



## CULTURAL IDENTITY

Actor Deepika Padukone aims for global success without compromising her cultural identity

LEISURE P2



## RAMASWAMY'S PROMISE

Vivek Ramaswamy calls the H-1B visa programme 'indentured servitude', and vows to 'gut' the lottery-based system

INTERNATIONAL P10



## ELAVENIL SHOTS GOLD

Elavenil Valarivan wins women's 10m air rifle event to clinch gold at ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol

SPORTS P12

## SHORT TAKES

### 3 killed in lightning

**Rourkela:** At least three persons died as lightning struck them when they had taken shelter under a tree during a thunderstorm, Sunday at Biruala village under Brahmani Tarang police station limits near Rourkela. The trio had gone to witness a football match. The deceased were identified as Sumit Oram and Bishal Bilung of Karlakhaman and Shanti Prakash Lakra of Monco in Sundargarh district. Police sent the bodies to the Rourkela Government Hospital for post-mortem.

### 11 more scrub typhus cases

**Bhubaneswar:** Eleven more people were found scrub typhus positive in Sundargarh district Sunday, taking the total number of such cases in the district to 180, a health official said. Fifty-nine samples were sent for testing, of which 11 were detected positive for scrub typhus, he said. Of the 180 infected people, 10 patients are from outside Odisha and nine are from other districts, said Kanhucharan Nayak, chief district medical officer of Sundargarh. The district had Saturday reported seven positive cases.

### Bribery: CBI arrests 7

**New Delhi:** The CBI has arrested the executive secretary to the CMD of Bridge and Roof Company (India) Ltd, a PSU, and six others in connection with the alleged bribery of Rs 20 lakh to favour a Gujarat firm bag a Rs 56-crore tender for an Eklaya Model Residential School in Odisha. They were identified as Ashish Razdan, Hetal Pravinchandra Rajyaguru, Shashank Kumar Jain, Somesh Chandra, Veer Thakkar, Rajiv Ranjan and Tarang Agarwal.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The whole nation is celebrating PM's birthday! How come there's no celebration here?

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	31.7°C	31.0°C	
MIN	23.4°C	24.2°C	
Humidity	95%	89%	Cloudy sky with light rain
Rainfall	47.4 mm	44.6 mm	

# ASIA CONQUERED, WORLD NEXT



**SIXER WITH BALL:** Mohammed Siraj's magnificent spell helped India maul Sri Lanka by 10 wickets after bowling the home team out for a paltry 50 in the Asia Cup final Sunday. The Rohit Sharma-led side has now their eyes set on the ICC World Cup title after the continental success. (Report on P12)

## Naveen in Delhi to attend elder sister's funeral

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday flew to New Delhi to attend the funeral of his elder sister and eminent author Gita Mehta, who passed away a day before.

Mehta died in Delhi Saturday. She was 80.

"I am here due to the sad demise of my elder sister, who was a well-known author and filmmaker. I would also like to extend my appreciation and thanks to those who have offered their condolences," Patnaik told reporters in the national capital.

Official sources said that the Chief Minister will return to Bhubaneswar Monday after completion of Mehta's last rites.

Mehta's funeral will take place Monday after the arrival of her son Aditya, who stays abroad, late Sunday night, they said.

Her body has been kept at Patnaik's residence on the APJ Abdul Kalam Marg.

Mehta penned several books, including 'Karma Cola', 'Snake and Ladders', 'A River Sutra', 'Raj' and 'The Eternal Ganesha'.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and senior leaders of different political parties had paid condolences to the departed soul.

# Push for women's reservation

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** At the all-party meeting ahead of the special session of the Parliament, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and other parties Sunday pushed for the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill during the five-day session.

BJD MPs Sasmit Patra and Pinaki Misra attended the all-party meeting convened by Union Defence minister Rajnath Singh, Union Minister Piyush Goyal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi at the Parliament Library building here. The MPs demanded that the Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies should be passed during the special session. The demand was also echoed by the Bharat Rashtriya Samithi (BRS)

during the all-party meeting. The Opposition parties also pushed for the Bill during the five-day special session. Following the meeting, Congress Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said that all Opposition parties demanded the passage of Women's Reservation Bill in this Parliament session. Nationalist Congress Party leader Prafull Patel also supported the demand.

The Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha in March 2010. It was introduced in the 15th Lok Sabha but it got lapsed as the term of the Lok Sabha ended before the Bill could be passed in lower house. The BJP in its 2014 Lok Sabha polls manifesto had promised to pass the Bill. The saffron party, however, did not table the Bill in the Lok Sabha despite having absolute majority and support from other

## AS MATTERS STAND

- The Women's Reservation Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha May 6, 2008
- It was referred to the standing committee May 9, 2008
- It was passed in Rajya Sabha March 9, 2010
- Odisha Assembly in 2019 passed a resolution for Women's Reservation Bill

parties as well. In November 2018, the Odisha Assembly had passed a resolution demanding 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies. After that, as many as 22 BJD delegations were sent out to 22 national and regional parties asking for support for the passage of the Bill. At the all-party meeting, the

Opposition MPs also asked the government about the agenda of the special session. The Union ministers, however, dodged the questions, which led to speculations of a surprise during the session.

Significantly, the five-day special session will commence Monday. According to officials, Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha will hold discussion on the Parliamentary journey of 75 years starting from Samvidhan Sabha - achievements, experiences, memories and learnings, on the first day of the session. The government has also listed the controversial Bill on appointment of chief election commissioner and other election commissioners for consideration and passage. The other Bills that would be brought for consideration and passage are the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023 and the Post Office Bill, 2023.

# Soldier abducted, killed in Manipur

Sepoy Serto Thangthang Kom, who was on leave, was kidnapped from his home in Imphal West district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, Sept 17:** The body of an Indian Army soldier was found at Khuningthek village in Manipur's Imphal East district Sunday, officials said.

He was identified as Sepoy Serto Thangthang Kom of the Army's Defence Security Corps (DSC) platoon at Leimakhong in Kangpokpi district, they said.

He hailed from Tarung in Imphal West, officials said.

According to officials, unidentified armed men abducted Sepoy Kom, who was on leave, from his home around 10am Saturday.

According to his 10-year-old son, who was the only eyewitness to the crime, three men entered their home while his father and he were working on the porch.

"The armed men placed a pistol on the Sepoy's head and forced him into a white vehicle before fleeing the spot," officials said quoting his son.

"There was no news of Sepoy Kom till Sunday early morning. Around 9.30am, his body was found at Khuningthek village, east of Mongjam under Sogolmang PS in Imphal East. His identity was confirmed by his brother and brother-in-law who said the soldier had a single bullet wound on his head," officials added.

Sepoy Kom is survived by wife, daughter and son.

The last rites will be conducted as per the wishes of the family, officials said, adding the army has rushed a team to assist the bereaved family.

# World Heritage tag for Santiniketan

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** Santiniketan, the famed place in West Bengal where poet Rabindranath Tagore built Visva-Bharati over a century ago, has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The world body made the announcement in a post on 'X' Sunday.

"New inscription on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List: Santiniketan, #India. Congratulations!" it posted.

India had been striving for long to get a UNESCO tag for this cultural site located in Birbhum district. Noted conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah, who had worked on preparing a dossier for its inclusion in the list, said she was "dancing with joy" after hearing the news.

"We had worked on the dossier in 2009 and, maybe time wasn't right then, but we always believed in the beauty of



Santiniketan, and today we feel vindicated seeing it in the UNESCO list," she told PTI.

Santiniketan, a university town over 160 km from Kolkata, was originally an ashram built by Rabindranath Tagore's father Debendranath Tagore, where anyone, irrespective of caste and creed, could come and meditate on the one Supreme God, according to a description of the landmark on the official website of the UNESCO World

Heritage Centre. Visva-Bharati, located in Santiniketan, is one of the most prestigious universities in India with degree courses in humanities, social science, science, fine arts, music, performing arts, education, agricultural science and rural reconstruction.

The university was founded by Rabindranath Tagore. It is the sole Central university of West Bengal and the Prime Minister is its chancellor.

## SWEET REMINDER

A borrower who is planning to default will not answer a reminder call from the bank. So the best way is to meet them at their homes unannounced, according to SBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 17:** The nation's largest lender State Bank of India is adopting a novel way to ensure timely repayments, especially by its retail borrowers, by greeting those likely to default on monthly installments with a pack of chocolates.

According to the bank, it has been found that a borrower who is planning to default will not answer a reminder call from the bank. So the best way is to meet them at their homes unannounced.

The move, aimed at ensuring

# Chocolates for likely defaulters



better collections, comes amidst rising level of retail lending in the system coupled with increasing delinquency levels on the back of the upward movement in the interest rates.

SBI's retail loan book grew over 16.46 per cent to Rs 12,04,279 crore in the June 2023 quarter from Rs 10,34,111 crore in the year-ago period, making it the largest asset class for the lender whose total book stood at Rs 33,03,731 crore, growing at 13.9 per cent on-year.

In fact for the entire system, the double-digit loan growth of

around 16 per cent has been led by retail loans only.

"With two fintechs which use artificial intelligence, we are piloting a novel way of reminding our retail borrowers of their repayment obligations. While one is doing conciliation with borrowers, the other is alerting us on the propensity of a borrower to default. And to such borrowers who are likely to default, the representatives from this fintech will visit them, carrying a pack of chocolates for each of them, and remind them of the forthcoming EMIs,"

Ashwini Kumar Tewari, managing director in-charge of risk, compliance and stressed assets at SBI, said here over the weekend. According to Tewari, this novel method of carrying a pack of chocolates and personally visiting them is adopted because it has been found that a borrower who is planning to default will not answer a reminder call from the bank. So the best way is to meet them at their own homes unannounced and surprise them. And so far, the success rate has been overwhelming, he said.

Tewari refused to name the fintechs saying the move is just at the pilot stage and has been put into place just about 15 days back and "if successful, we will formally announce it."

"We are also talking to a few other fintechs to improve our collection efficiencies and hopefully by the end of the year, we will have formally tied up with at least half of them," he said.

# leisure



## RUSSELL BRAND ACCUSED OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Comedian and actor Russell Brand has been accused of rape, sexual assaults and emotional abuse during a seven-year period at the height of his fame from four women between 2006 and 2013, reports [bbc.com](http://bbc.com).

## BTS MEMBER SUGA TO BEGIN MILITARY SERVICE THIS WEEK

K-Pop superband member Suga will begin his mandatory military service this week, his agency BigHit Music announced Sunday, reports [Yonhap](http://yonhap.com).



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

#### ARIES

Today you may try to make your loved one happy, and perhaps even try to woo the person in a fresh manner. You may not be too satisfied with your friends and relatives, but, Ganesha says, you can expect to go to a party in the evening and make new friends.

#### TAURUS

Today, Ganesha sees your feelings and emotions running high. There is a strong possibility of an emotional encounter with some close to you. You are likely to be swayed and influenced by the other in course of this meeting. Avoid getting into any kind of dispute or controversy.

#### GEMINI

Your day will be spent indulging in activities that appeal to you. You may go out shopping with your family members, or go out to dinner with friends. A leisurely, entertainment filled, fun day awaits you, says Ganesha.

#### CANCER

People will be stunned at the swift pace of your work. All your pending tasks and projects will fructify. But Ganesha counsels you not to do anything haphazardly or in any careless manner. Ganesha thinks you as an extraordinary orator.

#### LEO

Financial gains will make you happy today. You will have the opportunity to participate in social functions. All your work will get completed as per schedule. You will be able to channel your energy effectively, says Ganesha.

#### VIRGO

Consummation of work and success will be the high points today, says Ganesha. You will gain the much needed appreciation for your dedication to work and your desire to succeed in whatever you do. A long-awaited promotion may materialise today, and there is also the bright prospect of some monetary arrears coming your way.

#### LIBRA

Ganesha says that today is going to be an unforgettable day for all those people who are in love or a romantic relationship. If you plan to propose to your beloved today is a good opportunity for it as success will come easily to you. You will be able to spend a day filled with joy, happiness and enjoyment.

#### SCORPIO

Today, you must spend most of the time in meditation and introspection. If you do not meditate, you will be surrounded by negative thoughts and bitterness for others. According to Ganesha, this may hinder your progress and growth in career. Simple living and high thinking may make things easier for you.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Your stars are mighty today and plan a pleasant day for you, says Ganesha. You are a thorough professional and garner compliments for this attitude. You also have a knack to sail through all the troubles at work.

#### CAPRICORN

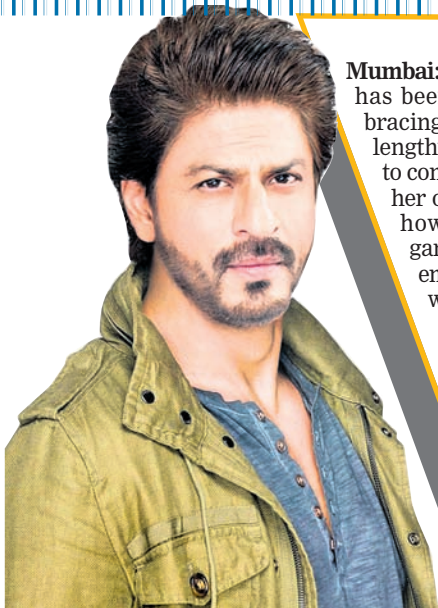
You love your family and you will try your best to live up to the expectations of your family members. If you are student, you will finish up your existing projects and get on with some fresh assignments, foretells Ganesha. Don't block your imagination; give yourself some freedom so that you can test your creativity and talent. You don't let yourself fly too high otherwise you may lose the track of reality.

#### AQUARIUS

You may have to remain indoors today. But, don't think that you will get bored. You can do a lot of things, like playing cards and other board games, reading, watching the natural world around, and what not.

#### PISCES

You will race ahead of you competition today. No matter what field you are in, you will find yourself at an advantageous point, well ahead of your contemporaries. You will be able to complete the task at hand with lesser effort than required.



## Jawan director calls SRK a visionary

**Chennai:** Director Atlee Kumar who is running high on the mammoth success of his recent release. His film *Jawan*, starring Shah Rukh Khan, Vijay Sethupathi and Nayanthara among others is shattering records and is on course to emerge as the highest grossing Indian film of the year, in his exclusive interview with media, shares how he reacted on being offered to direct Shah Rukh Khan, why he writes daddy roles the best and more.

In an exclusive interview, Atlee said, "Shah Rukh sir is a visionary person. When he called me, you know what the game is. I came and I said, 'Sir, it's a great opportunity for anybody in the world to work with you, Mr Khan'. He is something else. It's not even an opportunity, it is something else. So, I have done four films and that too in my territory and my space. Someone from a bigger territory, a bigger space, a bigger audience, bigger footfalls and the star of the country. He is a global icon of India. So, he came to me and said, 'I want to make an Atlee film. An Atlee film. What magic you create, I want you to create that magic'. That's where I felt he's a visionary."

The director continued, "I came up with my own writing and whatever I am good at, I feel personally, I wrote that to him. Then I found a character called Vikram Rathore. First hero of your life is your daddy. So I always write the daddy as best heroes and characters. I made Vikram Rathore like Rayappan of my previous film. So when I narrated him, he was very happy. He said, 'It has all your drama. We have to make it right.' When we did the look test, it was something else to me. The first shot, I still remember. I saw the shot and I knew the film is going to be something else which we have not seen. Khan sir for all these years. So I am very happy. I am very very happy and I've got god's blessing."

AGENCIES

## Vidya shares her fitness journey

**Mumbai:** Actress Vidya Balan, who has been outspoken about embracing body positivity and the lengthy journey she undertook to come to terms with and value her own body, recently disclosed how her mother's worries regarding her weight prompted her to embark on early diet and exercise routines, which had a profound impact on her body image.

Speaking about how her mother put her on a diet early on, the *Parineeta* actress said, "My mother had this fear that I was a chubby girl. So she was constantly doing things to make me lose weight because she grew up a big girl. She was scared about the fact that I would be judged like her. Parents are always worried for their children and I see that today. I used to be very angry with my mother; 'Why does she make me go through the exercise regime? Why is she making me diet so early?' Maybe it's because she was worried for me."

I grew up hating my body. I had developed hormonal issues very early on in my life because it was

the rejection of the body." She further said, "It's taken me a lot of work to reach this stage. People always come and tell me, 'You must not be exercising.' And only if they knew that I love exercise and I am consistent at it because I love it. But for whatever reason, I don't have the quintessential heroine body. I have not been able to figure that out. I have been through a time where I have put in all the effort and I have not seen the result. The journey of acceptance started around the time I was maybe 30-31 and it's only been getting better."

On the work front, Vidya Balan was recently seen in *Neevai* and will be seen next in *Lovers*.  
AGENCIES

## 'Won't shun culture for ambition'

**New Delhi:** Actress Deepika Padukone, who was most recently seen in an extended cameo in the blockbuster film *Jawan*, said in an interview that in an attempt to break into the Western market, she wouldn't want to abandon her own culture and identity.

Speaking to a magazine, the *Housefull* actress said, "I have global ambitions, but much of it is being beyond a movie star. There is a lot I want to do globally as an individual. I find it fascinating and strange at the same time to think that we were almost apologetic about who we are and where we came from. We have always overcompensated because of this. I don't feel I need to move to another country or speak the way they speak in order to be accepted. Has the journey taken longer? Yes. But I sleep better knowing I am in my culture and I did it on my own terms."

On the work front, Deepika will be seen next in *Fighter* and *Kalki 2898 AD*.  
AGENCIES

## Sayantika harassed during B'desh shoot

**Kolkata:** Actress and TMC leader Sayantika Banerjee recently confirmed reports of harassment in Bangladesh, where she had gone for a shoot. Talking about facing problems on the sets of *Chayabaj*, said it was the choreographer Michael who misbehaved with her.

Sayantika said, "Initially, a teacher came for the dance shooting but he left because of monetary issues. Then the young boy called Michael came." "Michael, without my consent, held my hand and I stopped him in front of everyone," she added.

