed the central government data showed Punjab reduced farm fires from 71,300 in 2021 to 36,600 in 2023.

Meanwhile, farm fires this year increased from 341 to 417 in Haryana, while in UP the number went up from 244 to 417, between October 1 and 15, as compared to the last year, she said.

"This clearly shows the dirty politics of the BJP. If the Punjab government can reduce parali burning, why can't the BJP governments in Haryana and UP do it?" she asked.

Atishi said the use of silicone-based defoamers will start from Sunday night to subside the froth layer on Yamuna's surface. Sachdeva alleged that

the leaders of the ruling AAP who have been inactive for 10 years are now panicking ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls because of worsening air quality and heavy pollution in Yamuna.

Clean Yamuna water enters Delhi through Haryana's Palla village and exits via Uttar Pradesh at the southern edge of the city where it becomes polluted, Sachdeva said.

He said the AAP leaders were making "baseless" claims about industrial waste from Haryana and UP polluting the river as no drain from either state is discharged into the Delhi section of Yamuna. Earlier, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla criticised the Aam Aadmi Party for blaming Haryana and UP for the pollution and said AAP's "poisonous politics" was responsible for the "poison" in the air and in the river.



The BJP with Amit Shah seems to have accepted that the party would not win the Maharashtra assembly polls
SANJAY RAUT | UBT LEADER

AIZAWL TO COME UNDER RLY MAP

Mizoram's Aizawl will be the fourth capital city in the Northeast to come under railway link within the next nine months as the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is laying the new 51.38 km Broad Gauge track up to Sairang, top officials said Sunday



of the day quote

We have held discussions with leaders and workers from Channapatna taluk under the leadership of state President D K Shivakumar and we have gathered their opinion
D K SURESH | EX-CONG MP

Firstly, think about two great values of courage and sacrifice to become a good and great leader. You will succeed if you have courage and are ready for sacrifice
A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

The morale of the Army has increased under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. It is being provided with the latest weapons with new technology
MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

X POST OF THE DAY

Unbelievable. This is the life under Hindutva. Take insult and aggression with a grin. If you fail, your localities will be bulldozed no matter what the Supreme Court says. Hindutva is supreme. BHAI RICH, UP MUSLIMS HOUSES BULLDOZED. THIS IS HAPPENING EVERYDAY BASIS.
@khan_zafarul

SHORT TAKES

Will not allow dilution of AIIMS brand: Nadda

New Delhi: Union Health Minister J P Nadda Sunday said he would not allow any dilution in the standards of teaching and faculty at all the new AIIMS set up across the country as he vowed to protect the institute's brand. Addressing the BJMFCON 2024, a forum of doctors from Bihar and Jharkhand practising in Delhi-NCR, Nadda said AIIMS-Delhi was set up in the '60s but it was only in the '80s that it became a brand name.

T'gana: Minor fire breaks out in hosp

Hyderabad: A minor fire broke out in a government hospital in Nirmal district in Telangana Sunday, and no one was injured, police said. The blaze erupted in the store room on the first floor of the hospital. Police got the patients evacuated from the hospital, a senior police official said, adding it was a minor fire. The fire personnel extinguished the flames.

Three teens drown in river in Malda

Malda (WB): Three teenage boys drowned in the Mahananda river in West Bengal's Malda district Sunday, police said. The incident happened at Tekna ghat in the Pukhuria police station area in the afternoon when the three cousins went for a swim in the river, they said.

Man, son shot dead

Hoshiarpur: A man and his son were killed by two unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants outside a health centre in a village here Sunday evening, police said. Kashmiri Lal along with his son, Amarjit Singh, both residents of Talwandi Arayan, went to the Public Health Centre in Chakowal Brahmana village to meet his daughter-in-law, who gave birth to a child, police said.

7 killed, 5 injured in J&K terrorist attack

The unidentified terrorists carried out the attack when the labourers and other staff working on the tunnel project at Gund in Ganderbal had returned to their camp late in the evening

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 20: A doctor and six labourers were killed when terrorists struck a tunnel-construction site on the Srinagar-Leh national highway in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district Sunday, officials said.

The unidentified terrorists carried out the attack when the labourers and other staff working on the tunnel project at Gund in Ganderbal had returned to their camp late in the evening, the officials said.

They said the terrorists - believed to be at least two - opened indiscriminate fire on the group of labourers that included both locals and non-locals.

While two labourers died on the spot, four others and the doctor succumbed to their injuries subsequently, the officials said, adding that five people are undergoing treatment for injuries.

The deceased have been identified as Dr Shah Nawaz, Faheem Nazir, Kaleem, Mohammad Hanif, Shashi Abrol, Anil Shukla and Gurmeet Singh.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to track down the attackers, the officials said.

Top security officials, including Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, V K Birdi, have reached the spot to assess the situation. Condemning the terror attack,



Union Home Minister Amit Shah said those involved in the heinous act will not be spared.

"The dastardly terror attack on civilians in Gagangir, J&K, is a despicable act of cowardice. Those involved in this heinous act will not be spared and will face the harshest response from our security forces," Shah said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the number of casualties in the attack may go up. "The casualty figure from the Gagangir attack is not final as there are a number of injured labourers, both local and non-local. Praying that the injured make a full recovery as the more seriously injured are being referred to SKIMS, Srinagar," he said in a post on X.

Abdullah condemned the attack, which came barely four days after he was sworn in as the chief minister of the Union Territory.

"Very sad news of a dastardly and cowardly attack on non-

local labourers at Gagangir in Sonamarg region. These people were working on a key infrastructure project in the area. 2 have been killed and 2-3 more have been injured in this militant attack. I strongly condemn this attack on unarmed innocent people and send my condolences to their loved ones," he said in another post on the microblogging platform. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha strongly condemned the heinous terror attack on civilians. "I assure the people that those behind this despicable act will not go unpunished. We have given full freedom to J&K Police, Army and security forces," Sinha said in a post on X. Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti also condemned the attack.

In a post on X, People's Conference leader Sajad Gani Lone said: "Strongly condemn the dastardly act of terror wherein two persons have lost their lives in Sonamarg. This is an insane act of madness. My thoughts with these two families. May the perpetrators be brought to justice." Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra expressed grave concern over the attack and said such incidents will vitiate the atmosphere in the Union Territory.

ISI goes digital in terror recruitments

Srinagar: In a concerning shift in tactics, Pakistan's intelligence agency and terror groups are trying to ramp up recruitment efforts in Jammu and Kashmir through digital platforms, as direct interactions become increasingly difficult due to heightened security measures, officials said Sunday. Once identified, these individuals are drawn into private groups where they are exposed to manipulative content, including fabricated videos depicting atrocities allegedly committed by security forces, the officials said. This strategy is employed by handlers linked to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to incite hatred and foster a narrative conducive to recruitment.

8 kids among 12 of family die in mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Oct 20: Eight children among 12 people of a family died in a collision between a bus and tempo in Rajasthan's Dholpur district, police said Sunday. Bari SHO Shivlahari Meena said the accident took place Saturday night when a speedy sleeper coach bus going towards Jaipur from Gwalior hit the tempo near Sumipur.

The victims, residents of Kareem Gumvat colony, belonged to the same family and were returning from a wedding function in Barauli village.

Those killed have been identified as Irfan alias Bunty (38), his wife Julie (34), daughter Asma (14), son Salman (8), Parveen (32), Zareena (35), Saqir (6), Sanif (9), Ajaan (5), Aashiyaana (10), Sufi (7) and Danish (10). One person got injured in the accident.



Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Hari Kishan said injured people were taken to hospital where eleven were declared dead while one died in district hospital. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss of lives and announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each of the deceased. The injured would be given ₹50,000.

"The accident that took place in Dholpur, Rajasthan is heart-wrenching. My condolences to the bereaved families of those who lost their lives, including innocent children," Modi said.

Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief minister Bhajanlal Sharma, Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot and other leaders also expressed grief over the incident. Sharma directed the officials to ensure proper medical care to the injured.

'Special Branch manual confidential, not for RTI'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The Delhi High Court has held that details of the Special Branch manual, which contains sensitive and confidential information, cannot be brought into public domain under the Right To Information (RTI) Act.

"Such procedures, while operational in nature, may also reveal tactical insights into how law enforcement agencies function in sensitive areas, and their disclosure could compromise the integrity of such processes," the high court said.

The court also noted that given the confidential nature of these procedures, it was of the view that the reliance placed by the Special Branch of Delhi Police on Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act, while denying the information sought, was "justified".

"Disclosing such information will not only compromise the functioning of the Special Branch, but could also jeopardise ongoing and future investigations. Thus, the decision of the CIC to exempt the disclosure of this classified information under the RTI Act is well-founded and justified," it said.

In his RTI application of 2016, petitioner Harkishan Das Nijhawan sought several information from the Special Branch, including a certified copy of its manual which outlines procedural norms for passport verification. While all other queries were answered, the authorities denied providing a copy of the Special Branch man-

The high court said disclosing such information will not only compromise the functioning of the Special Branch of Delhi Police, but could also jeopardise ongoing and future investigations

Justice Sanjeev Narula dismissed a petition seeking to provide under RTI the certified copy of the complete Special Branch manual with all annexures/latest rulings/notifications on passport verification as February 3, 2016

ual by invoking the exemptions under the RTI Act.

The petitioner challenged the denial of information before the appellate authorities before moving the Central Information Commission (CIC) which also held that the information sought was indeed classified and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the RTI Act. Nijhawan then approached the high court challenging the CIC order.

Under Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act, authorities are exempted from giving information that could prejudice the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, or the strategic, scientific, or economic interests of the State.

The court, which acknowledged the petitioner's interest in seeking transparency in government operations, said the need to protect sensitive information that could compromise national security and law enforcement procedures must be borne in mind.

SNIPPETS

UP: Protests over social media post; 500 booked

Muzaffarnagar (UP): Over 500 persons were booked after protests erupted in Budhana town here over rumours that a youth arrested for allegedly making an "objectionable" social media post against Islam had been released by police, officials said Sunday, adding that security has been tightened in the town. The protestors were booked for allegedly raising "objectionable slogans", spreading rumours and pelting stones at the shop of Nikhil Tyagi, they said.

Assam: 200 people fall sick after consuming snacks

Golaghat: Around 200 people have fallen ill due to food poisoning after consuming snacks during an obituary function of a deceased in Assam's Golaghat district, officials said Sunday. The incident took place Saturday night during a gathering at the memorial ceremony of the mother of Pradip Gogoi at Pasghoria village of Uriamghat in Sarupathar area. According to an official, the guests were served with traditional 'jalpani' (snacks with puffed rice and cream) during the function.

SC to hear case on coaching centre deaths today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a matter related to the death of three civil service aspirants at a coaching centre here in July due to the flooding in the building's basement. Three civil services aspirants drowned July 27 in the basement library of Rau's IAS Study Circle in the Old Rajinder Nagar area here after it was flooded following heavy rain. As per the cause list of October 21 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan is slated to hear the matter.



Women raise slogans near the fasting mancha of junior doctors observing fast-unto-death in protest against the alleged rape and murder of their colleague at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, West Bengal
PTI PHOTO

TMC announces candidates for WB Assembly bypolls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 20: The Trinamool Congress Sunday announced candidates for the November 13 byelections to six Assembly constituencies in West Bengal.

The party fielded Sangita Roy from Sitai in Cooch Behar district, Jay Prakash Toppo from Madarihat in Alipurduar, Sanat Dey from Naihati and Sk Rabiul Islam from Haroa in North 24 Parganas, Falguni Singhababu from Taldangra in Bankura and Sujoy Hazra from Medinipur in Paschim Medinipur district. The TMC won five of these seats in the 2021 Assembly polls, except for Madarihat, which was held by the BJP.

Over 50% medics feel their workplace unsafe: Study

NEARLY HALF OF THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS DO NOT HAVE A DEDICATED DUTY ROOM WHILE WORKING FOR LONG HOURS OR AT NIGHT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: More than half of the healthcare workers who participated in a survey feel that their workplace is "unsafe", particularly in state and central government medical colleges.

Led by experts from the Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC), Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS, New Delhi, the study highlighted "significant gaps" in the security infrastructure within Indian healthcare settings.

The "Workplace Safety and

Security in Indian Healthcare Settings: A Cross-Sectional Survey" published in a recent issue of the journal 'Epidemiology International' underscored the urgent need for improving the prevailing safety and security measures in healthcare settings.

The survey is a collaborative effort of Dr Kartik Chadhar and Dr Jugal Kishore from the VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital along with Dr Richa Mishra, Dr Semanti Das, Dr Indra Shekhar Prasad and Dr Prakalp Gupta from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

The cross-sectional survey was conducted among 1,566 healthcare workers from diverse medical institutions across India using a pre-tested, self-administered online questionnaire, which assessed various dimensions of workplace safety. Logistic regression was used to find differences among groups.

The survey participants consisted of 869 (55.5 per cent) fe-



supporting staff.
The majority of the respondents worked in government-run medical colleges (71.5 per cent). Half of the respondents worked in non-surgical departments (49.2 per cent) and one-third worked in surgical departments (33.8 per cent).
Results revealed that more than half (58.2 per cent) of health-

males and 697 (44.5 per cent) males. About one-fourth (24.7 per cent) of healthcare workers were from Delhi and around half of them were resident doctors (49.6 per cent), followed by undergraduate medical students, including interns (15.9 per cent). Responses were also received from faculty members, medical officers, nursing staff, and other

care workers feel unsafe at the workplace and 78.4 per cent reported having been threatened on duty, Dr Jugal Kishore, the corresponding author of the study said. The existing duty rooms are grossly inadequate in providing the basic amenities and services such as regular cleaning, pest control, ventilation, room space, and air conditioning, Dr Kishore stated.

A staggering majority of healthcare workers expressed "deep dissatisfaction" with the existing security measures in health institutions across India, he said.

Over 70 per cent felt security personnel were ineffective, and 62 per cent reported the emergency alarm system to be inadequate. Nearly half reported severe gaps in access control, surveillance, and security in high-risk areas like ICUs and psychiatric wards.