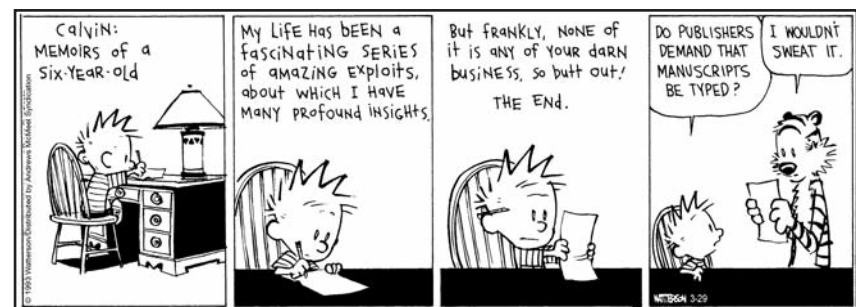
She also refuted allegations of not completing the shoot. "I am a professional artist and can't think of doing such things. Time and again, I tried to contact the producer regarding some technical issues but did not get any response. He has no planning and no management. We were suddenly told that a dance sequence would be shot. When Manirul did not respond after being called many times, I said that I would not work with Michael like this," added the 37 year old actress.  
AGENCIES



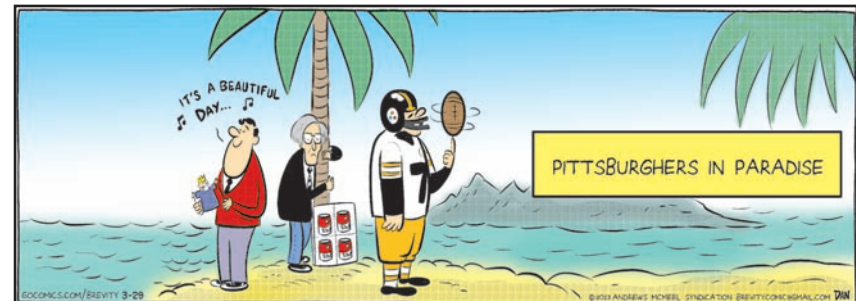
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

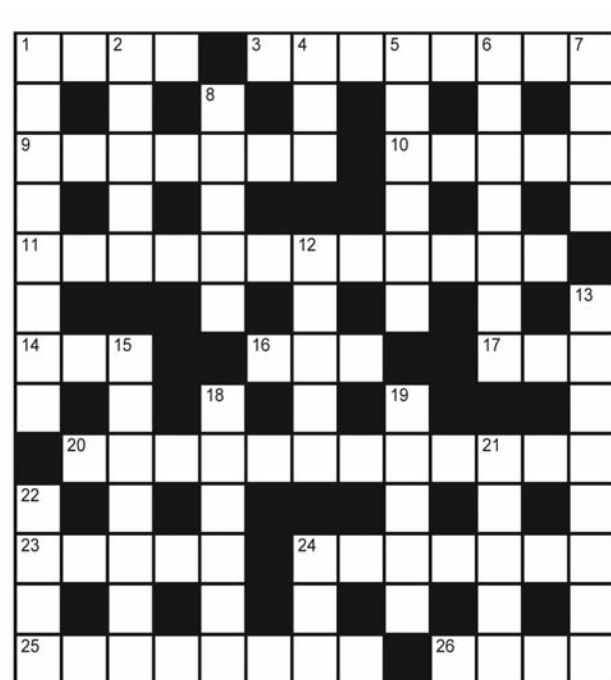


### BREVITY



### FUN post

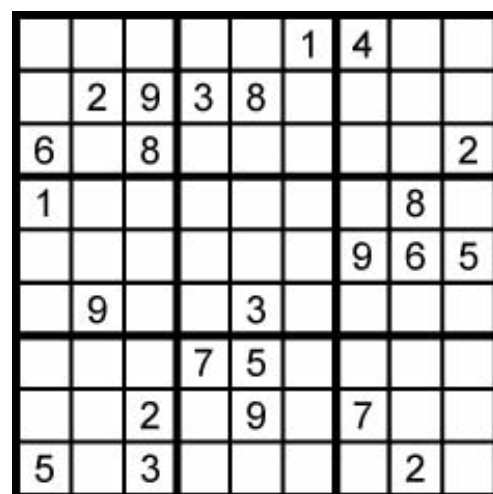
### CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2023 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Hunter's quarry
  - 3 King or queen (4,4)
  - 9 Old enough to know better?
  - 10 Turning point
  - 11 Perfume type (3,2,7)
  - 14 Samovar
  - 16 Dead letters?
  - 17 Ostrich relative
  - 20 Devil-may-care (5-2-5)
  - 23 Factory
  - 24 Toddler, in Calabria
  - 25 Dissects
  - 26 Uncertain
  - 6 Front money
  - 7 Spreadsheet numbers
  - 8 Euripides drama
  - 12 Behind on the bills
  - 13 Meddler
  - 15 Famous falls
  - 18 Voters' problem
  - 19 Heartthrob province
  - 4 Army member
  - 5 Hire
- Down**
- 1 Like a prima ballerina
  - 2 Former Portuguese province
  - 13 Meddler
  - 15 Famous falls
  - 18 Voters' problem
  - 19 Heartthrob province
  - 21 Decision maker
  - 22 Samoan capital
  - 24 Quilting party

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## PUJA IN MIND

A vendor arranges clay idols of Lord Ganesh near Gourishankar Park in Cuttack, Sunday



# Aid for kewra, betel leaf farmers

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** The state government has decided to provide financial assistance to kewra and betel leaf farmers of Odisha, an official said Sunday.

The move follows recent visits of ST Secretary VK Pandian to Puri and Ganjam districts where he interacted with kewra and betel leaf farmers and learnt about their issues.

Betel leaf farmers will get the assistance through a special scheme.

"Farmers having betel leaf plantation on at least 200 square metres of land would be eligible for the scheme. An eligible farmer would get financial assistance of Rs 2,500 per unit of betel leaf farming," an official said, adding



that a farmer can avail the aid for a maximum of two units.

Besides, betel leaf farmers would be provided interest-free loans up to Rs 1 lakh through Kishan Credit Card, the official said, adding that the Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department will prepare a set of guidelines in this regard.

"The state government will provide subsidies to the betel leaf processing units in Odisha. The Agricultural Promotion and

Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL) will prepare a detailed project report (DPR) in this regard," said the official.

The state government will provide incentives to kewra growers of Ganjam district by including them under the National Horticulture Mission.

Besides, the state government will provide financial assistance to the kewra growers from its own resources, said

the official.

"The government will provide assistance to the kewra farmers to mitigate their losses during natural calamities. The Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department and Ganjam district administration will jointly prepare modalities for the scheme," the official said.

Necessary steps will be taken for inclusion of kewra flower processing units in the Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyog Yojana of the state government, said the official.

The official further said that Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) or any other institute on agricultural research will be roped in to provide technical assistance to the kewra growers in Ganjam district.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL

**I.N.D.I. ALLIANCE IS MUZZLING THE PRESS FREEDOM BY BOYCOTTING THE NEWS...**



# 43 LAKH CHILDREN IN ANGANWADIS OBESE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** More than 43 lakh children in the 0-5 age group were identified as obese or overweight last month, accounting for around six per cent of the total children surveyed at anganwadi centres across the country, according to official data.

The data collected from the government-run rural child care centres also showed that the percentage of obese or overweight children was almost the same as that of severely and moderately malnourished children found in anganwadis - six per cent.

Out of the 7,24,56,458 children 'measured' in the 0-5 years age category, approximately six per cent or 43,47,387 children, were classified as obese or overweight, showed the data collated from growth monitoring app 'Poshan Tracker'.

Thirteen states and union territories, including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, exhibit obesity rates surpassing the national average of six per cent, it showed.

Childhood obesity has exhibited a concerning upward trend in recent years. There has been a notable increase in the percentage of children under five years of age who are overweight in NFHS-5 compared to NFHS-

**Out of the 7,24,56,458 children 'measured' in the 0-5 years age category, approximately six per cent children, were classified as obese or overweight, showed the data collated from growth monitoring app 'Poshan Tracker'**

4, according to data from the NFHS-4 (2015-16) and the NFHS-5 (2019-21).

A global study published by the World Obesity Federation recently showed that childhood obesity is a grave concern worldwide, and India is no exception. The study warned that if not addressed promptly, childhood obesity in India could see an annual rise of 9.1 per cent by 2035.

The study pointed out that the risk of obesity for boys in India may surge from three per cent in 2020 to 12 per cent within the next 12 years. For girls, the risk, which was at two per cent in 2020, may rise to seven per cent over the same period.

It also estimated that around 11 per cent of the Indian population will be obese by 2035, with an annual increase in adult obesity projected to be around 5.2 per cent between 2020 and 2035.

# 1 more associate of Irani nabbed

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested one more associate of the fraudster couple held recently in connection with the kidnapping and extortion case involving a doctor here.

The arrested was identified as Debananda Jena, 29, a resident of Narogada under Tamando police limits of the City.

The Commissionerate Police had earlier arrested Irani Patra, her husband Nishikanta, along with two of their associates - Manoranjan Pradhan and Saktikanta Harichandan - for duping several persons, including a doctor, a businessman and a student through 'honeypot'.

"We arrested Debananda Jena, a close associate of Irani and Nishikanta, for his involvement in the case. Using the Facebook account of Irani, the accused were sending friend requests to various persons and later extorting money from the victims," said Tamando police station IIC Subhrakanta Jena.

The mobile phone used by the gang to victimise people has also been seized. However, it was found that the accused usually deleted the messages (chats) with the victims after getting money from them, said Jena. So far, four cases have been registered against the gang after receiving complaints from victims, he said.

# CBI ARRESTS 7 FOR ODISHA SCHOOL TENDER BRIBERY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** The CBI has arrested the executive secretary to the CMD of Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited (BRIL), a PSU, and six others in connection with the alleged bribery of Rs 20 lakh to favour a Gujarat-based firm bag a Rs 56 crore tender for an Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) in Odisha, officials said Sunday.

Asish Razdan, the executive secretary to the chairman and managing director (CMD) of BRIL, Hetal Kumar Pravinchandra Rajyaguru, the proprietor of a Rajkot-based private firm, and five others - Shashank Kumar Jain, Somesh Chandra, Veer Thakkar, Rajiv Ranjan and Tarang Agarwal - have so far been arrested in the case, they said.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had received information from a source that Kolkata-based middleman Jain, allegedly working for BRIL officials, asked his co-conspirators Chandra and Ranjan to find a suitable party for the EMRS project, according to the FIR.

Ranjan and Chandra allegedly contacted Thakkar, who in turn arranged the Rajkot-based firm - H P Rajyaguru - the FIR said.

"It was alleged that a conspiracy was hatched amongst the said accused for getting the



tender of Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), Odisha awarded to the private company (HP Rajyaguru) in lieu of illegal gratification to an unknown public servant of Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited, Kolkata," a CBI spokesperson said.

The federal agency has accused Jain of demanding a bribe on behalf of unidentified BRIL officers from the owner of the private firm directly as well as through another private person for the awarding of the tender to it.

On August 10, Jain allegedly informed Chandra that he had ensured that the EMRS tender worth Rs 56 crore was awarded to HP Rajyaguru, as promised by him.

The very next day, Chandra allegedly told Ranjan that 4 per cent of the total contract value will be paid to Jain, of which 3 per cent will be used to bribe the BRIL officials while 1 per cent will

be divided among all the middlemen - Chandra, Jain, Ranjan and Thakkar - the FIR alleged.

The CBI had received information that the proprietor of the firm, Hetal Kumar Pravinchandra Rajyaguru, made multiple payments to the middlemen between August 12 and September 11.

Rajyaguru had allegedly assured Jain that he would send him Rs 20 lakh (approximately) through 'hawala' channels, meant for an unidentified public servant of BRIL - a public sector undertaking (PSU).

The agency laid a trap when the transaction was to take place in Kolkata, arrested two private persons and recovered the bribe amount of Rs 19.96 lakh.

"During the investigation, it was found that the said bribe was allegedly meant for the executive secretary to the CMD, Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited (a public servant). The said executive secretary and other private persons were also caught," the CBI spokesperson said.

He said the agency conducted searches on the premises of the accused at different locations in Kolkata, Delhi, Noida, Mumbai, Nagpur and Rajkot, which led to the recovery of several incriminating documents, digital evidence and Rs 26.6 lakh (approximately) in cash.

# Top court on Bar members' cooperation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** The Supreme Court has said that fairness is a 'hallmark of great advocacy' and if the members of the Bar do not cooperate with the trial courts, it would be very difficult for the courts to deal with huge arrears of cases.

The apex court made the observations while hearing a petition arising out of an order of the Bombay High Court. It noted that as per data available on the National Judicial Data Grid, there is a huge pendency of suits in the trial courts in Maharashtra.

"If the members of the Bar do not cooperate with the trial courts, it will be very difficult for our courts to deal with the huge arrears," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Rajesh Bindal said in its verdict delivered September 14.

The top court said while a trial is being conducted, the members of the Bar are expected to act as officers of the court and conduct themselves in a reasonable and fair manner.



"The members of the Bar must remember that fairness is a hallmark of great advocacy. If the advocates start objecting to every question asked in the cross-examination, the trial cannot go on smoothly. The trial gets delayed," it said.

The observations by the top court came after it noted that as per the trial court's recording in the matter, one of the advocates had taken objections on every question during the cross-examination of a witness.

The bench delivered its judgement on an appeal challenging the June 2021 order of the high court which had stayed the execution and operation of a judgement and decree passed by a district court on a suit filed by a firm engaged in selling country liquor.

Claiming that it has a copyright of the artistic label displayed on the bottles of the country liquor sold by it, the firm had claimed permanent injunction restraining another company from infringing copyright in its artistic label.

In its suit, the firm had also prayed for a decree of injunction restraining the other side from manufacturing, selling, offering for sale, advertising or otherwise dealing in country liquor having its trademark label or any deceptively similar trademark label.

# STATE COZYING UP TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES

ATRI PRASAD ROUT, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** The Indian government has set an aim for 30 per cent electric vehicle (EV) penetration by 2030. Similarly, the Odisha government aspires to achieve 20 per cent electric vehicles on road by 2025. As we nearly approach the end of 2023, that destination seems far away.

Currently in Odisha, as the data for 2023, till mid-September, show electric vehicles account for a mere 6 per cent of total vehicle registrations (Chart 1), which is not surprising as nationally the share of EVs in total vehicle registrations also stands around 6 to 8 per cent. However, on a positive note, as EVs are becoming economically viable, they are being preferred over petrol vehicles, with people finding them environment-friendly as well as comfortable.

## Matter of convenience

Akshaya Mohanty, who runs a kirana store in Vani Vihar, got a Kinetic Flex this April for all practical reasons. "Unlike other electric scooters, this one's body is wide, much like an Activa, and price is almost the same. But the vehicle feels far lighter compared to petrol ones, which helps when you're old with weak knees and limbs," says Mohanty who is in his late-fifties and uses the scooter daily to carry good-to his store.

"I charge it at home once and use it for three days, it's perfect if you're living in a city with good roads," says Mohanty, adding, "We had also considered petrol scooters, but as electric is now in trend decided to give it a try."

Electric is indeed now in trend. Three years back, in 2020, in Odisha, there were only 610 registered electric scooters. But that number jumped eight times to 4,943 in 2021. And in

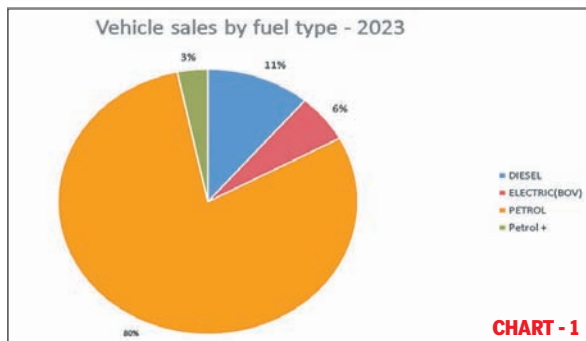


CHART - 1

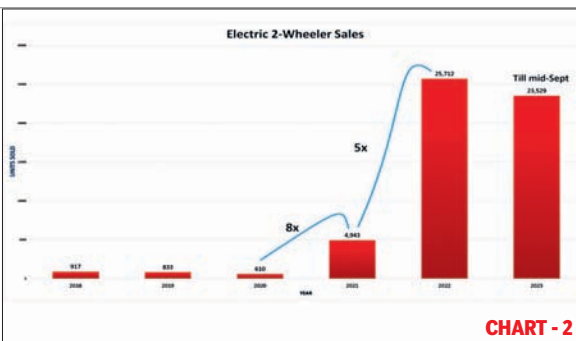


CHART - 2

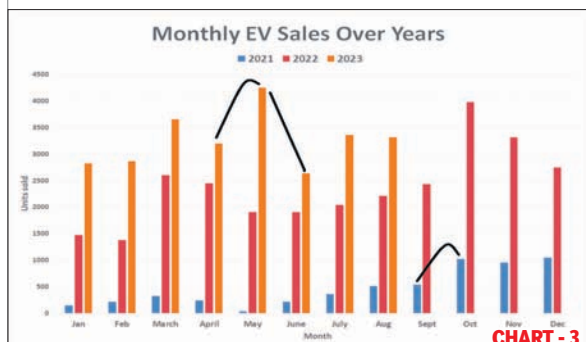


CHART - 3

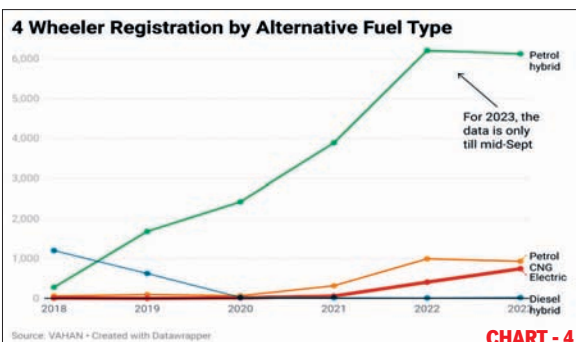


CHART - 4

2022, keeping up the momentum, the number of electric scooters further jumped to 25,712, a phenomenal five times rise (Chart 2) over the previous year. With more than 23,000 scooters already registered, 2023 is well on its way to secure a high growth rate, though it might not be as impressive as the two before.