Over 90 per cent of institutions lack proper screening for weapons or dangerous objects, and nearly three-fourths reported

the absence of secure hospital boundaries. These findings paint a "dire picture of insufficient security" in critical healthcare settings, putting both workers and patients at risk, Dr Kishore said.

Over 63 per cent of respondents in state government medical colleges were unhappy with the number of security personnel, with a four times higher likelihood of dissatisfaction compared to private colleges.

Nearly 70 per cent criticised poor emergency alarms, access control, and security in high-risk areas, where dissatisfaction was more than 3.5 times higher.

Besides, an alarming 81.3 per cent of healthcare workers reported witnessing violence, yet nearly half (44.1 per cent) felt these incidents were handled poorly. About 80 per cent of respondents didn't know who to contact in case of an emergency, and over 70 per cent lacked a clear, confidential process for reporting security concerns.

international



No anti-China activities will be allowed to operate within Nepal's territory
KP SHARMA OLI | PM, NEPAL

HARRIS' 60TH B'DAY: TRUMP TAKES A DIG

Democrat Kamala Harris kicked off her 60th birthday celebrations Sunday with two church visits in Georgia, where she plans to rally early voters, while her Republican rival, Donald Trump, spent time at a McDonald's fast food joint in Pennsylvania where the former worked when she was young, a claim dismissed by Trump



of the day quote

We are ready for President Kamala Harris. That's what we want and the good news is Kamala Harris is ready for the job. This is a leader who has spent her entire life fighting for people who need a champion

BARACK OBAMA | FORMER PRESIDENT, US

Our position is clear: We are supporting Ukraine as strongly as possible. At the same time, we are taking care that NATO does not become a party to the war so that this war doesn't culminate in an even bigger catastrophe

OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

We are committed to ensuring the rights of the Kurdish people, but this must be done within Iraq's constitution

MOHAMMED AL-SUDANI | PM, IRAQ

SHORT TAKES

Pak's polio crisis: 39 cases this year

Islamabad: Pakistan has reported 39 polio cases this year, with two fresh cases of the crippling disease being detected in the Sindh province, authorities said Sunday. The latest cases were confirmed Saturday in the Sanghar and Mirpurkhas districts of the province, the Dawn newspaper reported. These come after four cases were reported a day earlier, jolting the country's efforts to eradicate the poliovirus. According to the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication in Islamabad, the newest victims are a girl and a boy. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic, according to the World Health Organisation.

Bangladesh makes big judicial changes

Dhaka: Bangladesh's Supreme Court Sunday reinstated the Supreme Judicial Council with authority to investigate allegations of judicial misconduct, while upholding its previous ruling that declared the 16th constitutional amendment, which transferred the power of removing judges to parliament, as "illegal". "The order was passed by a six-member bench of the Supreme Court's apex Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed," Supreme Court lawyer Ruhul Kuddus told reporters after the apex court announced its judgement. Kuddus, who was present in the hearing, said the ruling reinforced the original constitutional provisions.

MISSILE RAIN

Israel continues deadly assault

BEIRUT, GAZA COME UNDER HEAVY RETALIATION AFTER 'ASSASSINATION' ATTEMPT ON NETANYAHU



ISRAELI STRIKES LATE SATURDAY ON A MULTI-FLOOR BUILDING IN THE NORTHERN GAZA TOWN OF BEIT LAHIYA KILLED AT LEAST 73 PEOPLE AND WOUNDED DOZENS, MEDICS AND HAMAS MEDIA SAID

REUTERS

Jerusalem, Oct 20: Israel struck what it said were Hezbollah arms facilities in southern Beirut Saturday after the Lebanese armed group fired rockets into northern Israel and a spokesman said a drone was launched at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's holiday home. Netanyahu was not there at the time, and it was not immediately clear if the building was hit. But he described it as an assassination attempt by "Iran's proxy Hezbollah" and called it a "grave mistake", as Israel prepares to retaliate for an Iranian missile barrage earlier this month. The strikes came as medics and Hamas media in Gaza, where Israel has been fighting to root out the Palestinian militant group for more than a year, said Israeli bombardments had killed more than 100 peo-

ple across the coastal enclave and a siege around three hospitals had tightened.

Promises by Israel and its enemies Hamas and Hezbollah to keep fighting have chilled hopes that the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar Wednesday might lead to truces in Gaza and Lebanon and prevent further escalation in the Middle East. Officials, diplomats and other sources say that with US elections approaching, Israel is seeking to use intensified military operations to try to shield its borders and ensure its rivals cannot regroup.

On Saturday, Israeli planes dropped leaflets over southern Gaza with a picture of Sinwar and the message: "Hamas will no longer rule Gaza".

The strikes targeted "a number of Hezbollah weapons storage facilities and a Hezbollah intelligence headquarters com-

mand centre", Israel's military said. Tens of thousands of people have fled the southern suburbs - once a densely populated zone that also housed Hezbollah offices and underground installations - since Israel began regular strikes there about three weeks ago.

An Israeli air attack September 27 killed Hezbollah's secretary general Hassan Nasrallah, and strikes nearby have killed other top figures from the Iran-backed group.

Classified US intel leaked, docs show Israel's plans for Iran

Two highly classified US intelligence documents have leaked, allegedly exposing Israel's military preparations for a potential strike on Iran, as per reports. The documents, originating from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) - "responsible for analysing images and information collected by American spy satellites" - offer insights into Israeli military exercises and operational readiness. The two documents, dated October 15 and 16, were circulated on Telegram by accounts largely associated with pro-Iran sentiments. They provide detailed analyses of satellite images showing Israel's military exercises, which appear to be in preparation for a retaliatory strike on Iran. The potential strike comes in the wake of escalating tensions following an Iranian missile barrage October



1, itself a retaliation for an earlier Israeli attack. One of the documents is titled "Israel: Air Force Continues Preparations for Strike on Iran" and outlines recent Israeli exercises that seem to rehearse a potential military operation against Iran. These preparations reportedly include air-to-air refuelling operations, search-and-rescue missions, and the repositioning of missile systems in anticipation of potential Iranian strikes. The sec-

ond document reveals Israeli efforts to move munitions and other military assets to strategic locations. Although the documents describe Israeli military movements and exercises, they do not provide satellite images themselves. The US intelligence gathered from these images suggests that Israel is gearing up for a strike, but it is unclear whether these documents reveal the full scope of Israel's plans for Iran. The leaks have reportedly prompted immediate concern within the US government. US officials are divided over the severity of the leak, with some downplaying its impact given that the documents do not reveal new American capabilities. Others, however, are alarmed by the exposure of Israel's sensitive military plans, particularly at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Prabowo: Indonesia's eighth president

JAKARTA: Indonesia's Prabowo Subianto Sunday took over as president of the world's third-largest democracy, vowing to combat internal issues such as corruption that plague the country and to make it more self-sufficient. The 73-year-old has undergone a remarkable transformation, from being a former military commander facing unproven allegations of rights abuses to sweeping the polls and now leading the country of 280 million people. Wearing a traditional black hat and navy suit with a woven maroon and golden sarong, Prabowo officially became Indonesia's eighth president Sunday morning after he was sworn in during a ceremony at Indonesia's parliament. Prabowo, who unsuccessfully ran for the presidency twice before, said in a fiery speech to lawmakers he would be president for all Indonesians and challenged the nation to help him face down the country's problems.