## Govt handholding

The jump in electric scooter registrations in 2021 came as a result of change in government regulations. In September that year, the state government started implementing the Odisha Electric Vehicle Policy, 2021, which enabled 100 per cent exemption of motor vehicles taxes (road tax) and registration fees for all battery-

operated vehicles (BOVs) till December 31, 2025. For the first time, electric scooter registrations in Odisha crossed the 1,000 mark in October, 2021 (Chart 3).

In April 2023, to encourage EV buyers, the state government further enhanced subsidies and the incentives pushed EV sales up 33 per cent in the next month (Chart 3). At the same time, the Central government, as part of the second phase of its Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME) scheme was also offering subsidies on EVs, as a result of which EV sales had soared.

But in 2023, the government had to reassess the incentives after com-

plaints about several manufacturers violating the scheme norms, importing parts and manipulating product pricing. The incentives were lowered for electric scooters and as scooter sales contribute the most to EV sales, the registrations took a nosedive in June, 2023 (Chart 3), including in Odisha.

"Government support is absolutely essential for more EV penetration. We cannot imagine growth without government help," says Kailash Chaudhury of eDrive India, a company that deals in low-speed (250watt) electric scooters. "If you consider the competitive pricing, it won't simply be profitable for us to manufacture these vehicles here when Chinese compo-

# 500 km of rly line target in current FY: Vaishnaw



**Informing about new Khurda-Bolangir railway line project, Union Railway Minister said work from Khurda to Daspalla and from Bolangir to Subarnapur has been completed**

about 50 km of new railway lines were being constructed earlier, now it has been enhanced to 450 km last year, he said.

"A target has been set to lay 500 km of railway line in the current financial year," the minister informed.

On the new Khurda-Bolangir railway line, Vaishnaw said work from Khurda to Daspalla and from Bolangir to Subarnapur has been completed.

"Speedy work is under progress for the remaining portion of the project," he added.

Vaishnaw was speaking here at an event organised to witness the launch of the PM Vishwakarma Yojana in Delhi.

from Odisha used to visit New Delhi to seek funds for the state for railway projects, he said.

"At that time, Odisha was receiving on an average ₹800 crore in a year as railway allocation in budget. Now, the Modi government has allocated ₹10,000 crore to the state for the railway sector in the latest budget," Vaishnaw said.

The pace of railway work has also increased in the state. While

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Sunday said the Odisha government no longer has to approach the Centre to seek funds for development of the sector as it has provided the "highest-ever" allocation to the state this year. During the regime of the previous government, delegations

## EOW quizzes Sambad publisher

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** A day after a former district correspondent of Sambad leveled allegations of loan fraud against the proprietor of Eastern Media Limited Soumya Rajan Patnaik, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police Sunday questioned the Odia daily's publisher Kamalakant Mahapatra in connection with the alleged fraud. The former district correspondent has alleged that the HR and finance department of the media house on instructions of Patnaik, used to avail loans from various banks by furnishing fake salary certificate of employees. The complainant accused Patnaik of embezzling the loan money.

## Rabies declared as 'notifiable disease'

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** The Health and Family Welfare department recently declared human rabies as a 'notifiable disease' in Odisha. In a letter, department secretary Shalini Pandit said, "Rabies, a viral disease present in India can result in human deaths. Human rabies incidents depend on dog related transmission parameters." Dogs are the main source of the human rabies, 99 per cent of rabies transmission in humans occurs due to dog bites. But rabies is preventable with timely and appropriate post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). So no stones should be left unturned to eliminate deaths related to rabies, said Pandit.

"The global call is to achieve 'Zero Human deaths' due to rabies by 2030. National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) is being implemented in India to address the issues and challenges of rabies surveillance in India. And clear case definitions have been formulated for reporting suspected cases, Probable cases or confirmed cases, along with deaths, should be reported through the IDSP-IHIP portal," a health department official said. As per the new rule, every suspect, probable and confirmed cases of rabies is to be notified to the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) by public health officers, public and private hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. Then the district health authorities will report such cases to the state nodal officer for NRCP/SSU, IDSP through IDSP-IHIP portal.

## 'Children teaching us through their paintings'



**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** An exhibition of paintings made by tribal children from remote hamlets of Odisha was inaugurated by Tata Steel Foundation in collaboration with ASPIRE at the Lalit Kala Akademi here Sunday. The exhibition will continue till September 19.

The exhibition is displaying a total of 111 paintings by 98 tribal children. These children come from 57 schools studying in classes III to IX. The 57 schools whose students participated in the exhibition are spread across 9 blocks of Jajpur and Kendujhar districts - Banspal, Champua, Danagadi, Ghatgaon, Jhumpura, Joda and Sukinda.

The children belong to the 12 tribes viz Bathudi, Bhuiya, Bhumij, Gandia, Gond, Ho, Kolha, Mankirdia, Munda, Samti, Santhal and Sounti. Some of these are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

The young students living in the remotest tribal hamlets,

made the paintings with crayons, pencil colours, sketch pens and water colours.

Joining as chief guest, BMC Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange said, "The paintings we see here today talk of the tribal way of life, of finding beauty in the simplest of activities, of the bounty of nature that often goes unnoticed. The children are not just showcasing their own learning but also teaching us in a way."

CSR, Odisha head Ambika Prasad Nanda said, "This is a first-of-its-kind painting exhibition for us wherein we intend to take the larger narrative of education and tribal wisdom through the lens of children and their artistic skills."

Tata Steel Foundation Education Head Smita Agarwal said, "These paintings show that children's potential is limitless. No matter what their background, the moment the right opportunities of learning are created for them, they blossom beyond what we can imagine."



**ARCHITECT OF UNIVERSE:** Staffers of the Ranihat TPCODL Electricity Office celebrated Vishwakarma Puja in Cuttack, Sunday

## Sikharchandi Hill to be a tourist spot

**AROUND 5,000 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE 'SABUJA PAHADA' INITIATIVE SUNDAY BY PLANTING MORE THAN 3,400 SAPLINGS OF DIFFERENT SPECIES ACROSS 5 ACRES**

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) will transform Sikharchandi Hill here into a major tourist attraction hub by developing basic amenities, an official said Sunday.

BDA vice-chairman Balwant Singh said a slew of facilities such as parking, community centre, children playing areas, recreational centre, trekking route, view point, battery-operated vehicles for PwDs, electric buses, dedicated and separate zones for picnickers are being constructed for visitors at an estimated cost of ₹30 crore.

Notably, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had approved the master plan for redevelopment of the hill in January. The project will spread over a patch of land measuring nearly 54 acres, including the main temple and its surrounding areas.

Meanwhile, to enhance green



coverage in the hill, a community plantation drive was jointly organised by BDA, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) Sunday morning.

More than 3,400 saplings of different species were planted across five acres with the participation of over 5,000 people including 2,000 school and college

students, officials said. Speaking on the occasion, Singh said, "The main purpose of this drive is to give a further boost to the green cover in and around this place by involving every section of the society."

OFDC managing director Suresh Pant said, "People's spontaneous participation in the programme is the key to increasing the green cover in and around our surroundings. We should and must do something every day to protect our environment for us and for our future generations."

Revealing the further plans, he said that as many as 18,000 trees of various species will be planted at Sikharchandi and its foothills. "This target will be achieved by end of this month. The BDA has earmarked a budget of around ₹3.51 crore. OFDC has taken up the responsibility of maintaining these trees for five years from the date of plantation," he added.

## 'Apollo Hosp well equipped to treat genital urinary cancers'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** Apollo Cancer Centre, Bhubaneswar conducted a CME on recent advances in the management of genital urinary cancers, Sunday.

"Apollo Cancer Centre is well equipped with cutting edge technology for the treatment of genital urinary cancers including Robotic surgeries, advanced radiation techniques like SBRT, VMAT with motion management and immunotherapy," said Alok Srivastava, COO and DMS.

"Use of advanced radiation techniques in the treatment of these cancers has enabled us for better organ preservation and rather improved physical and sexual functioning and consecutively a better quality of life" said Shithi Das, senior consultant radiation oncologist and organizing secretary for CME.

Sunil Jaiswal, senior consultant, surgical oncologist and co-organizing secretary, explained the importance of minimally invasive surgery such as Robotic surgery and how it has gained traction in recent times due to lesser blood loss and shorter hospital stay in the treatment of Genito Urinary malignancies.

Renowned oncologists from premier cancer centres across the state and the country like SN Senapati, HOD radiation oncology AHPGIC, Ghanashyam Biswas, senior medical oncologist, Sparsh Hospital, Bhubaneswar; Tanveer Shahid, senior consultant, Apollo Gleneagles Cancer Hospitals, Kolkata, Sambit Mohanty and molecular oncologist and oncopathologist, Core Diagnostics, New Delhi attended the CME.

# Aviation sector to get boost through revenue sharing

**A** new study by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow and University of Liverpool has found that revenue sharing by airports and airlines can help them become eco-friendlier and give the aviation sector a sustainable boost of growth.

Led by IIM Lucknow, the study sheds light on how airlines and airports can collaboratively achieve sustainable growth through various agreements.

Moreover, the government can also step in, acting as an overall leader - enabling a further greening of this sector by imposing taxes, the study has suggested.

The study has been published in the European Journal of Operational Research and

Transportation Research.

"Airlines in India have been working on improving fuel efficiency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This involves adopting more fuel-efficient aircraft, optimising flight routes, and implementing operational practices that minimise fuel consumption, reducing taxi times, and implementing procedures to minimise unnecessary fuel burn during delays in landing permissions," said Suresh K. Jakhar, Associate Professor, IIM Lucknow.

"With the urgency to decarbonise the aviation sector gaining momentum, the study addresses the crucial role that collaboration between airlines and airports plays in advancing



sustainability. The team used data collected from publicly available secondary sources which include airline and airport schedules and financial and other documents available with airlines," Jakhar said.

"We have addressed fundamental questions about how co-ordinated agreements between airlines and airports can bring better results for the economy, the

environment, and society. We have also shown the effects of environmental and social factors on airport charges, ticket prices, and the demand for air travel," he added.

The study highlights the roles of reciprocity, fairness, and passengers' environmental awareness in the coordination of airports and airlines.

It presents a detailed frame-

■ According to a study by IIM Lucknow, revenue sharing by airports and airlines can help them become eco-friendlier and give the aviation sector a sustainable boost of growth

■ The study sheds light on how airlines and airports can collaboratively achieve sustainable growth through various agreements

■ The government can also step in, acting as an overall leader -- enabling a further greening of the sector by imposing taxes, the study suggested

■ In the aviation industry, an airline's performance determines the airport's demand, while the airport needs to facilitate the airline by providing the necessary infrastructure

work for achieving triple-bottom-line growth. This framework includes airlines investing in eco-friendly practices, airports taking on corporate social responsibility initiatives, both supplemented by government interventions.

According to the study, in the aviation industry, an airline's

performance determines the airport's demand, while the airport needs to facilitate the airline by providing the necessary infrastructure. This inter-dependency has to be well coordinated, failure of which would lead to limited economic growth, environmental protection and social development.

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**TRIBAL BALLET:** Tribals perform a dance at the foundation stone laying ceremony of Adivasi Sanskrutik Bhawan at Totaguda Square under Dudukabahal panchayat of Kashipur block in Rayagada district, Sunday

## Shifting of courts to Remuna sparks anger

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, Sept 17:** The Balasure district administration's bid to shift all judicial courts functioning in Balasure town to Remuna about 12 km from this district headquarters town has sparked sharp resentment and anger among the denizens, a report said Sunday.

The matter came to the fore at a meeting of the Balasure Civil Society group held at the Utha Jalasechan Karmachari Bhawan here, Sunday.

The society members termed the move as an inconsequential and imprudent decision of the district administration and strongly opposed the move at a meeting presided over by its president Antaryami Pradhan.

Reports said that Remuna tehsildar had issued a notice August 21 inviting objections and complaints on the issue. The Remuna tehsil officials have launched process to identify land for establishment of the courts at Bidyadharpur mouza under ward no-7 of Notified Area Council (NAC) in Remuna.



They said that shifting of the courts to Remuna is not prudent when there is road and rail transport facilities to the district headquarters town. They said that they will involve other social outfits and oppose the move.

The speakers said that they will submit a memorandum in this regard to the Chief Minister, Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, District and Sessions Judge and the district administration next week. They will also conduct a signature campaign in next month and submit memorandum to the state government and judiciary comprising the signatures of 1 lakh residents.

Society secretary Manoj Nayak, advisor Gourang Panigrahi, former MLA Pradipta Kishore Panda and Sitaram Pradhan were present in the meeting.

## 11 new scrub typhus cases in Sundargarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 17:** Eleven more people were found scrub typhus positive in Sundargarh district Sunday, taking the total number of such cases in the district to 180, a health official said.

59 samples were sent for testing, of which 11 were detected positive for scrub typhus, he said.

Of the 180 infected people, 10 patients are from outside Odisha and nine are from other districts, said Kanhucharan Nayak, chief district medical officer (CDMO) of Sundargarh. Significantly, most of the patients are from Sundargarh Sadar and Balishankara blocks, he added.

The district had Saturday reported seven positive cases.



Scrub typhus infection spreads through bites of infected chigger (larval mites).

If fever continues for a period of four or five days, one should go for the test which is available free of cost, he said.

The testing for scrub typhus

is being done at Rourkela Government Hospital and the Sundargarh district health centre. The Health department is deploying Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife volunteers to spread awareness about the disease.

So far, seven people have died due to the disease in Odisha. While six deaths have been reported from Bargarh district, one person has succumbed to the infection in Sundargarh.

Meanwhile, the Health department sent a three-member medical team from Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla to Bargarh Saturday to monitor the situation and suggest steps to control it.

The three-member medical team comprises assistant professor Dr. Shankar Ramchandani, assistant professor and microbiologist Dr. Satyabrata Thakur, and assistant professor of community medicine Dr. Udaya Kumar Nayak. After reaching Bargarh and before going to the field for investigation, the team held discussions with the district chief medical officer (CDMO) Jitendra Mohan Bebartta.

Currently, there are 11 active cases in Bargarh district, officials said. People, who frequently visit farmland or forests, are vulnerable to the infection.

The most common symptoms of scrub typhus disease include fever and a black inflamed mark on the skin called 'eschar'.

## Paddy saplings flower in fortnight; farmers frown

**DEFAUDED FARMERS DEMAND GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND STRINGENT ACTION AGAINST THE UNSCRUPULOUS TRADERS SELLING FAKE SEEDS**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pattamundai, Sept 17:** Farmers under this block in Kendrapara district have been pushed into distress as panicles have appeared nearly a fortnight after they transplanted paddy saplings, a report said Sunday.

Shocked over the development, farmers have apprised officials in the local agriculture office of the matter and the officials have promised to undertake a spot visit to review the situation.

Farmers alleged that the seed shops have cheated them because they were not aware of the seed varieties.

Santosh Padhi, a farmer of Beltala village under Pattamundai municipality limits said that he had visited the Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society (PACS) to purchase government approved seeds for cultivation on his 2 acre farmland. However, he was forced to buy from the local shops after seeds were not available at the PACS.

The seeds which he had bought from the local shops failed to sprout. He thought it might be due to scanty rainfall and again bought and planted seeds on his farmland. The seeds grew into saplings and he transplanted them on his farmland.

However, much to his surprise the saplings started flowering within a fortnight of their



transplantation. He said that it takes at least four and half months for the saplings to flower but flowers appearing within just a fortnight after transplantation has pushed him into distress.

The flowers on the saplings are very weak and of sub-standard quality. He feared that he may not be able to reap a good harvest this kharif season.

Social activist Pratap Padhi said that the onslaught of natural calamities and the negligence of Agriculture department have become bane for the farmers.

He said that the start of kharif season has been quite worrisome for the farmers. Issues such as scanty rainfall, lack of paddy seeds and sale of sub-standard seeds have been troubling the farmers from the start.

Undeterred, the farmers have carried on with their agricultural works but flowering of saplings within a fortnight of transplantation has disappointed the farmers.

Many farmers have alleged that this situation has cropped up due to sale of sub-standard and fake seeds.

Both the Centre and state government are claiming of providing quality paddy seeds, fer-

tilizers and pesticides to the farmers at subsidised rates. The government has also formed various primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS) to provide seeds, fertilizers and medicines to the farmers.

However, in reality, the government and the PACS have failed to ensure timely supply of seeds, fertilizers and medicines. The government should look into such problems, Pradhan and other farmers said.

Another farmer Susant Samal said he was forced to buy seeds from the open market after he failed to get those from the PACS. "If I fail to get a good harvest, how will I be able to meet my family expenses and repay the loans I have taken for cultivation?" he lamented adding that the state government should urgently intervene and provide compensation.

When contacted, additional agriculture officer Sarat Nayak said that the seeds supplied by the state government through PACS undergo quality check in four stages.

The government will supply new seeds in case the previously supplied seeds fail. There is no provision for compensation in cases of seeds brought from the open market, he said.

## PMKY: 6K FARMERS YET TO UPDATE THEIR E-KYC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rasulpur, Sept 17:** As many as 6,000 farmers in 28 panchayats under this block of Jajpur district are likely to be deprived of assistance under the Centre-sponsored Pradhan Mantri Kisan Yojana (PMKY) as their e-KYC (Know Your Customer) details are yet to be updated online.

The farmers should immediately visit the common service centres - Jan Seva Kendra or Mo Seva Kendra - and get their e-KYC verified, block agriculture officer Biswabijay Mishra said. Any delay in getting the e-KYC verified online will deprive the farmers of the benefits of the Centre-sponsored scheme, he added.

Moreover, the subsidy assistance provided by the Centre to the farmers on various crops may not be credited to their bank account through direct benefit transfer (DBT) and Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS), the block agriculture official said.

Sources said that the farmers should get their e-KYC verified



immediately and update it in the farmers' registration portal.

The block agriculture office has asked the ground level agriculture workers to sensitise the farmers on updating their e-KYC as well as to inform them through local panchayat representatives.