The interim government, which took power in August after deadly protests forced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee to India, has been struggling to stabilize food prices that have surged nearly 20% in recent months.

Moldovans decide on European future



Chisinau: Moldovans cast their ballots Sunday in a presidential election and EU referendum at a pivotal moment that could reinforce the small agricultural economy's drive to join the European Union, after allegations of Russian election meddling. As the war in Ukraine rages to the east and turns the political and diplomatic spotlight on the former Soviet republic, it has accelerated its push to escape Moscow's orbit and embarked on the long process of EU accession talks. Polls show pro-Western incumbent Maia Sandu has a comfortable lead over her 10 rivals on the ballot, though the race will go to a November 3 run-off if she fails to reach the 50% threshold to win outright.

Floods destroy 1.1MT of rice in Bangladesh

REUTERS

Dhaka, Oct 20: Floods in Bangladesh have destroyed an estimated 1.1 million metric tonne of rice, according to data from the agriculture ministry, prompting the country to ramp up imports of the staple grain amid soaring food prices.

Floods brought by heavy monsoon rains and torrential upstream runoff struck the country in two major waves in August and October, claiming at least 75 lives and affecting millions, particularly in the eastern and northern regions where crop damage has been the most severe.

The floods have also severely impacted other agricultural products, including more than 200,000 tonne of vegetables. Total nationwide agricultural losses due to the flooding are estimated at around 45 billion taka (\$380 million).

Bangladesh, the world's third-largest rice producer, typically produces nearly 40 million tonne of rice a year to feed its population of 170 million.

WAR FRIENDS

NK soldiers train with Russian military

North Korea is preparing to deploy up to 10K soldiers, comprising various military specialities

AGENCIES

Washington, Oct 20: North Korea has deployed 1,500 soldiers to Russia for military training, with plans to send up to 12,000 troops to fight in the Ukraine war, South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) has confirmed. A video released by the Ukrainian Centre for Strategic Communication and Information Security shows a line of North Korean soldiers receiving uniforms at a training ground in Russia's far-east. While the audio quality of the video limited clarity, the soldiers appeared to be communicating in Korean. Upon their arrival, recruits filled out questionnaires to provide sizes for their military attire, as per reports.

Another video showed troops arriving at the Sergeevka Training Ground, near the Russian-Chinese border. A voice in the background was allegedly heard saying, "We can't film them... Here are the new reinforcements. This is just the beginning. There are more."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed that "thousands" of North



Korean soldiers are en route to Russia. According to Zelenskyy, intelligence suggests that the North is preparing to deploy up to 10,000 soldiers, comprising various military specialities. "From intelligence that I have... they are preparing 10,000 soldiers, different soldiers, land forces, technical personnel," he said during a recent NATO summit.

Evidence is mounting that North Korea is also supplying Russia with ammunition.

The deepening cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang was exemplified last week when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin as his "closest comrade" on Putin's birthday. South Korean intelligence

sources have also claimed that Russian forces are organising a unit of North Korean troops. Ukrainian military intelligence, led by Kyrylo Budanov, noted that nearly 11,000 North Korean infantry are currently training in eastern Russia, ready to be deployed by November 1. They are expected to use Russian equipment and ammunition, with an initial group of 2,600 soldiers slated to be sent to the Kursk region.

Since August, North Korea has allegedly sent around 13,000 shipping containers of military supplies to Russia, including millions of artillery shells, missiles and anti-armour rockets. Russia has received up to eight million 122-mm and 152-mm artillery shells, they said.

'Zombies' swarm Japan train ahead of Halloween

THE EERIE EXPERIENCE WAS INSPIRED BY THE HIT 2016 SOUTH KOREAN ACTION-HORROR MOVIE "TRAIN TO BUSAN", IN WHICH A FATHER AND DAUGHTER TRAPPED ON A MOVING TRAIN BATTLE ZOMBIES HUNGRY FOR HUMAN FLESH

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tokyo, Oct 20: It's usually a serene two-and-a-half-hour ride on Japan's famously efficient bullet train. But the journey quickly descended into a zombie apocalypse, with passengers screaming in terror.

Organisers of Saturday's adrenaline-filled trip, less than two weeks before Halloween, touted it as the "world's first haunted house experience on a running shinkansen".

On board one chartered car of the shinkansen - the Japanese word for bullet train - were around 40 thrill-seekers, ready to brave an encounter with the living dead between Tokyo and the western metropolis of Osaka. All seemed normal at first as the bullet train made a peaceful



departure Saturday evening, but it wasn't long until the first gory attack.

The victims - actors planted in seats by the organisers - jerked in agony and then underwent a terrifying transformation before starting a rampage against

their fellow passengers.

Event organiser Kenta Iwana of the group Kowagarasetai, which translates to the "scare squad", said they wanted to "depict the normally safe, peaceful shinkansen - something we take for granted - collapsing in the

blink of an eye".

"Like I was in the film"
Sitting next to one of the actors was Joshua Payne, one of many foreign tourists on board.

"I literally felt like I was in the film, just sitting here watching it take place in front of me," the 31-year-old American told AFP.

"The fact that we can physically go from Tokyo to Osaka right now and have this whole performance at the same time... I think is really cool and maybe a little bit groundbreaking," he said.

It was far from Central Japan Railway Company's first experiment with the usually dazzlingly clean, accident-free shinkansen, a Japanese institution that turned 60 this year.

After demand for long-dis-

tance travel plunged during the Covid-19 pandemic, the railway operator started renting out bullet train compartments for special events to diversify its business.

A sushi restaurant, a bar and even a wrestling match have been hosted on the high-speed train, and carriages can also be reserved for private parties.

Marie Izumi of JR Central's tourism subsidiary told AFP that she was surprised by the idea for a zombie-themed commute when Kowagarasetai approached her, thinking it would be "almost impossible to pull off". But the event has convinced her of "new possibilities" for the bullet train, Izumi said, adding that concerts and comedy shows might be a good fit in the future.

Cubans suffer in darkness

Govt faces 3rd setback in restoring power, millions still in dark

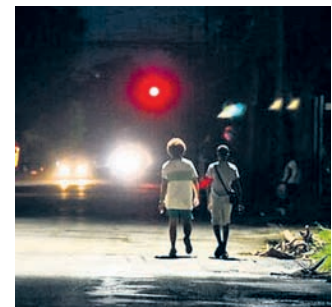
REUTERS

Havana, Oct 20: Cuba's efforts to restore power to the island were derailed for a third time late on Saturday, Cuban authorities said shortly before midnight, leaving millions in the dark and raising fresh questions over the viability of the government's bid to reestablish electrical service.

Cuba's national electrical grid first crashed around midday Friday after the island's largest power plant shut down. The grid collapsed again Saturday morning, state-run media reported.

By early evening, authorities reported some progress restoring power before announcing the grid had once again collapsed.

Cuba's energy ministry said the government was working to reestablish service, adding that "another disconnection" had occurred in the "western sub-sys-



tem," which includes the capital Havana.