Sources said over 20,000 farming families excluding the landless farmers are receiving financial assistance under PMKY. Meanwhile, many of the farmers have been included under

state-sponsored KALIA Yojana while others are applying for inclusion of their names.

The state has registered the names of eligible beneficiaries for providing assistance under the KALIA Yojana. These beneficiaries are required to update e-KYC during their enrollment in PMKY.

Submission of e-KYC is possible if the Aadhaar number of the farmer is linked with his mobile phone number. However, many farmers are yet to link their numbers with Aadhaar and have also not abided by the e-KYC norms.

As a result, thousands of farmers under this block are likely to get deprived of PMKY benefits.

The block agriculture official said that every farmer should get his e-KYC verified with the Krushak Sathi and village level agriculture worker. All those left out should visit the Jan Seva Kendra and get themselves enrolled in PMKY by submitting the copy of their Aadhaar card and other certificates.

## Poacher held with country-made arms

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nilagiri, Sept 17:** A poacher was arrested with seizure of two country-made guns from his possession near Gohirabhol in Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary under Nilagiri forest division in Balasure district Saturday.

The poacher was identified as Ramachandra Kushmalia, 41, of Betakata village under Keshipur panchayat and Berhampur police limits.

As per reports, the Forest department got a tip-off about the poacher's entry from Balianal beat area under Jodachua forest in Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary and as per the instruction of Kuldiha ranger Prabir Murmu a team was formed to nab him.

Forester Soumyaranjan Majhi, forest guards and green force participated in the raid and arrested Kushmalia. A case (No-6-K 2023-24) was registered by Kuldiha Forest department in this regard and the poacher was forwarded to court, Kuldiha ranger Murmu said.



## Five Maoists surrender



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 17:** Five Maoist cadres including one carrying ₹1 lakh reward on his head surrendered before Dantewada police in Chhattisgarh across the Malkangiri district border Sunday.

The five Red rebels were identified as Kesru aka Kohla Alami of Parlana village under Orcha police limits of Narayanput district who has ₹1 lakh bounty on his head as declared by the gov-

ernment, Badru Alami of Parlana village in Dantewada district and Bijja Madbi, Madke Kabasi, Hadme Mandbi of Takopara village.

All the five were engaged in putting up Maoist posters, banners, and distributing leaflets.

As per reports, all these surrendered Maoists are the active members of Katakalyan and Indrabati area committee of Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh. Till date a total of 644 Maoists have surrendered, Dantewada police said.

## Rare snakes rescued in Joda

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda, Sept 17:** Two rare species of snakes which are on the verge of extinction have been rescued Sunday from Joda in Keonjhar district.

One of snakes identified as Ornate Flying Snake was rescued at Bhuyan slum in Joda town. This species of snake is known for its bright colour and morphology. It is not venomous, state's known snake catcher Chandan Mohanty told this correspondent.

This snake can easily fly from one branch of a tree to another, which is why it is known as Ornate Flying Snake, Mohanty said. It defies logic by being able to glide through the air from tree to tree.

Similarly, another rare snake species Bamboo Pit Viper was rescued from Kamar Joda area.



It is green in colour and is poisonous, Mohanty said. The two snakes after their rescue were released in the nearby jungle.

Mohanty said that people should not kill snakes out of fear and call the forest personnel or authorised snake catchers to catch the reptiles. The snakes come out due to high moisture content during the rainy season, he added.



## PM Vishwakarma Scheme launched

**Sambalpur:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday launched the 'PM Vishwakarma Scheme' here through video conferencing from New Delhi. On this occasion, Ministry of Railways on behalf of Ministry of MSME had organised the event at Biju Patnaik Auditorium of Sambalpur University at Burla. John Barla, Minister of State for Minority affairs, Suresh Pujari, MP (Lok Sabha) Bargarh and Nauri Nayak, MLA, Rengali were present to grace the occasion.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER & DPC, BALANGIR**

**Procurement Notice** No.n-184

Email ID: [dpcbalangirssa.opepa@nic.in](mailto:dpcbalangirssa.opepa@nic.in)  
No.VIII/CW/18/2023 2409 dated 15.09.2023

1. The District Education Officer & DPC, Samagra Shiksha, Balangir on behalf of Government of Odisha invites unit Rate bid in double cover in offline mode for Incinerator & vending machines for schools of Balangir District. As detail on technical bid for eligibility of original manufacturer / authorized suppliers.
2. Nos. of Incinerator for Pad disposal & Pad Vending Machine: 1138 Nos.
3. Tender paper cost: Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand) only.
4. EMD: 341500/- (Rupees three lakh forty one thousand five hundred) only.
5. Date and time available in web portal: 10 hrs. of 18th Sept. 2023 to 17 hrs. of dt.17th Oct. 2023.
6. Date of opening of technical bid of the tender: 18th Oct. 2023 at 11.00 hrs. Venue: DPC, Conference Hall, Balangir.
7. The bidders have to participate in offline bidding only. Further detail can be seen from the Web Portal (<http://www.balangir.nic.in>).
8. Any corrigendum / addendum will be displayed in the above web portal.

Sd./- District Education Officer & DPC  
Samagra Shiksha, Balangir

OIPR-2707/11/0002/2324

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# NATURE-POSITIVE INNOVATION



As climate change worsens, we must move beyond technological fixes that accelerate production and promote consumption. Indigenous practices and tools, like the traditional halibut fishing hook of the Pacific Northwest, demonstrate the importance of approaching design with a deep knowledge of and respect for the environment

can help us rebalance our values and recognise the importance of interdependence, the common good, localisation, a more distributed economy, and biodiversity.

These are all key aspects of economist Kate Raworth's groundbreaking book Doughnut Economics, in which she critiques the dominant economic system and proposes an economic system suited to the twenty-first century. In the same vein, Wales, as a member of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, is attempting to transform its economy to ensure a good quality of life for all and to achieve harmony with the natural world. Transformation is progressing via a host of bottom-up (rather than centralised, top-down) initiatives, including local food production, swap shops, co-working spaces, "women's sheds," peppercorn rents for small businesses, local wealth-building projects, leadership training courses in nature-based well-being, and regular public-engagement panels.

As global warming accelerates, innovation must move beyond technological novelties whose main purpose is to generate profits for shareholders. Tools like the halibut hook of the Pacific Northwest and the localisation initiatives in Wales demonstrate the need for a different set of values. Embracing resilient and restorative design that respects and supports the environment, social equity, and cultural traditions, while also building a vibrant economy that benefits everyone, is the only way to create a future that lasts.

The writer, Professor of Design for Sustainability at Manchester School of Art, is the author of Design for Resilience: Making the Future We Leave Behind (MIT Press, August 2023).

PROJECT SYNDICATE

What if we could build wooden houses without felling a tree? What if we could fish in such a way that left egg-producing females in the sea? And what if we could fill our forests with a wide array of edible plants, making commercially farmed forests look comparatively barren? Though they may seem impossible, these practices have existed for centuries, suggesting that the future we need is to be found in our past.

Climate change has become a time bomb, and the need to develop new ways of living that are far gentler on the planet has never been greater. But we stubbornly adhere to the same old mantra of innovation, technology, and unrestrained growth – offering lip service to sustainability while encouraging nature-destroying activities that are rapidly making the planet unlivable.

Even so-called "green" technologies accelerate production and promote consumption. Consider electric vehicles, bicycles, and scooters: manufacturing these goods requires ever more energy and resources and inevitably results in more emissions and waste.

While living in Canada, I had the opportunity to learn from its indigenous peoples. In the town of Port Hardy, on the northern tip of Vancouver Island, I met an indigenous fisherman at the municipal wharf, which was crowded with small fishing boats. He told me that he used to fish for halibut until industrialised fishing decimated the stocks. Now he fishes only for salmon; but those stocks are dwindling, too.

Before the Europeans arrived, indigenous peoples around the world had lived on their tribal lands for thousands of years; even after centuries of dispossession, many continue to be

close to the Earth. They have learned, over generations, how to coexist with, rather than exploit, nature and developed highly sophisticated tools, mostly made of local materials. The design and utility of these tools reflect a deep knowledge of and respect for the natural world. By comparison, our modern innovations often seem frivolous and irresponsible.

Take, for example, the humble halibut fishing hook. Mass-produced hooks, which can be bought for pennies, are not made to last and can be easily replaced – like so many of today's products. The traditional halibut hook of the Pacific Northwest, however, is something else entirely.

This artifact seamlessly integrates many of the objectives that we are struggling to achieve in design today: functionality, sustainability, and conserva-

tion. It also embodies the creativity, artistic expression, ecological knowledge, spiritual beliefs, and cultural heritage of its indigenous makers. Perhaps most importantly, the hook is sized to catch only the male halibut, which is smaller than the female, thus preserving fish stocks for the future. This approach to fishing, like traditional indigenous methods of boat building, house construction, and forest management, ensures the continuation of community-based practices, while simultaneously conserving the natural environment.

The good news is that UNESCO, through its Intangible Cultural Heritage lists, supports the safeguarding of this type of local knowledge and know-how, which should play a foundational role in sustainable development. Indigenous practices



Stuart Walker

CLIMATE CHANGE HAS BECOME A TIME BOMB, AND THE NEED TO DEVELOP NEW WAYS OF LIVING THAT ARE FAR GENTLER ON THE PLANET HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER



THE MOTHER

## Golda Who Mattered

A movie starring Helen Mirren as Golda Meir has just opened, 50 years after the war that ended the Israeli prime minister's career. More snore than sleeper hit, Golda captures its subject's Chesterfield chain-smoking while brushing past a timely lesson about diplomacy: to be effective, leaders need to know each other's personalities as well as each other's national interests.

America, for its part, has blundered when presidents have confused the two. President Barack Obama thought he understood Syrian President Bashar al-Assad when Obama warned him that using chemical weapons would cross a "red line." Assad scoffed and used them anyway. Smelling weakness, Russian President Vladimir Putin all but goose-stepped into Crimea.

Donald Trump then conflated his personal rapport with North Korea's Kim Jong-un with policy, crowing that a "beautiful" letter from the dictator had changed the dynamic of US-North Korea relations. And President Joe Biden thought he had a handle on the Taliban when he ordered US troops to vacate Afghanistan. He didn't, and America's hasty departure left deadly Black Hawk and Apache choppers in the hands of a barbarous regime.

What about Meir? An immigrant to the United States from Russia, she could have enjoyed a comfortable life in Milwaukee. The valedictorian of her high school class, she once organised a fundraiser to buy books for poor refugee children. But instead of pursuing comfort, she moved to Tel Aviv in 1921 and slogged through Israel's difficult early history.

Meir was in Israel for the drought that sent farmers begging for drops of water. She held a fellow civilian as he died from a gunshot wound. And she witnessed British soldiers turning away Holocaust survivors who would end up back in detention camps.

Meir had deep-set bags under her eyes – as if to prove what she had seen. When sworn in as Israel's prime minister in 1969, she looked remarkably like the exhausted Lyndon Johnson who had just stepped down from the US presidency (give or take a foot and a half in height).

Male Zionists could be chauvinistic. The comedian Jackie Mason once joked that Israeli men looked so tan and macho that he was sure they must be Puerto Ricans. But Meir refused to be relegated to the women's section of any meeting. She became a key adviser to Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, who called her "the best man in my cabinet."

After Israel declared independence in 1948, Ben-Gurion asked Meir to oversee the defence of Jerusalem and food distribution. She imposed daily rationing of just three ounces of dried fish, lentils, macaroni, and beans. Sleep-deprived, she frequently ran the gauntlet from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. One day, while bullets strafed her bus, she covered her eyes. When asked why, she replied: "I'm not really afraid to die. ... But how will I live if I'm blinded? How will I work?" A few days later, her bus was ambushed while careening around a curve just outside Jerusalem. The man next to her died in her lap.

Smart, strong men found her appealing. US President Richard Nixon, overcoming his psychological demons, showed her his seldom-seen warm side. He also overrode Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to fulfill Meir's wartime requests as prime minister.

Kissinger had dithered over helping Israel during the surprise 1973 Yom Kippur attack, when Egyptian forces crippled the Israeli Air Force with new Soviet anti-aircraft and antitank missiles. Nixon finally said, "Look, Henry, we're going to get just as much blame for sending three as if we send thirty or a hundred... so send everything that flies."

Even more fascinating were Meir's close ties with the kings of Jordan, Abdullah and his grandson Hussein, whom she met with secretly for frank and friendly conversations. Just before Israel declared independence, she snuck to the Jordanian border, put on a black dress and a veil, and rode with the king's driver to a safe house in the hills. "Why are the Jews in such a hurry to have a state?" the king asked her. "We've waited two thousand years. That's not my definition of a hurry," she replied.

When Hussein later became king, he developed a strong personal relationship with Meir. In 1970, he asked her to direct the Israeli Air Force to destroy Syrian tanks amassed on Jordan's border, and the Syrians retreated under the threats. He also sometimes snuck into Israel to see her, piloting his own Bell helicopter and landing at a rendezvous point near the Dead Sea. Just days before the Yom Kippur war in 1973, he flew to a Mossad safe house to warn her of a possible attack. She and Hussein regretted that he did not have enough sway to hammer out a broad Israeli-Arab peace agreement. Heavy losses in the 1973 war cost her the premiership.

Four years later, when Egypt's Anwar Sadat made his courageous trip to Israel and told the cheering Knesset that "we truly welcome you to live among us in peace," Meir waited in the receiving line. They busied cheeks and joked about becoming grandparents. Years earlier, Meir had been convinced that Sadat could be a peacemaker. In that moment, a year before her death from cancer, she was finally proved right.

The writer is a former White House director of economic policy. PROJECT SYNDICATE



Todd G. Buchholz

To be effective, leaders need to know each other's personalities as well as each other's national interests

SPECTRUM COMMERCE

## Charting out path for growth

The G20 was a mega show. The success was in terms of Indian diplomacy carving out a delicate consensus on the war "in" Ukraine rather than "against". It was carefully chalked out economic planning, where India wins US investments and Arab and Western support through the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) for robust trade relations.

It follows Ukrainian President V Zelenskyy visiting Washington, during the UN General Assembly as the US Congress debates \$24 billion in military and humanitarian aid for his war-torn country as it continues to fight against Russia, though the Republicans are not in favour. Had there not been such a joint communiqué in New Delhi, Ukraine may not have got this largesse and Russia another 150 sanctions.

The bilateral agreement with US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi in a way facilitates it further. In a joint statement, the two leaders reiterated their support for building resilient global semiconductor supply chains, noting in this respect a multi-year initiative of Microchip Technology Inc., to invest approximately \$300 million in expanding its research and devel-

opment presence in India and Advanced Micro Device's announcement to invest \$400 million in India over the next five years to expand research, development, and engineering operations in the country.

The leaders expressed satisfaction at the ongoing implementation of announcements made in June 2023 by the US companies, Micron, LAM Research, and Applied Materials. Biden reaffirmed his support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member; and, in this context, welcomed once again India's candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat in 2028-29.

The two moves look different but are not so. The consensus communiqué facilitates enhanced aid to Ukraine despite the opposition from the Republicans. India gains and so does the US, the support of the largest democracy. It opens up further ways for Indo-US trade, as America has surpassed China in trade relationships with India. In 2023, India and the US surpass record value of \$128.78 billion. In 2022, the total bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to \$119.42 billion. Almost half of it is Indian exports. This changes the global scenario to quote UN Secretary

General Antonio Guterres, "It is time for a compromise for a better tomorrow. If we want a future of peace and prosperity based on equity and solidarity, leaders have a special responsibility to achieve compromise in designing our common future for our common good."

Guterres goes beyond, "I remain determined to do everything possible, to re-establish the Black Sea Initiative, the exports of Ukraine foodstuffs and also to go on, on our work in relation to the facilitation within the sanctions regime of the Russian foods and fertilizer products".

Post G20, the world orders are not easing, though Guterres says that is what he aims at with G77 and the "greatest G of all G193 – the High Level Week of the General Assembly." He says a multi-polar world is emerging. It can lead to escalating tensions, fragmentation and worse. Today's multilateral institutions that were created after the World War II reflect the power and economic dynamics of that and so they need reform.

"The only thing you can be sure is that I remain determined to do everything possible, to re-establish the Black Sea Initiative, the exports of Ukraine foodstuffs and also to go on, on our

work in relation to the facilitation within the sanctions regime of the Russian foods and fertilizer products," says Guterres. But all know his powers are compromised and he would not be able to do much.

In such a scenario, India has also to reassert itself and continue to have the balance between the US and Russia.

How is India doing for its own economy? It has 7.8 per cent GDP growth in the first quarter. That is not the real growth. The story told by the nominal numbers, however, is very different. The nominal figures track the real numbers until the first half of FY23, but then decline by a whopping 14 percentage points over the past three quarters. This is a narrative of an economy which has decelerated sharply to very modest levels also with lower investments.

The national income accounts suggest that after a strong recovery from the pandemic, there has been a significant ebbing of dynamism over the last three quarters to more modest levels recently. This suggests that with high debt and even G20 push, policymakers do not have the comfort of being complacent. They have to chart out the path for rapid growth.

INF A



Shivaji Sarkar

INDIA HAS TO REASSERT ITSELF AND CONTINUE TO HAVE THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE US AND RUSSIA

WISDOM CORNER

The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do. STEVE JOBS

The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus. BRUCE LEE

If you don't find a way to make money while you sleep, you will work until you die. WARREN BUFFETT

WORDSWORTH

Nipcheese

Nipcheese is a penny-pincher or skinflint, all three suggesting a sordidly covetous or penurious person who cuts the cost or quantity of everything to the minimum, often to his own benefit. Nip here is in the sense you might use when speaking of nipping off the heads of dead flowers or of nipping some enterprise in the bud, stopping it before it gets fully underway. Cheese features in the word because it's a staple food whose portions can easily be reduced by trimming them, an idea that we also have in cheeseparing. Nipcheese began life as a seafaring term, a nickname for a ship's purser, the officer responsible for provisioning and keeping the accounts. Pursers were a notoriously hard-hearted and tight-fisted breed of men, as Francis Grose explained in an entry for nipcheese in his Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue in 1788: "A nick name for the parser of a ship: from those gentlemen being supposed sometimes to nip, or diminish, the allowance of the seamen, in that and every other article."