A third grid collapse marks a major setback in the government's efforts to quickly restore power to exhausted residents already suffering from severe food, medicine and fuel shortages.

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

of the day quote

Foreign Institutional Investors have been a key driver of the Indian market's performance, and their stance will depend on factors such as global economic conditions, and domestic political developments

PRAVESH GOUR | SENIOR TECHNICAL ANALYST, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

India should partner with the US, the EU, and Japan to establish large-scale solar manufacturing facilities, fostering an independent and resilient solar industry

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

India is growing faster and it's an emerging economy that emphasises education. And I think these ingredients create a country that will be leading in some time. The world is coming towards India's strengths

LOUIS HERNANDEZ JR | CEO, BLACK DRAGON CAPITAL

SHORT TAKES

Diwali 'Muhurat Trading' Nov 1

New Delhi: Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE will conduct a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081. The symbolic trading session will be held between 6 pm and 7 pm, the stock exchanges said in separate circulars. The session also marks the beginning of a new Samvat -- the Hindu calendar year that starts on Diwali -- and it is believed that trading during the 'Muhurat' or auspicious hour brings prosperity and financial growth for the stakeholders. The market will remain closed for regular trading on Diwali, but a special trading window will be open for one hour in the evening. The exchanges announced that the pre-opening session will take place from 5:45 pm to 6:00 pm.

HDB Financial to raise \$1.5bn in IPO

New Delhi: India's top private lender HDFC Bank said Saturday its HDB Financial Services unit will raise up to \$1.25 billion (\$1.5 billion) in its initial public offering (IPO). Parent HDFC Bank, which holds a 94.6% stake in HDB Financial, will sell shares worth \$100 billion, the lender said, adding that the price and other details of the proposed IPO will be determined in due course. Last month HDFC Bank approved raising \$25 billion through an issue of shares in the IPO, marking the group's first public float in six years.

Mcap of 4 of top-10 companies jumps

New Delhi: Four of the top-10 most-valued firms together added ₹81,151.31 crore in market valuation last week, with ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank emerging as the biggest gainers. Last week, the BSE benchmark declined 156.61 points, or 0.19 per cent. While HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, and the State Bank of India were the gainers, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) suffered a combined erosion of ₹76,622.05 crore from their market valuation. Reliance Industries continued to remain the most-valued domestic firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, and LIC.



Raw material cost went up by about 6 per cent quarter on quarter. It's a steep increase and we took a lot of price increase but the entire thing could not be passed on to consumers

ARNAB BANERJEE | MD AND CEO, CEAT

BISSELL RE-ENTERS INDIA AFTER 6 YEARS

Bissell, a Michigan US-based homecare solutions provider, has re-entered India with its range of vacuum cleaners after six years, expecting the country to be a "very important market in the future". Though India is a relatively small market for floor care globally, looking at its demography and growing economy, it is an investment for the future, Bissell President, Global Markets, Max Bissell, told PTI



CNG price may go up ₹4-6

PRODUCTION FROM LEGACY FIELDS, WHOSE PRICE IS REGULATED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND WHICH ARE USED TO FEED CITY GAS RETAILERS, HAS BEEN FALLING BY UP TO 5% ANNUALLY DUE TO NATURAL DECLINE THAT HAS SET IN



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: The government has slashed by up to 20 per cent the supplies of cheaper domestically produced natural gas to city retailers -- a move that may result in ₹4-6 per kg hike in the price of CNG sold to automobiles, unless excise duty on the fuel is cut, sources said. Natural gas pumped from below the ground and from under the seabed from sites ranging from the Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal within India is the raw material that is turned into CNG for sale to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households. Production from legacy fields, whose price is regulated by the government and which are used to feed city gas retailers, has been falling by up to 5 per cent annually due to natural decline that has set in. This has led to supply cuts to city gas retailers, four sources in know of the matter said.

EPFO new member additions rise 9.07% to 18.53L in August

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Retirement fund body EPFO's net new member additions increased 9.07 per cent to 18.53 lakh in August, compared to a year ago, according to payroll data released Sunday. EPFO enrolled around 9.30 lakh new members in August 2024, representing an increase of 0.48 per cent from August 2023, a labour ministry statement said. This surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's successful outreach programs, it stated. According to the provisional payroll data for August 2024 released by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), there was a net addition of 18.53 lakh members in August 2024, representing a 9.07 per cent year-on-year growth. A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 59.26 per cent of the total new member additions in August 2024. In addition, the net payroll data for the age group 18-25 for August 2024 was 8.06 lakh.

While the input gas for piped cooking gas that households get is protected, the government has cut supply of raw material for CNG. Gas from legacy fields used to meet 90 per cent of the demand for CNG in May 2023 and has progressively fallen. The supply was cut to just 50.75 per cent of the CNG demand beginning October 16 from 67.74 per cent last month, they said. City gas retailers are forced to buy imported and costlier liquefied natural gas (LNG) to make up for the shortfall, which will lead to a hike in CNG prices that varies from ₹4-6/kg. The gas from legacy fields is priced at \$6.50 per million British thermal unit (mmBtu) as against imported LNG that costs \$11-12 per mmBtu. For now, the retailers have not raised CNG rates as they are engaged with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to find a solution, sources said. One of the options is for the

government to cut excise duty on CNG. Currently, the central government levies a 14 per cent excise duty on CNG, which translates into ₹14-15 per kg. If this is cut, the retailers will not have to pass on the increased cost to consumers, they said. Sources said the gas supplies to city gas retailers had to be cut after the government decided to restore fuel to ONGC-promoted OPaL petrochemical plant in Dahej, Gujarat. The plant was originally allocated 4.12 million standard cubic meters per day of domestically produced natural gas. However, the allocation

for various reasons was cut to 1.95 mmscmd and during Covid was halved. Lack of promised domestic gas was the main reason for OPaL running into losses, sources said, adding that the government has now approved a package to revive the unit. This package includes promoter Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) infusing additional ₹10,501 crore as equity and the unit being made available domestically produced natural gas. The Union Cabinet approved the allocation of 3.44 mmscmd of domestic gas -- mostly coming from new wells of ONGC. This led to lesser gas being available for city gas retailers.

Girish Kadam, Senior Vice President & Group Head - Corporate Ratings, Ica Ratings, Ica Ltd, said, "The APM gas allocation has been reduced for the CGD sector by 20 per cent of the current domestic gas consumption by the sector. The reduction in APM allocation will have to be replaced by more expensive HPHT gas or (imported) LNG, which will push the overall gas costs for the sector." To maintain contribution margins at existing levels, CNG prices will have to be increased about ₹5-5.5 per kg.

CNG price hike is also a political issue since Maharashtra goes to the polls next month and elections are also due in Delhi soon. Delhi and Mumbai are among the biggest CNG markets in the country

STRONG RETURNS

Mid- and small-cap MFs attract ₹30,350cr in H1



Small caps will continue to grow at a faster rate for years to come. I expect the inflows to continue as Indians want to invest in the high-growth sectors. Small cap funds should be seen as an integral part of one's portfolio allocation and not a tactical play

SANDEEP BAGLA | CEO, TRUST MUTUAL FUND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Mid-cap and small-cap mutual fund schemes have continued to attract strong investor interest, garnering nearly ₹30,350 crore in inflows during the April-September period of the current financial year, driven by impressive returns delivered by these segments. In comparison, the cumulative inflow into mid-cap and small-cap funds stood at ₹32,924 crore during the same period last year, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi). The inflow trend persists despite concerns raised by market regulator Sebi over heightened inflows into small-cap and mid-cap funds, as experts believe investors will continue to favour these categories for their potential to deliver high returns.

Individually, mid-cap funds saw an inflow of ₹14,756 crore and small-cap funds attracted ₹15,586 crore in the first half of FY25. This aggregates the total inflow to ₹30,342 crore, the data showed. Mid-cap and small-cap indices have posted gains of about 20 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively, this financial year, outperforming both the Nifty and large-cap indices. While the previous year saw even higher returns that led to higher inflows, the current performance continues to draw investor interest. In addition, stress test in March 2024 has also played a

- MID-CAP FUNDS SAW INFLOW OF ₹14,756CR
- SMALL-CAP FUNDS ATTRACTED ₹15,586CR
- LARGE-CAP FUNDS SAW INFLOW OF ₹7,067CR

role, reinforcing confidence by ensuring that fund managers are prepared to handle market volatility, Feroze Azeed, Deputy CEO, Anand Rath Wealth Ltd, said.

"With the mid-cap and small-cap segments projected to grow at 20 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, in FY25, we expect inflows to remain strong, especially as SIP inflows continue to hit new peaks," he said.

Moreover, companies' earnings will drive flows in these categories.

The last year has seen mutual funds launch new fund offerings (NFOs) of the thematic funds and newer fund management strategies in the passive fund management space. If these NFOs deliver above broader market returns, we may see incremental flows moving to these categories, Manish Kothari, Co-Founder and CEO, ZFunds, said.

If there is a correction in the broader markets, we may see flows in mid- and small-cap category mutual fund schemes go down, he added.

Large-cap mutual funds experienced an inflow of over ₹7,067 crore in the April-September period of FY25 after witnessing an outflow of ₹5,700 crore in the same period of FY24.

In line with the increase in inflow, the number of investors (folios) in the two schemes shot up by 1.32 crore year-on-year to nearly 4 crore in the six months period ended September 30, 2024.

Funding pace returns for startups

39 startups raised \$449mn across 29 deals -- an over 300% jump from the \$135mn raised last week

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 20: The funding momentum bounced back for the Indian startup ecosystem this week, with 39 startups raising around \$449 million



across 29 deals -- an over 300 per cent jump from the \$135 million raised last week. This week saw 12 growth-stage

and 16 early-stage deals. The seed funding stood at \$26.5 million, a surge of 48.8 per cent from previous week's \$17.8 million, which means that investment activity in the startup ecosystem gained momentum. Meanwhile, the Indian fintech startup ecosystem secured \$778 million in funding in the July-September period, reaching second spot globally after the US in terms of fintech funding raised in the third quarter.

BOUNCE BACK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Automobile exports from India in the first six months of the current fiscal year rose 14 per cent year-on-year, led by gains in shipments of passenger vehicles and two-wheelers. According to Siam data, the overall exports in the April-September period stood at 25,28,248 units, up 14 per cent as compared with 22,11,457 units in the year-ago period. Various African nations and other regions faced challenges due to devaluation of currencies. This impacted the vehicle shipments as the nations focussed

Auto exports surge in first half of FY25

on import of essential items. Automobile exports declined 5.5 per cent in FY24 due to the monetary crisis in various overseas markets. Overall exports stood at 45,00,492 units in the last fiscal year as compared with 47,61,299 units in FY23. Total passenger vehicle shipments rose 12 per cent year-on-year to 3,76,679 units in the first half of the current fiscal year as against 3,36,754 units in the September quarter of FY24. The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki led the vertical with shipments of 1,47,063 units, an increase of 12 per cent over 1,31,546 units in the year-ago period.



Hyundai Motor India exported 84,900 units, a drop of 1 per cent, as against 86,105 units in April-September period of the previous fiscal year. Two-wheeler exports rose 16 per cent year-on-year to 19,59,145 units in the April-September period this fiscal year as compared with 16,85,907 units in the year-ago period.

Scooter shipments increased 19 per cent to 3,14,533 units while motorcycle exports rose 16 per cent to 16,41,804 units during the period under review. Commercial vehicle exports rose 12 per cent year-on-year to 35,731 units in the first six months of the fiscal year. Three-wheeler shipments, however, declined 1 per cent dur-

Automobile exports up 14%	Key markets like Latin America and Africa, which had slowed down for various reasons, have bounced back. This has been the main reason for exports coming back
PV shipments rose 12% YoY	
CV exports zoom 12% YoY	
2W exports jump 16% YoY	
3W shipments drop 1% YoY	
Exports dipped 5.5% in FY24	

ing the period to 1,53,199 units as compared with 1,55,154 units in the April-September period of the 2023-24 fiscal year.

35% pay raise, \$7K signing bonus: Boeing's deal with protesting workers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, Oct 20: Boeing and its striking Seattle-area workers have reached a tentative deal to end a more than month-long stoppage, the union said Saturday. Boeing confirmed a tentative deal was reached and said it includes a 35 percent pay raise over four years and a one-time signing bonus of \$7,000. Union members will vote Wednesday on the proposal. The strike began September 13 in a dispute over pay and other compensation issues, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers said on social media platform X in a message to its members. "It warrants presenting to the members and is worthy of your consideration," IAM Union

District 751 said. The strike by some 33,000 unionized workers, mainly in Washington state, halted work at two Seattle-area assembly plants and production of its 737 MAX planes. The workers were seeking hefty wage hikes and other gains, complaining of more than a decade of near-flat wages amid inflation. Wage increases had been a stumbling block. Boeing first offered a 25 percent raise, and then 30 percent, while the union wanted 40 percent. Workers had also been pressing for the restoration of a traditional employer-paid pension plan, which Boeing withdrew in 2014, but they did not get it. Such retirement plans had been a staple of the American workplace for decades but they



are now rare, as the onus for preparing for old age has shifted from employer to employee. Instead, among the sweeteners Boeing is now offering are enhanced contributions to largely worker-funded retirement schemes called 401(k) plans.

Boeing said in a one-sentence statement, "We look forward to our employees voting on the negotiated proposal." The work stoppage added to the company's litany of problems. Boeing sank into further tur-

THE STRIKE HAS COST AN ESTIMATED \$7.6BN IN DIRECT LOSSES -- INCLUDING AT LEAST \$4.35BN FOR BOEING AND ALMOST \$2BN FOR ITS SUPPLIERS

moil in January when a window panel blew out mid-flight on an Alaska Airlines plane, necessitating an emergency landing on a 737 MAX, the aircraft involved in two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019. That led to the Federal Aviation Administration tightening oversight of Boeing's production processes, capping the company's output. This week Boeing unveiled

measures meant to replenish its cash flow, including an intention to raise up to \$25 billion, as it navigated recurrent production problems and the strike. Last week, Boeing said it planned to cut 10 percent of its workforce as it projected a large third-quarter loss in the wake of the labor action. The cuts of 17,000 positions globally will include executives, managers and employees, according to Chief Executive Kelly Ortberg, who added that the company must "reset our workforce levels to align with our financial reality." In other fallout from the strike, Boeing has said it is pushing back first delivery of its 777X plane to 2026 from 2025. The much-delayed jet was originally supposed to enter service in January 2020.