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Disadvantage Naidu

Sir, Striking at an opportune moment to humiliate a rival is a norm in Indian politics. The latest example is the arrest of Telugu Desam Party chief N Chandrababu Naidu in the skill development scam case. Whether or not the former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister was complicit in the scam is for the courts to decide. However, the timing of the arrest has certainly raised eyebrows as the state goes to polls in April, 2024. Rumour mill had gone overboard about his joining hands with the BJP again. This is what his betenoire Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is hell bent to prevent because a BJP-TDP alliance is a huge political disadvantage for Jagan. An inert Naidu is a plus for Jagan who is known to be on good terms with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Evidently, he desires to keep that relation to his advantage. Naidu hoped for a groundswell of support. But going by the prevailing public mood, that possibility looks remote.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Agrarian crisis

Sir, Sir, It is really sad that suicides of farmers, who are the backbone of our country, are on the rise. According to the National Crime Records Bureau data, a total of 10,881 persons from the farming sector have ended their lives in 2021. Small and marginal farmers toil right through the day to eke out a living by selling whatever little they produce, but they are unable to reap their rightful benefits out of it, and the Centre, as ever, continues to turn a Nelson's eye to their miseries. Recurring drought, scarcity of water for irrigation, combined with a lack of modern farming equipment, have all contributed to a steep fall in productivity and income, forcing our farmers to take huge loans, without being able to repay them. There is widespread perception that the agrarian crisis is an outcome of natural calamities which none can fight. Governments, over the years, have used this to hide their inefficiencies in problem-solving. The time has come to scrutinise the impact of reforms on Indian agriculture. An agrarian crisis is a much broader phenomenon than it is understood by many.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

# Raj unveils plan to showcase lesser-known destinations

## Jodhpur RIFF to be held from Oct 26-30

**Jaipur, Sept 17:** The Rajasthan government is all set to unlock the tourism potential of lesser-known places as it has identified two sites in selected districts for their development as new tourism sites.

The sites are being developed in various districts, including Alwar, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Bundi, Bharatpur, Banswara, Dausa, Dungarpur, Jodhpur, Jhalawar, Jalore, Jhunjhunu, Karauli, Nagaur, Sirohi, Bikaner, Chittorgarh, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer, Jaipur, at a cost of

70.06 crore.

An official said the move will transform the tourism landscape of the state which offers a range of tourism sites, from desert to hill station.

"Two tourist destinations have been identified in districts and development work has started through the Tourism Development Fund," Gayatri Rathore, principal secretary, tourism, said.

She said new tourist places will be developed and the benefits of the tourism industry will be available district-wise in the state.



Director of the tourism department, Rashmi Sharma said work is going on at a fast pace to promote tourism in the state.

Public Works Department for the development of tourism sites," she said.

"Rajasthan is not just about forts and places, many more sites are there in the state which has great potential to be developed as tourist attractions," another official said.

There has been a record arrival of tourists on extended weekends and New Year, particularly in Jaipur, Udaipur and Jaisalmer which has necessitated development of facilities for tourists, Gaurav Bhatt, a tourist guide, said.

In August, Udaipur witnessed

a record surge in the number of tourists.

Deputy Director of the tourism department in Udaipur, Shikha Saxena said Udaipur continues to be a top destination, drawing visitors from all over to enjoy its natural beauty and serene lakes.

"This year has been quite eventful for Udaipur in terms of tourism. In January, 1,80,000 domestic tourists and 14,215 foreign guests visited," she said.

She said 1,60,567 tourists flocked to the lake city in the monsoon season. Among them, 1,51,300 were domestic tourists, while 9,267 were foreigners.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sep 17:** Jodhpur Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) at Mehrangarh Fort will host multiple performers, showcasing the best of Indian and global roots music, dance, and collaborations from October 26-30.

The 16th edition of the festival will witness a special focus on Rajasthan's percussion instruments -- the dholak, bhang, and khartal - the last being unique to the state of Rajasthan.

Musicians from countries such as France, Australia, Cabo Verde, Italy and Estonia, as well as diverse Indian regions, will be in attendance.



Besides collaborations between international and Indian artists -- with Cabo Verdean drummer Miroca Paris, for instance -- the festival will focus on collaborations among Indian artists, bringing together classical and folk traditions of India.

Festival Director Divya Bhatia said, "This year, we are very excited to begin a whole host of new collaborations, and also facilitate the same among Indian artists. The audiences will witness Rajasthan folk artists collaborating with contemporary Indian jazz musicians, and with percussionists from different roots traditions. We will also be bringing 'roots' dance to you in a way that has not been seen before -- kathak dance pieces set to Rajasthan folk songs and percussion."

Also, with a view to introducing Rajasthan's rich folk music to audiences of all ages, a 'Bal Mela' where children from schools across Jodhpur are invited to the colourfully decorated environs of Veer Durga Das Memorial Park will be organised.

# Raj govt okays hydrogen policy

Under the policy, companies producing green energy will get various types of subsidies. Employment opportunities will also increase in the state



subsidies. Employment opportunities will also increase in the state. Renewable energy sources are available in the state which is most favourable for green hydrogen production, the release said.

Under this policy, the state government will provide various facilities to encourage investors.

These include a 50 per cent exemption in transmission and distribution charges for 10 years for 500 kilotons per annum (KTPA) renewable energy plants installed on the state's transmission network, additional exemption on purchasing renewable energy from 'third parties' and 10 years in 'cross-subsidy surcharge'.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, Sept 17:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved the draft of 'Rajasthan Green Hydrogen Policy-2023' and a notification in this regard will be issued soon.

The state government has taken the decision keeping in mind clean energy production, future needs and climate change, according to a release.

'Rajasthan Green Hydrogen Policy-2023' is being brought to encourage investors and search for clean energy sources in the state. Chief Minister Gehlot has approved the policy draft. Notification will be issued soon by the Energy Department, the release said. Under the policy, companies producing green energy will get various types of

## PROJECT CHEETAH FIRST ANNIVERSARY

# 9 big cats dead, 15 alive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, Sept 17:** India's ambitious 'project cheetah' completed one year Sunday after the first batch of eight Namibian cheetahs was released in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday September 17, 2022.

With 12 more cheetahs brought from South Africa February 18 this year, a total 20 fastest running felines were released at KNP with a purpose of breeding them in India. The plan got success when Namibian female cheetah 'Siyaya' gave birth to four cubs in March this year.

However, unfortunately, three out of four cubs died in May due to heatstroke and malnutrition. The lone surviving female cheetah cub -- a remarkable milestone as the nation's first cheetah birth in 75 years -- is now healthy, officials at KNP said.

"Having spent more than 100 days in close proximity to her mother, the cub has exhibited remarkable vitality, steadily gaining weight and following a standard growth trajectory. Born on Indian soil, this young cheetah holds the promise of a brighter future for cheetah conservation in the country," said the



WITH 12 MORE CHEETAHS BROUGHT FROM SOUTH AFRICA FEBRUARY 18 THIS YEAR, A TOTAL 20 FASTEST RUNNING FELINES WERE RELEASED AT KNP WITH A PURPOSE OF BREEDING THEM IN INDIA

Kuno authority recently through an official communication.

While, on the other side the project also witnessed back to back jolt as one after another cheetah died due to varied reasons, and raised apprehensions as well as political controversy in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh. A total of nine cheetahs, including three cubs, have died between March to August.

The project witnessed its first jolt when Namibian female cheetah 'Sasha' succumbed to a kidney-related ailment on March 27. Two male African cheetahs 'Uday' and 'Daksha' died on April 13 and May 9 respectively.

More shocking to the project came when two male cheetahs Tejas and Suraj died within a span of one week in July. Namibian female cheetah 'Dhatri' was found dead on August 2. Since then two pieces of good news

came from Kuno, one that the female cheetah 'Nirva' who had gone out of radar, was captured and the lone surviving cub born in Indian soil is healthy now.

On the eve of the first anniversary of the 'project cheetah', Kuno authority released a video of the success story and praised the efforts of the forest guards deployed to monitor the felines. "It's been an amazing ride as we get ready to mark a year since the incredible reintroduction of cheetahs, the impact has been astounding, from revitalising ecosystems to inspiring local communities," it said.

If all goes according to the plan, cheetahs would be introduced at two more habitats in Madhya Pradesh -- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary.

Additional Director General of Forests at the Environment Ministry SP Yadav recently told the media that the next batch of cheetahs will be imported from South Africa and introduced into Madhya Pradesh's Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary by the end of this year.

"We are preparing two such sites in Madhya Pradesh, one is the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, and the other is Nauradehi," he added.

# Nath seeks urgent crop damage survey

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, Sep 17:** Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has demanded that a survey be conducted on the damaged crops, besides compensation to farmers in the wake of deficit rain and infestation by tobacco caterpillars affecting the soybean produce in the state.

In a letter to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the Congress leader has cited information from many districts, including Kargone, Sehore (CM's home district), Vidisha, Dhar, Neemuch, Harda and Narmadapuram, about extensive damage to soybean crop due to low/delayed rains as well as tobacco caterpillars,

despite use of insecticide and pesticide by farmers.

"Farmers are protesting in many districts, demanding immediate survey of damaged crops and subsequent compensation. But no survey has till date been started by the insensitive state government on the ground, which will prompt the farmers to go for statewide protest," the letter read.

While addressing a press conference and later a public meeting along with another former CM and present Congress MP Digvijaya Singh in Ashok Nagar district, Kamal Nath claimed that 30 per cent of crop in the Gwalior-Chambal region district too has been damaged by deficient rain.



An artist gives final touches to the idols of Lord Ganesha ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

# MP polls: Shivraj govt launches 'Ladli Bhena Awas Yojana'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, Sept 17:** Relying on its previous women-centric scheme 'Ladli Behna Awas Yojana' launched three months ago, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government has now taken it forward and launched a housing scheme under similar name as the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh near.

CM Chouhan Sunday launched the housing scheme 'Ladli Bhena Awas Yojana' at Kushabhau Thakre Convention Centre in Bhopal. Chouhan launched the scheme by filling the first application for a woman.



Under the scheme, the families, who were left out from the benefit of facilities under various housing schemes, will get their houses under the 'Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana'. The government has estimated that around five lakh beneficiaries will benefit from the scheme.

Application forms will be received from the beneficiaries from September 17 to October 5. The government notification said that the applications for 'Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana' will be made available to Gram Panchayats by the Janpad Panchayats.

"Beneficiaries having the prescribed eligibility in the housing scheme will fill all the points in the application form provided by the Gram Panchayat and submit the form to the Gram Panchayat. They will be given acknowledgment of the application by the

Secretary/Village Employment Assistant. Along with the application form, self-attested copies of Samagra ID, Aadhar Number, Bank Account Number, Job Card (if available), Ladli Bahna Registration Number (only for the beneficiaries of Ladli Bahna Scheme) will have to be submitted," it said.

Panchayat wise list of applications received by the CEO Janpad Panchayat will be sent to the Chief Executive Officer District Panchayat within a week of the last date of receipt of applications.

Before announcing this housing scheme, CM Chouhan announced to provide LPG cylinders at a subsidised rate of ₹450 under the Ujjwala Yojana and Ladli Behna Yojana. The sale of LPG cylinders under the subsidised rate will begin on September 1, the state government said.

# 8,700 shifted as rains cause flood-like situation in MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, Sept 17:** More than 8,700 people have been shifted to safer places after heavy rains caused flood-like situation in many areas in Malwa and Nimar regions of Madhya Pradesh, officials said Sunday.

Khargone, Barwani, Dhar, Khandwa, Burhanpur, Alirajpur and Indore districts saw heavy rains in the last two days. The intensity of the downpour reduced comparatively Sunday.

In Jhabua district, eight persons were swept away after the embankment of a pond collapsed on Saturday night amid heavy rains in Bahadur Pada village, an official said, adding that two bodies were recovered Sunday morning, while a search for three women and as many children is underway.

In Ujjain district, an Indian Air Force (IAF) chopper on Sunday rescued a pregnant woman and two other members of her family from the rooftop of their



house located in a flooded agricultural field, an official said.

"8,718 people and 2,637 cattle have been shifted to safety in Malwa and Nimar regions. 610 jawans and 801 home guards were involved in rescue operations. The SDERF (State Disaster Emergency Response Force) launched 89 rescue operations," a release said. Indore, Khandwa, Khargone, Badwani, and Burhanpur districts are most hit by rains in the last two days.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Sunday said the Army and Air Force will be called in

if required for flood relief operations in the state. He held a virtual meeting with officials and gave instructions to deal with the situation.

Chouhan said he reviewed the situation caused by heavy rains in Khargone, Barwani, Dhar, Khandwa, Burhanpur, Alirajpur and Indore and spoke to officials of these districts. The situation is under control but the people are on alert and teams of SDERF and the NDRF are working in these areas, while the flow in water bodies as well as rain has reduced, he said.

river. In Khandwa, 500 people were shifted to safer places from the areas affected by the rising level of the Narmada river, officials said. Tapti and Narmada rivers were flowing above the danger mark in Burhanpur and Khargone respectively.

The gates of dams, including Bargi (Jabalpur), Indira Sagar (Khandwa), Omkareshwar, Tawa (Narmadapuram), Bansujara (Tikamgarh), Rajghat (Ashok Nagar), Sanjay Sarovar (Seoni), and Parasodh (Betul) were opened to release the water, officials added.

A total of 2,482 houses were partially damaged while 78 houses suffered extensive damage so far, officials said. India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said medium to heavy rains are likely on Monday in Ratlam, Mandasaur and Neemuch districts.

The rain in the districts under the Indore and Ujjain divisions will reduce from Monday, as per the Met department.

According to officials, 2,017 people are lodged in 45 relief camps in Khargone district while 227 were rescued from various villages in Indore district.

Eight teams of SDERF are involved in the relief operation in Indore district. In Dhar district, 1,993 persons were shifted to higher places due to water-logging in 72 low-lying settlements, officials said. The water level of the Narmada river is receding in Narmadapuram but in Burhanpur district, 20 families were shifted to safe places after the water level rose in the Tapti

Under the scheme, the families, who were left out from the benefit of facilities under various housing schemes, will get their houses under the 'Ladli Bahna Awas Yojana'. The government has estimated that around five lakh beneficiaries will benefit from the scheme.



A cadet of the Heroic Military Academy with the academy mascot, a golden eagle, takes part in the annual Independence Day military parade in the capital's main square, the Zocalo, in Mexico City



Central Reserve Police Force personnel during the flag hoisting ceremony at new Parliament building in New Delhi



AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi with his supporters participates in a 'Tiranga' rally on 'National Integration Day' in Hyderabad



People crowd at Jal Mahal after Indian Air Force Surya Kiran Aerobatic aerial show was called off due to poor weather conditions in Jaipur



Prime Minister Narendra Modi travels via metro on his way to inaugurate India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) in New Delhi



A man passes by the burnt remains of vehicles after a fire broke out at a hotel in Mussoorie



Health workers in PPE kits at a 'Nipah' virus isolation ward, at a medical college in Kozhikode



Women walk to participate in a Maratha rally demanding reservation in Sangli, Maharashtra



# national

## of the day quote

Our mission is clear: Do not be swayed by diversion tactics of BJP. Stand strong, raise your voices  
**MK STALIN** | TN CM

I have always been for the freedom of the press which is under attack from those in power at the Centre. I assure you full freedom to practice your profession once we defeat the current dispensation  
**NITISH KUMAR** | BIHAR CM

Earlier, leaders from India were not given importance during their visits to foreign countries. That changed after Modi came to power in 2014, with every foreign leader not only giving respect to Indian ministers but also expressing willingness to conduct bilateral meetings with them and wanting to engage with India on every front  
**KIREN RIJU** | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Woman, daughter detained in UP

**Bareilly (UP):** Police Sunday detained a 38-year-old woman and her daughter for allegedly offering namaz at a Shiva temple here along with a cleric, officials said. They said the action was taken after police received a complaint from the Kesarpur village head's husband, Prem Singh, who alleged that the incident took place Friday. Circle Officer (CO) of the area Gaurav Singh said the woman and her daughter allegedly offered namaz at the temple on the cleric's advice.

### Over 8,000 fish found dead

**Ranchi:** More than 8,000 fish were found dead in a dam in Ranchi, following which the fisheries department ordered a probe into the incident, an official said Sunday. Fish, weighing 500 gm to 1 kg, were found dead in four cages laid for fish rearing in Getalsud dam, district fishery officer Arup Kumar Chaudhary said. State Agriculture Minister Badal Patralekh ordered a probe into the incident Saturday evening. Badal directed the department secretary to carry out a probe into the matter on Sunday and submit a report at the earliest. Chaudhary said he and his team would visit the dam during the day and try to find out how the fish died.

### Constable ends life

**Kanker:** A 36-year-old Constable of Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service weapon in the state's Kanker district, police said Sunday. Chandrasekhar Yadav, who belonged to CAF's 15th battalion, ended his life by shooting himself with an Insas rifle when he was on security duty at Halba police chowki under Narharpur police station limits late Saturday night, a senior official here said. His colleagues rushed him to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead, the official said.

### Man shot dead

**Jamshedpur:** A 25-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by his friend here on suspicion that he had stolen his mobile phone, a police officer said. The victim identified as Vishal Prasad was shot dead by his friend Abhishek Lal on Saturday night, the officer said. About the reason behind the incident, the police officer said Abhishek's mobile was missing and he suspected his friend of stealing it.