Inevitable happens

KIWIS GO ONE-UP IN 3 GAME SERIES AS THEY ROMP TO AN EIGHT-WICKET WIN



WELL DONE MATE: Indian players congratulate New Zealand's Will Young and Rachin Ravindra after the game Sunday

PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 20: New Zealand survived a hostile Jasprit Bumrah (2/29) spell to foil India's attempt to add a final-day twist to an absorbing series-opener, slaying the cricketers' giants at home by eight wickets and ending a 36-year long wait to taste Test success in the country, here Sunday. The last time New Zealand had won in India was at the Wankhede Stadium in 1988.

Will Young (48 n o) and Rachin Ravindra (39 n o) fuelled New Zealand's chase with a 75-run stand for the third wicket, hand-holding their side a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

However, the Indians will not be an entirely despondent lot despite the defeat as they showed admirable spunk to claw back from the depths of getting bowled out for 46 in the first innings. They will need to build on it and pretty quickly too as the second

36 No of years needed for New Zealand to win a Test in India after their victory in 1988

2 No of Tests India have lost in 2024, the first was against England in Hyderabad in January

3 Number of games New Zealand have won in the 37 Tests they have played against India in India

Test at Pune starts October 24.

The Rohit Sharma-marshalled side will also have to think deeply about retaining Sarfaraz Khan, who made a 150 in the second dig, as Shubman Gill is poised to return after recovering from a stiff neck. The other point they will moot long is whether to go back to the three-pacer strategy or continue with three spinners, a move which backfired here spectacularly.

New Zealand's victory did not

come without its share of drama once the day's play started at 10.15am, a wet outfield pushing back the proceedings by an hour. Bumrah (2/29), operating from the dressing room end, found appreciable movement and Tom Latham fell in the first over of the day itself for his overnight naught.

India might just have felt the absence of a third pacer as both Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj found movement and carry to trouble the Kiwi batters under largely overcast skies.

Devon Conway, the other overnight batter, was shaky throughout his stay and would consider himself fortunate to have found a last-minute edge on a Bumrah skidder that otherwise would have trapped him plumb in front. However, the left-hander eventually reached the road's end when Bumrah, operating from around the stumps, caught him right in front of the wicket with another

one that skidded and swung back into him.

New Zealand were 35 for two at that point, and one would say the match in balance as a couple of more strikes could have left the cat among the pigeons. But Young and Ravindra, the first innings centurion, found some solidity to resist the Indian charge.

Once the sun came out for a while, the ball movement was much more predictable and the Kiwi batters used favourable conditions to rack in a few boundaries to ease the pressure.

The defining moment came when Young turned Jadeja for two to collect the winning runs as Kiwis dressing room turned into a hub of celebrations.

BRIEF SCORES

India 46 and 462 lost to New Zealand 402 and 110 for 2 (Will Young 48 n o, Rachin Ravindra 39 n o) by 8 wickets.

1 bad day doesn't define our capabilities: Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 20: Skipper Rohit Sharma asserted Sunday that "those three hours" when they collapsed to an unimaginable 46 runs in the first innings of the opening Test against New Zealand, won't define the quality of the Indian team. He added that the any judgement of his players based on that performance will be unfair.

"I am not going to look too much into this Test match honestly because those three hours are not going to dictate the quality of this team. You know, because it will be unfair to think about those three hours and start judging players and talk slightly differently," said Rohit in the post-match press meet.

"It's important to keep a consistent message in the group. We really found a way to come back into this game with the bat in the second innings. Of course, we lost a Test match. But I feel

"We don't change our mindset based on one game or one series. We are not going to change our mindset fearing that we will lose a Test"

ROHIT SHARMA

a lot of good things have happened in this game," Rohit added.

The captain conceded that India committed some 'small mistakes' but underlined the importance of not 'panicking' ahead of the next match.

"We have made small mistakes in this game and we are suffering the consequences. But that doesn't mean that everything is over. We have lost such matches before and we have made a comeback after that. So, we will try not to think too much about this Test," Rohit said.

Rohit was delighted to see

Sarfaraz Khan stepping up after getting drafted in as a replacement for Shubman Gill, who missed the first Test due to a stiff neck.

"It felt like we were ahead in the game at one stage when he (Sarfaraz) was batting. We didn't feel like we were 350 behind and that is something that I am really proud of. It's always nice to have these kinds of players waiting to play the game," Rohit stated.

Meanwhile New Zealand skipper Tom Latham reminded his team not to lose focus on the second Test amid the revelries after winning the first match, as India have the firepower in their ranks to hit back.

"I think 36 years is the last time that we've won here. So, it's a really special feeling to be in this position. We certainly know that it's going to be a challenge against India (in the second Test), who obviously have a lot of firepower in that line-up," Latham said.



Indian skipper Rohit Sharma has something to discuss with his New Zealand counterpart Tom Latham after the game, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Squad for AFC U-17 Qualifiers announced

New Delhi: India U-17 men's national team head coach Ishfaq Ahmed, named Sunday a 23-member squad for the AFC Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers to be held in Thailand October 23-27. India are placed in Group D, where they will meet Brunei Darussalam (October 23), Turkmenistan (October 25) and hosts Thailand (October 27). **The squad:** (Goalkeepers): Aheibam Suraj Singh, Rohit, Nandan Roy; (Defenders): Karish Soram, Mohamed Kaif, Chingtham Renin Singh, Sumit Sharma, Usham Singh, Yaipharemba Chingakham, Jodric Abranches; (Midfielders): Abdul Salha, Ahongshangbam Samson, Kh Azlaan Shah, Levis Zangminlu, Mahmad Sami, Md Arbash, Rishi Singh, Vishal Yadav, Ngamgouhou Mate; (Forwards): Bharat Laitrenjam, Prem Hansdak and Hemneichung Lunkin.

Head opts out of Pak white ball series

Adelaide: Australia batter Travis Head will miss the Pakistan white ball series to spend some family time before the gruelling five-Test series against India commencing November 22 in Perth. Having spent 330 of the past 365 nights away from home, Head is now cherishing family time as he and his wife Jess prepare for their second child. "I'll probably make decisions in the future around family more, and what drives me to play is probably more my family and my teammates," cricket.com.au quoted Head as saying after officially signing a one-year BBL deal with Adelaide Strikers.

Stones saves City

Wolverhampton: John Stones came up with an injury-time goal again as Manchester City narrowly avoided a major setback by beating struggling Wolverhampton Wanderers 2-1 in the Premier League here Sunday. Stones headed home a corner in the fifth minute of second half injury time and the goal stood despite the VAR asking referee Chris Kavanagh to review whether Bernardo Silva was interfering with goalkeeper Jose Sa from an off-side position.

Cheptegei triumphs in Delhi half marathon

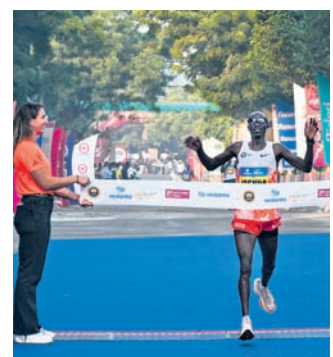
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Long distance running great Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda won the men's elite race at the Vedanta Delhi half marathon here Sunday, his maiden international title over the 21.097km distance and also his first crown in a road race after retiring from the track.

The 28-year-old clocked an impressive 59 minutes 46 seconds to win the race. Kenyans Alex Matata (59:53) and Nicholas Kipkorir (59:59) were second and third respectively.

Alemaddis Eyaayu of Ethiopia won the women's half marathon elite race title, clocking 1 hour 8 minutes and 17 seconds. Cynthia Limo (1:08:27) of Kenya and Tiruye Mesfin (1:09:42) of Ethiopia were second and third respectively.

Sawan Barwal ran his personal best time of 1:02:46 to win the elite race among Indian men while Lili Das (1:18:12) took the women's title among domestic runners. Puneet Yadav (1:03:55) and Kiran Matre (1:04:58) were second and third among Indian men while Kavita Yadav (1:19:44) and Priti Lamba (1:20:20) took the second and third places among do-



Joshua Cheptegei crosses the finish line at the Delhi half marathon Sunday

PTI PHOTO

mestic women runners.

The three podium finishers in both the men and women's races took home USD 27,000, USD 20,000 and USD 13,000 respectively. Among the Indian competitors, the top three finishers in both men's and women's pocketed ₹4 lakh, ₹2 lakh and ₹1 lakh respectively.

Cheptegei realised his pre-race goal of winning with India yet again providing him the platform for a successful journey in road race after he decided to quit running on track after winning the 10,000m gold in Paris.

Poddar ton props Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 20: Skipper Govind Poddar's (133 n o, 201b, 11x4, 4x6) unbeaten century helped Odisha take a vital first innings lead against Jammu and Kashmir in their Ranji Trophy encounter at the Barabati Stadium here Sunday. Poddar stayed firm and played shots all round the wicket as Odisha managed to score 272 in their first innings in reply to J&K's score of 270. It may be a slender two-run lead, but it will be enough for Odisha to get three points if the match ends in a draw Monday.

With the first match against Tripura being abandoned without a ball being bowled, it is vital for Odisha that they get three points from the game. It was incidentally Poddar's ninth century in first class cricket.

In their second innings, J&K were 195 for four at stumps with first innings century-maker Abdul Samad (70 batting, 69b, 4x4, 5x6) at the crease. He treated the Odisha bowlers with disdain as the visitors went for quick runs, trying to put the hosts under pressure. Giving him company is Salil Lotra (21 batting). The two have so far put on 51 runs for the fifth wicket. J&K's



Odisha skipper Govind Poddar celebrates after his century Sunday

OP PHOTO

intention is clear, they want to score quickly and put Odisha under pressure in the second innings so that they can go for an outright win.

However, it was Poddar's day as he guided his team to a first innings lead. Resuming at the overnight score of 187 for five wickets, Poddar and Aasirwad Swain (32) took the score to 217 before the latter fell. However, before than Poddar and Swain had put on 111 runs for the sixth wicket and in the end it turned

out to be quite vital. Even though the tail fell in a heap, Poddar guided Odisha to a first innings lead. Poddar added 32 runs for the ninth wicket with Rajesh Mohanty (8) and in the end the partnership turned out to be quite vital. Abid Mustaq (4/84) was the most successful bowler for J&K.

Brief scores: J&K 270 and 195 for 4 (Abdul Samad 70 batting, Kartik Biswal 2/25) vs Odisha 272 (Govind Poddar 133 n o). Match to continue.

Team announced for Germany Tests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 20: Defender Varun Kumar, who missed out on the Paris Olympics and the Asian Champions Trophy following allegations of sexual harassment by a former junior volleyball player, made his return Sunday to the Indian men's hockey squad for the upcoming two Test matches against Germany, scheduled for October 23 and 24.

In February, Bangalore police had charged Varun under the POCSO Act after a 22-year-old woman accused him of sexually assaulting her multiple times. However, HI sources confirmed that Varun has been acquitted of all charges.

The squad: (Goalkeepers): Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Suraj Karkera; (Defenders): Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh (captain), Varun Kumar, Sanjay Sumit, Nilam Sanjeev Xess; (Midfielders): Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Vishnu Kant Singh, Shamsher Singh, Mohd Raheel Mousen, Rajinder Singh; (Forwards): Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Aditya Arjun Lalage, Dilpreet Singh, and Shilananda Lakra.

Hockey colts win thrilling match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johor Bahru (Malaysia), Oct 20: Dilraj Singh and Sharda Nand Tiwari scored a brace each as the Indian junior men's hockey team continued their winning run, defeating Great Britain 6-4 in a high-scoring game at the Sultan of Johor Cup here Sunday.

Mohd Konain Dad (seventh) opened India's account before Dilraj (17th, 50th), Sharda (20th, 50th) struck. Manmeet Singh (26th) also scored for India, while Rory Penrose (second, 15th) and Michael Royden (46th, 59th) put their names on the scoreboard for Great Britain.

High on confidence after their opening match win Saturday against Japan, the Indian colts continued in the same vein, and stamped their authority from



Action during the India-Great Britain game Sunday

PHOTO X

the word go.

Though they suffered an early setback, when a defensive error cost them dearly in the second

minute of the game with Penrose scoring from Britain's first penalty corner, India bounced back in the seventh minute with

a goal by Dad from a set piece.

Great Britain, however, regained their lead in the 15th minute when Penrose scored his second goal through another penalty corner.

But it was India who dominated the second quarter with their forwards working in tandem, as they scored three back-to-back goals.

First it was mercurial striker Dilraj who scored to equalise the score at 2-2. He followed that up with another good piece of work to help Sharda score from a penalty corner in the 20th minute, helping India take a 3-2 lead.

Dilraj remained the cynosure of the Indian attack as he set up Manmeet in the 26th minute with a quick baseline pass, which was tapped in extending the lead to 4-2.

NZ win maiden Women's T20 WC

South Africa falter in successive final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 20: New Zealand produced a clinical performance in a high-stakes final to beat South Africa by 32 runs and win their maiden Women's T20 World Cup title here Sunday.

It turned out to be a historic Sunday for New Zealand cricket as the White Ferns got their hands on the ICC trophy hours after the men recorded their first Test win in India after 36 years.

South Africa, playing their second successive final, sent New Zealand in to bat and the Sophie Devine-led side thrived under pressure to post an above par 158 for five at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.



Amelia Kerr collected 43 off 38 balls while Brooke Halliday made an impactful 38 off 28 balls to push New Zealand beyond 150 in what has been a low scoring tournament.

It was a remarkable change of fortunes for New Zealand, who had come into the tournament with the baggage of 10 losses in a row. They were the best bowling unit in the competition by a fair distance and Sunday, improved their batting by a few notches.