# 'PM Vishwakarma' launched; 'Yashobhoomi' inaugurated



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) in New Delhi, Sunday

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday invited film and television industry as well as global event management companies to organise events at Bharat Mandapam and the newly-constructed Yashobhoomi, the state-of-the-art convention centre which he inaugurated on the occasion of the launch of Rs 13,000-crore 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme. Built at the cost of Rs 5,400 crore, Phase 1 of India International Convention and Expo Centre - 'Yashobhoomi' has a total built-up area of more than 1.8 lakh square metres, and will find its place among the world's largest MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) facilities. It boasts of a magnificent convention centre, multiple exhibition halls and other facilities. The Prime Minister launched the Rs 13,000 crore 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme for traditional artisans and craftspeople on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti. He also released a customised stamp sheet, a toolkit e-

booklet and video on the occasion. The Prime Minister distributed Vishwakarma Certificates to 18 beneficiaries. Beneficiaries will get collateral-free loans of up to Rs 3 lakh at concessional rate of 5 per cent. Talking about the future of conference tourism, he said the sector holds immense potential for India and informed that it is worth more than Rs 25,000 crore. He highlighted that more than 32,000 big exhibitions and expos are organised in the world every year, where people coming for conference tourism spend more money than an ordinary tourist. India's share in such a big industry is only around one per cent and many big companies in India go to foreign lands every year to organise their events. He further emphasised that India is also preparing itself for conference tourism now. Modi stressed that conference tourism will progress only where there are necessary resources for events, meetings, and exhibitions, hence Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi centre are now going to make Delhi the biggest hub of conference

tourism. Lakhs of youth are likely to get employment. In the future, he said, Yashobhoomi will become a place where people from countries all over the world will come for international conferences, meetings and exhibitions. "Today I invite people associated with the exhibition and event industry from countries around the world to come to Delhi. I will invite the film industry and TV industry of every region of the country, east-west-north-south." You hold your award ceremonies, film festivals here. Hold first film shows here. I invite people associated with international event companies, exhibition sector to join Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi," the Prime Minister said. Underlining the contribution and importance of the Vishwakarmas in the everyday life of the country, the Prime Minister said Vishwakarmas will always remain significant in society, no matter the advancements made in technology. "The government has come forward as a partner to elevate the respect, enhance the capabilities, and grow the prosperity of the Vishwakarmas," Modi remarked. Throwing light on the 18 focus areas of artisans and craftsmen, the Prime Minister informed that carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, sculptors, potters, cobblers, tailors, masons, hairdressers, washermen, etc. have been included in the 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme and the government will spend Rs 13,000 crore. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman; commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal; education, skill development and entrepreneurship minister Dharmendra Pradhan; micro, small and medium enterprises minister Narayan Rane; and Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma were present on the occasion, among others.

India is a country where a majority of people follow Sanatan Dharma. However, the BJP is trying to divert the attention from real issues and hence brought up the Sanatan Dharma controversy  
**KAMAL NATH** | CONGRESS LEADER

# Kharge calls for unity at CWC meet



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Rahul Gandhi and KC Venugopal during the second day of Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Hyderabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, Sept 17:** After two days of hectic deliberations, the Congress expressed confidence Sunday about receiving a decisive mandate in the upcoming Assembly polls in five states and reaffirmed its preparedness for the 2024 Lok Sabha election, with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge exhorted leaders to maintain unity and discipline. In his speech on the concluding day of the extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting here, Kharge urged the party leaders to set aside their personal differences to ensure the party's success and work towards forming an alternative government in the country as people are looking for a change. He also asked them not to say anything against the party or their colleagues in public for their personal gains. A resolution adopted at the conclusion of the extended CWC meeting expressed confidence that the Congress will receive a decisive mandate from the people of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana in the Assembly elections due in months. "It also reaffirms the preparedness of the party organisation for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, which are due in April-May 2024." The Congress party is fully ready for the battle ahead. It is confident that the people of our country are want-

**"We must work tirelessly, putting aside personal interests. We must prioritise the success of the party, putting aside our personal differences. We must exercise self-restraint and avoid going to the media with statements against our leaders or party so that the Congress's interests are not harmed"**  
**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE** | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

ing change. We will fulfil their expectations of law and order, freedom, social and economic justice, equality and equity," the CWC resolution said. During the extended CWC meet, the party's state unit chiefs from Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Mizoram also gave their reports on preparedness and the roadmap for winning the polls in their states. Some Delhi leaders, including former Union minister Ajay Maken and Alka Lamba, also spoke against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and suggested that the Congress should not have a tie-up with it in Delhi, sources said. Kharge earlier told the CWC members, state unit presidents and Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leaders to work towards the goal of defeating the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 general election as well as in the five upcoming Assembly polls.

## NUH VIOLENCE

### Cong MLA's remand extended by 2 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Nuh (Haryana), Sept 17:** A court Sunday extended by two days the police remand of Congress MLA Mamman Khan, who has been arrested in connection with the July 31 communal violence in Haryana's Nuh district. Meanwhile, the state government has again ordered suspension of mobile internet and bulk SMS services in the district till Tuesday midnight. Khan's remand was extended by two more days in connection



Congress MLA Mamman Khan being produced before a court in connection with the Nuh violence, in Nuh district, Sunday

with an FIR registered at the Nagina police station, officials said.

The MLA from Ferozepur Jhirka, who was named as an accused in a separate FIR lodged on August 1 after the communal clashes in Nuh, was arrested late Thursday night from Rajasthan. The charges in that FIR include promoting enmity between different groups on the ground of religion. Police had, Friday, secured a two-day remand of Khan after he was produced before a court here.

During his remand, police took custody of Khan's mobile phone and laptop and reviewed his social media accounts for evidence. After producing him before the chief judicial magistrate-cum-duty magistrate on Sunday, police sought a five-day remand of Khan for questioning him in connection with three more cases lodged over the Nuh violence.

The court extended the Congress MLA's police remand by two more days.

# UP girl dies during molestation attempt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ambedkarnagar (UP), Sept 17:** A girl student lost her life when two motorcycle-borne persons pulled her 'dupatta' in a molestation attempt due to which she fell off her bicycle and was run over by another motorcyclist. The shocking incident occurred Friday when the victim was returning home from school. After its CCTV footage went viral, police arrested the three accused on Saturday night. The police claimed two of the accused sustained bullet injuries while one suffered a leg fracture while trying to flee from custody on Sunday. The Station House Officer

*The shocking incident occurred Friday when the victim was returning home from school*

(SHO) Haswar police station Ritesh Pandey has also been suspended for dereliction of duty in handling the case, officials said. In the CCTV footage, the victim, who is a class 11 student, and another girl are seen moving on their bicycles when a speeding bike approaches her from behind and the pillion rider pulls her dupatta as they pass by her. The girl falls on the ground after losing her balance and is run over by another motorist coming from behind.

The arrested accused were identified as Sehbaz and his brother Arbaz, who pulled the dupatta. The third accused, Faisal, ran over the girl. It is yet to be ascertained if there is any connection between the accused brothers and Faisal, the officials said.



Security personnel on the fifth day of the ongoing encounter with terrorists, at Gadol Kokarnag in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir



## Sunak drew a leaf out of Modi's book

It seems Prime Minister Modi has finally got a match in England, if not in India. Guess who? Its none

other than the British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who is proud to be a practicing Hindu, visits temples barefoot in simple attire leaving his security cover far behind and claims an Indian legacy by saying he is the son-in-law of India. Interestingly, he took his oath as a British MP in the name of Bhagwat Gita in 2015 and there is no controversy in England about his being a Hindu. Among the large galaxy of world leaders during the G20 Summit, the British PM was way ahead of all of them in terms of leaving his footprints behind. If Modi stole the thunder when he visited the UK for the first time as PM, his counterpart Sunak also earned laurels and left behind his own legacy.

## Knives are out in BJP after Ghosi loss

Knives are out in the BJP over the humiliating defeat of party's candidate Dara Singh Chauhan from the Ghosi Assembly seat in UP in a bitter by-election last week. The party high command has decided to send a special team to Ghosi to find out reasons for the defeat. Chauhan had quit the Samajwadi Party and Assembly seat which he had won by a margin of more than 22000 votes in 2022 and had a meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah. It has emerged that the BJP's local unit was against fielding Chauhan on the ground that he has been a party hopper; beginning with the

Congress to BSP and now the BJP. But the high command felt that a Ghosi win would pave the way for the disintegration of the SP before the Lok Sabha polls and Chauhan is the best bet. Besides Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary, State BJP president, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak and over 20 BJP ministers chipped in for campaigning. But nothing worked while some of the senior ministers privately blamed Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who did not put his heart and soul into the campaign.

## Ruffled feathers in BJP states

Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have emerged on the

global scene as the man capable of resolving differences. But in many of the states the BJP leadership is facing sharp differences and public spat among the senior leaders has become common. The BJP is facing internal bickering in many states including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Punjab and elsewhere. With the Lok Sabha elections around the corner, the BJP leadership is not taking any chances. In Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the BJP high command has decided that it will not declare anybody as party's chief ministerial face and the principle of collective leadership will apply. But leaders in these

states are refusing to be cowed down. Vasundha Raje Scindia's supporters are quietly waiting while Kailash Meghwal, a senior BJP legislator and former Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly, embarrassed the party when he publicly attacked Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. He accused the Union minister of indulging in corrupt practices and sought his removal from the Cabinet. In Madhya Pradesh, Jyotiraditya Scindia's supporters are publicly crossing swords with another Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and state BJP chief V D Sharma has opened a front against sitting CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan. It's the same story in a few other states as well.

# international

## of the day quote

I will make a comeback and you will have to answer for all your actions  
**IMRAN KHAN** | FORMER PAK PM

The Russian government has so far declined our request to access the areas under its temporary military control  
**DENISE BROWN** | UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR UKRAINE

Tunisia doesn't want to be Europe's border guard to slow migration  
**KAIS SAIED** | TUNISIA PREZ

## SHORT TAKES

### EU pledges crackdown on migrant smuggling

**Milan:** EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged the swift return of irregular migrants and a crackdown on the "brutal business" of migrant smuggling Sunday during a visit with Italy's premier to a tiny fishing island overwhelmed with nearly 7,000 arrivals in a single day this week. "We will decide who comes to the European Union, and under what circumstances. Not the smugglers," von der Leyen declared after touring the island's hotspot. The Red Cross said 1,500 migrants remained in the centre built to accommodate hundreds.

### Lee delivers high winds, rain

**Bar Harbor (US):** Atlantic storm Lee — which made landfall at near-hurricane strength, bringing destructive winds and torrential rains to New England and Maritime Canada — kept weakening Sunday after officials withdrew some warnings and predicted the storm would disappear early this week. The US National Hurricane Center said Sunday morning that the post-tropical cyclone was about 70 miles (113 kilometers) west-northwest of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and about 180 miles (290 kilometers) west of Channel-Port Aux Basques, Newfoundland.

### Greek PM outlines policy priorities

**Athens:** Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has outlined the government's policy priorities for the coming months at a trade fair in Thessaloniki in northern Greece. Delivering a speech on Saturday during the 87th Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF), he announced a series of measures aimed at strengthening the public healthcare system, accelerating the delivery of justice, combating tax evasion, and improving the prevention and response mechanism to natural disasters, Xinhua news agency reported.

### China issues blue alert

**Beijing:** China's meteorological authorities Sunday issued a blue alert for severe convective weather in vast stretches of the country. From 2 p.m. Sunday to 2 p.m. Monday, thunderstorms, gales, and hail will sweep parts of Beijing, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei and Henan, the National Meteorological Center was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying. Short bursts of heavy rainfall with hourly precipitation ranging from 20 to over 60 millimeters will scatter across China, lashing parts of Beijing, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Shandong, Hubei, Fujian, Chongqing, Yunnan and Guangdong, among other places, the center said.

## Libyan flood survivors weigh water shortages against landmine risk



REUTERS

**Derna, Libya, Sept 17:** People whose homes were swept away by flooding in Libya's eastern city of Derna a week ago faced the dilemma Sunday of whether to stay despite a lack of fresh water or flee through areas where landmines have been displaced by the torrents.

Thousands of people are feared to have died after two dams above Derna broke on Sept. 10, bringing down residential blocks lining a usually dry river bed as people slept. Many bodies were washed out to sea and more than 1,000 have already been buried in mass graves, according to the United Nations.

Sunrise Sunday revealed a scene of quiet devastation, with piles of rubble cleared to the sides of empty roads along with tangled metal including pieces of wrecked cars.

Entire districts of Derna, with an estimated population of at least 120,000, were swept away or buried in mud. State media said Sunday at least 891 buildings had been destroyed in the city, whose mayor has said 20,000 people may have died.

Another resident said people were at a loss over what to do next.

A report by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Libyan authorities had detected at least 55 children poisoned from drinking polluted water in Derna, where the homeless were surviving in makeshift shelters, schools or packed into the houses of relatives or friends.

Floodwaters had shifted landmines and other ordnance left over from years of conflict, posing an extra risk to the thousands of displaced people on the move, it said.

**CLINGING ON**  
Aid organizations have flown in emergency aid and some countries have sent supplies, although international aid officials say much more help is needed.

Awad pointed to a rusty pole stretched between two buildings and said clinging to it was how his family had survived the flood which tore through their home, covering everything in mud.

In al Badya, a coastal settlement west of Derna, the hospital was treating victims from Derna as well as its own. Doctors built makeshift dams in the street

- Search for survivors goes on a week after disaster
- Report warns of twin risks of water shortages and mines
- UN agency reports death toll jump to 11,300
- Libyan officials give tolls of less than half that figure
- Volunteers from west of divided Libya bring aid to east

when the flooding hit to try to hold back the water, but it rose within the building.

Elsewhere in the town, volunteers handed out clothing and food.

Volunteer Abdunabi said the team came from Ajaylat, around 800 miles (1,200 km) away in western Libya, divided from the east by more than a decade of on and off conflict.

The country of 7 million people has lacked a strong central government since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 and its oil wealth is dispersed among competing groups.

Analysts said the disaster had brought some level of coordination between the internationally-backed administration in Tripoli in the west and the rival administration in the east but that reconstruction efforts would likely reopen faultlines.

The OCHA report said at least 11,300 people had died and more than 10,000 people were missing in Derna after Storm Daniel swept over the Mediterranean and into the city and other coastal settlements, but officials disputed the figures.

A spokesman for the Libyan Red Crescent, which OCHA cited for the data, said it had not published a toll and referred Reuters to government spokespeople, saying "figures are changing and the Red Crescent is not responsible for this."

An official from the administration that runs eastern Libya, Dr. Osama Al-Fakhry, said: "The number of dead so far is 3,252, and they are those who were buried."

Other Libyan officials have previously cited a death toll of more than 5,000. OCHA said more than 40,000 people had been displaced, cautioning that the figure was likely much higher since access had been restricted to the worst-affected areas such as Derna.

## Ramaswamy vows to end H-1B visa programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Sept 17:** Describing the H-1B visa programme as a form of "indentured servitude", Indian-American Republican presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy has vowed to "gut" the lottery-based system and replace it with meritocratic admission if he wins the race to the White House in 2024.

The H-1B visa, much sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies de-

pend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

Ramaswamy himself has used the H-1B visa programme 29 times. From 2018 through 2023, US Citizenship and Immigration Services approved 29 applications for Ramaswamy's former company, Roivant Sciences, to hire employees under H-1B visas, the Politico reported. Yet, the H-1B system is "bad for everyone involved," the 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur was quoted

as saying by Politico. "The lottery system needs to be replaced by actual meritocratic admission. It's a form of indentured servitude that only accrues to the benefit of the company that sponsored an H-1B immigrant. I'll gut it," Ramaswamy said in a statement, adding that the US needs to eliminate chain-based migration. Ramaswamy stepped down as chief executive officer of Roivant in February 2021 but remained the chair of the company's board of directors until February this year when he an-

Every year, the US gives 65,000 H-1B visas which are open to all and 20,000 to those with advanced US degrees



**A nationwide crackdown is being carried out on the supply of Iranian fuel products in the country**  
**JAN ACHAKZAI** | BALOCHISTAN'S CARETAKER INFORMATION MINISTER

**PAK GETS NEW CJ**  
Justice Qazi Faez Isa was sworn in as the 29th Chief Justice of Pakistan Sunday. His term as Chief Justice in the Supreme Court will span 13 months, ending October 25, 2024



## UKRAINE GENOCIDE CASE

# World Court to hear Russian objections

AGENCIES

**The Hague, Sept 17:** Russia and Ukraine will square off before the International Court of Justice Monday in a case that centres around claims by Moscow that its invasion of Ukraine was done to prevent genocide.

Ukraine brought the case to the United Nations' highest court just days after the Russian invasion February 24 last year. Kyiv argues Russia is abusing international law by saying the invasion was justified to prevent an alleged genocide in eastern Ukraine.

Russia wants the case to be thrown out and objects to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The hearings, set to run until September 27, will not delve into the merits of the case and are instead focused on legal arguments about jurisdiction.



Moscow says Ukraine is using the case as a roundabout way to get a ruling on the overall legality of its military action. Ukraine has already cleared one hurdle as the court decided in its favour in a preliminary decision in the case in March last year. Based on that, the court

### Ukraine drones hit Crimea, oil depot: Russia

Russia said it had thwarted a coordinated Ukrainian attack on Crimea early Sunday, while drones also targeted Moscow, disrupting air traffic in the capital, and caused a fire at an oil depot in the southwest of the country. Ukraine in recent days has launched a series of strikes on Russian military targets in occupied Crimea, including the Russian Navy Black Sea Fleet's facilities, seeking to undermine Moscow's war efforts in the critical region.

ordered Russia to cease military actions in Ukraine immediately. In the hearings the court will also hear from 32 other states, all supporting Ukraine's argument that the court has jurisdiction to move the case forward.

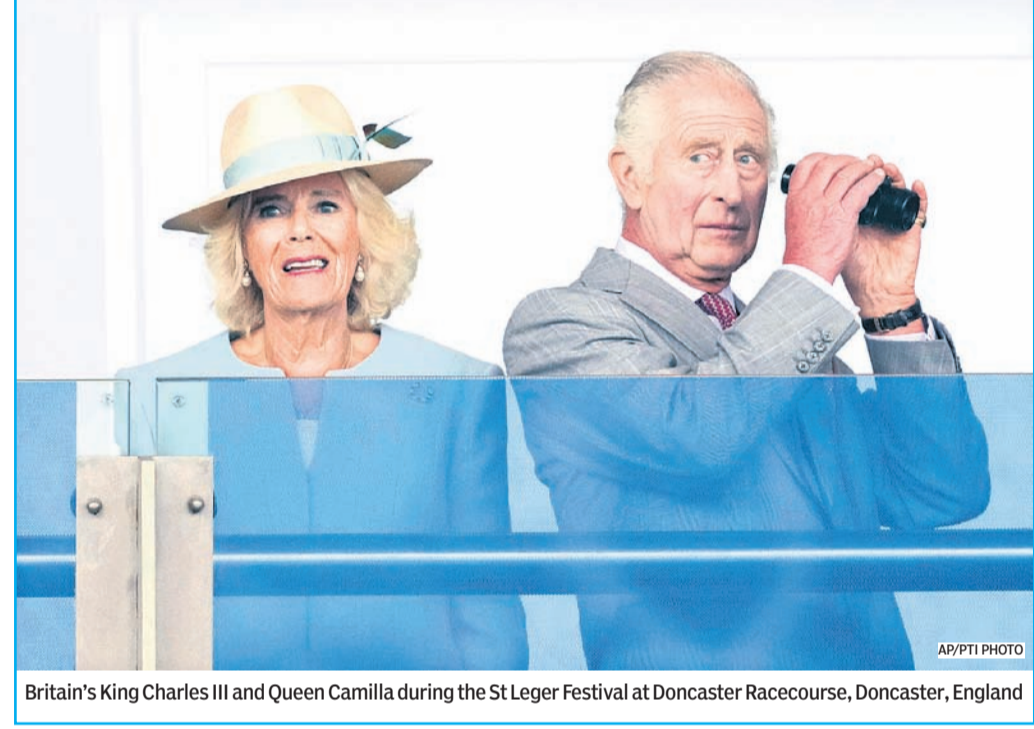
"It is looking fairly positive for the court to find it has jurisdiction," Juliette McIntyre, a law lecturer at the University of South Australia and ICJ watcher, said.

While Russia has so far ignored the ICJ's orders to stop its military actions and the court has no way of enforcing its de-

isions, experts say an eventual ruling in favour of Ukraine could be important for any future reparations claims.

"If the court finds there was no lawful justification under the Genocide Convention for Russia's acts, the decision can set up a future claim for compensation," McIntyre said.

The United Nations' 1948 Genocide Convention defines genocide as crimes committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such."



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla during the St Leger Festival at Doncaster Racecourse, Doncaster, England

### Small plane crash in Amazon rainforest kills all 14 onboard

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rio de Janeiro, Sept 17:** A small passenger plane crashed in Brazil's Amazon rainforest Saturday, killing all 14 people on board, Amazonas state Governor Wilson Lima announced.

"I deeply regret the death of the 12 passengers and two crew members who were victims of the plane crash in Barcelos Saturday," Lima said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The Embraer PT-SOG aircraft had taken off from Manaus, the Amazonas state capital and the biggest city in the Amazon, and was attempting to land in heavy rain when it crashed, local media reported.

The passengers were Brazilian tourists on their way to fish, the reports said. Video footage posted by the Globo television network showed the plane lying on a muddy dirt track with the front part of the aircraft in green foliage. A couple of dozen people are seen standing nearby holding umbrellas.

### UAW strike enters 3rd day



REUTERS

**Washington, Sept 17:** The United Auto Workers strike against the Detroit Three automakers entered its third day Sunday with no immediate resolution on the horizon.

Union negotiators and representatives of General Motors (GM), Ford (F) and Stellantis (STLA) were set to resume talks starting Sunday, following the start of the most ambitious US industrial labor action in decades. This is the first time the UAW has gone on strike against all three automakers simultaneously.

The coordinated strike comes at a time when Americans' approval of labor unions is at its highest point in decades even as membership in unions remains largely unchanged.

UAW President Shawn Fain told MSNBC Sunday that progress in the talks has been slow. The UAW is set to resume talks with GM Sunday, and Stellantis and Ford Monday.

About 12,700 UAW workers remain on strike as part of a co-ordinated labor action targeting three US assembly plants - one at each of the Detroit Three automakers after the prior four-year labor agreements expired at 11:59 p.m. ET Thursday.

Negotiators for the UAW and Ford had "reasonably productive discussions" toward a new contract Saturday, the union said, while Chrysler-parent Stellantis said it hiked its offer, proposing raises of 20% over a four-and-a-half-year contract term, including an immediate 10% hike. That matched proposals from GM and Ford.

The proposals are about half the 40% wage hike the UAW is demanding through 2027, including an immediate 20% boost.

US President Joe Biden, who has signaled support for the union's efforts, has had acting Labor Secretary Julie Su and advisor Gene Sperling speaking to the UAW and the automakers during the talks.

## KIM ENDS RUSSIA TRIP

AGENCIES

**Seoul (South Korea), Sept 17:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is on his way home Sunday from Russia, ending a six-day trip that triggered global concerns about weapons transfer deals between the two countries locked in separate standoffs with the West.

Kim's armoured train departed to the sound of the Russian patriotic march song "Farewell of Slavianska" at the end of a farewell ceremony at a railway station in Artyom, a far eastern Russian city about 200 kilometres (124 miles) from the border with North Korea, Russia's state news agency RIA reported.

Senior officials including Russia's Minister of Natural Resources Alexander Kozlov and Primorye regional Gov. Oleg



Kozhemyako were present at the ceremony, which featured a Russian military band playing both North Korean and Russian national anthems.

Since entering Russia last Tuesday in his first overseas trip in more than four years, Kim had met President Vladimir Putin and visited key military and technology sites, underscoring the countries' deepening defence cooperation in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with the West.

US and South Korean officials have said North Korea could provide badly needed munitions for Moscow's war on Ukraine in exchange for sophisticated Russian weapons technology that would advance Kim's nuclear ambitions. UN Security Council resolutions — which Russia, a permanent member, previously endorsed — ban North Korea from exporting or importing any arms.



nounced his presidential campaign. As of March 31, the company and its subsidiaries had 904 full-time employees, including 825 in the US, according to its Securities and Exchange Commission filings. When asked about the mis-

match in the Republican presidential hopeful's policy stance and his past business practices, his press secretary Tricia McLaughlin said the role of a policymaker "is to do what's right for a country overall: the system is broken and needs to be fixed."

He also said he would use military force to secure the border, and that he would deport US-born children of undocumented immigrants.

H-1B visas are highly sought after, and the demand for these workers continues to increase. For fiscal year 2021, US businesses submitted 780,884 applications for just 85,000 available slots, jumping by more than 60

per cent. Ramaswamy acknowledged his own experience with immigration during his opening remarks at the first Republican debate in Milwaukee.

Ramaswamy's stance on H-1B visas is reminiscent of the 2016 Trump campaign, when then-candidate Donald Trump, who has also hired a number of foreign workers under H-1B visas for his businesses, took a hardline stance on these foreign workers before later softening his rhetoric.

As president, Trump temporarily suspended new work visas and blocked hundreds of thousands of foreign workers from US employment, as part of his sweeping effort to limit the number of immigrants coming into the US.

# business

## of the day quote

Unpredictability is not good for business because my business plans are based on a certain assumption of subsidy. If the assumption changes then the plans change and if I'm not certain about my plans, I can't make investments

**RAVNEET S PHOKELA** | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, ATHER ENERGY

We have 17 brands, which are in the range of ₹100-500 crore. These are the brands for the future, which we will scale up. If you look five years prior, they all were sub-₹100 crore brands

**MOHIT MALHOTRA** | CEO, DABUR

As luxury consumers become more discerning in their choices and adoption of new technology, we are committed to delivering exceptional vehicles that exceed their expectations along these lines

**RAJAN AMBA** | MD, JLR

## SHORT TAKES

### Firms' mcap shines

**New Delhi:** The combined market valuation of nine of the top-10 most valued firms rallied by ₹1,80,788.99 crore last week, amid an overall buoyant trend in equities, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerging as the biggest gainer. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,239.72 points or 1.86 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied for the 11th day running Friday. The 30-share BSE benchmark had jumped 319.63 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at a record closing of ₹7,838.63 on Friday. During the day, it rallied 408.23 points or 0.60 per cent to hit its fresh all-time intra-day high of 67,927.23. Hindustan Unilever Limited was the only laggard from the top-10 pack. The list of winners had Reliance Industries Limited, TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the most valued company title followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance.

### VI pays ₹1,701crore

**New Delhi:** Vodafone Idea has made a requisite payment of ₹1,701 crore to the Department of Telecommunications telecom department towards 2022 Spectrum Auction Instalment. In a regulatory filing, Vodafone Idea said the payment is in accordance with the terms of Notice Inviting Applications dated June 15, 2022. In an earlier filing August 14, Vodafone Idea had said that the company has received a communication from a promoter group entity confirming that in the event of any fund requirement for meeting its impending payment obligations by the Company, it shall provide direct or indirect financial support to the extent of ₹2,000 crore.

### Sidbi to raise ₹10K-cr

**Mumbai:** Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi), which refinances SME loans, plans to float a ₹10,000-crore rights issue next fiscal to expand its equity capital as it expects to grow assets to ₹5 lakh crore by March 2024 from about ₹4 lakh crore in March 2023, a top official has said. The central government owns 20.8 per cent in Sidbi, while State Bank of India holds 15.65 per cent and Life Insurance Corporation 13.33 per cent. The rest of the equity is held by other public financial institutions and banks.



**Luxury real estate sales in India's financial capital and its wealthiest city, registered record-setting sales in the first six months of 2023**

**AMIT GOYAL** | MD, SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

## JEEP FINALISING INDIA EV PLANS

Electric vehicles are a focal point for SUV maker Jeep in India and it is evaluating different options before finalising its plans for the domestic market, a top company executive has said. Jeep India, which is a part of automobile group Stellantis, also said that the company is aiming for over 90 per cent localisation in its compact SUV Jeep Compass over the next three years



## INDIA, BRAZIL SUGAR DISPUTE NEGOTIATIONS

**'Brazil may share ethanol tech'** Brazil is the largest producer of sugarcane and ethanol in the world. It is also a leader in the technology used for ethanol production

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** India and Brazil have started talks to mutually resolve a sugar related trade dispute at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and as part of the solution the South American nation may share ethanol production technology with New Delhi, an official said.

"Few rounds of talks have been held as part of our efforts to resolve the dispute. We have also held inter-ministerial meetings here. Brazil is saying that they will share with us technology for ethanol (production). It is a positive thing," the official said.

Ethanol is used to blend with oil to power vehicles. Use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help the world's third largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments. India currently is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. Also, it cuts carbon emissions. There is a target of 20 per cent ethanol blended petrol by 2025.

India would also have to offer something as part of the mutually agreed solution (MAS) to resolve the dispute at the Geneva-based multi-lateral body.

Recently India and the US have ended six trade disputes



India targets 20% ethanol blended petrol by 2025

and have also agreed to terminate the seventh case. As part of the solution, while New Delhi removed retaliatory duties on 8 American products like apples and walnuts, the US is providing market access to Indian steel and aluminium products without levying extra duties.

The official said that India is also following a similar process for other complainants of the sugar dispute at the WTO.

### YEARS OF DISPUTE

In 2019, Brazil, Australia and Guatemala dragged India into the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism alleging that New Delhi's sugar subsidies to farmers are inconsistent with global trade rules.

A WTO dispute settlement panel December 14, 2021, ruled that India's support measures

for the sugar sector are inconsistent with the global trade norms.

In January 2022, India appealed against the panel's ruling at the WTO's appellate body, which is the final authority to pass rulings against such disputes. The appellate body, however, is not functioning due to differences in the countries on appointments of members of the body.

Brazil is the largest producer and exporter of sugar in the world. India is the world's second-largest producer.

Brazil, Australia and Guatemala, which are members of the WTO, had complained that India's support measures to sugarcane producers exceed the de minimis level of 10 per cent

of the total value of sugarcane production, which according to them was inconsistent with the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture.

They had also flagged India's alleged export subsidies, subsidies under the production assistance and buffer stock schemes, and the marketing and transportation scheme.

According to WTO rules, a WTO member or members can file a case in the Geneva-based multilateral body if they feel that a particular trade measure is against the norms of the WTO.

Bilateral consultation is the first step to resolve a dispute. If both sides are not able to resolve the matter through consultation, either can approach the establishment of a dispute settlement panel. The panel's ruling or report can be challenged at the World Trade Organization's Appellate Body.

Interestingly, the appellate body of the WTO is not functioning because of differences among member countries to appoint members in this body. Several disputes are already pending with the appellate body. The US has been blocking the appointment of the members.

The bilateral trade between India and Brazil increased to \$16.6 billion in 2022-23 as against \$12.2 billion in 2021-22. Trade

gap is in the favour of India.

### INDIA'S SUGAR TRADE

During the 2021-22 sugar marketing year (October-September), India exported 110 lakh tonne of sugar and became the second largest exporter of sugar in the world and earned about ₹40,000 crore worth of foreign exchange.

For the current 2022-23 marketing year ending this month, the Centre allowed export of 61 lakh tonne of sugar. Mills have already shipped 60 lakh tonne.

The Centre is yet to decide on exports for the next 2023-24 marketing year, starting next month. As the current sugar season (October-September) 2022-23 is coming to an end, India has already crossed sugar production of 330 lakh tonne, excluding the diversion of about 43 lakh tonne for ethanol production.

The blending of ethanol with petrol has increased to 10 per cent in 2021-22 marketing year from just 1.53 per cent in 2013-14. To achieve the target of 20 per cent by 2025, about 1,016 crore litres of ethanol would be required. About 334 crore ethanol would be required for other usage.

WTO member countries can resolve disputes outside the dispute settlement mechanism and later inform the multi-lateral body about the same.

## Diesel sales fall, petrol usage up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** Diesel sales in India fell for the second straight month in September as rains dampened demand and slowed industrial activity in some parts of the country, preliminary data of state-owned firms showed.

While diesel sales by three state-owned fuel retailers fell year-on-year in the first half of September, petrol sales were up marginally.

Consumption of diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country accounting for about two-fifths of the demand, fell 5.8 per cent to 2.72 million tonne between September 1 and 15, compared to the year-ago period.

Consumption had fallen by a similar proportion in the first half of August.



Month-on-month sales were up 0.9 per cent, when compared with 2.7 million tonne of diesel consumed in the first half of August.

Diesel sales typically fall in monsoon months as rains lower demand in the agriculture sector which uses the fuel for irrigation, harvesting and transportation. Also, rains slow vehicular movements.

Consumption of diesel had soared 6.7 per cent and 9.3 per cent in April and May, respectively as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat the summer heat. It started to taper in the second half of June after the monsoon set in. It fell in the first half of July but picked up in the second fortnight of that month.

Petrol sales were up 1.2 per cent to 1.3 million tonne in the first fortnight of September, when compared with the same period last year.

Consumption had dropped 10.5 per cent in the first fortnight of July but picked up in the latter half. It had fallen by 8 per cent in the first half of August.

Sales in the first half of September were up 8.8 per cent month-on-month, the data showed.

India's economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience and is likely to have surpassed the performance of most major economies during the first half of 2023. This is helping fuel demand grow.

Consumption of petrol during September 1-15 was 29.2 per cent more than in the Covid marred first half of September 2021 and 20.8 per cent more than in pre-pandemic September 2019.

Diesel consumption was up 26 per cent over September 1-15, 2021 and 36.4 per cent when compared with September 1-15, 2019.

## ABRUPT RESIGNATIONS

# Legal action by Akasa Air: Over 40 pilots face suit



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** Akasa Air has initiated legal action against more than 40 pilots who recently left the airline to join other carriers. This sudden departure of pilots has compelled the airline, which commenced operations in August of the previous year, to cancel numerous flights since the previous month.

Consequently, by August this year, Akasa's domestic market share had fallen behind that of the financially challenged SpiceJet, a carrier it had surpassed in June.

Akasa is reportedly requesting around ₹22 crore in compensation for the loss of revenue and damage to its reputation, citing that the 43 pilots in question departed with-

out fulfilling the mandatory notice period.

"We have sought legal remedy only against a small set of pilots who abandoned their duties and left without serving their mandatory contractual notice period. This was not only in violation of their contract but also the country's civil aviation regulations," the airline spokesperson told IANS.

"Not only is this illegal in law but also an unethical and selfish act that disrupted flights in August forcing last-minute cancellations that stranded thousands of customers, causing significant inconvenience to the travelling public," the spokesperson further said.

"Fortunately, that is behind us now. Thanks to the hard work of our colleagues. As a young start up, we are proud of what every Akasian has helped us build in the first year of our operations," the spokesperson said.

"Therefore, this kind of behaviour by a handful of employees is not only illegal and unethical, but also deeply disrespectful to the hard work of our entire team which shows up to work, everyday with utmost integrity," the spokesperson added.

# FPIs take a breather in Sept

**FOREIGN INVESTORS TAKE OUT ₹4,800 CRORE FROM EQUITIES IN FIRST FORTNIGHT OF SEPT AFTER A BUYING SPREE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS; SELL-OFF MAY CONTINUE FOR NOW**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 17:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have pulled out close to ₹4,800 crore from equities in the first fortnight of September on rising US bond yields, a stronger dollar, and concerns over global economic growth.

Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months from March to August and brought in ₹1.74 lakh crore during the period.

In the coming days, FPIs are likely to press sale as the market is at record highs and valuations are high, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. "With high bond yields in the US (the 10-year is at 4.28 per cent) and the dollar index above 105, FPIs are likely to sell more," he added.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulled out a net sum of ₹4,768 crore from the equities so far this month (till September 15). This figure includes bulk deals and investments through the primary market.

This came after FPI investment in equities had hit a four-



**The net outflow (in September) was mainly due to uncertainties surrounding the global interest rate landscape, particularly in the United States, and concerns regarding global economic growth**

**HIMANSHU SRIVASTAVA** | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR - MANAGER RESEARCH, MORNINGSTAR INDIA

month low of ₹12,262 crore in August.

On the other hand, FPIs invested over ₹2,000 crore in the country's debt market during

the period under review.

With this, the total investment by FPIs in equity has reached ₹1.3 lakh crore and over ₹30,200 crore in the debt market this year so far.

In terms of sectors, FPIs have been consistently buying capital goods and power.

Even though the foreign investors have been sellers, it didn't impact the market at all since it was neutralised by domestic institutional investors.

Additionally, hyperactivity by retail investors is also contributing to the bullishness in the market, Geojit's Vijayakumar said.

# How to port from GMC to Retail Health Insurance Plan?

**T**oday, many organisations provide Group Medical Coverage (GMC) to their employees under Employee Benefit programs. It has emerged as a critical component of the overall compensation package of the companies. GMC policy is an effective way for salaried people to have basic health insurance protection; however, you can avail the benefits of GMC only as long as you are employed with the company. Have you ever wondered what happens if your next employer is not offering a GMC or is offering limited cover? How will you manage if you decide to take a career break or start a stint as a freelancer or an entrepreneur? Do not worry; you have the option to port your health insurance coverage under GMC to an individual health policy; this is called 'continuity benefit,' let us see how it works.

**How to port?** First and foremost, if the GMC policy covered your dependents, you can port the policy to a family floater plan. If the policy only covers you, you

can shift to an individual health insurance plan. To initiate the process, inform the insurance company offering GMC about your intention to port the policy to an individual plan. For a smooth transition, it is recommended that you inform the insurer at least 45 days before your last day with your organisation. Study their retail health insurance products, evaluate your requirements and choose a plan that best suits you. Once you have identified the right product for you, request the insurer to provide you with the required documents like the proposal, portability forms etc. Fill out the forms, share the details of the existing GMC policy, medical history, claims history etc, as the form asks, and submit it to the insurer. Once the form is submitted the insurer will review your request and if accepted, you can pay using net banking, debit/credit card or UPI. The insurer may offer you some change/modifications of terms depending on your claim

experience or health declaration. Evaluate the offerings and proceed.

**What are the benefits of porting?** One of the most significant benefits is that the waiting period under the GMC will be adjusted against the waiting periods for certain ailments of the retail policy. For example, the retail policy you plan to buy has a waiting period of 4 years for a particular ailment, and you had a GMC cover for 3 years. In this case, the time served under GMC will be considered. So, you will have to serve the waiting period of only 1 year for those ailments. The second benefit is GMC policies are designed to provide coverage to a group of individuals with similar insurance needs. By porting to a retail policy, you have the opportunity to customise your coverage to suit your specific requirements. GMC often have a sub-limits under various ailments like cataract, maternity etc that may not be sufficient. While porting to a retail policy, you can choose a higher

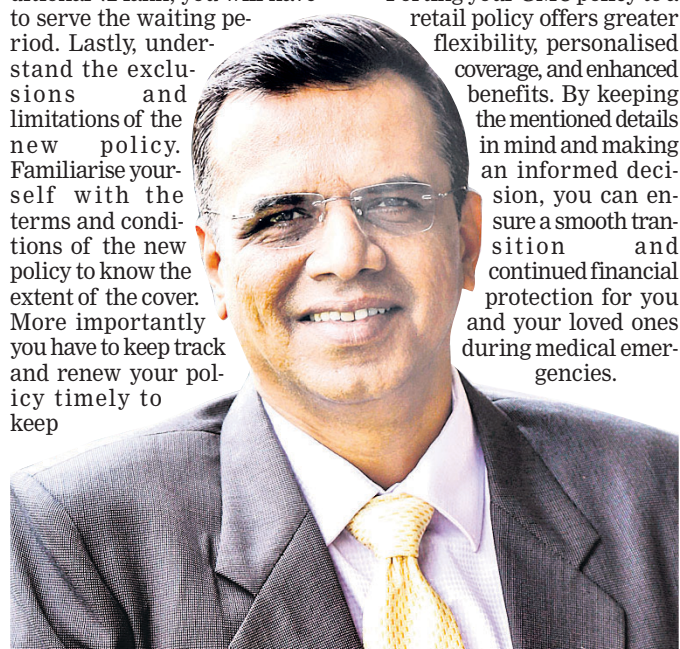
sum insured in line with your requirements. Lastly, porting to a retail policy allows you to maintain the policy independently, irrespective of any change in employment.

**Things to keep in mind:** Continuity benefits have many advantages; however, you must know a few things before starting the process. You can port a GMC to a retail plan only with the same insurer, and porting is subject to the insurer's underwriting guidelines. Usually, GMC policy does not require you to undergo a medical check-up; however, while porting, you may have to undergo a routine medical test. Many people prefer to increase the sum insured during the transition to get better coverage. However, it is important to note that the waiting period benefit will apply only to the amount of the GMC sum insured. Suppose the GMC sum insured is ₹3 lakh, and you decide to increase the sum insured in your new policy to ₹5 lakh. The waiting period benefit will be

available for ₹3 lakh; for the additional ₹2 lakh, you will have to serve the waiting period. Lastly, understand the exclusions and limitations of the new policy. Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of the new policy to know the extent of the cover. More importantly you have to keep track and renew your policy timely to keep

the policy active.

Porting your GMC policy to a retail policy offers greater flexibility, personalised coverage, and enhanced benefits. By keeping the mentioned details in mind and making an informed decision, you can ensure a smooth transition and continued financial protection for you and your loved ones during medical emergencies.



**BHASKAR NERURKAR**, HEAD - HEALTH ADMINISTRATION TEAM, BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE

**SIRAJ SWINGS A 'SIX' AS PACER'S DREAM SPELL SETS UP INDIA'S COMPREHENSIVE ASIA CUP TRIUMPH OVER SRI LANKA AS MEN IN BLUE EYE WORLD CROWN AFTER CONTINENTAL SUCCESS**

**“** Jitna naseeb mein hota hai wahi milta hai, aaj mera naseeb tha (You get what's in our destiny, today it was my destiny). I'm so happy with my performance and this is a dream come true for me  
**MOHAMMED SIRAJ**



# SUPREMACY AT ITS BEST

**NUMBERS' GAME**

**6/21** Siraj's figures became the best by a bowler against Sri Lanka, a record previously held by Pakistan pace legend Waqar Younis (6/26 in 1990). Siraj's figures became the fourth best in ODIs for India after Stuart Binny (6/4 vs Bangladesh in 2014), Anil Kumble (6/12 vs West Indies in 1993) and Jasprit Bumrah (6/19 vs England in 2022)

**1002** Balls taken by Siraj to complete 50-wicket mark (total: 53) in ODIs, second fastest after Ajantha Mendis (847 balls)

**16** Deliveries needed for Siraj to complete 5-wicket haul, becoming the joint fastest alongside former Sri Lankan pacer Chaminda Vaas

**4** Siraj became only the fourth bowler in ODI history to claim four wickets in a single over

**263** The victory was India's biggest in ODIs in terms of balls remaining (263). Their previous best was 231 against Kenya in 2001

**50** Sri Lanka's second lowest team total in ODIs after 43 against South Africa in 2012. This is the lowest total versus India in the format. Also, it is the lowest in any ODI final to date

**101** The match aggregate became the lowest for an India-Sri Lanka contest, going below the previous score of 193 in 1984

**10** India became the only team to win an ODI final by 10 wickets on two occasions, with the other being against Zimbabwe in Sharjah in 1998 (197/0)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Sept 17:** Mohammed Siraj conjured a magical spell of seam and swing bowling with magnificent figures of 6/21 as India crushed Sri Lanka by 10 wickets to lift the Asia Cup title - their eighth - after a gap of five years. Siraj's astonishing effort saw defending champions Sri Lanka getting bundled out for 50. India did not bat an eyelid in the chase, as Shubman Gill (27 n o) and Ishan Kishan (23 n o) did the job in just 6.1 overs. This was India's first title in a multi-nation event after their triumph in the Asia Cup 2018, and in a way, it also exorcised the ghost of India's 54 all out against Lanka in the Coca Cola Champions Trophy at Sharjah in 2000. The match at Premadasa, forever, will be remembered for the way Siraj reduced the Lankan top order to mere puppets of his sorcery. Perhaps, he was des-

...tined to have a day like this, said the Hyderabad. It all started with Lanka electing to bat first after winning the toss, despite heavily overcast conditions. The match started 40 minutes after the scheduled 3 pm beginning, but a storm of a different kind was awaiting Sri Lanka - a peak Siraj. His spell ensured that Lanka batted just 15.2 overs, and this was also their lowest ODI total against India. However, the beauty of Siraj's bowling was beyond mere numbers. He got into action after Jasprit Bumrah jettisoned Kusal Perera in the third ball of the first over - a regulation caught behind. In conditions that resembled more London than Colombo, Siraj just had to pitch the ball in the right areas. Siraj made his dance of destruction in the 4th over - 3.1, 3.3,

**MOHAMMED SIRAJ SUNDAY DONATED HIS 'PLAYER OF THE MATCH' CASH PRIZE OF USD 5,000 TO THE SRI LANKAN GROUNDSTAFF WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY THROUGH THE RAIN-HIT ASIA CUP. "THIS CASH PRIZE GOES TO THE GROUNDSTAFF. THEY DESERVE IT FULLY. THIS TOURNAMENT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THEM," SIRAJ SAID AT THE POST-MATCH PRESENTATION. EARLIER, THE ASIAN CRICKET COUNCIL CHIEF JAY SHAH ALSO ANNOUNCED A CASH REWARD OF USD 50,000 FOR THE GROUNDSTAFF IN KANDY AND COLOMBO AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN MAKING THE FIELD OF PLAY READY.**

**“** IT WAS A GREAT PERFORMANCE, ESPECIALLY TO COME AND PLAY LIKE THAT IN A FINAL. SHOWS THE MENTALITY OF THE TEAM. VERY CLINICAL. A PERFORMANCE LIKE THAT WILL BE CHERISHED FOR A VERY LONG TIME  
**ROHIT SHARMA**

3.4 and 3.6 balls. The victims were Pathum Nissanka, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka and Dhananjaya De Silva. Nissanka tried to place the ball around Ravindra Jadeja at point, but the placement went awry as the fielder completed a fine tumbling catch. Samarawickrama could not deal with a delivery that came in that little bit after pitching on a length, and the umpire did not have to think even for a moment to uphold Siraj's appeal for leg-before. In the very next ball, the left-handed Asalanka pushed at a fuller delivery from Siraj with zero footwork, and the uppish shot ended in the hands of Ishan Kishan at covers. De Silva managed to avert the hat-trick, but he lasted only for another ball, a push away from body resulted in an easy collection for Rahul behind the stumps. But Siraj was not done yet. He castled Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka and Kusal Mendis with peaches to complete their destruction. Shanaka could not even cover a beautiful outswinger;

a delivery that he used to optimum effect on this day, that rooted his off-stump. At 33/6, someone needed to try and break the shackles and Mendis tried to do it. But this time, Siraj nipped one back in to beat the Lankan batter's booming drive, and rearranged his timber. It was a magnificent effort by a fast bowler on top of his trade - complete mayhem, but yet so beautifully dipped in the art of quick bowling. Once Siraj finished his spell, there was nothing left in the Lankan innings. Hardik Pandya picked up the remaining crumbs of Lankan innings with a three-wicket haul (3/3). Sri Lanka needed someone to bowl a Siraj-esque spell, but they did not have anyone, as India completed a comprehensive victory in just 116 minutes.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Sri Lanka 50 (Kusal Mendis 17; Mohammed Siraj 6/21, Hardik Pandya 3/3) lost to India 51/0 (Shubman Gill 27 n o, Ishan Kishan 23 n o) by 10 wickets.



## Elavenil secures gold in shooting World Cup



20-year-old sensation Oceanne Muller, who won silver with 251.9. China's Zhang Jiale bagged the bronze. Elavenil had qualified for the final at eighth and final spot with a score of 630.5. Muller had topped with 633.7. Two Chinese shooters Zhang Jiale and Zhang Yu (Olympian) and reigning European champion Jeanette Hegg Duestad of Norway were also among the finalists. In the men's 10m air rifle event, Sandeep Singh, India's lone contender, shot 628.2 in qualification to finish in the 14th spot. Elavenil had teamed up with Sandeep Friday in the 10m air rifle mixed team event to finish fifth with a combined score of 629.1. The fourth and final medal round spot went to Israel, who were 0.5 points ahead of the Indian pair in the 42-team field. While Elavenil shot 314.8, Sandeep shot 314.3 as the Indians narrowly missed a shot at bronze. Israel did win bronze eventually, while Germany won gold and the silver went to Hungary.

**Rio de Janeiro, Sept 17:** Olympian Elavenil Valarivan won the women's 10m air rifle event to clinch her second gold at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol competition here. Elavenil was perfection personified in the strong eight-woman final field, never scoring below 10.1 throughout the 24 shots. She finished with a score of 252.2 to outgun France's

## Neeraj settles for silver medal



**Eugene (US), Sept 17:** Olympic and World Champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra failed to defend his Diamond League champion's title, finishing second with a modest effort of 83.80m in the grand finale here. The 25-year-old Chopra, who clinched his maiden World Championships gold last month, struggled to produce his best in the winner-takes-all Finals of the 13-leg one-day meeting series at the Hayward Field, Saturday night. He fouled his two attempts and his best effort of the day came in the second throw, with the series reading foul, 83.80m, 81.37m, foul, 80.74 and 80.90m. This was Chopra's first below-85m throw of the season. He had qualified for the DL Finals at the third spot. He had won the 2022 DL Finals in Zurich with a throw of 88.44m.

No competitor could touch 85m under 25 degree Celsius temperature and 45 per cent humidity. Other field events held simultaneously showed wide variation in wind speed readings, though they are not known for javelin throw. Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic became the Diamond League champion for the third time, after claiming the crown in 2017 and 2018, with a best throw of 84.24m which came in his sixth and final attempt. He was leading the six-man field from the beginning following his first round effort of 84.01m. Oliver Helander of Finland took the third spot with a best throw of 83.74m. Two-time world champion Anderson Peters' wretched season continued as he finished last with a throw of 74.71m. This was the same venue where Chopra had finished second in the 2022 World Championships. Chopra will now head to the Hangzhou Asian Games beginning later this month, where he will defend the gold he had won in 2018 in Indonesia.

## Bopanna ends Davis Cup career on a high

**Lucknow, Sept 17:** Rohan Bopanna brought the curtains down on his Davis Cup career with a comfortable straight set win alongside Yuki Bhambri before Sumit Nagal won his reverse singles as India sealed the World Group II tie against Morocco 4-1, here Sunday. The 43-year-old Bopanna, coming out to play his 33rd and final tie, and Bhambri raced to a 6-2, 6-1 win over Elliot Benchetrit and Younes Lalami Laaroussi in one hour and 11 minutes at the Mini Stadium. India's No. 1 singles player Sumit Nagal outgunned Yassine Dlimi 6-3, 6-3 in the first reverse singles to seal the home tie. Rookie Digvijay Pratap Singh, making his debut in the inconsequential fifth rubber, defeated Walid Ahouda 6-1, 5-7, 10-6. It is only the second time that Nagal has won both his singles matches in a Davis Cup tie. He had achieved a similar result against Pakistan in 2019 in Kazakhstan. Nagal earned early breaks in both the sets, leaving Dlimi playing catch-up. The win takes India to next year's World Group I playoffs. An emotional Bopanna rested

**Canada reach last 8** **SPLIT (CROATIA):** Defending champion Canada advanced to the Final 8 of the Davis Cup, beating Chile 2-1, but the United States was eliminated by Finland, which reached the quarterfinals for the first time with a 3-0 win. Finland join the Netherlands in advancing out of Group D and reaching the Final 8 in the southern Spanish city of Malaga in November. Last year's runners-up Australia also ensured their return to the Final 8 with a 3-0 win over Switzerland. The Czech Republic beat Serbia 3-0 to clinch top spot in Group C. Both countries were already through with two wins each in Valencia.

his India-shirt on the court, marking the end of his Davis Cup career in which he played 50 matches in 33 ties, winning 23 rubbers, including 13 in doubles. Watched by his family and friends, Bopanna acknowledged their and fans' appreciation and blew kisses towards the stands. About 50 of Bopanna's family and friends flew to Lucknow to watch the Coorg player in action one last time in Davis Cup. They were wearing T-shirts that had a tri-colour-waving Bopanna picture printed.

## FELIX, CANCELO SCORE IN BARCA'S ROUT OF BETIS

**Barcelona, Sept 17:** Joao Felix and Joao Cancelo scored after making their first starts for Barcelona in a 5-0 rout of Real Betis in the Spanish league. The pair of Portugal internationals made their debuts last round for Barcelona as substitutes two days after they joined the defending champions on loan just hours before the summer transfer market closed. Felix opened the scoring Saturday and Cancelo capped the biggest win so far this season for the defending champions. Felix scored in the 25th minute



**JOAO FELIX (L) & JOAO CANCELO** and then cleverly let a pass run between his legs in the area that

Robert Lewandowski fired home to double the lead in the 32nd. Ferran Torres, who also made his first start of the season, added a third goal in the 62nd when he became the first Barcelona player to score directly from a free-kick since Lionel Messi did so against Valencia in May 2021, according to OPTA statistics. After substitute Raphinha struck from just outside the area in the 66th, Cancelo topped the victory in the 81st with a great solo effort after he cut back twice to ditch his marker and beat goalkeeper Rui Silva from an angle.

**Disappointing draw** **BOURNEMOUTH:** Injury-hit Chelsea could not catch the break they badly need in a 0-0 draw at Bournemouth Sunday and stayed in the bottom half of the Premier League standings where they finished last season. Chelsea twice had shots strike the frame of Bournemouth's goal and the 51st-minute free-kick by Raheem Sterling bounced down from the bar onto the goal-line. Nicolas Jackson's shot in the 13th had struck the post after exchanging passes with Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk. Chelsea needed goalkeeper Robert Sanchez to preserve the point with a save in the 79th from Dominic Solanke.

## Sainz ends Verstappen, Red Bull's winning run

**Singapore, Sept 17:** Carlos Sainz Jr. Won the Singapore Grand Prix for Ferrari Sunday as Max Verstappen and Red Bull's historic win streaks in Formula One came to an end. Verstappen finished fifth and Perez eighth. Verstappen's winning run ended at 10 races and Red Bull's at 15. Sainz started on pole position and held on with badly worn tires over tense final laps for his second career win in F1 ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and the Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton.

